

Vanguard

LAUNDRY SERVICES



IMPACT REPORT 2018





Changing lives one wash at a time

Vanguard Laundry is a state-of-the-art commercial laundry in Toowoomba, Queensland, opened and operated for one purpose: to remove barriers to employment for people with a lived experience of mental illness.

We offer transitional jobs to long-term unemployed people who need a hand getting back into the workforce. Vanguard works with these staff to develop their professional skills and wellbeing, before supporting them into a chosen profession.

We are one of Australia's largest employment-focused social enterprises. Since opening our doors in December 2016, we've given jobs to 103 people, we have helped with 26 transitions to the open jobs market or full-time education. We have offered work experience and employment pathway places to a further 13 people.

Many Vanguard staff have reported meaningful improvements in their physical and mental health, as well as increased social integration and financial independence. Results from this year's study indicate that positive changes in health were particularly

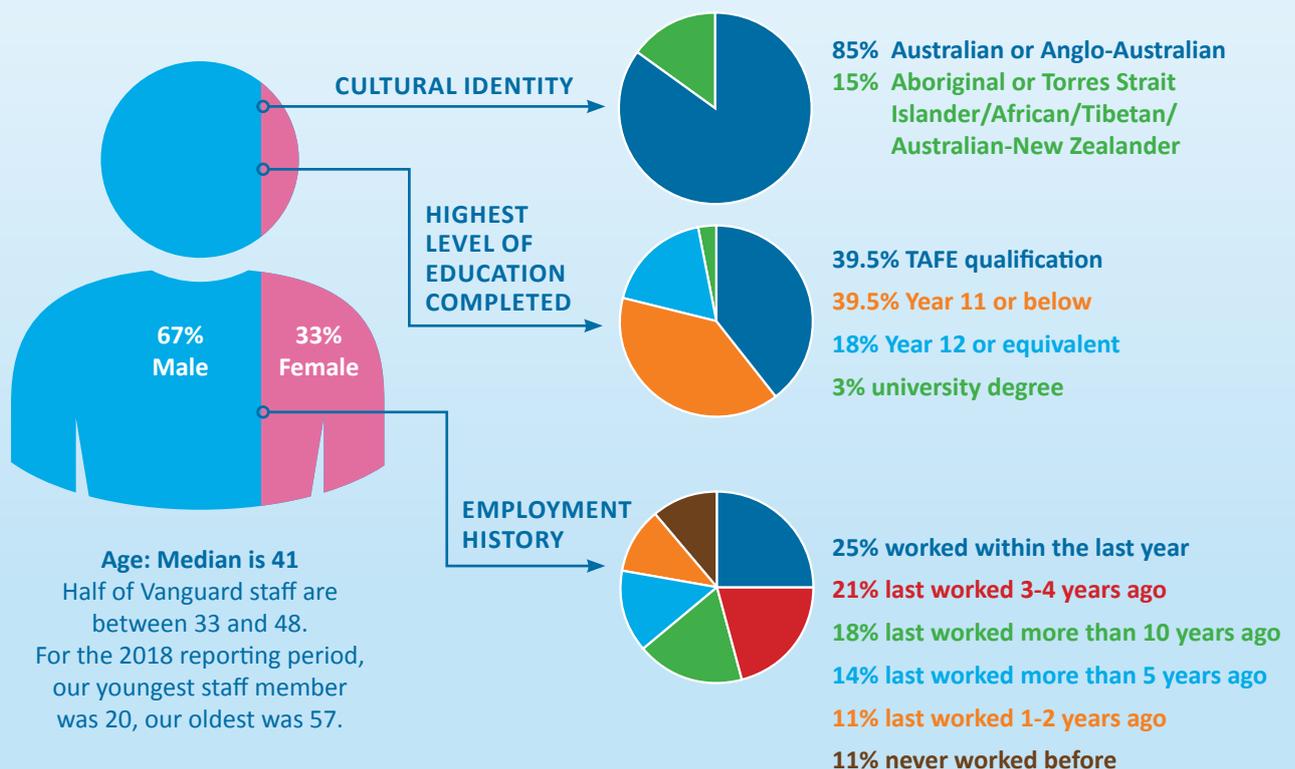
felt during the first year of employment, reflecting the impact of moving out of unemployment and into a transitional job with Vanguard.

Most of the information contained in this report (except the Transitions section, which draws on data collected by Vanguard's Careers Team) was obtained from data analysis provided by Aurora Elmes, a PhD student and Senior Research Assistant at the Centre for Social Impact (CSI), Swinburne University of Technology. This data was collected as part of a series of evaluation reports produced by CSI to inform a longer-term longitudinal evaluation of Vanguard Laundry's Theory of Change.

Our Theory of Change provides us a framework for everything we do and everything we want to achieve. It maps out our vision of creating a people-centred, effective social enterprise that stimulates demand for inclusive employment and models an alternative approach to employment for people with a lived experience.

MEET A VANGUARD STAFF MEMBER...

