



Industry restructuring and job loss: helping older workers get back into employment

Support document 2: case studies

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This document was produced by the author(s) based on their research for the report *Industry restructuring and job loss: helping older workers get back into employment*, and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVER's Portal: <<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>.

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This document should be attributed as Callan, V & Bowman, K 2015, *Industry restructuring and job loss: helping older workers get back into employment – support document 2, case studies*, NCVER, Adelaide.

Published by NCVER, ABN 87 007 967 311

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Introduction

Purpose

This Support Document 2 contains case studies that investigate what has and is occurring in four regions of Australia to help older workers (aged 45 years and over) to overcome job loss due to industry restructuring.

Job loss due to industry restructuring is an enduring feature of the Australian economy (Murtough & Waite 2000). It occurs when workers lose their jobs due to employers ceasing to operate as a business or employers reduce their business operations and no longer have certain types of jobs. In response, we need effective strategies and intervention programs to avoid displaced older workers from adding to unemployment numbers or retiring by default when they fail to find employment (Spoehr et al 2009)

The four case studies reported here aim to inform the development of an evidence-based working model for the effective design and delivery of skills transfer and re-skilling initiatives for displaced older workers. It is hoped that the insights from these cases studies and the working model that is presented in the Final Report on the project will assist in further developing policy and other responses to assist older displaced workers in Australia.

Background

The case studies were informed by a literature review (see support document 1). The review of the literature confirmed that older workers, and especially those in lower skilled jobs, face greater challenges in finding a new job compared to other workers. Typically, more skilled and highly qualified displaced workers have a profile that is more readily transferable and they gain new jobs more readily. Conversely, older workers displaced from lower skilled jobs require more assistance to gain new employment.

The review also identified the types of assistance required by older displaced workers from lower skilled jobs in order to find new jobs. The types of assistance identified include skills transfer, re-skilling and training activities. These are often in combination with other activities including career guidance, resume preparation and new job interview assistance, access to work experience, job search assistance, wage subsidies, provision of access to a range of personal support services, and access to public employment/public works programs and new private sector jobs creation programs.

Overall, the review found that skills transfer, re-skilling and training initiatives are major proactive strategies that can be used in response to the continued industry restructuring that is occurring in Australia. However, these initiatives need to be tailored to specific groups of displaced workers and aligned with other actions in order to achieve the best outcomes for displaced workers and their communities.

Based on the review, a preliminary working model for effective skills transfer, re-skilling and training for displaced older workers was developed. This framework comprises of three stages: 1) a preparation stage of retraining; 2) a retraining stage; and 3) a post-retraining stage, with key actions taken within each stage (see appendix 1 to this report).

The case studies presented in this Supporting Document 2 were undertaken to test and further refine this working framework.

Case study sites and rationale

The sites of the four case studies were:

- 1 Hunter Region of New South Wales
- 2 Greater Geelong Region of Victoria
- 3 Adelaide Region of South Australia
- 4 Tasmania.

These four sites were chosen for the reasons outlined below.

Substantial manufacturing industries

The four sites all have substantial manufacturing industries. Regions with a substantial manufacturing industry were targeted as a disproportionate share of job losses due to restructuring in Australia has occurred in the manufacturing industry (Murtough & Waite 2000). In addition, as highlighted in Support Document 1, restructuring and job losses are expected to continue within the manufacturing sector (Manufacturing Skills Australia 2014a). Furthermore, manufacturing has high numbers of mature age workers aged 45 years or older (42% of the manufacturing workforce) and 36 per cent of mature age manufacturing workers do not hold post-school qualifications. Furthermore, they have low language, literacy and numeracy skills (Manufacturing Skills Australia 2014b).

The four sites selected for the case studies also have considerable experience, both past and current, with displaced older workers from lower skilled jobs. Many of the workers in these four sites have been long-term older employees with skills and experiences mostly from doing jobs only in these industries.

In addition, there is a lot at stake if the skills transfer, reskilling and training strategies that are currently operating are not as effective as they could be. Manufacturing is a significant sector to the Australian economy and forms links between the resource and services sectors. Any changes which affect manufacturing can impact, either directly or indirectly, many other areas of the Australian economy (Clark et al 1996). According to Manufacturing Skills Australia (2014a), each year conditions have become harder and harder for manufacturing in Australia. As a result, retrenched manufacturing workers may have to look outside of manufacturing for new jobs. Also, the removal of these experienced and skilled workers due to industry restructuring will have measureable impacts on productivity as these workers take valuable skills and knowledge with them as they leave the workforce.

Mix of metropolitan and regional areas in different parts of Australia

The four sites also include a mix of metropolitan and regional areas in different parts of Australia. This sampling decision was purposeful as different geographic regions have different economic and social structures and circumstances at play. The different workforce planning approaches in each region provide a sample of regions and strategies that allow a more robust test of the key factors that operate successfully across regions. Also, different states facilitate the study of how differences in the approaches and roles of the VET systems might be influential. Although they operate within

national training frameworks and national partnership agreements, VET systems are state based. There are operational differences that can therefore affect the approaches being taken.

Experienced in assisting displaced workers and willing to be involved

The four sites provided individuals, employer organisations and support bodies highly experienced in assisting displaced workers and who were willing to be involved in each case study. The individuals we wished to involve included representatives of providers of skills recognition and new skills development programs; representatives of other agencies that play an active role in helping displaced older workers to overcome job loss; and retrenched older workers themselves.

Considerable desktop research was undertaken to identify the key agencies in each case site. We examined the services that they provided and were particularly interested in more innovative practices that were being used to promote skills transfer, reskilling and training. Next we approached these organisations and their key staff to determine their willingness to be involved in the study. Those interviewed assisted us to locate for interview other agencies and their key staff, as well as retrenched older workers themselves, in order to more fully develop each case study. Therefore, the case studies used purposive sampling, and interviewees cannot be seen to be fully representative of the professionals assisting displaced workers or the workers themselves.

Case study approach

Case study participants were interviewed, either face to face or by telephone. These semi-structured interviews took between 30-90 minutes each. Informed consent was secured from all participants prior to the interview and the set of interview questions were sent in advance. Interview questions were developed on the basis of the working model that evolved from the literature review. Appendix 2 contains the three sets of interview questions used for the different groups of respondents (i.e. displaced workers; Providers of skills transfer and re-skilling initiatives to displaced older workers; and other service providers). Each case study involved 10 interviews or more.

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Case study 1: The Hunter region of New South Wales

Introduction

The Hunter Region, also commonly known as the Hunter Valley, is a region of New South Wales extending from approximately 120km to 310km north of Sydney. Most of the population of the Hunter Region lives within 25km of the coast, with 55% of the entire population living in the cities of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. There are numerous other towns scattered across the region in the eleven local government areas that make up the region. The combined population of the region was 620 530 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010).

The main industries in the Hunter Region are coal mining, agriculture, viticulture and wine making, tourism, horse breeding, electricity production, dairy farming and beef cattle farming and associated service industries. Currently, the most important economic activity in the valley is coal mining, through businesses such as Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton. The port of Newcastle is the world's largest export facility for coal, most of which is brought to the port via railway.

The Hunter labour force comprises around 245 000 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers. Health and social assistance is the largest employer industry, accounting for 31 000 FTE jobs, followed by manufacturing with 24 900 FTE jobs. While contributing around 22% of economic output, the mining industry directly employs only 7.2% of the regional workforce (approximately 17 700 FTE workers), reflecting the substantial capital intensity of mining operations (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010).

In the past 15 years there have been closures of several prominent organisations in the Hunter Region, leaving many workers displaced. Examples of these, in chronological order, include:

- Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri Smelter closure in 2012
- Sankey Tomago closure in 2011
- Incitec Pivot Cockle Creek closure in 2009
- Delta EMD closure in 2008
- Pasminco Smelter closure in 2003
- Electric Lamp Manufacturers Australia closure in 2002
- Brambles Gardner Perrott closure in 2002
- BOC Gases Newcastle Plant closure in 2001
- BHP Newcastle Steelworks Closure in 1999.

Whilst many companies have closed down across the Hunter region during the past decade, 2014 was a particularly difficult year for redundancies and business closures. There was a loss of almost 4,000 jobs in the Hunter region in 2014, although this number is based on the widely reported redundancies, with many more jobs likely to have been shed (Australian Broadcasting Commission 2014). Most of these job losses were in the mining sector, and have predominantly affected the towns of Singleton and Muswellbrook. The job cuts were spread across both permanent and contracted staff, with lower

coal prices and the high Australian dollar driving large companies to seek operational savings to offset tougher economic conditions.

In 2014, the list of job losses in the Hunter region included:

- Glennies Creek and Camberwell mines (Vale) - 500 employees
- Mt Arthur Coal (BHP Billiton) - 258, plus 50 contractors previously shed
- Drayton - unspecified number of contractors cut following change to five-day roster
- Newstan Colliery (Centennial Coal) - 103 retrenched, 45 redeployed employees
- Chain Valley Colliery (LDO) - 73 employees; Ravensworth (Glencore) - approximately 130 employees
- Downer EDI - 190 employees
- Powerserve - 178 employees
- Arrium - 150 employees
- Sandvik - 103 employees
- Abel mine (Donaldson Coal) - 50 employees
- Pacific National - 45 employees
- Port Waratah Coal Services - 34 employees
- Forgacs - 100 employees
- QantasLink - 25 employees
- Bradken - an unspecified number cut from the Mayfield office and
- ResCo Services - transferred 95 per cent of workers over to new labour hire companies (Coal Face Magazine 2014).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for January 2015 showed the unemployment rate is now 9.1% in the Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle) and 8.9% in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie (Commonwealth Government, Department of Employment 2015). However, Professor Bill Mitchell, from the University of Newcastle's Centre for Full Employment and Equity, believes this understates the true picture. Taking into account the 'hidden workforce' of those who have given up on looking for work, the real unemployment rate for the Hunter Valley is more likely to be around 16% and 12% for Newcastle-Lake Macquarie (Gleeson 2014).

As the Deloitte Access Economics' (2013) report for Regional Development Australia Hunter notes, the Hunter region is especially vulnerable to the closure or downscaling of parts of the region's industrial base. However, recent structural change in the Hunter also shows that the region is already experiencing adjustment, and highlights the region's economic diversity and resilience. On the other hand, the changes experienced thus far do point to the challenges associated with utilising existing skills and transferrable workforce capabilities in the region.

As one interviewee noted:

The challenge for the Hunter is diversification. At the moment, coal mining is a major player and when that starts to downsize the flow on effect is significant, a number of employers will reduce their workforce, and then there are the flow on effects on the SMEs. Since January 2014 we have

lost 5,000 jobs in the Hunter region and 99 per cent of these were related to mining. So the challenge is a cyclical issue as the mining industry has been booming in last seven to eight years and now we are looking at a lack of investment and lack of jobs and next few years.

As many of our interviewees noted, ensuring such risks are effectively managed and any dislocation impacts are minimised will require a concerted effort by many stakeholders. A key aim is to enable the existing workforces' skills to be retained in the region and absorbed in other areas of the economy. According to Deloitte Access Economics (2013) this may involve a number of aspects, including:

- Expanding research capabilities in the areas of renewable energy
- Ongoing development of industry clusters in and around Newcastle Airport, particularly related to defence services
- Promoting further high-value advanced manufacturing capabilities.

This case study now describes a range of groups, organisations and intervention strategies that have been employed in the Hunter region. This is not an exhaustive list but does highlight some of the higher profile and more successful initiatives. Following this description, some mini-cases are presented that highlight the role of these bodies or schemes in supporting retrenched workers.

Initiatives to support displaced workers

Employer early intervention

It is reported that a failed termination-back-to-work transition that results in an average duration of long-term unemployment can cost society between \$50 000 and \$150 000 depending on the age, salary level and family circumstances of the worker whose employment is terminated (Boston Consulting Group 2000). Therefore, timely intervention is critical in terms of both improved outcomes and more effective use of funds to support displaced workers.

In an ideal world, employers would be actively involved in identifying high-risk employees whose employment is about to be terminated, giving them early warning, promoting the assistance available to them, and proactively helping them to secure employment outside the organisation. Even in a less than ideal world where, for example, there are unforeseen lay-offs in small firms, employees' details can be submitted to a local Job Network member or Centrelink on the day their employment is terminated, so that they can quickly be made aware of the implications, risks and opportunities of their situation, as well as the availability of assistance (Boston Consulting Group 2000). There are several good examples particularly among larger companies of the value of early intervention and intensive assistance in maximising the chances of high-risk employees finding work after termination (see the BHP mini-case study that follows).

Employers providing training assistance

As reported in the interviews, prior to the termination of their employment, displaced workers can be provided with assistance from their employer for training or retraining to help them gain another job. This form of assistance was seen to take many forms. Examples included monetary support (either provided by the company itself or obtained through government funding) or time off given to the worker to undertake retraining. If the employer was an RTO, there was an opportunity for the employer to ensure that their displaced workers had all the relevant Work Safety certificates in

accordance with WorkCover, in order to bolster their chances of gaining work as soon as possible following termination.

Outplacement services

Outplacement or career transition services make good commercial sense as they allow departing employees to leave with dignity and quickly resume their career with another employer. Other positive outcomes can include minimising the negative feelings on remaining staff and avoiding costly industrial disputation. Immediate counselling to the affected individual places the situation in context and provides them with a more positive view of the future.

It is imperative that outplacement programs are structured in a linear and logical fashion beginning with general knowledge provision. Overall, the literature reports the need for an assessment of the worker's capabilities; one-on-one tailored discussions with the displaced worker regarding their future career aspirations; and then facilitated planning to help the displaced worker embark on the trajectory of choice towards further training, retraining or their next career.

It is also important that a comprehensive suite of outplacement services are available and provided to the displaced worker by experts. For example, career counselling and psychological counselling are two services that are often overlooked or considered 'nice to have' optional extras in a budget constrained environment. Anecdotal evidence from the BHP Steelworks displaced workers reveals that many suffered depression, had marriage breakdowns and turned to alcohol to fill the void left in their lives. Thus, it is important to consider the whole spectrum of support needed to a displaced worker, not just vocational, but also emotional, financial, administration (such as dealing with Centrelink) and the life skills they may need assistance with.

Pathways Employment Services

Pathways Employment Services is one example of a best practice organisation providing the whole spectrum of outplacement services. Many organisations in the Hunter who have gone through restructuring or downsizing in recent years have utilised Pathways to provide this broad range of services for their retrenched workers. The outplacement support services Pathways provides at Stage three of their Program include: coaching and mentoring; active marketing of displaced worker; job search training and workshops covering career planning, job search, networking skills, applying for jobs, and the employment interview; resume writing skills workshops and one-on-one support; on interview skills workshops and one-on-one support; and skills recognition (Recognition of Prior Learning) and skills enhancement advice.

In addition, representatives from Pathways emphasise the importance of not only providing a comprehensive range of outplacement services, but also tailoring these services to the organisation and also to the individual. Pathways provide one-on-one support to displaced workers and form a unique and intimate relationship with the displaced worker, being their champion and advocate and helping them secure new jobs, work experience or volunteering opportunities. As Pathways employees are hands-on with these displaced workers, they are approached when displaced workers may have emotional or psychological troubles, and an experienced counsellor or psychologist can be provided.

The role of inter-agency partnerships

Inter-agency partnerships are critical in getting all interested stakeholders on the same page and working together to help displaced workers. The Hunter region uses inter-agency partnerships very

well. Outlined below are a few of the more successful inter-agency partnerships reported during the interviews and in the literature for the Hunter Region.

HunterNet

HunterNet is a network of manufacturing, engineering and specialist services companies located in the Hunter and Central Coast Regions of NSW. Formed as a non-trading, not for profit co-operative, it involves over 200 companies active in national and international infrastructure and asset management, energy and resources, defence and advanced manufacturing supply chains.

HunterNet is widely recognised within Australian manufacturing and academia as one of the most successful industry 'clusters' of its type nationally (HunterNet 2014). HunterNet provides its members with numerous support programs covering areas such as business development; business systems and processes; WHS and training; marketing and communications; business improvement; and government advocacy. The network provides member companies with the opportunity to take part in activities previously out of reach for smaller enterprises including training and development, networking, joint marketing initiatives, joint project bids, focused task forces, trade missions and tendering.

HunterNet Group Training Company

HunterNet Group Training Company (HGTC) is a subsidiary of HunterNet and is a Registered Group Training Organisation led by the management of manufacturing and engineering companies within the region (HunterNet 2014). HGTC currently manages the training and development program for apprentices and trainees. Using their relationship with Hunter TAFE, HGTC facilitates enrolment of their apprentices with Hunter TAFE, although the apprentices may choose to study elsewhere. Following the success of HGTC, there is much scope for another body like this to work with displaced workers including out-of-work apprentices.

HGTC in collaboration with the State Training Services is in the early stages of discussions with government regarding the creation of a cooperative facility at Tomago. The goal is that when a business has little work, the apprentices/trainees can go to another business which is busy, or alternatively they can make use of the training facilities within the Tomago precinct. This innovative job-share arrangement could be equally applied to older displaced workers.

Hunter TAFE

Hunter TAFE has an excellent working relationship with many other organisations in the region. In fact, it even has Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with organisations such as the local JSAs, specific employers, the HGTC and the Hunter Business Chamber. Hunter TAFE is also a board member for Hunter Business Chamber, which is collocated on one of Hunter TAFE's campuses. In addition it is a member of HunterNet and on its board too. Hunter TAFE also has a very good relationship with the local universities, in particular the University of Newcastle. Hunter TAFE has excellent articulation programs with the University of Newcastle and even has some joint degree programs.

Hunter TAFE also has very close linkages and an excellent working relationship with the local government. For example, in the Upper Muswellbrook shire, the local government funded the building of a Mining Skills Centre near the mines. The Mining Skills Centre is a unique 63-bed facility, purpose built to deliver practical experience and a thorough understanding of the mining industry. Hunter TAFE runs this facility with co-funding from the local government. Hunter TAFE's

partnerships with the region's major mining organisations are another key feature in the intensive training program. Through these strong relationships Hunter TAFE was able to design courses that deliver the skills and knowledge required by the local industry.

Lake Macquarie Business Growth Centre

Another important organisation assisting older displaced workers in the Hunter region is the Lake Macquarie Business Growth Centre. The Centre is a not-for-profit organisation that operates as an RTO and also a Business Incubator, with offices and light industrial units for people to start or grow their businesses (Lake Macquarie Business Growth Centre 2014). As an RTO, the Centre is a provider of the New Enterprise Incentives Scheme (NEIS), which provides a five week intensive course in small business management, and following this, a further 12 months of mentoring. The manager of the Growth Centre interviewed explained that, "The intention of this Scheme is that the displaced workers maintain their welfare benefits during this period and then after this period they run the business and don't go back onto entitlements."

The Lake Macquarie Business Growth Centre also runs the Business Incubator. This is designed to assist new and growing businesses become established and profitable by providing accommodation, mentoring, services and support. Rent for an office space in the Business Incubator is \$100 a week. This goes up 10% per year for five years until it gets to market rates. Typically, a business will move out at this stage and usually seek other, often larger, premises. In this way, the Business Incubator provides a supportive environment for displaced workers and others who might want to start their own business; encourages employed and unemployed people to set up self-employment ventures; reduces the failure rate of new start-up businesses; and assists businesses to operate efficiently, fulfil their potential, create jobs, expand and graduate from the incubator to the business community.

In addition, the Centre runs seminars and workshops for workers made redundant from an organisation. The organisation will typically contact the Centre to come in and run the sessions prior to termination of the workers' employment. The manager of the Growth Centre interviewed explained that the sessions they run cover the following:

Working out what they wanted to do and what their options were. A lot had never gone through formalised recruitment so resume writing, skills recognition and how that was transferrable into another setting was also covered. And if they wanted to get a job as a TAFE teacher for example, we covered how to do this and highlighted their skills for the job. On the softer side of the program, we get a golf professional to come in to teach them golf lessons, we also do gardening lessons and fishing lessons. The displaced workers actually include their partners in the program. By having the wives it got the message through even better and the wives understood that they were part of the solution going forward.

Finally, the manager of the Centre also commented that one of the most impactful strategies for assisting older displaced workers find a new job is to:

Work with them as individuals and at the level that they are at. They will have a variety of backgrounds and their paradigms are often quite set so being able to open them up to the opportunities is good but you have to get to know them as individuals first and get their trust. Get them into groups of 'like-minded' or 'like intent' people with respect to what they want to do in the future. They are a generation that are not used to that approach and can be cautious of someone coming in and telling them how to run their lives.

Government assistance

There are a number of state and federal government-based services available for workers who are made redundant. The level of federal government assistance depends on the services already being provided by the employer and state government, the scale of the redundancies, the characteristics of the workforce being retrenched and the ability for workers to quickly move to new employment and the capacity of the local labour market to absorb these workers. The level and type of support provided is tailored to needs of the employers and workers and is assessed on a case by case basis.

In addition to Federal Government support and assistance through the Department of Employment, the Retrenched Workers Training Assistance was provided through the NSW Department of Education and Training, for workers affected by business closures and downsizing. This assistance was coordinated by State Training Services, and was designed to link training to job opportunities in local areas. It included providing information and advice, skills assessment and recognition of prior learning, and skills training. The government also provides support for apprentices and trainees, including the Continuing Apprenticeship Placement Service (CAPS), which is a register to help match out of work apprentices with employers.

The Rapid Response Team

The NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services (DTIRIS) as the lead agency, in conjunction with many other State and Federal departments, the Local Council, and other key stakeholders in the Hunter Region have created a Rapid Response Team (RRT). The team works together collaboratively in the event of business closures or downsizing. There is a formal Memorandum of Understanding outlining the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved.

The Rapid Response model involves the following steps:

- 1 Notice is received of a pending company closure/downsizing
- 2 Gather intelligence:
 - Contact the company to confirm details and ascertain whether the company wants the RRT's involvement
 - Obtain relevant facts and information on the closure and whether there are alternatives to closure such as restructuring
 - Seek information from the business on matters such as plans for retraining or redeployment of staff in the case of closure
 - Inform relevant government stakeholders of the company closure/downsizing
 - If RRT involvement is required, advise the Rapid Response Hunter Committee of the meeting schedule.
- 3 Meeting with the company is held:
 - Identify job losses and company requirements
 - Capture skill set of any potentially redundant workers
- 4 Distribute the minutes of the meeting to the Rapid Response Hunter Committee and establish a deadline date for action items to be completed

- 5 Co-ordinate an Information Session for employees with company agreement:
 - Ensure staff receive the Resource List (a booklet outlining the contact details of all the relevant government, NFPs and NGOs that are able to provide assistance to the displaced worker)
 - Capture employee skill sets
 - Capture employee training needs
- 6 Complete actions items:
 - Contact employee representatives and suggest that a local meeting be held to identify outstanding issues or other matters of importance if required
 - Provide general advice on employee entitlements, particularly long service leave entitlements, as well as advice on programs to assist employees access entitlements such as the General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme. In situations where a business is unable to meet employee entitlements, refer the matter to the Fair Work Ombudsman
 - Provide access to a training co-ordinator resource to provide coordination and case management services to groups of displaced workers
 - Compile information on worker skills, qualifications and retraining interests of displaced workers
 - Confirm worker interest and participation in retraining, including a financial contribution from the relevant business or from affected individuals to the cost (where redundancy payments have been made available)
 - Work with local training providers to implement training programs to up skill or retrain groups of displaced workers where there are identified employment opportunities in the local area
 - Through the local Job Services Australia services, provide information to employees and the business on education and training options, career planning advice and assistance with job search and placement for displaced workers
 - Provide advice to displaced employees who are contemplating starting a business
 - Coordinate provision of counselling and other community support services to displaced employees and their families. This could include through relevant NGOs and local councils and also include credit management counselling services
 - Coordinate provision of personal counselling and other support services where the business failure is affecting the physical and mental health of families, including children.
- 7 Follow up any incomplete action items
- 8 As required, provide support to the company to co-ordinate a Jobs Expo to attract potential employers of redundant workers.

