

your job your way

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared by the Centre for Social Impact and **yourtown**

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Centre for Social Impact

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yourtown

yourtown is a national organization and registered charity that aims to tackle the issues affecting the lives of children and young people. The mission is to enable young people, especially those who are marginalized and without voice, to improve their life outcomes. **yourtown** provides a range of face-to-face and virtual services to children, young people and families seeking support. These services include:

- Kids Helpline, a national 24/7 telephone and on-line counselling and support service and Parentline, a telephone and online counselling and support service for parents and carers.
- Youth specialist jobactive services, Transition to Work and ParentsNext programs and social enterprises.
- Other youth focused services which include: education engagement support; child development programs for young parents and their children; mental health services; and accommodation for young parents with children seeking refuge from family and domestic violence.
- Accommodation for young parents with children where there are child protection risks and for

women and children seeking refuge from family and domestic violence.

yourtown operates a house and car art union program that provides the majority of the organisation's funding. The organisation is committed to using research as advocacy to improve the lives of young people. Because of the diverse nature of services, **yourtown** is able to respond to Government inquiries on various topics such as youth suicide prevention, mental health, self-harm, juvenile offending, domestic and family violence. **yourtown** also runs proactive advocacy projects on topics where young people are continuing to experience disadvantage and try to enable young people to have a voice on strategies to address issues. One of these topics is long-term youth unemployment.

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Disclaimer

The opinions in this report reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNSW Sydney, CSI, **yourtown**, Macquarie Group or the Department of Social Services.

Although every effort was made to accurately capture, record and appropriately analyse information contained in this document, the conclusions are subject to the limitations of the data and methodologies used and described.

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Executive summary

Context

Young people are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed and the proportion of long-term unemployed youth (15-24 year-olds) has been on the rise in the past decades. Long-term unemployment is likely to erode young people's self-esteem and confidence, and lead to poor physical and mental health, low family and life satisfaction, lower wages across their lifetime, dependency on welfare and a higher propensity to engage in criminal activity. The long-term unemployed youth face a range of vocational and non-vocational barriers to attaining and maintaining employment and as such, they require a specific suite of interventions and intensive support to make a sustainable transition to employment. However, historically, employment assistance programs have had modest impacts with little or no benefit to young people.

your job your way is a 24-month pilot program rolled out at three sites in socio-economically disadvantaged areas: Elizabeth in Adelaide, South Australia; Caboolture north of Brisbane, in Queensland; and Burnie-Devonport in Tasmania. The Queensland and South Australian sites commenced in July 2018 and the Tasmanian site in January 2019. **yourtown** funded the Elizabeth, South Australia and Caboolture, Queensland sites. The Burnie-Devonport site is funded by the Department of Social Services. It targets young people aged 15-24 years who have been unemployed for over 52 weeks and are at high risk of social exclusion and permanent detachment from the labour market. The program aims to transition long-term unemployed young people to sustainable employment. While the pilot ceased at all sites on 30th June 2020, the program has been funded until 30th June 2021.

The program is designed to complement jobactive services by:

- Delivering intensive services to a small 'pre-employment' caseload of approximately 25 young people.
- Providing a dual support team consisting of a qualified case manager (Pathways Coach) and an Employment Mentor working with the young person using:
 - A strengths-based, trauma informed best practice model of employment services;
 - Targeted employer engagement; and
 - Intensive 'in-work' mentoring for 26 weeks, including employer liaison.

The evaluation

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) has partnered with **yourtown** to evaluate the pilot program **your job your way**. The interim report analysed short- and medium-term vocational and non-vocational outcomes throughout the first year of program implementation. This final evaluation report describes the **your job your way** client cohort, examines vocational and non-vocational outcomes using program and evaluation data, compares vocational outcomes from the program with jobactive outcomes, and considers issues impacting outcomes as well as the successes and challenges of implementing the program throughout the two years. Outcomes, challenges, and successes are discussed in their ecosystem, including challenges presented by bushfires at the end of 2019 and in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020 (the final six months of the program). The evaluation includes a cost-effectiveness analysis of the two-year pilot program.

The evaluation of **your job your way**, through interim and final findings, intends to inform service improvements, strategy and design, and provide an evidence base to advocate for a more intensive, client-centred response to long-term youth unemployment.

The evaluation uses a mixed method design, which includes a process evaluation (how the program was established and implemented), an outcomes evaluation (what the program achieved) and an economic evaluation (what was the cost of the program relative to its benefits). The evaluation is both formative and summative. The evaluation has ethics approval from UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee.

Key findings

Program outcomes

Overall, the proportion of **your job your way** clients who found jobs (that is, achieved a placement) between July 2018 and June 2020 was much higher than that of jobactive clients: 82% of **your job your way clients** compared to 49% of jobactive clients. Furthermore, across all three sites and all three types of outcomes (4-, 12- and 26-week outcomes – i.e. retaining a job at each period), **your job your way** clients achieved higher conversion rates (outcomes achieved – maintaining their job for 4-, 12-, 26-weeks – as proportion of young people commencing a placement) than jobactive.

Outcome conversion rate, your job your way and jobactive

Outcome	jobactive	your job your way	your job your way compared to jobactive
4-week outcome	22%	48%	+26
12-week outcome	18%	39%	+21
26-week outcome	9%	21%	+13

Note: outcome conversion rate calculated as the number of outcomes achieved divided by the number of commencements

your job your way clients experienced improvements in health and wellbeing across a range of measures. Young people demonstrated a statistically significant increased satisfaction with life, measured using the Personal Wellbeing Index. These positive changes are also supported by progress recorded through the WorkStar™, a tool supporting case workers and clients identify and focus on what needs to change to progress towards obtaining work. For example, young people showed improvement in job skills and experience (73%), job search skills (63% of young people), aspiration and motivation (63%), workplace and social skills (51%), and health and wellbeing (50%).

Longitudinal interviews with young people, their family, partners and friends and program staff also indicated improvements across the program outcome areas:

- Young people improved their skills for resume/cover letter writing and job interviews.
- Young people noted improvements in their mental health.
- Young people reported increased aspiration, motivation and confidence, which meant they felt better able to apply for jobs and deal with difficult matters that might arise in the workplace.
- Young people's communication skills improved, including their level of confidence in talking with new people and talking on the telephone.

- Young people had greater access to a range of social, financial, housing and health resources, including support with bill payments, access to Food Banks and access to services such as headspace, GPs and drug/alcohol services.
- Program staff assisted many young people to enroll in TAFE or similar courses, and young people also had assistance to obtain other certifications (e.g. forklift license, Responsible Service of Alcohol and Responsible Conduct of Gambling certifications).
- Program clients gained job skills and experience through internships, volunteer work and job trials. Many also entered paid employment with the assistance of the **your job your way** program, including paid traineeships, apprenticeships, part time work, and casual work.

COVID-19 impacts

The COVID-19 crisis presented significant challenges for the **your job your way** program and its clients. Nevertheless, no young people directly reported significant mental health problems during the pandemic, and, with the assistance of program staff, most were able to keep up their motivation for engagement with the program and applying for work. The strong relationship between staff and clients was essential in maintaining client engagement and progress during this period.

Key challenges for clients were completing education online, with reduced resources and/or without in-person support. The downturn in the employment market was also a major problem, in that there were significantly fewer jobs available and more competition for those that were advertised.

However, the COVID-19 crisis also presented some significant opportunities. A key opportunity was that remote contact with program staff acted as a means for young people to improve their confidence at talking on the telephone. In addition, **your job your way** staff supported many clients to save the supplementary Government payment of \$550 available to recipients of Youth Allowance and the JobSeeker Payment for costs that would assist their overall employment goals, e.g. buying a car, paying for TAFE.

Program implementation

The relationship-based practice of **your job your way** is a clear strength of the model and, in the accounts of young people, their family, partners and friends, and staff, the critical factor which meant that the program could achieve the positive outcomes it did. Key elements of the program's relationship-based practice were:

- Smaller caseloads compared to the jobactive model.
- Intensive support to young people.
- Skilled and 'youth friendly' staff, within a dual support model.
- Staff discretion about how some program funds are spent and where services are delivered.
- Social activities to complement the employment focused work of **your job your way**.

Notably, strong relationships between clients and staff were cited as critical to the program continuing to achieve positive outcomes during the challenging COVID-19 crisis. With these strong relationships in place, the majority of **your job your way** clients stayed engaged with the program during the crisis, and phone contact between program clients and staff worked well.

A central challenge of the **your job your way** program was ensuring that others within the landscape of employment and youth support understood the **your job your way** model and its differences from

other employment programs. Misunderstandings of the **your job your way** model challenged many aspects of the program's implementation, including appropriately acknowledging staff workloads; ensuring appropriate management practice, training and resourcing; collaboration efforts; and data collection and record keeping. Other challenges included some difficulty with implementing assessment tools with young people with pre-set standardised goals. Further, it was acknowledged by program staff that 'employer engagement' had not occurred as successfully as hoped and that this had some impact on both the employment opportunities available to young people and the degree to which **your job your way** staff could continue to support **your job your way** clients once they had found a job.

Cost-effectiveness analysis

Achieving the 26-week sustained employment outcome was considered the key program outcome as it provides an indication that the young person is likely to remain employed and, hence, achieve the goal of the program – break the cycle of long-term unemployment. The costs of achieving this key outcome by **your job your way** and jobactive clients were compared.

The total **your job your way** cost over the two-year period of pilot implementation across the three sites was \$1,375,774. This was significantly lower than the cost of implementing jobactive across the three sites, \$4,249,829. jobactive, however, supported clients of all ages, long-term and not long-term unemployed. It was not possible to separate the cost for long-term unemployed youth in jobactive but the cost of a 26-week outcome (regardless of the age of client and period of unemployment) was calculated at \$13,066, less than half the cost of a 26-week outcome in **your job your way** (\$30,573). While **your job your way** was a more expensive model than jobactive, it had a much higher success rate, and therefore greater likelihood of long-term savings due to a reduced cost in lifetime welfare. **your job your way** was successful at achieving 45 26-week outcomes for the 210 long-term unemployed youth over the two years of pilot (21.4% conversion rate) compared to a much lower conversion rate (8.5%) in jobactive, where only 41 26-week outcomes were achieved for 481 long-term unemployed youth over the two year period.

If **your job your way** had the capacity to engage with 481 long-term unemployed young people over the two years, considering the 21.4% demonstrated conversion rate, a total of 103 26-week outcomes would have been achieved, an additional 62 outcomes compared to jobactive. This equates to an annual additional investment in the program of \$1.9 million with a return of \$12 million in lifetime welfare savings (estimated using Department of Social Services' average lifetime welfare cost of Youth Allowance Other and average lifetime welfare population cost, DSS 2019). As such, in addition to the demonstrated health and wellbeing outcomes, **your job your way** is likely to generate a 1:6 cost to savings ratio. It is likely that the outcomes assessed in this evaluation are further improved, as it can take up to three years before performance is at a consistently high level (**yourtown** 2020).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations are made to retain and strengthen the **your job your way** program into the future:

1. Continue to prioritise and resource the relationship-based practice of the **your job your way** model.
2. Communicate a clear account of the **your job your way** model and its purpose and points of difference compared to other employment services to all staff and stakeholders.
3. Improve program governance.

4. Create and embed an ‘employer engagement strategy’ within the **your job your way** model, with staffing and accountability structures to ensure it is thoroughly implemented.
5. Use all assessment tools to measure young people’s individual progress without pre-set standardised goals.
6. Consider options for simplifying and streamlining the data and record keeping requirements for **your job your way**.
7. Promote the **your job your way** model as a cost-effective option in addressing long term youth unemployment, noting it is likely to generate a 1:6 cost-saving to government in welfare payments over the life course.

1 Introduction

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) has partnered with **yourtown** to evaluate the pilot program **your job your way**. This final report expands insights from the interim evaluation report and provides findings from the evaluation of the 24-month pilot program.

Long-term unemployed young people are at high risk of remaining on welfare over the longer term (Mroz and Savage 2006; Brotherhood of St Laurence 2014). Gaining and maintaining employment becomes more difficult as the duration of unemployment increases. Employers are often resistant to hiring people with no work history or significant gaps in their resume and perceive those who have been unemployed long-term as unemployable. For the individual job seeker, extended periods of unemployment may erode self-esteem and confidence, and lead to poor mental and physical health, low family and life satisfaction, lower wages across a lifetime, and a higher propensity to engage in criminal activity (Carvalho 2015). Non-vocational barriers to employment may be multiplied or exacerbated by the financial and psychological hardships associated with being long-term unemployed.

This cohort requires a specific suite of interventions and intensive support to make a sustainable transition to employment. However, the existing jobactive services are insufficiently resourced to provide the intensity of support and engagement necessary to address barriers and improve the life chances of long-term unemployed young people. Specifically, the existing caseload sizes do not enable consultants enough time per job seeker to (a) develop the rapport and trust necessary to build and maintain engagement and motivation; (b) to comprehensively understand individual needs, strengths and interests, and (c) collaboratively develop a detailed plan of action, including post-employment strategies targeting ongoing capability development. The **your job your way** pilot program overcomes these challenges by delivering intensive, concurrent services and supports to this high-needs cohort, and aims to contribute to the evidence base for effective approaches to reducing long-term unemployment amongst young people.

Context – long-term youth unemployment

History

Young people (15-24 year-olds) are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed (International Labour Organisation 2017, Australian Government 2020). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, youth unemployment in Australia was 12.1% (comparable to the OECD's 13%) (ILO 2017, Australian Government 2020). The percentage of long-term unemployed people has been increasing since the 1970s (Davidson 2011, Dockery and Webster 2002).

In September 2019 there were 756,557 people receiving Newstart Allowance (people over 21 years of age, renamed "JobSeeker Payment" after March 2020) or Youth Allowance (young people aged 16 to 21 who are unemployed, as distinct from full time students). Together, these cohorts provide an estimate of the number of unemployed young people aged 15 to 24 in Australia. Almost one in five (19%) of those on Newstart or Youth Allowance are younger than 25 years and there is a large overlap between the people receiving these Government payments and the people the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) classifies as unemployed.

Further, almost two thirds of people receiving these payments are long-term unemployed: almost half a million people (49,250, 64%) had received Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance for more than a year, almost half received unemployment payments for over two years and 20% for more than five years (ACOSS 2020).

The effectiveness of policy/ policy context

In Australia, employment assistance programs moved from a human capacity building approach to the ‘work first’ or ‘activation’ approach in the 1990s, following the recommendation of the OECD (1994). The former approach focused on training and gaining work experience (Davidson 2011) and was expensive and ineffective (Dockery and Webster 2002). The activation approach focuses on job searching to improve immediate employment prospects and requires recipients of government benefits to meet several stringent compliance requirements (Davidson 2011). Such programs, known as Active Labour Market Programs (ALMPs) have had a modest impact with little or no benefit to young people (Blundell, Dias et al. 2003, Kluge 2010, Davidson 2011, OECD 2014, Borland, Considine et al. 2016, Card, Kluge et al. 2018, Ibararán, Kluge et al. 2019).

Some studies propose that a large investment would be required to move long-term unemployed youth into employment (Dockery and Webster 2002, Fay 1996). Yet, over recent decades, there has been a decreasing investment in employment assistance programs, and with proportionally less funding for the long-term unemployed (Davidson 2011).

Unemployment in the COVID-19 context

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic crisis in Australia has exacerbated the unemployment situation overall, but far more so for young people. While the overall unemployment rate in March 2020 was 5.1%, the youth unemployment rate was 11.6%. By July 2020, the overall unemployment rate increased to 7.5% and the youth unemployment rate to 16.3% (ABS 2020). The largest declines in employment were for those aged 18-24 years (Biddle, Edwards et al. 2020). Additionally, the number of people who are unemployed but not actively seeking work has increased. This is illustrated by the April Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force data which showed an increase of 2.4% in the number of people out of the labour force from the previous month, representing almost half a million people (Lloyd-Cape 2020), including more than 290,000 people between the age of 15 and 24 (Jackson 2020).

