



## Insights from Vanguard Laundry: social enterprise and work integration

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# Washing sheets, changing lives







Vanguard Laundry Services is a social enterprise commercial laundry service based in Toowoomba, Queensland, which provides jobs and employment pathways for people with a lived experience of mental illness who have a history of unemployment.









Vanguard Laundry's mission is to **create life-changing jobs through laundry**



# Financial Stability

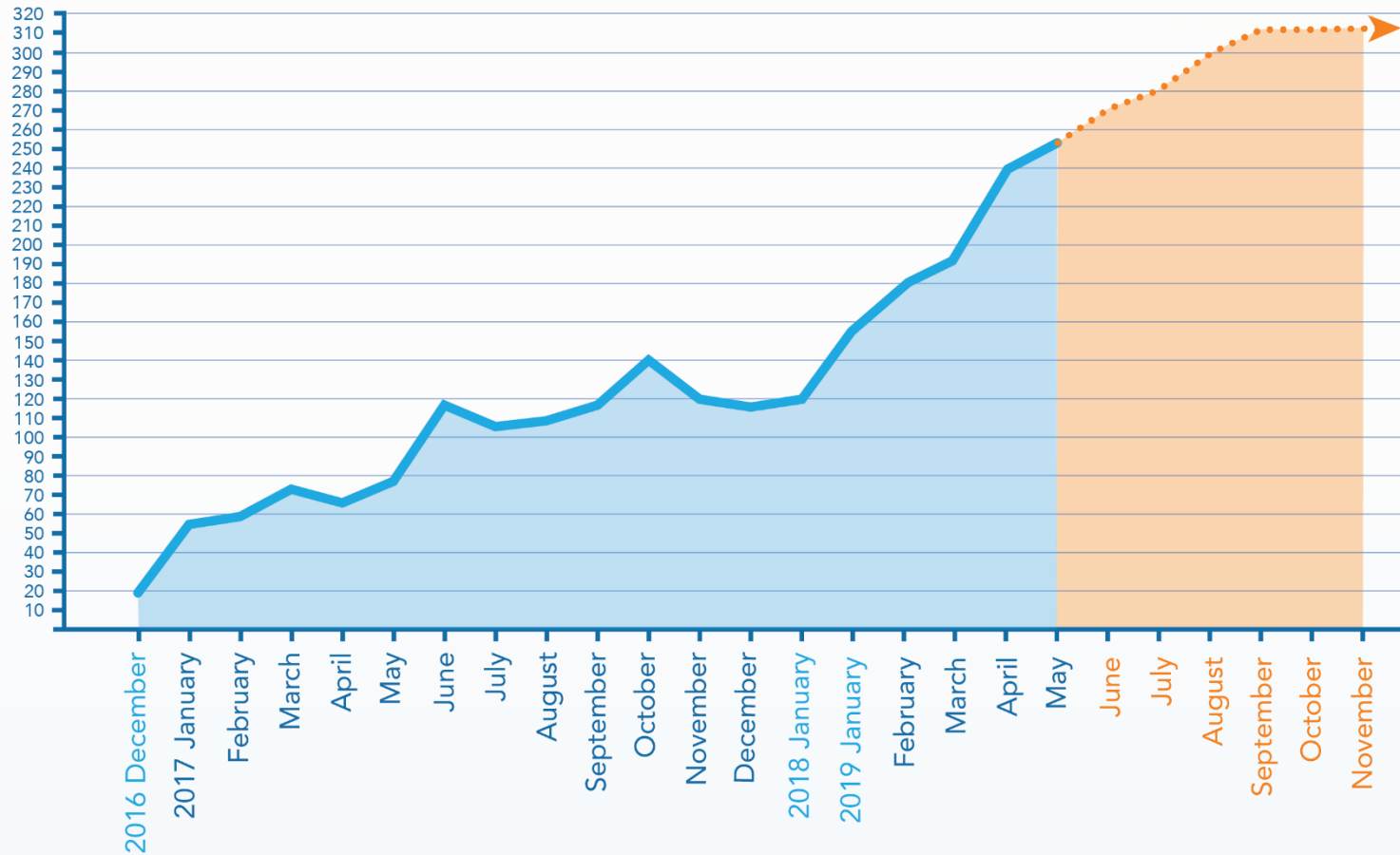
December 2016 – May 2019+



Revenue (\$00,000)



