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Building Jobs

Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive

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BUILDING JOBS

RENEWAL SA'S WORKS PROGRAM AT PLAYFORD ALIVE

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KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

This report provides a detailed overview of Renewal SA's Works Program implemented as part of Playford Alive, a large scale urban renewal project representing a partnership between Renewal SA, the City of Playford, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI), Housing SA and the local community. It documents evidence generated by semi-structured interviews with project staff and participants of the program. Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive requires private contractors and service providers to deliver either work experience and longer term placements or training to a number of local unemployed people as a condition of being awarded the contract. Key findings from this report include;

1. Early pessimism based upon ideological objections to 'government interference' in business decisions proved to be ill-founded and contractors appear to have embraced the program.

2. There exists a diverse range of physical and psychological barriers to the unemployed entering the labour market and this justifies the eclectic nature of the Works Program.

3. The 'three tiered' structure of the Works Program means that the unique circumstances and support requirements of individuals can be best addressed.

4. The Works Program was viewed as particularly useful by women who had taken time out of the labour market due to childcare responsibilities as it enabled them to retrain, build human capital and change career trajectories.

5. Both the work experience placement and onsite training offered participants the opportunity to 'showcase' themselves and 'get a foot in the door'.

6. The Works Program recruits through multiple entry points, both private sector and public institutions, and has succeeded in creating awareness of the program throughout the community.

7. All three streams incorporated within the Works Program have been well used. These streams include 1) classroom training 2) Live Site training and 3) work experience placements.

8. The Works Program generates quantifiable and measureable outcomes, for example new jobs and formal qualifications, however it also generates a range of subjective outcomes which are more likely to encourage longer term employment and other social benefits.

The dedicated Works Live Training Site Compound at Playford Alive

1 Introduction

Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive represents an innovative collaboration between Renewal SA, the City of Playford, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI), Housing SA and the local community. Launched in 2008, the new Works Program seeks to provide economic opportunities for people within the City of Playford through training or employment, premised on the idea that the cause of much social exclusion and multiple social disadvantage is an absence of employment. The Works Program incorporates three separate streams to address the diverse circumstances faced by different people in the local community. These include, first, classroom based learning, second onsite 'Live Training' and third work experience placements. On a case by case basis, these three streams have been incorporated into Renewal SA's contracts with private contractors and service providers as part of the Playford Alive regeneration program. Over the period from the program's inception to March 2014, over 1300 local people have undertaken pre-employment training. A further 650 local people have undertaken Live Training, of which 85 per cent gained the respective formal qualification, and over 200 local people have undertaken a work experience placement resulting directly in around 110 new jobs across a wide range of industries. It is reasonable to expect that jobs have also been created indirectly through the program as a result of improved employability and human capital. The success experienced in the City of Playford has resulted in Renewal SA including the Works Program contract clause more broadly into commercial land sales as well as renewal programs in other Local Authority areas throughout Adelaide.

Using detailed interviews with project staff and participants, this report provides an overview of Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive. The report begins with some contextual background information about both the Playford Alive project and Renewal SA's Works Program. It then details the motivation, operation and perceived benefits of the 'three streams' of the Works Program. The second half of the report presents four 'stories' from participants who pursued one of these three streams. Semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted so that their first hand experiences can be shared. Each of the four case studies presents a concise 'snapshot' of the participants' lives before, during and after engaging with the Works Program. The report concludes with a summary of some of the key lessons learnt from the program.

Participants of Live Training provided by registered training organisation 'IS Australia'

2 URBAN RENEWAL AS A STIMULUS FOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Including both public and private investment, Playford Alive represents a $1 billion urban renewal project led by Renewal SA in partnership with the City of Playford, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI), Housing SA and the local community. It was approved by State Cabinet in 2006 and work was subsequently initiated in early 2008. The project is located in Northern Adelaide, in the local government area of Playford. It includes both the development of 'greenfield' land in the suburbs of Munno Para, as well as the renewal of the adjacent suburbs of Smithfield Plains and Davoren Park. Collectively known as the 'Peachey Belt', these two suburbs represent some of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia with local people enduring multiple social disadvantage. The renewal project incorporates a variety of building and infrastructures projects including new housing, public housing upgrades, upgraded shopping centres, a new GP super clinic, state-of-the-art schools, transport upgrades, a new railway station, the Stretton Centre innovation hub, sporting facilities, parks and a new town centre. Renewal SA, the Urban Renewal Authority for South Australia, is responsible for overseeing the development as part of its remit is to manage surplus government land and assets.

BoysTown Social Enterprise employee, Joseph – home refurbishment project

Emma, the Training and Employment Initiatives Manager for Renewal SA, recalled how the approach they adopted on the Playford Alive renewal project differed from other land sales and development projects. In most cases Renewal SA would take an area of 'greenfield' land and sell it to private developers who would develop the land. However, in the case of Playford Alive, Renewal SA is not only the land owner but is also the developer. She claimed that the reason for this is that:

> *"The 570 hectares of greenfield land for development was adjacent to one of the most disadvantaged areas in Australia … one of the key objectives was to make sure that local people prosper from the economic development and economic growth that Playford Alive provides and it was felt that government was best placed to ensure this".*

A key focus of any urban regeneration program is the creation of economic opportunities for the local population through employment, training and education which is often achieved by attracting new business to an area. Whilst Playford Alive will undoubtedly attract private business to the area over time it was also felt that the building and infrastructure capital works program itself could also offer local people an opportunity to gain work experience, training and employment as well as being part of the regeneration of their own community. As such, the Director of the Lifelong Learning Department for the City of Playford supported the creation of a dedicated training and employment post within Renewal SA. Their remit was to develop a demand driven employment and training strategy linked to infrastructure and building contracts which were part of the Playford Alive regeneration program. Emma, who had an employment background within both the recruitment and NGO sectors, was appointed to the post in May 2008; she claimed, passionately, that:

> *"the best way out of disadvantage is a job. The best way to have more choices is a job. So if we could use the state funded infrastructure of one of Australia's largest urban renewal projects to drive some kind of economic opportunities for local people, work ready and not work ready, it's not the be all and end all of social inclusion in the North but what a great way for a state government to give back".*

A Project Officer for Learning, Training and Employment, Maureen, was also appointed by the City of Playford to support Emma 'on the ground' and within the community.