The high concentration of young people in industries that are highly casualised and that have been hard-hit by the pandemic further contributed to the increase in un- and under-employment of youth. The result has been that youth under-employment is now three times higher than for any other demographic group (Lloyd-Cape 2020). The pandemic resulted in a 50% increase in under-employment through a decline in the number of hours worked, with more than half of this figure accounted for by the highly-casualised retail, accommodation and food services, and healthcare and social assistance industries (Lloyd-Cape 2020). In all of these industries more than 40% of the workforce is younger than 24 years (Jackson 2020).

The unequal influence of the pandemic on young people may have long-term impacts such as reduced overall career earnings (Kahn 2010, Bäckman and Nilsson 2016). Further, long-term unemployment can have severe impacts on young people’s levels of social connection, health and wellbeing (Carvalho 2015), which is concerning, given that levels of psychological distress increased between February 2017 and April 2020.¹ While 8.4% of the Australian population reported a serious mental illness in 2017, this increased to 10.6% during the pandemic. These increases in severe psychological distress

¹ In April and May 2020, the **yourtown** Kids Helpline service experienced a 36% increase in demand (compared to the same period in 2019), with mental health concerns showing a 39% increase, emotional well-being concerns a 52% increase and suicide-related concerns a 26% increase. Some contacts were from those who had lost employment due to COVID-19 restrictions, others were concerned about how to meet their immediate financial needs and some expressed despair about what effects the crisis would have on their future career (**yourtown** 2020).

are largely concentrated in those aged 18 to 34 years (Biddle, Edwards et al. 2020).

This context sets the scene for the importance of the **your job your way program**. The program provides support for young people who have been long-term unemployed, even before the economic and unemployment crisis associated with the pandemic. Given the additional number of unemployed people now in the job market, particularly those who are well-qualified and have recently been in work, it will be even harder for long-term unemployed young people to find work.

About your job your way

The **your job your way** model is informed by **yourtown**'s internal and external research and over 15 years of experience in delivering Federally-funded youth specialist employment services and other youth services.

your job your way, at its base, is a jobactive employment service. jobactive is the Australian Government's program designed to connect unemployed people with employers and is delivered by a network of jobactive providers in over 1700 locations across Australia. Once a person becomes unemployed, they register with Centrelink and then choose a job service provider. It is the responsibility of the job service provider both to assist the job seeker in locating work and ensure that the job seeker complies with requirements needed to receive a government benefit. Job service providers are contracted to provide this service and receive a payment when a job seeker is in employment for 4 weeks, 12 weeks and 26 weeks.

yourtown is currently contracted to provide a specialist youth jobactive service². **yourtown** is also contracted by the Federal government to provide a Transition to Work program at several locations. This program has some similarities with **your job your way**. The key differences between these programs are the caseload size and their target groups. The national average caseload across jobactive programs is 148 cases per employment consultant (Commonwealth of Australia, 2019), whereas **yourtown**'s Transition to Work programs are run at 25 cases per staff member, and the **your job your way** pilot was run at 25 cases per two staff members. Regarding target groups, it is only **your job your way** that targets long-term unemployed youth (15-21³ years old, unemployed for at least 52 weeks).

One of **yourtown**'s goals was to demonstrate that a complementary program, such as **your job your way** could be effectively inserted into a general employment program. At the program level, **your job your way** has additions designed to overcome gaps identified in the jobactive program and to provide long-term unemployed young people with intensive, comprehensive, and ongoing support.

your job your way is a 24-month pilot program that aimed to transition long-term unemployed young people to sustainable employment. The program was designed to complement jobactive services by:

- Delivering intensive services to a small 'pre-employment' caseload of approximately 25 young people.
- Providing a dual support team consisting of a qualified case manager (Pathways Coach) and an Employment Mentor working with the young person using:
 - A strengths-based, trauma informed best practice model of employment services;

² Max Employment Services is a jobactive service provider. In some locations **yourtown** is contracted to Max Employment Services to provide a specialist youth jobactive service.

³ 15-24 years old in Burnie-Devonport

- Targeted employer engagement; and
- Intensive ‘in-work’ mentoring for 26 weeks, including employer liaison.

your job your way ran in three sites throughout Australia: Elizabeth, South Australia; Caboolture, Queensland and Burnie-Devonport, Tasmania. The pilot program, which started in July 2018 in Elizabeth and Caboolture was funded by **yourtown**. The Department of Social Services funded the pilot for Burnie-Devonport that started in January 2019. **your job your way** targets young people aged 15-21 years (Elizabeth and Caboolture) and 15-24 years (Burnie-Devonport), who have been unemployed for over 52 weeks and are at high risk of social exclusion and permanent detachment from the labour market.

At each site, the **your job your way** program is co-located with a **yourtown** jobactive program which provides services to youth and a Max Employment Services program which provides services to adults.

About the evaluation

The evaluation of **your job your way** intends to:

- Inform service improvements, strategy and design.
- Investigate the extent to which the program achieves its intended outcomes and, if proven successful, provide an evidence base to advocate for a more intensive, client-centred response to long-term youth unemployment.

The evaluation uses a mixed method design, which includes a process evaluation (how the program was established and implemented), an outcomes evaluation (what the program achieved) and an economic evaluation (what was the cost of the program relative to its benefits). The evaluation is both formative and summative.

The evaluation has ethics approval from the UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee.

Process evaluation

A process evaluation determines whether program activities were implemented as intended and resulted in the intended outputs. Both quantitative and qualitative data informed the process evaluation of **your job your way**. Program data, including number of activities young people engaged with or the number of young people participating, provides a first indication of the range of activities and the outputs produced by the program. Staff (including Pathway Coaches (PC), Employment Mentors (EM), Regional Managers and **yourtown** Management); employers; young people; and young people’s family (e.g. parents, grandparents), partners and friends were interviewed as part of the evaluation to understand how the program was implemented. The purpose of a process evaluation is to investigate the extent to which the program was implemented as intended, what worked well and what didn’t, in order to recommend the best way forward to ensure the good functioning of a program.

Outcomes evaluation

An outcomes evaluation measures program effects in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes that the program intends to improve (CDC, n.d). Both quantitative and qualitative data supported the evaluation of outcomes for **your job your way**. Quantitative data comprised demographic information collected from young people accessing **your job your way**, as well as information regarding their employment goals, attitudes, skills, and approaches to finding work and remaining employed. The purpose is to measure progress, identify pathways to employment,

understand what works, for whom and under what circumstance, and provide evidence to adjust the service to ensure the needs of the young person are addressed. Young people, and their family, partners and friends, and employers have also been interviewed to ensure all outcomes, intended and unintended, are qualitatively examined. The purpose of the outcomes evaluation is to identify and measure as many of the outcomes resulting from the program to evidence the changes that can be attributed to the intervention.

Economic evaluation

This final evaluation report includes a cost-effectiveness analysis. Key outcomes and the cost incurred by **your job your way** to achieve these are compared against the outcomes and costs of jobactive. The purpose of the cost-effectiveness analysis is to establish the economic feasibility of the program and the economic value generated by the program for each dollar of investment, in comparison to jobactive. Quantitative data measuring change in outcomes and financial data support this analysis.

Methods and data sources

[Appendix 1](#) expands on the methods employed for this evaluation, including the analysis of primary data (government, program data and qualitative interviews with young people, service providers and young people's family, partners and friends, and employers) and secondary data (Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey; <https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/hilda>) for population-level comparisons.

Several data sources, including quantitative, qualitative and financial data, were utilised for the evaluation.

Quantitative data

Employment Services System (ESS) data is recorded by all jobactive service providers for the Commonwealth government as a part of running their service. The ESS data comprises information on the number of commencements, placements and the number of clients achieving 4-, 12- and 26-week outcomes. The primary use of this data was to draw comparisons between the **your job your way** participants and a comparable jobactive sample.

Program data was created by the **yourtown** Employment Services team who are responsible for running the **yourtown** jobactive services and the **your job your way** pilot. Program data includes demographic information and self-assessed skills and health through intake data (see Intake and Assessment form in Appendix 3 Intake and Assessment form), a repeat collection of self-assessed health after six months, as well as information about workshops attended by participants, and how the individualized, tailored support was provided. The Kessler score (K10) and Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) are the two self-assessment health and wellbeing tools employed. K10 asks respondents to rank on a 1 to 5 scale the level of distress they experience across 10 items, then the score is summed to indicate an overall level of psychological distress. PWI measures on a 0 to 10 scale cognitive and affective evaluations of a person's life and circumstance across seven domains.

Two of the data collection tools that **yourtown** uses across multiple services, and used in the **your job your way** pilot are Work StarTM and the Basic Key Skills Builder (BSKB) licensed products.

The WorkStarTM is a tool developed by Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise⁴ to support case workers and clients to identify and focus on what needs to change in order to make progress towards returning

⁴ <https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

to work. BSKB is an online skills tool which determines reading and numeracy levels within the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and helps to determine areas where additional support may be needed to reach literacy and numeracy goals.

The various data used for the evaluation and the number of response/participants for each type of data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Type and source of program data

Data type/source	Number of respondents/participants
K10, PWI Intake and Assessment form	202
K10 repeat sample (Intake and Assessment form and at least a second record)	48
PWI repeat sample (Intake and Assessment form and at least a second record)	48
WorkStar™ at intake	189
WorkStar™, at least two records	127
PaTH internships	87
BKSB	170
your job your way placement and outcome data (ESS data)	210
jobactive placement and outcome data (ESS data)	529

Qualitative data

The evaluation was further supported by qualitative data collected through longitudinal interviews. In total 210 interviews were conducted with 107 individuals. Most of this data is from program participants. Two cohorts of young people were recruited from each site, and each of these young people participated in up to three interviews, conducted approximately six months apart (Table 2). Most interviews were conducted face-to-face and some were conducted by telephone. Interviews during COVID-19 were conducted by telephone exclusively. In total, 66 of the 210 program participants were interviewed at least once for the evaluation; 53 were interviewed a second time and 28 participated in three interviews (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of young people participating in interviews

Site	Cohort	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Total number of interviews
Elizabeth	1	13	13	11	37
Elizabeth	2	12	10	4	26
Caboolture	1	12	7	4	23
Caboolture	2	10	8	3	21
Burnie-Devonport	1	11	10	6	27
Burnie-Devonport	2	8	5	-	13
Total	-	66	53	28	147

Note: Participants in each subsequent round are a sub-group of the first round of interviews

Service providers (Pathway Coach, Employment Mentors, and their Regional Managers) were each interviewed up to four times, approximately six months apart. A total of 32 interviews were conducted

with 11 different service providers. This reflects some staff changes – there were three Pathway Coaches, four Employment Mentors and four Regional Managers interviewed across the three sites. Nineteen employer interviews were conducted during Year 2 of the pilot, and nine of the young people’s family, partners and friends were also interviewed during this period. Three Management interviews were conducted just prior to the end of the pilot.

Financial data

The cost-effectiveness analysis utilizes **your job your way** and jobactive ESS data and program financial data. Financial data explains the total costs incurred for the delivery of **your job your way** and jobactive services between July 2018 and June 2020. ESS data for the purpose of the economic analysis comprises information on the number of commencements, placements and the number of clients achieving 26-week outcomes across **your job your way** and jobactive clients in Elizabeth, Caboolture and Burnie-Devonport.

Outcomes framework

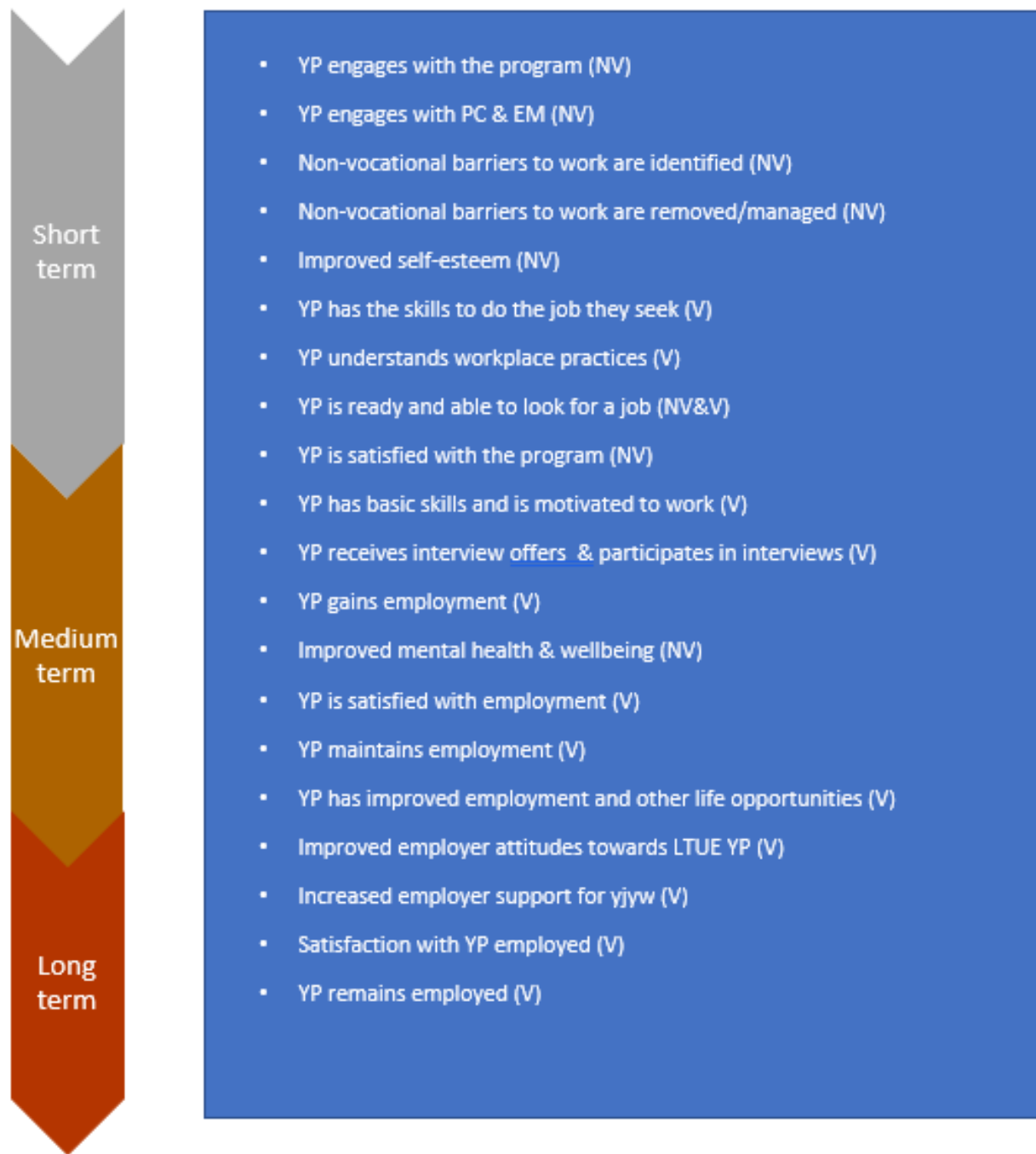
At the evaluation design stage, an outcomes framework was developed mapping out the intended outcomes that are likely to be achieved across stakeholder groups such as young people, employers and the wider community. While achieving and maintaining employment are often considered the flip side of unemployment and the most sought-after outcomes, a range of short- and medium-term outcomes are likely to be achieved prior to achieving employment.

As documented in the literature (e.g. ACOSS 2020), program and interview data demonstrate various barriers to employment, and the program is designed to address such barriers prior to placing young people into employment. A range of **non-vocational outcomes (NV)** are likely to be achieved first (at short-term), followed by both **vocational (V) and non-vocational outcomes** at medium- and long-term). As such, the evaluation has a focus on both vocational and non-vocational outcomes. The complete outcomes framework (Appendix 2 Outcomes and indicators framework) demonstrates the path young people may travel towards achieving and maintaining employment.

