



Mission Australia

A response to

**‘Submission to House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Employment and Workplace
Relations’**

Inquiry into Employment: Increasing participation in paid work

January 2004

Introduction

On 25 July 2003, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations asked the House of Representatives Employment and Workplace Relations Committee to inquire into and report on employment issues in both rural/regional and urban and outer suburban areas, with particular reference to:

- measures that can be implemented to increase the level of participation in paid work in Australia, and
- how a balance of assistance, incentives and obligations can increase participation for income support recipients.

Mission Australia is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this House Inquiry.

This submission

- outlines the employment gains made in the Australian economy in the past few years,
- identifies the following key groups considered particularly at risk of missing out on these gains:-
 - young people
 - mature aged workers
 - Indigenous Australians
 - People in regional and rural communities
- discusses the raft of labour market and vocational education strategies which assist at risk groups and proposes some recommendations, and
- advances a case for the reform of the income support structure.

Executive Summary

Mission Australia makes this submission on the basis of our expertise at the local level, assisting employers, job-seekers and communities as a member of the Job Network, provider of complementary employment programs and through a myriad of Mission Australia community services. We work with disadvantaged people, especially long term unemployed people across every State and Territory.

Mission Australia believes unemployment, particularly persistent unemployment over prolonged periods, is a destructive economic and social issue which contributes to high levels of poverty in Australia. The impacts of unemployment go beyond loss of income and reduced material well-being. Those who are unemployed feel a heightened sense of personal rejection. There are also negative consequences for society. Prolonged unemployment is a key factor contributing to the social exclusion of individuals, families and communities.

Despite the current record low rate of unemployment (5.6 percent), Mission Australia is concerned that young people, older workers and Indigenous Australians and those in regional and rural areas continue to experience poor labour market outcomes. We believe that these people require additional support from Government and the wider community if they are to take advantage of the employment opportunities available as a result of a strongly performing economy.

Mission Australia acknowledges that unemployment and labour market participation are linked to a range of other social policy issues. Many of these areas fall outside the scope of this submission. However, we believe an effective solution to unemployment is dependent on ensuring these policy links are also taken into consideration.

Mission Australia believes that the Reference Group on Welfare Reform Report—Participation Support for a More Equal Society (also known as the McClure Report) outlines a strategy to reduce unemployment levels across Australia (including rural and remote areas) by connecting those at risk of long term unemployment back into

the labour market through better alignment of the social support system to the real needs of unemployed people.

Mission Australia is cautiously optimistic that a range of measures introduced by the Government since the McClure Report may produce better employment outcomes for people currently in receipt of income support and seeking work. We continue to believe however, that the needs of young people are not being adequately met in the current policy environment. Early intervention is vital if we are committed to providing young people with the best opportunities and assistance to make the transition from school to work. Development of a National Commitment to Young People, we believe, would ensure that young people are adequately provided with the assistance, advice and the training they require to succeed in the modern labour market.

Over the longer term Mission Australia sees merit in the Government working towards the promised modernisation of the income support system. A fairer system based on the reduction of anomalies in payment rates, obligations and other conditions has the potential to allow Australians to better adapt and take full advantage of improved labour market opportunities.

Mission Australia-Who are we?

Mission Australia is a non-denominational Christian not for profit organisation operating in every state and territory across Australia. At a time when many Australians and their communities are facing new sets of social problems, Mission Australia is continually developing contemporary services to help people in need address emerging issues. An integrated approach allows us to work more efficiently and productively to respond to the changing social climate in Australia today.

Mission Australia provides more than 360 community and employment services. Our programs empower individuals to regain control of their lives and, in turn, help improve and strengthen communities. Briefly our services include:

- **Family Support-** we assist Australian individuals and their families overcome their difficulties and grow closer together, in turn strengthening - and contributing to - the wider community.
- **Youth Initiatives-**we provide a framework of support for almost 14,000 at risk young people and their families and friends helping them make positive changes in their lives.
- **Housing Support Initiatives-** During 2003 we assisted almost 22,000 Australians who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, to find safe, secure and permanent accommodation.
- **Employment Initiatives-** Mission Australia is active at a local level, helping connect employers, job-seekers and communities. In the past year we helped 118,000 job seekers into work or further training. Our employment initiatives play a key role in building and strengthening both individuals and their communities. By working with people to find suitable, satisfying and long-term employment, Mission Australia helps prevent individuals and their families from becoming caught in the cycle of poverty, family breakdown and social isolation.

Current context

Australia has been experiencing more than 10 years of sustained economic growth, in spite of a generally weak performance for the global economy. This has been reflected in strong and continuous employment growth and low rates of unemployment- as low as 5.6 percent in November 2003.

While the indications are that growth will continue, Mission Australia is concerned that a strong performing economy in itself will not deliver sustainable employment outcomes for all jobseekers, particularly those facing significant disadvantage.

In November 2003 there were still over 570,000 Australians officially unemployed. An unemployed person is defined as someone aged 15 years or over who, during a period of one week was not employed, and had actively looked for work in the previous four weeks and was available to start work. (ABS 2002, Kryger 1998)

On closer examination however, this official measure fails to take account of short term employment tenure and high levels of underemployment, effectively masking the true extent of unemployment. Research suggests that the unemployment rate may be doubled if the hidden unemployed (defined as either not working enough hours to earn a basic income or people wanting to work but no longer looking for work) are included in the official unemployment rate. (Barrett 2001, ACOSS 2003)

Moreover, there would seem to be a direct link between the hidden unemployed and the numbers of people in receipt of income support payments. Many of the people relying on income support are the hidden unemployed, who may be working for only a few hours per week and still need a Centrelink payment to top up their earned income. (ibid 2003)

Unemployment has strong links with other critical social issues.