Hunter's RRT has a proven track record of success. It is a great example of using a coordinated inter-agency approach to assist displaced workers retrain and/or obtain new employment.

The Hunter Strategic Procurement Project

As a result of recent significant job losses in the Hunter Region, the NSW Department of Trade and Investment's Newcastle office established an industry and stakeholder round table forum in February

2014 in order to monitor the Hunter economy and to look at measures to assist Hunter regional companies to diversify and grow. It was identified that regional procurement is a key strategy that can assist businesses to identify opportunities and increase capability to secure contracts with government and non-government organisations in the Region.

As a result of this round table, the Hunter Strategic Procurement Initiative was created. This is a pilot program that seeks to encourage a greater percentage of funds being spent with local suppliers, thereby supporting regional jobs, economic prosperity and social benefits. Partners in the project are NSW Trade and Investment, the Australian Industry Group, Regional Development Australia-Hunter, HunterNet, Hunter Business Chamber and AusIndustry.

Workshops on supply chain opportunities and tender development, as well as a masterclass in regional procurement, have formed part of this project and have occurred throughout 2014. In addition, a toolkit was also developed in October 2014 to assist Hunter businesses to identify supply opportunities and increase their knowledge of requirements to tender. The toolkit contains a matrix outlining the requirements of individual companies and public sector organisations for their procurement processes, thereby enabling Hunter companies to easily determine their suitability to engage in the tender/supply process (NSW Trade and Investment 2014).

Skills in the Hunter website

The NSW Department of Trade and Investment, in partnership with HunterNet and Regional Development Australia Hunter (who provided financial support for the project) have also created a 'Skills in the Hunter' website to promote local skills and creating local job opportunities. This website allows people looking for work in the Hunter region to register free of charge, create a profile and resume, search for jobs, 'star' jobs they are interested in, and receive the details of recommended jobs that fit their preferences. It also allows employers looking for employees to also register, create a profile, advertise their Hunter jobs or vacancies and connect with skilled and experienced candidates. Budget job ads can be posted free of charge; however, the website also allows employers to pay for a featured job ad, thereby obtaining more exposure. It also provides recruitment services, such as hiring or the primary selection management of applicants.

The NSW Department of Trade and Investment were also instrumental in establishing a partnership with a private provider who had already developed a 'Jobs in the Hunter' website. Linked to the 'Skills in the Hunter' website, JobsInTheHunter.com.au has about 300 or more job vacancies posted at any one time and in the past financial year has had more than 4 300 listed. It also has almost 8 000 social media followers, almost 3 400 email subscribers and has had 270 000 page views in financial year 2014 (Smeeth 2014). It has key partnerships with the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Hunter TAFE, Regional Development Australia and HunterNet. In addition, through its daily engagement with employers from across the region, it is fast developing into an online community of shared business values.

Two mini-case studies are now provided that highlight the role of these (and other) institutions, bodies and schemes in assisting displaced workers in the Hunter region.

Case study 1.1: BHP Steelworks' early intervention project

For 84 years Newcastle was known as a steel city and BHP was the city's biggest employer, at its peak employing approximately 13 000 people. By 1987 however, the old steel rolling mills were losing money and could no longer be globally competitive. On 30 September, 1999 the steelworks were

closed down. This closure saw the retrenchment of around 1 800 BHP employees and another 1 000 contractors (Payne 2013). Their average age was 44 years, and their average length of service was 21 years.

As one interviewee summarised the situation:

BHP provided a place for a lot of people. Some were technically skilled, some weren't, and some had numeracy and literacy problems. It was the manual workers who were made redundant. They were 55 years of age so who would want them? They were lifers who always had someone to look after them – a foreman or a manager. You could advance in your career from being a junior labourer in the beginning and through the years to crane driver, fork truck driver, wagon builder, wagon fitter, leading hand and operations supervisor.

Another also reflected:

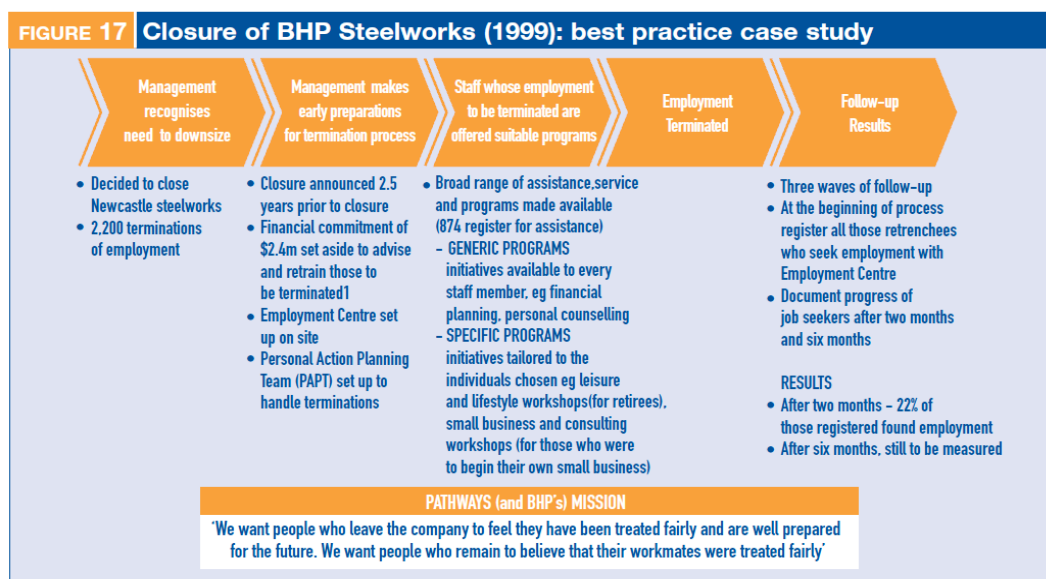
These guys had worked there for 20 plus years and they had enormous skills and knowledge that they did not recognise. It would have been a tragedy if these skills sets and knowledge were lost, including ways that we could get some knowledge transfer to younger generations, the future TAFE teachers and those working in our high schools in the region.

A key factor in smoothing the transition of these mostly older workers was the considerable time between the announcement of the closure of the plant on 29 April 1997 and the actual closure date of 30 September 1999. This gap gave BHP time to work with unions, the community and government to devise initiatives that would give employees and the regional economy the strongest grounding for a positive transition. The result was what has been labelled as an 'innovative response' to the plant's closure.

The Pathways Program

A key element of the success of BHP Steelwork's transition was its Pathways Program. The Pathways Program was a personalised and flexible retraining program that supported employees to train in almost any area of their choice if it was likely to help them find employment. The Program was not based on financial constraints or a set training program. Instead, each employee was interviewed about his or her aspirations in a post-steelworks world. BHP would cover whatever was required, including university or TAFE fees, textbooks and flexible work arrangements around study. The scheme gave rise to a wide range of individually chosen career changes – everything from nursing to flying to public relations. Figure 1 below summarises the Pathways' process that was central to this initiative.

Figure 1 Flow chart of the closure of BHP Steelworks



¹ Total cost of Pathways is estimated at \$7-8m, which includes all HR labour costs

Source: Interviews with BHP HR staff

Source: Boston Consulting Group. 2000. 'New Directions: pathways to work: tackling long-term unemployment'. Business Council of Australia, Melbourne, p. 46.

In several instances, employers experiencing a skills shortage approached Pathways and offered guaranteed employment. In addition, the match between the experience of the employees and the shortage of technology teachers in NSW sparked collaboration between BHP, the NSW Department of Education and the University of Newcastle. Around 80 employees trained onsite at the Steelworks to become teachers. In this case the Industry Recognition of Prior Learning principle was developed to draw on the skills of employees with little or no tertiary education. BHP fully funded and managed the Program, and despite the unconstrained nature of support to individual employees, the scheme was cost-effective.

Of the Pathways Program, one interviewee commented:

Each person was allocated an amount of money to do training to benefit their future. My training went to a security course over 10 days. I was familiar with security. Some did school teaching, diving courses, security etc. Pathways were terrific and are still terrific today.

Employees were also offered a bonus payment (on top of their redundancy entitlements) if they stayed until closure, but as many were moving into other jobs as a result of Pathways, they gave up this bonus and the salary they would have been paid in the remaining time. When the Pathways Program was wound up 15 months after the Steelworks' closure, around 7 000 separate training events had taken place and around 90% of participants were employed or getting educational qualifications (Payne 2013).

As part of the Program, BHP conducted surveys of employees to determine the post closure employment options they were intending to pursue. The survey results indicated that 50 were interested in full-time study/education; 150 were seeking employment with BHP in other locations; 150 were seeking employment with BHP in the remaining operations in Newcastle; 150 intended to go into small business; 400 were considering retirement; 400 would be seeking employment in the restructured business; and 1 200 would be seeking other employment (Centrelink Area Office 2000).

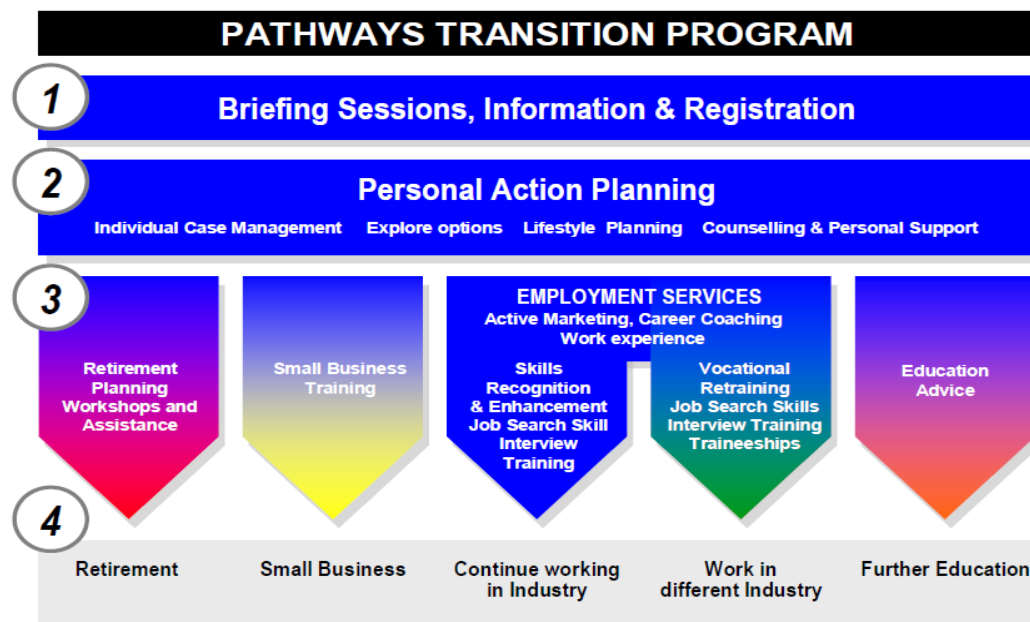
In summary, the BHP Steelwork's case demonstrates that early, targeted intervention improves employment outcomes for people who have involuntarily left work. Like BHP, most large corporates

have the resources both to identify employees who will need intensive job search assistance after their employment is terminated and to provide that assistance to them before they leave the company. For small and medium businesses this is generally not the case. As a significant proportion of employment terminations come from smaller businesses, it would clearly be desirable to enable the latter to provide such assistance to their at-risk employees.

Reflecting on what worked best, an interviewee commented: “Working with them as individuals and at the level that they are at. They will have a variety of backgrounds and their paradigms are often quite set so being able to open them up to the opportunities is good. But you have to get to know them as individuals first and get their trust. They are a generation that are not used to that approach and can be cautious of someone coming in and telling them how to run their lives. Get them into groups of ‘like-minded’ or ‘like intent’ and move along with them.”

Following Pathways assistance with the closure of the BHP steelworks in 1999, Pathways Employment Services commenced commercial operations in the year 2000 to meet the human resource needs of the business community. Since then, Pathways has assisted various government agencies with large scale redundancy projects and has managed numerous major industrial closures for corporate clients, providing various outplacement services and transitioning thousands of individuals into new careers. The Pathways Program has been recognised as setting an international standard and recommended as the benchmark for outplacement programs. The Program integrates career consultation, training, coaching, resume development, active job searching, vocational guidance and administrative support to ensure that the participant achieves an appropriate outcome. Figure 2 provides a summary of Pathways Program’s model around the steps to assist employees facing redundancy.

Figure 2 Pathways Program’s model



Source: Pathways Employment Services, 24 November 2014.

BHP’s Retraining Program

As part of the Pathways Program, during the 12 months’ prior to the BHP Steelworks’ closure, the displaced workers were given funding from the NSW State Government in the form of retrenchment training packages. This allowed the displaced workers to undertake training of their choice with the

Hunter Institute of TAFE for free. To encourage participation in the training program, it was mandated that in order to obtain some of their retrenchment money, the displaced workers had to undertake some form of training. While this training was only for 12 months, displaced workers could undertake as many courses as possible in that time. In addition, the displaced workers were given one day off per week to attend training sessions. These were mostly run on site at BHP's dedicated training facility, meaning that the workers did not have to travel.

Hunter TAFE's involvement

In order for the retrenchment training package to have maximum impact, Hunter TAFE firstly undertook a market scan to assess the Hunter Region for areas of skills shortage. Unfortunately, due to the massive layoffs at BHP and the ripple effect this had with BHP's contractors, there was more of a skills glut than a skills shortage in most trades and professions. The Hunter TAFE then used this skills shortage list to create a range of 12-week 'taster' courses for the BHP displaced workers in various trades and industries. Indeed, every faculty with Hunter TAFE was tasked with creating these new short courses, providing the displaced BHP workers with a full gamut of courses to enrol in. In addition, in order to cater specifically for these displaced workers, all of the 12-week courses included a section on resume writing, occupational health and safety, first aid, and a half-day to three-quarter day facilitated by a counsellor on workplace change. These new courses resulted in an additional 5,000 enrolments and required Hunter TAFE to employ a lot more part-time teachers.

Following completion of these 12-week courses, the participant received a transcript stating that they had completed certain modules – usually between two to six – from a larger nationally recognised training course, such as a Certificate III. The displaced worker could then choose to enrol in another 12-week course in a different discipline. If they wanted to do additional study they could then enrol in further study (self-funded) and receive credit for the modules they had already completed in the short course. Some displaced workers also moved into 'journeyman' courses, studying one night per week for 12 to 24 months to obtain a Statement of Attainment. Many of the courses were focused on reskilling the displaced workers to enable them to obtain a job in the coal mines or the power plants in the Hunter region. For example, courses geared towards these industries included industrial maintenance, industrial powercoating, and the necessary Work Cover certificates required.

It was a fairly diverse spread of courses people enrolled in. Many trained in computer programming and software, as in 1999 this was viewed as a burgeoning industry. Many also trained in the hospitality industry, as there was a push by the Newcastle Council to promote the area as a tourism region. Due to the number of additional TAFE teachers required, many also enrolled in a basic 'method of instruction' course, enabling them to become part-time teachers at TAFE. Due to demand, many of these positions eventually became fulltime teaching roles. A unique and beneficial part of the training courses were that many of them included site visits. These provided the displaced workers with an opportunity to introduce themselves to other employers and directly led to many displaced workers obtaining employment.

Post-training, many of the displaced workers found jobs in the coal mines or power plants in the Hunter region. Many also found work in the hospitality industry, working for employers like Bunnings and McDonalds who valued the strong work ethic and good customer service provided by older workers. Many displaced workers also decided to start their own small business (e.g. lawn mowing, landscape gardening, vehicle maintenance, car cleaning and house painting).

Reluctance to retrain

It is important to note that with the BHP Steelworks retrenchments, many of these displaced workers had been with BHP for 30-40 years. When it came to retraining, many of the older displaced workers were reluctant to change and retrain. As one interviewee commented:

The workers who had been there for 30-40 years were reluctant to change and angry that technology had overtaken a lot of their jobs. They were reluctant to retrain in things with technology. The ones that embraced it, however, and put in effort, were able to raise themselves back up again.

Among those who did seek training, it is interesting to note that many of the men enjoyed the training, not for the training component itself, but rather for the peer support it provided. One interviewee likened the training to the Men's Shed program, allowing the displaced workers to vent about their emotions and problems they were facing with people who understood what they were going through.

Life skills courses

When the BHP Steelworkers were retrenched, many were in their late 40s and 50s. They decided that they would take the redundancy money and either retire early or start their own small business working for themselves. With the funding from the NSW State Government, under the Pathways Program they were encouraged to access a range of 'Life Skills' courses that Hunter TAFE ran in its Adult Learning division. Some of these programs were new and were designed specifically with these retrenched workers in mind.

The premise of some of these life skills courses was that a proportion of the older displaced workers would not be looking to find a new job. However, by undertaking these courses, they would be able to manage small jobs and not have to pay for others to do them. These life skills courses included small DIY, home renovation, how to service a vehicle, basic welding, basic plumbing and eating to a budget. One interviewed explained that: "The eating to a budget course included a field trip to a local supermarket where the students were given \$20 each and asked to try to get the most value out of it." After completing these courses, some of the displaced workers developed their own cottage industries working for themselves; however, as planned, many others did retire, using the skills they had obtained from the courses to manage their finances on a budget.

BHP's on-site Centrelink

During the BHP Steelworks' wind-down phase, an onsite Centrelink office opened on 16 August 1999. It was staffed by nine Customer Service Officers, a supervisor and the project manager. Access to specialist services was available as required. Office hours were 7 am to 5 pm for the first seven weeks when the demand for services was at a maximum. The hours covered the shifts at the plant (Centrelink Area Office Hunter 2000).

The Centrelink office at BHP provided a one stop shop for BHP employees who were to be retrenched at the end of September 1999. It provided an opportunity for employees to lodge claims and establish eligibility for assistance prior to becoming unemployed and to access other forms of assistance for which they would become eligible because of their changed personal or family circumstances. The Centrelink office also ran a seminar program to provide early advice to employees of the impact of their redundancy payments on income support payments. Options, such as retirement where the employee was of retirement age or other employment, were also discussed.

BHP employees were able to access the full range of claims for financial assistance administered by Centrelink. In addition, medical examinations were conducted by Health Services Australia on site three days per week for people claiming Disability Support Pension. A total of 119 medical examinations were conducted on site. Centrelink also arranged for the Child Support Agency to attend the office two days per week to provide advice on child support issues. Twenty-seven interviews were conducted by the Agency.

Centrelink conducted over 2 000 interviews during the ten week period the office was on site at BHP. Some 950 new claims were lodged and 1 075 payments processed. Centrelink site staff also attended meetings of the various departments at BHP, displayed information on notice boards and arranged for messages to be put on payslips about the services available. Liaison between the Employment Centre and Centrelink ensured that employees were assisted appropriately (Centrelink Area Office 2000).

The Centrelink site office closed on 22 October 1999, a month after the closure of the steelworks on 30 September 1999. BHP employees were advised that they could access further services through their local Centrelink office and customer records were annotated accordingly. In conclusion, the Centrelink response to the BHP closure demonstrates that Centrelink at the time had the flexibility and capacity to arrange and deliver services which are tailored to the circumstances of particular groups in the community in transition.

Conclusion

The BHP Steelwork's transition to closure and redundancy of its workers was handled very well. This was due in part to the long lead time of two years, the structured use of the Pathways Program, and funding provided by BHP and the NSW State Government in the form of retrenchment training packages. BHP also provided a top psychologist to come in and talk to the supervisors about the signs of depression to look for in their workers. This was important, as one displaced worker noted: "People were telling you they were okay. Person couldn't read or write and he would tell me every day that he was okay. His wife would ring my wife crying because they didn't know what they were going to do." In addition, having an onsite Centrelink helped the workers enormously, by enabling them to conveniently access the full range of claims for financial assistance.

As one interviewee stated:

The combined inter-agency thing tends to happen with high profile things like the BHP case. BHP did some good things and because it was so high profile the Commonwealth and State agencies took the lead role in providing support to retrenched workers. BHP also provided money to the community for related events to do with commemorating the history of it to the town and other community events. This made it a celebration as well as a retrenchment event and this was good psychologically for people. BHP worked very hard to kick the tin for money as well. However, the bulk job losses are just the visible part of the iceberg and then you get the flow on effect - job losses in support industries and services and they are job losses in the ones and twos. If they turn up to Centrelink and the JSAs the approach is variable. If they are not a good advocate for themselves and don't say 'hey, I'm retrenched' then they do not get the agencies working together as well.

In conclusion, the comments made by one older displaced BHP worker sum up the situation well:

You have to take ownership of your job loss - you own it. The best thing people can do is get involved in something else. Men's shed has been excellent. The unions and clubs like Probus and Apex are also wonderful. You have to make yourself go to one of these places. You've got to also

really, really try to find a new job. Use your own initiative. You have to understand Centrelink. None of the workers had ever been to Centrelink. An organisation must provide: training, support, encouragement, psychological help. But the worker has to want to do the training and the teacher has to be down to earth. The career adviser has to understand the person they are talking to and what suits them and their personality. They need to ask, 'What would you like to do? What are your skills?' The training has to be shorter, more practical education, like tickets and white cards, and suited to the person. The assessment should also be individualised to suit the person.

Case study 1.2: the Minehunter Project

In 1994, the Department of Defence awarded ADI Limited (now known as Thales Australia) a contract to build six Italian designed Minehunter vessels for the Royal Australian Navy at a total contract value of \$917m (more than \$1b in 2001; Tasman Economics 2002). This was known as the Minehunter project (MHP). ADI Limited built the Minehunter fleet at their Newcastle shipbuilding facility and continued its maintenance under an additional \$1.2b contract that ran from 1994 to 2004. The MHP generated at least 3 180 FTE jobs for the Newcastle region, not taking into account the associated flow on employment effects. The Department of Defence's Australian Industry Involvement (All) Plan formed a condition of the contract. This meant that 68.4% of the contract value of building the vessels had to come from local content. In addition, as a condition of funding given to ADI by the NSW State Government, ADI was required to engage with the Hunter Institute of TAFE to purchase training for unemployed workers.

Hunter TAFE undertook a skills audit to ascertain all the skills required to make the Minehunter vessels, and then identified skills shortages. Hunter TAFE, using funding from ADI, paid for by the State and Federal governments then commenced a pre-training program for 300 unemployed people, many of whom were displaced workers from the closure of the BHP Steelworks in 1999. These individuals were trained in traditional ship building courses, such as Certificate III in Fibreglassed Reinforced Plastics, and also in many other trades necessary to build and maintain the vessels. These courses were at the Certificate III level and ranged from courses in plumbing and electrical engineering, through to hospitality, logistics, drafting and business administration.