About this report

This final evaluation report describes the **your job your way** clients; examines outcomes (short-, medium- and long-term) using program, ESS and interview data; compares vocational and non-vocational outcomes from the program with jobactive outcomes; and considers issues impacting outcomes, as well as the successes and challenges of implementing the program. The evaluation considers the ecosystem in which the program operated, including challenges presented by bushfires at the end of 2019 but predominantly the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020 (the final six months of the program). The report includes a cost-benefit analysis, exploring the economic value added by the program through the outcomes it generates.

Figure 1 Summary of evaluation outcomes framework: vocational (V) and non-vocational (NV) outcomes



Notes: YP: young person; EM: Employment Mentor; PC: Pathways Coach. Some outcomes, such as “improved wellbeing” or “satisfaction with employment” may be measured at both medium and long term and a gradual improvement would be expected.

2 your job your way program and clients

This chapter describes the background to the **your job your way** model and its clients, including those who participated in the evaluation. Information on young people's socio-demographic characteristics is included, as well as information collected from program clients at intake about their skills, qualifications and resource access; desired occupations; and barriers to employment. This information sets the scene for the rest of the report.

How the program was implemented

The program was implemented by a dual support team carrying a caseload of approximately 25 people. This model allows enough time per job seeker to (a) develop the rapport and trust necessary to build and maintain engagement and motivation in young people whose self-efficacy to engage in work has been eroded by both their own experience and by living in a community where many family and peers are also unemployed; (b) comprehensively understand individual needs, strengths and interests, and (c) collaboratively develop a detailed plan of action, including strategies after employment has commenced, targeting ongoing capability development.

The services delivered by the dual support team include:

- Intensive (up to daily) one-on-one support (e.g. mentoring, counselling);
- Referral to specialist health/other services;
- Individual and group coaching (workshops) for employability skills, job searching, applications and interview preparation;
- Practical assistance to address barriers (e.g. driver's license, interview clothes);
- Access to work experience (e.g. social enterprises, PaTH internships);
- Literacy/numeracy coaching;
- Job/goal related skills training;
- Advocating the young person to employers; and
- Job matching/placement.

Once the young person gains employment, the focus is on intensive 'in work' mentoring/personal support up to the first 26 weeks of employment; ongoing assessment and the development of an employment skills plan; and continued employer support/liaison. Employer engagement is on-going and includes the identification of and contact with employers, and vacancy canvassing. When the young person is employed, the dual support team provides liaison between the young person and employer to anticipate and resolve barriers to employment retention. While program implementation is predominantly on a one-to-one basis, group workshops are also used to deliver the program.

Successes and challenges experienced during the two years of implementing the pilot, including throughout periods of crisis due to bushfires and COVID-19, are discussed in [Chapter 4](#).

your job your way clients

During the two years of implementation, 210 clients were enrolled in **your job your way** across the three pilot sites. There were slightly higher numbers of clients in Caboolture and Elizabeth (86 and 71 respectively) than in Burnie-Devonport (53 clients) due to the program starting at a later date in Tasmania.

Of the 210 clients, 45 clients exited the program through reaching 26 weeks of employment and 92 clients were still engaged with the program at the end of the second year of the pilot (Table 3). Some clients exited prior to completing the program (n=73) the main reasons for exiting being relocation, transfer to DES (Disability Employment Services), Maximum Time Transfer and transfer to another provider (Table 4).

Participation in the program was voluntary and as such there were 56 young people that were invited but declined to join **your job your way**. Reasons for declining are presented in [Appendix 4](#), Table A 4.

Table 3 Young people engaging in your job your way

	N
Number of young people still engaged in your job your way at the completion of the program (June 2020)	92*
Total number of young people completed your job your way through reaching 26 weeks of employment	45
Total number of young people who have exited your job your way prior to completion	73
Total number of young people engaged in your job your way program throughout the pilot	210

* Of the 92 young people still engaged in the program at the completion of the pilot, 17 were working and had been in employment between 4 and 26 weeks.

Table 4 Exit reason, clients who exited your job your way prior to completion

	N
Relocated	24
Transferred to DES	11
Maximum Time Transfer	11
Requested transfer to other provider	10
Unknown	6
DHS exit	5
Transferred to student payment	4
yourtown exit	1
Gave birth	1
Total	73

Socio-demographic characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of **your job your way** clients at the end of June 2020 are described in Table 5. Most program participants were 19 to 21 years old, with a higher proportion of “older” participants, aged 22 to 24, in Burnie-Devonport (37.7%) and Elizabeth (31%). Overall Caboolture clients were younger than clients in the other two sites. A lower proportion of participants in Caboolture completed year 11 or year 12 education (60.7%) compared to 69.8% of clients in Burnie-Devonport, and 80% of clients in Elizabeth.

Caboolture and Elizabeth had more male than female participants (55.3% and 53.5% respectively) while more women than men participated in Burnie-Devonport (58.8%). There were more Indigenous participants in Caboolture (16.5%) and Elizabeth (14.1%) than in Burnie-Devonport (7.7%). Elizabeth also had a much higher proportion of participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (19.7%) compared to 8.1% of participants in Caboolture and 5.8% in Burnie-Devonport⁵.

⁵ In Caboolture and Elizabeth, the proportions of Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse participants recruited was deliberately made consistent with the **yourtown** jobactive caseload proportions. This did not apply to the DSS funded Burnie-Devonport site.

Table 5 Socio-demographic characteristics of program clients (%)

	Caboolture	Elizabeth	Burnie- Devonport	Total [^]
Total (n)	86	71	53	210
Sex				
Women	44.7	46.5	58.8	48.8
Men	55.3	53.5	41.5	51.2
Age				
17-18	4.7	1.4	0	2.4
19-21	81.4	67.6	62.3	71.9
22-24	14.0	31.0	37.7	25.7
Indigenous status*				
Indigenous	16.5	14.1	7.7	13.5
Not Indigenous	81.2	85.9	92.3	85.5
Prefer not to say	2.4	0	0	1
From a culturally and linguistically diverse background †	8.1	19.7	5.8	11.5
Highest level of school completed ‡				
Year 12	47.6	58.6	45.3	50.7
Year 11	13.1	21.4	24.5	18.8
Year 10	38.1	12.9	26.4	26.7
Year 9	1.2	1.4	3.8	1.9
Year 8	0	5.7	0	1.9

Source: Intake and Assessment form (program data) (n=210). [^]Data collated in August 2020; *missing intake data for two respondents (one respondent from Caboolture, one respondent from Burnie-Devonport); †missing data for one respondent (Burnie-Devonport); ‡missing data for three respondents (two from Caboolture; one from Elizabeth).

Health and wellbeing

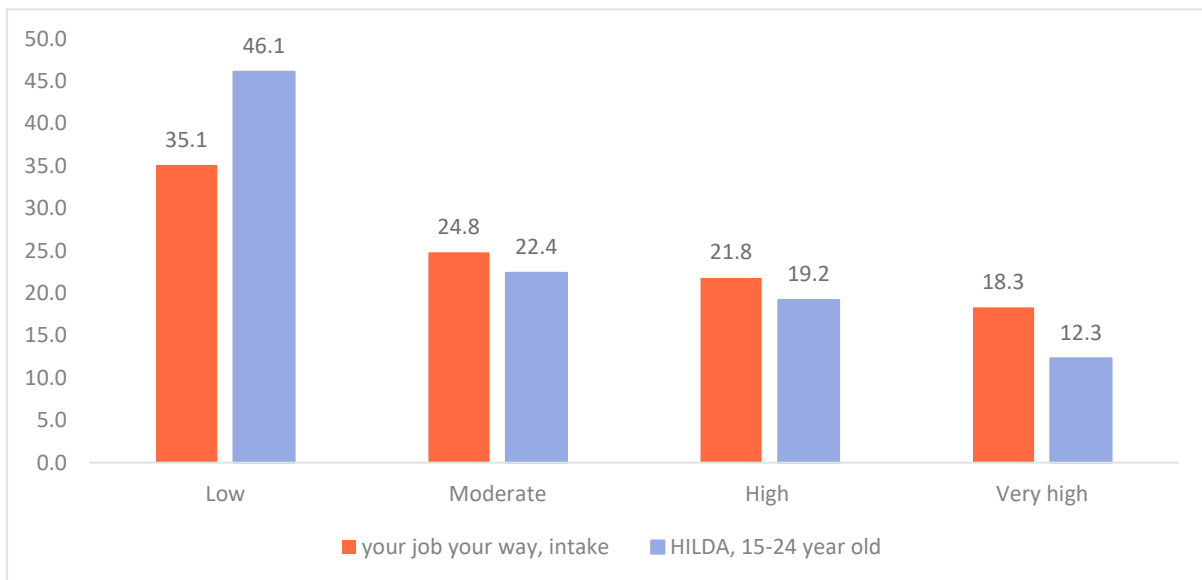
As part of the intake process, clients completed two health-related questionnaires – the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). The purpose of collecting this information at intake was to a) point to levels of psycho-social support young people may need, depending on their score, and b) provide a baseline, so a change in participant's well-being can be measured.

The K10 measures the likelihood of respondents experiencing psychological distress through ten items

(Kessler, Barker et al. 2003). Each of the ten items, or questions, are scored between 1 and 5, with a higher number indicating a higher level of severity of the respective item. As such, the composite score ranges between 10 and 50 with a lower score showing a lower likelihood of experiencing psychological distress (K10 questionnaire is included in the Intake and Assessment form in Appendix 3 Intake and Assessment form).

The young people in the program self-report poorer mental health than their peers in the general population. An analysis of K10 scores reported by young people aged 15 to 24 in the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey (n=969) revealed an average score of 19 across this population. Just under half of these young people (46.1%) had a low level of distress and 22.4% moderate. Almost one in five (19.2%) had a high level of distress and 12.3% a very high level of distress. These national statistics alone are concerning, with almost one in three young people across Australia (31.5%) experiencing high or very high levels of distress. Also concerning, a far higher proportion of young people engaging with **your job your way** reported at intake high (21.8%) or very high (18.3%) levels of psychological distress.

Figure 2 K10, your job your way clients at intake and HILDA data (%)



Source: HILDA, wave 17, 15-24 years-old respondents, n=969; **your job your way** intake data, n=202, missing data for 8 clients

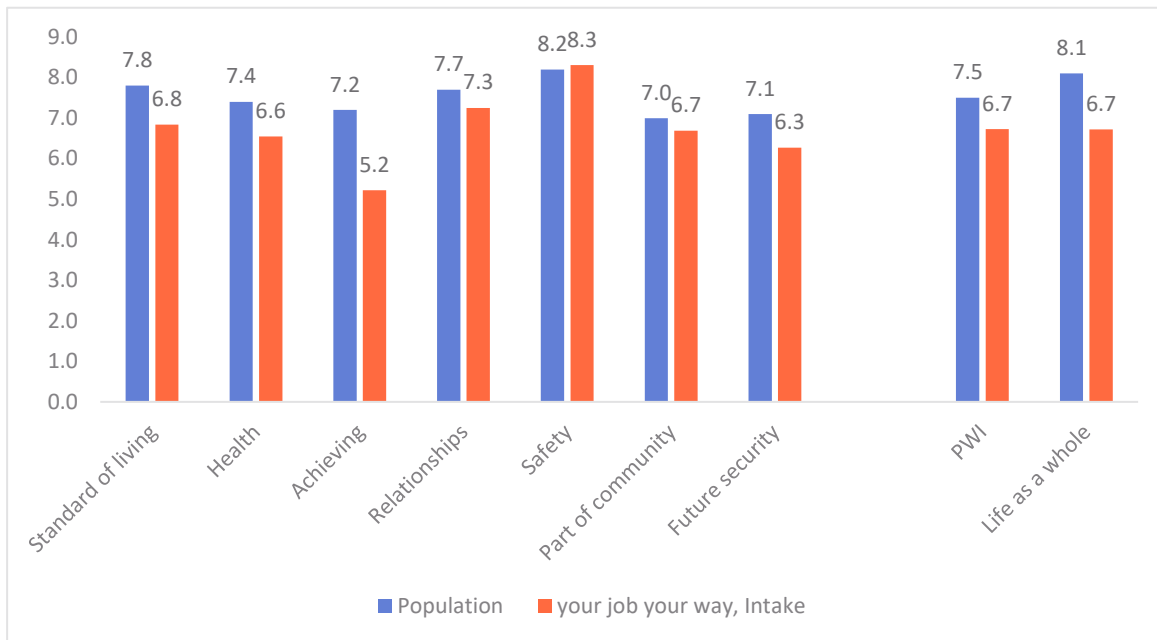
The second questionnaire, the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI), measures affective and cognitive evaluations of a person's life and personal circumstances. Seven domains are self-reported on: standard of living; health; achieving in life; relationships; safety; community connection; and future security. When totaled, the score indicates the level of subjective wellbeing (International Wellbeing Group 2013). An eighth question inquires about overall satisfaction with life.

In 2018, the PWI Australian population normative value is reported at 7.5 (Report 35, Australian Unity Wellbeing Index), with domains ranging from 7.0 (satisfaction with being part of community) to 7.9 (satisfaction with relationships and satisfaction with safety). Similarly, Khor et al. (2019) found the average PWI of the Australian population under retirement age to be 7.4.

The average PWI of young people engaging with **your job your way** was 7.4, ranging from as low as 5.2 (satisfaction with what you are achieving in life) to 8.3 (satisfaction with feeling safe). Except for satisfaction with safety, **your job your way** clients reported lower scores than those in the general

population across all areas of life measured through the PWI (Figure 3). They also report much lower levels of overall satisfaction with life, 6.7 compared to 7.8 across the general population.

Figure 3 PWI domains, your job your way intake vs adult general population (%)⁶



Source: **your job your way** intake data, n=202, missing data for 8 clients; Report 35 Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, n=1,960 (n differs slightly across domains with some missing data).

Skills, qualifications and resource access

On joining the program young people provided a range of information about their work-related skills, qualifications and resources they had access to (Table 6). The majority (80%) had some previous work experience, and just under two thirds had some post-school qualifications (62.9%). More than half (55.9%) were on a learners license, 5.7% had their driver license suspended, and almost one-third had a Provisional or open license. Almost a third (30.2%) had a White card for working in construction and 70.5% described their computer skills as “good”.

⁶ See items in the Intake and Assessment form in Appendix 3

Table 6 Client self-reported work-related skills, qualification and resources at intake (%)

	Total (%)
Computer skills †	
Good	70.5
Basic	22.9
Limited	3.9
None	1.0
Drivers license	
Learners license	55.9
Provisional or open license	31.4
Suspended license	5.7
Work-related licenses	
White card (construction)	30.2
Highest level of qualification	
Certificate I	5.2
Certificate II	24.3
Certificate III	27.6
Certificate IV	0.5
RSA/RSG/White card	5.2
Nil post school qualifications	37.1
Previous work experience*	80.3

Source: Intake and Assessment form (program data) (n=210). *Missing data (seven respondents, three Caboolture; three Elizabeth; one Burnie-Devonport). † Missing data for five respondents) two for Caboolture; three for Elizabeth.

Desired occupations

At the beginning of their engagement with the **your job your way** program, young people were assisted by program staff to identify and list the occupations that they wished to enter with the assistance of the program. These are displayed in a word cloud, with the occupations listed in the largest text the most popular among young people and those in the smallest text the least popular (Figure 4).

Table 7 Potential barriers identified by young people seeking work

	n	%	Missing
Confidence and motivational issues	108	52.9	6
Work capacity issues such as disability or ongoing illness	86	42	5
Problems with reading, writing or maths	61	29.6	4
Caring responsibilities	37	17.6	0
Family or relationship issues	33	15.9	3
Behavioural issues	33	15.7	0
Accommodation issues	27	12.9	1
Drinking or drug use issues that have caused trouble at school/work	13	6.3	2
Legal issues	12	5.8	2
Other issues	11	5.6	13

Source: Intake and Assessment form (program data) (n=210).