Mission Australia recognises that unemployment and labour market participation are linked to a range of other social policy issues. Among those policy links we would emphasise public health, education, housing, and infrastructure and transport. Recent

international research suggests that the link between public housing policy and employment are fundamental and that positive employment outcomes can be realised if the disincentives associated with housing assistance and income support are appropriately managed. (Kato 2003) Recent research within the Australian context (Hulse et al 2003) should strengthen our understanding of the dynamic between housing costs, housing assistance and employment disincentives.

While these areas fall outside of the scope of this submission, we emphasise that an effective solution to unemployment will be dependent on ensuring these policy links are also taken into consideration and the effects of change in one arena are mapped against potential consequences in another.

Unemployment prevents full participation in society

Mission Australia believes that unemployment is a destructive economic and social problem.

The impact of unemployment goes beyond loss of income and reduced material well-being. Those who are unemployed feel a heightened sense of personal rejection. There are also negative consequences for society. Material and psychological deprivation arising from unemployment provide fertile soil for the development of despair, community breakdown, and the creation of economically disenfranchised ghettos. (Webster 2000)

The British Government recognises long periods of unemployment lead to poverty, poor health and social isolation. Paid work is therefore a central element of the British Government's strategy to tackle social exclusion. (Social Exclusion Unit 2003)

Mission Australia believes employment is an essential means of participation in society which provides economic and social benefits for both individuals and the community as a whole. For this reason we are committed to providing labour market assistance through the Job Network, complementary employment services (including JPET) and related community services.

In particular, we are most concerned about the marked poor labour outcomes (eg. higher rates of unemployment, concentration in part time and casual employment and longer periods in unemployment) for young people, older workers, Indigenous Australians and people in regional and rural areas. Our submission examines the labour market status of these four population groups, comments on the barriers they face and proposes additional government measures which may improve their engagement in the labour market.

UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE

Mission Australia acknowledges that for many young Australians the transition from school to positive post school activity (further study, training and employment) is relatively smooth. For example the Dusseldorp Skills Forum report “How are young people faring?” (DSF 2003) found that 85 percent of young people aged 15-19 were either in full time study or full time work, and nearly 80 percent of young adults between 20-24 years completed Year 12 or have a post school qualification.

However there are a number of young people for whom the transition from education and/or training to work is anything but smooth, especially those who leave school early or before completing years 11 or 12. The Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2003) estimates that depending on which state or region you live in approximately 15 per cent of young people are not in full time education, employment or training, and that one in ten school leavers are not making a positive transition to employment.

These young people are potentially marginalised from labour market opportunities for two main reasons.

First, there has been a significant decline in the number of full time, entry level jobs with the Dusseldorp Skills Forum reporting that full time jobs had declined by 6.9 per cent for the 15-19 age group since 1995 and 15.2 per cent for young adults aged 20-24.

Second, while there has been a rapid expansion in part-time and casual work for young people this does not necessarily lead to longer term job success or career opportunities.

For young people leaving school prior to completing Years 11 and 12, the risk of unemployment and long term labour market disadvantage is significant. Those aged 15-24 years have over double the rate of unemployment than those aged 25-54 years. The Business Council of Australia (BCA 2003) found that seven years after leaving school:

- 21 per cent of young males who left school in Year 9 were unemployed
- 59 per cent of young females who left in Year 9 were also unemployed.

This compares with approximately 7 per cent of those who completed year 12 who were still unemployed.

Within Mission Australia's own employment services nearly 20,000 young job seekers accessed our programs with Mission Australia being responsible for approximately one in eight of the Job Network clients.

In seeking to assist disadvantaged young people, Mission Australia provides specialised youth services across the country where they can access a wide range of generic and specialist support services. Job seekers are encouraged to make informed choices, set goals and make positive decisions about their lives while being supported in their education, employment or training.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER 2003) in their longitudinal study of Australian youth have highlighted that securing full time work has the greatest effect on positive labour market outcomes and that the experience of unemployment has potentially long term personal and social scarring effects or costs on young people.

Mission Australia believes there are positive benefits to young people, employers and the wider community if the rate of unemployment among at risk young people is reduced. We believe that the risk of long term inter-generational poverty is increased if young people are not connected to positive work and living opportunities.

Youth Employment Study

In it in this context, that Mission Australia is undertaking a joint research project with the Youth Strategy and Advocacy Group (YSAG) on youth unemployment in Australia. The Youth Strategy and Advocacy Group chaired by Mr Rupert Myer is comprised of national business and community leaders.

The project is a three year initiative to review youth unemployment in Australia and to identify improved ways to reduce unemployment for the under 25 age group.

We believe that this three year study of young people's employment and transitions will inform a more effective national strategy to reduce youth unemployment - especially in more socially and economically disadvantaged locations. The study includes national data analysis, discussions with young people and action research. Mission Australia will use the findings of this study to improve our service delivery to and to identify and advocate for improved or ways for local, state and Commonwealth governments to assist young people into successful adult and employment transitions.