3 A THREE STREAM APPROACH TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Renewal SA's Works Program forms the basis of the Playford Alive training and employment strategy. The strategic design, development and overall operation of the program are the responsibility of Renewal SA. The Project Officer provided by the City of Playford undertakes a more 'hands on' role vetting potential applicants and working with agencies on the ground. The overarching objective of Renewal SA's Works Program, implemented through Playford Alive, is to provide economic opportunities for all people within the local community through training or employment and fostering collaboration and building capacity with NGOs in the area. The program is premised on the idea that the cause of much social exclusion and 'multiple social disadvantage' is an absence of employment and as such a training and employment strategy is essential in delivering social inclusion outcomes. Emma described some of the consequences of generational unemployment within the area as including a lack of numeracy and literacy, low educational attainment, drug and alcohol issues, domestic violence and teenage pregnancy and believed that the solution is 'a hand up, not a hand out'. It is recognised that different routes to employment are required as different people within the local area have different needs, as Emma identified:

> *"A stream of different initiatives was required to be able to target anybody no matter what condition they were in … there had to be work experience and employment for some and connections to different styles of training for some others to better their chances of employment in the future".*

Consultation was undertaken with a range of different local agencies, for example disability service providers, community NGOs, registered training organisations, job services Australia and partnership brokers. The Playford Alive training and employment model was subsequently designed to use new infrastructure projects and land sales linked to the Playford Alive urban renewal program to create jobs and training for local people. It incorporates three key elements:

1) Classroom based training programs (and referrals to other agencies)

2) Live Training Sites

3) Work experience and longer term job placements as a contractual condition of tendering for Renewal SA contracts

All three streams are demand driven in that training, work experience and longer term job placements are to meet the demands of employers in the area. The program is advertised widely within the community, in the media and through local agencies involved in training and employment. Social media has also been embraced with many Facebook posts advertising the Works Program receiving, literally, thousands of views. Of approximately 1700 applicants, around 70 per cent were referrals from agencies and 30 per cent were direct applications by an individual. Which one of the three streams an individual applies for depends upon their level of 'job readiness', personal interest and existing skills and qualifications which are identified in consultation with individual Case Mangers from local agencies and assessments made by the respective registered training

organisations and the City of Playford Project Officer. Moreover, applicants can progress from one stream to another, for example, from a training program onto work experience and subsequently into employment. Employment of local people is the overarching goal and so the program centres around making training, work experience and jobs for people from the local community a contractual condition in land sales and 'contracting-out' services to private providers in relation to regeneration and infrastructure projects. Through the competitive tendering process for infrastructure projects in the area, Renewal SA writes into their contracts mandatory requirements for contractors to support a number of Live Training placements and/or work experience placements and jobs for local people. The three key elements of the Works program are explained in more detail below.

3.1 Pre-employment classroom based training

Not everyone who is searching for employment is actually 'job ready' and so the first element of the Works Program is classroom based training. This stream is particularly popular with younger participants, many of whom come straight from school, while others are unemployed for long periods and make contact through Job Services Australia providers. One of the main reasons for not being 'job ready' is the lack of vocational qualifications held by the applicant. This is particularly the case for those pursuing construction work as Workplace Health and Safety regulations require them to hold specific qualifications before entering a site, for example the Induction for Construction Work certificate (SA White Card). A wide range of training courses are available which are usually provided at Certificate II level (entry level); these include for example, civil construction, horticulture, retail, age care, disability and home community care and hospitality. Local applicants are assessed by the relevant registered training organisation and the Playford Project Officer to ensure that they meet the specific academic standards required for the fully funded courses. Those deemed unsuitable or lacking basic skills required for employment, such as numeracy and literacy or resume writing, are referred to the Career Workforce Development Agency, other organisations providing services through Federal Government funding under the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program as well as Adult Community Education programs. Training courses (mostly Certificate II level) vary in length from around four to twelve weeks and are undertaken by a range of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Over 1300 local people undertook pre-employment training through this stream of the Works program, an average of 150-200 a year. Moreover, what is seen as a particular success is the number of these individuals who subsequently gained work experience through Playford Alive infrastructure projects (see below).

Caroline – Pre-employment classroom study

3.2 Live Training Sites

The second element of the Playford Alive Works program is termed live training sites. This entails a Certificate II level qualification, fully funded by the State Government, gained through hands on experience and on the job training of between four to eight weeks, although in some cases it could run for up to 12 weeks. Live training sites take two forms. The first is for Renewal SA to identify relatively small contracts through Playford Alive's procurement schedule and rather than outsourcing them to private contractors, buying the required materials themselves and using a registered training organisation (RTO) to complete the project using local labour whilst giving appropriate training. These can either be a part of an infrastructure project that is not time sensitive or likely to impact upon other projects, or they can be unrelated to official Playford Alive infrastructure contracts. An example of the latter was the Northern Communities of Hope Church project located in Davoren Park. An old Scout Hall that had run into a state of disrepair, and subsequently closed, was converted into a new community church building. Eight unemployed local residents received live training from a registered training organisation onsite as the work was being conducted. Training participants gained a Certificate II in General Construction by building a pergola and BBQ area for the church. They subsequently gained a Certificate II in Civil Construction by installing stormwater and rainwater tanks and paving the outdoor areas. In cases such as these, live training not only resulted in local people acquiring skills and improved employability, they also became involved in building a piece of local infrastructure in their own community.