Barriers to employment were also discussed by young people in interviews. The issue of lack of skills and work experience was common. For example, one young person said “I always just get told it’s my lack of experience” (YP_P40) when explaining why she had not been offered a job. Another issue was young people not being successful in job interviews. For example, one young person recounted the feedback received from a job interviewer about why she had not been the successful candidate: “Apparently, it was my lack of confidence” (YP_P05) that was the reason for not getting the job. Further, some young people also felt that disrupted and/or incomplete education made it harder to find work; one participant stated, “[Finding work was] really challenging, because I didn’t complete school and that was also a big factor of me not getting a job I think” (YP_P57). In some other cases, young people spoke about how experiencing anxiety and issues with mental health problems created a barrier to successfully finding work.

3 Program outcomes

This chapter of the report examines whether the intended outcomes of **your job your way** have been achieved and, if so, for whom. The purpose of the analysis is to assess change over time for young people as reported using the WorkStar™ tool; placements in work; length of time spent in work; and placements on PaTH internships. The chapter also examines findings from interviews with young people, their family, partners and friends, service providers, **yourtown** management and employers regarding outcomes. Mental health data was collected at intake (as discussed in the previous chapter) and for a quarter of young people this was also collected on a repeat occasion, around six to twelve months later. Changes in mental health are also reported in this chapter, with the limitation of a small cohort.

Literacy and numeracy – Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB)

BKSB is an online skills tool which determines reading and numeracy levels within the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) and helps to determine areas where additional support may be needed to reach literacy and numeracy goals. Learning resources are also provided. The initial assessment identifies a skill level and the diagnostic assessment identifies specific learning needs.

Level 3 attainment in the ACSF is associated with the ability to achieve most Certificate II-III level qualifications, with the objective of **your job your way** being to have each participant achieve 80% competency in Level 3 prior to program exit. ACSF Level 3 is regarded as the “minimum required for individuals to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work in the emerging knowledge-based economy” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, p. 5).

Overall, of those who completed assessments in both English and maths (n=125), 16% (n=20) achieved 80% competency in both English and maths at Level 3. Therefore 20 of the 210 **your job your way** participants are recorded as having achieved the program goal. Thirty participants recorded no score in English or maths. The majority of these participants relocated out of the service area, exited to employment within a short period of time or had only been in the program a short time prior to its end. While the BKSB assessment typically occurs in the early stages of a participant’s enrolment in **your job your way**, the timing is determined as a part of the overall assessment process that the dual support team and participant undertake.

Of the 136 participants who completed an assessment in English, 40.4% (n=55) achieved 80% competency at Level 3. For maths, of the 100 who completed an assessment 22% (n=22) achieved 80% competency at Level 3.

Of those who recorded an English initial assessment (180), almost half were working at Level 4 (47.2%) and a third (32.8%) were working at Level 3. Of the 171 who recorded a maths initial assessment, the largest proportion (43.9%), were working at Level 2. This was followed by almost one-quarter (23.8%) who were working at Level 3 (Table 8).

Table 8 BSKB assessment

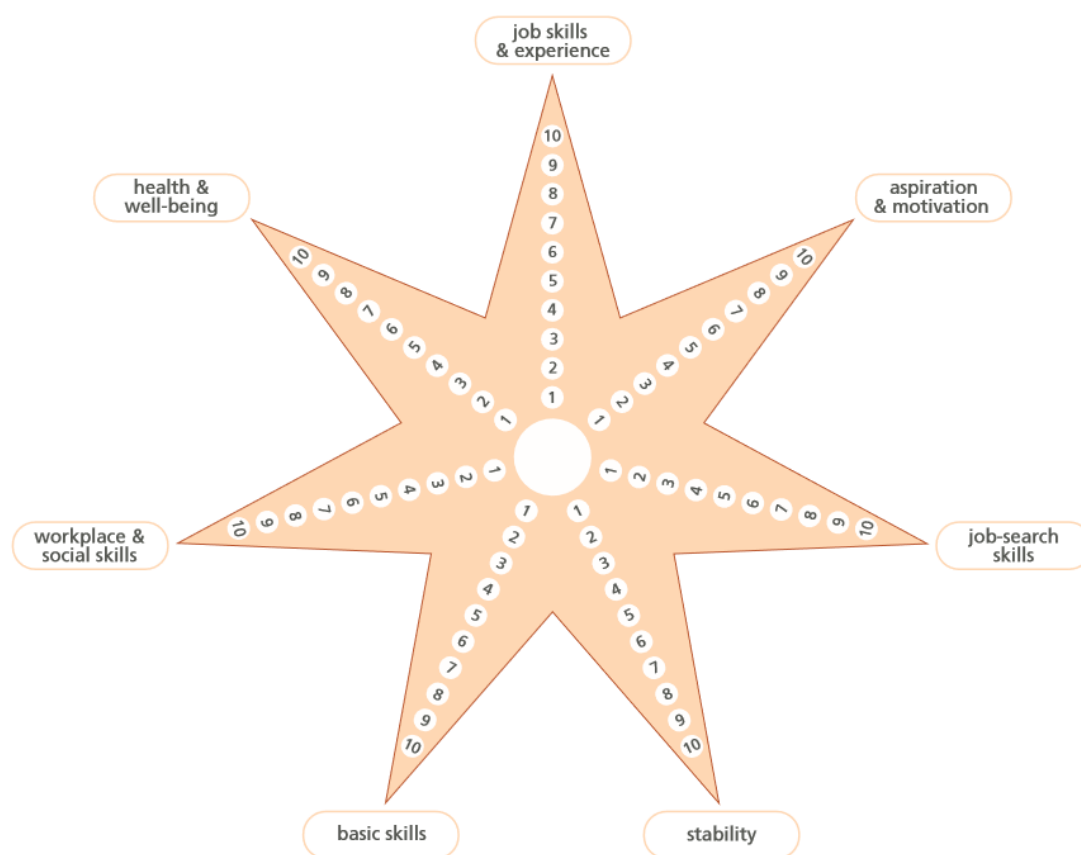
Type of initial assessment	Working Level	n	%
English (n=180)	1	12	6.7
	2	21	11.7
	3	59	32.8
	4	85	47.2
	5	3	1.6
Maths (n=172)	1	33	19.2
	2	75	43.6
	3	41	23.8
	4	22	12.8
	5	1	0.6

Work readiness – WorkStar™

A key goal of **your job your way** is ensuring that young people are ‘work ready’, in that they have the skills they require to sustain employment. The program measures these aspects using WorkStar™. The WorkStar™ is a tool developed by Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise⁷ to support case workers and clients identify and focus on what needs to change to make progress towards obtaining work. The WorkStar™ identifies seven key areas that are essential to the user’s journey into work: (1) job skills and experience; (2) aspiration and motivation; (3) job-search skills; (4) stability; (5) basic skills; (6) workplace and social skills; and (7) health and wellbeing (Figure 5).

⁷ <https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

Figure 5 WorkStar™ key areas



Source: WorkStar™. The Outcomes Star for finding work, ©Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd, reproduced under licence. See www.outcomesstar.org.uk for full copyright details

More than half of **your job your way** clients (n=127) completed two or more WorkStar™ during their time in the program, with 62 completing WorkStar™ only once and 21 not completing a WorkStar™^{8,9}. The average time between the first and final star completed was 8.1 months. Both the **your job your way** program itself and the evaluation then sought to measure change in clients' WorkStar™ scores.

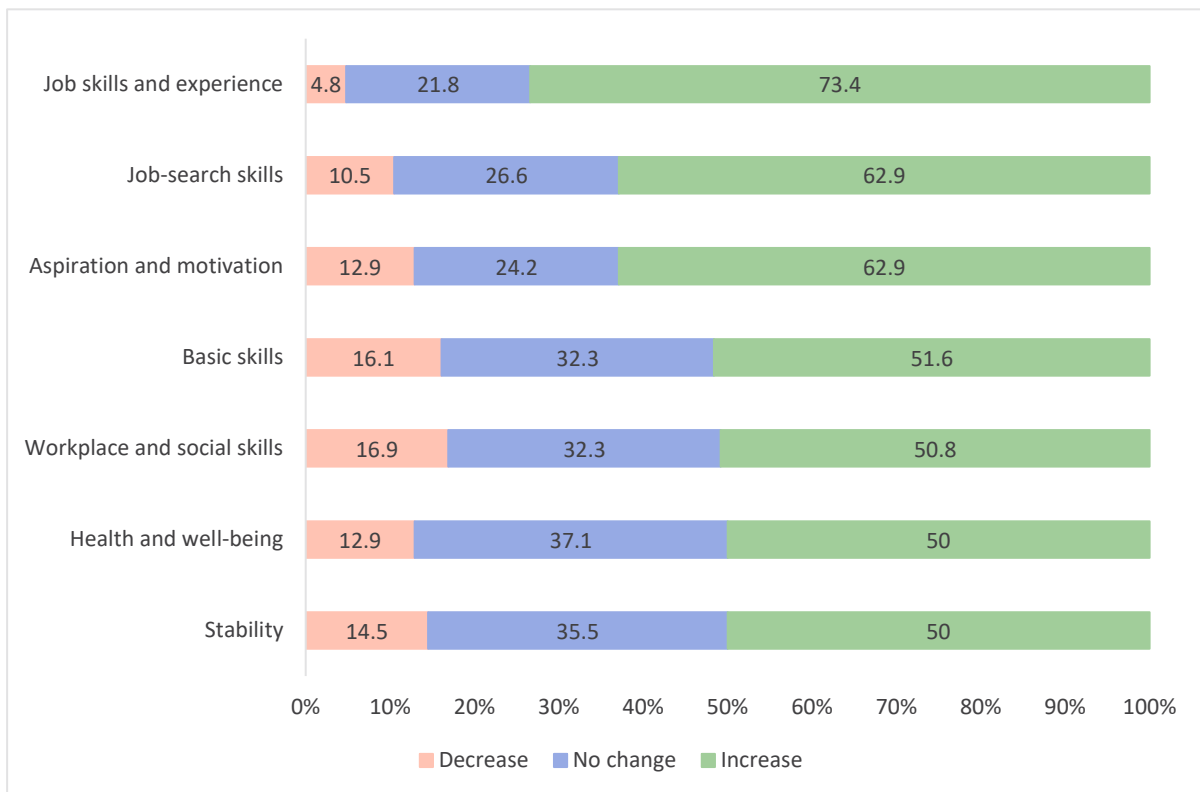
In this report, changes over time on WorkStar™ scores are investigated in two ways. Firstly, we investigate whether participants have improved their scores between their first and final WorkStar™ readings, or whether scores had declined or remained the same (Figure 6). Secondly, the difference between the first and final readings across the seven domains is shown diagrammatically (Figure 7).

⁸ 17 were not registered for WorkStar™ and 4 were but did not complete it.

⁹ In **your job your way**, there appears to be an expectation that the first WorkStar™ would be completed soon after enrollment and the procedure manual indicated that it should be completed every three months after that. However, WorkStar™ was designed as a practice tool but is also used for evaluation purposes. Therefore, the frequency of its use is determined at the practice level. For example, the need for a review can be triggered by the client reaching a milestone. As such, it is difficult to draw conclusions about why those who had been in the program may not have completed the WorkStar™ at the expected frequency.

Overall, between half and three quarters of **your job your way** clients improved across all of the seven areas of the WorkStar™ (Figure 6). Almost three quarters increased their job skills and experience, 62.9% their aspiration and motivation and the same proportion improved their job-search skills. Around half improved their basic skills, workplace and social skills, stability and health and wellbeing (Figure 6). A quarter to a third of **your job your way** clients reported no change, with the highest proportions in health and wellbeing (37.1%) and stability (35.5%), which, admittedly, are areas where change is difficult to achieve over a short period of time. A small proportion of **your job your way** clients reported a decrease in scores. On average, young people improved by 1 point across the seven domains of the WorkStar™, ranging from 0.7 points increase in “Stability” and 1.7 points in “Job skills and experience” (Figure 7).

Figure 6 Changes in WorkStar™ components: increase, decrease and no change



Source: WorkStar™ data, n=127 clients with at least two WorkStar™ completed.

Figure 7 WorkStar™, initial and final



Source: WorkStar™ data, n=127 clients with at least two WorkStar™ completed

The young people who took part in **your job your way** also commented in their interviews on their outcomes in each of the WorkStar™ domains. Their insights help to illustrate a picture of what their WorkStar™ changes meant in their everyday lives. Their perspectives are reported below, together with supporting evidence from young people's family, partners, friends and **your job your way** staff. Each WorkStar™ domain includes young people's comments on that area in general, as well as what happened for them in that domain during the COVID-19 crisis.

Job search skills

Consistent with their improvement on their WorkStar™ scores (overall 1.4 points increase, 62.9% of clients improved their score), in their interviews, young people described learning a range of job search skills from the **your job your way** program. Resume and cover letter writing were the skills young people most frequently mentioned developing. Young people noted that **your job your way** taught them how to adapt their cover letters and resumes to specific job roles and industries, and taught them better processes for submitting a job application:

Interviewer: So if you visualize back, do you think you would be where you are now if it wasn't for **your job your way**?

Young person: No, not at all.

Interviewer: Why do you think that?

Young person: I think because I wasn't searching in the right places. Like I did a lot of stuff online, but I found out now that it's more [about] going in and being like, "Hey this is ...", like actually go in to places and hand in resumes and stuff, instead of all online and stuff. And be more personal and be like, "Oh yeah this is what I know" and stuff like that. So I thought that was a lot better" (YP_P16).

Many young people spoke about the personalised support provided by **your job your way** staff as helping to create a "better" (YP_P27) resume and cover letter. These comments were sometimes followed by young people noting that "traditional" employment services, such as jobactive, were not very helpful in this area and that, as a result, their previous resumes and cover letters had been "average" (YP_P27) or "not professional" (YP_P11) before coming to **your job your way**.

Young people also mentioned learning about job interviews, including how to prepare for an interview and how to conduct themselves and communicate in the interview itself:

"I know how to present myself at a[n] interview. I know how to greet the interviewer and how to leave the interview. I know that you have to wait to get told to have a seat and you don't ask how much you get paid. And never say, 'Um' and you probably [should] never do 'and' all the time after every sentence. 'Aaaand'... just like that" (YP_P45).

Young people described how the **your job your way** program had contributed to these skills, describing JobClub¹⁰ activities aimed at writing mock cover letters and resumes tailored to different types of jobs, and gaining experience in doing mock job interviews with real employers from a range of businesses and companies, so that they could gain experience talking to "someone that we're not comfortable with, haven't met and haven't spoken to [before]" (YP_P32). In this respect, it was clear that the **your job your way** program clearly contributed to their improved job search skills.

Health and wellbeing

Fifty per cent of young people reported improvement on their WorkStar™ scores for health and wellbeing, and when talking in their interviews, it was evident that much of this improvement was actually in mental health and wellbeing, rather than other areas (e.g. physical health). Many young people spoke in their interviews about improved mental health and well-being as a direct result of being part of the **your job your way** program. The improvement was related to the support young people received through the program. In some cases, it was about **your job your way** having a generally positive and proactive approach to not allowing mental health problems restrict employment. For example, one young person said:

"I didn't really have good mental health but [the **your job your way** staff] really wanted to see me get a job and be happy and be healthier, so they were like, 'Alright, we're going to do this and... get you to a place where you feel happy and you feel like you can support yourself' and they, yeah, they've done a lot" (YP_P08).

In other cases, staff members had directly helped some young people in **your job your way** with resources and strategies to cope with mental health problems, such as anxiety. One young person said:

"...If I'm having some issues with my anxiety I'll tell [your job your way staff member] and she'll ask what I'm doing to cope and let me know like, there's some apps and

¹⁰ JobClub is a series of workshops covering various topics run by the dual support team.

stuff...it's a lot easier when you try to get out of your head" (YP_P31).

