



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC STUDIES



ADELAIDE & FLINDERS UNIVERSITIES

Review of Initiatives Into Workforce Re-Engagement of Long Term Disengaged Workers

Final Report

Report commissioned by
WorkCover SA

Report prepared by
The SA Centre for Economic Studies

September 2008

Contents

Executive Summary	(i)
1. Background	1
1.1 Review of SA Workers' Compensation System	1
1.2 Recommendations, Terms of Reference and Outcomes	1
1.3 Terms of Reference	3
1.4 Outcomes	4
1.5 South Australian Labour Market in the Next Decade	4
1.6 Skills, Workforce Development and Long-Term Injured Workers	7
2. Literature Review	12
2.1 WorkCover's workers with disability: a known population	12
2.2 WorkCover's workers with disability: a particular population	14
2.3 Disabled workers — work injury: the literature review	15
3. Return to Work: Providers, Services and Case Studies	23
3.1 Lessons from WorkSafe (Victoria)	24
3.2 Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Victoria	27
3.3 Disability Works Australia (DWA) Matching motivated people to good employers	29
3.4 Personnel Placement Consultancies (PPC)	30
3.5 Personal Support Program (PSP)	31
3.6 The Community Jobs Program (CJP)	33
3.7 Workforce Participation Partnerships (WPP)	35
3.8 Brotherhood of St Laurence (Victoria)	37
3.9 Case Studies	38
3.10 WPP Case Studies	50
3.11 Conclusions	57
List of Interviewees	59
Bibliography	60
Appendix A	62
Appendix B	74
Appendix C	75
Appendix D	77
Appendix E	80
Appendix F	84
Appendix G	86

This report has been prepared by the following SACES researchers:

Michael O'Neil, Executive Director
Peter Lumb, Research Associate

Disclaimer: This study, while embodying the best efforts of the investigators is but an expression of the issues considered most relevant, and neither the Centre, the investigators, nor the Universities can be held responsible for any consequences that ensue from the use of the information in this report. Neither the Centre, the investigators, nor the Universities make any warranty or guarantee regarding the contents of the report, and any warranty or guarantee is disavowed except to the extent that statute makes it unavoidable.

Executive Summary

This research project represents an explanatory paper to assess whether lessons learned from transitioning the long term unemployed into sustainable employment through labour market programs, may be applicable to long term workers' compensation beneficiaries.

The researchers findings are summarised under the following key headings.

Assessment of the labour market environment and impact on re-engagement of long term disengaged

Sections 1.5 and 1.6 illustrate that the demand for a skilled workforce and the importance of higher participation rates have never been stronger than at the present time. The Keating Review (2008) supports this finding. The researchers illustrate that while the South Australian Government seeks to increase overseas and interstate skilled migration and expand our training system there are many injured workers receiving compensation registered with WorkCover from occupations and with qualifications identified for the skilled migration program (Section 1.6). Simply put, the South Australian labour market would benefit from a speedier return to work of those in sought after occupations.

Specific Initiatives and Programs, their effectiveness and applicability to injured workers

Section 3 of the study describes services, programs and individual projects that have been successful in assisting the long term unemployed, many with multiple barriers to overcome, return to employment. The main features include the following:

- programs are designed to achieve and reward employment outcomes and outcomes are measured;
- increasingly labour market providers work in partnership with employers and industry associations providing specific, discrete, tailored courses or training to meet skill vacancies that have been identified by the respective parties;
- labour market programs are increasingly specifically targeted at occupations, an industry sector or job specific skill sets;
- as with Goal 100 many programs incorporate a personal development component (i.e., life skills) with work skills to build a participant's confidence and self-esteem which is integral to being work ready; the more delayed the point of intervention the more likely this component will be required;
- combination type programs including training, a work placement (sometimes with a wage subsidy) combined with support once in employment help to achieve sustainable outcomes;
- Return to Work Coordinators could play a similar role providing mentoring and support in a workers' compensation environment;
- generally programs are small scale, discrete programs for groups of up to 15 participants over a period of 12-15 weeks;
- employer associations in partnership with training providers are able to contribute to specific industry based training or training for skill vacancies. Partnerships with employers (and unions) are a new dimension to many labour market programs (e.g., Goal 100) as employers receive benefits in the form of workforce recruitment and immediately productive employees.

Injured workers on long term claims are required to re-assess future careers and employment options. Building on professional, independent assessment of a workers capabilities, labour market and career development programs are able to be flexibly designed to equip workers with skills and provide opportunities for trial, work placements.

What limitations are there if applied to a worker's compensation environment?

The fact that an injured worker is receiving income is not a limitation to participation — it is an advantage. The motivation to participate and return to the paid workforce is critical. The compensation system can contribute to this where return to work is the end objective (*outcome*) and participation in the RTW process is viewed as part of successful rehabilitation.

Labour market programs, involving WorkCover and workers with injuries or disability receiving compensation payments would need to carefully consider program ingredients which are less discussed in most of the ALMPS (Section 3). Considerations for WorkCover supported programs include:

- individual work related ability and disability assessments related to the targeted skills shortage;
- personal support programs which include managing individual identity challenges given the acquisition of disability;
- the relevance of pre-injury work experience, and the persistence of work skills; and
- how to assemble and refer a cohort of participants to relevant programs (by location, job/career direction, stage of recovery from injury, etc.). The approach suggested to us was for WorkCover, acting through training providers, to offer a suite of courses including courses/training developed with employers, based on known job vacancies.

The long term claimant cohort generally have fewer qualifications and post secondary education participation and may initially be reluctant to return to a “classroom setting”. This is also the case for many who are long term unemployed and who have multiple barriers to employment. The case studies highlighted in this report, including Goal 100, have successfully addressed this reality in the design of each program, the peer support that occurs within each program, attention to individual needs and the goal of employment as a positive outcome.

While WorkCover should not be seen as an “alternative training agency” training and work placement that builds on a worker's workforce experience and targets job vacancies is likely to be a more cost effective outcome than an elongated period of inactivity and income compensation.

Assessment of whether the worker is able to return to their pre-injury employer (balancing the obligations of the employer) should occur as early as possible. Different pathways will be required based on whether the worker is job attached or unattached.

Conclusion, Summary, Innovative Solutions

Recent reforms to WorkCover emphasise the importance of return to work both as a *process* on the pathway to rehabilitation and as an important *outcome* for the injured worker.

Labour market programs and providers as illustrated through the Commonwealth's Disability Employment Network (DEN) and Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) can make a positive contribution in returning injured workers to paid employment. In partnership with

employers and industry associations, well targeted, discrete training programs can be an aid in facilitating return to work.

A Potential Innovation

Consideration could be given to a dedicated website to house information on the job seeker returning to work outlining their experience, skills and preferred occupation/industry. 'Preferred employers' would be able to access the site, contact and recruit workers, lodge employment vacancies and opportunities for trial placements. Non-government organisations (NGOs) offering to host employees returning to work could also register opportunities for trial work placement. Such an initiative would help to reinforce the objective of return to work and the instrumental role that WorkCover can play in linking the demand for labour with the supply of labour.

1. Background

1.1 Review of the SA Workers' Compensation System

The impetus for this research derives directly from the SA Government initiated review of the South Australian Workers' Compensation System. The Review¹ has come to be known by the name of its principal author and is referred to as the 'Clayton Review' (December 2007). Clayton noted that there is widespread agreement for the proposition that 'a number of the objects of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 (WRCA) are not being met'. Primarily the scheme provided to give effect to the 1986 Act (WRCA) is 'failing to provide for the effective rehabilitation of disabled workers and their early return to work', and the system is failing to ensure that 'employers costs are contained within reasonable limits' (2007, p. 1).

An 'immense challenge' (Clayton 2007, p. 167) remains to improve the circumstances of people who have experienced a workplace injury and who remain outside the paid labour force, while receiving compensation through WorkCover. Long-term workers' compensation claimants, like the long-term unemployed, experience greater social isolation and tend to have diminished health outcomes and be subject to higher levels of depression and substance dependence. More effective support for injured workers (some who retain an ongoing disability) which supports them into sustained work will improve a range of personal as well as wider social, economic issues while at the same time containing costs to employers.

The Review noted that South Australia has the lowest return to work rates of all Australian states, the worst funding position, highest levy rates paid by employers and an ongoing increase in the number and length of longer term injured workers (and hence claims).

The Clayton Review further reported that the long-term claims segment represents approximately 30 per cent of the WorkCover claim numbers and over 50 per cent of WorkCover scheme liabilities (i.e. the economic cost of this claims tail accounts for more than half of the schemes liabilities). This presents an immense challenge to the WorkCover scheme.

The Review stressed the primary purpose of the WorkCover System was to 'rehabilitate and return injured workers back to safe employment and the community'.

1.2 Recommendations, Terms of Reference and Outcomes

The Clayton Review included a number of recommendations designed to improve the effectiveness of the workers' compensation scheme in South Australia. Recommendations that specifically addressed 'incentive effects' designed to achieve improved rates of return to work included, *inter alia*, the following:

- a step down in weekly payments in line with other schemes in other states to support the incentive to return to work;
- restrictions on the use of redemption payments, except in special circumstances, to reinforce the incentive to return to work;
- the establishment of a return to work fund of \$15 million 'to improve rehabilitation and retraining activities, and to fund projects and research to improve return to work outcomes', particularly in areas where there are current skill shortages;

¹ Review of the South Australian Workers' Compensation System', December 2007.

- the creation of properly-trained rehabilitation and return to work co-ordinators (RTWCs) following similar arrangements in Victoria; and
- improvements to the work capacity test and review to assess the potential (with tailored assistance) to return to work.

Equally far reaching were recommendations contained within the Review, that a much greater emphasis should be placed on 'return to work strategies and initiatives' in line with the practices in other states. The experience in other states is that return to work strategies are premised on the involvement and cooperation of the pre-injury employer, the injured worker, WorkCover and their agent/s, rehabilitation and vocational providers and the medical fraternity.

Most relevant to this study were the following recommendations:

- Rec. 44** That WorkCover Corporation engage with existing workforce development strategies and initiatives, such as South Australia Works, Industry Skill Boards and Group Training Organisations, to enhance the employment opportunities for injured workers.
- Rec. 45** That the lessons from initiatives for transitioning the long-term unemployed to employment, such as Goal 100, be assessed for their application to long-term workers' compensation beneficiaries.
- Rec. 47** That WorkCover Corporation establish a Return to Work Fund, similar to that existing in Victoria, to fund innovative and quality initiatives for improving return to work outcomes.
- Rec. 48** That the WorkCover Corporation build upon existing initiatives to make the fostering and facilitating of more supportive workplace cultures within and across the schemes employer community (both levy-paying and self-insured) a key part of its regulatory mission and programme.

The Review was mindful of the challenges involved in returning injured workers to work, particularly those who have been out of the workforce for long periods of time. The Review noted that there were few really exemplary examples of return to work programs but that programs designed to assist the long-term unemployed return to work may provide valuable lessons for the worker's compensation environment.

"One such example is the Goal 100 programme in Whyalla which produced extraordinarily good results in returning a group of long term unemployed to employment. This model, and others such as a programme overseen by the Brotherhood of St Lawrence (sic) in Melbourne, which have proven effective in dealing with this difficult issue are worthy of detailed study and analysis in terms of the transferable lessons that may be drawn from them. Such lessons may prove valuable in terms of fashioning an approach or approaches for dealing with the long-term cohort of WorkCover claimants who are experiencing barriers to return to work. Accordingly, it would be useful to have an independent body that is experienced in labour market and allied analysis to undertake such a study". (Clayton 2007, p. 167)

1.3 Terms of Reference

This study was commissioned by the Board of WorkCover to specifically address Rec 45. The RFQ specifies the following; principally that the consultant will:

- conduct a review of the Goal 100 program and similar initiatives for their effectiveness to long term WorkCover claim beneficiaries;
- provide a qualitative assessment of the initiatives mentioned in the Clayton Review but the consultant need not be constrained by that list. Assessment is also sought of other relevant initiatives or programs and their potential application to the workers' compensation environment;
- provide a detailed description of the proposed methodology for this review;² and
- provide an assessment of how the results of this review could underpin future programs targeting the pool of long term claimants. A timely review of the various initiatives is sought.

SACES suggested that there were other relevant initiatives aside from the Goal 100 program that should be documented, not only in South Australia but also in Victoria. The Centre agreed to provide case studies on those programs considered to be most applicable to long-term workers' compensation beneficiaries.

In addition, WorkCover indicated that it did not 'wish to constrain the review to the long-term unemployed sector', but welcomed an assessment of the effectiveness of programs and initiatives that have targeted sectors other than the unemployed. In short, the review should consider successful 'return to work programs' and extract lessons and features of those programs that are considered relevant to the workers' compensation environment. This would also include an assessment of the limitations that may apply in transferring successful programs to the workers' compensation environment.

This study has been guided by the significant criticism contained in the Clayton Review, that:

“the scheme is failing to provide for the effective rehabilitation of disabled workers and their early return to work.”

The central questions arising from a systematic failure to achieve a higher rate of return to work include, *inter alia*:

- what is the potential role of labour market programs in improving sustainable employment/return to work outcomes;
- how can labour market programs provide more effective support for long-term compensation recipients; and
- how best to tailor assistance, including operational procedures such as referrals and the timing of referral to labour market and vocational assistance providers.

² The methodology was described in SACES' tender and is not detailed in this report.

1.4 Outcomes

A final report should include the following:

- assessment of the labour market environment and impact on re-engagement of long-term disengaged;
- describe initiatives and programs in terms of relevance to WorkCover with an emphasis on the long-term claim pool;
- describe the effectiveness of the programs for the original cohort;
- draw out and summarise the applicability of features of the programs to injured workers on long-term claims;
- consider the limitations of the initiatives if applied to workers' compensation;
- provide analysis, conclusions and a comprehensive summary of research and innovative solutions to be considered by WorkCover in a policy setting.

1.5 South Australian Labour Market in the Next Decade

Opportunities to return injured workers to employment are influenced by a range of factors including most obviously, the significance of the injury or degree of disablement, the response of their pre-injury employer, the motivation of the injured worker, the demand for skilled labour and the state of labour market more generally. The demand for a skilled workforce and the need to increase labour force participation rates have never been stronger in South Australia than at the present time.

Injured and recovering workers who have skills, extensive workforce experience, trade qualifications, knowledge of the disciplines of the workforce are vital to the growth of the local economy.

Higher rates of employment participation and social inclusion will be advanced by re-engaging injured workers as quickly as possible.

A recent *Review of Skills and Workforce Development in South Australia* (Keating Review, June 2008) reiterated the necessity for South Australia 'to increase the rate of labour force participation', because the state is faced with an ageing population, fewer younger entrants into the labour market and strong growth in employment demand. The report noted:

"To meet the projected employment demand, participation will need to increase from its present rate of 62.9 per cent to 65.7 per cent by 2017-18. This increase in employment participation will necessarily have to come from those people who are presently not employed. Many of these people are on the margin of the labour force, often receiving some form of social security assistance. Thus this improvement in labour force participation should both facilitate and require a substantial improvement in social inclusion" (Keating 2008, p. 1).

The Keating Review also pointed to the needs for greater engagement with industry as it is 'industry that employs people, uses their skills, and frequently helps people to further develop their skills' (p.4). A further emphasis in that report was the need for training and employment initiatives to target skills in demand or the needs of employers through developing partnerships with business, community and training providers in order to deliver training flexibly and to assist disadvantaged people. The Review considered that an increased role for industry in workforce development is envisaged to meet skill demand in the future:

“...by encouraging a workforce development and training culture within enterprises, industry contributes to meeting its future demands for skilled labour and in turn, growth. What is required, then, is for government to engage with industry in a conversation about mutual responsibility.

In addition, research suggests that the most positive skills and employment outcomes occur when training is closely targeted to the needs of industry or local employers (Martin 1998, SACES 2008). To build enterprises and industry commitment to up-skilling the existing workforce, and training new entrants, employers must be highly engaged in the process. Employers need to determine their own skill needs, having regard to how those skills will be used so that they can be developed accordingly. Industry can then engage more productively with high quality training providers on an on-going basis” (Keating 2008, pp. 78-79).

Engagement with individual employers and industry groups as a way to address the demands for skilled labour is a message or theme which is equally relevant for WorkCover in returning injured and productive workers to the workforce.

The South Australian Government has established nine Industry Skill Boards (ISB's) located within DFEEST to, *inter alia*, “facilitate collective action by industry to solve skill shortages where they exist on an industry-by-industry basis” (p. 82), with membership comprising government, union and employer representatives. It is anticipated that the Industry Skill Boards will play a much stronger role in setting industry priorities and workforce development strategies. The nine Industry Skill Boards and their coverage of occupations by Australia and New Zealand Standard Industry Codes (ANZSIC) is as follows:

- Business Services Industry Skills Board SA Inc (77codes)
- Construction Industry Training Board (31 codes)
- Electrical, Electro-technology, Energy, Water Skills Board Inc (7 codes)
- Food, Tourism and Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Board SA Inc (44 codes)
- Manufacturing Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc (151 codes)
- Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc (58 codes)
- SA Health and Community Services Board Inc (25 codes)
- Services Skills Industry Alliance Inc (133 codes)
- Transport and Distribution Training SA Inc (34 codes)

To what extent ISB's are able to play a role in industry based return to work programs as one component of industry specific workforce planning and industry based strategies in occupational health and safety to retain workers and ensure lower injury rates as part of educating industry and enterprises is worthy of further consideration. The potential role and contribution of ISBs in helping injured workers return to work within specific industries is undefined. It is possible to envisage courses for specific occupations being sponsored through ISBs with employer involvement and tailored to the needs of the injured worker. Any future role should be the subject of discussions and negotiations between WorkCover and DFEEST.

It is feasible that ISB's acting as ‘brokers, co-ordinators and facilitators’ with employers, industry and training agencies could have a very positive role to play in industry based programs to assist and help re-equip workers for return to work within the industry. In addition, as argued in the Keating Review, ISB's will deliver a program to assist enterprises ‘build workforce development capability’. The subject material has the potential to improve workforce planning, including motivation, management and reward systems, improve the

retention of workers and potentially impact on reducing work related injuries (see discussion Keating Review p. 94).

On labour market programs and those in receipt of income support the Keating Review noted that

“There appears to be agreement that people receiving income support who have the potential to work have an obligation to either seek employment or to seek training that will lead to employment. However, people who are disadvantaged in the labour market will need assistance with finding employment or appropriate training. Earlier employment assistance models have been designed for labour markets in times of high unemployment. There is a need to rethink these models to strengthen social and economic participation; for example by integrating training, personal development and meaningful work outcomes, with an important role for industry and local communities in supporting employees”. (Keating 2008, p. 100)

The previous quote is equally relevant to return to work programs/assistance for injured workers in receipt of income support; there are mutual obligations on the part of the pre-injury employer and the injured worker; that an ongoing injury may lead to additional disadvantage and the injured worker will need extra assistance to return to work; personal development and life skills training is likely to be a module in any training program for the longer term injured worker.

South Australia's Strategic Plan; Progress Report 2008 includes Objective 1 Growing Prosperity (Government of South Australia 2008, p. 7). The Plan notes that employment participation rates in SA remain below the national average and that inequality monitoring of the Plan's targets indicates that ‘it (participation) is also higher (between 1996 and 2006) in each quintile although the gap in rates between the most disadvantaged areas and the least disadvantaged areas has remained stable at 19 per cent lower participation in the lowest SES quintile in both (measurement) periods. Maintaining better than average employment growth than the national average is also important to achieving the ‘Growing Prosperity’ for South Australia objective (Government of South Australia 2008, p. 15).

SACES made a contribution to the Keating Review. SACES concluded after an extensive review of the literatures on labour market policies and programs that “there is broad agreement on several key principles to improve the effectiveness of labour market programs although “why some programs” work well is not always fully understood”.

The key principles (and these are relevant to the worker's compensation environment) include:

- training should be closely targeted to the needs of industry or local employers and match the interests of the cohort of job seekers (latter involves careful selection of job seekers or WorkCover claimants);
- programs should generally be small in scale and again, be targeted at skills in demand or the needs of employers;
- achieving a qualification or certificate is important for some participants and for some industries, as it signals to the employer competency, skills and employability;
- combination programs work best as they have the capacity to address ‘multiple barriers’ to employment and are able to be tailored to the needs of the individual. Combination programs may involve, *inter alia*, training on and off the job, work placement, mentoring, job search assistance, and follow up once in employment;

- early intervention is advisable, whether this involves the unemployed job seeker or those currently at school who are at risk of leaving school without sufficient a foundation to compete in the labour market (applies equally to injured workers); and
- there are job seekers with entrepreneurial skills and talents who have the capabilities and desire to commence their own business who would benefit from training and business start up support.

SACES also reported that voluntary participation is important, training needs to be delivered flexibly, with some tailoring around the time commitments of the participants, individual learning needs, while local projects should attempt to mirror employment disciplines and conditions as much as possible.

Examples of tailored initiatives include the Mitsubishi Assistance Package providing job search skills and techniques, career counselling/case management/employment brokerage, recognition of prior learning and competencies, the use of wage subsidies, relocation assistance, self-employment and financial support to cover fees, fares and minor general training costs and the “Better Skills and Better Workplace Education Language and Literacy (WELL Program) to up-skill and credential age care workers as Enrolled Nurses.

Relevant to employers looking to take back and support previously injured workers is the finding in relation to labour market programs that “studies have shown that there is often a close relationship between a person’s health status and participation in the labour market. For example, a person with a pre-existing health condition or disability may be unable to find a job that could accommodate their health needs without some changes in job design and how the work is organised. Thus to attract people with a disability or health problems, work arrangements may need to be more flexible than for other members of society” (Keating Review, p. 108)

1.6 Skills, Workforce Development and Long-Term Injured Workers

All of the above discussion is in some way relevant to injured workers, the workers compensation environment and how we view workers who currently have an injury, but have previously been contributing and productive members of the workforce.

In total there are some 3,000 workers who have been receiving income support from WorkCover for three years or more and 2,400 injured workers on income support for between one and three years as at June 2008 (see Appendix A).

WorkCover faces an immediate challenge to improve the durable return to work rate (Australian average 80 per cent in 2005/06: South Australian average 67 per cent).³ Engineering a “cultural shift” over the longer term for all stakeholders involves incorporating assistance for injured workers into:

- broader strategies for skills and workforce development; and
- industry workforce action plans.

³ “Comparative Performance Monitoring Report”, 9th edition, p. 27, Indicator 24.

A “cultural shift” is used here to imply that while WorkCover is a compensation scheme, the organisation itself and injured workers should be seen to be, and should actively seek to be, integrated into state and industry workforce development. WorkCover may choose to be viewed as an organisation that is instrumental in helping to return injured workers to the paid labour force, as an organisation that re-equips workers, as an organisation that contributes to improvements in the workplace including safer workplaces, and as a labour supply organisation.

It follows that given this identity and mission, systematic processes and procedures and a culture of achieving stated outcomes is then designed or geared to meet this objective.

To illustrate this point, compare Tables 1.1 and 1.2. Table 1.1 shows the demand for skilled labour for 20 occupations across South Australia where that demand will involve interstate and overseas migration as well as greater output from local training organisations. Table 1.2 shows the number of claims by occupation in 2006/07. There are 506 Metal Fabricators on WorkCover in 2006/07 and South Australia is seeking to recruit over 100 metal fabricators; similarly registered nurses – 692 on WorkCover and 50 required. The occupations of motor mechanic, engineering process worker, fitter, police, secondary and primary education teachers, shown in Table 1.3 by industry are also in high demand.

The 20 occupations listed in Table 1.1 have been identified as priorities for the skilled migration program. From a state perspective we have resources committed to competing for and attracting skilled migrants for occupations in which we have a large number of injured workers and low return to work rates.

Improved and sustainable return to work outcomes are an important component of South Australia’s workforce development strategies.

Appendix A provides summary tables on active income maintenance claims as at 30th June 2008. The researchers examined the data to familiarise themselves with the industries and occupations of claimants, the duration of claims and how this profile matched the demand for labour in the South Australian economy. In summary:

- 41 per cent of claimants were 3+ years;
- 63 per cent of all claimants were male;
- 73 per cent of claimants reside in the metropolitan area;
- claims by industry sectors relative to the proportion of all employed persons in that sector are highest in manufacturing (23.0 per cent : 13.2 per cent), construction (11.7 per cent : 6.7 per cent), transport and storage (9.4 per cent : 3.9 per cent), and property and business services (12.9 per cent : 9.1 per cent);
- the actual number of claims is highest in manufacturing (1,667), property and business services (939), health and community services (847), construction (845) and transport and storage (680);
- these same industries generally have a higher proportion (relative to the all industry average) of injured workers with a duration of 3 years or more;
- the number of long-term claimants rises with age up to 54 years and declines sharply thereafter; and
- claims by occupation tend to rise as the level of qualifications (and financial returns for work) decline.