Other Mission Australia Services

Mission Australia also provides an extensive range of youth related services across the country. These services include supported and stable accommodation, financial support, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, counselling and education and vocational support. A detailed description of these services is included as Attachment One.

A National Youth Commitment

Mission Australia acknowledges that the Federal Government has previously recognised that young people who leave school early are at risk of poor long term labour market outcomes. The Report of the Prime Minister's Taskforce on Youth Pathways "Footprints to the Future" (2001) made a range of recommendations to improve young people's transitions which we believe have yet to be sufficiently addressed by the Government.

We are broadly supportive of the range of school based vocational education and training initiatives designed to give young people the chance to complete their senior

schooling and obtain valuable labour market experience. This includes opportunities such as structured work placements and school-based apprenticeships.

We support young jobseekers receiving intensive assistance through the Job Network. This assistance should be used to identify skills deficits, and provide job search and career development skills.

We also support making specialised assistance available to young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless through the Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) program. Mission Australia believes that JPET has potential to ensure that young people remain connected to the labour market and develop the right set of skills needed to retain their labour market attachment.

These are all steps in the right direction and help maximise the successful transition of young people into the longer term workforce and wider community. However, the Report of the Prime Ministers Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce - Footprints to the Future (Eldridge 2001) stressed the need for a more comprehensive national approach to strengthen pathways for young people and provide the earliest possible assistance for those at risk of becoming disengaged. The provision of youth income support measures and employment assistance were seen as key areas where sensitivity and flexibility should be applied.

If further inroads are to be made into youth unemployment we believe that the main thrust of the Footprints report, a national commitment to all young people, should be developed by the Commonwealth in partnership with state and territory governments. As long as significant numbers of our young people are not completing 12 years of meaningful learning, miss out on vocational education and training programs, or enter the labour market without adequate employability and life skills, then disengaged young people will continue to be over represented among the long term unemployed, continue as a cohort of disadvantaged jobseekers, and unable to fully participate in their communities.

Additional Strategies

Additional strategies which we would recommend to ensure young people make successful school-to-work transitions include:

- Early Intervention Program assistance for the community sector targeting at risk students in primary and secondary school such as Mission Australia's Pathways to Prevention Project which empowers children and their caregivers. The project's immediate focus is on supporting parents and children to make the transition from home to pre-school then primary to secondary school.
- Mentoring programs for young people who are at risk of early school leaving (or already have left school) to reconnect them to employment or vocational training or back into education.
- Increased availability of holistic recovery programs (such as Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm initiative) which target severe cases of youth disconnection from society and provide integrated services such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation and counselling, vocational training and pathways to foster stable long term living and work environments.

MATURE AGE WORKERS

Mission Australia has also raised concerns about how mature aged workers are faring in the current labour market.(McClure 2003, Encel 2003) These workers comprise a significant section of the community and yet they remain largely invisible in the debate about unemployment.

The Impact of an Ageing Population

There is much debate about the effects of an ageing population on the Australian economy. The OECD recently warned that unless some of the world's wealthiest countries take action to reverse the long-term trend to early retirement, they are likely to face labour shortages, slower growth and ballooning social security bills. (OECD 2003)

In Australia the proportion of the population aged 55-70 years will increase from 20 percent to 30 percent by 2041 (ABS 2003). By contrast the growth rate of the working

age population in the next ten years is unlikely to match projected growth in the Australian economy. Labour shortages in key industries are expected as older workers leave the work force. Despite these forecasts Australia continues to record low levels of labour force participation and early exit from the labour market among older workers. (Encel 2003) Not all of this is voluntary or planned. Last year Mission Australia employment services assisted nearly 10,000 unemployed mature aged workers who were seeking employment.

Significant Barriers to Mature-aged Employment

Although workers aged 45 years and older, as a group, continue to experience unemployment rates considerably lower than job seekers aged under 45 years, older job seekers do not fare as well once they become unemployed. Their average duration of unemployment is much higher than younger job seekers and generally rises with age. (Attorney Generals Department 2003, Discussion on Age Discrimination Bill)

Some mature age people face significant difficulties finding employment. This is because they

- lack current skills sought by employers
- lack adequate job seeking skills in a rapidly changing labour market, and
- become discouraged in their job search as a result of prejudicial stereotypes about older workers.

Mature aged workers are therefore far more likely than their counterparts 45 to face lengthy periods of unemployment after redundancy or retrenchment. Despite legislation which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of age, the Senate Select Committee on Retirement (2003) was presented with clear evidence that employers prefer employing younger workers over mature age workers and that mature age workers are most preferred for retrenchment. (Senate Select Committee 2003)

Mission Australia believes the combined effects of early retirement, significant restructuring by industry and high levels of long term unemployment among mature

age workers has contributed to a pool of “untapped resources” whose potential is currently not realised by society or in the economy.

This was also noted by the OECD which concluded “Although older workers, with their wealth of experience, can offer tremendous value to business and society, they are often discouraged from working or developing their skills after the age of 50”. (OECD 2003)

Mission Australia believes it is important to establish programs which prepare mature workers for the changes needed to find another job as soon as possible. We advocate a range of measures including special age specific training pathways and early intervention strategies to identify “at risk” mature age workers.

Mission Australia also encourages employers to provide more flexible working arrangements for mature age people such as part-time, casual, job sharing, and would like to see better and utilisation by employers of the value of mature age workers. We also promote programs that enhance social participation among mature age through training, volunteering and mentoring.