Other participants noted staff were always available to talk to about anything that was on their minds and all participants were offered additional help through the option of referrals to mental health services – although not all participants reported needing or wanting assistance from these other agencies. Overall, the mental health support that young people received also helped with motivation and opportunities for gaining work experience and employment, by enabling better overall wellbeing that they could bring to the workplace.

Changes in K10 and PWI

K10 and PWI data was collected at intake from all participants. The collection of six-months review data was a DSS requirement for Burnie-Devonport clients. One of the interim report recommendations (December 2019) was for K10 and PWI review data to be collected across all sites. As such, the timing for the collection of review data in Caboolture and Elizabeth was January-June 2020, reducing the sample size to 48 young people who were still engaged with the program and had been in the program for more than six months.

Clients were grouped based on their level of distress: low, moderate, high, very high¹¹ at intake and review. Table 9 describes the changes from intake to review. "Improvement" is flagged with green, when the change was from a higher to a lower risk category (e.g. 3 people moved from high risk at intake to moderate at review). Yellow flags no change (the young person was in the same risk category at intake and review, e.g. 5 people were in the "moderate" risk category at both intake and review) and orange flags the move from a lower to a higher risk category (e.g. one person moved from moderate at intake to high at review)

The analysis of change in the K10 score across the 48 **your job your way** clients, showed that 56.3% (n=27) stayed in the same category (yellow), 29.2% (n=14) improved, that is showed a lower level of psychological distress (green) and 14.5% deteriorated (n=6), that is indicated a great level of psychological distress compared to intake (orange). Of those who did not change category (yellow), 40% (n=11) were in the low-risk category.

Six of the 12 clients (50%) who experienced a moderate level of psychological distress at intake moved to 'low' risk after six months. Three of the 10 clients experiencing "high" level of distress at intake moved to "moderate". Of the clients who at intake were in the "very high" risk category (n=11) that is, experienced very high level of psychological distress, 5 moved to 'high'.

¹¹ Low: scores of 10-15, indicating little or no psychological distress; moderate: scores of 16-21; high: scores of 22-29; very high: scores of 30-50. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
[https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4363.0~2014-15~Main%20Features~Kessler%20Psychological%20Distress%20Scale-10%20\(K10\)~35](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4363.0~2014-15~Main%20Features~Kessler%20Psychological%20Distress%20Scale-10%20(K10)~35)

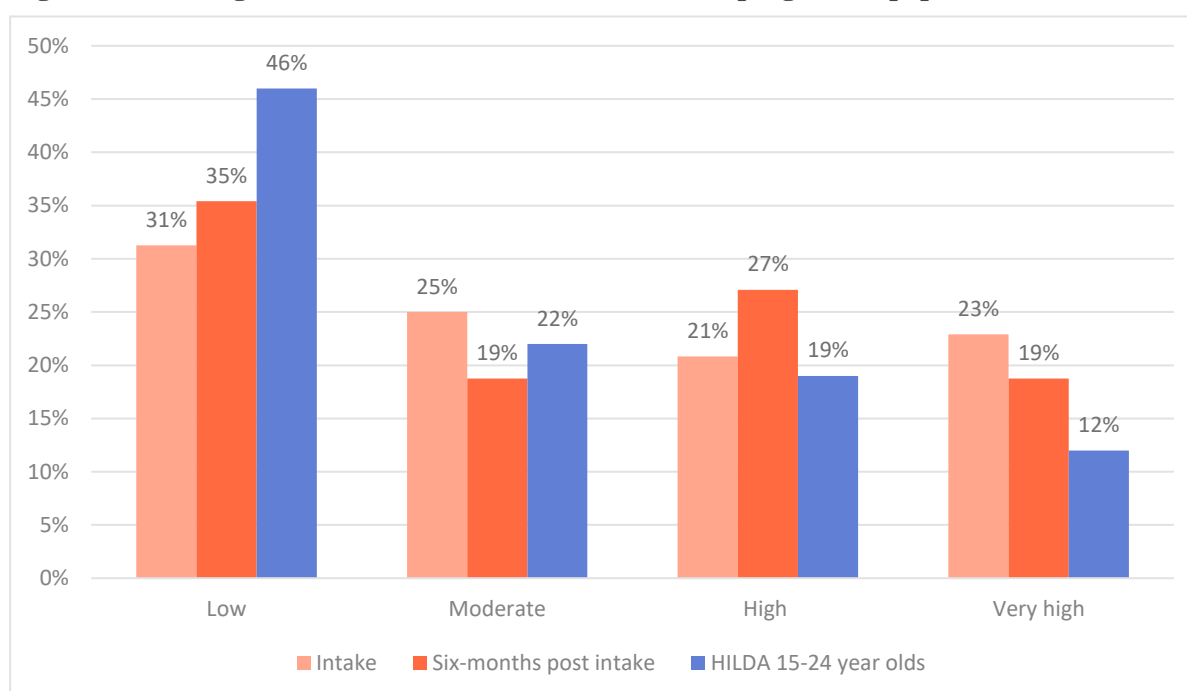
Table 9 K10 category at intake and review

On review (six months after intake)					
On Intake	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Total
Low ¹²	11	1	2	1	15
Moderate	6	5	1	0	12
High	0	3	5	2	10
Very high	0	0	5	6	11
Total	17	9	13	9	48

Source: **your job your way** Intake and Assessment form data and six months review data. N=48 clients with intake and review data

The change in the K10 scores over time for the **your job your way** participants with intake and review data was not statistically significant, and compared to the wider population, these young people are still slightly worse off, with more severe levels of psychological distress (Figure 8). These figures are, however, to be interpreted with caution due to the low number of respondents. Furthermore, the collection of some this data overlapped with the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic (further discussed below).

Figure 8 K10 categories at Intake and six-months into the program vs population

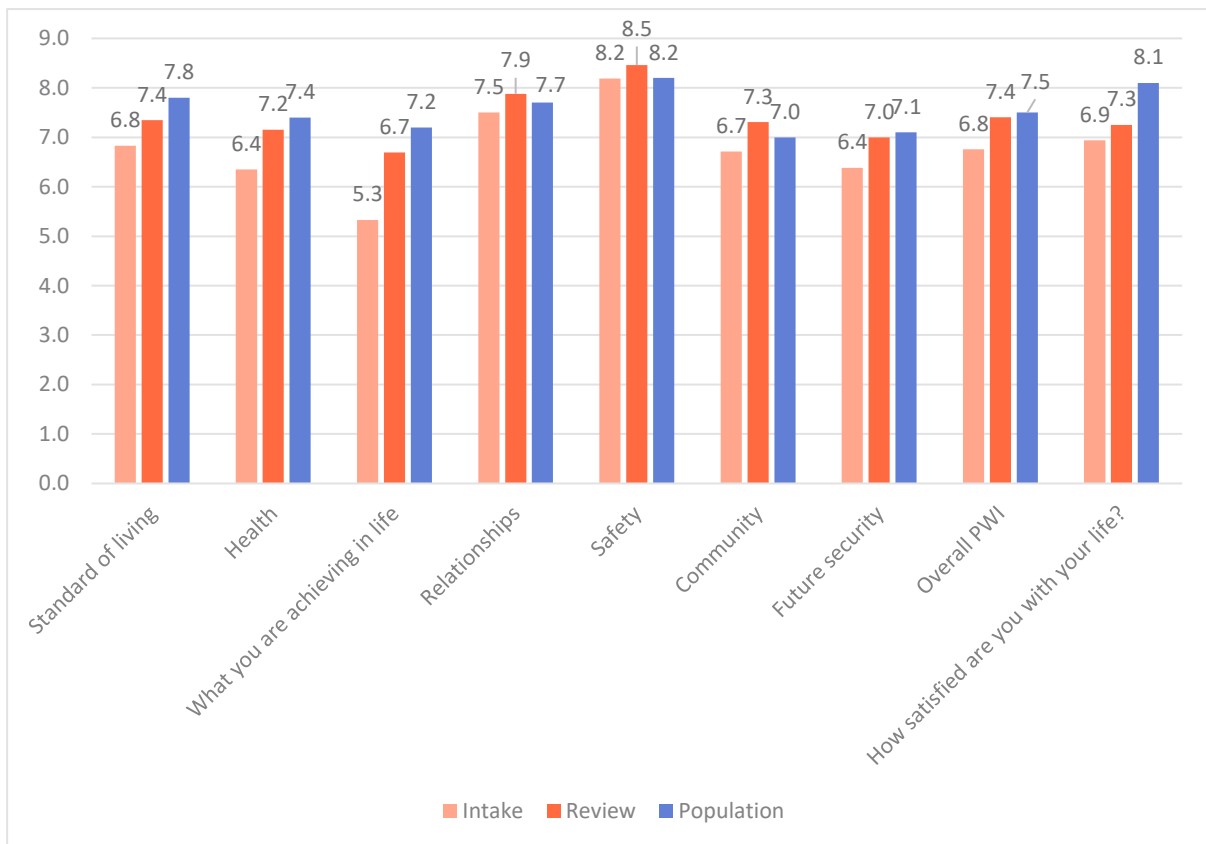


Source: **your job your way** Intake and Assessment data and six months review data. N=48, **your job your way** clients who completed a K10 at Intake and after six months. N=969, HILDA w17 data, respondents 15-24 years old.

¹² Low risk of psychological distress

Change in wellbeing was assessed through the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI). There was improvement across all areas measured by the PWI. The improvements in satisfaction with health (6.4 to 7.2), achieving in life (5.3 to 6.7), and future security (6.4 to 7.0) were statistically significant¹³. The change in overall personal wellbeing (6.8 to 7.4) was also statistically significant, bringing the **your job your way** group that provided this information (n=48) to a level similar to that of the general population (Figure 9). The 48 young people with intake and review data were compared in terms of their PWI to the whole group of young people in **your job your way** who provided intake data (n=202). There were no significant differences at intake between the larger group and the 48 young people, indicating that this group may be representative of the whole group of young people in the program (Table A 5 in [Appendix 4](#)).

Figure 9 Change in PWI, your job your way and population benchmark



Sources: **your job your way** Intake and Assessment data and six months review data, n=48 and Australian Unity Index, Report 35, n=1,960. *Difference between Intake and review is statistically significant (p<.005).

Mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19

At the point at which the COVID-19 crisis started in Australia, service providers reported they had concerns about its mental health impacts on **your job your way** clients. Issues of social isolation for **your job your way** clients were front of mind among staff, and staff feared some clients were living in unsafe situations.

¹³ Paired-sample t-test in SPSS, p<.005.

Service providers noted their impression that young people’s experience of anxiety increased during this period and that there had been a corresponding decrease in the extent to which young people focused on “looking[ing] presentable”. Notably, in some regions where **your job your way** was running, staff mentioned there had been an increase in suicidal ideation among young people receiving youth services at large, although this experience was not reported directly for any **your job your way** clients. One site responded by putting a second youth worker in place to support young people. Service providers were concerned about the extent to which they were able to pick up on all mental health impacts upon **your job your way** clients, particularly given that servicing had shifted to virtual calls:

“It also means those visible cues and clues I suppose that staff pick up on when you see a client, you’re not able to over the phone or if they’re not engaging at all” (ST_S05).

“... obviously a lot of the time over the phone, we don’t see those hidden emotions with what’s going on with what we would normally see face-to-face” (ST_S08).

Despite these concerns, no young people directly reported serious mental health impacts during the COVID-19 crisis during their interviews for the evaluation.

Aspiration and motivation

Aspiration and motivation were key areas on which young people improved their WorkStar™ scores (62.9%), something many young people were proud of; as one young person said: “[I] couldn’t be happier about it” (YP_P28). Their pride here is important because, as noted earlier in the report, **your job your way** clients’ PWI scores showed that they were previously less satisfied than the average population with what they were achieving in life – improvements in aspiration and motivation were perhaps then particularly important to them. Furthermore, the change in PWI revealed a statistically significant increase in satisfaction with what they are achieving in life (Figure 9). Notably, when young people spoke about these changes, many expressed the change as not only about aspiration and motivation, but also as an increase in their level of confidence.

Importantly, young people noted that their increased aspiration, motivation and confidence meant that they felt better able to apply for a range of jobs:

“I am more comfortable – confident going into places and asking about work now” (YP_P27).

“[Now I have] more confidence and motivation to apply for more jobs” (YP_P28).

“I’ve probably in a way become more motivated, just because I know now that that’s what I want to do. Like, it’s something that I’m actually keen to do and start looking for work and keep working” (YP_P04).

“But, after I came here and they helped me find a course to do, that has given me the courage to finish it and then get a job working with kids. So, I feel like I have the courage to get a job after doing my course. I feel like a different person after seeing them.” (YP_P01).

Further, when young people found a job and became employed, this was an additional boost to them. Young people spoke about how having a job in itself made them feel more motivated, as well as boosted their confidence for dealing with matters that might arise in the workplace:

“Well, most of my mental problems stuff was not having a purpose, not having a job and stuff. So, when I got that job, it’s like all of it just pretty much lifted off me and I was a whole heap happier” (YP_P30).

“I have so much confidence now. Like, you know, getting a job and my co-workers are

really nice and I have the confidence that I know that if something was wrong, I'd be able to speak out about it and, you know, stand up for myself" (YP_P56).

Family, partners and friends also confirmed the changes to young people's aspiration and motivation. Like the young people themselves, many linked the changes to increases in young people's confidence:

"I've seen [my son] absolutely blossom this year... his whole attitude has been more positive" (PP_P03).

"Has our life changed? Yeah... you can communicate with her more [now], she's happy to do things, to get up and go, not sit on the computer and thinking, like, that's the end of her life... She's more determined to move on and get out and about. Like I said, she's much more independent and that now" (PP_P01).

"Oh, when she got involved [in **your job your way**], well, she wasn't getting anywhere with just going to... the employment agency and she felt all alone. Whereas this [program] gives her more up and go and that. So, it's made a mental better outlook, helped her mentally she'd say, boosted her confidence, because someone's listening to her." (PP_P01).

Staff made similar comments when reflecting on the **your job your way** cohort as a whole, also linking aspiration and motivation to confidence:

"The changes I have seen is that I have seen confidence grow. I have seen relationships blossom. I have seen that once they've got work, I've seen their change. It's really in regard to their confidence and their experience through life. We have had young people that have never worked before and you can see just the change through their faces, their conversation" (ST_S10).

"So, getting them a job and getting them working has been, you know, that massive change, massive. Even just their demeanour, their self-esteem, how that improves, their confidence improves, they are much happier" (ST_S02).

In addition to helping with applying for work and speaking up for themselves in the workplace, young people, their family, partners and friends as well as staff spoke about the increase in aspiration, motivation and confidence also helping with young people's social lives, emotional wellbeing, outlook on life, level of social anxiety and level of independence, for example in catching public transport. In this respect, increased aspiration, motivation and confidence was also intricately linked to the health and wellbeing improvements for young people discussed earlier in the report.

Motivation during COVID-19

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, there was significant concern expressed by service providers (as well as more broadly within politics and media¹⁴) that the pause on mutual obligations requirements and the \$550 supplement to the JobSeeker Payment would mean that young people would be less motivated to find work. Some **your job your way** staff echoed these concerns:

"Well, I see that as a real disincentive, absolutely, a real disincentive, because they're probably getting more money now from the government than if they had a full-time job. So, I really don't think that anybody would go out and work 38 hours a week if they're getting more money to not work. I certainly wouldn't, I don't know about you?"

¹⁴ <https://www.smartcompany.com.au/finance/economy/coronavirus-supplement-reduced-job-seekers/>;
<https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/people-on-the-dole-don-t-want-a-job-don-t-believe-it-20200807-p55jja.html>

(ST_S02).