Table 1.1
Targeted Occupations and Planning Levels,¹ 2008

Occupation and ASCO code	Planning Level
4431-11 General Plumber	Over 100
4122-11 Metal Fabricator	Over 100
4122-15 Welder (First Class)	Over 100
4311-11 General Electrician	Over 100
4311-13 Electrician (Special Class)	Over 100
4112-11 Fitter	Over 100
4982-11 Flat Glass Tradesperson	Up to 100
3322 Chefs/4513-11 Cook	Up to 100
4211 Motor Mechanics	Up to 100
4213 Panel Beaters	Up to 100
4312-11 Refrigeration and Airconditioning Mechanic	Up to 100
4421-11 Painter and Decorator	Up to 100
2125-11 Electrical Engineer	Up to 50
2124 Civil Engineers	Up to 50
2381-11 Dentist	Up to 50
2323-11 Registered Nurse	Up to 50
2324 Registered Midwives	Up to 50
2211 Accountants	Up to 50
2523 Urban and Regional Planners	Up to 50
2311-11 General Medical Practitioner	Up to 25

Note: ¹ Planning level refers to an “ideal or targeted” level of overseas recruitment by government agencies to meet the estimated gap between labour demand and total training supply.

Source: SACES.

Table 1.2
Number of Claims by Occupation: 2006/07

Occupation	Number	Per cent by All Occupations	Per cent by Occupations Shown here
Storeperson	1,188	3.9	12.8
Engineering production process worker	1,184	3.9	12.8
Personal care assistant	960	3.2	10.4
Heavy truck driver	954	3.2	10.3
Registered nurse	692	2.3	7.5
Commercial cleaner	678	2.2	7.3
Fitter	629	2.1	6.8
Engineering production systems worker	522	1.7	5.6
Metal fabricator	506	1.7	5.5
Packager and container filler	500	1.7	5.4
Forklift driver	493	1.6	5.3
Kitchenhand	475	1.6	5.1
Motor mechanic	472	1.6	5.1
Total	9,253	30.7	100.0

Source: WorkCover Scheme Snapshot, Presentation to DFEEST 2008.

This snapshot of claimants is well known to WorkCover. However, for our purposes what the data illustrates is that the long term claimant cohort:

- have fewer qualifications/post secondary education participation;
- are predominantly male, with extensive workforce experience;
- in lower ranked occupations (in terms of qualifications, skills); and

- likely to be more difficult/challenging to train and individuals are likely to need encouragement and support to participate in life skills training including consideration of future work options.

However, these characteristics are not dissimilar to the long-term unemployment cohort.

Table 1.3
Number of Claims by Main Industry: 2006/07

Main industries	Number	Per cent by Main Industry	Per cent by Industries shown here
Hospitals	1,475	4.9	21.0
Personal care services	1,350	4.5	19.2
Employment services category 1	1,253	4.2	17.9
Grocers, etc.	933	3.1	13.3
Road freight transport	863	2.9	12.3
Local government	770	2.6	11.0
Motor vehicle manufacturing	729	2.4	10.4
Secondary education	524	1.7	7.5
Wine and brandy	500	1.7	7.1
Livestock processing	483	1.6	6.9
Police	483	1.6	6.9
Primary education	476	1.6	6.8
Structural steel	458	1.5	6.5
Hotels, bars, etc	409	1.4	5.8
Non-building construction	386	1.3	5.5
Total	7,014	37.0	100.0

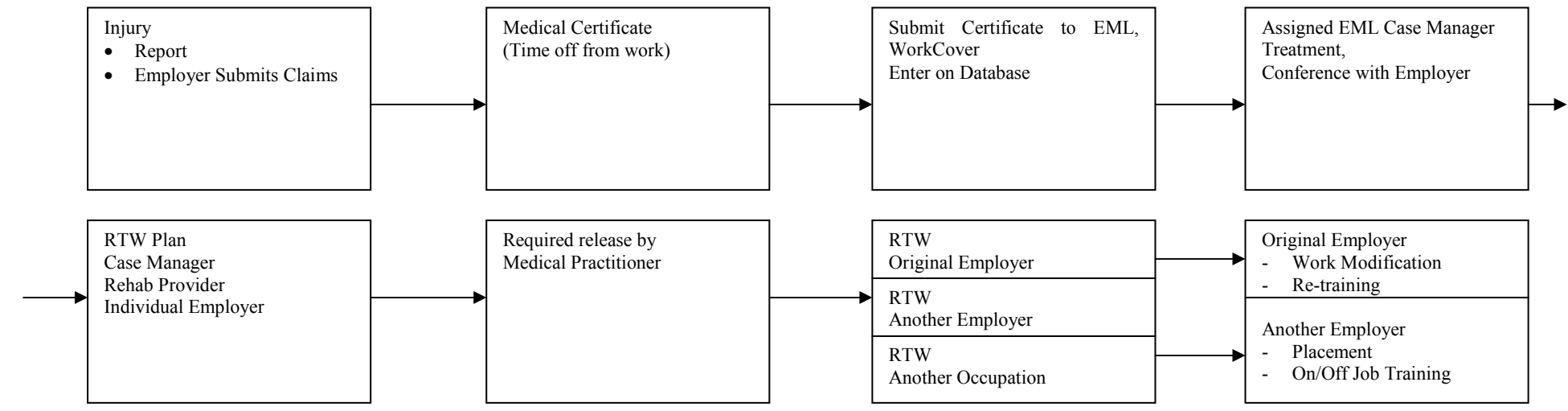
Source: WorkCover Scheme Snapshot, Presentation to DFEEST 2008.

Diagram 1 summarises the “current flow” through the WorkCover system with the new arrangements summarised below that. The new arrangements provide at the 13 week and 26 week mark an assessment and review of the injured worker with step down in income.

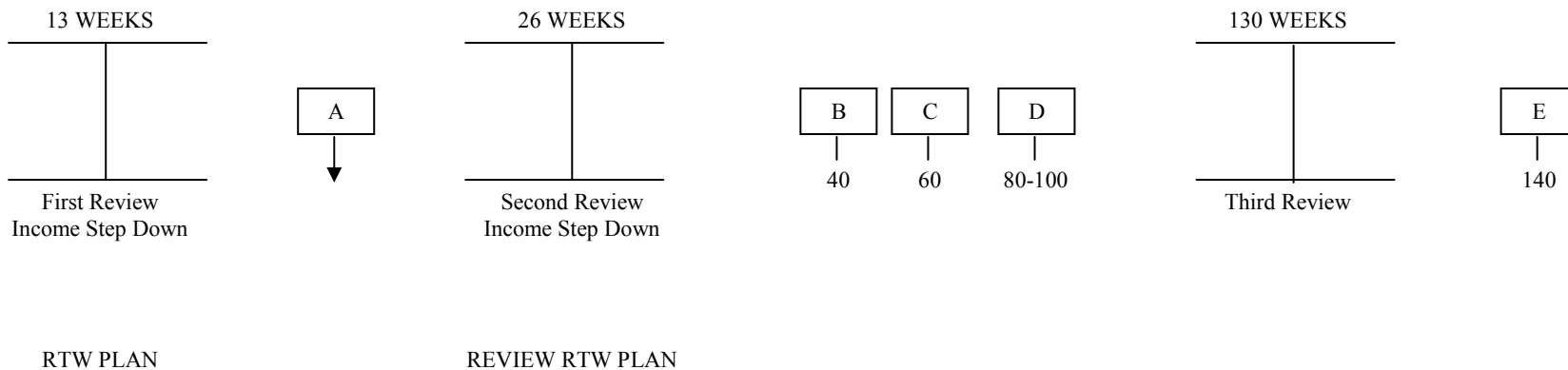
Boxes A-E illustrate potential intervention points for labour market programs where the type of assistance will vary. At Point A — assume return to work with original employer, but changed duties — may involve short-term, discrete training to adapt to new tasks (e.g., computer literacy, record keeping). If not returning to original employer, then at Point A intervention may involve job search training, resume preparation, consideration of new occupation, perhaps preparation for a trial work placement with host or new employer.

Post 26 weeks the longer the point of intervention the more likely that participants will require a module in life skills training, building up confidence and self-esteem. The point to be made here is that the design of any labour market program will vary to suit the needs of the cohort. In addition, how effective the internal operational procedures of WorkCover and its agents are including speed of response, capability assessment of the injured worker, referral to assistance providers, etc., will influence return to work outcomes.

Diagram 1: Understanding Current Flow



New Arrangements and Potential Intervention Points



* a-e ⇒ potential labour market assistance, different elements in program, nominal/suggested weeks as start-up points for participation.

2. Literature Review

SACES conducted a literature review related to injured workers and their return to work.⁴ The literature describes initiatives to re-engage long term unemployed people when the cause of unemployment is either recovery from a serious workplace physical or psychological injury or because they have an enduring disability due to a previous workplace injury. A significant portion of the literature about injured workers was supplied for review by WorkCover (e.g., three relevant reports commissioned by WorkCover: Barnett et al 2006, La Trobe 2006, Glover, Tennant & Leahy et al 2006). Other references cited in the literature review were written or commissioned by major government or semi government organisations located in OECD countries.

Due to time constraints, and to some extent the clarity of the task requested of the SACES, large scale studies or large scale literature reviews and synthesis projects were favoured over smaller lone researcher studies. These large scale studies were mostly sponsored by government organisations and undertaken by reputable research organisations.

Reports and articles were summarised and relevant issues for this study were identified and reworked into a draft literature review. The literature review served as the basis for discussion between the researchers and key stakeholders. These discussions were aimed at identifying lessons from the reviews and the experience of key stakeholders considered most likely to optimise sustained paid labour force engagement.

Clayton noted WorkCover had high levels of unfunded liabilities which derived from having large numbers of workers with disability who had not returned to paid labour. An important objective of this study was to document and understand this population's non re-engagement, and to look towards effective processes to optimise paid labour re-engagement when there is capacity in the worker to do so.

There are significant consequences for injured or disabled workers who do not quickly return to work. There are also consequences for public policy, society and the economy more generally.

2.1 WorkCover's workers with disability: a known population

The Social Health Atlas of Compensable Injury in South Australia (Glover, Tennant & Leahy et al, 2006) was jointly funded by WorkCover SA and the Motor Accident Commission (MAC) of South Australia.

In part the purpose of the Atlas is to facilitate a shared understanding between the two organisations. The Atlas promotes 'understandings of the structural patterns of compensable injuries' and argues that a 'health program response to injured workers is legitimate and warranted' (Glover, Tennant & Leahy et al 2006, p. 1). The Atlas confirms that injuries (deriving from workplaces or from motor vehicles crashes) are not randomly distributed across the population but are highly concentrated among people who share socioeconomic characteristics:

⁴ Clayton (2007) is clear and direct about where to look for potentially helpful learnings. In addition WorkCover officers responsible for managing this project provided helpful references.

... we can say that there is a strong association at the area level in Adelaide between high rates of workers' compensation claims and socioeconomic disadvantage, and high rates of claims under the Compulsory Third Party (motor vehicle) Insurance scheme. For workers' compensation claims (and number of services provided by GPs and physiotherapists) the association with socioeconomic disadvantage is very strong (Glover, Tennant & Leahy et al 2006, p. vii).

As made clear in the analysis of WorkCover data,⁵ the work injured population is relatively contained according to population variables and low skill, low occupational status, low education and low income levels are common to most injured workers. This population is one where work is often marginal and people residing in the same postcode are more likely to be unemployed or marginally attached to the labour force. As shown in the *Social Health Atlas of South Australia* (Glover et al, 2006) this population also bears a greater burden of disease and experiences earlier death than high skill, high occupational and high income people (especially for example, when compared with the top quintile of population by these variables). The association between injury, diseases and premature death and low socio-economic status is common in western industrial economies.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) *The Social Determinants of Health: Solid Facts* reports that

Unemployment puts health at risk and the risk is higher where unemployment is widespread. Evidence from a number of countries shows that, even after allowing for other factors, unemployed people *and their families* suffer a substantially increased risk of premature death. The health problems of unemployment are linked to both its psychological consequences and the financial problems it brings especially debt (Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003, p. 20). (Italics added)

WHO (Europe) notes the risks associated with unemployment are not confined to the unemployed person but can be attributed to 'their families' as well. In this sense, workers who are long term unemployed due to their work injury or disability suffer a range of consequences which bear on social institutions well beyond the worker, WorkCover and its unfunded liabilities.

In short, workers with disability (including those referred to as WorkCover's 'long term recipients') are well understood in a range of South Australian, Australian and international literature as a specific population. Generally people of working age with disabilities are in the lowest quintile of education, income, and occupational prestige, they reside in particular postcode areas and relative to others experience a higher burden of disease and premature death. Their disability, health and employment issues are likely to exceed the experience of one injury at a particular time in a particular workplace.

Understanding most of WorkCover's injured and disabled workers' general social and economic position indicates that Active Labour Market Programs (ALMPs) targeting them need to address a range of issues such as a lack of education and training, lack of optimal health generally (for example obesity, smoking and psychological distress are more prevalent in this quintile of the population) (PHIDU 2008). ALMPs which seek to engage people with disabilities need to mitigate a range of structural disadvantages which make re-engagement with paid labour especially difficult. However when the worker's disability is long term and is associated with unemployment the ramifications are significant for the worker's family, as well as for prosperity in South Australia. The depth and the complexity of the issues suggest

⁵ See Appendix A.

that partnerships with government agencies and non-government, community service providers to facilitate activation are justified.

2.2 WorkCover's workers with disability: a particular population

In general, it may be argued that most of WorkCover's long term injured workers share common characteristics of socioeconomic disadvantage with other lower quintiles of the population. This reveals the depth and complexities of labour market re-engagement for them. On the other hand they have several different attributes to take into account.

Injured workers can be seen as having a secure but usually modest income of 80 per cent or their previous average weekly earnings after 26 weeks (WorkCover 2008, p. 6), and in this respect they are different to people on New Start or those who engage with Disability Employment Network (DEN) providers. While a secure income can facilitate social inclusion, which then mitigates the negative outcomes of social isolation, the health and well-being risks of social isolation remain when there is income but not employment.

Most adults spend a high proportion of their lives at work. As well as income, the workplace is where many of us find friendship, fulfilment and the emotional interactions that enrich our lives. Policy makers insist with some vigour that unemployment has a corrosive effect on well-being and overall happiness. The association of worklessness with poor physical and mental health is now endorsed by a weight of unquestionable evidence (Coats and Max 2005, p. 11).

Broader social and economic issues are evident beyond the worker's disability and return to (pre-injury) work. Injured workers often experience multiple disadvantages. Cultural mores embedded in 'bad work' act as disincentives to injured worker's re-engagement in paid labour, perhaps especially with the prospect of a usually secure but modest income into the future. As Clayton comments, "the major thrust of this Review (i.e., Clayton) is that the South Australian workers' compensation scheme must be utilised in a manner which strongly promotes return to work outcomes through processes that are both fair and equitable" (Clayton 2007, p. 29).

Disabled worker's health, the significance of the disability, prior education/training, the quality of work and the injured workers understandings of the benefits and dis-benefits of being active in paid labour all need to be central to ALMP developments. There are broad population, health and wellbeing issues to address in order to create the conditions for successful ALMPs for this population. These issues are revisited in the Whyalla Goal 100 case study in Section 3.

Workers with disabilities tend to be in the quintile of population which is most disadvantaged. However, they are experienced workers with skills and attributes of value to the South Australian economy and employers. If workers with long term injury/disability can be successfully re-engaged in paid labour then South Australia is more likely to reach the targets required to achieve the overall 'Growing Prosperity' objective. There are benefits to South Australia if labour force participation rates improve, but especially if gains are significantly made in the quintile of greatest economic disadvantage as it is this quintile which utilises most state and Australian Government income (excluding age pensions) and other health and welfare benefits (PHIDU 2008).

2.3 Disabled worker – work injury: the literature review

The literature review reveals that there is a changed intellectual climate in work injury rehabilitation issues. The literature review confirms that in Australia and other countries, greater attention is now given to a range of issues related to work injured/disabled workers and their workforce (re)engagement. In the past the emphasis has been on physical, psychological and emotional characteristics of injured workers and the possibility of medical cure (the medical model) (Dunstan and Covic 2006, pp. 67-68), and on scheme legislative and regulated settings.

Insurance providers have also been keen to have predictive models based on injured worker variables so that approximate return to work times could be predicted and costed (Mackenzie, Morris and Gregory, 1998). Such studies have yielded confused results (Hilton, 2004). There has been less attention to characteristics of workers (i.e., the professionals) encountered by injured worker as they go through the process of registering a claim and begin moving towards labour market engagement (Lumb, 2006). Interest in workforce social organisation rather than only a focus on ergonomic workstation or work process settings, has also been recently established on the return to work/rehabilitation agenda. It is workforce engagement characteristics which provide the context for this review.

The complexity of this relatively new agenda is illustrated in the WorkCover commissioned report entitled *Facilitators and Barriers to Return to Work: A Literature Review* (Foreman *et al.*, July 2006).

The aims established by the report were (i) to provide an overview of the facilitators of, and barriers to, return to work after injury, and (ii) to provide direction for a research agenda for the SA WorkCover Corporation consistent with the development of best practice in return to work following injury. It should be noted that the focus is ‘return to work after injury’. The duration of time outside the paid labour force (long term or short term) of injured or disabled workers was not an aspect of this review.

With respect to facilitators and barriers, the authors stressed the complexity of issues they identified

Work disability and return-to-work are multi-determined outcomes that cannot be accurately predicted just from knowledge of the medical or physical dimensions of the injury or condition. On the contrary, a very wide range of determinants of return-to-work have been identified in the research reviewed.

Characteristics of the injured worker, components of particular medical and occupational rehabilitation interventions, physical and psychosocial job characteristics, workplace factors, the insurance or workers’ compensation scheme and broader societal factors such as labour market conditions and the prevailing legal framework have all been shown to have some role to play in influencing return-to-work outcomes independently of the underlying medical condition (Foreman, et al, 2006, p. 4).

The authors also identify the effectiveness of workplace interventions.

There is growing consensus that while attending to the physical/medical aspects of the work-disabled employee is important, much of the variability in return-to-work outcomes is accounted for by what takes place at the workplace ...For example, there is increasing evidence for the greater effectiveness of workplace based interventions as opposed to interventions provided outside the workplace (Foreman 2006, p. 22).

‘Workplace based interventions’, including the obligations of employers have become a first priority and the researchers note that this approach has been adopted by WorkSafe Victoria.

In addition, WorkCover SA recently commissioned the Australian Institute of Social Research Report “The role of the workplace in Return to work – an evidence base for informing policy and approaches” (Barnett, Spoehr, Parnis et al April 2008). That research was designed to ‘increase understanding of workplace factors that affect the achievement of positive return to work outcomes’ (2008, p. 4). In addition to the nine organisations that participated in the study, two large self funded aged care organisations provided case study material to the research project. The study included literature review, structured interviews, two case studies of good practice, analysis of claims data and a survey of managers and a survey of employees.

The report identified ten key success factors in achieving effective return to work all of which are significant in relation to applying ALMP lessons. The key findings are repeated in full below

Key Success Factors in achieving effective return-to-work: lessons from the Case Studies

- *The workplace has a critical role to play in preventing work-based injury and illness, and in promoting timely and effective return-to-work following injury or illness. This is a key finding of the project as a whole and of previous research.*
- *A proactive approach that includes a range of initiatives designed to achieve effective return-to-work, the monitoring of those initiatives to ensure that they are having their desired impact, as part of a broader message that workplace and worker safety are valued.*
- *Early intervention that includes the establishment of policies and procedures that encourage early reporting of illness or injury and a timely return to the workplace.*
- *The use of work accommodation to enable timely return-to-work that is located as close as possible to the employee’s usual work site.*
- *The involvement of the work team through a sharing of information about the injury and required treatment. This has been found to encourage supportiveness from colleagues which in turn, is important in achieving effective return-to-work.*
- *The use of a Return-to-Work Coordinator and a Return-to-Work Plan that involves managers/supervisors and team members.*
- *The provision of information packages that enable employees to be fully aware of workers’ compensation processes.*
- *A ‘hands on’ approach whereby the site manager plays a central role in the claim management and return to work process. This ‘local ownership’ of the process ensures that meaningful and appropriate alternative duties are considered and facilitates prompt re-integration with the employee’s usual work environment. Rigorous adherence to timeframes relating to the completion of claim documentation, medical assessment, return to work/rehabilitation planning and role diversification to facilitate the most timely return possible.*
- *Facilitate the most timely return possible. Fostering and maintaining positive working relationships between the workers compensation staff, line management and the injured workers.*

The workplace is central to a timely return to work and thereby reducing an inflow of work injured or work disabled people into long term income support through WorkCover. Workplaces are understood as places which can ‘enable’ the injured or disabled worker to maintain or regain employment.

The vital importance of employers and workplace organisation is further demonstrated by the authoritative Institute for Work and Health in Canada. The Institute conducted a systematic review of literature since 1990 and included 35 quantitative and 15 qualitative studies. Overall ‘the review found that workplace based return-to-work interventions have positive impacts on duration and costs of work disability’ (IHW March 2007, p. 1). Seven ‘Principles’ derived from the research. These were:

1. *The workplace has a strong commitment to health and safety which is demonstrated by the behaviours of the workplace parties.*
2. *The employer makes an offer of modified work (also known as work accommodation) to injured/ill workers so they can return early and safely to work activities suitable to their abilities.*
3. *RTW planners ensure that the plan supports the returning worker without disadvantaging co-workers and supervisors.*
4. *Supervisors are trained in work disability prevention and included in RTW planning.*
5. *The employer makes an early and considerate contact with injured/ill workers.*
6. *Someone has the responsibility to coordinate RTW.*
7. *Employers and health care providers communicate with each other about the workplace demands as needed, and with the worker’s consent (IWH March 2007)*

These principles sets out actions expected of employers and supervisors in relation to the injured worker which allow the injured worker to remain appropriately attached to paid labour. The intent is to maintain workforce engagement (a philosophy adopted by WorkSafe Victoria) and thus minimise long-term income dependency.

A recent major British controlled trial commissioned by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) examined return to work among a diverse range of workers who experienced musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) at work. MSDs are the ‘most common, potentially work-related, musculoskeletal disorders – low back pain and upper limb disorders’ (Burton A, et al 2005). The trial focussed on those with symptoms rather than on those with objective measured disease or impairment of MSD. There is an unclear relationship between MSD and ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ work and despite safe work manual handling campaigns prevalence for MSDs has continued to rise.

The authors adopted a biopsychosocial approach and noted that biomedical and the ergonomic interventions ‘exert modest influence compared with the third (the psychosocial influence) (Burton 2005, p. 5).

The authors note that the study was not able to provide a robust explanation for the interactions between psychosocial factors and (workplace) absence. However,

Very early workplace interventions addressing obstacles to recovery/return to work, which requires all key players to be onside, can be effective in reducing absence due to MSDs. Such interventions require substantial commitment, particularly from employers, to eliminate procedural obstacles to implementation (Burton 2005, p. 52).

A subsequent HSE commissioned report focussed on upper limb disorders and used a literature review ‘best evidence synthesis’ as its method (Burton et al, 2008). The report further developed the biopsychosocial model for understanding musculoskeletal disorders and return to work and emphatically calls for a ‘cultural shift’ in the way upper limb work-related injuries is conceived and handled. The authors argued that the key shift required was in

understanding the relationship between work and health ‘and growing acceptance that modern rehabilitation approaches may be more effective than primary prevention strategies in the overall management of work-relevant health problems’. Upper limb and low back pain are to be understood as normal. In workplaces they needed to be responded to using biological, psychological, and social understandings — all are work relevant and need to be managed in and through workplaces. The authors suggest that the findings are ‘unequivocal’ and apply to all players involved (workers, employers, health professionals, unions, lawyers, policy makers, enforcers).

These findings for the most part emphasise retaining injured workers at work, rather than returning injured workers to work after experiencing injury or disablement.