Following the completion of the pre-training, the 300 individuals were employed by ADI and were provided with on-the-job training working on the Minehunters. The training program was conducted like an apprenticeship, with Hunter TAFE trainers working alongside the trainees to help them develop their skills. Once construction of the Minehunters was completed in 2002, there were 300 newly trained people job ready. As part of ADI's contract, they were to develop these employees into another area once the contract had finished. However, there is limited evidence that this occurred. Many workers found themselves displaced and unemployed once again, with new skills but no job.

There is evidence that some obtained new jobs in the burgeoning fibreglass pleasure craft industry, with the low Australian dollar making it more desirable for European and American investors to have their super yachts built in Australia. For others, the skills that they developed for the boat building industry spurred them to start businesses in related fields such as building submersible vessels and hyperbaric chambers – constructing these locally and exporting them globally, with much success.

Overall, the Minehunter Project shows the power of inter-agency relationships in building a new industry and creating jobs and economic prosperity for a region. In this project, the key stakeholders included the Federal Government, the NSW State Government, the Department of Defence, the Royal Australian Navy, ADI Limited (now Thales Australia), and the Hunter Institute of TAFE.

Concluding comments

The Hunter region is quite possibly the most experienced region in Australia in responding to various waves of growth and then decline in its labour force. Throughout the region has shown remarkable resilience. Behind this outcome is evidence of strategically planned and well executed initiatives that have provided access to a variety of agencies and funded programs to support displaced workers, many of whom were older workers with many years of employment in the one organisation.

In particular, the BHP Pathways Program provides a good example of a highly connected and supportive outplacement program. It has shown the advantages of an integrated approach where personal and career counselling, skills recognition, VET training, small business training, life skills training, active job search, resume assistance and interview training and are likely to promote positive employment and related outcomes for the displaced older worker in particular.

However, as one interviewee commented:

There is a risk that the Newcastle and Hunter region becomes a sea change aged care backwater. Yes, there will be continued growth in health services and aged care in the Hunter region, but people losing their jobs in manufacturing are not necessarily going to move into those jobs. We need to be a value adding to the economy such as in our burgeoning wine industry, equine industry, engineering in agriculture, and our large airbase, which is going to be positioned as a regional aircraft airbase. At the moment we are reliant on government spending by defence to help our industry and we are sending building and manufacturing offshore. The jobs of the future in the Hunter region need to be highly skilled; we should be driving innovation, globally competitive, and with a high technology component. We also need to have the ability to transition the older workforce into these new jobs in the region.

Interviewees

Our thanks to the following for providing their time to be interviewed for the case study: Mary Ann Hill, Alicia Payne, Richard Downie, Dr Brent Jenkins, Jenny Williams, Murray Christie, Brett Gleeson, Tony Sansom OAM, James Kelly, David Kirkby, Paul Cartledge, Jenny Williams and Aubrey Brooks.

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Alison Poulsen in the preparation of this case study.

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Case study 2: Geelong region of Victoria

Introduction

A tsunami of job losses has occurred recently in the Geelong region due to the closure of several large manufacturing firms. Recent and scheduled major job cuts in the Geelong region include:

- Ford, which has been downsizing since mid-2013 and will close by October 2016 causing 510 job losses
- Boral Cement, approximately 100 jobs lost in 2013
- Target, 260 jobs lost from its Geelong headquarters in 2013
- Qantas/Forstaff heavy maintenance fleet at the Avalon regional airport closed in March 2014 with 300 job lost
- Alcoa closed its Point Henry aluminium smelter in July 2014 and its rolling and recycling mill at the end of 2014, with a total loss of 800 jobs
- Shell sold its oil refinery in late 2014, leading to some job losses due to restructuring (Australian Broadcasting Commission 2014a).

Unless many small to medium businesses can diversify, there will be additional job losses occurring among enterprises that are part of the supply chain to these large scale manufacturers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that over 10 500 jobs in total could be lost (LLEN 2014), out of an estimated 100 000 total regional jobs (G21 Regional Alliance 2013). The cumulative effect of current industry restructuring in Geelong has been likened by one commentator (Murphy 2014) to the impact that occurred when BHP left Newcastle and the State Electricity Commission in Latrobe Valley Victoria was privatised.

The Geelong region's response has been equally significant. A variety of region-based organisations are proactively and cooperatively helping displaced workers to move on. The challenge is great, however, as most of the available jobs are in non-manufacturing industries. Retraining is likely to be required if displaced workers are to find new jobs locally. Also region-based organisations are working collectively to secure new job creation projects, and are targeting more advanced manufacturing to ensure higher skilled and higher value adding jobs that are most likely to provide longer term jobs.

This case study outlines the Geelong region's response to industry restructuring utilising a number of state and federal government-based services available for workers who are made redundant. The focus is on the initiatives that are directly helping older displaced workers to move on, and a smaller section of the case study examines the parallel job creation activities being undertaken. The case is based on interviews undertaken with members of the region-based organisations involved and with some displaced older workers themselves, to learn of their experiences and views about the services provided to them. There is also secondary data from various reports, media and statistics about the restructuring that is occurring in the region.

Background

The Geelong region is located to the West and South-West of Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria. The region is comprised of the five municipalities of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast (see Figure 3 below). These municipalities have formed an alliance, referred to as the G21, that together with many local businesses and community organisations plan and advocate for a more sustainable future for the Geelong region. The G21 Regional Alliance has developed a profile of the Geelong region that includes a broad range of region-level demographic, socioeconomic, health, community and economic data (G21 Regional Alliance 2014). Based on the G21 region profile, and considerable community consultation, G21 has developed a comprehensive growth plan for the region that identifies priority projects for implementation (G21 Regional Alliance 2013).

Figure 3 The Geelong region and its five municipalities



The Geelong region is Victoria's largest regional economy. About three-quarters of the region's 278 863 residents (ABS 2011) live in the municipality of Greater Geelong, in the eastern part of the region. Greater Geelong includes the principal service centre and traditionally has been a major manufacturing centre. Greater Geelong has good proximity and road and rail and port connections to Melbourne. Other industries in the region include timber getting, farming, grazing, cropping, dairying, mining, viticulture and intensive agriculture in the expansive rural areas in the western and central parts of the region. Tourism is also significant.

The region has many natural attractions, such as the iconic Great Ocean Road that runs through the coastal towns of Torquay, Angelsea, Lorne and Apollo Bay, and several marine parks and the Otway Ranges. The region's natural beauty is underpinning population growth and related jobs growth in retail, health, education and other social services. Indeed, health has now become major employer of the regional workforce, replacing manufacturing. The construction industry is also relatively buoyant (G21 Regional Alliance 2014).

Business in Transition Support Program

The Victorian Government's Business in Transition Support Program (BiTS) run by the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI) is Victoria's central program for support services for Victorian businesses undertaking or considering the retrenchment process. The Program provides a

coordinated State and Federal Government stakeholder response for employees affected by retrenchment. BiTS provide retrenched employees with tailored information to encourage them to make informed choices about training that will help them transition to new employment. Advice includes information on:

- the benefits of training
- the Victorian Training Guarantee (i.e. how training is subsidised by the Government and who is eligible, noting that some retrenched employees are eligible for expanded access to government subsidised training through the Guarantee, in recognition that retrenched employees may need to retrain in order to find new employment)
- the Victorian Skills Gateway (i.e. online information to help retrenched workers think about what jobs might be right for them, what training might be needed, where to find this training and if they are eligible for financial assistance)
- Victoria's three Workforce Development Centres for face-to-face support (Victorian State Government 2014b).

Apart from the BiTS, many other initiatives have been undertaken in the Geelong region to ensure displaced workers from traditional manufacturing industries obtain new jobs. They include firm-level worker transition programs, general initiatives for all job seekers, and customised initiatives for mature aged male workers. These initiatives are now presented as two mini case studies that illustrate the application of a wide range of strategies to assist displaced or soon-to-be-displaced workers.

General initiatives for all job seekers

In the Geelong region, there are both face-to-face and web-based access points for advice on career opportunities, training and employment, and a range of individual career, training and employment services providers.

The Geelong Workforce Development Centre

In 2014, the Victorian State Government provided the funds to set up the Geelong Workforce Development Centre. The Centre is a 'one stop shop' where retrenched workers, job seekers and their families can access a range of services. It provides a starting point for job seekers, a place to get advice and assistance on careers, education, training, and employment support opportunities. It also provides links to a range of other services. The Centre offers:

- individual career guidance, including developing an individual career action plan
- training course information
- information about financial assistance for training courses
- local job market information
- referrals to other services
- access to online career development resources and tools
- workshops to assist with job search activities
- assistance with job resumes, cover letters and interview skills.

The Geelong Workforce Development Centre is located at the Gordon TAFE in Geelong. However, the Centre belongs to the Geelong region as a whole and operates as an ‘honest broker’ not promoting any organisation over another to its clients. The Centre is expected to deliver retrenched workers in Geelong a higher chance of accessing the training and skills to secure long-term jobs. The Centre has been in operation since late 2014 and is funded until 2018. The Centre is also part of a broader ‘Skilling the Bay’ initiative managed by the Gordon TAFE and Deakin University (see later sections).

The Corio shopping centre education to employment hub

The concept of a central place where job seekers can access a variety of services has recently been extended to include a hub in North Geelong at the Corio shopping centre. This ‘education to employment hub’ was opened in mid-2014 and is run by Acquire Learning. Acquire Learning, through the hub, help job seekers to determine their ideal role and matches them with the right courses and qualifications. Over a number of steps it provides career champions to coach and mentor candidates to get them job ready and ultimately to obtain a job. Acquire Learning is not an education provider but rather a conduit organisation, linking clients to appropriate education and training providers (Acquire Learning 2014).

The Geelong Careers website

The Geelong Careers website is a virtual web-based entry point into local jobs information and advice. The website frequently has over 800 local regional jobs which appear daily on the site. Geelong Careers is the most comprehensive source of live jobs in the region, and uses unique technology to draw jobs from relevant public sites, sorting them into local regions, categories and industries. The Geelong Careers website and app includes a suite of free resources that puts local career data and a live feed of Geelong jobs in the hands of job seekers. The technology also links to eight regional growth industries providing information about new careers and Industry specific jobs as well (Geelong Careers 2015).

The Geelong Careers website is owned by the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network (GRLEN). GRLEN ensure that the website remains an up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive guide to careers in Geelong and surrounding areas. GRLEN aims for the Geelong Careers website to demonstrate where there are specific jobs and provides indications about jobs growth in the future for Geelong (GRLEN 2015).

GRLEN was established in 2001. Its core business is to facilitate the development of an effective workforce development service system that supports the community to make informed decisions that lead to appropriate training and skills development. It is a network of local organisations in education, training and employment supported by a small team of staff. GRLEN encourages and does its work through partnerships. The initial focus of GRLEN was young people 10 to 19 years, but over the years its focus has shifted and expanded as new needs have arisen. GRLEN reports that it has always emphasised a lifelong approach to learning and sustainable employment at any age (GRLEN 2015).

GRLEN is funded by the Victorian Government; however a number of projects with the GRLEN has been funded by the Australian Government through the Geelong Employment Facilitator.

Access through specific services providers

There are a range of career, training and employment services providers in the Geelong region that can be a starting point for workers seeking new jobs due to industry restructuring. These providers include the Job Services Australia (JSA) employment providers that cater for anyone who is unemployed.¹ There is also the public training provider Gordon TAFE that caters for individuals wanting to acquire skills recognition and additional training. There are also a range of private training organisations in niche markets that provide less institutionalised approaches than Gordon TAFE, at least reported by members of two private training organisations interviewed for this case study. One of these organisations focuses on individuals and conducts training using adult education principles. The other focuses on businesses and conducts training aimed at improving business performance.

Finally, there are community organisations such as Volunteering Geelong, neighbourhood houses and men's sheds. Men's sheds, like neighbourhood houses, act as a central hub for information exchange and places where men can be involved in skills usage and development activities. Apart from the men's sheds there are few dedicated services in the Geelong region set up to assist displaced mature aged male workers.

Customised initiatives for mature aged male retrenched workers

Mature aged male retrenched workers have been identified as a 'hot spot' in the workforce development system by the GRLEN. In response they have developed and implemented initiatives targeted at this group with Flexible Funding Pool funds made available by the Australian Government appointed Geelong Employment Facilitator.

The Geelong Employment Facilitator has been in operation since September 2013, and works with stakeholders including the Department of Employment, employers, employment services, training providers and the community sector to deliver services focused on developing employment and skills opportunities that address local employment issues. This includes assisting retrenched workers and job seekers into new employment and/or training through employer engagement. As part of this role, the Geelong Employment Facilitator identifies innovative projects or activities to generate employment opportunities and assist retrenched workers in the Geelong region. The contract for the facilitator has been extended through to 2019.

During 2014, the GRLEN developed and implemented two innovative projects to support mature aged male retrenched workers to explore job opportunities in alternative industry sectors to manufacturing. The projects are described as 'Proof of Concept' projects. As a GRLEN staff member explained: "Each time a particular support project was run it was reviewed with the participants including the services agencies involved and the retrenched workers. Then the project is modified to improve it for next time. We also consider what else could be done." The GRLEN projects were undertaken using an action research methodology to build a strong evidence base to inform future practice. The projects include the two described below.

The Jobs 4 Geelong Front Foot series

The Jobs 4 Geelong Front Foot series assists displaced or soon-to-be displaced mature aged men to learn about industry sectors in the Geelong region that are likely to be jobs growth areas in the

¹ JSA operated from 1 July 2009 and was recently replaced by the *jobactive* system that commenced on 1 July 2015.

coming years. The industry sectors showcased to date include: transport and logistics, community services, construction, security and corrections, and advanced manufacturing. The half-day sessions on each industry involve a speaker who provides an overview of the industry area, as well as a local employer and employee from the industry who provide more details and insights into the industry, any pitfalls of the industry, and potential career opportunities available. A show bag is also given to the attendees. This includes training information specific to the industry as well as other general information such as Help Mate, a directory of social support services for men and boys in the Geelong region that GRLEN uses, compiled in collaboration with its partners.

The half-day sessions also cover topics such as resume development, transferable skills, and other places they can obtain assistance. Crucially, these sessions include plenty of talking time. The sessions are designed for the men to make social connections and learn about potential new job possibilities. For some men losing their job means losing their only circle of friends². GRLEN reports that attendance numbers at the Jobs 4 Geelong Front Foot series is growing, while the sessions have been a very good way to interact with the men and to find out what their needs are (GRLEN 2014).

Industry taster programs

The first industry taster program was run in March 2014 for displaced workers from Qantas and Forstaff enterprises at the Avalon airport. The industry in which the workers were given a taste was community services. This industry taster program involved taking 20 men to a range of different organisations in the community services sector, covering areas as such as disability, aged care and youth services. The host organisations talk about the range of roles in the business and the qualities they seek from more mature aged men in their workforce. In addition, during each site visit the host organisations arranged for a mature aged male employee with a blue collar work background to talk to the workers displaced from the Avalon airport about how they came to be in the community services sector and how their experience had been. Following the tour, participants are offered career counselling sessions with a mature aged male career counsellor tasked with providing specific advice about transitioning to the community services sector.

The GRLEN also help the displaced men in pursuing a place in the necessary training they require. The GRLEN does this by working with the displaced workers one-on-one to identify questions they should ask of the training organisations, such as when and where the training will be conducted, what approach will be taken and whether a work placement is involved to get practical experience. The GRLEN reports that about half of the men who undertook the taster program are now intending to pursue a career in the community services sector and will undertake the necessary training. These men report that without this type of program, they would not have considered pursuing a career in the community services sector (GRLEN 2014).

A coherent offering of initiatives for mature aged male retrenched workers

Reflecting on the above projects and other successful initiatives, the GRLEN has aggregated them into a proposed collective offering. This initiative is in recognition of the fact that a coherent effort for mature aged male displaced workers is required, and over a sustained period of time. The proposed collective offering is situated within a framework that makes it easy for the displaced

² It is to be noted that the Geelong Trades Hall is also serving as a social meeting place for retrenched workers. It is available for both union and non-union members and is being made available at no cost to other organisations as a venue from which they can deliver their services to retrenched workers.

workers to understand the service providers available to them. The GRLEN envisages the specific initiatives in the framework will be conducted by a range of local organisations working cooperatively and to the principles identified.

As shown in figure 4 (adapted from GRLEN 2014, p.12), the GRLEN has created a framework of initiatives to assist male displaced workers. Firstly, it identifies two overarching initiatives that are required. The GRLEN sees a need for better region level databases to underpin the above collective offering of initiatives for mature aged male displaced workers. Two types of regional data bases are being proposed: a regional retrenchment database and a regional workforce projections database. The regional retrenchment database will be made up of Geelong region workers who have been retrenched. This database is seen as a means of ensuring that everyone who may need help gets help. It is recognised that constructing such a database will be difficult as it needs to be done retrospectively. Further, it will involve implementation of a protocol for data collection and sharing between the various agencies that currently hold some data on retrenched workers.

It is envisage that the regional workforce projections database will contain robust localised labour market data and forecasts. Importantly, it will provide data on the numbers of people in training in the various labour markets. This will ensure that good advice about career pathways options and job prospects are available to the advisors in the region. It will also enable advisors to understand jobs areas in which there is a reasonable expectation that there will be an employment outcome; and to work with their displaced worker clients to map meaningful pathways to those jobs. Organisations within the Geelong region that already do some database work will be approached to contribute to the overarching regional workforce database.

The GRLEN has then sorted initiatives to assist these male displaced workers into three groups: those that assist with job research and experience development; those that assist with job searching; and those that assist with job application and interview. Each of the discrete initiatives within the framework focuses on a specific aspect of assistance that may be required. It is not expected that the displaced workers would access every specific intervention. Rather, the displaced workers will (often with the help of an advisor) identify an intervention or a sequence of interventions that will be of particular use and relevance to them. It is noted that some of the initiatives are only ideas at this stage for Geelong. The GRLEN require additional funding to trial and prove these initiatives in the region. It was reported in the interviews that these initiatives are not seen as the final solutions, but as ways currently identified to assist mature aged retrenched workers that through a 'proof of concept' implementation approach, which will lead to continuous improvement or their replacement with better employment interventions.

Figure 4 The GRLLLEN Male Displaced Workers Assistance Initiatives Framework

Services Principles	Age and experience appropriate advisors who can connect with mature aged men Awareness of low levels of computer literacy among mature aged retrenched men Awareness of health risks of prolonged unemployment among mature aged retrenched men Every initiative to be tested for “proof of concept” and continuously improved or replaced with other better actions		
Underpinning initiatives	Regional retrenchment database Regional workforce projections database Workforce Development Centre – Geelong Careers website and other points of entry		
Service areas	1. Job research & experience	2. Job search support	3. Job application support
Specific initiatives	Industry sectors showcasing Personal planning toolkit (a physical booklet of tools proven to guide workers planning and thinking about dealing with retrenchment and getting back to work e.g. tools for self and career analysis financial planning, tips for mental and physical health, forms to track job activities) Specific industry taster programs Focused volunteering (to provide opportunities to get a taster of a potential work role for those unsure the work is for them or who are struggling to get a permanent role because they lack relevant experience)	Job networking events (Jobs fairs involving all stake holders and/or single purpose job networking events involving only people who are looking for either an employee or a job) Hidden jobs market (workshops on how to approach employers direct and use networks to find jobs) Out of region jobs (proactive assistance in linking locals with specific vacancies in other regions) A foot in the door (encouraging local employers to give workers a job who have the qualifications but not the experience via the Geelong Careers website)	Peer assistance (sessions facilitated by mature aged men who have experienced redundancy to help others in the same position to develop their own narrative about the skills they have to offer an employer) Transferable skills (sessions on what these skills are and identify and discuss one’s own transferable skills) Resume/cover letter development (sessions on how to tailor resumes and cover letters to a particular set of job requirements) Interview skills (sessions to get build workers confidence in telling their own stories about the knowledge and skills they have acquired and responding to interview questions and explaining why they would be a valuable employee in a range of industry settings)
	Jobs clubs (regular meetings of retrenched workers to share information and build social connections and help maintain their focus/motivation on job finding activities)		

Case Study 2.1: The Ford Transition Program

In May 2013, the Ford Motor Company announced that it would stop producing motor vehicles in Australia by October 2016. The manufacturing operations in Geelong (and also Broadmeadows, Victoria) would close. The announcement triggered an immediate and collective response by Ford, the Australian Government and the Unions. One part of the response was the Ford Transition Program. The Australian Government (Department of Industry) awarded \$5m to the national automotive industry training advisory body, Auto Skills Australia (ASA), to work with Ford and the unions to develop and implement the Program. The Ford Transition Program is aimed at helping Ford workers and other workers in Ford supply chain businesses affected by Ford’s closure to transition to life after they leave their current employer. The Program includes funds for training of up to \$1 000 for each worker, excluding for equipment or books. The Program has dedicated ASA staff, referred to as Transition Program Coordinators, working in Ford sites and on request with the businesses in the Ford supply chain. The Transition Program Coordinators can endorse payment on invoice from the selected Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Ford workers may also be eligible for State Government funding from the Victorian Workers in Transition Program or the Victorian Training Guarantee funds.

The role of the Transition Program Coordinators includes:

- discussing with each worker what their individual transition process might look like
- ensuring workers have sufficient information to help with their decision-making on suitable destinations
- linking workers with external services and support agencies that can help them, with a focus particularly on connecting workers with providers of skills recognition and re-skilling and training, where needed. The primary aim is to ensure that workers have the right skills to find new employment once they leave their current employer (Auto Skills Australia 2014).

The ASA Transition Program Coordinator at Ford Geelong, for example, assists workers to develop more informed decisions that are then followed up with sound action plans. The central task of the Coordinator is to hold at least one single one-on-one meeting with each displaced worker for the purposes of helping them to develop a transition plan. In the interviews the adoption of a one-on-one or case management approach was nominated as the key to success: “as each worker’s life circumstances are unique and therefore so too will be their transition plans.” The importance of each worker having developed a transition plan before they engage with training was also reinforced: “in order that the training providers deliver what the workers require and not want the providers want to deliver.”

In the first one-on-one meeting, the Transition Program Coordinator uses the diagram in Figure 5 below to ensure that each worker considers all aspects of their life circumstances when considering where to go after Ford. At the end of the first meeting, a preliminary personal transition plan is developed that includes agreed actions to be taken by the worker and the Coordinator on behalf of the worker. The Coordinator encourages the workers to develop a Plan A and a back-up Plan B. Thereafter, the worker can arrange further meetings with the Coordinator as they wish, and update their transition plans.

Figure 5 The whole-of-person focus in the Ford Worker Transition Plan



In addition, Ford workers are encouraged to participate in information sessions arranged by the Transition Coordinator. These sessions involve local representatives coming into the Ford workplace to explain their services. The local representatives come from a range of government and non-government agencies that offer services that may be useful to the workers. The services have

included financial services (e.g. general financial education, superannuation, transition to retirement, Centrelink), career counselling and job preparation services (e.g. resume writing and job search assistance), education and training services and job placement services. These information sessions provided the workers with the opportunity to arrange follow-up individual meetings with services of interest to them. These follow-up meetings occur either in the workplace or outside of the workplace. Information sheets on the services are also kept available in a dedicated resources area in the Ford workplace that workers can access whenever they wish to.