Participants of Live Training provided by registered training organisation 'IS Australia'

The second type of live training site involved writing live training into commercial contracts that go out to competitive tender. An example of this is the current construction of the new town park in Munno Para. The private contractor agreed to a training provider, of Renewal SA's choice, to be located on site and provide 15 Live Training placements for local people. Live training had been popular as many people, particularly those with poor academic skills that hadn't done well at school, preferred 'hands on learning and learning by doing'. Live training gives participants industry specific skills and a qualification as well as on-site experience, significantly improving their employability and resume. Moreover, Emma identified other less tangible benefits from Live Training in terms of employability; for example she believed that:

"it might not get them a job straight away, but it might just switch on a little light … they might say 'I never realised I liked horticulture, I'll go look for work in this area now'. 'I've enjoyed my Certificate II level course, maybe I will do a Certificate III … It's also about engagement, getting people involved and interested in local development".

According to official Renewal SA figures, 635 local people have undertaken live training on a total of 19 live training sites. Around 85 per cent of all participants gained the respective qualification. Moreover, similar to the pre-employment training stream, a considerable proportion of live training participants went on to participate in the work experience stream and subsequently gained employment.

3.3 Contractual requirement for work experience and job placement

Bill – Work experience at Fencing World

The third and final element of the Works Program incorporates short work experience placements, and longer term job placements, for local people into all Renewal SA contracts relating to Playford Alive. This initiative is an innovative development of an existing South Australian Government (DPTI and DFEEST) policy which requires contractors to fulfil a list of prerequisites, including a requirement to employ at least 15 per cent of workers from the local population on larger projects in excess of $50 million. However, the vast majority of projects associated with the Playford Alive renewal project are valued considerably lower than this. Advice received from the Crown Solicitor's Office indicated that Renewal SA could re-word contracts given to private developers/service providers to require them to give work-experience to a set number of local people, and subsequently offer a specified number of longer term jobs for the remainder of that contract.

This clause, incorporated in new contracts, is designed to be as simple and user friendly as possible so as not to generate complaints or opposition from potential contractors. The number of work experience placements a contractor is required to take depends upon the value of the contract, the type of work and contract duration. For contracts valued between $1 million and $5 million, six to eight work experience placements are required although this is more likely with construction, trenching and concrete paving work and less likely where a lot of heavy machine operation is required. Contracts of lower value require fewer placements and are agreed on a case by case basis.

The work experience placement is formally known as an 'unpaid work trial' and involves five days working alongside experienced employees with adequate supervision. The work experience placement has two key functions; first, it gives local people valuable experience of work, stimulates an interest in employment, improves candidate's

employability and resumes, and gives them an opportunity to impress a potential employer. Second, it gives the contractor/employer the opportunity to observe participants over a five day work trial period and so acts as a screening device for more permanent potential employment. Both these functions are important as after completion of the work experience placement, contractors are required to offer half of these individuals paid employment until the completion of the contract with Renewal SA. When this stream of the Playford Alive Works program was developed, there was some initial concern that it might generate resistance from potential developers, however, this was short lived as Emma explained:

> *"The contractors said to us, 'we need staff anyway so if you can find us local people that are trained and have the relevant tickets and qualifications that's great for us.' … so in a way we became an internal recruitment agency for all of our contractors to ensure that as many local people as possible have an opportunity to get employment".*

Out of all the contracts she had been involved with over the preceding six years, Emma could think of only one instance where a contractor had been opposed and she concluded that overall the vast majority of contractors had embraced the scheme and benefitted from employing local people within their own communities. Moreover, the initial success with contractors in Playford Alive projects resulted in work experience and job placements being incorporated into private commercial land sale contracts. One example is the building of the new town centre in Munno Para where one developer, a large private fast food retailer, has agreed to provide 15 work experience placements initially resulting in 10 jobs for local people as well as 15 live training placements which could potentially lead to further employment. Other examples include a fast food outlet, a service station, a supermarket, a tavern, a religious site and a child care centre; furthermore jobs for local people are also being introduced to the subsequent operation of these businesses as well as in their construction.

Adelaide Property & Gardens work experience. Lachlan (left) with manager Jason (right)

This stream of the Works Program has generated valuable outcomes and benefits for participants. Renewal SA statistics indicate that 205 local people have undertaken a work experience placement through this scheme, which resulted directly in 107 new jobs in a wide range of sectors including engineering consultancy, civil contracting, office workers, marketing, PR, land sales, building and construction sites, housing refurbishments, civil construction, general construction, horticulture, landscaping and fencing. Though it is difficult to generate exact figures, it is known that after the completion of the Renewal SA contract a large proportion of contractors offered subsequent employment to people placed through this scheme. One final positive outcome, identified as a great success, relates to a number of contracts Renewal SA awarded to a social enterprise called Boystown. Renewal SA placed between 15-20 local disadvantaged young people, many of whom had been involved with the juvenile justice system, in transitional

jobs with pay for three to eight months. This included landscaping, Housing SA housing refurbishments, a Council revegetation project and a major council building refurbishment program (PlayfordConneXions).

BoysTown Social Enterprise employees – (left to right) Carol Anne, Joseph, Ethan, Junior, Ashley, Heath, Jackie and Emma from Renewal SA

The following section illustrates real life examples of local people who have engaged with the Works Program through one of the three streams outlined above. It presents four case studies, detailing the experiences of participants before, during and after engagement with the Works Program.

4 From the participant's point of view

This section details the experiences of four participants in Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive. Such case studies are essential to better understand the circumstances in which the program is operating, the barriers which the program has had to overcome and both the objective and subjective benefits it generates for participants. Too often, analyses of programs of this nature focus solely upon short term quantifiable data, such as job creation. Whilst this is important, it only tells part of the story and can neglect longer term and subjective benefits which are likely to contribute to employment as well as wider social indictors. Each case study presents a 'snapshot' of the participants' lives before, during and after engaging with the Works Program. This enables us to better understand how the Works Program has impacted upon the participants' lives, in a work and non-work context. Each of the case studies addresses the following:

1. Experiences before participating in the Works Program
2. Involvement in the Works Program
3. Training outcomes and employment benefits

Following the four case studies a short summary overview of the key findings are presented. A summary and broad conclusions are then provided.