According to the HSE reports the task of rehabilitation has changed to managing work-relevant injury at work (rather than arguing about ‘work related injury’), and if this biopsychosocial approach is to be increasingly successful, it should eventually mean a lesser inflow of workers into ‘long term recipient’ populations. The HSE reports and studies referred to earlier commissioned by WorkCover SA stress the need for and benefits of continuing workplace engagement when injured. What emerges from the review of literature is that the workplace is central to ensuring workplace (re)engagement.

In summary, the literature review reinforces the central importance of the workplace for early return to work, built around employer involvement and sponsorship and employee obligations. The key “concept and process” messages for musculoskeletal disorders (our assumption would be that these key messages are relevant to many physical and psychological injuries) are summarised below:

CONCEPT MESSAGES

Upper limb symptoms are a common experience -

- *they are generally transitory but recurrent;*
- *they are often triggered by physical stress (minor injury):*
- *due to everyday activities as well as work,*
- *but, rarely do they reflect irreparable damage;*
- *some cases need treatment, but many settle with self-management:*
- *activity is usually helpful: prolonged rest is not;*
- *recovery and return to full activities can be expected:*
- *lasting impairment is rare.*

Work is not the predominant cause -

- *some work will be difficult or impossible for a short while:*
- *yet that does not mean the work is unsafe,*
- *indeed, over-attribution to work is detrimental;*
- *most people can stay at work (sometimes with temporary adjustments):*
- *but, absence is appropriate if job demands cannot be tolerated.*

Early return to work is important -

- *it contributes to the recovery process and will usually do no harm;*
- *facilitating early return requires support from workplace and healthcare.*

All players onside is fundamental -

- *sharing goals, beliefs and a commitment to coordinated action.*

PROCESS MESSAGES**Promote self-management -**

- Give evidence-based information and advice:
- adopt a can-do approach,
- dispel myths,
- focus on recovery rather than what's happened.

Intervene using stepped care approach -

- provide only what's needed when it's needed:
- treatment only if required,
- beware detrimental labels and over-medicalisation;
- encourage and support early activity:
- avoid prolonged rest;
- focus on participation - including work.

Encourage early return to work -

- stay in touch with absent worker;
- use case management principles;
- focus on what worker can do rather than what they can't:
- a fit note may be more helpful than a sick note;
- provide transitional work arrangements:
- but only if required, and time-limited.

Endeavour to make work comfortable and accommodating -

- assess and control significant risks:
- ensure physical demands are within normal capabilities,
- but, don't rely on ergonomics alone;
- accommodating cases shows more promise than prevention.

Overcome obstacles -

- principles of rehabilitation should be applied early:
- focus on tackling biopsychosocial obstacles to participation;
- all players communicating openly and acting together:
- avoiding blame and conflict.

An OECD Report *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers* Vol. 2: Australia Luxembourg, Spain and the United Kingdom (OECD 2007) draws on a wealth of information and data from these four countries to make comparisons and to draw out lessons future policy directions. It should be noted however, that the OECD report studies recipients of Disability Pensions (DP) or people with disabilities who are outside the labour market and who in many cases will not have paid work experience. Much of the attention of the OECD Report is given to ALMPs for people with disabilities who have never been or have only intermittently been in paid labour (the lowest quintile of the population but without a specified workplace compensable injury). There is discussion of Australia's *Welfare to Work* initiatives.

The author's note that

...it is very difficult to activate people who have been out of the labour force for many years, often more than a decade. However...this is not impossible. Work motivation and personal aspirations decline rapidly with the duration of inactivity and disability benefit receipts and so do qualifications (OECD 2007, p. 18).

The report notes that in Australia there has been a decline in the growth of disability pension recipients due to Welfare to Work policy and program changes, emphasising that policy and ensuing programs *can have* an impact. The reforms have ensured that work assessments now document work capacity at whatever level, rather than defining disability alone. Activation is individually tailored and people with partially reduced capacity (who can work between 15-29 hours) are no longer entitled to a Disability Benefit, but rather are entitled to (partial) unemployment benefits (OECD 2007, p. 20).

The OECD report points towards greater responsibility for employers/workplaces in the management of worker's sickness and disability. The Report argues that employers need to be involved in good medical assessments of employee disability as well as being responsible for monitoring absences and seeking occupation health advice. Employers need to be in partnership with employees in developing a rehabilitation and work retention strategy. It is recommended that employers need financial incentives for managing sickness well (or penalties for not), and employers must provide 'early and accessible support for sick workers' (OECD 2007, p. 17). The central message is one of employer engagement immediately an injury occurs.

Coats and Max (2005) research suggest that the quality of work needs to be a consideration when developing ALMP especially for already disabled workers, who under the current WorkCover settings may continue to receive 80 per cent of their pre-injury income until 65 years. Further risking health and well-being will not be attractive to people with disability and a relatively secure income.

Poor quality of work is associated with low levels of well-being, a higher incidence of physical or mental illness, low levels of self esteem and a sense of powerlessness. In other words bad jobs are likely to make you ill.

Much of the employer response (to injury and sickness absences) has focused on improving attendance management through better information systems, return to work interviews and increasing senior management attention on the problem. All of this is sensible and necessary but treats the symptoms (of absence, injury and illness) rather than the causes (Coats and Max 2005, p. 12).

The literature on poor quality or "bad work" indicates that employees will experience worse health if:

- *Employment is insecure*
- *Work is monotonous and repetitive*
- *Workers have little or no autonomy, control or task direction*
- *There is an imbalance between effort and reward so that workers feel exploited*
- *There is an absence of procedural justice in the workplace. Workers cannot be confident that they will be treated fairly by their employer* (Coats and Max 2005, p. 18).

Endeavouring to return disabled workers to a non-cooperative pre-injury employer in a shrinking labour market may be resisted by the injured worker as an act of self protection.

A recent discussion paper⁶ was forwarded to SACES inviting responses to eight key principles that DEEW and the Disability Employment Network (DEN) and Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) are developing to guide the design, delivery, reward systems and outcomes from these services. The eight principles are reproduced in full because they

⁶ "Review of disability employment services - Disability Employment Network and Vocational Rehabilitation Services: A discussion paper", DEEW September 2008.

are pertinent to the design of labour market programs (or jobseeker programs) for a population which is similar to that of WorkCover:

- Principle 1: Build on the strengths of the existing approaches, including early intervention for job seekers*
- Principle 2: Create a less complex system that connects job seekers to the right service and provides flexible assistance*
- Principle 3 Match the intensity of service to the individual needs of job seekers*
- Principle 4: Tailor services to the circumstances of job seekers with disability, including meeting their education, training and capacity building needs*
- Principle 5: Respond effectively to employer requirements, including meeting skills shortages*
- Principle 6: Minimise the amount of time and money spent on administration, including on contract management*
- Principle 7: Provide the greatest rewards when providers find sustainable jobs for job seekers*
- Principle 8: Ensure the performance management and tendering systems properly account for quality performance (DEWR September 2008 6).*

While recognising WorkCover's clients are all experienced workers, and this is less likely to be true for many DEN clients, there appears to be much common ground. Several key themes in the DEWR paper (for DEN and VRS providers) are relevant to WorkCover and supported by the literature review, namely:

- early intervention is critical in maintaining a relationship with the pre-injury employer, as well as the design of a RTW plan and referral to relevant support networks;
- utilise labour market information, connect job seekers through tailored flexible assistance to work opportunities (respond to employer needs);
- reduce complexity in the system which causes delays in responding to individual needs and reward outcomes.

In summary, on the basis of considerable evidence the previously dominant illness/injury – recovery/cure approach has been set aside. While medical assessments and treatments remain vital, the picture is now bigger and more complex and workplaces and employers are central to the activation of healthy workplaces and healthy workers.

Clayton concurs 'The empirical record, ...emphatically demonstrates that the strongest correlate to early and durable return-to-work outcomes is a positive and sustaining workplace culture' (Clayton Dec 2007 p. 13). In addition trade union involvement in disability management is effective along with collaborative labour/management approach to planning and implementation (Clayton 2007, p. 33).

The key messages from the discussion and literature review above are:

- WorkCover's long term workers with disabilities are not randomly distributed, but are a part of a population which experiences the highest rates of injury, burden of disease and premature death. These workers will usually bring with them other complex health and well being issues in addition to their recent workplace injury. All issues need to be addressed when re-engaging with labour market programs;
- long term disability and unemployment diminishes income, health and well being and costs accrue to families as well as health and welfare agencies so early intervention is critical;

- facilitating return to work requires significant input from employers and work teams, and this effort can be applied to an established range of known effective employer practices;
- the literature supports the view that a biopsychosocial approach to re-engaging those who have been outside the labour force long-term due to disability is more effective than the traditional medical model of a singular focus on cure and recovery prior to re-engagement with paid labour;
- WorkCover sponsored programs seeking to re-establish workers with disability in the labour market will benefit from professional exchanges with other experts in disability, in the Australian Government Disability Employment Network (DEN) and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS);
- good quality work, employer and workplace involvement are required for durable return to work. Employers are required to be active in providing ‘good work’ in order to ensure durable employment outcomes including minimising (or eradicating) the condition which may contribute to work related injuries; and
- ALMPs will recognise these established structural issues but also recognise that injured workers are experienced workers with accumulated knowledge and skills. Re-engaging capable workers into paid labour is the ultimate goal.

3. Return to Work: Providers, Services and Case Studies

In this section we consider interviews and responses with providers of services either involved with return to work (e.g., WorkSafe Victoria, TAC Victoria), rehabilitation and labour market providers who work with injured workers, the disabled and long term unemployed. We then consider programs such as the Personal Support Program (PSP), the Community Jobs Program (CJP) and the Workforce Participation Program (WPP) designed to address the needs of the long-term unemployed and/or people with multiple barriers impeding their ability to gain and sustain employment.

The researchers then present a range of case studies to illustrate the design and operation of individual employment projects that have been successful in helping the long term unemployed return to gainful employment including the Goal 100 program conducted in Whyalla. Case studies include projects sponsored by community organisations, employer bodies, a union and regional community labour market providers.

Our purpose in this is to draw out lessons that may be relevant to assisting injured workers return to work, how assistance measures might be designed (e.g., content, length, employer relationships, etc.), whether active labour market programs are appropriate in the workers compensation environment and at what point should intervention or the offer of participation in labour market programs occur.

The potential contribution and role for active labour market programs within a workers' compensation environment will need to be evaluated against the following:

- WorkCover should not be seen as an 'alternative training agency' or a way to receive a guaranteed income while seeking to change careers (i.e., this implies short, discrete targeted courses for specific skills and occupations rather than generic courses);
- WorkCover should not be seen by the injured worker (or work colleague) as an avenue out of an occupation;
- programs may be designed specifically or tailored for an *industry* or *occupation*, they may be *place based*, or designed around the needs of a specific group (*cohort based*) or involve *individual* referral;
- ALMPs can contribute to building a culture and the common goal of return to work, linked to a RTW plan with commitments and obligations for the employer, the injured worker, RTWC, rehabilitation providers, EML and WorkCover; and
- the longer the period of inactivity outside of paid labour prior to referral the more likely that the individual will require assistance with life skills, personal development, and individual responsibility prior to undertaking work skills development.

3.1 Lessons from WorkSafe (Victoria)

Key Lessons

- The key to successful RTW is a systematic and coordinated approach with all parties trying to achieve a common goal.
- RTW is the end objective (i.e., the *outcome*) but it is also part of the *process* of successful rehabilitation.
- Employer engagement is critical as it provides the injured worker “something to respond to”.
- A systematic response incorporates a RTW plan, RTWCs, Employer RTW networks, training of RTWCs and information sharing, allocation of resources towards the prevention of injury, monitoring of RTW.
- New Employment Services, incentives to take on recovering workers (WISE) and training (specific, discrete, well targeted to skills in demand and known vacancies) assist workers in finding a new employer. This occurs within a structured plan to achieve an employment outcome.

WorkSafe (Victoria) stressed that while there is a legislative framework in place and there are legal obligations on the part of the employer and the injured worker (which set the general parameters of the approach to return to work), the key to successful return to work is a systematic and co-ordinated approach by the employer, the injured worker, their authorised agent, medical/rehabilitation providers and WorkSafe staff that is instrumental in achieving high rates of return to work.

The priority and strong emphasis on return to work is based on an understanding that full RTW is not only the end objective of a successful rehabilitation process, it is also a key means to achieving that objective.

From this key understanding, WorkSafe has designed a systematic process which is intended to achieve the objective of returning injured workers to safe and sustainable employment. Return to Work Plans, the Offer of Suitable Employment, Return to Work Co-ordinators (RTWC), the role and skill sets of the case manager and occupational rehabilitation providers are harnessed to achieve the objective of returning the injured worker to the workforce.

Key Elements of Approach/Framework

WorkSafe (Vic) indicated that the approach to successful return to work includes the following key activities that are dependent on firstly, employer engagement and secondly, reinforcing the responsibilities of the injured worker:

- eligibility needs to be rigorously determined, key dates for assessment adhered to;
- all key review points are met (e.g., 13 weeks, 52 and post 52 weeks and 130 weeks);
- there is a need to closely “manage the tail” for any workers compensation scheme (that is claims which have been in receipt of weekly benefits for an extended period of time); and
- synchronise the key responsibility of all players and follow through with each.

In the first instance, there is considerable emphasis placed on employer engagement, whereby the employer is encouraged to act decisively and early on to support the injured worker, consider how best to contribute to the return to work process, including job modification or redesign if necessary. This emphasis is consistent with the bulk of the literature reviewed for this study. Ultimately the ‘focus is on the worker, but unless the employer has done their bit

to develop a RTW plan and offer suitable duties, then the injured worker has nothing to respond to'. Employer engagement includes them being aware of their responsibilities, building awareness in their workforce through education and training, and developing the capacity of employers to manage and be key drivers of the return to work process. Employers are responsible for developing a return to work plan within 10 days from the date that the injured worker's claim for weekly payments was accepted or the date that the employer was made aware that the injured worker would have an incapacity for 20 days or more. Where an injured worker has any capacity for work then the RTW plan must include an "offer of suitable employment"⁷ which is formulated around the injured worker's capacity and work restrictions.

The employer must nominate a RTWC who is then expected to liaise with all parties involved in managing the injury, including the injured worker. They play an important role in keeping the injured worker in contact with their previous employment and have an input into the return to work action plan. The RTWC, injured worker and employer are involved in reviewing the plan from the time the injured worker returns to work and at least every 28 days.

WorkSafe (Vic) provides non-direct financial incentives (through the premium system) to motivate employers to engage in RTW activities and more recently, support for the education of return to work co-ordinators RTWCs, the establishment of an employer return to work network which is designed to provide a forum for employers to share experiences and learn from others about return to work issues (Appendix F).

Over the last three years there have been over 4,100 RTW Co-ordinators trained via a two day training course (Appendix B) delivered by over 40 WorkSafe approved training providers. Part of the training links RTWCs with others holding similar positions through a Return to Work Coordinator register (Appendix C), as it recognised that the position can be an "isolating, thankless and sometimes difficult position/responsibility to hold" particularly in small or medium employers where there are not likely to be RTWC colleagues from whom to learn and share approaches with. WorkSafe (Vic) has rolled out a monthly program of Employer RTW Networks for employers and their RTWCs to learn more about their responsibilities, to share with other RTWCs strategies and approaches that have helped and to assist in building a network of peers to draw on for support and advice. Finally, through the six agents used by WorkSafe it was recognised that much was known about the injured worker, the type of injury, insurance and payment arrangements, but there was insufficient information on successful return to work strategies and outcomes. In addition email contact details for RTWCs in the state had not been systematically collected. WorkSafe has developed a RTWC register to enable regular communication with these key people and amongst other e-communications distributed, all registrants receive a bimonthly electronic newsletter which contains practical plain English articles of relevance to RTWCs. To date over 9,000 RTWCs are on the register and the number is growing steadily.

WorkSafe has devoted considerable resources towards the prevention of workplace injury and accidents to reduce the number of claimants in the first instance. A good example of is this is that WorkSafe has allocated dedicated staff to addressing stress/psychological claimants from the public sector that largely derive from three agencies, Health/Human Services, Police and Education to provide early intervention, training and reduce the number of claimants.

⁷ Appendix E provides a copy of forms for the Return to Work Plan and the Offer of Suitable Employment.

Considerable success (and impact on liabilities) has been achieved as measured by the number of claimants falling by one third.

Return to Work Fund

The \$10 million Return to Work Fund has provided 'seeding funds' for initiatives and innovative trials (N=19 funded as at August 2008) to be conducted by employer associations and representatives, unions and group employers to facilitate return to work strategies and opportunities. The fund is designed to support a range of trials ('learning by doing') which are intended to improve return to work strategies and to strengthen the role and performance of RTW co-ordinators. The fund will support innovations designed to reduce barriers to RTW and may include workplace or industry initiatives, employment assistance and career, skills development, personal development courses or training. The various programs have only recently been funded and are yet to be evaluated (Appendix D).

Sustainability Employment Survey

The Return to Work Sustainability Survey measures how many injured workers, out of those who have had a least 10 days off work, are back at work at a point somewhere between 14-19 months after the date that they submitted their claim. This provides a measure of sustained return to work by monitoring RTW beyond the first 12 months of injury, when employers have an obligation to offer suitable employment to the injured worker. From 2007 to 2008 the survey showed an improvement from 75.8 per cent to 78.3 per cent.

Current Priorities Re. Return to Work Assistance Measures

WorkSafe is currently focussing on assisting employers meet their obligations to return injured workers to work (e.g. a disproportionate emphasis or focus is placed on assisting employers as they are legally required to make the first move). In practice it is necessary to strike a balance between an employer's obligation to facilitate and support the return of the injured worker and the worker's expectations and capacity to return to work, including with the original employer. In some cases this may not be feasible with the workers pre-injury employer.

In situations where return to work with the pre-injury employer is not feasible then WorkSafe offers a program through approved, contracted occupational rehabilitation providers called New Employer Services (NES). NES provides a structured program to help the injured worker get back to work in suitable employment with a new employer, and where employment does not occur, the injured worker will have obtained the skills to be an independent job seeker. NES provides assistance including one-to-one counselling, job search, specific training modules and personal development training to suit the needs of the individual. An injured worker may receive vocational education to equip them with additional skills, to add to their transferable skills that will assist them to become more employable. Services vary with the individual worker's circumstances.

WorkSafe also provides employer incentives (WISE: WorkSafe Incentive Scheme for Employers) for employers to hire and retain WorkSafe clients who are capable, motivated and ready to return to work. WISE provides up to a \$26,000 incentive for a 12 month period that is payable to the employer who offers ongoing employment of 15 hours or more to workers with a WorkSafe entitlement who cannot return to work (RTW) with their pre-injury

employer. There is further protection from new injuries and aggravation of existing injuries for a 12 month period. To give employers the added confidence that they have chosen the right applicant, an occupational rehabilitation provider will complete a workplace assessment to confirm the worker's capacity and skills match the job and the workplace. The injured worker cannot access WISE for themselves.

Assessment of Client Group

It is well recognised that many injured workers who become long-term claimants work in occupations that are relatively low skill, low pay and that require little or no post-secondary education. Many also have poor literacy and numeracy skills. The point to this is that when they suffer a physical injury which precludes their return to a physically demanding job, they represent one of the hardest groups to train and re-train for alternative employment.

Where training is undertaken, WorkSafe considered that it should be quite specific to a job or known job vacancy and the required skill set (rather than a generic course or training) with the prospect of employment at the end of the training. This view is very consistent with the best of active labour market programs which address skills in demand and known job vacancies. A number of labour market providers in Victoria have an excellent track record in achieving high employment outcomes for the long-term unemployed for specific industries and skill sets (see case study discussion).

Further Comments

The Return to Work Plan is the first opportunity to formally and mutually agree that an injured worker will return to their original employer. Where it is agreed that the injured worker will return to their original employer then it is obviously unlikely that WorkSafe would provide labour market skills/training courses.

On the other hand, if by the 26 week review period it is considered unlikely that the injured worker will return to their pre-injury work then an assessment of work/career options should be conducted accompanied by a structural plan to achieve an employment outcome within a specified period of time (e.g., plan based on individual needs but may include personal skills training, participation requirements, skills training, on-going rehabilitation services, job placement).

3.2 Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Victoria

TAC (Victoria) provides a suite of vocational assistance measures to clients who have been involved in transport accidents and require assistance in returning to work. The TAC internal Claims Division initially manage the claim, and if formal vocational assistance is required, a referral to the external contracted Vocational Panel is made.

The TAC claims divisions are divided by injury type – 'Community Support Division' manages clients with severe/complex injury (ABI, Spinal Injury) and 'Recovery Support Division' who manage all other injury types (Orthopaedic, Soft Tissue injury).

Key Lessons

- TAC promotes early intervention across the system to support RTW. This is the primary objective around which recovery and rehabilitation are “wrapped”.
- Provides employer incentive package including workplace modifications, post-placement support for existing employer and host/new employer.
- Close cooperation between the relevant management unit/divisions within TAC, the Claims Division, rehabilitation providers and employers.
- Vocational capability assessment is designed to match capability with jobs/skills in demand.

Recovery Support Division manage the majority of claims, and the teams are divided by injury (soft Tissue Team, Orthopaedic Team and Long Hospital Stay Team), and then portfolios within the teams according to the clients capacity. These are slightly different within the 3 teams, but are basically as follows: assessment of injury and capability (capacity portfolio), return to work program (RTW portfolio) and finally long term assistance. There is also an early intervention team named ‘Quick Recovery Team’, and the soft tissue and orthopaedic files start here with the sole focus being on RTW. If this has not occurred within 13 weeks, the file is then transitioned to the appropriate team.

The primary objective is to assist transport accident victims return to their previous employment or find suitable employment. As is the case with WorkSafe, TAC (Victoria) stresses that “an important part of recovering from your accident and getting on with life is returning to work. Returning to work means you are getting back to your normal routine and managing your injury rather than letting it dominate your life”.

TAC encourages early reporting in order that it is able to design a tailored, individual quick recovery rehabilitation package and to involve the employer. As detailed above, Return to Work is managed through the Claims Divisions who work closely with rehabilitation providers. There is in place a set of outcome based KPIs to measure progress, and these are formally reported back to each panel member every quarter.

TAC provides funding for vocational rehabilitation services including for vocational services assessment, pre-employment services prior to commencing a TAC funded return to work program, such as job seeking support and resume preparation and a funded employer incentive package.

The employer incentive package is individually tailored but *may* include a vocational allowance which is paid to the employer to reimburse all or a percentage of the wages paid by the employer during the return to work program (i.e., compensates the employer for their cost of supporting the client return to work, and recognises the clients reduced productivity). The value of the allowances reduces over time as the productivity and capabilities of the worker progress. TAC also assists with the cost of WorkCover insurance for employers participating in a TAC return to work program, for a period of up to six months from the date the program commences (and may continue beyond this if necessary).

As with the operation of WorkSafe, TAC provides for vocational services from a return to work specialist such as preparation of a return to work plan and provision of post placement support. TAC may also contribute to the reasonable cost of workplace modifications and/or equipment to maximise the effectiveness of a client’s return to work or maintenance of employment, where injuries from the transport accident have impaired the client's ability to access the workplace and perform normal work requirements.

Where return to work with the original employer is not feasible then TAC will financially support another employer who may take an injured worker in a 'host employer/training situation' to begin, or may employ the client as a permanent worker with the assistance of the employer incentive package. Tailored packages are negotiated with the new/host employer.

A Job Attached (JA) client refers to those returning to their pre-motor vehicle accident employer, and Job Unattached (JUA) refers to those who require job seeking assistance for new employment.

TAC informed SACES that over the last few years, while continuing to work on RTW with the pre-motor vehicle accident employer, approximately 40 per cent of referrals were JA, and currently it is known that these clients are on Loss of Earnings (LOE) for an average of 46 weeks. Those who RTW with a new employer represented nearly 60 per cent of the referrals, and these clients are on LOE for an average of 88 weeks.⁸ These results highlight the need to keep open pre-motor vehicle accident employment where possible.

TAC can pay Loss of Earnings for the first 18 months, and this is based on the clients pre-motor vehicle accident occupation. The second 18 months that can be paid, is Loss of Earnings Capacity Benefits (LOEC), and this is based on the clients capacity to earn, not only pertaining to their pre-motor vehicle accident job, but taking into consideration their transferable skills, education, training, employment, and the current labour market and what is realistically available. This is where the vocational provider's vocational assessment plays a large part, using the independent medical examiner's recommendations as to suitable and reasonably attainable employment.

The other important component of the approach to return to work by TAC is that their vocational capability assessment is matched to jobs that are available (i.e., they use labour market knowledge) so that training and transferable skills is able to be tailored to job opportunities. This is an area that TAC is seeking to develop further, including the use of RTWC and preferred employers.