Forecasted Revenue (\$00,000)





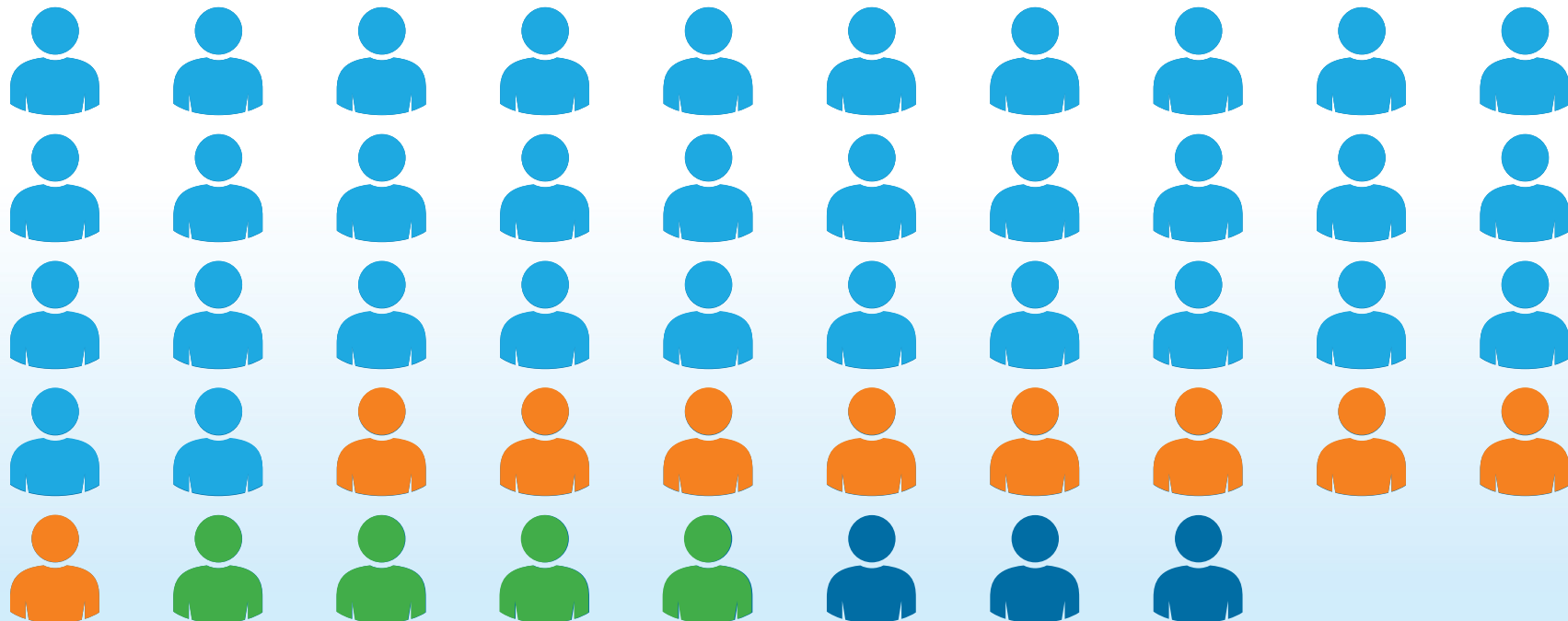
# Our People

 **125 staff have worked with us since opening including:**

 93 from our target group

 26 transitions to further employment

 18 pathway places



# Vanguard Laundry Theory of Change Summary

Create a people centred work environment

Stimulate demand for inclusive employment in our region

Run an effective social enterprise

Model a different approach to work participation of people with mental illness



PEOPLE



PLACE



PROFITS



POLICY

Improved health and wellbeing of Vanguard participants and their families/communities

A more socially inclusive region

Surplus to reinvest in local employment programs

Better policy frameworks for social and economic participation of people with mental illness