Notably however, despite their concerns, staff reported that almost all **your job your way** clients remained motivated to find work and stay engaged with the program, despite the lack of a requirement to. While appreciating the reduced pressure to apply for as many jobs as their previous mutual obligation requirements had mandated, young people themselves also directly commented on remaining motivated to look for work where the opportunity arose. The quote below shows an instance where a young person explicitly acknowledged continuing to look for work:

“It takes the stress off me [not having to apply for so many jobs], but... I do it anyway, like if I see they’re needing help, I’ll go in and put my resume in” (YP_P33).

Others demonstrated more implicitly that they had been continuing to look for work, in that they knew in detail about the job opportunities that were currently available.

It is difficult to know exactly how many young people disengaged entirely from the **your job your way** program during the COVID-19 crisis and ceased looking for work. Staff at one site noted that only two of their clients had disengaged entirely from the program, however this information was not provided directly by the other sites – only that the vast majority of clients had remained engaged. One staff member noted that it was mainly the newer program clients who had difficulty keeping motivated and engaged, as the program staff had not yet had the opportunity to win their trust.

Staff noted that keeping young people motivated and engaged in **your job your way** during the COVID-19 crisis and changed mutual obligations requirements meant overcoming mixed messaging from government, media and Centrelink services, as well as reminding young people of the importance of staying engaged with the job market, particularly when more people were unemployed overall and there would be more competition for work.

Workplace and social skills

In their WorkStar™ scores, 50.8% of young people improved in their workplace and social skills (Figure 6). The interview data showed that much of this improvement was in young people’s skills for communication, both within and beyond the workplace. In particular, young people noted learning how to speak more clearly and confidently, including what tone to use and what to say (and what not to say) in a workplace. One young person gave the following example of learning to manage tone:

“I know how to talk to people now, I know how to be in a team-based environment to an extent. And I know how to talk to people without being passively aggressive by accident” (YP_P45).

Other young people noted it was now “easier” to speak to new people, make friendships and have better relationships, and that they were able to apply these skills in the workplace. One young person said they had “really good relationships with co-workers” (YP_P56). Others described having “better” communication skills that helped in job interviews and customer service roles. For some young people, increased communication skills were attributed to **your job your way**’s group activities (e.g. JobClub) that allowed them to meet new people. Improved communication skills were also linked to program participants’ improved confidence, as discussed in the previous section.

Notably, young people’s family, partners and friends also commonly mentioned young people’s improved communication skills. A common response was that young people’s attitude at home was more positive and young people were more communicative.

Communication skills during COVID-19

One of the biggest impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the **your job your way** program was that all communication between young people and staff moved from face-to-face to virtual contact, mostly phone calls. One staff member noted consciously using this change as an opportunity to work on improving young people's phone skills, recognising that phone manner is a critical employment skill and one that would become even more important during the pandemic. She reported excellent outcomes in developing young people's phone skills:

“Our conversations have got longer. So for the majority of our young people, the common theme throughout working with them was [we] communicated a lot via text message and they had all spoken at one point or another about having issues with talking on the phone. So I kind of made it my mission during this COVID-19 situation... to try and improve their communication skills on the phone and to keep them on the phone talking a little bit longer every time I talk to them. And, you know, it has changed the way that some of them communicate. It's improved their communication skills as well and we are having longer conversations. So whilst I might not always be talking about employment opportunities or health and wellbeing, we're having a conversation. And for some of them it could be the first time they've had a real conversation on the phone and I see that as a win... with more and more businesses doing phone interviews and things like that, I thought this was a good opportunity to get them comfortable talking on the phone” (ST_S07).

While no young people directly commented on improving their phone skills, all young people who commented on having phone conversations with **your job your way** staff felt that this approach worked well for them, suggesting they reached a level of comfort in talking on the phone (see quotes from young people on phone calls in Chapter 4 on Program Implementation).

Stability

The WorkStar™ scores showed that half of the young people (50%) in the **your job your way** program improved in the stability area (Figure 6). When young people spoke about their improved stability in the interviews, many mentioned that the program had enabled for them greater access to social, financial, housing and health resources.

In some cases, social resources were embedded in the **your job your way** program itself. For example, the social activities and workshops included in the **your job your way** model offered opportunities to meet other young people, which was beneficial for socialising but also for practicing social and communication skills that **your job your way** clients might later use with co-workers or colleagues; for overcoming social anxiety; and for building networks. One young person explained the benefits of improved networks for searching for work:

“... when I do the workshops, you've got everybody else in the program you can talk to and that and also get to know and just make friends with them.... [then], you know, if they get a job or anything, you can always ask them to see if there's anything in their job, like any space [for other new workers] and that. So, just making more connections for jobs and all that, so it can help a lot” (YP_P05)

In other cases, the **your job your way** staff connected young people to other external resources, including financial, housing and health supports. For example, some young people were connected to

a financial program which helps pay bills, while others were connected to other types of financial supports, such as food assistance programs:

“They referred us to Food Bank, and things like that, when we were struggling a bit with money” (YP_P49).

In other cases, young people were referred to services to help obtain housing and **your job your way** staff also gave assistance with organising and taking young people to appointments in relation to obtaining housing. Other young people were connected to a range of health services, including headspace, GPs and drug/alcohol services. In some cases, **your job your way** staff provided direct support by arranging the appointments for young people and driving them there. For many young people, the opportunity to receive support with these issues from someone outside their family was a key benefit of the **your job your way** program, enabling them to seek support they may not have otherwise.

Financial wellbeing during COVID-19

In their interviews, young people spoke about their financial wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis, particularly in the context of the \$550 supplementary payment that was available to recipients of Youth Allowance and the JobSeeker Payment. Particularly, they noted the support that **your job your way** gave them in deciding how to use it. Some young people also noted the benefits of the extra finances, particularly in light of lockdown arrangements and not wanting to make too many separate shopping trips for food:

“At the moment, we’re getting a Government supplement... It’s helping a lot... At the beginning when it was very hectic and we weren’t allowed anywhere basically apart from the shops, like the grocery store, it was just good to know that we had the money to like buy too much food, if that makes sense... Just to have that security in case things did get hectic again is good” (YP_P28).

Others noted using the extra finances to save for big purchases, such as a car:

“Well, [the extra money is] helping me get my licence and a car... Yes, it’s been a really big help at the moment. I’m almost saved enough to get a car in the last month, so it’s helped me a lot with that” (YP_P33).

Notably, budgeting and future planning were strategies actively encouraged by **your job your way** staff, to ensure that young people got the best financial outcomes possible from the extra payment. Staff reported that they used the opportunity presented by the supplementary payment to work on budgeting skills with young people. They also encouraged young people to use the extra money in ways that would either assist their employment prospects or would help with future costs (e.g. getting ahead on payment of bills and rent, or saving for future spending, such as for driving lessons or bond payments on rental accommodation):

“But one thing that we’ve been... advising clients with this extra money that they’re getting is going through budgeting and, you know, what you can do with this...? So a lot of our clients, we’ve worked on getting licenses for [those] that don’t have cars, so you know going through ‘This could be a great opportunity for you guys to save for a car, so when these jobs do become available you’re going to be much more employable’. So we’re working on those short-term goals and budgeting with them in those areas” (ST_S08).

“Some of them are using the money to get their cars registered and get themselves on the road. Others are telling us that they’re saving up money to buy a car... and one client is going to be using that money to pay for a TAFE course that he wants to start in July.

So they are talking about [it] and planning what they want to do with that money, rather than just spend it. And of course that's a conversation we're having with them as well: 'Now while you're getting that money it might be a really good idea to try and live on that income that you've been previously living on and then putting the rest of that away, if you can to get yourself a car in a couple of months' time,' or those kinds of things. So there are some of them that are really planning to put that money aside and use it for something really valuable to them" (ST_S02).

Staff noted that while a few young people had spent the monetary supplement without planning for the future, in the main, due to their encouragement, most **your job your way** clients were planning to use the extra finances to improve their current and future situation.

One staff member did however note concern about what would happen when the supplement ended, including whether young people would be prepared for going back to their previous level of payments and whether issues related to mental health, self-harm and credit problems would follow when young people were living on more restricted financial resources again.

Basic skills

WorkStar™ scores showed that 51.6% of young people improved their basic skills following their participation in the **your job your way** program (Figure 6). In their interviews, many young people spoke about enhancing their core skills for work through vocational education and pursuing further training and qualifications. These developments are notable as prior to **your job your way**, only roughly half of the program's participants had finished school through to Year 12 (Table 5) and only 57.1% had a TAFE certificate at any level (Table 6).

Program staff assisted many young people to enroll in TAFE or similar courses. The support provided by staff allowed young people to find information about courses and opportunities to study:

"Everything [the **your job your way** staff] recommended to me was super helpful. Like I wasn't aware of all these things [before], like the university preparation program" (YP_P35).

Many **your job your way** clients then worked towards Certificate II and IIIs in construction, retail, hospitality, business and admin, IT, early childhood education and aged care. One person pursued a Diploma in beauty. Some young people who enrolled in these courses completed them and then found a job in areas related to their studies. Others continued to study, either to further their education, to work towards entering university or because they had not initially found employment, so decided instead to further their skills and opportunities:

"I went and enrolled in TAFE. Looking for employment wasn't really working out for me. So, I went back to study and I wanted to study something that I was really interested in" (YP_P08).

"I just was sick of sitting at home looking for a job and then having no [response] [or] always getting an interview and [them] saying like, 'There was a lot of applicants', you know, the stock-standard response to not getting the job. So, I was like I might as well go back to school and actually do something while looking for a job, [rather than] doing nothing" (YP_P12).

Through **your job your way**, young people also had assistance and opportunities to increase their work-related skillsets and obtain licenses and other certifications. For example, one participant spoke about the benefits of getting help from **your job your way** to receive a forklift license: "[It] is going to be good, even say if I leave this job; I'm still going to have it in the future" (YP_P07). Other participants

gained their Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) and Responsible Conduct of Gambling (RCG) certifications, which they expected would help them be eligible for more employment opportunities.

Educational attainment during COVID-19

In their interviews, some **your job your way** clients noted some disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on their educational attainment. In some cases, the disruption was because face-to-face learning opportunities were cancelled. One young person commented on the impact of her hairdressing course – very much an in-person role, best learnt face-to-face – being moved online:

“I’ve been doing the hair course for a little while, that went online due to COVID... We went on Zoom. And it was a lot harder to learn online, because there’s a lot of things that they can’t really explain over Zoom, because it is a very visual thing and, like, showing you just over a computer... [they’re not] next to you physically showing and explaining” (YP_P40).

Others noted that without the in-person resourcing support from **your job your way** and their employers, they had more trouble completing their education at home, due to a lack of resources:

“I’m still in the first block of [my TAFE course], but I’ve done a few of the... little units within the block... I just can’t do it at home as much, because I don’t have wifi and obviously I can’t go into the office to do it” (YP_P31).

Notably, in both cases above, young people were trying to maintain their education during the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown, but it was a struggle for them. No **your job your way** clients noted dropping out of educational opportunities due to COVID-19-related challenges in their interviews.

Job skills and experience

Young people noted that their job skills and experience had increased as part of their participation in **your job your way**. In the WorkStar™, young people’s improvement in this area was the largest of any of the seven domains, with 73.4% of program participants noting an improvement (Figure 6). In their interviews, young people explained that they primarily gained job skills and experience through internships, volunteer work and job trials. Many also noted obtaining paid employment with the assistance of the **your job your way** staff and program, including paid traineeships, apprenticeships, part time work, and casual work¹⁵.

Young people noted the helpfulness of assistance from **your job your way** in gaining their job skills and experience. For example, one participant explained that getting help from **your job your way** staff with the paperwork for applying for work took the “weight off my shoulders” (YP_P41). Another said receiving help through the job application process of handing in a resume and help with interview preparation and the health and safety check, made the process “pretty straightforward” (YP_P30).

Young people’s experiences of internships and job opportunities are outlined in more detail below, as these were the two areas that evaluation participants spoke about in the most depth.

Internships. The young people in **your job your way** had mixed experiences of internships. For some, internships were a positive experience where they gained work skills (e.g. customer service skills, admin experience), references and, in some cases, an ongoing paid role. A young person who gained a paid role as a result of their internship commented on the benefits of the internship as a more personal

¹⁵ Across the program, casual work was the most common type of work secured.

method of recruitment:

“The employer was really good and it’s good because instead of him getting 1000 resumés online, he gets to just come meet us and accept us” (YP_P25).

Another young person, who had not gained a paid role, commented on the benefits of gaining work experience and a good reference from their internship:

“I missed out [on an ongoing job], but that’s okay. I got the experience and I got the manager to have a reference anyway. So, that was good” (YP_P33).

However, other young people found internships more challenging. Some young people described the workplace in their internships as not being a welcoming place for those with little previous work experience. Young people made comments such as, “I wasn’t the right fit” (YP_P42) and “[The employer said] I didn’t listen to instructions.....I would get in trouble for not working, but I didn’t have anything to do” (YP_P05). Another young person commented that her internship supervisor had not been accommodating of her mental health needs. Young people’s family, partners and friends also expressed some concerns about internships, for example, one parent commented that internships “seem to amount to nothing... it feels like those employers just get free work out of someone basically... there’s no outcome at the end, really” (PP_P06).

Young people’s mixed experiences of internships are reflected in the figures on PaTH Internships¹⁶ within each **your job your way** site (Table 10). Of note, many more young people began PaTH Internships than finished, and, overall, the rate of PaTH Internships resulting in ongoing employment was low.

Table 10 PaTH internships by site

	Number of internships commenced	Number of internships completed	Number of internships resulting in employment
Burnie-Devonport	12	10	8
Caboolture	31	11	5
Elizabeth	44	23	10
Total	87	44	23

Source: **yourtown** program data

Job opportunities. Young people also noted gaining new job opportunities for paid work through **your job your way**. The program assisted young people with gaining job opportunities by staff notifying young people about jobs that were available or being advertised, doing resume drops to employers (which some young people were doing on their own as well), helping young people to tailor their resume and application to specific jobs and preparing young people for job interviews, so that they were more competitive in their applications. Young people mentioned that, to them, more time and resources appeared to be put into these types of assistance with finding job opportunities than with their previous employment agencies. The result was that young people spoke about being hired:

¹⁶ PaTH Internships (Australian Government n.d.) are short placements in the workplace that give young people an opportunity to demonstrate their skills to a potential employer, develop vocational skills and improve their employment prospects. At the same time, employers can trial young job seekers in a structured work experience placement, to see if they are the right fit for their business. The internships or work placements are funded by the Australian Government as part of the jobactive program.

“[My job] came about because I came around and I was sitting down with [your job your way staff member] and we listed the top four jobs that I’d possibly want and the job that I’m doing now came up as the first one. So I finished my traineeship officially Friday and then by the Monday I had an interview with the people I’m working with now and I was working with them on the Tuesday” (YP_P58).

“I ended up doing a six-week course, so I could get a job in Coles distribution centre. So yeah, I’ve been working there for three months now..... Coles wanted people to go to [the course], so I think... yourtown selected a few people and then we all went to it and everyone pretty [much] got the job out of it” (YP_P50).

This is reflected in the high number of placements and the high placement to commencement ratio, discussed in the next section.

Employment opportunities during COVID-19

By far the greatest impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the **your job your way** program and its clients was the contraction of the job market. When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on them and their **your job your way** experience, young people commonly noted that it meant there had simply been a lack of jobs to apply for. Some young people noted the lack of jobs across the board:

“[I’m] still looking [for a job], but there isn’t [any] – like occasionally one job will pop up. Probably there’s been one job in the past two months that I’ve seen pop up, besides like doctors and nurses, which obviously I can’t apply for... it’s completely dead at the moment, because we have so many restrictions still as well” (YP_P31).

“... there’s not really many [jobs], like every month or so, there’s like one new job available” (YP_P28)

Other young people more specifically noted a lack of jobs in the industries that they had already spent significant time and resources training for:

“[I’ve] just been applying for jobs and obviously there weren’t a lot of beauty jobs going and still aren’t because of COVID and everything having to be shut down... Obviously other jobs are few and far between at the moment too” (YP_P40).