4.1 Works Program participant 1 – Jean Claude

Festus (left), Kelvin the manager (centre) and Jean Claude (right)

4.1.1 Experiences before participating in the Works Program

Jean Claude is a recent migrant to Australia. He was born, and schooled, in Rwanda but political and social unrest, and subsequent violence, resulted in Jean Claude fleeing the country as a child to the Congo, before moving to Cameroon. As a teenager in Cameroon Jean Claude undertook a range of vocational qualifications and trained as a carpenter. He claimed that he possessed 'natural skills' in carpentry and was passionate about pursuing

a career within the building trade as well as in cabinet making. Further political unrest in Cameroon however, resulting in the intervention of the United Nations (UN), meant that Jean Claude was given political asylum in Australia in 2008. Jean Claude recalled:

> *"I found it very very difficult, French was my first language and without being able to speak English I couldn't do anything … It was hard to make friends, find work or learn in school".*

Upon arriving in Australia Jean Claude enrolled in a secondary school in an attempt to gain basic Australian academic qualifications, which he successfully achieved within the following three years. He left school in 2011 where he managed to obtain 'a little bit' of work experience in the building and construction industry, through a program called 'Habitat for Humanity', but this did not result in continuous employment. As such, Jean Claude searched for work in carpentry, writing cover letters to a multitude of companies and physically dropping off his resume, however he claimed that he did not receive a single reply or interview from these companies. Jean Claude indicated that he felt very alone over this period and that he did not know where to turn to for support. He decided to widen his search criteria to any work in the construction trade but again received no replies. Finally, he widened his search criteria to 'any job at all', but to no avail. Jean Claude was unsure as to why his job search was so unsuccessful; he believed that his difficulty with English language could have contributed but also believed that, as a recent non-English speaking migrant, he lacked knowledge of the employment market in South Australia, was unsure of what support was available to him to aid his transition into work or training, and simply did not have the informal networks or relationships possessed by many local Australians in the same position. As such, Jean Claude remained unemployed for two and a half years before coming into contact with Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive.

4.1.2 Involvement in the Works Program

Jean Claude on an APG work experience

Jean Claude was informed about Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive by an employment service provider called Job Prospects. Job Prospects, who were working with Centrelink at the time, sought to bring jobseekers and employers together to encourage sustained employment with a particular focus on the longer term unemployed and those that had found it hard to maintain work including those with disabilities, the young and the homeless. Jean Claude undertook an initial pre-selection interview with Job Prospects and Playford Alive's Project Officer, Maureen, where his desire to work outdoors was identified. Unfortunately they were unable to place Jean Claude within the construction industry at that time, however, Renewal SA were contracting services from a company called APG (a subsidiary of Bedford Industries) to provide landscaping and horticultural grounds maintenance services. As part of APG's involvement in the Playford Alive regeneration program they offered a number of work experience placements and paid employment positions to unemployed people from the local area as a result of the mandatory wording of their contract. Jean

Claude was accepted on the five day work experience placement, starting the following week.

Jean Claude explained that most of his work experience placement was part of a development program, regenerating the old public housing stock in Northern Adelaide, including the gardens. He claimed that whilst there was no formal training, a Supervisor introduced him to the work and talked him through what he needed to do – he believed that there was no need for detailed training as the vast majority of the work was manual. He also recalled how a fellow team-member took him 'under his wing', helped him out and befriended him. Jean Claude stated that:

> *"I enjoyed being in work, I really did … it wasn't necessarily the work itself, I found it a bit basic, it was just being in work, feeling useful, talking to people and making friends … I enjoyed it, they were good to me".*

As highlighted above, Jean Claude described the work as relatively basic but he was pleased that the work experience placement had given him the opportunity to get 'a foot in the door' and give him the opportunity to prove that he was a 'good worker'. He described his tasks as including, "weeding, irrigation, planting, laying soil, mulching, digging, and using some machines".

4.1.3 Training outcomes and employment benefits

Jean Claude recalled how he was delighted when APG, the company where he had undertaken his work experience placement, phoned him the following week to offer him a full time casual position landscaping and gardening. He felt that the hard work he had put into his work experience had paid off and had directly resulted in his subsequent employment. At the time of interview, Jean Claude was 24 and had just been made full time permanent after just over two years with the company. He claimed to be undertaking a wide range of gardening jobs:

> *"From small back yards, to big projects like parks and cutting trees … I've also planted trees, cut grass, removed graffiti and picked up litter, done landscaping and irrigation and I'm just about to do some fencing".*

Jean Claude claimed that this year he was also starting a new TAFE course on landscaping and gardening to add some formal qualifications to his experience. Whilst Jean Claude admitted that he still had a passion for carpentry and found the gardening quite easy, he clearly identified the benefits of his employment stating that:

> *"I'm improving my resume all the time, opening new opportunities in the future, I'm still learning, using more complex machinery, becoming more employable … not to mention being financially self-sufficient ".*

Jean Claude predicted that he would stay in his current job for the foreseeable future as he enjoyed the work, enjoyed meeting and working with new people and being financially stable. However, he also wanted to pursue his dream of becoming a carpenter in the future and he was determined to find a way to do both gardening and carpentry. John Claude concluded by suggesting that he would still have been unemployed "if it hadn't have been for the work experience" he had undertaken as part of Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive.

4.2 Works Program participant 2 – Tilly

Tilly chatting to care home resident Mary

4.2.1 Experiences before participating in the Works Program

Tilly had recently moved to South Australia from Kalgoorlie in Western Australia where her husband had worked on a 'fly in fly out' basis for a mining company. Unfortunately, cutbacks meant that her husband had been made redundant in 2012 and so the couple, along with their children, returned to Adelaide (his home town) where he gained employment within defence manufacture, more specifically submarine production. Tilly was originally from New Zealand but had lived in Australia for 12 years. She had three children aged 14, nine and six and had been out of the labour market for the preceding eight years bringing up their children.

