

Additional information provided by the Brotherhood of St Laurence on 12 November 2018.

We were asked to provide further information about the employer-led **Community Investment Committees**, which are intrinsic to the model delivered by members of the TtW Community of Practice. Committees bring together employers, training providers, local governments and local supports who collectively develop local solutions to help drive better youth employment outcomes. For example, at the Frankston/Mornington Peninsula CIC:

- Employer representatives (Endeavour Group, BlueScope Steel, Vicinity Shopping Centres, South East Water, Ball Horticulture, St Kilda Football Club, Peninsula Health and Peninsula Aquatic Recreation Centre) are committed to providing young people with work experience and employment opportunities. BlueScope Steel have employed 14 TtW participants - the first time they have directly sought younger recruits. Initially engaged on short term contracts, all of the participants have gained contract extensions, and some are now in the process of being appointed into full-time permanent roles. A working group is addressing how employers can be better informed about young people's readiness to work in their industry.
- An employment exposure program has been developed with Victoria's peak body for horticulture in response to the industry's difficulty in attracting young people. It includes a structured pre-employment program of tasters, hands-on learning and micro work experience. Employers are earmarking vacancies (ranging from casual to full-time, and including internships and apprenticeships) for program participants. Training pathways are being developed with local providers.
- Chisholm Institute is leading the development of new foundation accredited training programs for young people who have had disrupted learning pathways and require extra support to reengage with mainstream education.
- Transport barriers that limit young people's employability are being tackled. With Frankston Council, young people are being assisted to attain their drivers licence (Creating Futures for Youth) and opportunities for uptake of the L2P program (powered by volunteer mentor driving instructors) has been expanded by the Brotherhood allowing use of its fleet vehicles and the recruitment of additional volunteer mentors. Over the past 3 months 11 young participants who did not have access to family support to learn to drive have gained their licence. The CIC is also advocating for improvement in public transport - with the Mornington Peninsula Shire recently providing a new bus services to better link young people on the peninsula with training and work opportunities.

The Committee was also interested in the efficacy of **wage subsidies**. Our experience and research (both local and international) shows wage subsidies *by themselves* are not effective, *but as part of a package of support*, can open up opportunities for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage to secure and sustain employment. Key supports that should sit with wage subsidies include:

- Job-readiness training, particularly for jobseekers with limited previous work experience, such as young people, long-term unemployed, refugees and migrants (who may lack familiarity with Australian workplace culture), or skills updating (for mature aged)
- Ongoing post-placement support to maximise the chances of a continuing employment relationship
- A focus on positions that offer the real prospect of ongoing employment
- The opportunity to participate in quality training related to the job

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- Clear expectations that employers will provide a supportive work environment and develop the skills of subsidised recruits.

The low uptake of available wage subsidies by employers speaks volumes. However, there are employers eager to play an increased role in providing employment for disadvantaged jobseekers, if given the right support. Our submissions details demand-led approaches; parallel support for jobseekers and employers; and supported labour hire as some of the ways to enable employers to have positive experiences of recruiting jobseekers experiencing disadvantage.

There was also discussion about the comparative benefits of **PaTH and Work for the Dole**. Providing opportunities for young people to strengthen their skills and attain real work experience is critical. Some young people have enjoyed strong outcomes (the 2017 national review found 63% of participants who completed the program gained employment either with their host business or another business - albeit often in short term roles). However, uptake of PaTH has been much lower than projected, and attrition rates have been high.

Design needs to better ensure the bona fides of participating employers, that young people with significant employment barriers are offered intensive support - such as coaching, mentoring and referral to specialist support to prepare adequately for successful participation; that experiences are linked to aspirations/interests and there is a focus on next steps - jobactive is currently ill-equipped to do this. If the remit of TtW was extended (to include young jobseekers from all streams aged up to 25 years) participants could receive this support as part of a more holistic approach, negating the need for separate funding of Employability Skills Training.

The Brotherhood remains concerned about **WfD** - which is overwhelmingly punitive, rather than a program designed to move people closer to work. While acknowledging some participants report positive experiences and government research highlighting program benefits; WfD has a very marginal impact on employment outcomes - increasing the chances of employment by an average of just 2 percentage points - despite the high costs of delivery. Public investment in other measures (career advice; coaching; employer engagement; training and skills development; work experience matched to interests; structured pathways) would yield appreciably better results.