Interviewees made some general observations about the Ford workers, whilst also acknowledging that workers are a diverse group and as a consequence each individual requires tailored assistance. Overall, the types of specific assistance most frequently required by the workers are summarised below:

- Ford has a predominately male workforce. Many of its workers have been in Ford all of their working lives or for most of it. Some workers have up to 40 years of employment at Ford. For these workers being displaced is like, as one reported, “falling off a cliff” into the unknown wider world of work. In their first meeting with the Coordinator, many have no idea of where they wish to go after Ford. They need assistance to identify alternative job possibilities and to think outside of the square of ‘one person = one full-time job’. It can take some time before the worker establishes a clear view about their potential next steps. This next step can include accepting that they may not be able to achieve the wages they once earned at Ford.
- Career counselling is an early essential intervention to aid workers to develop their transition plans. The plans need to be realistic and focused on the types of jobs that are available or that offer good potential careers. The career counsellor needs to understand each worker’s background and experience. It is reported that workers do not tolerate ‘hollow talk’.
- While Ford has provided a relatively long lead time for workers to make future plans, there is a down side to this. Some workers wait too close to being retrenched before engaging fully in ‘what’s next thinking’. Workers need to be encouraged to start early to develop their transition plans.
- Ford workers are mostly blue collar workers. Some have low levels of digital literacy, writing and reading skills, and these issues are most apparent amongst the older workers. To overcome these barriers, Coordinators arrange for one on one instruction in ‘workforce language training’ with an outside expert who comes into the Ford workplace. The Coordinator conducts one-on-one computer based job search activities to build computer skills. As one interviewee noted: “One-on-one rather than classroom instruction in literacy is the more dignified and accepted approach by the workers.”
- Ford workers have many skills including qualifications and tickets, including in occupational health and safety, and skills developed on-the-job through non-accredited training. They also have a demonstrated work ethic, being used to a disciplined working environment and working in teams. However, it is reported that they may need assistance from skills development specialists to recognise those skills that are transferable to another job and how to explain their skills to prospective new employers in ‘non- Ford speak’. For many of the older Ford workers, this is the first time that they have had to develop a resume to enable them to apply for another job.
- For those workers who are fully work-ready, Ford has recruited a Melbourne-based outplacement services firm to assist these workers and link them with suitable employers with immediate job opportunities. It may have assisted to appoint a firm that also had linkages to Geelong employment opportunities.

- For those requiring it, further training has been a popular option, with training examples including licences for fork lift or operating major machinery. However, these tickets add little value if the worker has no prior work experience: “Workers prefer small chunks of learning and training organisations need to avoid cajoling workers into training that is not truly useful to the worker.”

In conclusion, it is believed by those interviewed that the success of the Ford Transition Program is due to the relationships between the Coordinator, the Ford HR team, the Ford general management, the unions and various outside agencies:

All parties have the shared objective of helping the workers. The HR team has been supplying workers with their individual job and training profiles. General management has put in its own resources and supported in any way we have asked. The unions have been brilliant at leading the way. The shop stewards have been the first in line for a one-on-one meeting and have encouraged others to make appointments. Many outside agencies have been involved. The Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network (GRLEN) has been most helpful in developing customised assistance. The new Workforce Development Centre at the Gordon TAFE has provided a further place where retrenched workers can access a range of services. And all the local training agencies are assisting with skills recognition and training programs and employment and recruitment agencies with job search.

In future all retrenched workers from eligible automotive manufacturers and suppliers will have intensive employment support through *jobactive* introduced on 1 July 2015 under the Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Programme (AISAP)

Services can include:

- help with resume preparation
- job applications
- interview skills
- training to obtain qualifications e.g. tickets or licences
- work experience
- other assistance to help them find new employment that is best suited to their specific circumstances.

Case Study 2.2: Alcoa Worker Assistance Program

In the case of Alcoa, the workers were given short notice that it was to close. Alcoa announced in February 2014 that the Point Henry aluminium smelter would be closed in July 2014 and its rolling mill at the end of 2014. As for assistance for its workers, this was forthcoming from Alcoa from May 2014, and after lobbying by G21 via a ‘Jobs for Geelong’ rally. The Alcoa Worker Assistance Package, worth \$4 million (including support for Alcoa workers affected in NSW as well as Geelong), was comprised of three elements: one- on-one career counselling; Alcoa organised short-term courses with Gordon TAFE; and final support for employees to undertake their own accredited training towards securing sustainable alternative employment.

Alcoa also offered its workers pastoral support. As at Ford, many of the Alcoa workers were older workers, and many had been in the same job for decades. According to the Alcoa general management, 60% of workers had been with Alcoa for ten years or more. Given this, there was the generally accepted view that Alcoa workers would struggle to adapt to the contemporary job market;

and would have to remodel and remarket themselves in order to obtain another job (Australian Broadcasting Commission 2014b).

The Victorian Alcoa Supply Chain Initiative

The Victorian Alcoa Supply Chain Initiative (VASCI) is a Victorian Government program which helps Victorian businesses identified within the Alcoa supply chain and affected by the closures at Point Henry. VASCI supports businesses to explore ways to transition their operations to remain competitive and to build a sustainable business for the future. The aim is to keep as many of their current workforce as possible or even to expand them. VASCI services are delivered by a panel of independent business development specialists over a period of up to nine months.

The five elements of the Initiative are:

- 1 Strategic diagnostic review of the current state of the business
- 2 Business planning to analyse the effects of Alcoa's closure and develop a business plan to overcome identified challenges
- 3 Workforce planning, involving a skills audit of the existing workforce and a strategy to ensure staff have the right skills to implement the business plan
- 4 Business coaching to assist with implementation of the plans
- 5 Strategic reviews at six months after plans have been developed.

Eligibility for VASCI is on a case by case basis. To be eligible to apply for the program a business must have an operational presence in Victoria; be a direct supplier to the Point Henry smelter and/or rolling mill of Alcoa of Australia Ltd; and agree to pay a financial contribution (\$1 000 + GST) to the cost of the program (Victorian State Government 2014a). In return the program will provide personalised assistance to approved businesses ensuring they have the necessary support, coaching and capability building to improve business management and planning. Approved business will be able to access up to 40 hours of support from the business planning specialist (Victorian State Government 2014a). Interestingly, as one interviewee noted: "Unfortunately there has been very little, if any take up of this initiative by Alcoa suppliers."

Displaced workers' experiences

Outlined in Table 2.1 below are the experiences of three displaced Ford workers, a retrenched Alcoa worker, a retrenched Qantas/ Forstaff worker, and one worker displaced from a non-manufacturing job. The displaced workers (pseudonym names used) were sourced through the GRLEN and one through the Geelong Trades Hall. The overall impression these workers gave was of resilience in the face of their shock and despair at being retrenched. All of the displaced workers used peer groups to help them remain positive. They actively sought assistance from the services providers available and reported this assistance was mostly useful. They have all realised however that they must use their own networks as well to find a new job. Unfortunately, at this point the displaced workers are not where they would like to be with respect to their jobs, and ongoing assistance will be required.

Table 1 Experiences of some displaced workers in Geelong

Fictional name	Background, experiences and advice in finding a new job
David	<p>Background: David is 50 years old. He worked as a sheet metal worker at Ford for 31 years and all of his working life. He was retrenched in June 2014.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: "We had been told that Ford was to close and I had decided I would stay to the end but then I was called to an interview and told I was to be retrenched earlier. I was shocked felt rejected and thought what am I going to do now?" Dave signed up with a local Job Services Australia provider. As he was retrenched, he was deemed eligible for Stream 3 level assistance but in the end Dave went it alone in his search for a new job. He thought: "I already have a resume and am as capable as the JSA to search and apply for jobs via the internet." Dave did this for three months. Then he realised "networking was the better way to go". He has had 2 jobs through his own networks. One of the jobs was with a friend who had a Jims Mowing franchise but Dave quickly realised this was not a job for him. His next job was obtained through his wife's friend's brother and he worked in this job until the end of 2014. Dave did attend an industry taster course in Community Services and thought it was good but did not pay well enough. Dave has decided to follow his dream of making a living out of athletics coaching. He is a long distance runner and has been involved in Little Athletics for years in his own time and has an athletic coach certificate level 3. From the start of 2015, Dave has managed to secure a part-time job as an athletic coach at a local school. He and the school are considering whether this can be combined with some school maintenance work that Darren has the skills to do, and in this way providing more total work hours for Dave.</p> <p>Advice: Networking is important to obtain a new job and can often be better than using the JSAs or internet.</p>
Ron	<p>Background: Ron is 53 years old. He undertook his apprenticeship at Ford and worked there for 35 years as an electrician and a refrigeration mechanic via extra training until he was retrenched in June 2014.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: "I was devastated and shocked and did not hear anything else that was said after 'you are to be retrenched.'" Ron attended the information sessions at Ford but thought they were too general and not of real use to him. He thought the same of the Job Fair he had attended. Ron also sought help at a local employment and training agency but found "they were not geared up to assist tradesmen." Ron soon realised "he was on his own." He attended the Gordon TAFE and shared his portfolio of qualifications and asked what further training he might usefully do. He did do some short courses to broaden the areas in which he could work. The short courses included in working at heights, traffic control management, hazardous area wiring and electrical spotting. Ron also did some volunteer work, providing one-on-one assistance to a person with a disability that he found "interesting and rewarding and it certainly helped to put my own life into perspective." Ron attended meetings of his peers at Trades Hall that helped him to maintain a balanced perspective. Ron admitted that at times the stress really got to him and he had stopped doing some of his sporting activities. "Sometimes I was up and inspired to seek out job possibilities and apply; other times I was down in the dumps and did nothing." Ron had applied for 85 jobs in total from which he was interviewed for four jobs. The best assistance Ron had received was from the Geelong Workforce Development Centre and in relation to his resume for one of the jobs: "The woman I met there appeared to have all the time in the world for me. She "crow-barred" out of me my work story and wrote it up into a resume that I was most happy with and could not have written myself. I also did a rehearsal interview with her around generic questions I was likely to be asked. I did okay in the interview but did not get the job due to a lack of appropriate hands on experience." Ron was unemployed for five and half months until he secured a fly-in-fly-out job in Queensland, "which is filling up the bank book but I am not sure how long the job will last. It is still on my mind what to do next. I now know that nothing happens fast." If at all possible he wants to return to working in the Geelong Region to be with family and friends and have a social life again.</p> <p>Advice: Further help that Ron would like is names of employers who are seeking workers like him in the Geelong area and to be able to have direct contact with them. The best assistance Ron received was from the Geelong Workforce Development Centre in relation to his resume. He also stressed the importance of keeping in touch with peers through Trades Halls and the like and keeping up regular exercise to minimise stress levels.</p>
Jim	<p>Background: Jim is 59 years of age. He worked as an electrician at Ford for 14 years and in a few other jobs beforehand. Jim was retrenched from Ford in late 2012.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: He said "My retrenchment was a shock and gave rise to a year from hell that I am still recovering from." He had been advised to and did pay off his mortgage with his final payout and then found he was not eligible for income assistance for 18 months. Jim sought jobs search assistance from a local Job Services Australia agent but said he has not had any real help from the agent. He reflected "I am in the too hard basket because of my age. They have not got back to me with any suitable jobs." Jim has sent off his resume for many jobs, noting "it is disheartening when you receive nothing back." Jim has secured a part-time job for 2 days per week doing some electrical work and acting as academic assistant to pre-apprenticeship students. Jim had done part of a training and assessment course whilst at Ford. Jim wants more work than he has now. He describes his job as "a good way of getting out of the house for a bit and having a routine again."</p> <p>Advice: Jim had received some positive help regarding his resume from both the Job Services Australia agent and the Geelong Workforce Development Centre for which he is grateful. However, Jim believes much more needs to be done to promote the benefits of mature aged employees to employers.</p>

Fictional name	Background, experiences and advice in finding a new job
Grant	<p>Background: Grant is 62 years old. He worked as a fitter and turner and equipment maintenance manager at ALCOA for 25 year until he was retrenched in December 2014.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: "We were called to a group meeting and told Alcoa was to cease operations. I was gobsmacked. Some guys were numb. We were all asked to be part of a 'look after your buddy system' hence forth to ensure safety on the job did not drop off as a result of minds being on other matters." Grant suggested that some co-workers had not really thought ahead and had little to show for their work efforts and were in a worse position than himself. Grant went to a one-on-one counselling session and sorted his finances so he could partly retire. Grant also undertook some extra training with the dollars provided by Alcoa. Grant did a short course in Responsible Serving of Alcohol so he could help out in the bar at his son's football club and short courses in Worksite Traffic Control, and a white card for construction to broaden the areas in which he may work. Grant has been offered a part-time fitter and turner job through a family friend and is also considering taxi driving as a result of another friend.</p> <p>Advice: Grant nominated the training he undertook using funds provided by Alcoa as the most impactful assistance available to him, broadening the areas in which he may work. He also emphasised the importance of using your networks to find work.</p>
Steve	<p>Background: Steve is 55 years old. He worked at Forstar/Qanatas on aircraft at Avalon airport for eight years before being retrenched in March 2014.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: For Steve retrenchment was a shock. "Me and my fellow workers had been kept positive to the end by management and then they just announced it was all over. I was left with no other option but to consider what to do next." Steve wants another job in which he can use his aero skills and knowledge. He has put his name down with relevant labour hire firms and a local Job Skills Australia agent. Only one job has come up and that was interstate and not for long enough to be worth the move. Meanwhile, Steve has been involved in the GRILEN Community Services taster program and is among the men who has gone on to undertake the necessary training to take up a job in Aged Care, at least until he can gain a more mechanical job again.</p> <p>Advice: Steve said it is hard to keep positive and focused and that meeting up with his co-workers had helped him in this regard. His workmates had organised regular meetings to keep abreast of each one's progress and situation and provide support to each other.</p>
Stacey	<p>Background: Stacey is a displaced worker from a non-manufacturing job. She has Certificates to level IV in Office Skills and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. She has undertaken contract office work. Her last contract ended in September 2014.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Four months later Stacey has a new job. Stacey attended a Gordon TAFE event on some courses she was considering taking. There, Stacey met a woman from Barwon Health. Stacey had a copy of her resume with her and gave it the women, which led to a phone call, an interview and a job. Stacey is doing office work and is undertaking a health care course she has long wanted to do to transition into a new career with her current employer.</p> <p>Advice: Stacey's advice to displaced workers was to: "Get on with it. Get your resume prepared. Look outside the square for possible new jobs. Try things not done before. Take a pay cut if need be. Keep training in what might benefit you in a few years if not today."</p>

New jobs creation as a parallel strategy

The initiatives described to date to help displaced workers due to industry restructuring might broadly be called 'capacity building' work. In acknowledgment that most displaced workers want to stay in the Geelong region due to family and social ties, the region is also undertaking 'job creation' work to assist these displaced workers find new jobs locally. There are three job creation initiatives that are closely linked to Geelong region's response to industry restructuring.

The Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund (GRIIF)

The Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund (GRIIF) was set up when Ford announced it was going to close. Contributors to the GRIFF include Ford (\$5m), the Federal Government (\$15 m), the Victorian Government (\$4.5 m) and Alcoa (\$4m). The GRIIF is a competitive, merit-based grants program. Under the GRIIF, eligible projects are to focus on encouraging new investment to create new or additional business capacity that results in sustainable jobs. The minimum grant is \$50 000. There is a GRIIF committee of representatives of various local organisations who review submissions and make recommendations to the Ministers involved. Four projects have been supported under Round

1 and a further six projects supported under Round 2 of the GRIFF. These projects are to create new jobs in the medium to longer term.

The GRIFF projects include many in agricultural products manufacture (e.g. animal feed-mill, animal processing facilities, animal product development facilities, agricultural chemicals production and paper products development). One project will expand a clothing company's head office facilities in the Geelong region and two other projects are in car manufacturing (carbon fibre wheels manufacture and carbon fibre composite centre (Australian Government 2014). However, as one interview remarked: "How well these projects suit the skills of the current displaced older male workers is another matter."

There is also a Geelong Future Manufacturing Centre establishment proposal to grow and diversify existing Geelong manufacturers and a new generation of start-up manufacturers, as well as to attract manufacturers to the Geelong region. The proposed host of the centre is the Geelong Manufacturing Council. The proposal has overlaps with existing initiatives. However attained, it is very important that the Geelong region maintains a manufacturing focus to ensure high output wealth creating jobs are within the mix of jobs available in the future (Geelong Manufacturing Council 2014).

The Skilling the Bay initiative

The Skilling the Bay initiative is designed to skill the local workforce as the Geelong region's local economy transitions over the coming years. In short, the workforce will be equipped to take advantage of new opportunities. The initiative is being funded by the Victorian Government, which has provided \$11m total to date including for ten initiatives that have been developed through community consultation. The other initiatives include: future skills development in science, technology, engineering design, mathematics and advanced manufacturing; innovative and entrepreneurialism in small and medium enterprises in Geelong; learning pathways development (e.g. in health and community services and into tertiary education for Year 9 students); areas of high risk around long-term unemployment; and a pilot of an advanced manufacturing plant for the production of short nano-fibres (Gordon Institute of TAFE 2014).

G21 Region Opportunities for Work (GROW)

G21 Region Opportunities for Work (GROW) is an initiative of the G21 Alliance and Give Where You Live. Give Where You Live tackles regional social and economic disadvantage. GROW is designed to support the work of the many organisations working on joblessness and generational poverty in the G21 Region.

GROW is drawing on the views of people with local knowledge and experience to identify the most practical, timely and effective ways to increase jobs and placement by:

- 1 Embedding social procurement policy and practice so that contracts issued in the region incorporate training and employment
- 2 Increasing investment and other supports to strengthen and grow small to medium enterprises and employment
- 3 Expanding existing brokerage approaches and investigating additional brokerage models for sustainable pathways between job seekers and employers.

GROW is providing an overarching regional framework within which social procurement, small to medium enterprise and demand-led employment brokerage can be extended. The first phase of GROW

involves the development of a business plan focused on the City of Greater Geelong and the Colac Otway Shire that will be completed in April 2015. This phase is being funded jointly by Regional Development Victoria, G21, Give Where You Live, the City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway Shire, Surfcoast Shire, Golden Plains Shire and the Borough of Queenscliffe. Give Where You Live has committed funds over the coming 10 years to support implementation of the GROW business plan across the whole G21 Region. This may include securing additional resources for existing programs or identified gaps; and facilitating the involvement of multiple organisations and sectors and monitoring and evaluating outcomes. This commitment provides a base from which the region can identify appropriate public, private and philanthropic funds in a coordinated way.

GROW is using a collective impact model, as does the G21 Alliance and the GRLEN, and that is:

- 1 Common agenda: shared vision, common problem understanding and joint approach to agreed actions
- 2 Shared measurement system: consistent and transparent data and measurement that set goals and track progress
- 3 Mutually reinforcing activities: provides the space for differential activities that are coordinated through a shared action plan
- 4 Continuous communication: consistent and open communication
- 5 Backbone structure: an independent entity with staff and the right skill set to coordinate participating organisations and support implementation.

Concluding comments

In response to major job losses due to large manufacturing firm closures, the Geelong region has initiated two sets of action: policies and projects that focus on helping the displaced workers to move on; and policies and projects that focus on growing the job opportunities available in the region. This Geelong region case study illustrates the power of collective strategic advocacy and collective impact models to achieving success. This case study also highlights the importance of having central points of contact for displaced workers to acquire advice on careers, training and employment and personal services (e.g. face-to-face, online, and in print format). The model also makes use of referrals to other organisations.

The Geelong region also has various specific initiatives in place for older male displaced workers, in recognition that they need special assistance to retrain to secure new jobs locally. However, how many of these workers who have lost their manufacturing jobs gain new work will be tested further in the future. At least at this time, there is strong evidence of a coordinated and consistent effort by a wide range of people, agencies, businesses and Governments to committed to helping displaced workers obtain new jobs and ensuring that the Geelong region moves onto the next stage of its successful regional development, albeit with a smaller manufacturing presence.

Interviewees

Our thanks to the following for providing their time to be interviewed for the case study: Robert Birch, Elaine Carbines, Kylie Fox, Tim Gooden, Robert Hope, Kerry Irving, Lyn Peterson and Anne-Marie Ryan.

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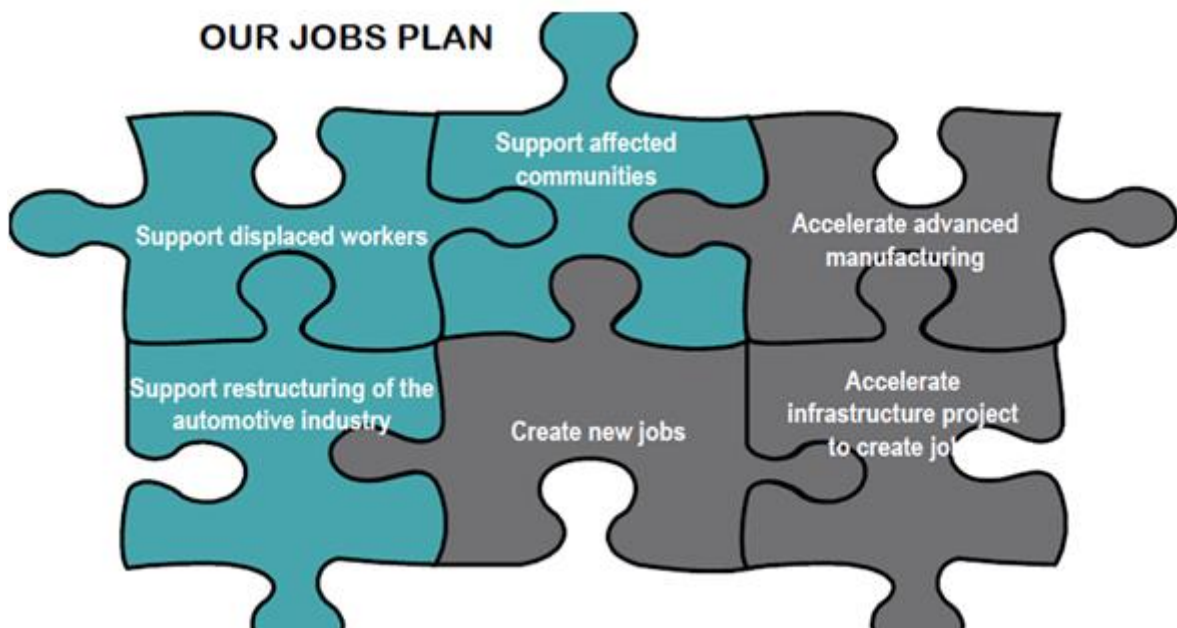
Case Study 3: Adelaide region of South Australia

Introduction

South Australia (SA) is embarking on a period of significant economic transformation. Major factors at work include the impending closure of General Motors Holden (Holden) in 2017 and the potential loss of \$1.2 billion in revenue that the automotive industry currently contributes to the SA economy. The main areas of the State that will be impacted are the outer metropolitan areas of Adelaide, the State's capital. Predicted job losses include 1 700 from Holden (in Northern Adelaide), together with 4000 in the automotive supply chain and 7500 in the broader economy (13 200 in total). Other estimates suggest total jobs losses due to Holden's closure will be 24 000 (Sphoer 2015). These enterprises include 203 employees located in Northern Adelaide, 387 employees in Central, Eastern and Western Adelaide, and 91 employees in Southern Adelaide. In addition, there are 38 companies in regional South Australia that will be impacted by Holden's closure (Nussio 2014).