She was 36 years old when they arrived in South Australia and her youngest child had just reached kindergarten age meaning that she would have more free time and as a result would be able to pursue employment. Furthermore, it had also become apparent that restructuring and cuts within the defence sector had rendered her husband's new job 'potentially insecure'. Tilly began applying for work; she accepted that, unfortunately, her time out of the labour market looking after their children, and her lack of formal qualifications, were potential barriers to employment, however she was willing to 'accept anything' and applied for around 15 jobs including casual work at McDonald's. This did not, however, generate the intended benefits, as Tilly claimed that:

> *"I didn't hear back from a single one of them, not one. It was quite demoralising but what could I do? There are simply too many people applying for too few jobs in South Australia".*

4.2.2 Involvement in the Works Program

In early 2013 Tilly's grandmother became very ill and was admitted to hospital in Brisbane. As her condition deteriorated and she became confined to her room, Tilly travelled to Brisbane to stay by her Grandmother's side to offer support and help out as best she could. Tilly admitted that she had very little experience of caring for the elderly or sick, and she hadn't realised how embarrassing and 'undignified' it could actually be for those in care. However, she looked after her grandmother and realised that she could 'give her back her dignity', spend quality time talking to her and make her feel good about

herself again. She described her experience as a very steep learning curve. Tilly claimed that ultimately her grandmother 'really appreciated her being there' and she subsequently realised that;

> *"I am good at this, and I genuinely want to make things easier for people ... I knew I could do this as a job, and I knew I could do it well".*

Tilly's search for (any) employment continued upon her return to South Australia but to no avail, until one day, purely by chance, Tilly noticed a 'tiny little' advert in the back of the Advertiser newspaper promoting a free training program linked to age care. This was part of the Works Program collaboration between Renewal SA and the City of Playford. Tilly immediately called the number on the advert and spoke to the Playford Project Officer who she described as 'very supportive and understanding' and who clearly outlined, in great detail, what the course entailed. Tilly went to a briefing and information session the following day where the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) provided a more detailed briefing to approximately 15 attendees. The RTO that was to provide the training on behalf of the program was called Equals International. Equals International was a provider of a range of nationally recognised vocational qualifications, and career pathways, with a particular focus on integrated health, aged care, community services, disability and nursing. Tilly found the session very useful and it reinforced her commitment to a career in age care and nursing. She also believed that the session gave the Project Officer and the RTO the opportunity to screen out participants that were not serious or committed to this area of expertise. Tilly was immediately accepted and started on the course just a week later.

Tilly offering support in the care home

Tilly explained that the course, which was a Certificate III in Aged Care and Home and Community Care, ran for over three months incorporating around ten weeks of classroom training followed immediately by a four week placement in a work environment. She recalled that there were around 12 people on the classroom based part of the course which was held in a training centre in Elizabeth. She described it as like being back in school, being in class at 9am five days a week and having homework to do some evenings. Tilly thrived throughout the training and described it as 'very well structured and informative'. She also claimed that it opened up new career pathways that she had not considered prior and she developed a keen interest in nursing, particularly palliative care, which focuses on relieving and preventing the suffering of patients.

Upon completion of the classroom based training, Tilly began her placement at a residential care home to the North of Adelaide. She recalled how circumstances outside of her control had meant that things had become financially strained at that time:

> *"It was difficult, I received no salary whatsoever over the period of the course, the placement was unpaid as well ... the problem was that as a New Zealand citizen I was not entitled to any real benefit assistance either ... and to make matters worse my husband lost his job whilst I was on the course".*

The placement ran over four weeks from 7am until 3pm each day. Whilst Tilly emphasised that not everything about the placement was perfect, she gained a great deal of experience from it and it opened up new employment possibilities to her. She stated that;

> *"It has taught me so much about the industry and about the job, and I can now look back upon it and learn from it, the negatives and the positives ... I suppose, if I didn't have all those experiences I would be less able to deal with them now. Now I feel more prepared to be able to deal with worst-case scenarios".*

4.2.3 Training outcomes and employment benefits

Tilly completed her Certificate III qualification in mid to late 2013 and was immediately offered a post at the residential care home where she had undertaken her placement. She took the job on a casual contract working around 20 hours a week as well as covering those absent from their shifts or undertaking emergency shifts. She appreciated the (two months) paid work experience this post gave her but subsequently found a more convenient care home close to her child's kindergarten at which she believed she would be more content working. Tilly passed on her resume and within three weeks was offered a job at the new care home.

At the time of interview, 12 months after first seeing the newspaper advert for Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive, Tilly was employed in a 'fantastic care home', in a job that she loved. Moreover, through Playford Alive, Tilly won a 'Best Training to Employment Outcome Award' and subsequently a 'Ministers Scholarship' which she used to enrol on an 18 month Nursing Diploma (Div 2) incorporating evening classes three nights a week. This formed the basis of Tilly's longer term goals, to maintain her employment in the care home whilst completing her qualification so as to pursue a career in palliative care. Tilly summarised her experiences of Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive as follows;

> *"we have an aging population and this program has provided a pathway to address this whilst also giving people skills and relieving unemployment ... it gave me a route to employment I had not considered before ... both [the classroom training and the placement] improved my employability by putting me in situations that I thought I would never be in, it helped me to see every side to what this job entails".*

4.3 Works Program participant 3 – Kody

Matthew (left) and Kody (right) on work experience with Bettio Builders

4.3.1 Experiences before participating in the Works Program

Kody was just 17 years old when he became involved in Renewal SA's Works Program. At the time he was completing his year 12 SACE qualification (South Australian Certificate of Education) at St Patrick's Technical College in Edinburgh North, part of the City of Playford local government area. Kody was studying competencies to contribute to a Certificate I and II in Building and Construction at the technical college with a particular focus on carpentry, having always wanted to pursue this as a career.