It is encouraging that mature aged job seekers have been recognised in the Australians Working Together package as requiring specialised support to get back into employment. We believe that the kinds of assistance proposed in this package, eg. Personal Advisors based in Centrelink, priority placements in appropriate services and programmes, and training credits, will assist mature age workers to re-enter the workforce.

Mission Australia believes that the earlier assistance can be provided for mature age workers who have been made unemployed or are facing retrenchment, the better chance they have of being supported to regain employment and the less likely they will be at risk of long term unemployment or opt for early retirement. Assistance should not only be made available to people receiving income support payments.

Mission Australia believes that strategies to retain older workers in employment will increase the financial independence of this group and lessen the demand on income

support assistance and superannuation. It will also provide an extra source of skilled labour in the short to medium term at a time when employers are facing skilled labour shortages.

Mission Australia also believes that the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) target market should be expanded to include all 50 year olds - not just those in receipt of a qualifying income support payment or veteran's pension. This would permit semi-retirees and those who are facing unemployment to consider establishing a small business and therefore directly contribute to the community and reduce reliance on income support and remain attached to the labour market.

Finally Mission Australia would like the Commonwealth Government to undertake a long term promotion to employers and the community about the benefit of employing mature age job seekers. This would include media promotions aimed at changing employer views of mature workers by marketing the advantages of such workers. Awards by Region/State and nationally for the "Mature Employee of the Year" with employer benefits for the award winners aimed at promoting their business. Additionally special "one-off" wage support incentives for employers who employ a mature worker for more than six months full-time could be considered.

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

The differing age structure of Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (median age of 20 compared with 35 for non-Indigenous) strengthens the need to ensure that young Indigenous people are able to access appropriate education, training and employment opportunities.

Recent studies (CAEPR 2003, Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2003) suggest that despite strong economic growth there has been little discernable improvement in the overall position of Indigenous people in the labour market since 1996. Worse still, estimates for future job growth point to a decline in employment and rises in unemployment. (CAEPR 2003)

Young Indigenous people are 3 times more likely not to participate in full-time in education or work, compared to non-Indigenous teenagers. This situation tends to be worse in remote areas. (DSF 2003)

Higher levels of labour market disadvantage

Mission Australia believes it is unacceptable that Indigenous Australians continue to experience adverse labour market outcomes at far higher levels than their non-Indigenous peers. In 2002 4,000 Indigenous Australians accessed employment related services from Mission Australia.

We believe that such adverse outcomes will only be reduced if there is a sufficient commitment by governments and the wider community to improve Indigenous participation in education and employment.

A range of strategies are already being implemented to boost outcomes for Indigenous people. Nationally the MCEETYA Taskforce on Indigenous Education, Employment, Training and Youth is examining approaches to achieve educational equality and equitable outcomes in employment and well-being for Australia's Indigenous people.

We also believe that Indigenous Australians are likely to benefit from increased education and training assistance through Australians Working Together Package. The creation of Indigenous Employment Centres to offer work experience, job search support, access to job training and mentoring assistance is a positive development.

Also through initiatives such as the Cape York Enterprise Partnership, Indigenous communities are recognising the leadership role they have in working towards economically sustainable business enterprises. The focus is on improved employment opportunities for Indigenous communities. Mission Australia strongly supports these initiatives and would recommend the Commonwealth Government foster further initiatives of this kind.

RURAL /REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Mission Australia notes that unemployment in regional and rural Australia has been declining and is currently at its lowest levels in the past 21 years (DEWR 2003). This is despite the prolonged effects of drought.

However employers and job seekers in rural areas face additional barriers to employment than compared to the people in metropolitan Australia.

Employers face labour shortages due to

- geographical remoteness
- lack of infrastructure
- seasonal demand , and
- lack of transportation.

Among the barriers face by job seekers in regional and rural areas are

- accessing employment which is located away from where job seekers are based, and
- transport and travel difficulties due to lack of public transport infrastructure and affordability of private transport.

Mission Australia believes that the following initiatives should be considered.

- Provision of long term travel cost incentives for jobseekers to overcome a key disincentive for seeking long term employment. This could also include subsidies for petrol, insurance etc.
- The issue of "restricted "drivers licence arrangements by the States for employees or jobseekers who have lost their licences but need their own transport in order to be employed.
- Incentive packages to assist with the costs of locating jobseekers from low employment areas to more dynamic labour markets. This could include relocation expenses and assistance with accommodation, and job search assistance.
- Continued investment in regional development to create more employment within regional and rural areas. Consideration should be given to developing

seasonally complementary industries to enable permanent employment rather than sporadic seasonal employment.

- Improved organisation of harvest labour to maximise the mobility of local residents employed in seasonal work and to overcome the cost barriers of working significant distances from the location of permanent residence. Options for subsidised transport and accommodation to job seekers prepared to be employed in more remote employment from their place of residence should be considered.

A SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK

A range of education and employment based initiatives have been implemented by the Commonwealth Government to assist specific groups of job seekers at risk of long term unemployment back into the labour market or into further learning. These include structured workplace learning (SWL) the Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM) and Career and Transition (CAT) Pilot Programme funded by DEST, JPET funded by FACS, and the Job Network.

Targeted customers of Centrelink will also benefit from the tailored individualised service delivery announced in the Australians Working Together (AWT) package. Individualised service delivery was a key recommendation in the McClure Report.