South Australia has developed a comprehensive response to Holden's closure. This is documented in South Australia's *Our Jobs Plan* (South Australia State Government 2014). The *Our Jobs Plan* has six key action areas (see figure 6). The 'support for displaced workers' action area in this document is the focus for the current case study. Importantly, the key actions planned have been incorporated into the Automotive Workers in Transition Program. This Program builds on previous experiences with industry restructuring and lessons learnt by South Australia from the closure of the Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal operations between 2004 and 2009.

Figure 6 Six key action areas of South Australia's *Our Jobs Plan*



The interviewees for the current study included experts involved in services delivery to displaced workers from Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal; planners of the Automotive Workers in Transition Program that is being rolled out from late 2014; and some displaced workers themselves.

South Australia's previous experiences in assisting displaced workers

During the period 2004 to 2009, South Australia experienced several significant company level closures. These included:

- Mitsubishi Motors Australia plant closures between 2004 and 2008 that resulted in the loss of approximately 2 000 jobs
- Bridgestone's exit from local production in 2009 which saw the retrenchment of 600 workers
- The closure of several plants of the electrical manufacturer Clipsal in 2008-2009, which affected hundreds of workers.

These companies, assisted by the South Australian Government, developed labour adjustment program responses for their workers. The aim was to minimise periods of unemployment by reducing the time taken to find suitable alternative work. The services included career counselling and job placement assistance, skills recognition and further training.

Several experts involved in delivering these services were interviewed for this study. They provided the following insights around the importance of early engagement and counselling services; the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); and training and related actions. Their reflections are discussed below.

Early engagement and including with personal counselling services

The career counselling and skills recognition services were provided onsite in the canteen areas of Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal. The services were provided over several months, up until the date of the plant closures, and were delivered at all hours to ensure shift workers were able to attend. The interviewees agreed that engaging workers as early as possible is crucial for empowering them through individualised and stable one-on-one support. The point was made that the long notification periods were a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it gave time for workers to develop well-thought out transition plans. However, on the other hand, due to the long lead time, there was some complacency among employees about planning their transition. It was believed that personal counselling services during this period could have been used more effectively.

One interviewee noted:

Mitsubishi's length of service averaged 17 years. Its redundancy agreement was one of the best in the industry and so many workers left under no immediate financial pressure. They did not see any urgent need to engage with the services. I believe that more emphasis should be directed to engaging all workers as early as possible.

This interviewee suggested that:

more focus on personal counselling services would have been a good idea noting that a cashed up worker with a slight problem of depression or substance abuse can soon develop a larger problem... Early intervention is critical to help avoid these workers from becoming the long term unemployed with a chip on both shoulders and feeling no one is really interested in them and so their motivation drops to the point that they give up on job seeking.

A second interviewee advised:

It is best for the career practitioner(s) to be available from the day that the downsizing or closure is announced, and so that the workers have somewhere to turn to immediately. A supportive

relationship with the worker needs to be built quickly. The workers can be emotional and need reassurance. With hindsight a referral system to pastoral care should have been in place as well as career counselling and skills recognition services.

Yet another interviewee reflected:

I met many workers who were excessively angry and could not get past this stage which stops them from being able to move on. I recommend the provision of change management counselling for all retrenched workers and their spouses (as marital break downs and depression are significant issues).

This interviewee was working on an individual mind set change program based on the book Duxters Leap: 'The pursuit of possibility' (Creaghan 2000). It was reported that a smaller program based on this book has had significant benefits in Canada with long-term mature aged unemployed people (Cato undated).

A follow up case study of Mitsubishi workers' perceptions of the family impacts of their job loss confirmed that they were predominantly negative impacts. Outcomes included financial strain, loss of relationship stability and general stress and worry. The researchers concluded that there is a need for policymakers to pay greater attention to these potential impacts by engaging human service professionals in post-retrenchment support and community development processes (Jolley et al 2011).

Career counselling

Career counsellors worked with a wide range of workers, including many who had long average lengths of service with their current employers. Some had never applied for any other job, had never written a resume, or dealt with Government agencies. From the interviews, the authors have distilled the following three main points of advice for career counsellors working with displaced workers.

Keep all discussions positive and focussed on actions taking

The workers can be locked into a 'why me?' mentality. Therefore, they need encouragement and assistance to understand what skills they have and what potential jobs they are suited for. Often, they do not have any clear idea of these at the outset, especially production workers. They need help to identify their options based on their interests and passions. They need to be encouraged to take action to explore their options and build future work networks as they go. They also need to understand the importance of the networks they develop as they search for job possibilities suited to them. Career counsellors, in turn, need to have good networks with potential employers to help those workers deemed work-ready to be outplaced immediately into new jobs.

Help the 'work ready' with self-marketing

In many instances, workers need help writing their resumes due to low levels of literacy and writing skills. Workers also often require help communicating in their resumes their current job experiences, skills, knowledge and completed training. Older workers, in particular, may also need assistance with computer skills in order to search for and apply for jobs on the internet. Furthermore, coaching for a job interview may be required as older displaced workers are not accustomed in speaking and promoting themselves, and many have never been through a formal interview process.

Help with recognition of current skills

In many instances, skills recognition and further skills development may be the next best step for displaced older worker. In these instances, the role of the career counsellor is to assist the worker to prepare their case for this next step. Older workers who have been in their jobs for some time may not be at all *au fait* with the current training system and the full range of qualifications and skill sets (e.g. licences) that are available. They need considerable help to investigate training possibilities. Some career practitioners will be able to assist the worker to develop their own starting point. However, they may not be able to translate these skills into 'education' speak for skills recognition purposes.

Recognition of workers current skills and knowledge and attributes

Recognition of Prior Learning, regardless of how the knowledge and skills have been attained, has long been policy in the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. In the period when Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal closed, there was special funding available for RPL trials. This meant that RPL was conducted well, and avoided problems associated with the inconsistent treatment of RPL that was occurring from certain VET practitioners at the time. Some of these RPL funds were applied to the Mitsubishi and Bridgestone projects.

In the Mitsubishi RPL project, 120 workers participated. Skills recognition occurred in Frontline Management, Electro Technology, Automotive Manufacturing, Production Engineering and Metrology. Ninety nine workers gained full qualifications against the Australian Qualification Framework (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2009b). Most of the people in the program were able to have their automotive qualifications mapped over to Engineering. Many of the people interviewed also had team leader experience and had worked on the implementation of new models. This made many workers eligible for qualifications in Front Line Management and Project Management. Consequently, most workers who had a Certificate III in Automotive were recognised with skills at least to a Certificate III in Engineering, a Certificate IV in Frontline Management and a Certificate IV or higher in Project Management. This opened up significant opportunities to them including (at the time) opportunities with the Collins submarine project.

The RPL expert interviewed commented:

This result illustrates my point. There remains a learning and skills recognition gap in Australia rather than a skills shortage. In other words, there is a difference between the amount of learning that is actually recognised and credentialed in a transferable form and the amount of learning that could potentially be recognised. An RPL intervention was the right way to go in Mitsubishi.

RPL done well

On the basis of the interview with the RPL expert and an examination of the existing literature (e.g. SA Department of Further Education Employment Science and Technology 2009 and Council of Australian Governments 2009) an efficient and effective RPL process for displaced workers includes:

- A focus on the assessment of workers' skills whilst they are still in their current employers' workplaces. As a result they are able to produce the evidence required to show that they have the skills and knowledge, and can obtain third party validation of these skills (from a supervisor or co-worker who has watched them do their tasks)
- The use a group of RPL assessors who collectively cover all industry areas the workers have been working in and who have an excellent working knowledge of the training packages (i.e. vocational

qualifications and performance standards and how units of competencies are able to be grouped to make up qualifications)

- The use RPL assessors committed to the process and without a tendency to direct the worker towards training that is more financially lucrative than RPL
- Ensuring that the assessor takes responsibility for the assessment process. They do not leave it to the candidate for whom RPL can be a very difficult journey when this does occur
- The use of a guided approach, whereby the candidate undertakes the RPL process coached by the expert
- The assessor should undertake a strategic professional conversation. The assessor asks questions against the worker's job description and assists in the creation of a work history profile. They profile other skills and knowledge the worker has acquired in their wider life (e.g. as a coach of the local football team). The assessor should use the conversation with a candidate as a pre-screening step. RPL may not be suitable for every displaced worker
- Where RPL is relevant, the assessor provides the worker with:
 - Relevant information on the RPL process, including self-assessment forms, third party assessment forms, sources of evidence lists and competency lists (in simple English)
 - A specific list of evidence that needs to be collected and assistance with ideas on how the candidate can generate the proof required
 - An assessment of the evidence the candidate supplies, a determination of competency and where evidence gaps might exist. For evidence gaps, the assessor may set up work projects so that the candidate can collect the additional evidence required, or refer the learner to gap training
 - Finally, the assessor directs the worker to a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that can validate the RPL assessment and issue a qualification, or a statement of attainment for part qualification. The assessor monitors this step to ensure that it is completed in a timely and satisfactory fashion.

Training

With respect to further training for displaced older workers, it was frequently mentioned by interviewees that training must be driven by the needs of the worker rather than by the available training program or pre-conceived ideas regarding what jobs will suit them. Unfortunately, details were not able to be provided regarding the types of training provided to the displaced workers from Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal.

However, a research team from Flinders University employed to follow up displaced Mitsubishi workers noted:

The government response to the closure of Mitsubishi surprisingly did not commit funding for the retraining or skills development of retrenched Mitsubishi workers, despite the Government of South Australia recognising that the State was suffering a skills shortage (Beer and Thomas 2007 p253).

The researchers noted that only 22 of the 936 individuals registered for services had been placed in full-time education. However, 59% of the displaced workers reported that they had plans for further training which could assist their future employment. Only five of those respondents reported that

they were full-time students, suggesting that the level of training amongst this group was relatively low despite a high level of interest. This Flinders University research project concluded that there is an important role for government to respond better to the strong VET demand from displaced workers.

Follow-up and ongoing support

As previously mentioned, a research team from Flinders University was employed to follow up Mitsubishi's displaced workers from the Lonsdale plant closure and the voluntary redundancies at Tonsley. The study, which was completed two years post closure, revealed mixed outcomes for many of the displaced workers: approximately a third of workers moved into full-time paid employment; a third had transitioned into casual or contract employment; and a further third had left the workforce entirely (Beer et al 2006).

A further study on the displaced workers from the Tonsley closure conducted by the unions found similar statistical outcomes with respect to the displaced workers finding new work. However, the validity of these results has been challenged around its sampling. In particular, a major source for the sample was the unions, and as they acknowledged their data base at the time was not comprehensive.

As one respondent reported:

There were surveys conducted and statistics gathered by the union and Government over a two year period after the closure. All revealed roughly the same percentage outcomes for employment but because of confidentiality, only numbers could be shared, not names. The results obtained by both parties may have been for the same people or not. We have no way of knowing. In hindsight, a release of an information form signed by workers before exiting would have solved this problem.

On the other hand, in the case of Bridgestone's closure, one interviewee indicated that the follow-up had been done better. By using manual manipulation of data, the tracking of displaced workers outcomes was made much easier.

Union efforts

The unions played an important role in assisting displaced workers. When the closure of Mitsubishi was announced, union shop stewards worked with management to ensure each worker received their financial entitlements and were connected to the available services. The unions also did 'trouble shooting' on work processes to ensure that the workers could leave when it suited them without disrupting Mitsubishi's production.

The unions also became involved in following up Mitsubishi workers through surveys. They identified those workers not engaged in the services and encouraged them to access Job Network providers within the timeframe allocated under the guidelines in the assistance package. They also provided displaced workers with the phone number of the Job Network provider in their area. Furthermore, through their surveys, the unions also identified people with special needs, such as language barriers, stress and anxiety and directed them to organisations that would be able to assist.

In 2008, the unions saw the services being offered to its members by the Job Networks (now Job Services Australia) as inadequate. They had serious concerns about the Network's ability to assist members in finding meaningful long-term employment. At the time, the Job Networks only had to organise short-term contracts for job seekers (13 weeks) to receive full remuneration from the Federal Government. The Union believed this arrangement offered no incentive to find meaningful,

long term employment for members. It was reported by one of the retrenched workers that the change to this contract to payments made at 13 weeks and a further payment at 26 weeks was an improvement.

As a result of the Job Networks services being inadequate, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) lobbied the Federal and State Governments for funding for the creation of one fulltime position for a Labour Adjustment Officer (LAO) to assist the Union in providing assistance to the displaced workers. The funding was received and the LAO commenced in April 2008. This timing was two weeks after closure of the last Mitsubishi plant. The role of the LAO was to assist workers who had not yet gained further employment; assist workers who believed they were not eligible for assistance when they were, and engage them with the services available; and assist parents and partners of retrenched workers worried about the mental health of their loved ones.

However, the LAO found their ability to assist was impeded due to confidentiality protocols which restricted information sharing:

I could not ring a Job Network provider and make enquiries on behalf of a member because the provider had no authority to divulge information to me. I would then have to go through the Department responsible for the networks to get them to investigate, respond to me and I would in turn, respond to the worker. This was very time-consuming.

The LAO has maintained contact with ex-Mitsubishi workers through two surveys with approximately 1 200 calls being made for each survey. According to the survey results, the majority of eligible people have engaged with the services on offer and have been grateful for the services provided. Predominantly, the reactions to the services offered by the Federal and State Governments were still very positive, with complaints coming mainly from those with very high expectations about their redundancy package. Others had concerns about the cost of their intended training. However, of note is the comment that:

The majority of people were made redundant would still be there if they had the option. They soon realised the importance of job security and also realised they would not be likely to find other employment with similar wages or conditions. Sadly, a lot of these people have moved into casual or part-time work with little or no security. The insecurities that result from that type of employment have been noticeable in many of the conversations we have had with them.

The LAO suggested that:

A dedicated chat room for workers may be of assistance in sharing information, contacting and tracing people who are not engaged and assisting those who may need assistance. This site would need to be monitored to ensure there is no inappropriate use of the website.

Other interviewees also mentioned that they still receive calls from displaced workers they helped in the 2004-2009 period. It was generally believed that displaced workers ideally require follow-up services until such time as they get a new job. Finally, it needs to be recognised that it takes time for displaced workers to find a new pathway in life.

Don't Overlook Mature-aged Employees (DOME)

Don't Overlook Mature-aged Employees (DOME) is seen as an example of a best practice organisation that is specifically dedicated to assisting mature-aged workers find employment. DOME uses volunteers to supplement its resources, enabling it to provide more timely, tailored and one-on-one assistance to mature-age workers than the government employment services such as Job Services

Australia can provide. DOME uses trained volunteers who conduct initial meetings over 1.5 hours with older job seekers to identify their work and life skills that might transfer to a new job. The volunteers help the job seekers identify their skills and grade them as good, better or best, and identify occupations that they might be interested in becoming engaged in. Building self-esteem and self-confidence underpin these sessions. DOME may also help the worker to prepare a resume and cover letter and coach on interview techniques.

For the job ready, DOME has its own data base of potential employers who are specifically looking for the maturity and reliability of more mature-age workers. There are 2 000 employers on the database that has been built up in the early years by cold-calling employers and now by reputation and employer-to-employer word of mouth. The employers can register with DOME for free.

As DOME is an RTO it can also deliver some vocational education and training programs including in basic foundation skills, business or office studies, hospitality and retail. For other training, DOME refers their clients to other RTOs. DOME has found that mature-age workers are often unaware of the advances that have been made in the Australian qualifications system, including the many levels and types of qualifications that are now available to them. However, it was noted by interviewees that some mature-age unemployed often cannot afford to pay for training. Therefore, they require access to public training dollars as part of their assistance. The DOME interviewee nominated alternative industry taster programs as a further action to consider in relation to assisting SA automotive workers who have been, or are about to be displaced.

The Growth Fund Skills and Training Initiative

In December 2013, approximately five years following the retrenchments at Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal, Holden announced that it too would shut its operations in Northern Adelaide by 2017. In January 2014, in response to this announcement, the South Australian Premier, the Honourable Jay Weatherill MP, released the *Our Jobs Plan*, outlining the State Government's response to the Holden closure. Fortunately, the Premier had anticipated the need to assure future job opportunities for the State and so had commenced planning for this in April 2013, just before Ford announced its planned closure in mid-2013. Two months after the release of the *Our Jobs Plan*, in March 2014, Toyota made its closure announcement. This then triggered involvement by the Commonwealth Government in April 2014, establishing the \$155 million Growth Fund.

The Growth Fund includes a range of initiatives to drive the development of industries in high growth sectors in South Australia and Victoria and was established with the support and contributions from the South Australian and Victorian Governments, Holden and Toyota.³ A component of the Growth Fund is the Skills and Training Initiative to help workers from Holden and Toyota transition to new jobs, self-employment or retirement as the car manufacturing industry winds down in Australia. The Skills and Training Initiative complements state government programs which were developed in collaboration between the Commonwealth Government, the South Australian and Victorian Governments, Holden and Toyota.⁴ Apart from South Australia, Victoria is the other State that will be most impacted by the total closure of the automotive car component manufacturing industry in Australia by 2017 (Australian Government Productivity Commission 2014). The Skills and Training

³ See <www.business.gov.au/grants-and-assistance/growth-fund> for more information.

⁴ With respect to Ford, it already had its own Ford (Workers) Transition Program before the Skills and Training Initiative was implemented. Information on the Ford (workers) Transition Program is included in the Geelong region of Victoria case study.

Initiative is to be used for several purposes, including the provision of assistance to automotive employees in having their skills recognised as well as training for new jobs whilst they are still employed. The initiative incorporates lessons learned from South Australia's previous experience in helping displaced workers at Mitsubishi, Bridgestone and Clipsal between 2004 and 2009.

Elements

A redeployment strategy was agreed under the Skills and Training Initiative including:

- information sessions, including financial education
- skills analysis and career advice
- skills recognition, training and job search
- employment services through the Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Programme.

All organisations involved have agreed that these elements will be the framework for their respective worker transition programs. However, the elements may be applied somewhat differently by the organisations assigned responsibility for assisting the displaced workers.

The assigned responsibilities are as follows:

- Holden is to provide assistance to Holden workers and with Holden-donated funds to the Skills and Training Initiative
- Toyota is to provide assistance to Toyota workers and workers in its tier 1 companies (tier 1 companies are direct suppliers to Toyota) with Toyota-donated funds
- South Australian Government through the Department of State Development is to provide assistance to workers in Holden's tier 1, 2 and tier 3 companies (tier 2 companies being the key suppliers to tier 1 suppliers; tier 3 companies are suppliers to tier 2 firms)
- Victorian Government through the Department of Education and Training is responsible for providing assistance to the tier 1 and 2 supply chains of Ford, Holden and Toyota. Tier 3 companies can also be eligible for assistance. Ford workers are also assisted with increased eligibility for training subsidies.

Under the Commonwealth Government's Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Programme retrenched workers from eligible manufacturing companies in the automotive industry (including component suppliers) will have immediate access to intensive employment support with a *jobactive* (formerly a Job Network Service) provider to help them find a new job.

The Automotive Workers in Transition Program in South Australia

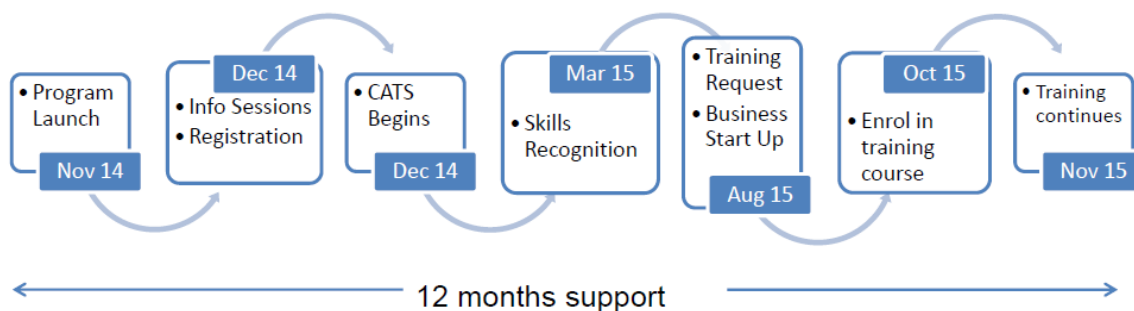
Under the Automotive Workers in Transition Program in South Australia, the soon-to-be-displaced workers from automotive component supply businesses are to undertake the initial steps of Information Sessions, Career Advice and Transition Services, and Skills Recognition, before any Quality Training and Business Start-Up Advice (if required) is provided. This is to ensure that the workers enter into well-considered training. The aim is to have the workers complete training that will provide them with a good chance of obtaining a new job. Alternatively, they might start their own business being better prepared than those with no training.

As a planner of the Automotive Workers in Transition Program explained:

We knew from past experiences that just offering training is not the panacea. There were many instances in which the retrenched workers got part way through a training program and decided this was not for them and withdrew. This was wasteful of their time and the training dollars spent. The aim of the early elements of the Automotive Workers in Transition Program is to help avoid this from occurring this time around.

This interviewee also provided an illustrative timeline for automotive workers to gain support (see figure 7). As you can see from the figure below, there is a lead time of 10 months between the workers registration with the Program and the enrolment in a training course. This ensures the training dollars are spent wisely on programs which will be most beneficial to the workers gaining new employment.

Figure 7 Time line to access services



Information sessions

The first step in the Automotive Workers in Transition Program is information sessions. This involves a member of the Automotive Transition Taskforce conducting information sessions in the affected workplaces. The workers' involvement in the Program is voluntary. If they want to be involved, they must register by responding to the officer conducting the information session on the day or to a dedicated website (workersintransition@sa.gov.au). The workers are able to register from late 2014 up until six months after the last of the Holden workers will exit the plant. From their date of registration, the workers have twelve months to access the services of the Program, however, the training services can continue beyond this 12 month timeframe.

South Australia has also established an online information service for the soon-to-be-displaced automotive workers and their families to access support. The online service includes general information and contains the following sections:

- **Redundancy:** has a checklist for use beginning from when the worker is informed of their redundancy
- **Preparation:** provides information to consider prior to redundancy. This should include meeting with a financial advisor to receive independent advice on their financial health
- **Moving on:** allows workers to work their way through their ideas on the new occupation and to use the Job Outlook website to verify or correct this information
- **Training:** provides information on courses and training providers. It also provides questions to ask of the RTOs to help the worker decide if the training will benefit them in the long term

- Dealing with change: offers workers strategies to cope with the changes that they are experiencing. Also it provides details around assistance if the worker is not coping and referral to the Beyond Auto service.

There is however an issue regarding whether the transitioning workers have a home computer and/or have the computer skills or desire to use computers to do any of the above work using the online information service.

Career advice and transition services

Once a transitioning worker has registered to be involved in the Automotive Workers in Transition Program, the worker's next step is to attend a career advice session. Attending at least one, one-hour session is mandatory before the worker can move to the next step of the Program. Whether the worker should meet with a financial advisor to receive independent advice on their financial health is another mandatory step that should be considered at this stage.

The career advice sessions are one-on-one with qualified career practitioners. The career practitioners assist the transitioning workers to make more informed decisions regarding the best pathway for them into a new career. They assess a worker's interests and current skills, and how they match with alternative jobs that are likely to provide sustainable future employment. The career practitioners then help the transitioning workers set out their goals in a Future Career Plan. Following this, the practitioners help the workers link the goals in their Future Career Plan directly to new work or to the next steps in the Automotive Workers in Transition Program.