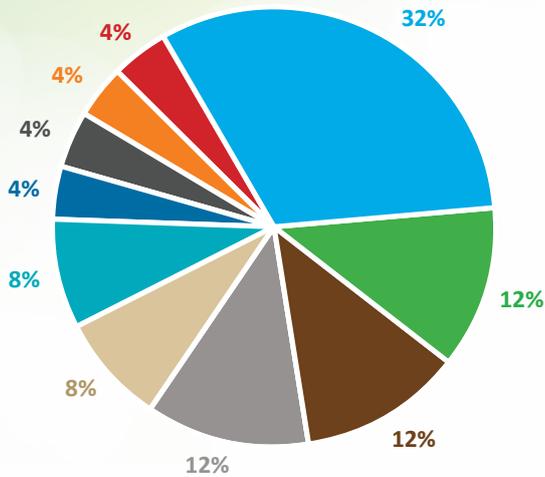
We can profile the 'typical' Vanguard staff member, using data collected for 33 target staff members over the past two years...



TRANSITIONS

Transitioning staff have moved into a variety of industries, based on the career plans they developed with Vanguard's Careers Team.

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



- 32% cleaning services
- 12% factory/process work
- 12% aged care/disability
- 12% trades and apprenticeships
- 8% self-employment
- 8% childcare
- 4% retail
- 4% horticulture
- 4% education
- 4% administration

Roles include diversionary therapy assistant, apprentice chef, refrigeration mechanic and depot hand. One staff member went back to high school and two opened businesses. Of our community employment partners, St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba has taken the most Vanguard staff (employing five).



"When you hear 'yes, we can help' you think 'maybe there is hope that I can get this employment, this sort of job'. So, it changes the game plan."

THE VANGUARD EFFECT

Findings continue to indicate that many staff experience physical and mental health improvements, and increased levels of social engagement and financial independence. These effects are particularly apparent in the first 12 months. The changes appear to stabilise after the first year, as staff prepare to transition into the open jobs market with support from our Careers Team.



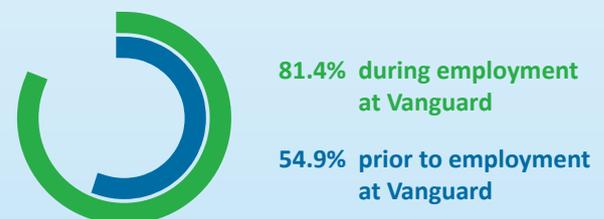
"My social circle has become a lot more open. Just meeting everyone here... and making new friends, that kind of thing."

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

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

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.

Fortnightly income against Toowoomba median



Prior to Vanguard, our target staff earned a fortnightly income equivalent to 54.9% of the median income in the Toowoomba community. During Vanguard, their fortnightly income was 81.4% of the median Toowoomba income.

Since working at Vanguard 62.5% of staff said they were able to save some of their fortnightly income – some using their savings for course fees and textbooks.



"Earning an income makes a big difference, instead of living off Centrelink. I'm finding now I can put a lot more away in my savings... which is really good because textbooks are expensive."

RELIANCE ON WELFARE

The average reduction in Centrelink income was \$204.50 per fortnight.

83.3% people receiving a Centrelink payment 6 months prior to employment at Vanguard

73.3% people receiving a Centrelink payment since starting at Vanguard



\$153,451

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

"I enjoy getting up in the morning and having a purpose to go do something... I want to earn it rather than have it handed to me."



HOUSING SECURITY

Having to spend more than 30% of income on housing can be a marker for housing stress and present financial difficulties for people with relatively lower levels of income.

Six months before starting at Vanguard, 65.2% of staff experienced housing stress. Since Vanguard, that figure is 17.4%.

Since starting work for Vanguard, housing stress among our staff has decreased by

47.8
percentage points

"...the day I started here I was due to be evicted from my house the next day. I would have been homeless ... I don't think I would've survived, it was that bad."



MENTAL WELLBEING

Vanguard staff reported multiple positive impacts on their wellbeing, including improvements in confidence and motivation. In 2018, 63.7% said they were confident to apply successfully for a job – up from 52.1% in 2017.

And 72.7% of target staff were confident to hold down a job, up from 60.9% in 2017. Some of the increases in confidence levels are attributed to new staff joining the evaluation in 2018.



"I noticed a significant change in my mental health... I was a lot more willing to do things, interact instead of being reclusive... The fact I came to work, nobody disliked me ... it made me think that I'm actually pretty cool."

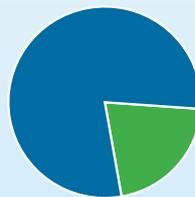
Of staff hired in FY2018, 71.5% reported moderate or low levels of psychological stress, versus 42.2% of those hired earlier. These differences may be related to changes to Vanguard's recruitment criteria in FY2018.

HEALTH

Participants rated their overall health in comparison to a year ago, with 78.8% saying their health was either about the same or better than one year before. Of staff starting in FY2018, 64.3% said their health was somewhat or much better than before Vanguard, again emphasising the initial impact felt in year one of employment.

Less than half (45.5%) of Vanguard's target staff reported smoking daily, and where participants spoke about quitting smoking, the available support programs were seen as a resource that could help them take the next step.

For those who still smoked daily, smoking reduced from a median of 15 cigarettes a day before Vanguard, to 10 a day since employment with Vanguard.



79% about the same or better
21% somewhat worse

RELIANCE ON HEALTH SERVICES

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.



"I'm getting fit. There's always something every time I come here. I get exercise and... I'm feeling much better because of it. It's improved my mood. It's just totally changed my life. To be quite honest, it saved my life, getting a job here."