Australians Working Together

The Australians Working Together Act (2003) provided new funding for employment and community services to expand and improve the assistance available to Australians looking for work. Mission Australia is cautiously optimistic that the AWT package will provide a better balance of support for people receiving income assistance who wish to work casually or part-time.

Mission Australia is pleased that mature age people and Indigenous Australians stand to benefit from new incentives which allow them to retain a higher proportion of their income support payments when they start work.

Similarly the new Working Credit should allow some people who begin paid work (especially part-time or casual) to retain a larger proportion of their income support payments.

Young People Must Be Included

Two years ago, the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce identified a lack of integrated income support for young people, coupled with a low level of youth specific knowledge and service expertise among some Job Network providers as the key barriers to young people's participation in job search and employment (Footprints to the Future p73). Mission Australia is concerned that this issue does not seem to have been addressed in the AWT package.

We believe young people should be able to access intensive assistance and other opportunities which are available to older workers and Indigenous Australians. In fact access by young people to intensive assistance was also strongly recommended in Footprints to the Future. (p190) This submission has continues to emphasise this concern.

Longer term change

Mission Australia continues to believe that modernisation of the income-support system would further reduce barriers to employment. We think that a modern welfare framework must meet basic income needs and reduce poverty and its associated consequences. It should also create equity by removing anomalies in payment rates, obligations and other conditions and broaden employment and other life opportunities to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families. Finally a modern welfare framework must provide transparent decision making so that those who access it know how decisions have been made and what entitlements are available.

At present, people with similar circumstances and needs may receive differing levels of income support through a complicated system of separate payments and conditions. Many of these payments do not reflect the current needs or realities experienced by those who receive them. This disparity extends to the entitlements of working age people receiving allowances and those receiving pensions. Mission Australia believes

of these disparities contributes to the maintenance of disincentives and prolonged labour force withdrawal.

Mission Australia believes that complicated allowance and pension measures combined with the effect of marginal tax rates act as significant disincentives to labour market participation. Further, we believe this issue should be urgently addressed by the Commonwealth Government.

There is broad consensus among Government, business and the not for profit sector that Australia's social security system would benefit from modernisation, and in particular simplification and integration of payment structure for people of working age.

References

- ACOSS 2003 “*It’s Time for Social Security Reform*” in *Impact* August 2003
- ACOSS 2003 *Hidden Unemployment in Australia* ACOSS Paper 131
- Barrett Stephen 2001 *Integrating Hidden Unemployment into Measures of Labour Market Health* 8th National Unemployment Conference
- Business Council of Australia 2003 “*The Cost of Dropping Out-The Impact of early School Leaving*” January 2003
- CAEPR 2003. *The Future of Indigenous work: Forecasts of labour force status to 2011*. Center for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Canberra
- DEWR 2003 *Australian Regional Labour Markets* September 2003
- Regional Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2003 “*How young people are faring-Key Indicators 2003*” Sydney DSF
- Eldridge D 2001 *Footprints to the Future Report of the Prime Ministers Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce*.
- Encel S 2003 “*Age Can Work; The case for older Australians Staying in the Workforce*” A Report to the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Business Council of Australia.
- Hulse K et al 2003, *Understanding the roles of Housing costs and housing assistance in creating employment disincentives* AHURI
- Kato Linda Yuriko, 2003 *Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site Key Features of Mature Employment Programs in Seven Public Housing Communities* MDRC
- Kryger T 1998 “*Do Official Figures Understate 'True' Unemployment?*”. ABS Research Note 33 1997-98
- Longitudinal Studies on Australian Youth 2003 *Dynamics of the Australian Youth Labour Market: The 1975 Cohort, 1996-2000* LSAY report 34 ACER
- McClure P (Chair) (2000) *Participation Support for a more Equitable Society* Final Report for the Reference Group on Welfare Reform Canberra DFaCS
- McClure P 2003 *Realising the Potential of Mature Age People through Social and Economic Participation*. The Pursuing Opportunity and Prosperity Conference Melbourne Nov 2003
- Mission Australia 2000 *No “use by date” An advocacy statement on mature aged workers and unemployment*.
- OECD 2001 *Economic Survey of Australia*
- OECD 2003 “*Countries Face Slow Growth and Escalating Welfare Bills, unless Older Workers Remain Active*” Media release.

Senate Select Committee on Superannuation 2003 *Planning for Retirement*

Social Exclusion Unit 2003 (<http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/index>)

Webster Elizabeth (date unknown) *Unemployment in Australia*, Full Employment Project

Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social research.

(www.economics.unimelb.edu.au/TLdevelopment/econochat/WebsterEcon9)

Attachment 1

Mission Australia's Programs for Young People

Multi state Programs

Reconnect (Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales Queensland)

Mission Australia's Reconnect program is an early intervention program which aims to improve the level of engagement of homeless young people, or those at risk of homelessness, with family, work, education, training and the community.

Reconnect is for young people, aged 12-18, who are planning to leave home or have recently left. It also targets parents, guardians or families, concerned about a young person, who is thinking about leaving home or has recently left. Reconnect is also involved in a range of activities such as offering training and providing consultancy to other services on early intervention issues, helping with parenting education groups and developing resources for families and the community.