One idea under consideration is a website or dedicated portal to house information on the job seeker and their capabilities with information on preferred occupations/industries of employment that is able to be accessed by 'preferred employers' who either have a job to register or are looking to recruit trained and skilled staff. A dedicated portal would also provide a platform to match an employer with a potential employee in a trial or intermediate labour market placement. Once again, a tailored package of assistance over some specified period of time would be able to be negotiated with the host employer.

3.3 Disability Works Australia (DWA) *Matching motivated people to good employers*⁹

The literature reviewed for this study, (including reports commissioned by WorkCover) considered the importance of having 'good work' to offer to disabled workers. Disability Works Australia (DWA) was interviewed about the way that DWA engages employers. This is done by 'providing employers with access to a single, free, effective contact point for recruiting people with disabilities' funded by the Australian Government.

⁸ For the latest period, the 40/60 per cent referral is now approaching 50/50 per cent re pre-motor vehicle accident employer/new employer.

⁹ For further information <http://www.dwa.org.au/>

Key Lessons

- DWA takes what could be called a systems approach, in the sense that DWA actively engage with the entire process of placing disabled people into work.
- DWA engages with a limited range of strategic employer partners in order to ensure appropriate systems and cultures are in place which support successful work outcomes.
- DWA invests in shaping ‘good work’ and ‘good employers’ to ensure that work is sustained for their workers with disability.
- Able to match assistance to the individual with employer requirements.

DWA partners with employers, including large national employers and seeks a commitment from these employers that they will use DWA services. DWA identifies elements and cultures in the employing organisation processes which serve as barriers to the employment of disabled workers and then puts in the time to assist employers to develop sustainable recruitment processes that will provide job opportunities in the long term for employees with a disability.

DWA pre-screens potential employees and actively promotes the benefits to employers of employing people with disabilities including, *inter alia*, lower workers compensation costs, lower absenteeism, lower number of OHS incident reports, better than average loyalty, better productivity and above average attendance (Australian Safety and Compensation Council 2007). DWA provides high quality services consistently with its employer partners and with their national recruitment partner.

DWA provides tailor made disability awareness training for staff, at no cost, and provides employers with any information they need when employing a person with a disability.

Employment opportunities are broadcast nationally through Disability Employment Network providers. We note that these providers work primarily with Centrelink clients and many of these clients will have no, or very limited, previous work experience. Workers who have a disability and receive income from WorkCover are all experienced workers. Their work experience means that with appropriate work capacity assessment they should be relatively easy to place, providing that the range of employers with whom they are placed have been appropriately assisted to understand the needs of workers who have a disability and who can demonstrate that they are ‘good employers’.

3.4 Personnel Placement Consultancies (PPC)¹⁰

Personal Placement Consultancies provide a range of services for injured workers entering work with new employers, rather than returning to their pre-injury employer. Successful outcomes will be influenced by a range of factors including the timeliness of referral, the length of time a worker remains attached to their pre-injury employer, linking clients to training/re-training, etc. PPC report that their experience tends to confirm that the earlier on in the WorkCover process that the worker is engaged in job seeking (or return to work) then the more likely employment outcomes will be achieved. PPC believes that all reasonable efforts to return a worker to a pre-injury employer should be exhausted in 3-9 months. A decision on this matter has implications for the referral of injured workers to employment assistance providers.

¹⁰ Case study developed from interview with Steve Harrington, past President, ARPA SA and supported by a conference paper ‘Shifting the Focus from Disability to Ability’ written by Steve Harrington and Christine Smitham, and presented to the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (ASORC) Conference in 2005.

Key Lessons

- Knowing the labour market in detail and providing relevant training are significant elements in achieving success for new employment.
- Encouragement to return to work or find alternative employment should occur very early on.
- Assessment of the likelihood of returning to the pre-injury employer or to detach the worker needs to be made earlier than is presently the case.
- There is emphasis on active and respectful partnerships between workers and PPC staff, and professional development for vocational rehabilitation staff is valued to ensure appropriate labour market outcomes for long term and ‘detached’ workers with disabilities.

PPC supports workers desires to develop new work skills and encourages relevant and timely training that has certificate or diploma outcome. PPC has found that in general workers have realistic job options with insight into their own abilities and possible shortcomings in relation to new career choices.

PPC has found that cooperation is needed to reduce the length of time from the date of injury to workers beginning job search. Earlier referrals from the date of the workers injury to then participate in job seeking services has a significant impact on employment outcomes.

The injured worker with PPC staff is encouraged to set work goals that are relevant to areas of labour market demand (in the clients local area). This is supported by job searching services which place an emphasis on achieving sustainable work with a new employer.

PPC will assist injured workers who want to try to achieve work and if they fail to sustain work will support endeavours to return injured workers to meaningful community activities. Through a follow up telephone survey conducted by PPC it was found that their processes and commitments provided durable employment (at least 1-2 years) to 87 per cent of 71 workers surveyed. A critical success factor is the close working relationship that PPC establishes with employers and injured workers referred to them. Assistance is usually intensive and personalised.

In summary, the reflection of a provider within the existing system are that decisions need to be made earlier regarding return to work and assistance required, whether with a new or the original employer, what type of training assistance is required and so on. These are largely reflections and observations about the process now. Referrals to employment transition or re-training services have lengthened over the last eight years. This impacts on the likelihood of achieving RTW.

As the conference paper referred to (see footnote) concluded

“that timely and appropriate job-seeking services are a vital investment opportunity for compensation systems...wages earned by workers in new jobs provide a very substantial return on investment (in them)” (Harrington and Smitham 2005)

3.5 Personal Support Program (PSP)

The Commonwealth funded Personal Support Program (PSP) was designed to assist the long-term unemployed with multiple non-vocational barriers to achieve economic and social participation. PSP effectively “withdrew” the target group from the labour force for two years and provided case management support to job seekers while addressing personal barriers including, *inter alia*, general health and mental health problems, family breakdown, social

isolation, substance abuse and low levels of education. Participants often experienced extreme social isolation, anxiety conditions and low confidence and self-esteem.

The target group differs from injured workers in many respects; however, it is similar in other respects including length of time out of the workforce, increasing social isolation as the period of non-workforce participation lengthened, loss of confidence, decline in the ability (and knowledge) to engage in job seeking and self-promotion. Participants had relatively low educational levels and basic skills.

Key Lessons

- PSP assists the long-term unemployed with multiple barriers to employment. In some important respects the experience of long-term WorkCover claimants would be similar to PSP participants.
- The program addresses personal barriers to employment (similar in this regard to the Goal 100 Program) prior to helping participants become job ready.
- Individual case management is the “heart of the program”, supported by an action plan and regular contact to maintain motivation.
- Goal orientated, sequential stages along a pathway to achieve agreed outcomes.

PSP sought to reduce the personal barriers to employment as a precursor to addressing human capital barriers; that is PSP provided case management, intensive support to move or transition the individual to the most appropriate employment assistance program.

A range of services are provided under PSP including regular contact, building self-esteem/confidence, counselling, referral to local services/agencies, support in attending appointments and interviews and agenda or goal setting activities. In essence the case manager and the individual identify the barriers, develop an action plan and work towards reducing personal barriers prior to any consideration of employment. At the conclusion of the program individuals are referred to the appropriate employment program provider (e.g., J.N., Disability Employment Network, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.).

Long-term injured workers often experience social and economic isolation, suffer a loss of confidence and job seeking skills and experience a decline in motivation in addition to the personal challenge of physical rehabilitation.

This suggests that long-term injured workers may accumulate additional barriers impeding their return to work and that a pathways approach¹¹ of intervention may be beneficial including:

- intensive case management to address motivation and goal setting, personal development and life skills;
- training for vocational skills and capabilities as well as basic/life skills such as literacy and numeracy, personal responsibility;
- integrate career guidance, skills development, training through to work experience; and
- progression into employment, support from employer, rehabilitation provider, RTWC, etc.

¹¹ The pathway approach is recommended by the European Commission in recognition of the different nature and severity of barriers experienced by job seekers.

The Goal 100 program first addressed the often complex and multiple personal barriers to employment and continued to assist participants with counselling, referral to other service providers, meetings/appointments/interviews over the twenty weeks of the program. Goal 100 then sought to address literacy and numeracy issues in combination with work skills, development of work habits and readiness for work; so it followed a staged, sequential, pathways model.

Both Goal 100 and PSP illustrate the importance of an individual's commitment to change, but equally significantly, that the integration of services such as vocational rehabilitation, training in life/basic skills and commitment to the goal of appropriate work are important in achieving sustainable employment outcomes.

Case managers in PSP and those evaluated by SACES in the Victorian Government's Community Jobs Program (SACES 2006) play an important role in supporting and maintaining the motivation of the long-term unemployed in finding employment, participation in training and even encouraging participation in non-vocational activities to overcome social isolation.

3.6 The Community Jobs Program (CJP)

Key Lessons

- Projects that addressed either known job vacancies and/or skills shortages in the training they provided and then placement in employment, overall achieved the highest, sustainable employment outcomes;
- Projects that stressed CJP was time limited and provided intensive job search assistance and encouragement to apply for other employment achieved commendable outcomes (i.e., they provided *assistance* for job search and *insistence* to job search and had an overriding commitment to achieve employment);
- Attention and recognition of the desirability of matching the 'supply-side with the demand-side' assisted in achieving employment outcomes. A specific example is that training was carefully targeted to either the needs of local employers or workplace requirements;
- Various host employer models (or intermediate labour market placements) were used by project providers to place CJP participants. Placements with government agencies/organisations/ authorities and incorporated not-for-profit community-based organisations resulted in sustainable employment offers, although community agencies often do not have the funding to offer on-going employment. Recognising this leads to insistence on applying for other jobs while in "CJP time-limited, subsidised employment";
- The results of CJP (at least 32 per cent net employment impact) demonstrate the value of combination programs where a wage subsidy supports actual employment combined with targeted training and job search assistance;

Participant's Perspective

- Participants were placed in real work situations, they were paid to work with the opportunity to learn skills and display talents/attitude to work;
- Intensive help and assistance from supervisor was highly valued;
- Achieved a qualification/certificate to show future employers;
- Participation in the program made it easier to achieve paid employment with another employer on completion of CJP project as had demonstrated work capacity/performance, with a better CV or resume.

The Victorian government funded *CJP – Jobs and Training* (CJP) initiative sought to enhance the prospects of long-term unemployed people and those at risk of long-term unemployment by providing up to 15 weeks paid employment and nationally accredited training. The basic design of each project funded, was that CJP provided employment on a project basis, a paid wage and 110 hours of certified training for between 12 and 16 people for up to 15 weeks. CJP is a good example of a combination type program including a wage subsidy and a minimum specified number of hours of nationally accredited training.

The objective of CJP was “... to assist in breaking down the employment barriers that prevent people from gaining employment, particularly in communities that are disadvantaged and/or are in areas of high unemployment”. CJP sought to assist some 2,000 unemployed people annually to experience real paid work situations, develop skills, be involved in a project that benefits the local community and improve their prospects of finding ongoing employment and/or further education and training within local communities.

Priority for funding was given to providers who were able to demonstrate close co-operation with other service providers and networks (e.g., Job Network, local government, employers, and state government agencies), where projects were located in high unemployment areas and/or unemployment was one of multiple barriers for disadvantaged target groups. In addition, the CJP guidelines prioritised projects that sought “to address skills shortages in local communities that are linked to on-going employment opportunities” (DVC Guidelines).

CJP Target Group/at-risk populations

The CJP initiative targeted the following:

- those unemployed for at least six months preceding their CJP application; or
- deemed to be disadvantaged and ‘at-risk’ of long-term unemployment and have been unemployed for one month preceding their CJP application.

Almost 60 per cent of persons who participated in CJP projects had been unemployed for 6 or more months prior to their participation; another 40 per cent had been unemployed for one month or more and were deemed to be disadvantaged or at-risk of long-term unemployment on the basis of labour market disadvantage because they had ATSI or CALD backgrounds, or were disabled, retrenched, sole parents, disadvantaged or homeless youth, mature aged workers, or ex-offenders.

CJP Outcomes

Analysis of CJP outcomes including employment and participation in education and training and interviews with project providers suggests a number of valuable key lessons can be drawn about CJP projects overall. The context for the “key learning lessons” are to recognise the current state of the labour market, the fact that CJP projects did recruit disadvantaged job seekers to the program and that the ultimate goal of participation in any of the projects was a sustainable employment outcome. It is also significant that the CJP program provided considerable flexibility for project sponsors to design different approaches to addressing the needs of job seekers so there was no single, “one size fits all” CJP project.

Based on a sample of CJP projects (N=86) where the data quality was high and verification of outcomes has been undertaken,¹² SACES reported that CJP achieved the following after a minimum of 100 days:

- 64 per cent of program participants achieved a positive outcome which was either employment or education and training;
- 53 per cent of participants were in employment post 100 days;
- 11 per cent were in education and training;
- 31.5 were still unemployed; and
- less than 5 per cent were not in the labour force.

CJP post-program outcomes were very positive. CJP participants in all regions (e.g. metro/non-metro) had successful outcomes with 70 per cent or more of participants across all regions in employment or study/training following their exit from the program.

While all labour market programs are different in some regard and macroeconomic conditions and the labour market also vary over time, outcomes from other wage subsidy programs (and RISE, Victoria's WISE and other subsidy elements such as levy not based on apprenticeship wages) are that they have resulted in significant improvement in job prospects of those assisted and achieved sustainable employment outcomes. That is to say, the net impacts are higher than for a matched comparison group of job seekers.

SACES concluded from an extensive literature review, that in general, "training programs seem most successful when they are small-scale and carefully targeted towards the workplace needs of local employers". This again was a characteristic of several CJP projects and is likely to be relevant to cohorts of WorkCover clients who enter discrete job specific training programs in combination with a trial work placement.

3.7 Workforce Participation Partnerships (WPP)

The Workforce Participation Partnerships (WPP) program was designed to assist disadvantaged job seekers and those who face significant barriers to employment re-enter the labour market, while simultaneously meeting skill shortages across Victoria. This large scale program followed on from the CJP program. The WPP sought to foster a range of flexible support services for job seekers, including *inter alia*, work experience together with individual case management, post placement support, mentoring and counselling.

WPP emphasised working in collaboration or partnership with local and regional industry groups, unions, Commonwealth and State agencies to achieve employment outcomes. The lead agency in the partnership was the broker. Together, the broker and the supportive partners were required to place job seekers in employment for a minimum of 16 weeks in industries and occupations with identified skill shortages.

The WPP was based on six key principles: target disadvantaged job seekers; target areas of high need; complement (not duplicate) other programs; provide value for money; develop support of partnerships; and achieve sustainable employment outcomes.

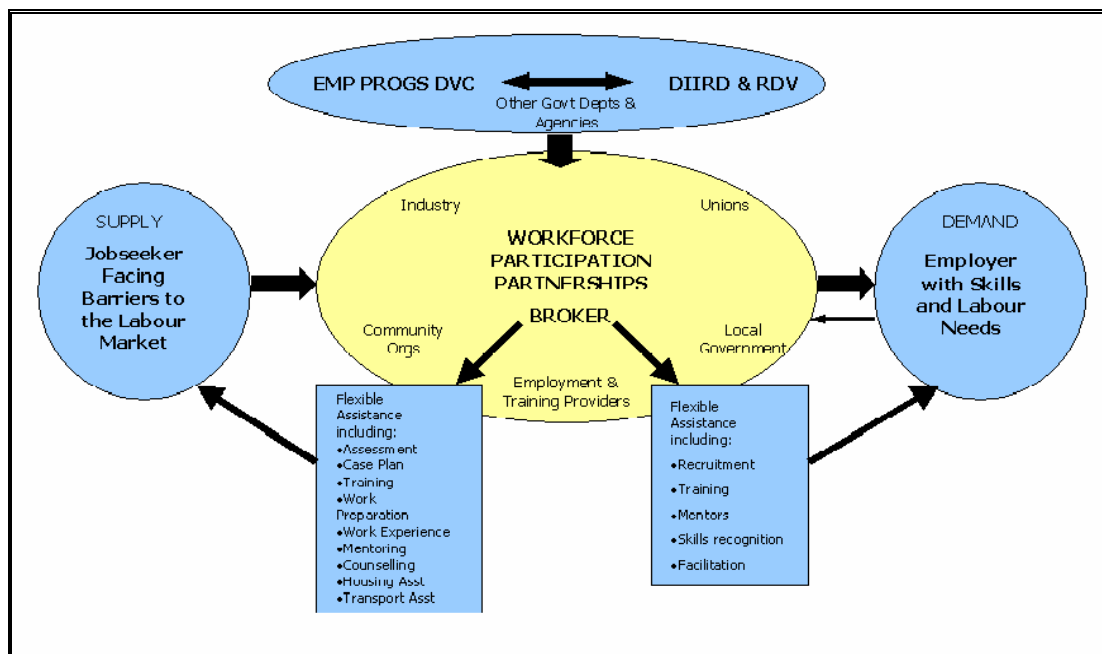
¹² Consists of project sponsor returns, the post program monitoring survey (PPM) and the researchers contact with selected projects to verify employment outcomes.

Other factors taken into consideration when funding projects included identified skill shortages and industry demand for skilled workers, the type of assistance to be provided based on the needs of the participant group, the level of disadvantage of participants, regional and/or statewide activity and the capacity and capability of the sponsor organisation.

The Workforce Participation Partnership program was intended to address the demand side and the supply side of the labour market simultaneously; that is to say employers/industries will have benefited from addressing skill shortages and jobseekers will have overcome barriers to participation and achieved sustainable employment outcomes. This perspective is certainly relevant to WorkCover claimants and employer's need for a skilled and reliable workforce.

WPP could be described as a 'dual linkages model', linking the demand and supply side of the labour market as SACES summarised in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1
Organisational Chart for the WPP



Source: DVC WPP presentation slides (2005).

SACES described this program model as a **dual linkages model** because:

- the *process* involves linkages to achieve dual outcomes;
- outcomes are intended to meet the needs of the employer and the job seeker;
- the dual outcomes are real/tangible and the payment schedule reflects this;
- the *broker* takes responsibility to establish linkages to meet the needs of the employer and the job seeker;
- there are known skills shortages while there are many job seekers. To obtain equilibrium a systematic effort to "fix" the linkages problem is required;
- all stakeholders are able to draw-in or link up WPP with other programs, funding and resources; and
- projects are intended to link the supply side and the demand side of the labour market.

The researchers provide several case studies of projects funded under WPP, noting particularly that employer organisations were able to act as project sponsors under the WPP initiative (see later case studies).

3.8 Brotherhood of St Laurence (Victoria)

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) has a very long history of assisting the long-term unemployed and those who are disadvantaged and marginalised from the labour market enter employment. In addition they have extensive experience with Commonwealth and state funded labour market programs over many years plus they have designed, implemented and funded their own labour market intervention programs. BSL also has experience in assisting those with a disability back into employment.

The experience of BSL informs us that long-term injured workers and long-term unemployed (i.e., >2 years) are similar in many respects in that they experience:

- a loss of confidence, self-esteem, social isolation and diminished personal motivation;
- medical, health and physical mobility issues combine with psychosocial factors leading to multiple barriers to overcome prior to the stage of being work ready;
- the two groups are similar in terms of their educational experience, qualifications (or lack thereof) and this means they are a difficult or challenging group to train/re-train;
- require personal development and confidence building prior to the stage of skill development/training; and
- require intensive support initially and post-training/program support once in employment.

From the perspective of a potential new employer BSL recognise that there are legitimate employer concerns in taking on the long-term unemployed or an injured worker. The risk or uncertainty that an employer might face can be addressed in a number of structured ways (e.g., as WorkCover does through RISE, or meets employer obligations with respect to the levy, non-inclusion of apprentice, wages, etc.), but also, through post-placement support once in employment. A number of successful labour market programs offer such support and often their contractual funding agreement requires this, usually up to 26 weeks of employment.

The BSL also uses “intermediate labour markets” (ILMs) — usually a non-government organisation — for placement, work experience, accredited training, on the job workplace skills and the host NGO receives a wage subsidy. The use of intermediate labour markets is a mechanism to develop experience, provide training and for the individual to perform and become work ready. ILMs are “local initiatives that typically provide waged employment in a genuine work environment with continuous support to assist the transition to work.” ILM replicates the traditional employment market (i.e., require a job application, CV, interview, employee rights and obligations) while they provide practical work experience, supported by workplace supervisors, case management and job search assistance to assist the next transition stage towards the end of their employment contact.

BSL views the use of ILMs for the long-term unemployed as a “bridge to the mainstream labour market.” ILMs are particularly useful as a place-based, local or regional initiative, with a secondary objective of local community regeneration (i.e., maintain employment level, consumption expenditure, health benefits, assist local NGOs) etc.

Key Lessons

The BSL experience with the long-term unemployed highlights the need for personal development and the re-building of personal confidence prior to skills development and the status of being work ready. This combination approach is similar to elements within the Goal 100 initiative and may be very relevant to long-term WorkCover placements. BSL (and notably TAC: Victoria) also use “intermediate placements” or host placements as a way to acquire work experience, knowledge and work disciplines. This may also be relevant to WorkCover where a new employer/new industry is involved in taking a detached injured worker on a trial basis as the worker seeks to develop career options.

3.9 Case Studies

In this section the researchers provide selected case studies commencing with the Goal 100 program referred to in the Clayton Review. The remaining case studies commence with the critical or key learning outcomes of each project; each of these case studies deals with either a different cohort of unemployed participants, a different industry for work placement or a different project sponsor.

The case studies are examples of particular approaches to equipping the long-term unemployed with personal and work skills for employment. Several examples are presented of employer sponsored training for existing job vacancies. It is SACES assessment that each of the case studies and project sponsors were capable of adapting their project to accommodate injured workers and thus they are relevant to a worker’s compensation environment.

3.9.1 Goal 100 Whyalla: Choose Your Future (SA Works in the Regions)

The SA Centre for Economic Studies evaluated the Goal 100 Program for DFEEST in April 2008 along with other ‘successful programs’ funded by DFEEST under the SA Works in the Regions Program. The evaluation of the Goal 100 Program prepared for DFEEST is set out in the Box below. Following under the Box is an update of the evaluation looking particularly at the relevance of the program from an employer and worker’s compensation perspective.

Key Lessons

Goal 100 is an example of a ‘demand driven model’, where there was a clear focus on employment outcomes and addressing skills in demand at a regional level.

A commitment by employers to hire Goal 100 graduates was a strong incentive to participate and continue in the program. The program ran over 20 weeks and achieved almost a 100 per cent retention rate. The promise of future employment in turn generated a commitment from job seekers to ‘stay the course’.

This specific industry based training (demand driven program) achieved sustainable employment outcome one year after the program and has provided a platform for the program to be repeated.

Community support and co-operation was a visible and significant element of this project. The design of the program, in providing holistic support for participants, and a strong emphasis on peer support and leadership reflected an understanding of the needs of the most disadvantaged/ the most marginalised job seekers.

Training providers are able to respond to the specific needs of industry (“industry set the requirements”) and individual employers in well structured and well funded programs, where specific skills, hands on training and the status of being ‘work ready’ are agreed between all providers.

Overview, Background, Organisation and Funding

The background to this project was the inability of OneSteel, following the near completion of Project Magnet at their Whyalla site, to secure sufficient interest in employment at the Whyalla steel making facility. They had advertised positions in the normal way (through newspapers, the Job Network and via word of mouth) but had received insufficient job applications or applicants were not able to demonstrate they possessed the required work skills. Up to 50 vacancies for operators and semi-skilled personnel were available within the company. The company was forced to consider advertising in Port Augusta and Port Pirie, and possibly even overseas. The company and other employers were clearly frustrated with this situation given that unemployment was relatively high in Whyalla.

OneSteel and several major employers in the heavy engineering sector, DFEEST and the Whyalla Economic Development Board (WEDB) met and designed the Goal 100 program. A very significant element of the Goal 100 program was the involvement of local service providers, including *inter alia*, the local Job Network members, and the Bungala Indigenous Employment Centre. The commitment of employers to provide employment at the conclusion of the program was another important element of the program, not the least of reasons that it provided the incentive to retention in the program. Thus, community support and partnerships with local service providers was a visible and significant element.