For Holden workers, they are to attend these career advice sessions at a Career Advice and Transition Centre set up by Holden. For transitioning workers in Holden's tier 2 and 3 companies, they are to attend for Career Advice and Transition Services at Northern Futures in Northern Adelaide or at a new Career Advice and Transition Centre in Southern Adelaide that the State Government has set up. The SA Government has contracted Northern Futures⁵ to provide the Career Advice and Transition Services component of the Automotive Workers in Transition Program in Northern Adelaide based on an assessment of 17 organisations identified as already providing career services in Northern Adelaide. A career development good practice checklist and benchmarks tool was used to make the assessment. This tool is based on the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* framework for designing, implementing and evaluating career development programs that was developed, trialled, refined and officially rolled out in 2010 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015).

The decision to have designated Career Advice and Transition Services providers was made to avoid a chaotic approach:

In the past many providers were falling over themselves to access displaced workers due to industry restructuring and that led to confusion for the workers. Naturally, the workers can choose to go to any Career Advice Service for assistance, but if in the Automotive Workers in Transition Program it would be for a second opinion only.

Following the career advice sessions, it is expected that each transitioning worker will have developed a broad Future Career Plan in which up to five suitable future careers are identified for them, together with an initial profile of their existing skills. With respect to the development of an initial

⁵ Northern Futures is a community-based not for profit organisation whose key role is to develop and progress State and Federal programs to advance education, training and workforce development in the northern region (see www.northernfutures.org.au).

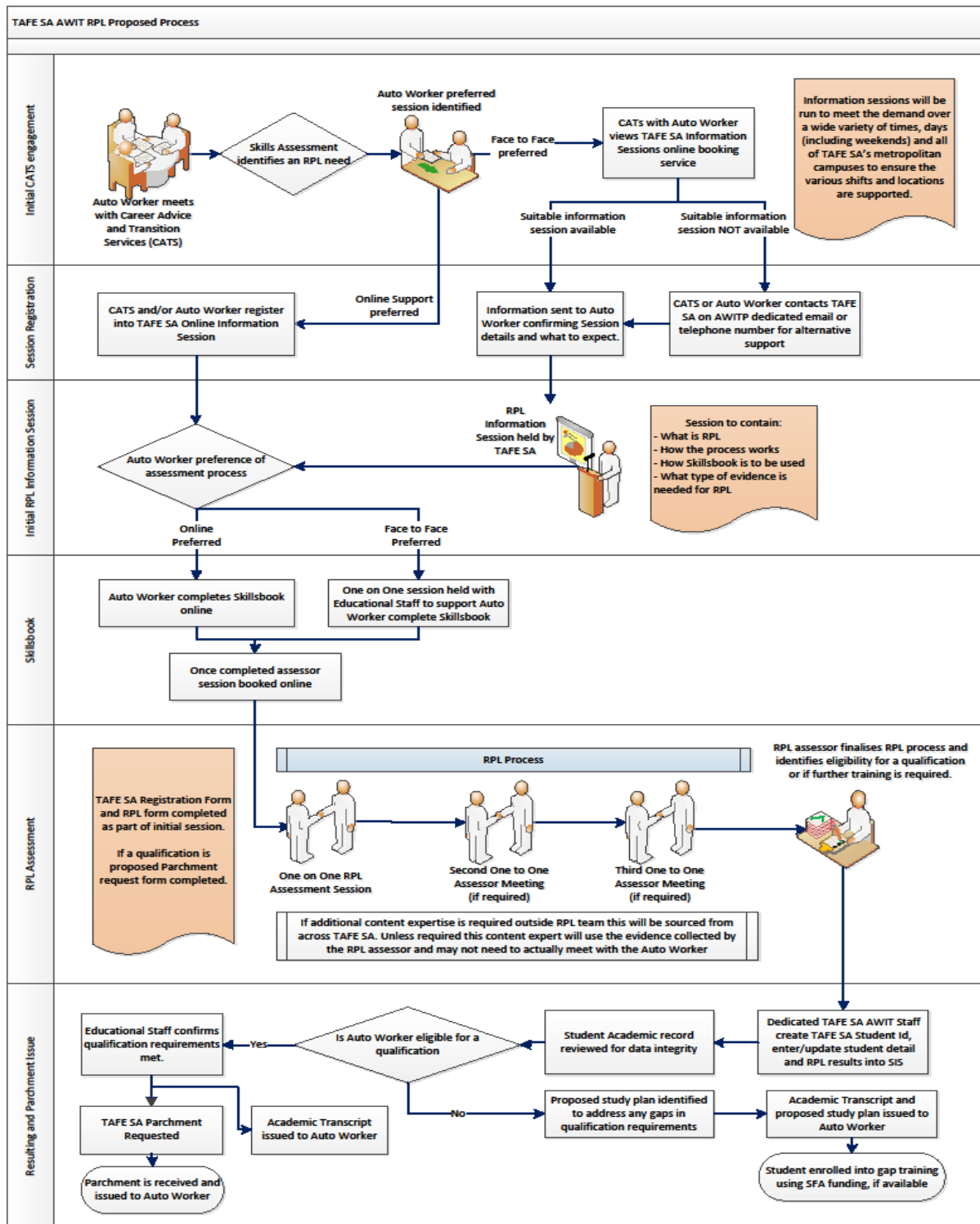
skills profile, the SA Government is requiring the use of SkillsBook⁶, an online tool that transitioning workers can use to self-evaluate their skills and as a pre-skills recognition step. South Australia has used SkillsBook in the past and has modified it for use in the Automotive Workers in Transition Program (see the Tasmania case study for similar use of SkillsBook). Following completion of the SkillsBook, the career practitioner will then inform the worker of the selected organisation they can go to in order to obtain official Skills Recognition.

Skills recognition

Following the provision of career advice and transition services, the next step in the Program is skills recognition. This step involves identifying a worker's experience, skills and knowledge gained throughout their life and validating these against recognised education frameworks. A competitive tender process has been used to select agencies to undertake this step and to screen for agencies that can do RPL well. Fifteen RTOs have been selected that collectively cover the scope of the work of automotive workers. Workers will be assigned to an RTO dependent upon their individual Future Career Plan. The Automotive Transition Taskforce monitors this process through random checks with the workers and by tracking workers' progress through their system. One of the RTOs selected is TAFE SA who provided a flow chart of their proposed RPL process (see figure 8).

⁶ Skillsbook® is fully owned and managed by The Work Lab in Tasmania (www.theworklab.com.au).

Figure 8 TAFE SA's Recognition of Prior Learning Process



Quality training

The Automotive Transition Taskforce will monitor training requests arising from the above two steps. Transitioning workers are to complete a Training Request form and indicate what training services they would like to access and send the request via email to the Automotive Transition Taskforce for approval. The transitioning workers must not enrol in any course without contacting the Taskforce; otherwise, they will not have their training paid for by the Taskforce. The Taskforce will not support the funding of higher education qualifications (e.g. university courses); licences, for example, forklift, truck training and white card; purchase of tools, equipment and assets; travel and accommodation; and wage subsidies.

Business start-up advice

This final element will support transitioning workers by helping them identify their personal strengths and weaknesses with respect to starting and managing a business. This element offers the transitioning workers business information and support through referral to appropriate services, such as the SA Chamber of Commerce, and the Polaris Centre for Innovation and Business in Northern Adelaide.

The need for this step was identified by the AMWU Labour Adjustment Officer:

Although I have no direct evidence of people being targeted for ‘get rich schemes’, I did receive quite a few enquiries from people looking to access the people who had left Mitsubishi to talk about franchises and other ways to use their redundancies. We need to be mindful of people out there now working on ways to take advantage of people who may be vulnerable.

Other underpinning activities

Other activities underpinning the SA Automotive Workers in Transition Program include:

- Partnership coordination: The SA Automotive Transition Taskforce is responsible for engaging with all stakeholders involved in services provision to automotive workers and facilitating coordinated access.
- Real time reporting system and a comprehensive longitudinal study of workers: The up-front registration process allows for real time monitoring of the transitioning workers movements through the SA Automotive Workers in Transition Program, and will be used to conduct a comprehensive longitudinal study of the transitioning workers’ experiences and destinations.
- A proactive approach to potential social issues: The SA Automotive Transition Taskforce has engaged with schools in Northern Adelaide to encourage them to respond to social issues that may manifest among children affected by Holden’s closure.

Advice from displaced workers

Through the AMWU Labour Adjustment Officer and the organisation DOME (Don’t Overlook Mature-aged Employees), an invitation was sent to mature aged workers who had been retrenched informing them that there was an opportunity to tell their story for this research project. DOME is an Adelaide based not-for-profit Association dedicated to assisting unemployed mature aged workers. It does so at no or minimum cost to the workers and with special approval from the Equal Opportunities Commission to assist only people over the age of 40. DOME has provided a free career advice and employment services to mature age unemployed and disadvantaged people in South Australia since its

inception in 1981. It also offers some accredited training services since becoming an RTO about 10 years ago.

Six mature aged workers who had been retrenched told their stories for this research study (see table 2). Their retrenchments were from a wide range of jobs. They all had undertaken skills recognition and further training of various types. They had sought help from the Job Services Network and also from DOME in several instances. However, all were still precariously employed in shorter term jobs at the time of interview.

Table 2 Experiences of some displaced workers in South Australia

Fictional name	Background, experiences and advice in finding a new job
Alvaro	<p>Background: Alvaro was a press worker at Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd (MMAL) for 12 years. He was among the last batch of workers to be retrenched in 2008 at and the age of 55. Beforehand, he had held a few other labouring jobs in foundries and brick works after arriving in Australia in 1990.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Alvaro realised that “there were not too many jobs out there for me.” He found out through a friend about a government training program that he could access to become an aged care worker and that was not at too high a skill level for him and that was likely to lead to job, albeit at a lower wage than he had earned at MMAL. Alvaro did the course and got a job in aged care in which he worked as a casual to maximise his pay rate but he found working in aged care as a male “very hard”. The mostly female staff he worked with would not work cooperate with him and were quick to blame him if anything went wrong and bullied him about job rosters. The apparent discrimination took its toll. Alvaro could not sleep properly and started to drink more. He moved to another aged care facility but his experiences there were similar and so he left aged care. Through a friend he found a 2.5 days per week job with Holden. He reports to Centrelink and his Job services Australia provider regularly, knowing that he will need another job after Holden. As required for his Centrelink payment, and at the suggestion of his Job Services Australia provider, Alvaro has applied for many jobs advertised on seek.com.au (e.g. cleaner, shelves stocker and car wash attendant) but has not had one reply.</p> <p>Advice: Alvaro suggested that Centrelink and his Job services Australia provider needs to provide him with more assistance to help find a new job. Further, this support needs to be provided earlier than it has been. He suggested that he is more likely to find a new job through his own friends. He also suggested discrimination in the workplace of all types needs greater attention.</p>
Sam	<p>Background: Sam worked at Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd (MMAL) for 16 years and was aged 45 when he was retrenched in 2008. He had worked in MMAL’s engineering department as a spray painter. He had become a leading hand with responsibility for maintaining the machines, a training supervisor, and was also a shop steward with the union.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Sam thought that Mitsubishi handled the closure announcement well, by putting in place support services for the workers, and by being flexible and allowing workers time off to take advantage of those services. He got some help with his resume straight away and undertook training for a reticulated truck driver’s licence and appreciated the help provided with the training costs. He also obtained qualifications through skills recognition. He said having the opportunity to gather workplace evidence for skills recognition was fantastic. He attained a Certificate IV in Frontline Management and a Diploma in Engineering. Sam then went about finding another job on his own. He has had several jobs since 2008, all acquired through his own network of family and friends. Sam has been a house painter for 2.5 years, and also worked in a timber mill on the lathes until the mill shut down 2 years later. Now he has a truck driving job together with other work in a recycling yard. He considers himself lucky because it was not overly important to him that he find a good paying job.</p> <p>Advice: Sam said it had been stressful going into Mitsubishi and experiencing the low mood of the place after the closure announcement. He felt for the older production workers who really struggled as they only knew factory work and were not educated for other work except labouring. He thought of the Holden workers and couched his advice in terms of what he would say to them. It was to think outside the square. Try to think of work alternatives that you have contemplated or dreamed about when you were younger and pursue them. Don’t feel sorry for yourself. See your situation as opportunity, a next step forward. Be smart about it. Start considering your options now. Use your own networks to get ideas and information. Ring up family and friends. Don’t just rely on provided services. Recognise that it will take you time to decide what to do and then you still have to do it, and that also takes time. He thought that if Holden does it right and along the lines of Mitsubishi then the workers should come out of it well if the workers get proactive now because there aren’t as many jobs available today as there were when Mitsubishi closed.</p>

Fictional name	Background, experiences and advice in finding a new job
Randall	<p>Background: Randall is a chartered accountant who was retrenched in April 2014 from an IT company in Adelaide that was sold and the new owners took the business to Perth.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Randall attended three sessions with an outplacement officer but the assistance received was minimal. He thinks "the recruitment industry leaves a bit to be desired." He conceded this might be because the company bought a low level worker transition support package. He gained access to online guidelines for resume and cover letter writing that he did not really need. He applied for about 10 jobs, including some for which he was overqualified, but received no feedback whatsoever. Randall has since commenced his own consulting business in accountancy to get needed income rolling in again. He is taking any work he can get to build the business up but it is slow going. To expand his own business opportunities Randall has undertaken a Tax Agents course, and is thinking of doing a course and becoming qualified in business change management. He is willing to pay for training as he sees it as an investment his own future. Randall's retrenchment and ongoing transition to a new life has been stressful for his whole family. He has attended personal counselling sessions with his wife and alone and said these have helped by providing some tools he uses to keep himself motivated and not feel depressed.</p> <p>Advice: When asked what further help he would have liked, Randall nominated a support group made up of mature aged retrenched workers that he could join to exchange ideas and information with. He has found out about DOME via his wife and thinks it is great that there is an organisation that positively discriminates for older workers. However, he feels it is a pity that more employers who have vacancies are not signed up with DOME. Randall has got some work indirectly as a result of connecting up with DOME. He thinks more money should be spent on marketing older workers to employers and that age and experience should count for more.</p>
Martha	<p>Background: Martha has worked in the retail industry in a variety of shops for years and in her last job for 13 years part-time, 2-3 days a week. When her employer sold up in June 2014 Martha was told her services would no longer be required and she was retrenched at age 67.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Martha is looking for a new part-time job in retail but is open to suggestions on what other jobs might be possible. She has contacted DOME and received assistance to gain a certificate level qualification in retail through a skills recognition process undertaken with TAFE SA. DOME, along with her daughter, also assisted her with preparing her resume. At present Martha is working as a volunteer in a local newsagency to acquire job experience in this retail area. She knew the owner of the local newsagency and asked and was given this job experience opportunity. She is thinking about undertaking a basic computer course with DOME to extend her skills base and because she will be in a class with other mature aged workers.</p> <p>Advice: Martha believes she is being discriminated against by potential new employers due to her age. She thinks the local Job Services Network are not likely to find her a new job for this reason and that DOME is the better bet as they have on their books only employers who are looking for mature aged workers.</p>
Helen	<p>Background: Helen is 60 years old and worked in accounts payable and administration for Qantas Flight Catering in Adelaide for 21 years before being retrenched in April 2014. Qantas had provided notification well ahead of its impending closure.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Helen felt "terribly let down by Qantas" for focusing its workers support program on those working on the floor and not in the offices. Qantas HR did offer her and her two female co-workers in administration, skills recognition and /or training in a Certificate II in Business but they thought "this is laughable as they had higher level skills than that!" They tried to have the offer upgraded to a Certificate III level and in Business Administration rather than Business but failed and so "went it alone." The three in the office discussed daily their options, kept each other positive and motivated and contacted skills transfer and training providers directly. They ended up doing a course online in Certificate IV in Education Support to broaden their job opportunities. They did this whilst still working at Qantas, on job time when their Qantas work was done. Helen also undertook a skills recognition process, guided by TAFE SA, and achieved a Certificate III in Business Administration. Helen has since registered with Centrelink and four Job Services Australia providers. She has had three months of temporary work over the past 12 months. She continues to go on seek.com.au most days looking for work. She has applied for hundreds of jobs. Helen did mention though that she will take a job only if it is close to her home, as she has a dependent son requiring care.</p> <p>Advice: Helen suggested that all workers in an organisation that is due to close should be provided with appropriate help to find new jobs, and that the organisation should bring in experts to cover those work areas in which they do not have good knowledge themselves. Also, the staff working at the Job Services Australia providers could be more personable and their processes more streamlined to reduce the time it takes to become registered and be assisted and to "stop the run around for the job seeker." Finally, Helen is convinced that "her age is going against her as she has the experience." Her younger co-workers have both got jobs.</p>

Fictional name	Background, experiences and advice in finding a new job
Dave	<p>Background: Dave is 51 years of age. He was retrenched in July 2014 from a firm contracted to Santo, a major Australian oil and gas exploration and production company. Dave was a Safety Advisor for Santos. He has a Certificate IV in Occupational Health and Safety obtained during his previous work as an aviation technician (7 years). He has also worked with apprentices and has a Certificate IV in Teaching and Assessment, and has been a part-time lecturer in safety training at TAFE. He also has a Diploma in Management. He originally trained and worked as a diesel mechanic, for 10 years.</p> <p>Experiences with finding a new job: Dave was angry and disappointed when told he was to be laid off, even though he knew it was coming. However, after a couple of hours of sitting and thinking about it he was not too upset and began the process of applying for other jobs. There was no assistance offered by his employer. Dave went to a Job Services Australia provider but was disappointed in the service he received. He said “a young girl rattled off all of this information that was useless or did not apply to me, and then she pointed me to the computers and said to go and find jobs through that means while we complete the process to get you registered and onto job support. I thought I can do work searches at home and this process is only going to chew up my valuable time.” Dave found the help he wanted from DOME. DOME provided a person to talk to one-on-one about his future job options and showed him how to fix up his resume and tailor cover letters to the jobs on offer. Dave has had a few short-term jobs since July 2014 but was laid off from the last of these in late 2014. Dave is ready to do any job that he can obtain. For a long-term job he is willing to move elsewhere in Australia with his wife and three children who are still at home. Dave has spent his time off from work undertaking further skills recognition and training to bolster his job prospects. He has attained a Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety via skills recognition, which he says was easy for him because he knew how to assemble the evidence required due to his knowledge of the vocational training system. He has also completed a construction white card course, some of which he ended up running as the assigned trainer was not up to speed with the legislation, and a short course in working in confined spaces. Dave would like to do a Lead Auditor course but is ineligible for public funding for this course.</p> <p>Advice: Dave suggested having the right qualifications is the key to success in finding a new job today. He observed that when he was younger, work experience was all one needed to get a job but that this has changed and nowadays qualifications seem to matter more to employers. Dave also suggested one needs to use one’s own initiative and personal networks to find work and to not to rely on the Job Services providers. He also thought it would be good for him to be able to talk with other older displaced people looking for work, in order to share stories, help each other out (including helping each other “to think outside the box”) and to provide morale support.</p>

The advice these workers offered based on their experiences can be summarised as follows:

- To employees: Start considering options early. Use your own initiative and personal networks to obtain ideas and information. Don’t rely only on provided services. Recognise that it will take time to decide what to do, and then to do it also takes time. Qualifications and certifications matter. Therefore, it is important to do additional training if required. Talk with peers in similar circumstances to share information and maintain morale.
- To employers: Give greater attention to discrimination in the workplace of all types. One interviewee had trained for a new job in aged care but had come up against apparent discrimination in the workplace as a male in a predominately female workforce, leading him to eventually quit. Two others thought their age was the main reason that they were not as yet re-employed to the level they wished to be.
- To Centrelink/Job Services Australia providers: Be more personable when they engage with workers and help them earlier on and more quickly to move towards a new job. Provide more personalised, tailored support.

Concluding comments

The Premier of South Australia’s Statement on page 2 of *Our Jobs Plan* states: “If we act now, there is no reason we cannot have a stronger, more sustainable economic future. Unless we act now, Holden’s closure will be a massive setback for South Australia.” This is a crucial point and one in which South Australia has certainly listened to. South Australia has taken a proactive approach to the impending closure of Holden, Toyota and other associated automotive manufacturing businesses by establishing the Automotive Workers in Transition Program to assist the affected workers to move on with their lives and obtain new employment. In creating this Program, South Australia has drawn on its learnings from past efforts and set up structures and processes to ensure effective service delivery to displaced

workers occurs. Under this Program, services will be provided in a coordinated way with each service provider knowing their role and interconnections with other providers. In addition, the State is requiring RTOs to be highly responsive to transitioning workers' needs for skills recognition and training to support them to secure alternative employment. Furthermore, under the State's *Our Jobs Plan* there is an additional role for RTOs in ensuring that new future job opportunities are created (see figure 6).

Interviewees

Our thanks to the following for providing their time to be interviewed for the case study: Brian Rungie, Hilary Ashworth, Debbie Robbins, Greg Goudie, Kerrie Nussio, Ray Sara, Pippa Webb, Leanne Hill, Shay Yuill, Wendy Cato, Wendy Bailey, and six displaced mature aged workers.

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Case Study 4: Tasmania

Introduction

Tasmania has the highest unemployment rate out of all the States and Territories in Australia - 6.6% in January 2015, compared to the national average of 6.3%. On the upside however, the Tasmania's unemployment rate was down 0.1% from the previous month and was 0.9% lower than the level one year earlier. According to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Tasmania's labour force was estimated to have increased by 100 persons to 258 600 persons in January 2015 and was up 7 300 persons from January 2014 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015).

The downturn in the forestry and timber industry in Tasmania since 2008 has had a significant impact on the local economy and has left many workers displaced. For example, the closure of the Wesley Vale and Burnie mills in March 2010 and June 2010, respectively, resulted in the loss of approximately 420 pulp and paper jobs and hundreds of other jobs that were indirectly dependent on the mills (i.e. contracting businesses; Kempton 2014).

After the mills' closure, the circumstances in the industry evolved even more poorly. In late 2010, Gunns Ltd, Tasmania's major processor of both native forest sawlog and pulpwood products, decided to move out of native forest resources which lessened the demand for harvesting contractors, having a further impact on the north-west coast of the State. The decision of Gunns to exit the native forests represented the starting point for the formation of Tasmanian Forests Statement of Principles and what was to follow - a massive industry restructure in the State. This process of significant transformation was marked by mass redundancies - about 50% of harvesting and haulage employees' jobs were made redundant, and a large number of businesses exited from the sector. In August 2011, the Commonwealth Government and the State of Tasmania signed a Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement, agreeing to support the industry in its restructuring (Kempton 2014).

The closure of Gunns' three woodchipping mills and most of their sawmills in 2011 saw approximately 600 redundancies, the majority coming from the Tasmanian and mainland sawmill division, which employed about 450 people (LaFrenz, Dunckley & Keen 2012). Then in 2012, Gunns was placed into voluntary administration. Fortunately, this enabled the Longreach mill to be reopened and begin exporting woodchips once again. However, this did little to offset the numerous redundancies that had already occurred.

More recently, Tasmania's mining industry has seen even more hard times, with Copper Mines of Tasmania's (CMT) announcement on 9 July 2014 that the Mt Lyell mine would enter care and maintenance for a period of up to 18 months, causing a loss of more than 200 jobs (Denholm 2014). MT's parent company, Vedanta, and the site's main mine contractor, Barmenco, both promised to try to relocate as many workers as possible to jobs at other operations. However, the decision will have a significant impact on the nearby town of Queenstown and the State's West Coast, already reeling from the announcement earlier the same week that Unity Mining's Henty gold mine would also close in 2015. At least 150 workers from Henty gold mine are expected to lose their jobs between December 2014 and June 2015. The two mine closures will cost a combined 400 jobs amid predictions the small community could become a ghost town (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2014).