New South Wales programs

Campbelltown Recreation and Leisure Program

This program is a partnership between the community and Mission Australia to run social, recreational and educational skills based and self help programs. The community is responsible for administering the groups and providing teachers/facilitators, with the venue and childcare being provided by Mission Australia's Campbelltown Family, Youth and Community Services. The educational and skills based groups give participants the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge to help them to join, or return to, the workforce.

Activities are open to all ages, with some groups specifically designed for designated ages, such as young people.

Campbelltown Drug and Alcohol Awareness Program

The Drug and Alcohol Awareness program (DAAP) is a prevention/education program, aimed at minimizing all drug use harms among people, aged 12-25, and their families, living in the Macarthur region.

The program provides information about the effects of all types of drug and alcohol to all enquirers. Mission Australia uses a number of innovative projects to heighten awareness of drug and alcohol issues. While targeting the 12-25 age groups, the program is open to all community members in the Macarthur region. It works closely with other youth programs and local schools in Macarthur.

Clifton Youth Service

Mission Australia's Clifton Youth Services in Sydney is an early intervention program to support young people, who are recently homeless or at risk of homelessness. Giving priority to their immediate needs, safety and well being, Mission Australia aims to improve the stability in young people's living situations and help reconciliation with families, where appropriate. Young people can access to a wide range of generic and specialist support services. Mission Australia encourages young people to make informed choices, set goals and make positive decisions about their lives, while being supported in their education, employment or training.

The program targets young people, aged 14-18, who are at risk of homelessness or have been out of home for no more than 12 weeks. Referrals come from schools, families, government departments, friends and other local youth services.

Creative Youth Initiatives

Community Youth initiatives are a unique specialist service for homeless and at risk people, aged 16-25. It has proven to be a positive and successful response to the complex needs and issues these young people face. Through the creative arts, CYI aims to provide positive learning and educational experiences to build self esteem, confidence and a sense of achievement, and to improve literacy and numeracy skills in a non-threatening environment.

The programs target young people, who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or socially disadvantaged. Our referrals come via word of mouth, youth refuges, departments of Juvenile Justice and Community Services, and mental health and other youth focused services. Young people come to us with many issues, including substance abuse, homelessness, mental health, family breakdown, unemployment and poor educational experiences.

Drummoyne Lodge

Mission Australia's Drummoyne Lodge provides medium to long term semi-independent accommodation for homeless and disadvantaged young people aged 18-24.

Young people referred to Drummoyne Lodge come from all over Sydney and are referred by government departments, family, friends and other youth services. Most of these young people have experienced varying degrees of neglect, isolation and/or perhaps some form of abuse. After becoming homeless or being at imminent risk of homelessness, these young adults have made the decision to change their lives. level of support we are able to give our residents, thus maximising available opportunities available to them.

Harold Lodge

Mission Australia helps young people in need or at risk with family style mediation, long term accommodation, supportive intervention and guidelines. We also assist young people to further their education, living skills and employment possibilities. Harold Lodge encourages the development of self esteem, confidence, positive social interaction and independence.

Harold Lodge has provided a unique service for the past 20 years, responding to homeless young people and those at risk, aged 14-18, male and female, in the Macarthur and surrounding areas. Our referrals come from other accommodation units, counselors, schools, families, the Department of Community Services, or the young people themselves.

Lemmongrove Lodge

Mission Australia's Lemmongrove Lodge Transitional Youth Services provides secure accommodation for young homeless people, aged 16-21. We help with living skills, budgeting, hygiene, menu planning/cooking, recreational activities, referral, advice, resume preparation, health, legal, family reconciliation (mutually requested) and exit housing. The Day Program and Outreach Program for young people, aged 17-25, provides transport, meals, laundry, court support, retrieval, and storage and removal of belongings. There are links to other services for brokerage, counseling, health, other accommodation options and exit housing.

Lemmongrove lodge targets young people (16-25) from Penrith, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Mt Druitt regions. Referrals come from young people, other refuges, family, friends, schools, health professionals, police and Department of Community Services.

Miller Youth Services

Mission Australia's Miller Youth Centre seeks to enhance the emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual development of disadvantaged young people and those at risk. This is achieved through various activities, which encourage young people to re-focus on positive lifestyle options.

Miller youth services target people aged 12-24, who are juvenile justice clients, drug and alcohol abusers, unemployed people, those of non-English speaking/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island background, homeless or likely to be homeless, early school leavers, young people with anti-social behavior, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Radio House

Mission Australia's Radio House provides medium to long term supported accommodation for homeless and disadvantaged young people, aged 14-18, who are offered a comfortable, safe environment where they can feel cared for and valued.

Radio house targets young people, most of whom are from Sydney's northern beaches and are referred by schools, government departments, family, friends and other youth services. Young people come to us when life at home has become

intolerable or when the family unit has irretrievably broken down. Many are from dysfunctional family backgrounds, where parents might have had few skills or were struggling with their own addictions and mental health issues.

Supported Living Extra Program

Mission Australia's Supported Living Extra Program (SLEP) is a 12 month supported housing program to help young people, aged 16-18, serving a supervision order with the Department of Juvenile Justice, to acquire independent living skills. The relationship between homelessness and crime is complex. For many offenders, homelessness plays a major role in continuing their lifestyle.

By funding a partnership Argyle Community Housing, Mission Australia supplies case management and support for services, brokerage and living skills programs.

Triple Care Farm

Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm (TCF) is a residential, treatment and vocational training program. It helps young people address barriers to change negative behaviors and supports them to integrate into a more positive community. The program attempts to provide this service with the least intrusive intervention as possible.