The program was 20 weeks in length and involved both on and off the job training. This is a relatively extended period of time for which participants had to attend and commit to gaining work and life skills. The program built in student, educator and employer networks to support each participant, including a component “I make a difference’ to address social, family, emotional and personal issues confronting a number of the participants. There is no doubt that the program dealt with many job seekers who had experienced extended periods of unemployment (some had been unemployed for more than five years) and were truly marginalised job seekers. This makes the achievements of this program even more exemplary.

Process Including Selection of Target Group

Demand for the program was very strong with up to 350 unemployed persons registering for the first intake and 320 for the second. As unemployment has fallen in Whyalla (from 12.0 per cent (May 2006) to approximately 5.3 per cent in October 2007) applicant numbers for employment programs under the banner of “Whyalla Works’ have declined to 200.

The design of the Goal 100 program was ‘not set in concrete from day one’; in fact several partner organisations described a process of responding as required or ‘making it up as we went along’. The point is that the 20 week program was flexible in its design although there was no wavering from the ultimate goal (sustainable employment) of the program. Here participants were required to demonstrate that they were capable of attending the program over 20 weeks, from 9 until 5 each day, whether it was in a classroom setting, attending a worksite or day trip, sporting or other forms of physical activity. This was described as ‘meeting the rhythms of working life’. Industry set the standard in this regard.

TAFE as the training provider successfully built into the project a life skills component to assist those who had been unemployed for a considerable length of time, including health and fitness, assistance with family issues, drug and alcohol support, career planning, problem solving and personal development. Peer support groups provided opportunities for leadership, attendance at management meetings by peer support leaders and help to others. In this way, leadership skills in helping others were incorporated into the program.

The Goal 100 program had a mix of age groups, male and female, non-indigenous and indigenous participants and it appears that the program was successfully able to integrate all participants to achieve the personal goal of employment, using peer leadership groups, building group identity to achieve successful outcomes, etc.

Outcomes

Measured solely by sustainable employment outcomes, Goal 100 was a successful program. "Employment Extra", a publication of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations recorded that "100 participants began the Goal 100 program with 79 graduating including 11 females and 16 indigenous participants. Eighty-one participants had either started work or received a job offer including some who didn't complete the program but found work as a direct result of their participation. OneSteel gave a guarantee to employ 50 graduates, and ultimately employed 65 graduates". At the time of interview the project sponsor reported 80+ participants were still employed with participating employers. It was highly successful as measured by the retention rate over 20 weeks.

Conclusions

Demand driven programs, where local employers identify a need for skilled employees and combine with local service providers to design specific training programs, with a commitment to employ the graduates of such programs, are likely to be successful in today's job market. Goal 100 is a significant program for that reason, but also because of the number of participants and the retention rate for a 20 week training program (albeit not all this time was spent in the classroom). The commitment to employ appears to be a significant element in the success of the program.

TAFE as the principal training provider, in co-operation with other agencies demonstrated that it was capable of the meeting the needs of 100 participants, with technical (job specific skills training) but also incorporating life skills training, personal development, assistance with family and personal issues and building a peer group culture that enabled the high retention rate.

A back of the envelope calculation is that this program for a total cost of approximately \$800, 000, in placing 80+ previously unemployed persons into sustainable employment would save the Commonwealth in welfare payments approximately \$1.8 million per year, result in the payment of wages of \$3.2 million per year with personal tax revenue accruing to the Commonwealth of \$0.6 million per year. There are clearly many other savings and benefits to account for, at the personal, family, community and public agency level.

For employers, there are many benefits and reasons why they should financially support this type of demand driven project. They have access to a more highly productive workforce from day one, a 'work ready/work hardened' trained workforce, where training is industry or job specific. Employers benefit by reducing recruitment or search costs. Employers also contribute to strengthening community relations and are seen to support the local community. The co-operation across agencies in the design and delivery of Goal 100 is not quantifiable in dollar terms; however, that Whyalla Works is now planning Goal 100 Mark 3 illustrates the value of the networks and relationships established through these programs.

Employer Perspective and Worker's Compensation Environment

The Goal 100 Program was obviously a very successful program in terms of employment outcomes but it was also highly successful considering most participants were long-term unemployed, they were dealing with multiple barriers to employment and were not 'work ready'. The Goal 100 Program incorporated a strong emphasis on personal development skills and the foundation tools for improved quality of life, provided by the company Globally Make a Difference (GMAD). A five day intensive course was provided by GMAD.

The rationale for the emphasis on personal development skills for those who have experienced long term-unemployment is that this group (like many long term workers with an injury/disability) have been separated from the workforce for some time, they often feel rejected, marginalised, 'a victim' and hence experience a loss of self-esteem, confidence and self worth. WorkCover clients may feel that they have lost their place or lost 'their previous comfort zone' and this can make returning to work all the harder. The longer the time away from work the greater the likelihood that the sense of loss, being out of the workplace and personal vulnerability will increase. This can feed through into a loss of confidence, limited interaction with others and diminishing of self-responsibility. GMAD provided a one week

education and learning environment within the Goal 100 program to assist the long-term unemployed gain the “social and personal foundation tools’ for life and future employment.

This is an important element in any labour market program designed to facilitate return to work; to recognise that these foundation tools and personal confidence may have been further eroded and that the individual requires assistance to regain control over their own life. This insight is likely to be relevant for many long-term claimants in WorkCover.

In that sense, the Goal 100 initiative represented both a “**process and a program**”. In fact GMAD and OneSteel both agreed that a training course and employer on (and off) the job training can provide the skills for employment. However, building the foundational tools (e.g., confidence, personal development, self-esteem, accepting responsibility, communication skills, ability to work in a team) all come before the stage of being work ready. The Centre’s view in evaluating the Goal 100 program, is that the inclusion of the personal development component was critical to the high retention rate and subsequent employment rate achieved by Goal 100.

The Manager of Human Resources at OneSteel¹³ in providing an employer’s perspective on Goal 100 commented that the personal development component was critical to the success of the program, as an individual is not work ready if they are grappling with personal problems including a lack of confidence, poor self-esteem and feelings of victimisation or marginalisation. This is equally the case for many injured workers as it is for the long-term unemployed. A healing process is sometime necessary as a first step before an individual can truly be ‘work ready’.

As an employer, OneSteel commented on their approach to injured workers. In essence, they have a very strong emphasis on return to work. The company moves quickly to review/assess how an injury occurred and the situation of the injured worker. They believe that the longer the injured worker is away from work the less likely they are to return to work. The company has a policy of involving the injured worker back on site for even one hour per week, linking the capability of the injured worker with a job/task that is available. There is also an element of re-building commitment and trust in this approach which is difficult to orchestrate when the injured worker is absent for a long period of time.

It is worth reiterating in regard to Goal 100 type programs, where employers are closely involved in the conduct of the program and then subsequent recruitment, that there are considerable benefits for employers in this approach. They reduce their recruitment and search costs including advertising and HR interviewing/selection costs. The principal advantage is that the employer knows a good deal about the person before they take them on thus reducing the risk (financial and time costs) of recruitment and ‘second guessing’ which is involved in hiring new staff.

¹³ Mr Alan Tidswell, OneSteel Manager Human Resources.

3.9.2 Aged Care: Brotherhood of St Laurence (Combination of Training, Accreditation, Intensive Support)

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) Aged Care Community Jobs Program was conducted between March and July 2004. The program ran for 15 weeks and delivered Aged Care training and work placement at the BSL's Aged Care facilities in Fitzroy and Brunswick. Participants were recruited from the Atherton Gardens and Collingwood Public Housing Estates (i.e., relatively disadvantaged areas of inner Melbourne).

Key Lessons

- Pre-employment model with intensive work preparation and training for a difficult client group that required intensive support and personal encouragement;
- Training linked to an identifiable job (outcome), program targeted known skills shortages;
- Requirement to initially address many personal barriers to employment and then combine this with the needs of the employer. Very client centred in first instance to address personal barriers through a Personal Support Worker;
- High quality supervision on the job by trained staff;
- Extensive skills training in initial phase; and
- A client centred model which is not mutually exclusive from models that more expressly link to employer needs.

The project received funding of \$63,480. Seven of the eight participants completed the program. At 200 day follow-up, 75 per cent were in employment in aged care facilities. Most of the graduates were working a standard 15 hours per week plus undertaking study to complete their Certificate III qualification in Aged Care, while several were working additional shifts at other aged care facilities. One graduate did obtain a full-time traineeship. These results were verified by an evaluation undertaken by SACES.

The structure of the project was:

- initial 4 weeks devoted to induction and classroom based training covering modules in Certificate III Community Services (Aged Care). Conducted by BSL's Step Group Training RTO;
- following 11 weeks worked on-site in the Aged Care facilities;
- final week included job search activities, training, CV preparation, continuing in study and evaluation.

The design of the project was that participants would pathway from the Community Jobs Program (CJP) program into a traineeship attaining their Certificate III qualification. This was successful, opening up further pathways into child care and nursing.

Client group

Participants had only short periods of employment in the last 5 years, mostly on a part-time and casual basis. BSL advised that "a number of participants had experienced periods of 10 years or more with little or no work". That is to say, a combination of poor work histories had to be addressed along with sometimes quite complex personal and relationship issues. Whether personal or institutional in origin, there was an obvious need to overcome barriers in the transition phase from long-term unemployment to training (and retention in course) and then employment.

The project was described as a “package designed for the client”. Whatever the terminology — a “client centred model”, an “engagement model” — the project provided an opportunity, right through from the selection process to training and work placement, for the client to discover whether they wanted to work and study, and especially then to work in the Aged Care sector.

Up to six members of the BSL Program Team (e.g., work place supervisor, training co-ordinator, personal support worker) helped to achieve 100 per cent retention rate in the training course and then to employment. It is also important to record that BSL has very extensive knowledge of disadvantaged job seekers and their needs, developed over many years through the conduct of labour market programs, community engagement and local economic development. This knowledge is reflected in the high level of personal support BSL provided to each participant in each phase of this project — training, support once in employment, further support to undertake and complete their traineeship.

Training and Key Themes

Formal training involved 205 hours in industry familiarisation, personal development, workplace skills, industry specific modules and employment planning.

Peer support in the classroom setting and with the personal support worker (from comments provided by participants) were important in helping to address personal issues and fear of the unknown (i.e., “could I study, achieve, could I hold a job”). For WorkCover clients, group participation and peer support are also likely to be important when participating in training or career development, and while adjusting to living with an enduring injury.

A sense of purpose or tangible goal was a key element of the training and work preparation. Training was linked to a specific job and then this job/employment was linked to a traineeship (employment and a qualification). These links which were conveyed and understood by participants were significant elements of the program. BSL argues (based on their experience in working with disadvantaged communities) that to produce sustainable or life changing outcomes, the following three key themes are essential in the design and implementation of labour market programs:

- a tangible goal (training, intermediate job placement, traineeship/employment);
- intensive support (high level of personal, financial and project support); and
- commitment from all key stakeholders and participants.

The post-program evaluation illustrated the factors critical for successful outcomes:

- an identified job at the end of training period is a key motivating factor;
- knowledge of industry skill shortages, tailored pre-vocational training¹⁴ including skill development and then a high level of workplace experience;
- dedicated program team and support workers including extending support while in employment; and
- for this specific client group, attention to “soft outcomes” such as the importance of peer support, overcoming personal barriers and reinforcing a sense of achievement and personal self esteem.

¹⁴ Some training sessions commenced at 7.00am to mirror start times in the work environment.

From an employers point of view the prior training and then hosting employees represents an *investment* through the recruitment process and potential cost savings because the element of uncertainty and risk in hiring is significantly reduced.

“Learning lessons” include a clear demonstration of the ability of this form of labour market intervention to achieve on-going changes in the circumstances of local residents — employment and continued participation in training to achieve post-school qualifications.

High quality training and support offered by BSL staff, recognition of prior learning experience of participants many of whom are active carers in their own households, and then, a clear focus on specific employment ensured the success of this program. What it does demonstrate is, that if known job vacancies can be identified by agencies such as BSL, then they can engage local communities, engage local employers and “train the individual” to meet the skills in demand. In so doing they overcome the lack of capacity at the very local level (which is often observable) and are able to match the demand side (from employers) with the supply side (via job specific training). For WorkCover clients, this model may be applicable in regional centres where the number of participants is likely to be small. Intensive support, targeting known vacancies and engaging local employers will contribute to successful outcomes.

BSL helped participants manage the transition from unemployment to CJP including adjusting to the requirements of work attendance, punctuality, study pressures and personal responsibility in the workplace as well as the sense of financial independence in earning a regular weekly wage. This made the transition to employment achievable for participants.

Final Assessment

BSL offered a client centred approach targeted at known skills and job vacancies, supported by high quality, intensive and employment related training. These were critical elements in the success of the program because what BSL effectively achieved was a close matching of graduates and skills training (supply side) with the employment needs of three local aged care providers.

It must also be remembered that the participants had very poor work histories, they were largely unskilled or low skilled and clearly were very disadvantaged. In a period of 15-17 weeks this same client group achieved on-going employment and were completing studies at the Certificate III level. Several were holding down two jobs.

Training was a key strength of this program. Another key strength was that the project consistently maintained a focus on “working in the CJP job” but then moving into sustainable employment with the host employer and gaining a qualification. The design of the program was to ensure that the job seeker and the employer were both to benefit which obviously builds commitment from the host employers. A supportive infrastructure by BSL to assist all participants throughout their program and then beyond into employment was a critical third element. While much smaller in size than Goal 100 the target group, the complexity of barriers to employment and the high level of personal support in training and then in employment are similar elements across the two programs.

3.9.3 Taskforce Community Agency (TCA) Foot in the Door (Host Employer Model – Community/NGO based)

Taskforce Community Agency (TCA) is a Victorian non-profit community organisation that provides employment programs, drug and alcohol counselling, and support for families, friends and partners.¹⁵

Key Lessons

- Project gave absolute priority to post program employment outcomes (“tough on outcomes”). Required all participants to apply for up to 4 jobs per week throughout the project;
- Emphasised the limited length of job placement and wage subsidy CJP program;
- Combination program (job & wage subsidy and assistance with job search) with stress on job search activities right throughout the 15 weeks of the program. Training was relevant to existing job vacancies;
- Selection of long-term unemployed with shared experiences; all were committed to achieve employment. Training in work skills but also life skills, self esteem, and building self-confidence etc;
- Support offered to all employers that eventually assisted participants, helped to establish good reputation and eventual hiring; and
- High employment outcomes and positive outcomes at low cost.

TCA has extensive experience in the conduct and management of labour market programs, including the Community Business Employment (CBE) program, Work for the Dole, JPET and has considerable experience with young people through alcohol and drug counselling. It also has very extensive networks with other NGOs and local councils. TCA received \$52,010 for 14 participants. The project was extremely cost effective.

Employment outcomes for this project were exceptional (80 per cent) with the remainder continuing in further education or training. Outcomes were achieved at very low cost. The principal explanation for this achievement appears to be dedicated effort to impart relevant skills in demand by local employers, including, *inter alia*, information technology, business administration and bookkeeping. The employment strategies used by TCA in *Foot in the Door* mirror recommendations made in the literature review on active labour market policies for effective employment programs, particularly in regard to a strong emphasis on training and education for young women entering the workforce.¹⁶

The project used a host employer model, placing participants in local community agencies (e.g., libraries, family and community services, youth services). The target group were those unemployed for at least six months, aged 15-24 and those aged 45 plus. Training in business operations, IT, administration and job search commenced during the first week of induction and continued over the 15 weeks (e.g., work was 9 days per fortnight, 1 day for training). Training was estimated at 260 hours, well above the required 110 hours.

A *critical success factor* in achieving employment outcomes was that participants were trained in job search skills and were required to apply for 4 jobs per week over the life of the program. This is considered very sound practice given that it is highly unlikely many NGO’s would have the funding to continue employment of graduates of the program. Participants

¹⁵ Situated in Prahran, the TCA provides employment services and training programs for people who live in the municipalities of Stonington, Yarra, Port Phillip and Melbourne. Alcohol and Drug Services are located in Moorabbin. TCA is a registered training organisation community provider.

¹⁶ South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES), (2008), “A review of the literature on active labour market policies”, Economic Issues Paper No. 23, June.

were required to demonstrate that they had applied for this number of jobs (“tough on outcomes”).

Participants were also encouraged to apply for vacancies in the local area where vacancies had earlier been documented. TCA and the City Council of Port Phillip (Melbourne) identified shortages of aged care and child care workers, and administrative/secretarial staff in council and in local businesses. Targeting known job vacancies was again another critical success factor.

TCA supported applicants in this process through relevant training, job search skills and one-on-one support and coaching. From the perspective of participants this support was crucial as for many, their recent workforce participation history could be summarised as;

- their first real experience of permanent work in many years;
- prior to CJP, extended period out of the labour market and no recent experience of applying for employment;
- high reliance on welfare and housing services;
- intermittent/infrequent contact with Job Network provider (if at all); and
- hence debilitating loss of skills and self-confidence.

Indeed, TCA concluded that from the perspective of the client, rebuilding “self confidence” is the critical learning lesson; helping all participants to reclaim control over their lives. This understanding is very similar to the Globally Makes a Difference (GMAD) component which was included in the Goal 100 program.

The wage subsidy was acknowledged as a “powerful bargaining chip” to encourage and support participants. It enabled TCA to be demanding about job applications, to stress that the time on CJP was no guarantee; that it was time limited; yet it rewarded participants for their participation.

The 15 weeks program was assessed as being “about right” (longer than this and participants become complacent); CJP funding enabled support to be offered to the employer and employee; but overall the wage component and being able to place participants in a real job was vital. The wage component and then the actual work placement ensured that the training was related and relevant to the workforce.

In summary, the TCA “Foot in the Door” project was highly successful in achieving sustainable employment outcomes as indeed were other projects conducted by this agency. A critical success factor in the researchers’ view is that TCA consistently demanded an employment outcomes focus (i.e., equivalently for WorkCover, it would be return to sustainable employment). The training and job search activities reinforced this message. The time on CJP was always as “limited time”. The end result is that participants used the program as a stepping-stone to permanent employment.

Graduates also developed a high degree of professionalism in the way they approached potential employers. Job search training and job search activities were consistently promoted.

In summary, the costs per employment outcome were low supporting SACES conclusion that this was a successful, well managed and highly effective project.

It was successful because of the following:

- the consistent priority given to sustainable employment outcomes as a result of participation in CJP. This was reinforced by the requirement that all participants apply for at least four jobs per week throughout the life of the project;
- the requirement that all participants continue to apply for known job vacancies was supported by training in job search activities; and
- the combination of employment, paid work, performance in work, and training for existing job vacancies, training in job search skills and life skills all contributed to developing employable individuals. Participants were ultimately successful in the labour market.

3.9.4 Corio/Norlane Streetscape Improvement Project (Community Project Based – near Geelong)

Key Lessons

- Project was established as a contract with specific outcomes, reinforced that the contract (project) was real work;
- Intensive supervision with two qualified tradespersons;
- Intensive individual support, social work support throughout and considerable post-program job search assistance;
- “Whole of government” approach, excellent cooperation between the local office of DHS, DVC and CREATE.¹⁷ A good example of partnership;
- Establishment of social and business enterprise so that CREATE is invited to tender with Department of Infrastructure, Office of Housing and Local Government;
- Conceptually and practically linked entry to the labour market, full-time work, to traineeship and then apprenticeship opportunities; and
- Support to find alternative employment while undertaking the project as well as rotating graduates through employment with CREATE onto the private sector.

The Corio/Norlane Streetscape Improvement Project involved 13 participants over 15 weeks. The project received funding of \$98,820 and this was supplemented by funding from the project sponsor CREATE. The project was established as a business contract with agreed timelines, activities and outcomes. Specifically the participants were contracted to renovate and make physical improvements to some 20 houses owned by the Department of Human Services. Supervision of the contract was undertaken by two qualified tradespersons who provided intensive on the job training. The actual contract required renovation of the housing stock including outdoor beautification, front fence establishment and repair, installation of gates, the design of pathways, garden improvements and horticulture. The researchers visited the completed work and agreed the renovations displayed high quality workmanship and contributed to improvements in the local residential environment.

The project involved cooperation of several government agencies and specifically Neighbourhood Renewal¹⁸ staff and staff of the Office of Housing in DHS. The Office of Housing provided the tools, equipment and materials and also provided input into the project plan. This represented a display of active partnership designed to achieve successful

¹⁷ CREATE (Geelong) is a non-government community based organisation. It has delivered a wide range of training and employment-focussed community services and programs.

¹⁸ Neighbourhood Renewal is a program supported by the Victorian Department of Human Services to support the most disadvantaged suburbs and regions in the process of renewal.

completion of the project and employment outcomes. This was the third project conducted by CREATE with strong employment outcomes.

From the point of view of participants SACES considers the following as important:

- the project acted like a fixed term contract so it was explained to participants the nature and length of the contract, and this led to support and encouragement to look for other work;
- accredited training in OHS, first aid and building safety by qualified instructors provided confidence and a sense of achievement (and necessary qualifications) to apply for other jobs; and
- intensive on the job training by skilled supervisors who could also relate well to the target group.

“Soft outcomes” from this project include attempts to re-engage communities with the labour market through demonstration projects. Re-engagement occurred through the actual project and the activities undertaken, but also by way of demonstration of outcomes such as the physical assets that are renovated, an improved physical environment and/or the creation of on-going employment through the establishment of business enterprises (see also BSL project).

Designing the project or activity to be “like a contract” reinforced that the project was real work. Training activities (for one full day per week) provided an introduction to traineeship/apprenticeship experience and this is considered an important outcome for young people who were not inclined to return to formal education.

The employment success rate was close to 60 per cent. This is a very positive outcome as all male participants were from Neighbourhood Renewal areas, they were all long-term unemployed and were all local residents. The most disadvantaged were selected into the project. Barriers to employment are obvious — loss of personal and work skills in the long-term unemployed, high reliance on welfare, lack of positive role models and situational/institutional barriers in that the suburb is less endowed with social and recreational services, it is distanced from Geelong and employment opportunities are few. Participants were lacking in confidence, nervous, unsure of their capabilities and in need of developing life skills, work skills, the discipline of work and time management. The project helped to organise life skills through paying participants at 3.00 on a Friday to then enable them to do their banking, pay bills, organise weekly shopping. Again it is obvious that CREATE and their partners did much more than impart work skills. Bendigo Bank provided financial and banking awareness instruction and assisted participants as did Centrelink at the start and the end of the contract.

The project achieved 5 direct employment outcomes, one into further education, 4 unknowns and 3 unemployed as at the 100 day follow up and post program monitoring. The business enterprise established by CREATE employed two participants on traineeships and has achieved further work through competitive tendering.

SACES reported other more intangible benefits or “soft outcomes”. The project achieved good relationships with the local community, the renovated sites have not been vandalised, the project “opened up relationships” with the local community, whereby physical outcomes were welcomed, commended and promoted by the local community.

The design of the project was influenced by earlier CJP projects. In this Streetscape Project there were only 12 participants, they received more intensive training and the length of the contract over 15 weeks was appropriate. Two qualified supervisors who had skills to impart and who related well to participants was another critical element as it provided intensive support to participants. The partnership between CREATE, DHS (NR), Office of Housing and then Centrelink and Bendigo Bank was practical and outcome oriented. Building further employment into the Social Enterprise model was also successful.

Intensive case management also helped participants develop life skills, personal confidence, work and time management skills.

The key lessons — the contract was real work, it was supported by intensive training which was job specific, it was further supported by active partners such as DHS and the Office of Housing, and high level of assistance with job search — illustrate that labour market programs that combine wage subsidies, employer or job specific training and job search activities can be highly successful. Employment in a “real” enterprise, paying market related wages are key success factors as is engagement of the local community. This model may be suitable for younger people on WorkCover who have yet to establish a work history and/or are very unlikely to return to their pre-injury employer.

Participant’s Perspective on CJP

The experience of participants in these discrete well targeted programs is likely to be a similar experience for many WorkCover claimants — working/studying in small groups, benefiting from being eased back into paid work, supported by peers, course instructors and host employers, reduction in social isolation, feeling of being valued and breaking the isolation cycle.

The experience of participants across a range of CJP projects are summarised below. Most had completed their program one year before being interviewed by SACES staff and all were continuing in employment and/or further study. The two consistent experiences cited by participants were:

- the small size of the group (between 10-15 persons), being able to get to know other job seekers and being able to form a relationship with the supervisor; and
- the benefit of paid work with a host employer. The quality of training and the relevance of training to the employment situation were also commented upon.