Improved long term economic participation of people with mental illness

A stronger regional economy

A model that can be replicated or expanded

A model that can be replicated or expanded



# Evaluation methodology and progress

- A longitudinal mixed methods evaluation (2017-2019)
- Research design informed by Vanguard's theory of change
- Using interviews and validated health and wellbeing scales
- Multiple data sources – participants, SE, govt and health agencies
- 2017 - first data collection with 31 participants (23 target staff)
- 2018 – second data collection with 54 participants (33 target staff)
- 2019 – third data collection with 66+ participants (39+ target staff)



# Research questions

This research aims to answer the three main research questions:

1. What are the SE effects over time on health, wellbeing, economic participation and social inclusion?
2. How is the SE influencing these outcomes?
3. What mediating or contextual factors also influence outcomes?

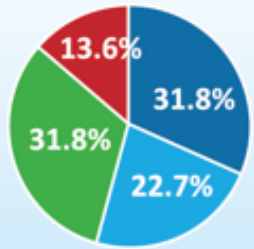


# Evaluation of Vanguard Laundry – Findings Year 1

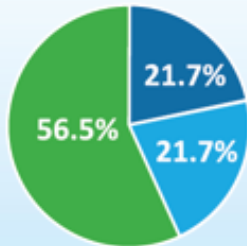
## Employment

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

#### 6 MONTHS BEFORE VANGUARD



#### SINCE VANGUARD



**No employment experience**  
**Interrupted employment experience**  
**Some employment experience**  
**Significant employment experience**

## Increased income

The median fortnightly income of target group staff increased by

 **\$392**

since working at Vanguard

Compared to the six months prior to starting their employment.

## Skills and capabilities

*“I get some interpersonal skills, such as self-esteem, some self-confidence back, some self-belief that I **can** work and that I **can** achieve things...”*

## Social inclusion

*“Before I was a bit reclusive, but now being out and around people I’ve noticed that my social life has opened up a bit too, because I’m more willing to be around people, where before I just wanted to hide away, I never had much social contact at all.”*

## Improved health

### SELF-ASSESSED CHANGE IN HEALTH COMPARED TO ONE YEAR AGO

- 43.5%** Much better now
- 34.8%** Somewhat better now
- 17.4%** About the same
- 4.3%** Much worse now

## Changes in service use

- 10 less** visits to the emergency department
- 106 less** days in hospital



In total, this equates to an estimated saving of

**\$195,677**

in direct hospital costs.

Saving **\$43,208**  
in Centrelink payments for the financial year to June 2017

based on participant reported data.



# Evaluation of Vanguard Laundry – Findings Year 2

## Employment

**26** transitions into open employment and education have taken place from Vanguard's launch, to February 2019.

## Improved health

**79%** about the same or better  
**21%** somewhat worse

## Changes in service use

**\$153,451**

in Centrelink payments saved since Vanguard's launch in December 2016 until end of June 2018

## Increased income



The median fortnightly income of target group staff increased by **\$304** since working at Vanguard compared to the six months prior to starting their employment.

## Skills and capabilities

*"I noticed a significant change in my mental health.... I was a lot more willing to do things, interact instead of being reclusive."*

## Social inclusion

*"I feel I'm getting a lot more freedom. Got more choices I can make."*

*"My social circle has become a lot more open. Just meeting everyone here... and making new friends, that kind of thing."*

As a group, participants reported a total of 138 fewer days spent in a hospital for any health reason since working at Vanguard.

This equates to an estimated saving of **\$231,767** in direct hospital costs from Vanguard's launch in December 2016 to June 2018.



# Discussion – Vanguard’s mechanisms and outcomes

## *Research questions*

1. What are the effects of a social enterprise over time on health, wellbeing, economic participation and social inclusion?
2. How is the social enterprise influencing these outcomes?

## Overall positive impacts on the expected areas of action

<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Occupation</li><li>• Social status</li><li>• Increased income</li></ul>	Improvements in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Socioeconomic position</li><li>• Social connections</li><li>• Living standards</li></ul>
Fair working conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Supportive work environment</li></ul>	Experiences of wellbeing through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capability</li><li>• Social integration</li></ul>



# Discussion – other factors that influence outcomes

## *Research question*

3. What mediating or contextual factors also influence outcomes?

There are some limits to effects, or negative effects due to mediating and contextual factors