As well as classroom based carpentry training, the technical college taught compulsory academic subjects, for example maths and English, in the context of the building and construction industry. Moreover, students were encouraged to pursue part-time apprenticeships prior to finishing school. Kody recalled how these were increasingly difficult to find given the worsening economic conditions in the area, and even more elusive were full time, apprenticeships. At around the same time, mid-2012, a private building contractor called Bettio Builders had won a housing refurbishment contract as part of the Playford Alive regeneration program in Northern Adelaide. As part of the mandatory requirements of the contract with Renewal SA, Bettio Builders agreed to give onsite work experience to seven young people from the local area, each receiving one week of work experience over the course of seven consecutive weeks with one ultimately being taken on full time as a permanent carpentry apprentice.

Targeting the local technical college as a supplier of labour was a specific strategy for Renewal SA, as youth unemployment within the area was seen as a severe problem. Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2011) figures indicate that the youth unemployment rate (those seeking work and aged between 15 to 24 years) in the City of Playford was 18.3%, compared to 11.8% in Greater Adelaide. Maureen, the Project Officer for Learning, Training and Employment for the City of Playford, worked as the link between Bettio Builders and the technical college.

4.3.2 Involvement in the Works Program

Kody was informed by one of his teachers that he had been recommended by the school for work experience with Bettio Builders. Kody was excited about the opportunity as he was passionate about carpentry and wanted the opportunity to use his classroom skills in a real work environment. Kody understood that this was a competitive process and that Bettio Builders would want the best possible apprentice to invest in, to recoup their investment over a long period. As such Kody took the whole process very seriously. He was selected for interview which was conducted by a manager from Bettio Builders along with two of his supervisors and Maureen from the City of Playford. Kody was successful and within a 'few weeks' he was working alongside qualified Bettio carpenters on real projects. Kody described his five day work experience as;

> *"really really good, really enjoyable. It was mainly the fact that I had been stuck in a classroom for so long, I needed to put my skills into practice and learn on the job ... I got a lot more out of it than just technical skills as well, I learnt what it was like to work for a company and everything that goes with that, to be professional, to portray a good image, to listen ... [also] I really love carpentry and I got the chance to show that to an employer".*

Kody listed a number of the practical tasks he undertook over his five day work experience with Bettio Builders; these included, installing door handles in apartments, repairing wall fractures, a 'bit of' bricklaying and hanging a number of doors.

4.3.3 Training outcomes and employment benefits

The company were required to wait until all seven students had completed their work experiences before deciding who to take on as a full time apprentice. As such Kody had to wait, nervously, for over a month to hear back from Bettio Builders. In November 2012, they contacted Kody to give him the good news; he was to start as a full time apprentice carpenter in December of the same year. The apprenticeship was to run over four years, paid on a reduced apprenticeship rate to cover their investment in training.

Maureen (left), Kody (centre), Emma (right)

At the time of interview, March 2014, Kody was 19 years old and had held his apprenticeship post for over fifteen months. He described carpentry as a perfectionist's job which well suited his personality and way of working. Kody was extremely happy in his work and in the additional skills and experiences he had gained and was '100 per cent sure' that this was the career for him. He had also developed a strong sense of loyalty to the company that had given him a chance, stating that, in the future, he planned to finish his apprenticeship, stay with Bettio Builders and climb the company ladder. Kody gave a brief overview of some of the tasks he had undertaken in his apprentice role, predominantly relating to the regeneration of older housing stock in the area; these included helping to install doors, double wall framing, cladding, bricklaying and concreting, roof framing and roof restoration.

Kody was excited about his new career and looked forward to developing his skills in the future. However, looking backwards, he clearly acknowledged the advantages generated by the work experience as part of Renewal SA's Works Program. He stated that;

> *"The initial work experience was essential for me in establishing a career within carpentry, going out on a work experience gave me insights into how the company operates, gave me practical experience and the opportunity to show my skills and commitment ... It gave me the experience and the foot up I needed, no doubt about it".*

4.4 Works Program participant 4 – Caroline

Caroline on her apprenticeship with SA Power Networks

4.4.1 Experiences before participating in the Works Program

Caroline had been employed as a telephone operative within the Registration and Licensing department at the State Government's contact services centre, Service SA, for two and a half years before restructuring resulted in her being made redundant in 2010. As an Aboriginal Australian woman in her mid-40s with few formal qualifications and time out of the labour market to bring up children, Caroline faced many barriers to finding alternative employment. Moreover, health issues brought on, in part, by the redundancy acted as a further barrier and psychological impediment to building confidence, resulting in a prolonged period of 12 months out of work. As alternative employment had proved to be elusive, Caroline made the brave decision to re-train to pursue an alternative skilled career. This option had not been available in the past as she had dependent children, and so she was excited about training to do a job that she would like to do, in contrast to previous employment which had been more of a necessity than a choice. Whilst she was unsure of exactly what job she wanted or what was available, she was certain that she wanted to work outdoors and believed that earlier office based employment had contributed to her poor health issues. She stated that:

> *"I don't like being stuck in an office, I've always preferred being outdoors ... but I also wanted the opportunity to use my brain, so it was really important for me to get some training to start me in the right direction".*

Caroline actively sought outdoor training and in early 2011 identified a horticultural course through an organisation called Muna Paiendi, a Primary Health Care Service based in Elizabeth that offered support specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the northern metropolitan area. Caroline enrolled on the course and, whilst she thrived on working outdoors, instructors soon realised that the work was not challenging enough for her and so brought to her attention a course called Powerful Pathways for Women. Powerful Pathways for Women was a collaborative program designed specifically to encourage and introduce women into the electrical trades. It represented an innovative collaboration between public agencies including Renewal SA and TAFE, registered service providers and a private utilities provider, SA Power Networks, which was responsible for South Australia's electricity distribution network (under a licence granted by the State Government). Caroline discussed the principles underpinning the course, the practical training it would incorporate as well as the potential opportunities it could generate with representatives from the program and the Playford Project Officer. She claimed that:

> *"I didn't know about these kind of jobs, and even if I did I wouldn't have had the confidence if I was the only woman ... but immediately I knew that this was what I wanted to do, to get out of the office and get back into studying so that I would eventually be able to work outdoors with electricity".*