The program targets young people, aged 16-21, male and female, with complex backgrounds. This includes multiple offending behavior, subsistence abuse, mental health issues, abuse and trauma. Many have multiple and intense support needs that can not be catered for in the traditional services. Referral agencies to Triple Care Farm include the departments of Juvenile Justice, Community Services and Health, family, doctors, probation and parole, Mission Australia services and the young people themselves.

The Crossing

The Crossing is Mission Australia's long term, intensive case management service for young people, addressing high and/or complex needs. It promotes their capacity to make positive choices and increase skills, which help them to live independently and inter-dependently within the community.

The primary target group is young people, aged 18-25, who are:

- homeless/ at risk of homelessness
- excluded from or finding it hard to access other support services
- young people with complex issues, multiple needs and/or challenging behaviors.

A secondary target group is young people, aged 16-18, also with high and complex needs. Young people who access the service are homeless/at risk of homelessness and often present with multiple issues such as:

- a history of abuse
- drug and alcohol dependency
- poor education, vocational or living skills.

Referrals are made from a broad range of government and non-government agencies.

The Shopfront Youth Legal Centre

The Shopfront Youth Legal Centre provides free legal advice and court representation to young people, aged 25 and under, who might be homeless, disadvantaged, have an intellectual disability or a mental illness. The Shopfront is run jointly by Freehills, Mission Australia and The Salvation Army. The Shopfront deals with a variety of matters, including criminal law, victims' compensation, child welfare and family law, social security, housing, employment, debt and consumer claims.

The Shopfront targets homeless and disadvantaged young people aged up to 25. Our main priority is the Kings Cross or inner city area, but we recognise our clients are very mobile and homelessness is not confined to Kings Cross. Accordingly, we work with clients throughout Sydney. In the past few years, the number of clients from south western Sydney has increased significantly.

Youth Peer Mediation Program

Mission Australia developed the Youth Peer Mediation Program (YPMP) as a new approach to providing services to marginalised young people, who have left school, or are at risk of leaving school early. The program works with these young people in youth centers, schools, refuges and community groups to increase their skills in conflict resolution and peer mediation. We also train interested young people to become peer mediators.

The program's main target group is young people, aged 12-25, and youth workers in the Macarthur region. However, the YPMP will also provide a service to other interested community members.

Youth Links Post Release Support Program (PRSP)

Youth Links Post Release Support Program (PRSP) strives to link young people involved with Juvenile Justice back into their communities. This is a structured 18 week (six weeks' pre release + 12 weeks' post release) community based program, which works in partnership with the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice and Mission Australia. The program operates in four local government areas in Sydney's south west – Campbelltown, Liverpool, Camden and Wollondilly

PRSP targets those

- Needing help re-integrating back into the community after a period in custody.
- Young people who will have no mandated supervision order with Juvenile Justice.
- Those undertaking conditional bail.

Northern Territory

Darwin Youth Beat

Mission Australia provides a Youth Outreach Service to young people in the northern suburbs of Darwin who are on the streets at night. The focus of the service is on engaging and connecting with young people for the purpose of relationship building, information provision, referral and crisis response.

Mission Australia's Darwin Youth Beat targets people up to age 25.

Palmerston Youth Beat

Mission Australia provides a youth outreach project in the Palmerston central business district. The aim of the project is to facilitate the exchange information between workers and young people so that appropriate referrals to, other programs can be made. Palmerston Youth Beat targets young people of Palmerston up to age 25.

Queensland

Project Circuit Breaker

Mission Australia's Project Circuit Breaker is a mobile crisis response, family intervention and support service, which helps families with children, aged 10-16. We use a responsive, family centred, strength based approach, which includes a broad range of techniques, strategies and integrated services. The program helps families to cope with crises and develop resilience and skills to prevent recurrences.

Project Circuit Breaker is an early intervention and prevention trial for families with children, aged 10-16. It services Brisbane's northern suburbs. Circuit Breaker has also introduced other services to further support families, such as a series of new strength based parenting programs, young men's anger management workshops and community based initiatives, including monthly newsletter and family activities..

Border Rivers Transport Service

The Border Rivers Transport Service is a 12-month Innovative and Collaborative Youth Servicing (ICYS) Pilot, which provides safe, regular, reliable and supported transport to young people from the NSW/QLD border communities of Toomelah, Boggabilla and Goondiwindi. The bus at this stage operates four runs a day between 8.00am and 5.00pm. The Border Rivers Transport Service is primarily provided to young people aged 12-21, however we encourage other community members to access the service when it is not required by young people.

South Australia

Reynella Enterprise and Youth Centre

Mission Australia's Reynella Enterprise and Youth Centre (REYC) is funded by and operated in partnership with the City of Onkaparinga. It provides programs, designed to develop and enhance young people's enterprise and personal development skills, allowing participants to continue in education and training, enter the workforce or set up their own enterprise.

The centre's range of activities generally targets young people, deemed to be at risk. This includes people, who are at risk of leaving school early, are unemployed (or under employed), or need more intensive mentoring than their mainstream counterparts.

The Southern Youth Xchange

The Southern Youth Xchange is provided by Mission Australia with funding from, and partnership with, the City of Onkaparinga. It offers:

- an information hub and reference facility on youth issues for local government and other community service groups
- a focal point for assessing local youth needs for use in research, data and reports
- a base from which youth development officers form collaborative partnerships, monitor needs and provide information and referral, where appropriate.