The small group size and pre-arranged meeting over the 10-14 weeks meant that participants felt supported by others, they could share their sense of achievement/successes and relate work experience to others. All participants discussed the support of supervisors — that they “pushed you, encouraged you, made you think” — and it is obvious that participants came to value this support. The same was reported about host employers, who appear to have treated participants as “any other paid employee” but who also engaged in on the job training.

All those we spoke with were clear that the program would come to an end and that they had to apply for other employment or decide to continue their training and achieve a qualification.

Training for a specific job and being able to relate training to the work you were doing (e.g., aged care, child care, building and construction) was favourably commented upon, and it is clear that all participants gained a sense of pride out of achieving a certificate or other forms of accreditation.

The hardest experience for most participants was learning to be on time — for work, for training, “every Friday at the project”. Three participants had completed the first year of their apprenticeship (bricklayer, welder, and carpenter) at the time of interview. We note that the review of labour market programs illustrates that training programs are most successful when they are small scale and targeted towards the workplace needs of local employers.

3.10 WPP Case Studies

The design and objectives of the Workforce Participation Partnership (WPP) program was outlined in Section 3.7. In this section the researchers summarise four case studies, two that were sponsored by employer groups, one by a union and one by a community provider.

In this first case study the Electrical Trades Union used a training and placement model to place young Indigenous job seekers with employers. Not all the elements or design of this project are relevant to a worker’s compensation environment (e.g., use of New Apprenticeship placement and funding); those elements that are relevant include an individualised case management model, matching the interests, skills and capabilities of the participant with an employer and then training, mentoring and post-placement support once in employment.

“Bringing on-board” a significant number of employers is a role for vocational providers such as DWA and PPC acting as employment and placement brokers. Staging an intake of participants to be assisted by labour market or vocational providers (as was required in project 3.10.3) will require progressive referrals and progressive injury assessment by WorkCover and EML.

3.10.1 Trades Apprenticeship Program for Indigenous Communities conducted by the Electrical Trades Unions of Australia (ETU) Southern Branch

The Electrical Trades Union (ETU) Victoria sponsored an employment, training and placement programs for Indigenous youth with the partnership of major employers who committed to employing the 15 participants in the program. It was a very ambitious program because of the group of participants, their previous education experience and the study/knowledge required for an electrical trades apprentice. Notwithstanding, the successful partnership between the ETU and major employers illustrate what can be achieved across a range of occupations.

Funding

The project received \$179,500, and was designed to assist 15 Indigenous participants. Major project expenses were described for mentoring and pre-employment preparation. The project was located in metropolitan Melbourne.

Key Lessons

- Strong partnership between a union and employers assisted job seekers into employment. While apprenticeship placement is less relevant to a workers compensation environment, the project illustrates the benefits of cooperation to address skill shortages;
- The project used well known Indigenous sportsmen to mentor young indigenous workers. The use of well known identities is often incorporated into components of labour market programs for motivation and/or mentoring.

Description

The project sought to assist Indigenous job seekers into apprenticeships in the construction trades. Apprenticeships could be in plumbing, carpentry, plastering, electrical trades and other associated trades. Case managers and mentors were described as “being able to provide strong guidance to ensure successful transitions into employment”. The project was also described as a pilot project, providing a model for future projects to assist Indigenous persons.

Provider’s Past Experience

ETU provided assistance to employers and employees in the Electrical Trades sector. The ETU indicated a special interest in providing assistance for people seeking apprenticeships. The project was to be overseen by a steering committee comprised of representatives from VICTEC, the ETU, employers and representatives of the Indigenous Community. VICTEC is the largest training body for electrical apprentices in Victoria.

Skill Shortages in Industry

The project application identified trade based employment opportunities in Melbourne due to skill shortages. Specifically, electricians or linesmen 4 year apprenticeships. Both Electronic Equipment trades (ASCO 4315-11) and Electronic Instrument trades (ASCO 4314-13), as well as Electrical Powerline trades (4313-11) were identified as skills shortage occupations in the STNI Eligibility List (i.e., state nominated list).

Partnerships

The project developed partnerships with the VICTEC (a registered training organisation), and unnamed construction industry employers (ETU has sought to keep the names of participating employers confidential) who are willing to host apprentices for a four year period. ETU is well known by employers within the construction industry.

Methods of Assistance

After candidate selection, the participants were assessed for their pre-employment training needs. At the time of interview by SACES researchers the process was described as “employers are being sought for all participants during their 16 week pre-apprenticeship training as they demonstrated readiness for employment. Written contracts guaranteeing employment were negotiated and signed at that time”. Participants were placed directly into apprenticeships with employers (where possible), or directly into pre-apprenticeship, induction or pre-employment training programs. A case manager provided mentoring for participants throughout the duration of the project, including training programs, on site support during employment, and helping participants find a work-life balance. Mentoring participants and consulting employers to achieve sustainable outcomes was described as “a major focus of the program”.

The program specified the following:

- provide pathways for 15 Indigenous persons to complete a trade apprenticeship in the construction industry;
- 16 week accredited pre-apprenticeship electrical training;
- provide a qualification in electrical, plumbing, building or the construction industry;
- provide work experience throughout the apprenticeship.

Recruitment and Outcomes

Participants were selected from the Indigenous community in Melbourne, and through networks the ETU had developed with employers and training organisations. The project achieved ten participants into specified trades and a further five participants employed within the construction industry.

3.10.2 Automotive Workforce Participation Partnerships conducted by the Victorian Automotive Industry Training Board Inc (ATV)

Two projects were sponsored by industry groups/associations where the industry had identified on-going jobs or skilled vacancies that were difficult to fill. Acting as the project sponsor, the industry associations designed specific training to meet the needs of local employers. In the first of the industry sponsored projects we report on the Automotive Industry Partnership program.

Funding and Outcomes

The project received \$320,000 for 80 sustainable outcomes with up to 100 negotiated individual work placements. The program ran for a full year and sought to fill vacancies statewide, although the training occurred in metropolitan Melbourne.

Key Lessons

- An Employer Network for the relevant industry helped to identify skill vacancies, the training required and the number of work placements for course graduates;
- The Employer's Network involved many small employers (whose needs often are unstated), the Network could serve similar function as WorkSafe's employer networks;
- Industry focussed course/training based on skill shortages or known job vacancies is similar to the Goal 100 program;
- Illustrates that employer groups could assist injured workers back into paid employment through discrete, well targeted training and then commitment to employ.

Description

The project established an 'Automotive Employment Network' (AEN), to coordinate industry employers with job vacancies with job seekers across the State. The network is specific to the automotive sector. This sector was described as predominantly small business (less than 10 employees) including vehicle dealerships, specialised and general repairers. The project was designed to match the interests of employers and job seekers (demand/supply side).

Provider's Past Experience, Management and Oversight

The project sponsor had no previous experience delivering employment programs.

A full time project supervisor was employed to administer the project. The project primarily was designed to establish a Job Network like structure specific to the automotive industry needs in Victoria.

It successfully engaged a series of partners across the state whose task it was to identify and match 80 eligible unemployed job seekers to employers. The project goal was to achieve commencement and completion of apprenticeships and traineeships in areas of identified skills shortage in metropolitan and regional areas. Targeted jobseekers were young people, mature and retrenched workers with an interest in the automotive sector.

Partners included Group Training Companies and a host of employers, and the lead broker was the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce Group Apprenticeship Scheme. Industry partners were allocated target numbers by the ATV and were responsible for the selection and recruitment of participants, matching them to employers and providing the necessary post placement support to ensure completion. A \$2,000 payment was made by ATV to partners for each participant in several instalments subject to agreed performance measures.

Target groups and Skill Shortages in Industry

The project targeted youth (aged 15-24), mature aged and retrenched job seekers (with limited job opportunities). However, participants from any disadvantaged group could be targeted, depending on local demographics.

The application identified skill shortages in the automotive sector. Specifically, mechanics, automotive electricians and fitters, panel beaters, car re-sprayers and automotive retail assistants. The key sectors were vehicle and trailer manufacturing, automotive retail including dealerships and general repairers, marine retailers and aftermarket sales and service.

Partnerships

The underlying philosophy and approach is that the peak body for the automotive industry identified available jobs within the industry but that its needs were not being met by existing service providers. It therefore sought to establish an “industry owned and responsive” job network type structure and in doing so appears to have garnered support from across the industry and identified partners (e.g., VACC, AMWU, Auto Centre for Excellence, Group Training Victoria).

Methods of Assistance

Once the automotive employer network was established, the project assisted participants by developing a work plan, arranging work placements with employers in the industry, determining the participants training requirements, and matching the participant with a mentor. Once in an employment placement support was an important element of the program. A significant amount of training occurred on-the-job with each employer and this was supported by ATV mentors. Group Training for apprenticeship positions involved a commitment of employers to host the trainee.

3.10.3 National Up Skill and Placement Project (UP) conducted by the Australian Manufacturing Technology Institute Limited (AMTIL)

AMTIL is an employer group representing small and medium sized businesses in the precision engineering and tooling sector. AMTIL has delivered projects for government agencies in the past, including the YouthLink project (supported by DEST) to attract and retain young people into engineering and manufacturing careers.

One full time coordinator and three part time staff providing industry liaison, project coordination, recruitment, and management services were appointed to the project. The project was monitored through a series of qualitative performance indicators at each major step in the course of the project.

The project had considerable support from industry sources, in a recognised area of skilled shortages. The direct use of employers to provide work experience provided ongoing employment opportunities for participants. The project design also involved training more than twice as many participants than it expected to place as additional employment placements occurred towards the culmination of the project.

Key Lessons

- This industry sector identified skills in demand and through the employer group designed specific training in engineering and manufacturing;
- Considerable attention was devoted to matching the demands of occupations and the placement of job seekers with disabilities who could meet the requirements of the job. Matching the capabilities of the job seeker and the job required input (or partnerships) with individual employers and this is relevant to WorkCover's job seekers;
- Participants achieved a Certificate level qualification while the actual course combined training with a work placement offered by participating employers;
- Emphasis on training for job skills in demand.

Funding

The project received \$90,000 for 30 places. Other funding included \$120,000 from DEEWR, \$100,000 from Queensland Government, \$50,000 from South Australia, \$57,000 from the Job Seeker account. The project was located in Knox, with participation on a national level in South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

Description

The project sought to train 180 participants nationally to Certificate I or II level and to assist with placement of 135 participants into sustainable jobs in the Precision Engineering Sector.

Target groups and Skill Shortages in Industry

The project target groups were specified as the mature aged, retrenched workers and disabled job seekers. Placement of jobseekers with disabilities was highly dependent on individual capabilities to perform in the engineering sector. Selection of participants involved a training needs analysis to ascertain suitability with final selection to be based on capability, willingness to participate, enthusiasm and current work history.

The project identified current shortages of skilled staff in the precision engineering sector and engineering trades in general (as identified by the DEEWR skills in demand list). Engineering trades were specified by ASCO 4 digit classification.

Partnerships

The project was coordinated by AMTIL, with the cooperation of Victorian and New South Wales government agencies, the Queensland Department of Employment and Training, the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology and DEEWR. Several TAFE colleges across Australia also supported the project with training programs for participants. Employers in the precision engineering industry were informed of the project through a survey, and an estimated 80 per cent of the industry has registered interest in providing work experience placements, and possibly ongoing employment of participants.

Methods of Assistance

Participants were assisted primarily through training and work placements with employers, including an individualised training course depending on current knowledge and capabilities, undertaking between 320-400 hours training to achieve a Certificate I or II level. Participants then received pre-employment training, including CV preparation, interview techniques and general skills relevant to employment in the sector. Participants then undertook a work placement in the industry. On completion of the placement, AMTIL matched participants with vacancies in the sector through industry contacts. Occupations included CNC operators, sheet metal workers and/or trades assistants.

Outcomes

The project application identified two positive outcomes: completion of training courses and employment. In Victoria, the project was contracted to place 30 participants with employers in ongoing, full time permanent employment. AMTIL sought to commence 70 unemployed with 30 employment places; 30 outcomes was considered a minimum number of participants placed. Project participants achieved employment as base level machinists, CNC operators, trades assistants, technical sales assistants, and in technical customer service and maintenance positions.

3.10.4 New Life –New Workplace conducted by Victorian Cooperative and Children’s Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG)¹⁹

This project specifically addressed the needs of newly arrived migrants and refugees. On first glance it may appear to be less relevant to a workers compensation environment. However, the project illustrates the benefit of local labour market knowledge, knowing who the employers are and what their needs are, then matching the training and qualification to local industry and vacancies and the use of a limited wage subsidy to achieve job placement.

Key Lessons

- A principal learning lesson is that local knowledge of employment opportunities and contact with employers is a valuable aid in securing work placements and paid employment;
- Intensive support provided to all participants, including follow-up once in employment;
- Employers have input into the courses so they know the “quality of the output”, including that all participants achieved accreditation and a Certificate III in their chosen field;
- Program is relevant to a workers compensation environment where discrete training combined with language courses may help to upskill injured workers in specific/identified and provide certificate of competency.

Description

VICSEG received up to \$450,000 for 150 employment outcomes. The largest expenditure item was on training. VICSEG is an RTO with significant experience in training workers for employment in the personal and human services areas. The project was contracted to supply up to 300 Certificate III places in Aged Care accredited training. Mentoring was also a key component of this project.

The project was designed to assist Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) jobseekers, especially recently arrived migrant women to find places in child care, aged care and other semi-skilled positions in the human and community service sector. This was to be achieved

¹⁹ VICSEG is a large, community-based non-government organisation located in Coburg, Victoria.

by providing extensive pre-employment and Australian workplace familiarisation courses; employment focused training, mentoring and employment support once in the workplace.

Provider's Past Experience

VICSEG has extensive experience in providing employment projects assisting CALD, migrant and refugee job seekers, and particularly placing women into aged care and childcare places. Previous projects have been highly successful, achieving near full employment outcomes. VICSEG conducts its training programs internally as it is also a Registered Training Organisation.

Classes are duplicated — once with a native language teacher (e.g., Chinese, Iraqi, Sudanese), a second with an English teacher, so that training is designed to advance literacy and numeracy skills, reinforce prior learning, while educating for the essential skills and knowledge required for the workplace.

Contact and follow-up sheets were maintained on all clients. They are completed when mentoring or co-ordinator visits are undertaken in the workplace and every time a contact is made with a client. This is an example of good internal management designed to achieve outcomes.

The agency reinforced employment outcomes through job search training, addressing employer specific needs such as for bi-lingual employees, additional training courses and mentoring support in work experience placements. That employers regularly contact VICSEG highlights their visibility in the CALD communities and aged/child care sector.

Skill Shortages in Industry

The project application accurately cited skills shortages in aged and disability care. To illustrate the demand for project participants, VICSEG noted that in similar projects in the past many participants gained employment before project completion. The industry is likely to expand due to the new Welfare to Work regulations and the increase in the number of funded child care places so the demand for qualified persons was expected to increase.

VICSEG has partnerships with employers in the relevant industries, employment program providers, local government, and many ethnic community organisations. This has been achieved through previous projects that assisted CALD job seekers into employment. Employers also had significant input into the direction of training programs provided to participants through feedback from prior projects.

Methods of Assistance

Assistance was centred on four key points: effective pre-employment training, accredited vocational training, mentoring from community members currently in the care sector, and sustained follow up supervision in employment. Pre-employment training involved familiarising job seekers with no prior experience in the Australian job market, and providing career guidance before training. Mentoring from people of their own cultural background in employment provided encouragement to participants. All participants gained a Certificate III in the appropriate care-giving field, with the option of further study provided by VICSEG. Finally, follow up employment supervision was designed to bridge any cultural or communication gaps between employer and employee in the early stages of employment.

Recruitment and Outcome

Participants were recruited from a large pool of applicants that had expressed interest in programs offered by VICSEG. Participants were also referred from partner organisations, such as Centrelink, women's refuges, Job Network providers and through word of mouth. Barriers to employment included cultural familiarity, little knowledge of Australian work customs/practices/ethics, language barriers and qualifications obtained overseas which are not recognised here in Australia. Selection processes identified barriers such as the need for specific language classes, written skills development, refugee status and other relevant personal characteristics and that less than one quarter of current registrations were registered with the Job Network.

The project successfully placed 150 job seekers into employment and provide up to 300 accredited training placements and practical work experience placements.

The target group does not immediately relate to a workers compensation environment although literacy and numeracy and language difficulties may be present in some WorkCover clients. The relevance of this project to a workers compensation environment is that it demonstrates that with appropriate peer support and training, knowledge of local employers (and their involvement), an understanding of skills in demand and individuals able to achieve a recognised qualification that sustainable employment outcomes can be readily achieved. It might also be argued that this target group (refugees/new migrants) with little or no work experience and knowledge of Australian work practices, would be harder to place than WorkCover clients yet the project was highly successful.

3.11 Conclusion

In this section the researchers have considered several providers of services involved with return to work, a range of labour market programs and individual case studies each designed to assist the long-term unemployed and/or those with multiple barriers to secure and retain employment.

A common element across services, programs and individual projects is that they are all *outcome oriented* and the outcomes are measurable and they are measured.

Specifically relevant to the workers compensation environment are the following findings:

- RTW is the end objective (*outcome*) and also part of the *process* of successful rehabilitation (WorkSafe);
- employer engagement in RTW or supporting local projects is critical (WorkSafe, case studies);
- matching demand/supply for skilled labour or matching a worker's capability with specific employment contributes to successful outcomes (WorkSafe, TAC, DWA individual case studies);
- the longer the period of time that an individual is inactive or out of the paid labour market the more likely that other personal barriers will need to be addressed and included in labour market programs (Goal 100, WPP and CJP programs, Brotherhood of St Laurence);
- combination programs involving training, a work placement, sometimes (but not always) a wage subsidy, with personal support in employment appear to achieve the most sustainable employment outcomes. The offer of employment at course end has

also been shown to be important (Goal 100, Victorian Automotive Industry, AMTIL, ETU project);

- for younger long-term unemployed mentoring and support once in employment helps to sustain employment outcomes. Return to Work Coordinators may play a very similar role in a workers compensation environment;
- with relatively small scale funding, for groups of up to 15 participants, over a period of 12-15 weeks where training is combined with on the job experience, then labour market programs are able to achieve significant employment outcomes. Small scale discrete programs appear to work best;
- specific industry based training, employer based training or training for skill vacancies have shown to be successful, whether projects are sponsored by employers (Goal 100, Automotive Industry, AMTIL) or sponsored by community agency/labour market providers (VICSEG, BSL, and projects funded by DFEEST: SA Works in the Regions²⁰). Partnerships are a key element in all these projects;
- the case studies illustrate the absolute priority given to post program outcomes. Participants understand that the subsidy, the temporary work placement or the course/training will cease at some future date. Activities are goal oriented and projects are “tough on outcomes”. Recent changes to WorkCover illustrate similar priorities and objectives;
- partnerships with employers are an increasing dimension in many labour market programs as employers receive benefits in the form of workforce recruitment, trained and more immediately productive employees.

In summary, the more successful projects are based around good labour market knowledge, they are usually discrete and targeted at specific skills, occupations or employers, often conducted with employer support²¹ and they combine personal development with skills acquisition. Projects attempt to match employer/employee interests while also matching demand/supply for skilled workers.

There is no single “best” labour market program. However, providers are extremely flexible in the way they design projects so it is clearly possible that specific programs could readily be developed for cohorts of WorkCover clients.

²⁰ While not considered in this report the Boys Town project at Port Pirie, and projects conducted by regional community centres are examples of successful partnerships.

²¹ This may take the form of involvement in off-the-job training, preparedness to offer host placements, commitment to employ course graduates.

List of Interviewees

Penny Addison, Consultant People Work and Culture, Brotherhood of Saint Laurence, Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. Victoria.

Siobhan Boyd-Squires, Manager Workplace Engagement Branch, Return to Work, WorkSafe Victoria.

Brenton Caffin, General Manager, Strategy, WorkCover SA.

Jason Colomer, Manager Weekly Liabilities Branch, Return to Work Division, WorkSafe Victoria.

David Coombe and Michael Ebrey, Injured Workers Stakeholder Group, WorkCover SA, South Australia.

George Hallwood, CEO Effective Australia Pty Ltd (Councillor, ARPA), South Australia.

Steve Harrington, Personnel Placement Consultancies, South Australia.

Richard Hilton, Employers Mutual, South Australia.

Karen James, Health Promotion, Population Health, Department of Health, South Australia.

Heather Parkes and Dr Mark McKay, CE Trauma and Recovery TRAC, South Australia.

Eric Parnis, Senior Research Associate, AISR, University of Adelaide, South Australia.

Mark Raberger, Manager RTW Support Branch, Return to Work Division, WorkSafe Victoria.

Melinda Rice, Project Manager- Vocational Transport Accident Commission, Victoria.

Jim Ricks, Manager, Inter-Governmental Relations, Strategy Group (recent appointment to manage Return to Work Fund) WorkCover SA.

Margaret Swincer, Manager, Research Strategy, WorkCover SA, South Australia.

Alan Tidswell, Manager Human Resources, OneSteel Whyalla, South Australia.

Tina Zeleznik CEO of Disability Works Australia (DWA), South Australia.

Julian Zytnik, Senior Policy Analyst, Strategy, WorkCover SA, South Australia.

Bibliography

- Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC), (2007), “Are people with disability at risk at work? A review of the evidence”, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government, March.
- Barnett K, Spoehr J, and Parnis E, (2008), “The role of the workplace in return to work – an evidence base for informing policy and approaches”. Australian Institute of Social Research, (AISR) University of Adelaide, April.
- Burton AK, Kendall N, Pearce B, Birrell L, and Bainbridge L, (2008), “Management of upper limb disorders and the biopsychosocial model”. Centre for Health and Social Care Research, University of Huddersfield, Health and Safety Executive, RR 596.
- Burton AK, Bartys S, Wright I, and Main C, (2005), “Obstacles to recovery to musculoskeletal disorders in industry”. Salford Royal Hospital, University of Huddersfield, Health and Safety Executive, RR 323.
- Clayton Alan, (2007), “Review of the South Australian Workers’ Compensation System Report”, Bracton Consulting Services Pty Ltd., Pricewaterhouse Coopers., December.
- Coats D, and Max C, (2005), “Healthy work: productive workplaces”, The Work Foundation and The London Health Commission., December.
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), (2005), “Early intervention and engagement pilot: evaluation report”, Research, Evaluation and Legislation Group and Specialist Services and Income Support, Australian Government, September.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2008), “Review of Disability Employment Services – Disability Employment Network and Vocational Rehabilitation Services: A Discussion Paper”, Australian Government, September.
- Dunstan, D. and Covic, T., (2006), ‘Compensable work disability management: a literature review of biopsychosocial perspectives’, Feature Article, *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 53, 67-77.
- Foreman P, Murphy G, and Swerissen H, (2006), “Facilitators and barriers to return to work: A Literature Review. A report prepared for the South Australian WorkCover Corporation, Australian Institute of Primary Care ,La Trobe University, July.
- Glover J, Tennant S, Leahy K, and Fisher E, (2006), “A social health atlas of compensable injury in South Australia”, Adelaide Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU), The University of Adelaide, November.
- Government of South Australia, (2008), “South Australia’s Strategic Plan Progress Report 2008”, SASP Audit Committee, Adelaide.
- Hilton R, (2005), “Predicting return to work after workplace injury: a meta-analysis of current literature”. Masters Thesis (partial requirement), University of SA, November.
- Institute for Work and Health, (IWH), (2004), “Workplace based return to work interventions: a systematic review of the quantitative and qualitative literature”, Summary, IWH Canada.