4.4.2 Involvement in the Works Program

Caroline's passion for her chosen career was clear as she progressed through the TAFE interview process and was found to be an 'excellent fit' for the course in early 2011. The initial course ran over six months and was to result in a Certificate I in Electro-Communications. Caroline accepted that it was going to be a difficult time, primarily as the training was unpaid and so she would have to live on her benefits from Centrelink, but also because she had not undertaken classroom learning for a considerable period. However, her fears were alleviated as Caroline described the training as being 'clearly focussed' to the end goal of improving employability within the electricity utilities sector whilst also offering a diverse range of more broad courses. She described how she undertook a Mathematics bridging course to improve her maths using practical examples from industry and highlighted how the Job Network Agency advised her on interview techniques and helped improve her resume whilst SA Power Networks ran mock interviews and aptitude tests. Caroline also described how, early on in the course, there had been a range of 'women's studies' lectures and confidence building activities specifically designed for women entering into male dominated industries. She believed that these were an essential part of the program as they helped her and others in the class, many she described as 'single mums, and some younger girls', to give them confidence in themselves and their abilities and not to 'feel silly in front of guys'.

The technical side of the course was taught by Tafe SA (developed with SA Power Networks) and ran over six months incorporating both classroom based study which introduced basic concepts and onsite training for practical application. Caroline claimed that her favourite part of the training was a two week residential course in Port Augusta. She described it as physical outdoor training resulting in formal qualifications including the Induction for Construction Work certificate (SA White Card), Working at Heights, First Aid, Working in Close Spaces and Chainsaw licences. She described the training as incorporating 'climbing up poles and abseiling down pits'. Caroline claimed that the structure of the course was clearly outlined at the start and she was told exactly what to expect. She also described the support she received from Renewal SA, TAFE, the Playford Project Officer and SA Power Networks over the course as 'phenomenal', stating that:

> *"Everything about the program was brilliant. Everyone that was involved in the program from organisers to instructors were so supportive and encouraging ... some have become great friends now".*

Caroline described how financial assistance was given indirectly through SA Power Networks as they provided them with safety equipment and text books free of charge. Finally, she claimed that the female only training, and not having to compete with men early on in their development, played a vital role helping to build confidence. The vast majority of the women that started the Electro-Communications course gained the Certificate I qualification and were subsequently invited to undertake the Certificate II qualification in Electro-Technology. This, again, was an unpaid, six month course incorporating both classroom and practical field training. Caroline recalled that;

> *"In the second six month course, the women were separated into two classrooms with the guys which worked well as the initial CERT 1 course really improved our confidence in dealing with men at work ... it gave us the confidence to compete with guys in the same field, and guess what? We beat them!"*

4.4.3 Training outcomes and employment benefits

Upon completion of the Certificate II course, participants were encouraged to apply directly to SA Power Networks for an apprenticeship. Caroline topped the state aptitude test and showed a real interest in electrical design and progressing within the company. As a result she was offered a paid position as a trainee designer in the secondary design team for SA Power Networks in early 2012. Caroline described her job as 'checking the designs of sub-stations, electrical networks and the lines and circuitry' developed by the fully qualified draftsmen who she was learning from. At the time of interview, Caroline had worked as a trainee designer for 2 years and was just entering her third and final year as a trainee. Moreover, she claimed that SA Power Networks were putting her through a range of additional TAFE courses through day release once a week to give her additional formal qualifications to reflect her on the job training.

Caroline – Classroom study with SA Power Networks

Caroline was very happy with her employment position at the time of interview and indicated that she would like to become a fully qualified electrical designer in the future. She was extremely complementary of the training and support she had received from all those involved with the program and summarised the wider effect the program had had on her life:

> *"The training was excellent, a brilliant program that gives girls skills and confidence to take on jobs usually associated with men ... It's improved my life and it's improved my son's life as well. He has seen Mum studying, mum can do it, and so he has realised that he can do it too. Now he is studying music at university and wants to be a music producer ... I am so proud of what we've achieved, and it wouldn't have happened without that initial training".*

5 Program outcomes and successes

Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive seeks to provide economic opportunities for all people within the local community through training or employment, premised on the idea that the cause of much social exclusion and 'multiple social disadvantage' is the absence of employment. Whilst in this case the Works Program formed part of a wider urban renewal strategy, Renewal SA has already started incorporating similar contract clauses into commercial land sales throughout Adelaide. As discussed in earlier sections the Works Program incorporated three separate streams so as to address the diverse circumstances faced by different groups of local people, these incorporated:

1) Classroom based training programs

2) Onsite 'Live Training'

3) Work experience and longer term job placements

This report has presented four very different stories from participants pursuing one of the above three streams through Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive. The diversity of experience is testament to the underlying philosophy of the program, that different people require different forms and levels of support and as such there is no one single 'best practice' support mechanism by which to maximise the outcomes achieved by a program. This section shall now present a summary of some of the key findings from the four case studies.

5.1 Experiences before participating in the Works Program

It is apparent that different individual circumstances result in a diverse range of physical and psychological barriers to re-entering the labour market. This would suggest that simply 'signposting' all unemployed people to Centrelink is inadequate and that the support offered should vary on a case-by-case basis, thus justifying a more eclectic approach to employment support and training. This is clear from the list presented below which summarises the key barriers to entering employment, highlighted by the four participants presented earlier.

- Earlier time out of the labour market due to childcare responsibilities
- Health problems
- Restructuring and workforce reductions in major industries
- Reduction in the use of skilled apprentices
- Language difficulties
- Lack of formal qualifications
- Dependent children
- Stereotyped work roles and discrimination
- Lack of work experience (often associated with youth)
- Poor networks and a lack of knowledge of employment and training support
- Low confidence
- A lack of jobs, of any level, within the area
- No recognition of foreign skills and qualifications

5.2 Involvement in the Works Program

Each of the four participants represented in this report described entirely different and unique experiences but all exhibited a similar level of satisfaction with the Works Program and what they achieved through it. This is testimony to the program's underlying philosophy that people are not the same and thus any solution to job creation must incorporate the flexibility to adapt to different individual circumstances. As such the 'three stream' approach to engagement, training and employment adopted is to be commended.