This case study now describes and presents the role of working groups, organisations and programs that were implemented to provide support for displaced workers in Tasmania. The material that

follows combines the views presented in the case study interviews with additional information provided either by the interviewees or in searches of the literature. The second part of the case study presents two mini-cases that identify how these working groups, organisations and other entities provided a coordinated response for displaced workers impacted by the closures within their industries.

Initiatives to support displaced workers

West Coast Economic Working Group

In direct response to Copper Mines of Tasmania (CMT) entering a care and maintenance arrangement in June 2014, the Tasmanian Government acted quickly to set up the West Coast Economic Working Group. The role of this Working Group was to provide immediate support to the affected mining workers. It was also to assist locals with skills training, job-seeking and social services, and to seek job-creating investment and fast-track infrastructure projects (The Mercury 2014).

The Working Group coordinated support for affected workers and community members through:

- workshops to outline support and services available through all levels of Government
- support to affected businesses and community members through the Department of State Growth and Rural Business Services
- dedicated additional Centrelink resources within the community
- establishment of a benevolent gift fund in partnership with Rural Business Tasmania
- establishment of a dedicated social recovery committee to provide critical health and well-being services to the community
- in partnership with Skills Tasmania, provide workforce planning support, employment assistance and training opportunities (such as the Rapid Response Skills Initiative)
- business advice and support through Enterprise Centres Tasmania
- training and upskilling (Department of State Growth 2014).

The Tasmanian State Government also provided further support by bringing forward its 'Building a Stronger West Coast' package, initially planned for 2014-17. Importantly, this package included \$250 000 for West Coast training and skills initiatives, which the Working Group was able to use to leverage an additional \$110 000 of funding from the Australian Government. This \$360 000 excludes other state-wide skills programs also available to individuals and business, thereby boosting the region's opportunities to accessible and relevant training.

In addition to providing support to the displaced workers, the Working Group was also tasked with identifying, reviewing and recommending ideas and opportunities for the region for its long-term economic success. Criteria for assessment included long term benefit, industry opportunities and short term stimulus to support workers and the community in their time of need. The local community embraced the opportunity to provide strategies to the working group through a dedicated email address and 1800 number, with more than 200 ideas received by the Department of State Growth and the Working Group (Department of State Growth 2014).

The West Coast Economic Working Group summarised their findings and detailed some of the key projects and community suggestions that they believe should be supported by the State Government

in their Final Report, released in January 2015. Further to these key commitments, the Tasmanian Government has also committed to projects which offered immediate local job opportunities, improved necessary infrastructure to support the region's industry and to offer new industry opportunities to reduce the reliance on employment within the mining sector and diversify the local industry base. These projects include:

Infrastructure

- \$5.2m upgrade of Strahan Road for improved access to the new aquaculture hub to support growth in the local industry
- \$8m upgrade to Murchison Highway for improved regional access.

Investment and employment

- \$75 000 for the DreamWorks production, *The Light Between Oceans* to extend casting and support crew opportunities to west coast residents
- Committed funds to reopening the full West Coast Wilderness Railway to Strahan on 15 December 2014, including a total commitment of over \$11m in the forward estimates
- Community survey project in partnership with Hydro Tasmania during November - February.
- \$435 000 towards a new Horsetail Falls walking track
- \$1 210 000 for a new industry opportunity to establish the West Coast Mountain Bike trails centred around Zeehan
- \$50 000 Climies improve and reopen a 4WD track experience
- \$500 000 West Coast Experience Trust Fund (jointly funded with RACT)
- Facilitated an agreement with Hydro Tasmania to enable the start-up of a private operator of white water rafting tours
- Investigate fast tracking exploration for new and existing mining operations in the region
- \$10 000 was committed to complete a Strahan waterfront precinct plan to ensure future development capability of a strategic site for the region.

Industry skill development

- \$30 000 from the West Coast Training and Skills Initiatives - Tourism Industry Development Program to assist industry to grow, develop and add new product offerings to the region
- Committed \$26 000 to a Contracting Industry Development Program to assist those contracting firms impacted by CMT entering care and maintenance. This Program will assist firms to pursue joint venture opportunities, improve tendering capabilities, and develop business and marketing strategies to ensure sustainability and growth.

In light of the region's challenges, the Working Group has focused on the need for investment in new industries to strengthen the economy, underpinned by improved infrastructure, skills and vocational training and access to new markets such as the growing global mountain biking sector. At the same time, continued investment in core mining and mineral processing, aquaculture and tourism sectors will fortify any local economic development strategy for the immediate future. The West Coast Council will now take carriage of the Working Group's efforts in partnership with the Tasmanian Government (West Coast Economic Working Group 2015).

The Rapid Response Skills Initiative (RRSI)

Another key part of the strategic response to displaced workers in Tasmania has been the formation of the Rapid Response Skills Initiative, administered by Skills Tasmania, a subsidiary of the Department of State Growth. The Tasmanian Government provides financial support for training to people made redundant. Under the initiative, displaced workers can obtain up to \$3 000 in financial assistance to help pay for nationally recognised qualifications, like a TAFE or university course. The funding may also be used for occupational tickets like white cards and licences or career advice to help people decide on the best training for them (Skills Tasmania 2014).

The Rapid Response Program exists to provide swift assistance at the time of job loss to put applicants on a solid pathway to employment. It is designed to provide assistance where barriers to future employment exist, but can be addressed through rapid engagement with the training system. It is not designed as a program to support long-term job seekers with significant barriers to employment. Furthermore, the Rapid Response Program is not designed to replace support services offered by Job Services Agencies. It is primarily a skills and training initiative. Also funding under the Rapid Response Program will not be available where training can be fully funded from other government sources. In addition, Skills Tasmania does not offer individual support and career counselling directly to applicants.

There are two levels of funding, either up to \$1 500 for people who do not have a job offer but know what training they want to do and feel confident that it will get them a job. Or up to \$3 000 for people who already have an offer of work or who have already started a job, but have been told by an employer that they need specific training to be able to start and or retain the job. Additionally, for those on the \$1 500 funding, once they do the training and obtain a job offer, they are able to come back within six months of commencing employment and request an additional \$1 500 for any further training they need to start or maintain their job (Skills Tasmania 2014). Eligibility for the funding is quite broad and includes the following persons:

- People who have been made redundant within the last 12 months
- The partner of someone who has been made redundant in the last 12 months to help them improve their employment prospects
- Workers in the native forestry industry who want to leave the industry
- Casual workers and contractors who are no longer working because their employer has closed or cut down on work
- People who worked in management or at a senior level, if they face barriers to employment because of industry structural adjustment or changes to the skills and technology used within their field (Skills Tasmania 2014).

The Program also provides funding support for nationally accredited courses within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) sector, and funding support for occupational tickets and licences. Preference is given to accredited courses and Skills Tasmania endorsed Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) - currently of which there are 150 - where appropriate and available. The Skills Tasmania Endorsed RTO system is designed to:

- Ensure that only RTOs with quality outcomes are contracted to deliver government subsidised training
- Streamline the application process to access individual Skills Tasmania program subsidies

- Provide recognition of RTOs that deliver quality training in Tasmania (Skills Tasmania 2014).

In cases where support is sought for non-accredited training, Skills Tasmania seeks evidence that this form of training is in demand from employers and will assist the applicant to secure work. Generally, the RTO providing the course will agree to send Skills Tasmania an invoice for the provision of training, meaning displaced workers do not have to pay upfront. However, if a training provider requires upfront payment, Skills Tasmania will pay 50% of total costs and the displaced worker is responsible for the remaining 50%, which is reimbursed upon evidence of completion of the course.

The Rapid Response Program funding can also be sought for materials and equipment needed to complete approved training and receive accreditation. This includes the cost of text books and course materials, health and safety equipment and licences. Skills Tasmania will consider requests on an individual basis, with reference to eligibility thresholds and available budget.

As one interviewee explained:

In the early days we let people work it out themselves. Training requests were for the basic things, but people tended to apply for everything they thought was useful. As a result, we funded things that didn't really lead to a job outcome. A lot of people blew their funding and then didn't get a job at the end of it. Now \$3 000 is the maximum people can get.

In addition, Skills Tasmania allows up to \$500 of the total funding received by a displaced worker to be used towards covering the costs of receiving career advice. This is available to applicants who do not qualify for extensive support (stream 2 and above) from a Job Services Agency. Skills Tasmania strongly encourages displaced workers to receive some form of formal career counselling services and have developed a register of career advice providers to help applicants find suitable career advice. Skills Tasmania does not endorse or recommend these services and it is up to the applicant to choose a provider which suits them best. Upon completion of the career assistance, Skills Tasmania pays the chosen career adviser directly.

As one interviewee commented:

A lot of the money that we did spend was wasted because people didn't have the correct career advice to start with and behaved in a way disadvantageous to them. Now we strongly encourage people to use career advisers. People didn't want to because they felt that it was intangible. That's why we have the \$500 worth of funding for it now.

The career pathway planning process must include face-to-face interviews between the service provider and the applicants, and the preparation of a detailed career pathway plan that is tailored to the applicant's needs and circumstances. Career pathway plans include, but are not limited to: current work and life experience; skills assessment; employment and career opportunities; training needs analysis; agreed actions with timelines; and other relevant information (Skills Tasmania 2014). Career advice is not mandatory under the Rapid Response Program but it is strongly encouraged. Guiding this decision are lessons learned from the Program that funding for training and licences typically is put to better use, and leads to better job outcomes, following the receipt of appropriate career advice.

Workplace English Literacy and Language (WELL) Program

The Workplace English Literacy and Language (WELL) Program was funded by the Federal Government and administered by the former Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The aim of the Program was to assist organisations train workers in English language,

literacy and numeracy skills. Funding was available on a competitive grants basis to organisations for English language and literacy training linked to job-related workplace training and was designed to help workers meet their current and future employment and training needs. Funding for this Program has now ceased, however similar projects may now be funded under the new Industry Skills Fund.⁷

In 2014 ForestWorks was able to obtain WELL Program funding for use at a Sawmill which was still operating for a period of time before being closed down. Most of the workers about to lose their jobs were over 50 years of age, had never used a computer and had little idea about how to use the internet. As such, ForestWorks engaged TasTAFE to provide training to these workers in using a computer, accessing the internet (e.g. using the SEEK job search database) and using word processing software to write their resumes. A teacher from TasTAFE was specially selected because she had previously worked in sawmills and could relate to the students. The project was successful in equipping these workers with valuable IT skills to help them to obtain a new job.

The role of LINC Tasmania

LINC Tasmania is an organisation which brings together the previously separate entities of the State Library of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Archives Office of Tasmania, Adult Education and Tasmanian Communities Online. LINC Tasmania is part of the Department of Education in Tasmania. It provides Tasmanians with access to library services, research and information services, adult literacy support, community learning, online access, and archive and heritage services (LINC Tasmania 2014e).

Importantly, LINC has literacy support programs as well as trained volunteer literacy tutors who are able to work with displaced workers on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. This service is free and helps with filling out forms, taking a course, applying for a job and improving literacy skills for work. Programs focus on building participants' reading, writing, numeracy, oral communication and learning skills for the particular contexts they require (LINC Tasmania 2014c).

LINC Tasmania also delivers adult education, providing a range of courses designed to suit the needs and interests of adult learners in Tasmania. Courses are offered in leisure and lifestyle activities, as well as courses to learn new skills for employment, personal development or general life skills. The Adult Education Program offers popular courses across Art and Craft, Computing and Technology, Fitness and Wellbeing, Home, Lifestyle and DIY, Humanities, Arts and Sciences, Languages, Performing Arts, Sports, Games and Outdoor Recreation and more. There are also programs for seniors including School for Seniors and Universities of the Third Age (LINC Tasmania 2014a). These Adult Education courses are useful for displaced workers who may be looking to transition to a different career, or to retirement.

Words @ Work course

The Words @ Work course was run by TasTAFE, in partnership with the Burnie LINC Literacy Program. It aimed to assist clients needing to build the necessary skills to apply for entry into accredited courses, to succeed in their courses, and to work in those particular industry areas. The 10-week part-time course was designed to give learners an introduction to three current growth sectors in Northern Tasmania: community services, warehousing and transport, and retail, providing a first step in possible pathways to formal industry training. Participants gained an insight into these industries and a solid understanding of the personal and training requirements of each work area.

⁷ For more information, see <www.business.gov.au/grants-and-assistance/Industry-Skills-Fund>.

Although not all three industries were of interest to all participants, they still completed all the learning activities, commenting on the fact that generic employability skills apply in all industries - workplace health and safety, communication and team work skills. At the conclusion of the course, it was reported by our interviewees that many participants had grown in confidence, and were able to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills in a meaningful context (see also LINC Tasmania 2014d).

Ready Set Go Program

The Ready Set Go Program is designed for those wishing to gain the skills and confidence to take the next step into training or work. The Program provides a combination of short courses covering technology skills, self-promotion, First Aid, volunteering skills and more. The main focus is on self-esteem and working with others - which helps participants connect with a variety of skills, information, and new networks in their community (LINC Tasmania 2014b). As one participant commented; “Anyone who is feeling down and unloved should do this Program. I’d say that I’m living proof of what it can do for you. I learnt a lot about how to communicate, and I have also learnt to write my own resume and cover letter, and a bit of computing as well.”

Rural Alive and Well

Rural Alive and Well Inc (RAW) is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation, funded to provide counselling and outreach assistance to individuals, families and communities that have been affected by the industry restructure and retrenchment. RAW aims to create resilience and capacity for individuals, families and the community to react to challenging life experiences, with particular emphasis on suicide prevention, mental health and wellbeing. The service has state-wide coverage and is strictly confidential. Its outreach workers are available 24/7 and can meet displaced workers at their homes or any location they are most comfortable with. RAW also assists individuals at risk of mental health problems, acute distress and suicide, and develops and implements strategies in communities to reduce stigma associated with mental health issues (LINC Tasmania 2014).

As one interviewee noted:

When guys lose their jobs - when their sense of self-worth is taken from them - there is an element of guilt and shame. Consequently, they often lose confidence and suffer from a mental health issue. These men need to be supported and valued, and the only way to do this is to have physical contact with them. Someone to talk to them and say ‘this is not your fault.’

RAW provides assistance to displaced workers by meeting with them face-to-face to talk through their retrenchment, build up their self-esteem and self-worth, and put them in touch with the right support services and agencies such as: Centrelink, JSAs, Salvation Army, Anglicare, Uniting Care, Beyond Blue, MensLine Australia, the SANE Helpline, Relationships Australia, Rural Primary Health, alcohol and drugs services, local GPs, psychologists/psychiatrists, CORES (a community-based suicide awareness and education program), LINC (for literacy support services), Rural Business Australia, Housing Connect, The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA), ForestWorks and the Men’s Shed.

In addition, RAW’s outreach managers work with displaced workers one-on-one to identify their skills, help them write their resumes, help them fill out paperwork (particularly if their literacy skills are low), find them employment in the local area and arrange for job interviews, and provide them with transport if required. In this way, RAW provides a holistic suite of services to help displaced workers.

As one interviewee explained:

We form a relationship with them over a short period of time and get a good understanding of where they are at. They might confide in us that they need help with Centrelink or driving. Literacy is one of the common issues that comes up. Some guys can't fill out forms but will not admit it. They'll just say 'can you fill it out for me, I don't have my glasses.' So unless you build up that trust and rapport with them, you won't know. Once we do find these things out, we organise transport to and from Centrelink for them, we assist with filling out forms, we assist with preparing CVs, we take them to appointments, and we make appointments for them. Some of them just need a supportive ear.

It is reported that RAW's success lies in the fact that it is 'on the ground', with outreach managers travelling to displaced workers to provide one-on-one face-to-face support. RAW workers also links its success to being entrenched in the local community by networking with locals and attending key community events. In doing so, RAW receives self-referrals from displaced workers who have heard of the service. RAW's profile in the local community also means it is able to directly connect local employers looking for employees with displaced workers looking for work. Finally, supporters of RAW associate its success with the close working relationships it has developed with other support services, agencies and the local community, and its ability to coordinate with all of these stakeholders in order to provide the total support package displaced workers require.

When asked how best to support these displaced workers, one interviewee concluded that:

In the rural communities it is important to identify these people early. Quite often everyone needs some form of financial support to survive. Retrenched people often haven't gotten the right advice with what to do with their redundancy payments. They'll pay off their home loans and then realise that they can't get Centrelink for six months. So it's important to get the information to them early so they can make informed decisions and get them hooked in with the right services early to make them feel like something is happening. Inter-agency arrangements are also vital. No one service can do it on their own. We need to work together and pool our resources for the client.

Financial Literacy Exchange Grants Program

In 2012 the Tasmanian Government awarded ten organisations with grants between \$5 000 to \$250 000 through the \$1 million Financial Literacy Exchange (FLEX) Grants Program for initiatives that increase financial literacy and support in Tasmanian communities. The Program aimed to provide financial education and support for low income households, including single persons; single parents with dependent children; working households; and people employed in declining industries, such as manufacturing and forestry.

ForestWorks was one of the recipients of this grant, allowing them to provide financial literacy support for retrenched forestry workers and their families. This funding allowed ForestWorks, in partnership with First Super and TasTAFE, to offer financial literacy programs aimed at equipping those most in need including people displaced in manufacturing and forestry industries. ForestWorks engaged TasTAFE to help develop and deliver information in small informal group settings. Topics covered included simple budgeting; payment options including Bpay and direct debit for fixed expenses - phone, rates, water, power and insurance bills; no fee bank accounts; and accessing information on free financial counselling (ForestWorks 2014).

Tasmanian Jobs Program

The Tasmanian Jobs Program commenced on 1 January 2014 and is a trial program providing a one-off payment of \$3 250 (GST inclusive) to employers who hire an eligible job seeker in an ongoing full time job. The aim of the Program is to improve the opportunities for unemployed Tasmanians, to assist employers expand their business by employing new staff, and in turn to provide a kick start to the Tasmanian labour market (Department of Employment 2014).

The Tasmanian Jobs Program incentive is paid as a lump sum with payment made directly to the employer once an eligible job seeker has been employed in a full time position for a period of six months. The Program provides job seekers with the opportunity to gain paid work and transition to greater financial independence. At the same time, employers gain assistance to off-set the costs of wages and training usually required during the first six months of employment. Employment Services Providers deliver ongoing support to employers and job seekers during the first six months of employment (Department of Employment 2014). To be eligible, individuals must fulfil the following criteria:

- have been a resident in Tasmania for the previous six months
- are in receipt of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance (Other) or Parenting Payment with participation requirements
- have been unemployed for at least six months
- are registered with an Australian Government Employment Services Provider.

Any suitable work is offered but jobs must be full time, ongoing and sustainable and expected to last after the Tasmanian Jobs Program payment has been made. Payment is not be made for short-term or temporary jobs.

University of Tasmania Redundancy Scholarships

The University of Tasmania has made available HECS Scholarships for the equivalent of one academic year of full-time study to any commencing students who have been made redundant from permanent or long-term casual employment within the last six months. This offer is extended as support for those seeking new or additional qualifications to better their employment opportunities.

The Redundancy Support HECS Scholarships apply to Commonwealth supported programs, not full fee programs, and are valued at between \$4 200 and \$8 700, depending on the course of enrolment. This means displaced workers can choose from: a range of more than 100 undergraduate degrees; or postgraduate coursework degrees in more than 50 different disciplines. In addition, for those who are not qualified for Bachelor degree entry, places will be available in the Bachelor of General Studies (Pathway) programs, the University Preparation Program and Bridging programs (University of Tasmania 2014).

The final sections now present two mini-cases where a number of the above support organisations, working parties or funding strategies can be seen to be at work.

Case Study 4.1: ACL Bearings Recognition of Prior Learning Project

ACL Bearings (ACL) went into administration and closed its business operations at the end of June 2014. Prior to the full closure of ACL's operations, the management of ACL offered to assist the transition of employees to new careers by providing the opportunity to have their existing skills formally recognised through a process of recognition of prior learning (RPL). The Rapid Response Skills Initiative provided this opportunity and brought together The Work Lab, one Tasmanian and two interstate RTOs to provide this service. The project involved six organisations:

- Skills Tasmania who were the project sponsor
- ACL whose staff were recipients of the RRSI initiative
- The Work Lab who provided specialist software (SkillsBook) and expertise to the project
- Tasmanian RTO (RTO A) who was the primary RTO responsible for assessment decisions and provision of statements of attainment/certification to successful applicants
- RTO B - interstate RTO providing assessment services for Transport related qualifications
- RTO C - interstate RTO providing assessment services for competitive systems and practices/manufacturing related qualifications.

Initial expressions of interest to employees of ACL yielded 83 employees interested in the opportunity. The skills transfer and RPL process was informed using The Work Lab's specialist software, an innovative program called SkillsBook. This provided an end to end assessment frequently requiring six hours per candidate for the RTO validation process. During this process each employee builds their personal skills profile and explores new career pathways using the skills gained both at ACL, as well as externally.

Fifty employees continued on with the process and applied for RPL, with 42 employees achieving either a full qualification or a Statement of Attainment for units of competency in their chosen qualifications. In total, 27 full qualifications and 18 Statements of Attainment were achieved. These ranged from Certificate I in Engineering, and Certificate II in Logistics, right through to Diplomas of Advanced Management, Laboratory Technology and Engineering (Advanced Trade). Employees were also able to use the RPL process to transition into other industries, many obtaining qualifications or Statements of Attainment in areas such as Aged Care, Hospitality, Community Services, and Horticulture (Morgan 2014).

Case Study 4.2: ForestWorks' Workers Assistance Service

ForestWorks is a representative body of the forest, wood, paper and timber products industry, comprised of 37 private and public sector organisations, as well as a range of industry unions and associations. ForestWorks supports the development of the forest, wood, paper and timber products industries and the people who work in them. Their role is to bring together industry, government and the VET sector to improve skills standards and support workforce development (ForestWorks 2015).

The Tasmanian Forestry Workers Assistance Service was established in 2012, with funding from the Federal Government's Department of Employment under the Tasmania Forestry Industry Structural Adjustment Program (TFISAP). The service was run by ForestWorks and continued the delivery of specialised training and employment related services to Tasmanian forestry workers affected by retrenchment, until June 2014, when the service ceased. Workers who have recently lost their job in the forest industry in Tasmania may be eligible for special assistance under the Forestry Industry in

Tasmania Assistance Package (FIT SAP), which provides them with immediate access to Stream B employment support services and giving them access to additional Employment Fund credits.⁸

The Workers Assistance Service assisted displaced workers by providing them with information about the job market, personal evaluations, a skills audit, as well as intensive personal and ongoing support. Coordinators and project officers included ex-forestry workers, who assisted participants by engaging them with services available to help them on their pathway to employment (Daian 2012). Figure 9 demonstrates how the model operated.

In total, 686 participants were assisted by the Workers Assistance Service. At the end of the service period, 85% (N=585) of all participants had obtained employment and 4% (N=28) remained unemployed (either they had never started a new job or started and were retrenched again). Ten per cent (N=70) were either not looking for employment or were not in the labour market for a range of circumstances. Thus, extending the employment figures to the participants who remained active in the job market, the employment rate achieved by the service was 95%. Of the 585 participants who found work, 393 participants obtained full time work, 94 were casual employees, and 42 were self-employed (Daian 2012).