-
- _____ (2007), “Seven ‘Principles’ for Successful Return to Work”, IWH, Canada., March.
- Keating M, (2008), “Review of skills and workforce development in South Australia: the challenge for the next decade. Final Report.” Economic Development Board, Government of South Australia, June.
- Lumb P, (2006”, “Young Women and Injured Blokes: Gender and Change in Rehabilitation Work”, *Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 37-45.
- MacKenzie E, Morris J, and Gregory L, *et al.*, (1998), “Return to work following injury: the role of economic, social and job-related factors”, *American Journal of Public Health* Vol. 88, No. 11, pp. 1630-1637.
- Mestan, K., et al, (2007) “Investing in People: Intermediate Labour Markets as Pathways to Employment”.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, (2007), *Sickness, disability and work: breaking the barriers. Australia, Luxembourg, Spain and the United Kingdom*, Vol. 2, Accessed on line 21/07/08 PDF.
- Public Health Information and Development Unit (PHIDU), (2008) “Monitoring Inequality” www.publichealth.gov.au/monitoring-inequality/objectives-and-targets.html#obj1 accessed on line 25/08/2008.
- South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES), (2008), “A review of the literature on active labour market policies”, Economic Issues Paper No. 23, June.
- _____ (2008), “Modelling What Works Well in SA: Works in the Regions”, report commissioned by DFEEST, South Australia, April.
- Temby P, Housakos G., Zigums S, (2004) “Helping local people get jobs. Insights from the Brotherhood of St Laurence experience in Fitzroy and Collingwood”.
- Weller S, (2004), “Non-regulatory impediments to the labour market participation of mature workers, Final Report”, School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Melbourne for Strategic Policy Group, Department of Treasury and Finance, June.
- Westmorland M, and Buys N, (2002), “Disability management in a sample of Australian self-insured companies”, *Disability and Rehabilitation*, Vol. 24, No. 14, pp. 746-754.
- Wilkinson R. and Marmot M., (Editors), (2003), *Social determinants of health: the solid facts*. 2nd edition WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- WorkCover SA (2008), “The WorkCover Scheme: a guide to the changes”, June.
- Workplace Relations Ministers Council, (2008), *Comparative performance monitoring*, Ninth Edition, DEEWR, February.

Appendix A

The data presented below refers to South Australian active income maintenance claims as at 30th June 2008 with data as at 17th August 2008. Active income maintenance claims are defined as claims that have received an income maintenance payment²² between 1st April 2008 and 30th June 2008. Data is presented by 1) Age, Gender and Claim Duration, 2) Location, 3) Industry, and 4) Occupation.

A1. Age, Gender and Claim Duration

Table A.1
Number of claims by age, gender and claim duration

Claim duration	Female	Male	Total
0-6 months	264	598	863
6-12 months	337	641	978
1-3 years	904	1,511	2,415
3+ years	968	2,028	2,996
Grand Total	2,473	4,778	7,252

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.2
Claims by age, gender and claim duration
(per cent of claim duration category)

Claim duration	Female	Male	Total
0-6 months	30.6	69.3	100.0
6-12 months	34.5	65.5	100.0
1-3 years	37.4	62.6	100.0
3+ years	32.3	67.7	100.0
Grand Total	34.1	65.9	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.3
Claims by age, gender and claim duration
(per cent of gender category)

Claim duration	Female	Male	Total
0-6 months	10.7	12.5	11.9
6-12 months	13.6	13.4	13.5
1-3 years	36.6	31.6	33.3
3+ years	39.1	42.4	41.3
Grand Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

²² Note: for an active income maintenance payment, the employer has paid the first 10 days of time lost so the number of active income maintenance claims means they have had at least two weeks away from work.

Table A.4
Claims by claim duration and age category at time of injury
(per cent of total claim duration category)

Claim duration	Age category at injury					Total
	15 - 24 years	25 - 34 years	35 - 44 years	45 - 54 years	54+ years	
0-6 months	14.3	23.2	25.8	23.5	13.1	100.0
6-12 months	8.9	19.7	24.2	29.6	17.6	100.0
1-3 years	6.0	17.0	30.3	30.2	16.5	100.0
3+ years	4.2	17.5	34.3	35.0	8.9	100.0
Grand Total	6.6	18.3	30.6	31.3	13.1	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

A2. Location

Table A.5
Claims by worker location, age and claim duration, per cent

	Metropolitan	Rural/Interstate	Total
As proportion of total for claim duration			
0-6 months	69.8	30.2	100.0
6-12 months	72.4	27.6	100.0
1-3 years	76.4	23.6	100.0
3+ years	71.2	28.8	100.0
Total	72.9	27.1	100.0
As proportion of total for region			
0-6 months	11.4	13.3	11.9
6-12 months	13.4	13.7	13.5
1-3 years	34.9	29.1	33.3
3+ years	40.3	43.9	41.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.6
Claims by worker location, age and claim duration
(per cent of total age bracket by claim duration)

Claim duration and age category	Region		
	Metropolitan	Rural/interstate	Total
0-6 months			
15 - 24 years	69.9	30.1	100.0
24+ - 34 years	74.0	26.0	100.0
34+ - 44 years	69.1	30.9	100.0
44+ - 54 years	68.1	31.9	100.0
54+ years	66.4	33.6	100.0
Total	69.8	30.2	100.0
6-12 months			
15 - 24 years	65.5	34.5	100.0
24+ - 34 years	75.6	24.4	100.0
34+ - 44 years	73.4	26.6	100.0
44+ - 54 years	70.9	29.1	100.0
54+ years	73.3	26.7	100.0
Total	72.4	27.6	100.0
1-3 years			
15 - 24 years	79.9	20.1	100.0
24+ - 34 years	80.8	19.2	100.0
34+ - 44 years	76.9	23.1	100.0
44+ - 54 years	75.2	24.8	100.0
54+ years	71.7	28.3	100.0
Total	76.4	23.6	100.0
3+ years			
15 - 24 years	70.4	29.6	100.0
24+ - 34 years	70.9	29.1	100.0
34+ - 44 years	68.2	31.8	100.0
44+ - 54 years	73.9	26.1	100.0
54+ years	73.0	27.0	100.0
Total	71.2	28.8	100.0
Total	72.9	27.1	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

A3. Industry

Table A.7
Number of claims by industry and employment by industry, persons

	Claim duration category					Employment (2006 Census) ^a
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Grand Total	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	61	52	120	169	402	32,255
Mining	5	9	22	36	72	5,940
Manufacturing	169	200	575	723	1,667	90,834
Electricity, gas and water	1	0	1	2	4	5,788
Construction	121	106	266	352	845	46,186
Wholesale trade	43	44	125	197	409	29,801
Retail trade	80	110	201	221	612	101,170
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	51	60	117	143	371	30,405
Transport and storage	78	90	210	302	680	26,633
Communication services	1	2	4	6	13	9,037
Finance and insurance	4	6	11	12	33	21,826
Property and business services	114	142	331	352	939	62,693
Government administration and defence	0	0	1	1	2	36,015
Education	6	9	17	23	55	51,012
Health and community services	100	109	312	326	847	87,842
Cultural and recreational services	9	13	25	42	89	12,231
Personal and other services	20	24	70	83	197	26,001
Total	864	978	2,415	2,995	7,252	689,896

Note: ^a Employment based on usual residents profile.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data, and ABS, Statistics, Census of Population and Housing [Online].

Table A.8
Claims by industry and duration
(per cent of total claim duration category)

	Claim duration category					Employment (2006 Census) ^a
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Grand Total	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7.1	5.3	5.0	5.6	5.5	4.7
Mining	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.9
Manufacturing	19.6	20.4	23.8	24.1	23.0	13.2
Electricity, gas and water	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.8
Construction	14.0	10.8	11.0	11.8	11.7	6.7
Wholesale trade	5.0	4.5	5.2	6.6	5.6	4.3
Retail trade	9.3	11.2	8.3	7.4	8.4	14.7
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	5.9	6.1	4.8	4.8	5.1	4.4
Transport and storage	9.0	9.2	8.7	10.1	9.4	3.9
Communication services	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.3
Finance and insurance	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	3.2
Property and business services	13.2	14.5	13.7	11.8	12.9	9.1
Government administration and defence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2
Education	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.8	7.4
Health and community services	11.6	11.1	12.9	10.9	11.7	12.7
Cultural and recreational services	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.4	1.2	1.8
Personal and other services	2.3	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.7	3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: ^a Employment based on usual residents profile.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data, and ABS, Statistics, Census of Population and Housing [Online].

Table A.9
Claims by industry and duration
(per cent of total industry category)

	Claim duration category				Grand Total
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	15.2	12.9	29.9	42.0	100.0
Mining	6.9	12.5	30.6	50.0	100.0
Manufacturing	10.1	12.0	34.5	43.4	100.0
Electricity, gas and water	25.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	100.0
Construction	14.3	12.5	31.5	41.7	100.0
Wholesale trade	10.5	10.8	30.6	48.2	100.0
Retail trade	13.1	18.0	32.8	36.1	100.0
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	13.7	16.2	31.5	38.5	100.0
Transport and storage	11.5	13.2	30.9	44.4	100.0
Communication services	7.7	15.4	30.8	46.2	100.0
Finance and insurance	12.1	18.2	33.3	36.4	100.0
Property and business services	12.1	15.1	35.3	37.5	100.0
Government administration and defence	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
Education	10.9	16.4	30.9	41.8	100.0
Health and community services	11.8	12.9	36.8	38.5	100.0
Cultural and recreational services	10.1	14.6	28.1	47.2	100.0
Personal and other services	10.2	12.2	35.5	42.1	100.0
Total	11.9	13.5	33.3	41.3	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.10
Top 25 claims by industry
(per cent of total claim duration category)

	Claim duration category				Grand Total
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	
Personal care services	6.9	7.5	7.4	6.2	6.9
Road freight transport	7.1	6.3	5.5	6.6	6.3
Employment services category 1	5.1	5.4	4.3	4.3	4.5
Hotels, bars etc.	3.4	3.2	1.9	2.2	2.4
Livestock processing	4.4	3.5	2.0	1.3	2.2
Cleaning services	1.9	2.1	2.3	1.8	2.0
Employment services category 2	2.9	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.8
Cafes and restaurants	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.4	1.6
Non-building construction nec	2.2	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.4
Security investigative service	0.8	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4
Site preparation services	0.7	1.8	1.4	1.1	1.3
Hospitals	0.8	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.2
Welfare and charitable service	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.2
Plastic products nec	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1
Construction services nec	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.9
Non-residential building nec	0.7	0.4	0.6	1.4	0.9
Concreting services	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9
Structural steel	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9
Fruit and vegetable wholesaler	0.5	0.5	0.9	1.0	0.9
Automotive component mfg	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.8
Fish and take away food retail	1.6	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.8
Wooden structural component	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8
Electrical services	1.4	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.8
House construction	1.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.8
Short dist bus transport	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Total includes claims for all other industry sectors. Hence, sum of the industries shown does not add up to 100 per cent.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.11
Top 25 claims by industry
(per cent of total industry category)

	Claim duration category				Grand Total
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	
Personal care services	12.1	14.7	36.0	37.2	100.0
Road freight transport	13.4	13.6	29.4	43.6	100.0
Employment services category 1	13.3	16.1	31.8	38.8	100.0
Hotels, bars etc.	16.7	17.8	27.0	38.5	100.0
Livestock processing	23.8	21.3	30.0	25.0	100.0
Cleaning services	11.0	14.4	37.7	37.0	100.0
Employment services category 2	19.1	14.5	36.6	29.8	100.0
Cafes and restaurants	12.7	15.3	36.4	35.6	100.0
Non-building construction nec	19.2	11.1	24.2	45.5	100.0
Security investigative service	7.1	14.3	37.8	40.8	100.0
Site preparation services	6.5	19.6	37.0	37.0	100.0
Hospitals	8.0	13.6	39.8	38.6	100.0
Welfare and charitable service	11.9	11.9	40.5	35.7	100.0
Plastic products nec	11.4	11.4	34.2	43.0	100.0
Construction services nec	10.3	10.3	35.3	44.1	100.0
Non-residential building nec	9.1	6.1	22.7	62.1	100.0
Concreting services	13.8	12.3	35.4	38.5	100.0
Structural steel	8.1	11.3	35.5	45.2	100.0
Fruit and vegetable wholesaler	6.5	8.1	35.5	50.0	100.0
Automotive component mfg	6.7	8.3	40.0	45.0	100.0
Fish and take away food retail	23.7	22.0	28.8	25.4	100.0
Wooden structural component	17.2	12.1	34.5	36.2	100.0
Electrical services	20.7	8.6	31.0	39.7	100.0
House construction	25.0	12.5	26.8	35.7	100.0
Short dist bus transport	13.0	11.1	24.1	51.9	100.0
Total	11.9	13.5	33.3	41.3	100.0

Note: Total includes claims for all other industry sectors. Hence, sum of the industries shown does not add up to 100 per cent.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.12
Number of long-term claimants (i.e. 3+ years) by age at time of injury

	Age at time of injury					Total
	15-24 years	24-34 years	34-44 years	44-54 years	54+ years	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	12	36	61	44	16	169
Mining	1	10	11	10	4	36
Manufacturing	26	136	252	250	59	723
Electricity, gas and water	0	0	1	0	1	2
Construction	20	70	113	123	26	352
Wholesale trade	5	48	66	64	14	197
Retail trade	11	37	75	72	26	221
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	5	19	58	43	18	143
Transport and storage	5	38	110	118	31	302
Communication services	0	1	3	2	0	6
Finance and insurance	0	0	4	7	1	12
Property and business services	25	66	128	107	26	352
Government administration and defence	0	0	0	1	0	1
Education	1	2	7	9	4	23
Health and community services	8	34	97	156	31	326
Cultural and recreational services	3	8	12	16	3	42
Personal and other services	3	17	30	27	6	83
Total	125	525	1,029	1,050	267	2,996

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.13
Long-term claimants (i.e. 3+ years) by age at time of injury
(per cent of total industry category)

	Age at time of injury					Total
	15-24 years	24-34 years	34-44 years	44-54 years	54+ years	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7.1	21.3	36.1	26.0	9.5	100.0
Mining	2.8	27.8	30.6	27.8	11.1	100.0
Manufacturing	3.6	18.8	34.9	34.6	8.2	100.0
Electricity, gas and water	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
Construction	5.7	19.9	32.1	34.9	7.4	100.0
Wholesale trade	2.5	24.4	33.5	32.5	7.1	100.0
Retail trade	5.0	16.7	33.9	32.6	11.8	100.0
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	3.5	13.3	40.6	30.1	12.6	100.0
Transport and storage	1.7	12.6	36.4	39.1	10.3	100.0
Communication services	0.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	0.0	100.0
Finance and insurance	0.0	0.0	33.3	58.3	8.3	100.0
Property and business services	7.1	18.8	36.4	30.4	7.4	100.0
Government administration and defence	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Education	4.3	8.7	30.4	39.1	17.4	100.0
Health and community services	2.5	10.4	29.8	47.9	9.5	100.0
Cultural and recreational services	7.1	19.0	28.6	38.1	7.1	100.0
Personal and other services	3.6	20.5	36.1	32.5	7.2	100.0
Total	4.2	17.5	34.3	35.0	8.9	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

A4. Occupation

Table A.14
Number of claims by occupation and employment by occupation, persons

	Claim duration category					Employment (2006 Census)
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Total	
Managers & Administrators	19	14	53	88	174	63,152
Professionals	18	30	75	92	215	124,135
Associate Professionals	56	50	119	120	345	83,250
Tradespersons & Related Workers	164	162	393	580	1,299	82,643
Advanced Clerical & Service Workers	4	4	18	32	58	19,571
Intermediate Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	110	124	312	330	876	116,066
Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	205	252	559	757	1,773	56,656
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	45	77	171	229	522	64,530
Labourers & Related Workers	242	265	715	750	1,972	69,224
Total	864	978	2,415	2,996	7,253	689,897

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data, and ABS, Statistics, Census of Population and Housing [Online].

Table A.15
Claims by occupation and duration
(per cent of total claim duration category)

	Claim duration category					Employment (2006 Census)
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Total	
Managers & Administrators	2.2	1.4	2.2	2.9	2.4	9.2
Professionals	2.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	18.0
Associate Professionals	6.5	5.1	4.9	4.0	4.8	12.1
Tradespersons & Related Workers	19.0	16.6	16.3	19.4	17.9	12.0
Advanced Clerical & Service Workers	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.1	0.8	2.8
Intermediate Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	12.7	12.7	12.9	11.0	12.1	16.8
Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	23.7	25.8	23.1	25.3	24.4	8.2
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	5.2	7.9	7.1	7.6	7.2	9.4
Labourers & Related Workers	28.0	27.1	29.6	25.0	27.2	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data, and ABS, Statistics, Census of Population and Housing [Online].

Table A.16
Claims by occupation and duration
(per cent of total occupation category)

	Claim duration category				
	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Total
Managers & Administrators	10.9	8.0	30.5	50.6	100.0
Professionals	8.4	14.0	34.9	42.8	100.0
Associate Professionals	16.2	14.5	34.5	34.8	100.0
Tradespersons & Related Workers	12.6	12.5	30.3	44.6	100.0
Advanced Clerical & Service Workers	6.9	6.9	31.0	55.2	100.0
Intermediate Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	12.6	14.2	35.6	37.7	100.0
Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	11.6	14.2	31.5	42.7	100.0
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	8.6	14.8	32.8	43.9	100.0
Labourers & Related Workers	12.3	13.4	36.3	38.0	100.0
Total	11.9	13.5	33.3	41.3	100.0

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.17
Top 25 claims by occupation
(per cent of total claim duration category)

Occupation category	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Total
Heavy Truck Driver	7.6	7.5	6.2	6.2	6.5
Personal Care Assistant	5.9	5.5	5.5	3.5	4.7
Commercial Cleaner	3.1	3.9	4.9	3.3	3.9
Storeperson	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.1	2.6
Engineering Production Process Worker	2.2	1.7	2.4	2.1	2.2
Construction Assistant	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.8
Fruit, Vegetable or Nut Farm Hand	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.4	1.4
Meatworks Labourer	3.0	3.0	1.1	0.7	1.4
Forklift Driver	1.3	2.2	1.5	1.1	1.4
Product Assembler	0.6	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.4
Kitchenhand	1.3	1.9	1.7	1.1	1.4
Delivery Driver	0.7	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.4
Security Officer	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.3
General Farm Hand	1.7	1.1	1.5	1.0	1.3
Hand Packer	1.2	0.7	1.3	1.3	1.2
Registered Nurse	1.3	0.8	1.2	1.0	1.1
Aged or Disabled Person Carer	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.1
Metal Fabricator	1.2	1.5	0.8	1.1	1.1
Fitter	1.3	0.6	1.3	0.9	1.1
Engineering Production Systems Worker	1.0	0.8	1.3	0.9	1.1
Sales Assistant (Other Personal and Household Good	1.2	1.4	1.1	0.8	1.0
Packager and Container Filler	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.6	1.0
Motor Mechanic	1.2	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9
Cook	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.9
Shop Manager	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Total includes claims for all other industry sectors. Hence, sum of the industries shown does not add up to 100 per cent.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.18
Top 25 claims by occupation
(per cent of total occupation category)

Occupation category	0-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3+ years	Total
Heavy Truck Driver	13.9	15.4	31.6	39.2	100.0
Personal Care Assistant	14.9	15.7	38.8	30.6	100.0
Commercial Cleaner	9.6	13.5	42.0	34.9	100.0
Storeperson	13.8	16.4	37.0	32.8	100.0
Engineering Production Process Worker	12.1	10.8	37.6	39.5	100.0
Construction Assistant	12.5	14.1	35.2	38.3	100.0
Fruit, Vegetable or Nut Farm Hand	10.5	9.5	41.0	39.0	100.0
Meatworks Labourer	25.0	27.9	26.0	21.2	100.0
Forklift Driver	10.6	21.2	35.6	32.7	100.0
Product Assembler	4.9	12.7	39.2	43.1	100.0
Kitchenhand	10.8	18.6	39.2	31.4	100.0
Delivery Driver	5.9	12.9	34.7	46.5	100.0
Security Officer	8.4	15.8	37.9	37.9	100.0
General Farm Hand	16.3	12.0	39.1	32.6	100.0
Hand Packer	11.6	8.1	36.0	44.2	100.0
Registered Nurse	13.9	10.1	36.7	39.2	100.0
Aged or Disabled Person Carer	10.3	11.5	37.2	41.0	100.0
Metal Fabricator	13.0	19.5	26.0	41.6	100.0
Fitter	14.3	7.8	41.6	36.4	100.0
Engineering Production Systems Worker	11.7	10.4	41.6	36.4	100.0
Sales Assistant (Other Personal and Household Good	13.2	18.4	35.5	32.9	100.0
Packager and Container Filler	15.5	16.9	40.8	26.8	100.0
Motor Mechanic	14.7	11.8	30.9	42.6	100.0
Cook	14.5	8.1	38.7	38.7	100.0
Shop Manager	15.0	20.0	40.0	25.0	100.0
Total	11.9	13.5	33.3	41.3	100.0

Note: Total includes claims for all other industry sectors. Hence, sum of the industries shown does not add up to 100 per cent.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.19
Number of long-term claimants (i.e. 3+ years) by age at time of injury

	Age at time of injury					Total
	15-24 years	24-34 years	34-44 years	44-54 years	54+ years	
Managers & Administrators	1	2	36	38	11	88
Professionals	3	6	28	49	6	92
Associate Professionals	2	11	47	49	11	120
Tradespersons & Related Workers	27	115	192	191	55	580
Advanced Clerical & Service Workers	0	7	10	14	1	32
Intermediate Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	21	45	100	136	28	330
Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	17	138	276	260	74	765
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	12	53	92	62	21	240
Labourers & Related Workers	41	145	243	249	60	738
Total ^a	124	522	1,024	1,048	267	2,985

Note: ^a Total includes occupation categories that could not be allocated to broad occupation categories.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

Table A.20
Long-term claimants (i.e. 3+ years) by age at time of injury
(per cent of total industry category)

	Age at time of injury					Total
	15-24 years	24-34 years	34-44 years	44-54 years	54+ years	
Managers & Administrators	1.1	2.3	40.9	43.2	12.5	100.0
Professionals	3.3	6.5	30.4	53.3	6.5	100.0
Associate Professionals	1.7	9.2	39.2	40.8	9.2	100.0
Tradespersons & Related Workers	4.7	19.8	33.1	32.9	9.5	100.0
Advanced Clerical & Service Workers	0.0	21.9	31.3	43.8	3.1	100.0
Intermediate Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	6.4	13.6	30.3	41.2	8.5	100.0
Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	2.2	18.0	36.1	34.0	9.7	100.0
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	5.0	22.1	38.3	25.8	8.8	100.0
Labourers & Related Workers	5.6	19.6	32.9	33.7	8.1	100.0
Total ^a	4.2	17.5	34.3	35.1	8.9	100.0

Note: ^a Total includes occupation categories that could not be allocated to broad occupation categories.

Source: WorkCover, unpublished data.

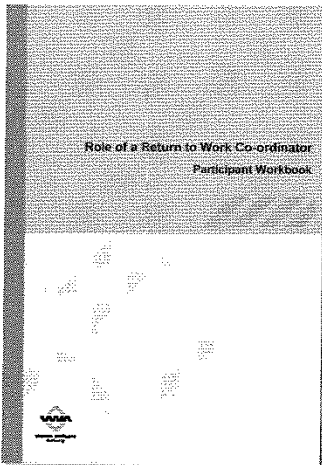
Appendix B

The Role of a Return to Work Co-ordinator Training

The *Role of a Return to Work Co-ordinator* training aims to develop the skills and knowledge of return to work co-ordinators so they can assist in the *early, safe and sustainable* return to work of injured workers.

It has been developed in consultation with key employer associations, Victorian Trades Hall Council and representatives of the Self Insurers Association of Victoria. The program has also been fully endorsed by the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

This training is a two-day program which will cover:



- The functions and requirements of a return to work co-ordinator
- The development of the skills required to perform these functions
- How to co-ordinate the return to work of an injured worker
- How to complete meaningful return to work plans
- How to effectively monitor return to work to ensure the ongoing success and sustainability of return to work
- How to communicate effectively with injured workers
- How to communicate with and utilise the support of others involved in the return to work process.

The *Role of a Return to Work Co-ordinator* training is conducted by approved providers to ensure the relevance and quality of the training.

For further details of training providers, visit the WorkCover website at www.workcover.vic.gov.au or contact the VWA on 1800 136 089 (free call).

Expression of Interest

If you would like to receive further information about this training program, please complete and return this slip to:

*Nina Worrall
Victorian WorkCover Authority
Level 19, 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, 3000*

I would like to receive more information on becoming a training participant / approved training provider (please select).

Name: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____

Preferred method of contact: _____

 Victorian WorkCover Authority

Appendix C



Return to Work Coordinator register

The Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) is committed to the timely and sustained return to work of all injured workers. Because knowledgeable and skilled Return to Work Coordinators are so crucial to achieving successful return to work, the VWA will develop and provide some additional tools to support those with responsibility for return to work at their workplace.

To ensure these tools are directed to the people who can best utilise them – those with responsibility for return to work at their workplace – the VWA is compiling a Return to Work Coordinator register.

What is the Return to Work Coordinator register?

The Return to Work Coordinator register will contain the details of those who are responsible for return to work at their workplace. Capturing this information will help employers meet their return to work obligations, by ensuring the right people get the information and support they need to help their injured workers return to work.

Why should you register?