“Yeah, it has impacted on the work that I can get... There’s not a lot of construction going on...” (YP_P58).

A few young people also mentioned losing their jobs directly due to the COVID-19 crisis, including through not being allowed to come back to the workplace when judged medically vulnerable and supervisors not being understanding when young people asked for time off due to discomfort travelling on public transport at the height of the pandemic.

Staff noted that the lack of jobs was especially acute for the young people in the **your job your way** program, because there had been a particular contraction of the entry level roles **your job your way** clients would usually take up:

“In terms of affecting people job searching, there are no jobs. Well there are, but there’s very very few and there’s almost no jobs in those entry level areas that are traditionally open to young people with minimal experience. So hospitality is gone, retail is mostly gone, events is gone” (ST_S03).

In addition, there was more competition in the job market, and both **your job your way** clients and staff noted that, as a result, employers could be more selective about who they took on and have more requirements for the roles they offered. The impact was that young people in the **your job your way** program were not necessarily judged by employers to be attractive candidates:

“I need a job. I need to apply for it, but at the same time with so many people probably going for the exact same job and I'm always getting told... I'm not what they're looking for and stuff like that. And with COVID at the top, it just kind of put a dampener on it” (YP_P40).

“It's harder to find what you want now. So like there's more requirements... it sucks, because I haven't got my Ps yet, but it's like reliable car and license you need. That's been the biggest thing at the moment; pretty much every job at the moment it's been required, you need this. Before it wasn't as bad, not as many requirements for the jobs” (YP_P51).

“I think also because of the number of people who lost work or had hours cut back who do have the experience, the qualifications, the transport, all of those things that our young people are missing, [for] the jobs that are still available the competition has gotten so much fiercer for them. So you know you've got business owners who have to make a decision between, you know, this person who's 20 years old and was working for the past five years of their life... and have a car and just came out of work because of this natural disaster, versus this other 20 year old who doesn't have a license and has never worked, like didn't finish high school – so that's been a fairly significant impact” (ST_S03).

The combination of these circumstances meant that it had been especially difficult for **your job your way** clients to secure, and in some cases even maintain, work during the pandemic. One staff member noted that where **your job your way** clients had found or kept employment opportunities, these were usually in meat processing facilities, supermarkets, pharmacies, security work and freight logistics. One young person noticed a few new jobs available for measuring temperatures at local services due to COVID-19, but had not been able to secure this work. These industries, as a result of the pandemic, seemed to have the most jobs available, yet, as noted above, competition for work meant that **your job your way** clients were not always able to secure these roles.

Job placements and comparison to jobactive

A key outcome for the evaluation of **your job your way** is the effectiveness of the program to support clients to achieve and maintain employment. Using ESS data, we compared outcomes achieved by **your job your way** clients against those of counterparts engaged in jobactive. The jobactive comparison group comprise long-term unemployed young people in the same age group as the **your job your way** clients, across the three sites. Box 1 explains eligibility criteria and how the outcomes were calculated.

The first comparison examines the differences between the number of young people who found a job (that is, had a placement) across the two groups. Between July 2018 and June 2020, a total of 481 young people commenced with jobactive and 210 with **your job your way** (Table 11).

Table 11 Placements and commencements, July 2018* – June 2020

	Commencements		Placements	
	jobactive	your job your way	jobactive	your job your way
Burnie/Devonport	192	53	97	36
Caboolture	160	86	80	76
Elizabeth	129	71	61	60
Total	481	210	238	172

Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

Box 1 Terminology

These descriptions are written in plain language to assist the reader. Please refer to 'Eligibility criteria' in [Appendix 1](#) for precise technical information.

Commencements – A commencement is counted when a young person starts the program.

Placements – A placement occurs when a job seeker starts a job. A job seeker may have multiple job placements and each placement is included in the count.

Outcomes – An outcome is a jobactive milestone and occurs when a job seeker stays in employment for 4, 12, and 26 weeks.

Placements eligible for each outcome – A placement eligible for a 4-, 12-, or 26-week outcome is the denominator used to determine the percentage of placements for which 4-, 12- or 26-week outcomes were achieved. A placement eligible for a 4-week conversion has 4 or more weeks between the start of the job placement and the end of the reporting period (that is, 30 June 2020). A placement eligible for a 12-week conversion has 12 or more weeks between the start of the job placement and the end of the reporting period (that is, 30 June 2020). A placement eligible for a 26-week conversion has 26 or more weeks between the start of the job placement and the end of the reporting period (that is, 30 June 2020). On the other hand, a person who has been in a placement for five weeks is eligible for a 4-week outcome but not eligible for a 12- or 26-week outcome.

Conversion rate, considering eligibility – The proportion of clients who achieved a 4-, 12-, or 26-week outcome among those who were eligible to do so. The 12 to 26-week conversion rate indicates the proportion of clients who had a placement at 12 weeks and continued to have a placement at 26 weeks out of the number of participants eligible for a 26-week outcome. The 4- to 12-week conversion rate is less easily defined because it is possible for a client to achieve a 12-week outcome without achieving a 4-week outcome, for example due to working part-time or not achieving the required number of employment hours to be eligible for a 4-week outcome and only a 12-week outcome is claimed later on.

Conversion rate as proportion of commencement – The proportion of clients who achieved a 4-, 12-, or 26-week outcome among all clients who commenced the program.

Total unique commencements – A job seeker may commence and exit the program multiple times but only the first commencement is included in the count. The total unique commencement is the count of all first commencements throughout the reporting period.

Unique number of job seekers – A job seeker may have one or multiple job placements. The unique number of job seeker counts only the job seekers irrespective of their number of placements. For example, a job seeker with 2 placements will be counted as 2 placements but only as 1 unique job seeker.

See also the glossary at the end of the report for further information on Jobseeker placement, eligibility and employment outcomes.

Overall, the proportion of **your job your way** clients who found jobs (that is, achieved a placement) between July 2018 and June 2020 was much higher than that of jobactive clients: 82% of **your job your way** clients compared to 49% of jobactive clients (2). The placement to commencement ratio was higher across all sites for **your job your way** clients than for jobactive clients. This shows that **your job your way** was more effective than jobactive in terms of clients getting a placement.

Table 12 Placements as a proportion of commencements, July 2018*-June 2020

	jobactive	your job your way	your job your way compared to jobactive
Burnie/Devonport	51%	68%	+17
Caboolture	50%	88%	+38
Elizabeth	47%	85%	+37
Total	49%	82%	+32

Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, n=210 **your job your way**, n=481 jobactive. Note: percentages do not sum due to rounding. * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

A second key goal of the comparison is to establish if **your job your way** is more effective than jobactive in terms of participants keeping their job. As such, the second comparison examines the difference between the number of young people who remained employed (or maintained their placement) across the two groups. The success of a placement is measured through the achievement of the 4-week, 12-week and 26-week outcomes. We compared jobactive and **your job your way** clients in terms of their conversion rate of placements to 4- and 12-week outcomes, as well as the conversion rate of 12-week outcomes to 26-week outcomes¹⁷. This shows the proportion of jobs maintained for 4, 12 and 26 weeks respectively, as well as the fulfilment of other requirements over that period, such as the minimum hours worked in the respective job¹⁸.

your job your way was more effective than jobactive at placing young people into jobs: 82% of **your job your way** clients achieved a job, compared to 49% of jobactive clients.

your job your way clients were more successful at achieving 4-, 12- and 26-week outcomes than jobactive clients.

The conversion rate of outcomes as a proportion of commencements was first. This rate indicates the proportion of young people who participated in the program and achieved a 4-week, 12-week, or 26-week outcome. We compared this conversion rate for the young people across the two groups and sites. Across all three sites and all three types of outcomes, **your job your way** achieved higher conversion rates than jobactive (Table 13; Figure 10 Conversions rates of placements, 4-week, 12-week and 26-week outcomes as proportion of commencements).

The largest difference in terms of 4-week outcome conversion rate between jobactive and **your job your way** clients was in Burnie-Devonport (31%). Overall, the **your job your way** 4-week outcome conversion rate was more than double that of jobactive (48% compared to 22% respectively). The

¹⁷ As this is how the Department of Education, Skills and Employment measures employment outcomes, this is the only data that is available to compare the difference in outcomes between **your job your way** and jobactive clients.

¹⁸ For further description of eligibility criteria and rules for calculating the outcomes, see Box 1 and Appendix 1.

difference between jobactive and **your job your way** clients in terms of 12-week outcome conversion rates are higher for Elizabeth (25%) and Caboolture (21%). Further, similar to the 4-week conversion rate, overall, the **your job your way** 12-week conversion rate was more than double that of jobactive (39% compared to 18%). Finally, the 26-week conversion rate, demonstrating ability to maintain a job to 26 weeks, was also more than double for **your job your way** clients (21%) compare to jobactive counterparts (9%) and this was consistent across all sites.

Overall, **your job your way** was more effective than jobactive at placing young people into jobs (higher conversion rate of placements as proportion of commencements, Table 12). Additionally, young people in **your job your way** are more successful at maintaining their jobs than their jobactive counterparts, as demonstrated through higher outcome conversion rates (Table 13).

Table 13 Conversion rates of placements, 4-week, 12-week and 26-week outcomes as proportion of commencements, your job your way and jobactive, July 2018* - June 2020

Outcome	Site	jobactive	your job your way	your job your way compared to jobactive
4-week outcome	Burnie-Devonport	20%	51%	+31
	Caboolture	24%	49%	+24
	Elizabeth	22%	45%	+23
	Total	22%	48%	+26
12-week outcome	Burnie-Devonport	21%	38%	+17
	Caboolture	19%	40%	+21
	Elizabeth	14%	39%	+25
	Total	18%	39%	+21
26-week outcome	Burnie-Devonport	7%	15%	+8
	Caboolture	9%	24%	+15
	Elizabeth	10%	23%	+12
	Total	9%	21%	+13

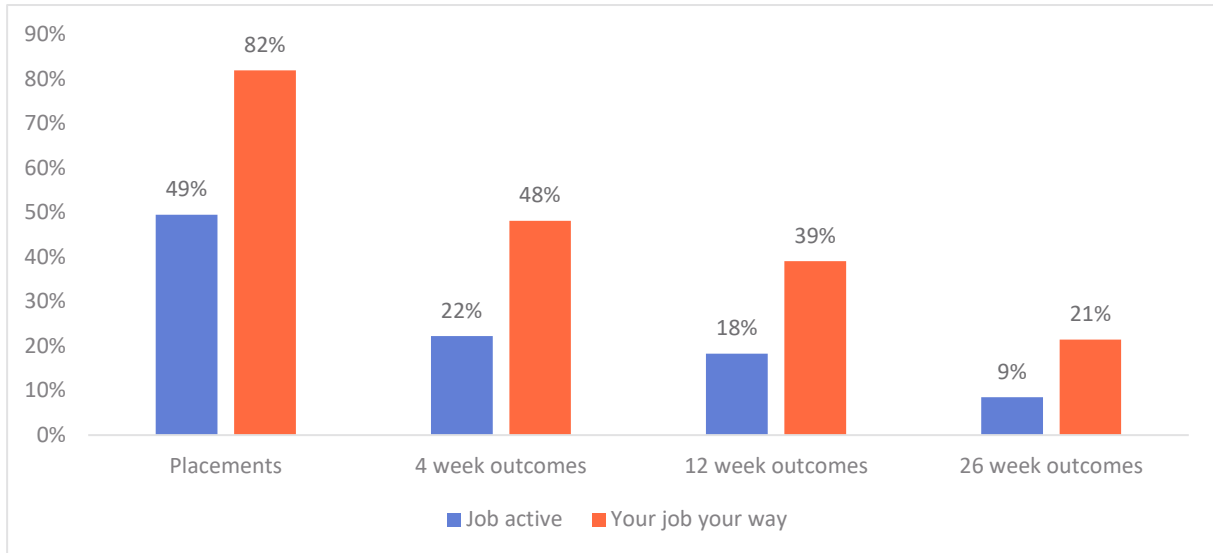
Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, n=481 jobactive, n=210 **your job your way**. * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

We further explored the conversion rate of eligible placements to 4-, 12- and 26-week outcomes. For this analysis only placements that were eligible for the respective outcome were considered in the calculation of the proportion. For example, only young people who had been in a placement with 4 or more weeks between the start of the job placement and the end of the reporting period are considered eligible for the 4-week outcome (and hence, counted in the denominator). See also Box 1 and [Appendix 1](#) for further description of the approach.

The 4-week, 12-week and 26-week conversion rates were considerably higher for **your job your way**

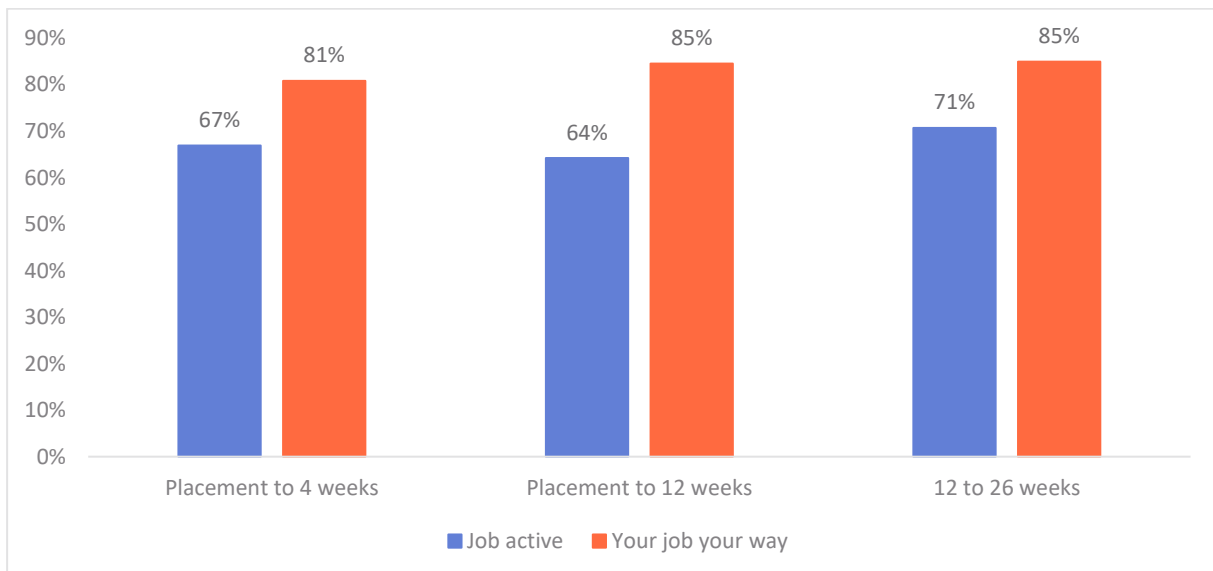
than for jobactive clients (Figure 11). Almost 9 in 10 **your job your way** clients eligible for a 26-week outcome achieved it (85%), considerably higher than the jobactive conversion rate (71%). Differences are consistent across sites and across most outcomes (see Table A 3in Appendix 2 Outcomes and indicators framework).

Figure 10 Conversion rates of placements, 4-week, 12-week and 26-week outcomes as proportion of commencements, July 2018* – June 2020



Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, July 2018 – June 2020, n=481 jobactive, n=210 **your job your way**. * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

Figure 11 Conversion rates of outcomes as a proportion of eligible placements, jobactive and your job your way, July 2018* – June 2020



Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, n=183 **your job your way**; n=529 jobactive. Conversion rates are calculated as proportion of the number of young people eligible for that outcome (see Box 1). * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

4 Program implementation

As described earlier in the report, **your job your way** was implemented by a dual support team carrying a caseload of approximately 25 people. The dual support team regularly engaged one-on-one with program clients, and workshops were also provided by staff and employers for the purpose of young people's skill development. Importantly, the dual support team had the time, skills and qualifications to apply collaborative engagement and assessment strategies; provide ongoing daily support to program clients (including concurrently addressing non-vocational and vocational barriers to employment); and engage with employers, with the aim of improving young people's access to available jobs and increasing employers' commitment to employing young people.