Target Groups

- All young people, aged 13-25, living in the City of Onkaparinga.
- Local schools.
- Local service providers.
- Families and carers of young people.
- Other community members.

Mission Australia's Youth Adventure Services (YAS),- Risk It!

Risk It!, is an Adventure and Personal Development Program is for young people (aged 12-15) from secondary schools within the City of Onkaparinga. The Commonwealth Government funded program caters for students, who are having problems fitting into mainstream schooling. Designed as a proactive prevention program, Risk It! Aims to have a positive influence on young people by providing adventure programs, counseling and support, and mentoring for participants and their families. Another component is the family liaison work, which uses a case management approach to broaden the support offered to participants to include their families.

Risk It! targets young people who are 'at risk of being at risk' – those who need additional support to ensure they maintain connection with school and family. Referrals come primarily from secondary schools within the City of Onkaparinga.

Tasmania

U-Turn

Theft of cars is one of the most common forms of crime in Australia and costs the community approximately \$1 billion per year. Traditional justice responses are costly and have had limited success in reducing offending. U-Turn is a diversionary program for young motor vehicle offenders being delivered by Mission Australia in Tasmania.

The target group for the program is young people aged 15-20 years of age with a history of motor vehicle offending, or who are at risk of becoming involved in motor vehicle offences.

U-Turn Supported Accommodation

U-Turn participants are assisted within a supported accommodation environment. U-Turn is a diversionary program for young offenders being delivered by Mission Australia under contract to Tasmania Police.

The target group for the program is young people aged 15-20 years of age with a history of motor vehicle theft offending, or who are at risk of becoming in motor vehicle theft. The participants are drawn from the North and North West of Tasmania.

Victoria

REEP (Regional Environmental Employment Program)

Mission Australia's aims to address two of Australia's national concerns: youth unemployment and land degradation. A unique program, REEP embodies the spirit of the conservation movement, while mentoring and developing the skills of disadvantaged youth to take on the training, employment and environmental challenges of the future.

REEP targets young people, aged 15-24 who are:

- All registered as unemployed with Centrelink for at least six months.
- Not undertaking training or further education (strong preference for people without qualifications).
- Interested in pursuing environmental or outdoor employment opportunities.

REEP strongly encourages participation by young women and Indigenous young people.

Youth Futures- L.I.F.E. (Living in Full Effect) Program- Frankston

The LIFE program is funded by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Aging. The aim of LIFE is to empower young people 15-25 years of age with substance abuse issues through participation in a creative LIFE Skills program and one to one support sessions.

Young People 15-25 years of age who are not engaged in education or employment as a result of substance dependency and other risk factors inherent to the client group:

Youth Futures- Dandenong Plaza Youth Information Centre- Dandenong

Youth Futures (YF) was established by a group of concerned private sector executives who identified the need to assist the growing numbers of at risk young people who appeared 'too hard' for existing education, employment and training providers. Young people are assisted with information and referral to other services

Other programs include:

- ◆ Youth Voices Leadership Program

- ◆ Schools Information Days
- ◆ Urban Quest Talent Competition

Target Groups

Youth at risk 13-25, not engaged in education, employment or training

Western Australia

Leaving Care Service

Mission Australia's Leaving Care Service supports young people, leaving state care, to fulfill their desire for a more successful transition to independence.

This service is available to young people, aged four-25, who are leaving or have recently left Department care. Many referrals come from the Department's case workers. Eligible young people can also refer themselves. Often, these young people engage in high risk behaviour, have had multiple out of home placements and have limited support networks.

Northern Suburbs Community Service

Mission Australia's Northern Suburbs Community Service in Perth provides support, via counselling and referral, to families and youth who are suffering conflict in the family domain. We support and help those in need and try to resolve tenant problems tenants, so they can live in secure, independent accommodation within the community.

Target Groups

Girrawheen Youth and Family Support Service

(GYFSS) -- families and children in the northern suburbs, who are experiencing conflict and disunity. supported Housing Assistance Program (SHAP) -- families experiencing tenancy difficulties within the Ministry of Housing and, consequently, are at risk of becoming homeless.

On-TRACK

Mission Australia's On-TRACK service in Perth is designed to ensure the safety and well being of young people, by providing a safe and supportive environment as an alternative to police custody and altercation.

Young people who are intoxicated or disorientated on city streets, and at risk of being taken into custody.

57% of attendees are aged 13-15.

Youth Accommodation Support Service

The Youth Accommodation Support Service (YASS) program operates in Victoria Park and offers young people aged between 15 to 18 years who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, a safe and supportive environment. Other aims are to identify and respond to the issues that lead to youth homelessness and to assist young people in maintaining their accommodation and developing skills to enable them to continue to live independently. YASS provides temporary crisis accommodation for up to six young people in a safe and caring home, whilst working with clients and making plans for their future. YASS also offers the Transitional Housing Program, where up to 16 young people aged between 16 to 25 years, can make the transition to independent living in home units maintained by Mission Australia.

The program targets homeless young people between 15 to 25 years of age and those at risk of becoming homeless

Yirra

A crisis service to assist young people make positive changes in relation to their substance abuse issues.

Target Group

Young people aged 12 to 18 years who are experiencing problems related to substance misuse.