If you are responsible for return to work at your workplace, you should sign up with us so your details are on the register. This will ensure you receive the following support tools from the VWA:

- ✓ the return to work e-newsletter which contains news, articles and research relating to return to work
- ✓ details of VWA approved Return to Work Coordinator training
- ✓ the opportunity to meet with other employer representatives to learn more about return to work through networking events
- ✓ return to work publications and tools



Return to Work Coordinator register

Who can register?

Registration is open to anyone who has responsibility for return to work at their workplace, regardless of whether they have completed Return to Work Coordinator training.

How do I register my details?

To register for the Return to Work Coordinator database, please visit the following website and follow the prompts: <http://rtw.workcover.vic.gov.au>

What if I work for a self-insurer?

If your employer is a self-insurer, you are also welcome to join the register. Support developed by the VWA for Return to Work Coordinators will be of use to both scheme and self-insured workplaces.

More information

For more information, please contact the WorkCover Advisory Service by email at info@workcover.vic.gov.au, or on freecall 1800 136 089 or (03) 9641 1444.

You can also visit the following website to learn more about return to work and the role of the Return to Work Coordinator: www.workcover.vic.gov.au

Collection and use of personal information

The VWA acknowledges and respects your privacy. Your contact details will be used to enable the VWA to communicate with you for the purpose of supporting, training and advising you in all aspects of your return to work role, to request your input into future VWA activities, to improve return to work outcomes and to assist you generally in meeting your responsibilities under the *Accident Compensation Act 1985*. Your contact details will be handled in accordance with the VWA's Privacy Policy, which can be accessed at www.workcover.vic.gov.au and will remain strictly confidential. Your details can be accessed or amended by updating your profile on the register at any time.

For information about WorkCover in your own language, call our *Talking your Language* service

廣東話	1300 559 141	Italiano	1300 660 210	Español	1300 724 101	العربية	1300 554 987
Ελληνικά	1300 650 535	普通话	1300 662 373	Türkçe	1300 725 445	English	1300 782 442
Македонски	1300 661 494	Српски	1300 722 595	Việt Ngữ	1300 781 868	Other	1300 782 343

The information contained in this document is protected by copyright. The Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) encourages the free transfer, copying and printing of the information in this guidance material, if such activities support the purpose for which the material was intended.

Victorian WorkCover Authority

WorkCover Advisory Service

222 Exhibition Street Phone (03) 9641 1444 Fax (03) 9641 1353
Melbourne VIC 3000 Freecall 1800 136 089 Website . . . www.workcover.vic.gov.au

VWA 1072/02/07.07

Appendix D



Return to Work Fund

Background

Returning injured workers to appropriate work in a timely and sustainable way is a primary objective of the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA).

The \$10 million Return to Work Fund (RTW Fund) was created to encourage and support collaboration between employer and worker groups and workplace parties to increase Return to Work (RTW) opportunities.

The Fund assists worker and employer organisations and workplace parties to undertake initiatives that have the potential for genuine improvement in RTW awareness, practices and opportunities.

Initiatives that will be supported must have a broad application that extends beyond individual organisations, or must provide outcomes that are available for publicising and implementing as widely as possible.

The RTW Fund commenced in July 2006 and is expected to run for up to three years.

About the RTW Fund

Purpose: The purpose of the RTW Fund is to support initiatives that focus on improving opportunities for injured Victorian workers to successfully return to work.

Objectives: The objectives of the RTW Fund are:

- To raise awareness of the RTW process among all parties involved in RTW
- To raise the understanding of what constitutes timely and effective RTW practice
- To support the development of methods that improve the ability of both employers and workers to initiate and manage RTW
- To support initiatives that will increase the opportunities for injured workers to successfully RTW
- To generate collaborative RTW solutions involving employer and worker parties that can be expanded or more widely applied
- To explore innovative approaches to RTW issues



Return to Work Fund

The types of initiatives that will be supported through the RTW Fund

The RTW Fund supports initiatives that fall into three broad categories – a proposed initiative may span more than one category.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Projects | These primarily involve the use of problem solving approaches to generate and implement effective RTW opportunities and outcomes. This can include research that has a clear focus on identifying, developing and/or implementing practical workplace-based RTW solutions. |
| Pilot Programs | These trial innovative RTW approaches and solutions. They have a finite duration, demonstrate the opportunity for ongoing sustainability and RTW outcomes and have the potential for broader application. |
| Support Initiatives | These involve education, information and communication activities that are designed to promote wider awareness and greater understanding among employers and workers of timely and effective RTW processes and practices. |

Priority areas for the RTW Fund

Each year areas that are seen as key to addressing RTW needs in Victorian workplaces are identified as 'Fund Priorities'.

The Fund Priorities for 2006/07 focus on encouraging workplace-based RTW opportunities, with particular emphasis on the early stages of RTW. These are:

1. The encouragement of effective employer and worker communication, education and RTW processes, especially during the pre-claim phase
2. The development of real RTW opportunities for injured workers who are unable to return to work with their pre-injury employer due to:
 - a. a limited capacity for work (either temporary or permanent) which is unable to be accommodated by the employer;
 - b. an inability to RTW due to the fact that the pre-injury employer is no longer in operation; or
 - c. the need to assist a worker who is not yet ready to RTW with a workplace-based RTW program in a work environment that will assist them in returning to work more quickly
3. Assistance to employers with little or no experience in managing the RTW of injured workers
4. The development and management of employer and worker networks to share learnings and address RTW issues and opportunities through shared resources, skills and experience
5. The customisation of the VWA approved RTW Co-ordinator Training package that includes delivery and follow-up support to meet the specific needs of particular industries or regions
6. The improvement of RTW outcomes in areas that traditionally have difficulty with RTW, including (but without being limited to) regional Victoria and small to medium sized business

Return to Work Fund

Who can apply?

Worker and employer organisations or groups and workplace parties, including those in the self insurance market, are eligible and encouraged to submit applications.

Applicants will need to have the necessary expertise, resources and capacity to undertake, manage and evaluate the proposed initiative.

Further detail about eligibility is available in the RTW Fund Guidelines for Applicants.

How initiatives will be assessed and selected

The individual merit of each application will be assessed with reference to the RTW Fund Purpose, Objectives and Fund Priorities along with additional selection criteria. The extent to which an initiative fulfils these requirements will determine whether it is approved for support. Funding will be commensurate with the initiative's methodology and deliverables.

Further detail on eligibility for funding is available in the *RTW Fund Guidelines for Applicants*.

To assist applicants in fulfilling these requirements, submissions should be made using the ***RTW Fund Application Form***.

How can I get further information?

Telephone the VWA's RTW Fund Manager

Prior to making a submission, prospective applicants should contact the RTW Fund Manager on (03) 9641 1268 to discuss their proposal and to obtain the *RTW Fund Application Form*.

The RTW Fund Manager will be able to provide advice regarding whether the proposal is likely to meet the RTW Fund requirements and ensure that your plans don't duplicate existing or planned work.

All information and applications are treated as confidential.

Visit our website

You can find more information about the RTW Fund, including the *RTW Fund Guidelines for Applicants* at www.workcover.vic.gov.au

Email

Interested parties can also email enquiries to RTWFund@workcover.vic.gov.au

Appendix E



RETURN TO WORK PLAN

*** Mandatory Fields** Refer to Page 2 for Return to Work guidance

EMPLOYER DETAILS

Business name & address

RTW Plan prepared by

Position **Contact number**

RTW Plan number **Date plan prepared**

WORKERS DETAILS

Have you discussed RTW with your injured worker? Yes No

*** Given name**

*** Surname**

Place of residence (not PO Box)

Telephone **Date of Birth**

Date of injury **Claim number**

Occupation/pre-injury duties: (Attach job description if available)

Interpreter required? Yes No **Language**

TREATING MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

Name

Address

Telephone **Fax**

Nature of injury (symptoms and diagnosis)

OTHER TREATING PRACTITIONERS (Optional)

Name

Address

Telephone **Fax**

Current treatment (include type and frequency)

RETURN TO WORK (Worker/Injured worker/Responsible)

Have you contacted the treator to discuss RTW? Yes No
 Record medical restrictions affecting the capacity to work as per *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity* and/or conversation with the treating medical practitioner.

Has the injured worker any capacity? Yes No
 If yes, an Offer of Suitable Employment should be attached to this RTW Plan

Is an Offer of Suitable Employment attached?
 Yes No If no, indicate date this will be reviewed:

Will you be able to offer suitable employment?
 Yes No (Attach written reasons) Unknown

*** Will assistance with RTW or other occupational rehabilitation services be required for this worker?**
 Yes No If yes, worker must be given a choice of provider & you should discuss occupational rehabilitation with your WorkSafe Agent.

*** Estimated date of RTW**
 Unknown

*** Steps that have or will be taken to facilitate the RTW:**

RTW goals:

Short term:

Long term:

*** Employer's signature** **Date**

Worker's signature **Date**

*** Date plan to be reviewed**

Indicate date plan has been forwarded to:
 WorkSafe Agent Treating Medical Practitioner

THE RETURN TO WORK PLAN

A Return to Work (RTW) Plan is a written action plan that explains how you will help your injured worker return to work as soon as possible, or how you will help them stay at work while they recover.

Before you complete the RTW Plan you should:

Nominate:

- the RTW Coordinator for your workplace, if you haven't already done so (under Section 156 *Accident Compensation Act 1985*)

Gather information:

- Worker's contact details
- Worker's pre-injury job description
- *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity*

Consult with:

- your injured worker
 - your injured worker's treating medical practitioner (if possible)
 - the occupational rehabilitation provider, where one is involved;
- and endeavour to arrive at a consensus with these persons in relation to the RTW Plan

COMPLETING THE RTW PLAN

EMPLOYER DETAILS

Business name and address:

Detail where all correspondence should be directed.

RTW Plan prepared by:

Employers are responsible for preparing the RTW Plan, but may authorise another employee to do so - including the nominated RTW Coordinator. The RTW Coordinator is responsible for supporting your injured worker, monitoring the plan and liaising with other workplace parties to manage the RTW process.

Position:

State the primary role or position title of your nominated RTW Coordinator.

RTW Plan review/revision:

RTW Plans must be reviewed regularly and revised

- as soon as an employer becomes aware of any relevant change to their worker's compensable injury
- whenever requested to do so by their worker, the worker's treating practitioner, the occupational rehabilitation provider (if any), the RTW Coordinator or the WorkSafe Agent

Number each new plan and send a copy to your WorkSafe Agent. The employer must, at intervals not exceeding three months, advise the WorkSafe Agent of the progress of the worker's RTW in accordance with the plan.

WORKER DETAILS

Claim number:

Enter the claim number assigned to your worker's claim by your WorkSafe Agent. This will be on all claim correspondence received from your WorkSafe Agent.

TREATING MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

Did you attempt to contact them?

It is recommended that you provide the treating medical practitioner with as much information as possible regarding suitable duties you could offer the worker to help them to remain at or return to work. Consider phoning the doctor, faxing through a list of duties available or sending a letter indicating your willingness to accommodate the workers medical restrictions, if any, when they have a capacity to work.

Nature of injury:

The medical diagnosis made by the treating medical practitioner is stated on the *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity* which should be provided to you by your injured worker.

Other treating practitioners:

If your injured worker is being treated by someone other than a medical practitioner, such as a physiotherapist or chiropractor, please include their contact details here. You should send a copy of the RTW Plan to them, or consider discussing RTW options with them.

RETURN TO WORK

Medical restrictions:

This information will be included on the *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity*. This may include information such as reduced hours, sitting or standing tolerance, lifting capacity or what you need to take into account when offering suitable employment.

Offer of Suitable Employment:

This must be incorporated into the RTW Plan if your injured worker has a current work capacity (see attached form and guide: *Offer of Suitable Employment*). You are required to provide a clear explanation if you believe you will not be able to provide suitable employment.

Will assistance with RTW be required:

If you need assistance with RTW and identifying suitable employment, indicate this here and contact your WorkSafe Agent immediately. Your WorkSafe Agent must approve costs for occupational rehabilitation before the services are provided.

Steps to facilitate the RTW:

These may include modifying your worker's duties or hours, providing special equipment or discussing RTW options with the treating medical practitioner.

RTW Goals

Try to be specific and realistic about what you are aiming for in the short term and long term e.g. "Able to perform modified duties for 20 hours within 2 weeks" or "Full driving duties recommenced within 2 months". Communicating this to all parties in the RTW Plan helps to set an expectation of successful RTW.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

- A RTW Plan must be prepared within 10 days from the date that your injured worker's claim for weekly payments was accepted, or the date you became aware your injured worker would have an incapacity for 20 days or more, whichever is the later
- If your worker has any capacity for work, the RTW Plan MUST include an Offer of Suitable Employment (see attached form and guide)
- The RTW Plan should be regularly reviewed and updated as your injured worker's condition changes - as a guide, the plan should be reviewed at least monthly in consultation with your injured worker
- You have a legal obligation to offer suitable employment to your injured worker once they have a capacity for work. You also have an obligation to return them to their pre injury duties or equivalent. Employers who do not meet these obligations risk penalties including prosecution and fines
- Ideally, the plan should be signed by all parties to indicate their agreement. You should send a copy to your injured worker's treating medical practitioner to gain their support, but it is not mandatory to have their signature to proceed with planning for your injured worker's return to work
- Send a copy of the completed plan to your WorkSafe Agent as soon as possible and whenever it is updated
- Occupational Rehabilitation Providers can be engaged by your WorkSafe Agent to assist with RTW - you should discuss this with your WorkSafe Agent if you are unsure of what to do. Their involvement however, does not remove your obligations.
- Once the plan has been prepared and whether or not your worker has returned to work, the employer must maintain contact with the worker (unless it is not practicable to do so).

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Additional forms and general RTW publications can be downloaded from www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- Training is available for RTW Coordinators and is recommended for employers who may require additional assistance in meeting their RTW responsibilities. Details are available from your WorkSafe Agent or the WorkSafe website.
- Contact your WorkSafe Agent for further advice and assistance if required.



OFFER OF SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT

*** Mandatory Fields** Refer to Page 4 for Offer of Suitable Employment guidance

Date Offer no.

Plan dates
From: To:

This offer is made to (worker's name)

as part of your Return to Work Plan, and is not a new employment contract. You are requested to respond by

RTW position (if different from pre-injury job)

RTW commencement date

* Work location (address)

Manager or Supervisor's name and position

Manager or Supervisor's direct contact number

Current certificate
From: To:

RTW restrictions (from current WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity and/or conversation with treating health practitioner)

* Describe the specific duties/tasks to be undertaken, including physical and other requirements of the job offered e.g. Lifting, sitting, standing, performance expectations. (Provide attachments/photos as required).

Other considerations e.g. specify rest breaks, special equipment, occupational rehabilitation services/providers, treatment

* Hours of work (Specify start and finish)

	Week Commencing	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Hours p/w
Week 1		start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	
Week 2		start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	
Week 3		start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	
Week 4		start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	start finish	

* Employer's Signature Date

Worker's Signature Date

Treating Practitioner's Signature Date

* RTW Wages: \$ * Date duties to be reviewed

Date plan forwarded to:
WorkSafe Agent Treating Medical Practitioner

OFFER OF SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT (OSE)

The OSE is a written job offer based on duties your injured worker can perform, taking into account their current work capacity and work restrictions.

Before you provide this offer you will need to:

Gather information:

- Worker's pre-injury job description & wages
- The current RTW Plan
- Current *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity*
- Details of available, suitable duties within the worker's capacity

Consult with:

- your injured worker
 - your injured worker's treating medical practitioner (if possible)
 - the occupational rehabilitation provider, where one is involved;
- and endeavour to arrive at a consensus with these persons in relation to the RTW Plan

COMPLETING THE OSE FORM**DATES, ROLES AND LOCATIONS**

Offer number:

It is important that you number each OSE to make clear the order in which multiple OSE's are made.

Plan dates:

The offer will usually mirror the period covered by the current *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity*.

Response:

The OSE should be discussed with your injured worker and by signing the form they indicate their acceptance of the offer.

Return to work position:

If the OSE is for a position different to your worker's pre injury role, indicate their new job title.

*** RTW commencement date:**

Enter the date that your worker is expected to commence work under this offer.

*** Work location:**

What is the address of the workplace where your worker will be working? If several or varying locations, indicate all locations.

Manager or Supervisor:

Indicate who will be the line manager or supervisor that your injured worker reports to. You should ensure this person also receives a copy of the RTW Plan incorporating the OSE.

MEDICAL STATUS & RESTRICTIONS

Current certificate:

Include the start and end dates of your injured worker's current *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity*.

Return to work restrictions:

Examples may include: lift no greater than 10kg, no reaching above shoulder height, no face to face contact with the public, rest breaks every 30 minutes etc.

DETAILS OF OFFER

*** Specific duties:**

Consider offering modified tasks or responsibilities, alternative hours/shifts and rotating tasks or a combination of any of these.

*** Review date:**

The offer must be revised with each change in current work capacity. A formal review is recommended at least monthly.

Other Considerations:

Include details of rest breaks. These must be adhered to by both employer and worker. Appointments for treatment should (where possible) be made outside of the agreed working hours.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE OFFER

The Return to Work Plan and Offer of Suitable Employment must be signed by the employer or by an employee with sufficient authority to commit the employer to the RTW Plan and make an offer of suitable employment. Request your worker to respond to the OSE within a reasonable, specified period.

*** Give** a copy of the OSE to your injured worker and their treating medical practitioner and seek their support for the plan. By signing the document all parties are indicating their commitment and support of the RTW process.

*** Send** the OSE to your WorkSafe Agent - it is essential to keep them informed of the current RTW Plan and Offer of Suitable Employment.

If applicable, send the OSE to any other health practitioner involved in the treatment of your worker (eg. Physiotherapist, psychologist, etc.) and the workplace supervisor.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

- If your worker has any capacity for work, the RTW Plan **MUST** include an Offer of Suitable Employment (see attached RTW Plan and guide)
- A RTW Plan must be prepared within 10 days from the date that your injured worker's claim for weekly payments was accepted, or the date you became aware your injured worker would have an incapacity for 20 days or more, whichever is the later
- You have a legal obligation to offer suitable employment to your injured worker once they have a capacity for work. You also have an obligation to return them to their pre injury duties or equivalent. Employers who do not meet these obligations risk penalties including prosecution and fines
- The RTW Plan, including the OSE, should be regularly reviewed and updated as your injured worker's current work capacity changes - as a guide, this should be at least monthly in consultation with your injured worker
- If you are unsure of your worker's current work capacity and restrictions or need further clarification, contact the treating health practitioner who issued the most recent *WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity*
- Occupational Rehabilitation Providers may be engaged by your WorkSafe Agent to assist with RTW and identifying suitable employment - you should discuss this with your WorkSafe Agent. This assistance however, does not remove your obligations to prepare a RTW Plan or make an OSE within the required timeframes.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Additional forms and general RTW publications can be downloaded from www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- Training is available for RTW Coordinators and is recommended for employers who may require additional assistance in meeting their RTW responsibilities. Details are available from your WorkSafe Agent or the WorkSafe website
- Contact your WorkSafe Agent for further advice and assistance if required.

Electronic copies of this form are downloadable from the WorkSafe website at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au.

WorkSafe Victoria is a trading name of the Victorian WorkCover Authority

Appendix F



[About WorkSafe](#) | [News](#) | [Events](#) | [Careers](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#)

"Victorian workers returning home safe every day"

Employer Return to Work Networks

The Employer RTW Networks

The Employer RTW Networks is a WorkSafe initiative designed to provide Return to Work Coordinators with support and relevant information. The aim is to bring together Return to Work Coordinators to learn from industry leaders and each other, and provide practical support and guidance in the management of return to work.

The networks provide a forum for employers to share their skills, experiences and knowledge, and discuss return to work issues with a range of highly experienced guest speakers.

Employer RTW Networks Calendar

Click the dates below to register:

network	Jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	a
western		7th			1st		22nd	
northern		26th			27th			2
southern				3rd		26th		
regional	For regional network events please contact rtw_networks@worksafe.vi							

topics	
RTW Fundamentals during Work Safe Week 27th - 31st October 2008	Aimed at RTW coordinators or those employers who would like to obtain relevant and practical information relating to best practice RTW. Hear about WorkSafe's current RTW initiatives, ask questions in an open forum, and learn from other local employers regarding their RTW practices and success stories.
Communicating with Doctors	Learn how you can interact more effectively with doctors and other health providers in order to achieve improved RTW planning and progression for your injured workers. Practical tips and information will be shared by a medical practitioner familiar with the worker's compensation scheme. Hear about

	WorkSafe's initiatives to improve doctor communications and input into RTW.
The Ageing Workforce	Do you have mature workers with injuries? Are there additional risks in the workplace you should be aware of? How can you plan for their safe RTW? Learn about initiatives that can help reduce injury and improve RTW success and sustainability.
Psychological injuries in the workplace	Managing psychological injuries can be complex and challenging. This session will provide you with the latest information about WorkSafe's approach to managing work related stress and psychological illness. Hear from experts in the field and gain some practical advice to help with RTW.
Preventing & managing RTW disputes	Frustrated with the dispute resolution process? This session will provide expert advice about the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service and some relevant RTW outcomes from the courts that will help you prevent and manage RTW disputes. Obtain a greater understanding of the technical considerations involved in dispute resolution in relation to RTW.
RTW & your Premium	This session will focus on ways in which your good RTW practices can result in reduced premiums. Useful and practical online tools available to employers will be demonstrated. Common premium questions will also be answered with a focus on RTW.
Occupation rehabilitation services & driving RTW outcomes	What are the key considerations in working with an occupational rehabilitation (OR) provider? Are you getting the best out of yours? Hear about those employers who have achieved RTW success in partnership with OR providers. Learn about some new OR initiatives that WorkSafe is undertaking to help improve RTW outcomes for employers and injured workers.
RTW service and your Agent	Are you making the most of your WorkSafe Agent? Hear about WorkSafe's new initiatives that will help you gain the best service from your Agent. This session will also provide you with valuable insight into tools, resources and strategies available through your Agent to help you improve your RTW performance and obtain the support you need.

Dates & topics are subject to change.

How do I find out more about them?

To learn more about return to work issues and when the networks are scheduled, send an email to rtw_networks@worksafe.vic.gov.au

Appendix G

A consideration of language and meaning

The researchers (and others including in the literature) make the assumption that language matters to the construction of social problems and to solutions and therefore to the actions WorkCover and its partners take in labour market activation.

Initially WorkCover clients can be described as a ‘worker with an injury’ or ‘injured workers’. Most recover from injury and return to work. At some stage the physical or psychological injury can be defined objectively and subjectively as an enduring impairment which is disabling at work and possibly other contexts. For the individual, acquiring a disability requires a re-assessment of identity and ones life trajectory, and these are major psychological as well as practical tasks. Active labour market programs and other programs to help re-equip the injured worker and to identify options/careers/occupations while building confidence and personal skills have an important role to play.

In interviews and in less formal conversations we found considerable stigmatisation of WorkCover ‘income claimants’. The underlying assumption appears to be that these ‘beneficiaries’ are privileged people who gain income unreasonably. Passivity is implied. Using language like ‘income claimant’ or ‘beneficiary’ re-inscribes negative and even passively ‘disabling’ ideas in our culture about WorkCover ‘income’ and ‘benefit’, rather than strengthening and re-affirming people’s identities as experienced workers, who experience work/life with disability/ability. Using language which supports emerging identities of work/disability/ability is preferable to language which supports identities formed around words like long term/ beneficiary/claimant.

Including ‘work’, ‘injury’ and ‘disability’ in the preferred phrase also allows discussion to emerge with employers about what it is that disables a worker. It may allow productive debate to emerge which show that it is a work station, a work process, or working hours which disable, and once employers re-work these the worker is then as enabled as other workers (ASCC, 2007).

There is an extensive literature about disability/disabilities, and a literature on workers with a disability. There is almost no literature located under key words like ‘long term worker’s compensation beneficiary’, or ‘long term claimant’. Using the former more readily directs researchers, policy makers, related officials and professionals, to relevant, existing knowledge when defining issues and seeking solutions. A ‘worker with disability’ (temporary or permanent) implies a worker with characteristics, capacities and identity in addition to disability.

Consistent use of language that points WorkCover’s clients, staff and all those who work with injured workers towards active identity building as workers with disability and other capacities is preferred. However, we acknowledge the pain, suffering, difficulties and victories of those relatively few who experience major traumatic injuries which result in disability which precludes engagement with paid labour. We acknowledge that ALMPs will not suit all workers with disability.