Table 1: The routes to participant involvement

Participant	How they found out about the program	Initial involvement in the program
Jean Claude	Referral by Centrelink working with a private employment service provider	Five day work experience with a private contractor – led to a 'foot in the door' and then to permanent employment
Tilly	Newspaper advert	Classroom based training provided by a private Registered Training Organisation, supplemented with an onsite placement
Kody	Approached through technical college/school	Five day work experience with a private contractor – led to a 'foot in the door' and then to an apprenticeship
Caroline	Referral by a Primary Health Care Service	Classroom based training supplemented by onsite training, resulting in a full apprenticeship

Table 1 (above) illustrates the variety of ways in which the four participants became involved in the Works Program, again reflecting the diversity of people's experiences. This demonstrates the successful manner in which Renewal SA and the City of Playford Local Authority communicated the Works Program to unemployed people within the local area.

5.3 Training outcomes and employment benefits

Sometimes it is too easy to focus on the objective, quantifiable outcomes from a program like this. Whilst these are important, and the tax payer needs to see a return on their investment, it is also essential not to forget that participants are not merely statistics and that it is the subjective benefits created by this program that are more likely to make people's lives better and keep them in employment in the longer term. Table 2 (below) outlines some of the key objective and subjective measures of success outlined by each participant.

Table 2: Measures of program success

Participant	Objective measures of success	Subjective measures of success
Jean Claude	• Full time (youth) employment • Migrants support provided	• Improved English language • Made friends • Financially secure • Sense of self-worth and value • Dignity
Tilly	• Certificate level 3 qualification achieved • PT casual employment – complements childcare responsibilities • Enrolled on further education	• Re-entering employment after time out for child care • Enabled complete career change • Financial security when spouse was made redundant • Provided inspiration to pursue further training and career
Kody	• Full time apprenticeship in a career he was passionate about • Full time youth employment	• Developed skills and passion for the occupation • Developed loyalty to the company that gave him a chance • Provided financial security
Caroline	• Certificate level 1 and 2 qualification achieved • Full time apprenticeship/employment • Additional TAFE qualifications	• Enabled complete career change • Allowed transition from office work to more outdoor orientated work • Improved health • Improved overall confidence and confidence working in a male dominated industry • Enabled retraining after time out of labour market to bring up children • Acted as an example and inspired her children into further education

Table 2 illustrates that quantifiable, objective outcomes have been generated by the Works Program. Moreover, it illustrates the subjective benefits the program has created for people facing 'real life' difficulties and barriers to employment. It is essential that these are acknowledged because the benefits generated by the Works Program do not simply stop when the participant completes their course or work experience; the benefits are long term and not confined solely to the workplace, they impact upon the participant's lives and those of their family, their community, business and ultimately society.

6 Summary and conclusions

Whilst this report is not a full program evaluation, the case studies represent the views and experiences of a diverse range of participants on Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive. The program is an example of where a proactive State Government department, Renewal SA, successfully worked collaboratively with a local authority, the City of Playford, to implement a Works Program that has generated quantifiable and long term benefits for local unemployed residents. Renewal SA and the City of Playford reported little ideological objections to 'government interference' in business decisions. On the contrary, they suggest that contractors appear to have embraced the program and that many reported that they 'needed to fill such vacancies anyway' and therefore the program had acted as an effective screening device of potential employees. Others agreed with the principle of employing locally and wanted to be seen to be 'giving back' to the local community.

All three streams of the program have created substantial results; over 1300 local people have undertaken pre-employment training since 2008, averaging between 150 and 200 a year. At the time of publication, around 650 local people had undertaken Live Training, of which 85 per cent gained the respective formal qualification. Over 200 local people have undertaken a work experience placement through the program resulting, at the time of writing (May 2014), in around 110 new jobs across a wide range of industries. Furthermore, partnerships with voluntary sector community organisations, such as Boystown, have resulted in training and placements for many local disadvantaged young people, many of whom were looking for a second chance and a fresh start after previously being involved in crime. What the figures cannot show is what happened to many of the participants who did not gain employment immediately following work experience or training. Despite this, one can imply that the employability of many participants improved as a result of the program leading to future employment. In this sense, the true impact of the program might never be known (though could form the basis of future research). The success in the City of Playford has resulted in Renewal SA including the Works Program contract conditions more broadly into commercial land sales as well as renewal programs in other Local Authority areas throughout Adelaide.

(left to right) Joel, (Allan the supervisor), Blake and Roeurn on work experience with LR&M Constructions

According to the Program Manager, by providing multiple pathways to employment, Renewal SA's Works Program at Playford Alive has helped to overcome a wide variety of barriers faced by many unemployed people and, as such, has created longer term benefits above and beyond the workplace. For example, the cases illustrate that the Works Program provided an opportunity for women, who had taken time out of the labour market to look after children, to renew their skills and qualifications and subsequently re-engage with paid employment. This is vitally important as taking time out

of paid employment reduces one's 'human capital' making them less employable, or employable at a lower rate, when they return. This is a major contributing factor to Australia's large and persistent gender pay gap of 17.6% [Australian Government, Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Feb 2013], an increase of 1.5% since 1994.

Perhaps consistent throughout all the cases presented in this report was that the program offered participants the opportunity, not only to learn new skills, but also to 'showcase' themselves to employers where in the past they could not. A simple placement, or onsite training, acted as an effective screening device for employers as well as an incentive for participants to engage enthusiastically and conscientiously with the program. Moreover, participants developed a strong sense of loyalty to the business that offered them 'a chance' resulting in high commitment and potentially long job tenure which is beneficial to business and employees alike. What was also apparent from the case studies was the physical and psychological benefits generated by employment, through the Works Program; the sense of financial security, confidence, companionship, self-worth and value; enabling careers or career changes to more satisfying employment and thus improved health. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the program appears to have inspired a diverse group of local people to engage in work and training.

Lachlan – Now employed by Adelaide Property & Gardens