The specialist Workers Assistance Coordinators were the linchpin of the service, providing one-on-one, flexible and ongoing support to the displaced workers. They were available 24/7 and would travel to the displaced worker and meet them where they wanted to meet. The Workers Assistance Coordinators were employees of ForestWorks and importantly, were all former forestry industry workers who had experienced retrenchment themselves. In addition, many of the coordinators personally knew the displaced workers they were assisting. The Workers Assistance Coordinators assisted displaced forestry workers by providing a variety of services, including but not limited to the following (ForestWorks 2013a):

- connecting forestry workers and their families to all Commonwealth Government service including registering with a Job Services Australia (JSA) and Centrelink
- assisting with putting together resumes
- discussing job roles and opportunities
- meeting with prospective employers to find employment opportunities for displaced workers
- researching and assisting in organising further training
- assisting with job applications and applying for jobs
- helping with job interview preparation
- helping with transport to and from interviews
- exploring other assistance and funding opportunities that maybe available
- connecting workers to Rural Alive and Well (RAW - a mental health service)
- connecting forestry workers with other available services.

As part of the Workers Assistance Service, displaced workers were provided with free skills audits. The skills audit looked at a displaced worker's complete work history and the skills and training that they

⁸ For more information, see <www.employment.gov.au/help-workers-who-have-recently-lost-their-job>.

have received on the job, and if possible, matched these skills and training with formal, widely recognised qualifications. As one Workers Assistance Coordinator explained:

Our role is identifying what they used to do, through RPL Skills Audits. Most of these people have been trained in-house, so we use the Forest and Forest Products nationally recognised training package and bring in an RTO to do RPL. We try to specialise in how their current skills set can link in with other industries. Quite often it is the person's mindset saying 'I only work in a saw mill.' A lot of those skills are generic skills and are transferrable, for instance, a lot are transferrable to heavy OH&S compliance. We ask the participant to bring in any copies of work and certificates. Often, but not always, we also have contact with supervisors and managers who can provide third party evidence that those people were competent using those tasks. In addition, we get the RTO to access any training records they may have.

Depending on what evidence displaced workers were able to provide (e.g. certificates, qualifications, resumes, job descriptions or licences), they were able to obtain a range of qualifications, from a statement of attainment, to a certificate I, II, III, or IV, or even a diploma. The skills audits took between one and two hours, and were held at a location that suited the displaced worker, even at their own home. By receiving formal recognition for what they had achieved in the workplace, displaced workers gained self-esteem, felt they had valuable transferrable skills, and were able to demonstrate their full potential new employers that they had a certain skills sets, and also that they were willing to learn (ForestWorks 2013b).

There were a number of lessons learned in this case. Common barriers for the participants in the job market included low computer literacy; being confident with existing skills; understanding how best to translate existing skills into another industry; and meeting a new employer. A challenge for the coordinators was encouraging and supporting people to work with the changes and to think through both obvious and lateral opportunities for participation in training and employment. Working with JSAs generally meant a cooperative response and supportive feedback in resolving issues.

Despite this, the service experienced some issues while working with the JSA system including high staff turnover, navigating JSA criteria and managing participants' expectations regarding funding entitlements. Participants that moved from a stable, long-term employment into new employment or a number of simultaneous or subsequent employment contracts, also faced challenges associated with dealing with new employee paperwork, superannuation rollover forms, reduced earnings and multiple employers (ForestWorks 2014).

The Workers Assistance Service's success in the forestry industry has been profound. The success of the service is attributable to its one-on-one, personalised and flexible approach. As one Worker Assistance Coordinator remarked: "A coordinator will spend as much time as needed with a person and as many times as the person needs. We work with people on a needs basis." It is also helpful that the coordinators are from the same industry and sometimes even the same employer as the displaced workers. By the coordinators knowing the displaced workers intimately, they were better able to gauge the types of jobs the displaced workers would be suitable for, and would flourish in. The coordinators were therefore able to better assist their peers to find alternative employment that was of perceived to be of good quality, safe, with longevity and was a good fit for the skills and background of the displaced worker.

As one Workers Assistance Coordinator remarked:

We also approach employers and talk to them about what types of person they would employ and what types of skills would they need to work there tomorrow - that is, entry level skills. This helps

us get them a job there and helps us know what training they will need to do. We tell the employers, if you want these people, you can have them and the training for them to get them up to scratch will be paid for by Skills Australia. This often helps motivate the employer to hire the displaced workers.

A further key to the success of the service was its holistic nature. The service provided support for across a wide range of areas: assisting displaced workers register with Centrelink and JSAs; helping them obtain financial assistance and funding for retraining; assisting them to undertake a Skills Audit; helping them obtain RPL; providing career counselling; assisting them to enrol with an RTO; to helping them write their resumes and prepare for interviews. The coordinators were also able to connect displaced workers with LINC (Learning and Information Network Centre - i.e. libraries) Tasmania services if required, to help them obtain basic IT skills, and/or to improve their Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) skills. In addition, the coordinators could also put displaced workers in touch with psychological counsellors and mental health services such as Rural Alive and Well (RAW), if required.

In addition, a pivotal key to the success of the service hinged on the interconnectedness and close working relationships between ForestWorks and the many other Government agencies and organisations involved in helping the displaced workers. Agencies interacting with the service on a regular basis included: Department of Employment; Department of Economic Development Tourism and Arts (now the Department of State Growth); Department of Human Services; Skills Tasmania; Job Services Australia agencies; Regional Development Australia; Cradle Coast Authority; LINC Tasmania; Rural Alive and Well (RAW); and private and public RTO's (Daian 2012).

All these organisations formed the Community Working Group, which would meet formally three times per year to discuss progress to date. These meetings also provided the forum for the Department of Economic Development Tourism and Arts (now the Department of State Growth) to highlight any business opportunities and jobs coming into the State. However, apart from the formal Community Working Group meetings, the success of the service was in the close and daily interactions ForestWorks would have with all the stakeholders involved.

One interviewee spoke about some of the benefits of the Community Working Group:

If we thought someone was struggling we would get RAW involved and get them to talk to them. If RAW came across someone that we hadn't talked to they would say 'Have you spoken to ForestWorks?' RAW also had good links to Anglicare and other charitable services, so we could link in with them and we didn't have to become experts in all fields. LINC Tasmania was also great providing volunteers to help people with reading and IT skills at a local library. Cradle Coast Authority also stayed involved as they were working on projects in the North-West coast where there is high unemployment, so they and could provide us with information on whether there was anything coming up that would lead to new job opportunities for the displaced workers.

Importantly, in its role as service provider, ForestWorks acted as the intermediary and conduit between the displaced workers and the numerous other assisting organisations. This meant that displaced workers were able to rely on their Workers Assistance Coordinator to put them in touch with the right support agencies and organisations, as and when they required. This eliminated some of the difficulties displaced workers experienced when struggling to deal with the various support agencies on their own. The model is different to that of the Job Services Australia (JSA) model, as it is industry specific, focuses on finding unadvertised work, and operates in the field, not in the office (ForestWorks 2014).

Summarising what seemed to be the most effective strategies to assist workers, one interviewee commented:

The one-on-one contact is so important. Not just churning them through, really listening to them. They have a great amount of skills. Formal RPL helps them build their self-esteem and shows to employers the value of the older people. Employers actually liked the older people because more likely to get in, get the job done, be loyal and stay. The WELL project funded by the Federal Government got guys who were over 50, never used a computer before, working with a Tasmania TAFE teacher who had worked in sawmills. This teacher taught them how to be comfortable using IT, using the internet (e.g. SEEK) and word processing to write a resume. Also of great help is having a coordinator who can chat with them prior to interviews - really informal - doing mock interviews if that is what they wanted.

Concluding comments

The downturn in the forestry, timber and mining industries in Tasmania has had a significant impact on the economy and has left many workers displaced. A majority of these displaced workers are older workers who require additional training and support in order to be competitive for jobs in the current market. This case study outlines the wide range of strategies that have been implemented by the Federal and State Governments, along with locally based organisations and working groups. The two mini-cases highlight a number of these strategies at work.

However, as one interviewee commented:

It is really complex. The problem we have got is that these older displaced workers can't get jobs the same rate of pay. These people need truck licence, forklift licence, white cards - these are the things that will help them get jobs. We also need some regional support for Tasmania because a lot of the closures have been regional. In addition, employers are reluctant to engage with displaced workers because there have been so many dismissal cases, it's expensive, and with the lack of HR expertise out there it's a mess and it's scary to take someone on - especially semi-skilled people. So we also need a lot of assistance to deal with employers and let them know how great these older displaced workers are.

As another interviewee noted:

Displaced workers are people not statistics. The most important thing you can do for them is to get them back into employment because working has been the backbone of their life. To not get them into work can have dire consequences for the person. What you need to help them is on-the-ground, face-to-face help, flexible arrangements (such as meeting where the displaced worker wants to meet), getting them happy and giving them options.

Overall, this case study is only at best a snap shot of the wide range of institutions, organisations, funding schemes and strategies that have been involved. A major observation is the level of interaction and, where possible, coordinated efforts between these groups as they design and deliver inter-related and integrated actions. Crucially, these coordinated, collaborative approaches have at their base a strong link into their local communities, enabling them to best access and support these older displaced workers.

Interviewees

Our thanks to the following for providing their time to be interviewed for the following case study: Ian Paterson, Mike McGee, Eva Down, Allan Kenny, Wayne Turale, Gail Eaton-Briggs, Jan Wallace and Christine McCristal.

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Alison Poulsen in the preparation of this case study.

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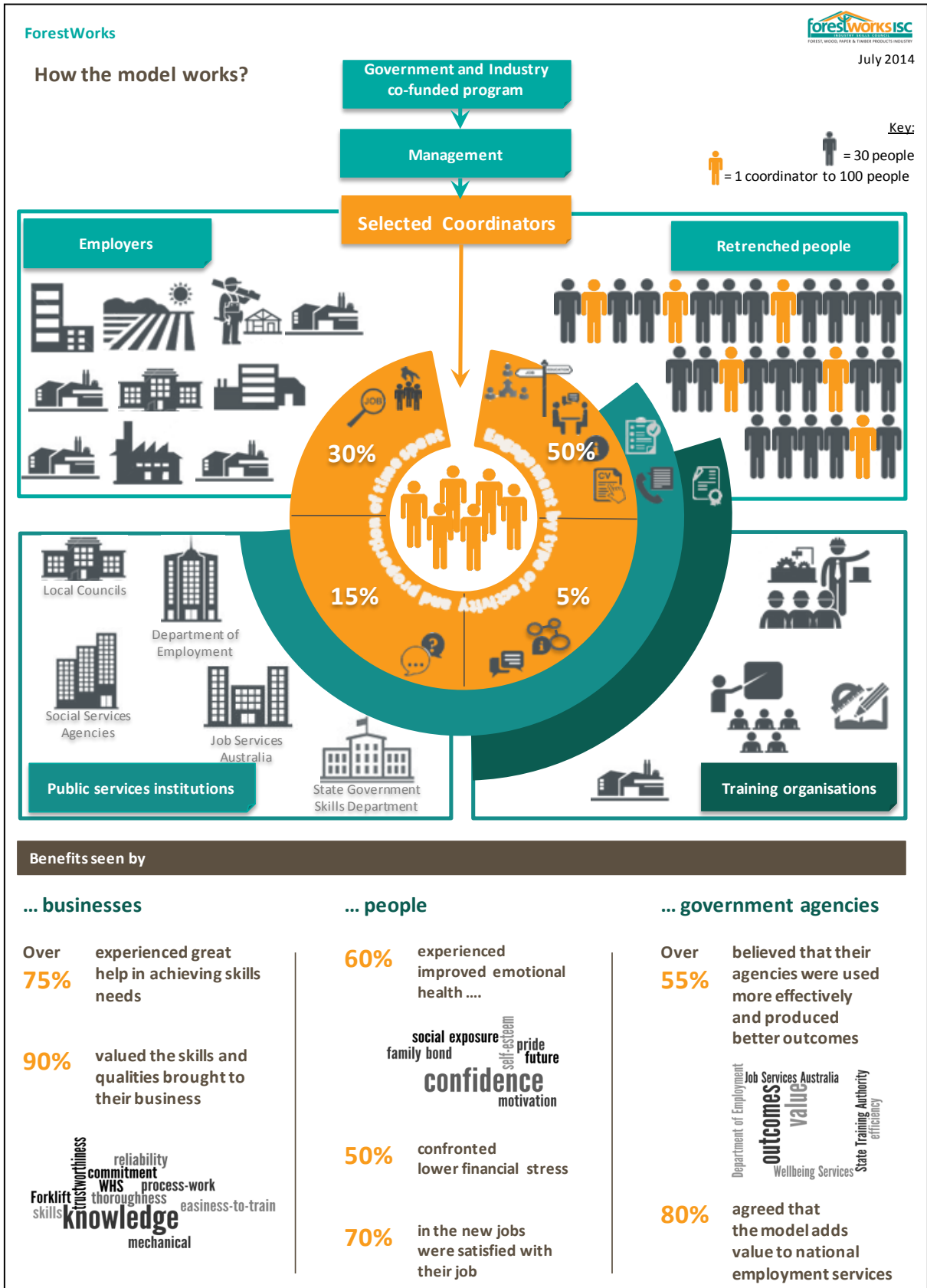
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Figure 9 ForestWorks Workers Assistance Service Model



Source: ForestWorks.

Appendix 1: Working model of steps to assist displaced older workers

Source: Authors, based on literature review undertaken (see Callan and Bowman 2014)

1) Preparation for re-training	2) Retraining	3) Post-retraining stage
<p>Assess the skills of potentially displaced workers while they are still in work and deliver well-targeted training in the workplace.</p> <p>Give access to career exploration and career assessment tools, information about the local labour market and begin to identify courses that help prepare for new careers.</p> <p>Provide advice on mapping of skills, recognition of prior learning and identify training needs and job prospects to help plan the transition to new jobs.</p> <p>Screen and assess prior to training to ensure the training program is right for the worker and he/she is capable of handling the content of the training.</p> <p>Encourage educational and training institutions to provide a rapid response that assists displaced workers by connecting them to unemployment benefits, career counselling, job search and guidance about what jobs are in demand beyond vacancy lists.</p> <p>Provide assistance to displaced workers according to need, in particular to older less skilled workers, those without formally recognised qualifications and those with low language, literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>Create partnerships between local businesses, non-government organisations, social enterprises and specialist service providers to improve job-person matching.</p> <p>Provide training in skills that are in demand, in courses relevant to available jobs and in skills/courses that promote long-lasting success in the labour market.</p> <p>Consider short-time training that can compensate for the loss of income while aiming to keep individuals attached to the labour market.</p>	<p>Modify training to acknowledge workers' life and work experiences.</p> <p>Involve them in the design and development of their own instruction.</p> <p>Allow them to learn among their own age group, at their own pace, and with flexible instruction.</p> <p>Motivate them through learning for empowerment and self-actualization vs. motivations around career advancement that apply more to younger workers.</p> <p>Instruction should be tailored to older worker needs and motivation, and the specificity of the tasks to be learned.</p> <p>Design training to include (a) a targeted approach, (b) training to renew critical skills, (c) new knowledge opportunities/challenges and (d) integrate training into recruitment strategies.</p> <p>Promote the learning of skills sets for those not seeking full qualifications.</p> <p>Design training to provide ample time to learn, good levels of support and feedback, and use train in groups to promote learning together and support.</p> <p>Use highly experiential approaches that target practical skills around job search, resume writing, networking and interviewing.</p> <p>Acknowledge that the impact of retraining programs requires time, especially when training is put in place quickly and with less planning to respond to economic and industry crises.</p> <p>Deliver foundation skill training using modularised and customised approaches that save dislocated workers' time and money.</p> <p>Apply recognition of prior learning to promote accelerated courses that save dislocated workers' time and money.</p>	<p>Promote organisational success stories that illustrate successful outcomes.</p> <p>Continue to provide career advice and training to minimise the likelihood of long-term unemployment.</p> <p>Introduce ways to monitor the number of contacts workers make, the value of each contact, and whether new contacts are in a position to provide job-related information.</p> <p>Support workers and their families to relocate to areas and industries where job opportunities exist.</p> <p>Measure success in terms of how many get a new job and what displaced workers regard as a good job.</p> <p>Six underpinning guidelines or principles regarding displaced older workers in relation to skills transfer and re-skilling initiatives also being tested</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Displaced older workers generally will be motivated and focussed on finding a new job as soon as possible. But they can lack knowledge of the wider labour market and can slip into unemployment if not assisted with their job search. 2. Displaced older workers are discriminating about what new learning they will undertake. They will not tolerate inappropriate or seemingly irrelevant content in re-training programs. 3. Displaced older workers want their existing knowledge and skills taken into account in determining what reskilling and training they will undertake. This situation is exacerbated where they do not have formal qualifications or have already left employment. 4. Displaced older workers undertaking formal retraining can require additional support. 5. Displaced older workers face personal factors that influence their decisions on what new job to focus on and often settle for a lower status job compared to the previous job. 6. While the nature and approach to skills transfer and reskilling and retraining are critical, displaced workers face a wide range of other factors that influence their success in seeking employment after a job loss

Appendix 2: Interview questions

A. Interview schedule – Displaced workers

Professor Victor Callan and Dr Kaye Bowman were recently awarded funding from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to undertake the above project. The aim of this research is to explore the enablers and barriers (such as personal, organisational, community or government factors) to successful skills transfer, re-skilling and training for low-skilled older workers who experience industry restructuring in an attempt to identify good practice. Funding and support for this project was provided by the Australian Government Department of Industry through the National VET Research program—a competitive grant program—managed by NCVER. The interview questions are based on a draft working model we have developed through a literature review.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

- 1 From what job were you retrenched, and when?
- 2 What other jobs had you done before the job from which you were retrenched?
- 3 Did you do any training in your previous jobs? What sort of training did you do?
- 4 When you heard you were to be retrenched what were your immediate thoughts?
- 5 What are you doing now and your future work plans?
- 6 What factors influenced you to do what you are doing now, job wise?
- 7 How did you get from your retrenched job to where you are now job- wise?
- 8 Who else did you receive assistance from and what was its nature? Did it help?
- 9 What did you do yourself? Did it help?
- 10 What was the most impactful assistance you received?
- 11 Did your age have any bearing on what assistance you received in your view?
- 12 Would further assistance have helped? If yes, what kind? If no, why not?
- 13 Regarding skills transfer and new training to get from your retrenched job to where you are now-
 - Were you keen on further training? Why/Why not?
 - Where did you do the training and why there?
 - What type of training was it?
- 14 Was the training based on advice/an assessment of possible new jobs available and realistically suited to you? If yes, who was involved in the assessment? What did you gain for the assessment?
- 15 Was the training based on an assessment of your current skills and knowledge that is, was your current skills and knowledge taken into account?
- 16 Was the training delivered in ways that suited you?
- 17 Overall, what do you think of the skills transfer and retraining you received?
- 18 Did you receive any assistance after you finished the re-training?

19 If yes what and with what impact. If no would you have liked to?

20 What are your thoughts about having been retrenched?

21 Given your experience, what are the key things you think should be done to help older workers who are retrenched to get a new job?

22 Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for the information you have provided for our study.

B. Interview Schedule: Providers of skills transfer and re-skilling initiatives to displaced older workers

Professor Victor Callan and Dr Kaye Bowman were recently awarded funding from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to undertake the above project. The aim of this research is to explore the enablers and barriers (such as personal, organisational, community or government factors) to successful skills transfer, re-skilling and training for low-skilled older workers who experience industry restructuring in an attempt to identify good practice.

Funding and support for this project was provided by the Australian Government Department of Industry through the National VET Research program—a competitive grant program—managed by NCVER. The interview questions are based on a draft working model we have developed through a literature review.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

- 1 Tell me a little bit about the training your organisation provides.
- 2 What's your role in your organisation?
- 3 What experience do you have in helping older workers (aged 45 years and more) to overcome job loss due to retrenchment caused by industry restructuring?
- 4 What experience does your organisation have in helping older workers (aged 45 years and more) to overcome job loss due to retrenchment caused by industry restructuring?
- 5 What services does your organisation offer to help older displaced workers get a new job?
- 6 Does your organisation apply a particular set of procedures /strategies to assist these older displaced workers?
- 7 If no - Do you think a particular /set of procedures /strategies could help older displaced workers to overcome job loss?
- 8 How does your organisation ensure it provides older displaced workers with relevant training?
- 9 How does your organisation go about skills recognition (RPL) that are transferable, especially those with no or lower level qualifications?
 - What characteristics of older workers are taken into account when designing new training for them and explain how?
 - Are there other characteristics of older workers that should be taken into account in training design?
 - How does your organisation deliver new skills training for older displaced workers?

- What skills transfer and new skilling strategies have the greatest impact in support older displaced workers to get a new job, especially those with no or lower level qualifications?

10 To what extent do you agree with the following statements (yes, no, sometimes and explain answer):

- Displaced older workers are motivated and focussed on finding a new job as soon as possible.
- Displaced older workers are discriminating about what new learning they will undertake. They will not tolerate inappropriate or seemingly irrelevant content in re-training programs.
- Displaced older workers want their existing knowledge and skills taken into account in determining what reskilling and training they will undertake.
- Displaced older workers undertaking formal retraining can require additional learning.
- Displaced older workers undertaking formal retraining can require additional financial support.
- The nature and approach taken to skills transfer and reskilling and retraining is critical for displaced older workers.

11 Does your organisation work with other services/agencies to help older displaced workers to overcome job loss? What types of agencies?

- If not, why not? Do you think there's merit in working with other agencies? Why? Why not?

12 Does your organisation have formal or informal links/processes with these organisations?

13 If formal, how were these established?

14 If informal, how did these links come to be formed?

15 In your view how well do these interagency arrangements provide a holistic service to older displaced workers?

16 Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for the information you have provided for our study.

C. Interview Schedule: Other service providers

Professor Victor Callan and Dr Kaye Bowman were recently awarded funding from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to undertake the above project. The aim of this research is to explore the enablers and barriers (such as personal, organisational, community or government factors) to successful skills transfer, re-skilling and training for low-skilled older workers who experience industry restructuring in an attempt to identify good practice. Funding and support for this project was provided by the Australian Government Department of Industry through the National VET Research program—a competitive grant program—managed by NCVER. The interview questions are based on a draft working model we have developed through a literature review.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

- 1 What organisation are you from?
- 2 What is your role?

- 3 What services does your organisation provide to help older workers (aged 45 years and more) to overcome job loss due to retrenchment caused by industry restructuring, and especially those with no or lower level qualifications?
- 4 In your view, what would a well thought out program for displaced workers include?
- 5 What do you consider to be the most impactful strategies that need to be the point of focus to support older lower skilled displaced Australian employees to work through industry restructuring, and obtain a new job?
- 6 Is your organisation proactive in helping older displaced workers to overcome job loss?
- 7 In what way/how is your organisation proactive?
- 8 What other agencies/services does your organisation provide to help older displaced workers to overcome job loss?
- 9 Does your organisation have formal or informal links/processes with these organisations?
- 10 Some talk about the need for interagency arrangements to provide a more holistic service to older displaced workers? What are your views about this?
- 11 Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for the information you have provided for our study.