This chapter of the report evaluates the **your job your way** implementation model. It first provides some more detailed information on how **your job your way** was implemented and then describes how the program was adapted during the COVID-19 crisis. Using qualitative data, an analysis of the program's implementation successes and challenges is then discussed.

Examples of how your job your way was implemented

Key supports provided by the dual support team were intensive one-on-one support and workshops (individual and group coaching) about employability skills, job searching, applications and interview preparation. Examples of content included in these key supports are shown in Table 14.

A total of 55 workshops were delivered, which had a total of 325 participants (NB: some young people attended more than one workshop). Table 15 shows a detailed breakdown of the workshop numbers.

Table 14 Examples of one-on-one support and workshop content

Type of support	Examples of content included
Intensive one-on-one support ¹⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular in-person and phone meetings with young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-vocational support, either directly through as needed counselling or through referrals to work jointly with other agencies (e.g. health, housing, transport, budgeting, self-care) ○ Assessment and development tools – BSKB and WorkStar™ ○ Analysis of interests ○ Goal planning ○ Career guidance ○ Assistance with paperwork (e.g. filling in forms, reporting to Centrelink) ○ Assistance with gaining IDs and licenses (e.g. driving; machine operation) • Looking for job placements for/with young people both online and in person at the businesses of potential employers • Liaising with young people’s employers • Transporting young people to and from appointments and interviews
Workshops ²⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building employability skills • Developing job search skills • Cover letters • Interview preparation • Job application process • Mock group interview • Interview feedback • Goals, individual plans, managing challenges and barriers to employment • Knowing the qualities of a good employee and understanding strong work ethic • Preparation for finding employment (that is, resources needed, support options) • Traineeship and apprenticeship information and registration sessions, including Indigenous Construction Apprenticeship/Traineeships • How a café operates • Job fair • Social media/digital footprint • Mental health, drugs and alcohol • Perspective, goals, aspirations, motivation, making dreams real, being positive, values • Communication – conflict resolution skills • Personal presentation and hygiene • Building self-esteem and confidence

¹⁹ Source: Program records documenting the strategies staff used when working with participants (“What strategies are you currently working on with this participant?”)

²⁰ Not all topics were covered at every **your job your way** site, however workshops which covered both vocational and non-vocational aspects were conducted at all three sites. These included some once-only topic-focused workshops at all sites, presented by program staff or guest speakers. ‘Job Club’ – a series of workshops covering multiple topics – was conducted at two sites. Staff also organised for employers to run workshops on site. Six employer workshops were held (three in Caboolture and three in Elizabeth).

Table 15 Workshop numbers

	Number of workshops	Number of participants
Total number of workshops run by employers	6	46
Total number of workshops run by the dual support team	49	279
Total	55	325

Source: **your job your way** program data

As noted in Chapter 2 of the report, other areas of support included in the **your job your way** model included: referral to specialist health and other services; practical assistance to address barriers (e.g. driver license, interview clothes); access to work experience (e.g. social enterprises, PaTH internships); literacy and numeracy coaching; job/goal related skills training; advocating the young person to employers; and job matching/placement.

COVID-19 impacts

In assessing the program implementation, it is important to note that while **your job your way** was

Box 2. Adaptation to meeting COVID-19 requirements

How **your job your way** services were adapted varied per site, but included:

- Participants were able to collect fuel vouchers, bus/train from the Jobactive office or have them emailed.
- Businesses where **yourtown** had online accounts or who would accept purchase orders were used to buy clothing or work-related items.
- Referrals to services where a participant consent form was required were impacted, but some rules were relaxed.
- Training that could be offered online continued.
- Contact with employers was online or by telephone.
- Driving lessons continued with some businesses at one site, but driving lessons and tests ceased at the other two sites.
- Document copying was done only at the Jobactive office.
- Many of the counselling and mental health services moved to online services, including **yourtown** Jobactive youth workers.
- There was more flexibility about accessing the Employment Fund for items such as telephones, data plans and laptops/iPads.

Services that were ceased for a period from 30th March 2020 were²¹:

- In-person contact with the **your job your way** dual support team
- The use of vehicles for transporting participants.
- Resume drops and reverse marketing.
- All workshops.
- Initial and diagnostic BSKB assessments were no longer undertaken, as there is no way to confirm that young people would not use calculators/Google.

implemented as described above for most of the two year pilot, bushfires and particularly the COVID-19 crisis impacted its implementation during its latter stages. During these times (see dates in Table 16), the jobactive ‘compulsory mutual obligations’ requirements (that is, attending appointments, doing job searches, applying for work and other activities, such as Work for the Dole) that also applied to **your job your way** clients were suspended. Social distancing requirements during the COVID-19 crisis also impacted the way that supports to young people could be implemented and, in particular, **your job your way** staff moved to a virtual service delivery model. Box describes how the **your job your way** delivery was adapted to meet social distancing and other COVID-19 related requirements.

Throughout the **your job your way** pilot, including when the service moved to virtual delivery, the dual support team endeavoured to maintain contact either weekly or fortnightly with **your job your way** clients. During virtual delivery this contact moved to telephone calls. While staff returned to sites from mid-May onwards, the face-to-face service for **your job your way** clients did not resume to pre-COVID levels. This was to comply with site-based COVID-19 management plans. Generally, clients were only allowed to visit the **your job your way** offices for specific purposes, such as for a signature, and this was with the knowledge of the Regional Manager for the site, as per the organisation’s COVID-19 management plan. However, if **your job your way** clients requested an in-person office visit, that occurred. Clients could also be seen off-site, again for specific reasons (such as purchasing clothes), and again with the Regional Manager’s knowledge. In accordance with the COVID-19 management plan, no transporting occurred²¹. These requirements changed the delivery of the **your job your way** model notably, and therefore program implementation during the COVID-19 crisis is covered in depth.

The following sections include information on implementation successes and challenges of the **your job your way** program, both irrespective of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as successes and challenges specifically during the pandemic. The demonstration of both is important to understanding the ways that the program adapted to the crisis and how it continued to support young people during the difficult circumstances that arose. The fact that support was continually offered to **your job your way** clients (even if in adapted form) during the crisis is a credit to the program.

Table 16 Dates during which the jobactive compulsory mutual obligations were ceased, the geographical areas affected and the purpose of the cessation

Date	Area covered	Reason for ceasing mutual obligations requirements
10-18 September 2019	QLD & NSW	Bushfire
9-11 October 2019	QLD & NSW	Bushfire
8-15 November 2019	QLD & NSW	Bushfire
24 Dec – 2 Jan 2020	National	Christmas
3 Jan – 19 January 2020	National	Bushfire
19 January – 6 March 2020	Specific LGAs, including Elizabeth	Bushfire
6–9 March 2020	National	Systems Outage
13-20 March 2020	National	JobSeeker Payment
24-31 March 2020	National	System Issues contingency
31 March 2020 – ongoing	National	COVID-19

Source: **your job your way** program data

²¹ Communication with program staff, on 1st May and 29th September 2020

Implementation successes

Primary implementation success: Relationship-based practice and contributing factors

The primary implementation success of **your job your way** was the capacity of the program to establish and maintain thorough relationship-based practice with young people. Multiple staff commented on a key benefit of the **your job your way** model being that they were able to establish a well-rounded relationship with young people, which became a basis for them to provide authentic and holistic support in both vocational and non-vocational areas:

“... we get to develop those relationships with the young person. We have more time to do that. We’ve got a caseload that allows that to happen. We get to know them on a level that we can have open frank discussions with them about employment opportunities and things like that so, we’re more real, I guess – we get to be real with our clients, so that works” (ST_S06).

Young people themselves also confirmed the relationship-based nature of **your job your way**, and that their close relationships with the staff enabled the staff to push them to work hard on areas on which it would be harder to accept advice or instructions from someone who knew them less personally:

“I actually really like the structure of it [the program]. That it is so personal... I can just text them, I can email them, I can just pop in one day and they’ll make time for me. That sort of personal side is awesome. I really love that. Because it’s so personal, they know they can push certain things. They know me, so they can go ‘You need to focus on this, so go and do it’ – you know, with someone who doesn’t really know you, it’s a bit like, ‘But I don’t want to do it’, [but] with them it’s all right, [because] you know they’re doing it for you” (YP_P27).

Young people’s family, partners and friends also confirmed the relationship-based nature of the program. One parent, for example, said:

“He’s listened to, he’s treated on a personal level... his individual needs and qualifications and experience and hopes are actually listened to. [They] try and guide and help him in the areas that he wants to work or further educate himself in. He’s treated as an individual and not a number, and I really like the support that it is recognised on a personal basis” (PP_P03).

The benefit of the relationship-based practice was the trust it built between young people and service providers, which became a strong foundation for young people not only accepting, but also seeking, the support and advice of the **your job your way** staff when it came to their employment. One staff member commented on this trust by describing young people proactively returning to the program if their employment opportunities fell through:

“So we’ve had clients that have made it up until 26 weeks of work and we’ve finished up with them and [then] they’ve come back along [to us], because something’s happened – they’ve lost their work or [been] made redundant – and they’ve come back on [the **your job your way** program]. And we’re the first people they contact – they don’t contact Centrelink... they contact us and say ‘I need another job, can you help me?’ and we just work on from that” (ST_S08).

Notably, staff and young people also mentioned several features of the program that enabled relationship-based practice. These features were framed as critical to the success of the **your job your way** program. Importantly, each were also features which staff saw as the primary points of difference between **your job your way** and the jobactive model. These features were:

- *The smaller caseload of the your job your way model compared to jobactive.*

Multiple staff commented that the smaller caseloads of **your job your way** compared to jobactive enabled the success of the **your job your way** model and the level of personalised attention required for relationship-based practice. Staff commented that “the whole nature of [our work] is very different, just by the case numbers alone” (ST_09) and cited the lower case numbers as enabling more time to address young people’s needs in a personalised and holistic way that is “more productive and more individualized” (ST_10). One staff member described the benefit of the smaller caseloads by saying they enabled more time for “pulling away layers of the onion, finding where the actual barrier or barriers are [for young people]” ST_09.

While not all young people were explicitly aware of the difference in the caseload model, they commented on having more frequent access to **your job your way** staff than to the staff in other employment services (such as jobactive), seeing the **your job your way** staff more often and for longer appointments, being able to receive more assistance from them and, on the whole, experiencing more consistent staffing.

Notably, while the small caseloads were appreciated by most staff, a small number felt that the same benefit could be obtained for young people with a moderate increase in caseload. For some staff, another 5-10 young people per site felt feasible, while one staff member at a management level thought a caseload of up to 40-50 young people might be possible.

- *The intensive support that the smaller caseload made possible.*

Inter-relatedly, the opportunity the small caseloads offered for very intensive support to individual young people was another key success cited for the **your job your way** model and another critical factor for relationship-based practice. Staff members commented on the benefits of “having that time to spend with the client – not just having a half hour time slot to try and cover everything”. With that time, one staff member commented on the possibilities for productive, personalised communication with and understanding of young people:

“... if you have that time to spend with them and listen to them and focus on what’s going to benefit them and not [on] what you think’s going to benefit them, you’re going to achieve huge things” (ST_S08).

Young people confirmed that **your job your way** staff listened to them in this way – “They actually sit down and listen, and they show you what to do... they actually sit there and actually help you with the situation” (YP_P67). Young people also confirmed that they were receiving more intensive support than they had received in other employment services. They noted particularly that they appreciated being able to receive support across a greater variety of areas and commented that they felt this, in turn, improved their readiness for work:

“Ever since I joined **your job your way** ... it’s like they understood that I need help in certain areas and my resume wasn’t correct for employers to read properly, and they helped me with that. And I don’t drive, so they understood that if I need to get interviews or go to my course or anything like that and it’s too far away, they can drive me. Compared to my old case manager [who] was just like ‘Here you go, here’s the address, off you go’... So it’s helped me a lot with getting like job-ready and getting to places and being organised... I feel more prepared going for jobs now, compared to like two years ago before I started with them” (YP_P53).

One staff member noted that a risk of this very intensive support was becoming too involved in the personal matters in young people’s lives, and therefore the importance of staff knowing where to set boundaries on their time and involvement with individual young people.

- ***Skilled and 'youth friendly' staffing within a dual servicing model.***

The skilled and 'youth friendly' nature of the **your job your way** staff was a further feature that enabled relationship-based practice and that was seen as a key success of the program. One staff member explained that having an approachable and relaxed attitude built strong relationships with young people, which meant that staff could then hold young people accountable for their actions:

“... we're approachable and relaxed and have the young people chill, but then maintain that professionalism. And what that does is it gives us the capacity to build a real relationship with them, and to then be able to say 'You've got to pull your neck in, you're being ridiculous right now' and for them to listen” (ST_S03)

The dual support model of the program was also beneficial (that is, Pathways Coach and Employment Mentor working alongside each other within each **your job your way** site). While some staff occasionally made comments that young people preferred one staff member over the other or that the dual support model meant too much emphasis could be placed on non-vocational elements, overall, the two staff's skills were seen to be strongly complementary and drawing on the skills of both was seen to be beneficial for young people.

Young people also made comments confirming the skilled and 'youth friendly' nature of staff. One young person, for example, commented that a particular staff member was the “one person that I can just talk to and open up to no matter what” (YP_P10), while another commented on the staff in general, saying “I'm very comfortable when I'm around them” (YP_P62).

- ***The discretion your job your way staff have about how some program funds are spent and about where their services are physically delivered.***

A further factor that was critical to the relationship-based practice of **your job your way** and to the success of the model was the discretion that staff had about how some program elements were delivered. One staff member noted, for example, the benefits of having some discretionary funds for engagement of young people, which could be used either for supporting them in their goals and/or for gaining their trust. She explained:

“It gives us the capacity to do little things for people, celebrate little wins, facilitate them moving towards goals – those kinds of things that you don't have [in jobactive]; there's less staff discretion in regular jobactive” (ST_S03).

This staff member gave examples of buying a water bottle to help with one **your job your way** client's health goals and of buying a small Christmas present for the young child of another client, which gained his trust and meant that “he's been much more willing to talk to us and on board with our suggestions since then” (ST_S03). Notably, the discretionary funds were in addition to other dedicated funds that were used to help young people with transport and fuel costs, thereby enabling them to get to job interviews, education, or work. In other cases, the funds were also used to help young people afford appropriate work clothes.

Similarly, staff also noted the benefits of their discretion about where program activities were run, citing the advantages of being able to meet **your job your way** clients at cafes or other public locations, not only the **yourtown** offices. One staff member noted, for example, that conducting the **your job your way** JobClub in a café was seen as an activity to be looked forward to by the **your job your way** clients, and “it makes the young people in the program feel valued and feel part of something” (ST_S06). Feeling valued by the program and its staff reinforced the relationship-based nature of the program. Young people also confirmed the benefits of meeting in community settings, also noting that often cafes and other eateries were quieter and less overwhelming than a busy office setting would be.

- ***The social activities that complement the employment-focused work of your job your way.***

A final critical success factor of the **your job your way** program that enabled relationship-based practice was the social activities contained within the program model. Staff members noted the benefits of these social activities not only for gaining young people's trust, but also for fostering relationships, social connections and communication skills between the young people in the program, which would in turn help them in employment:

“The social interaction; so when we do JobClubs and things like that, so the young people meeting and hanging out with people that they wouldn't usually... when we do group activities they think that we're just hanging out and having a coffee, but it is really building those communication skills and listening skills and things like that” (ST_S07).

Young people also confirmed the benefits of these types of social activities, explaining that it helped to share experiences with other people who were also going through the program and looking for work:

“We have a JobClub, so we get to meet other people in that and talk about our own experiences and stuff, which is good... it's good to talk to people that understand as well and, like, you [can] talk about your interview, like, good ones, bad ones and share your stories and stuff” (YP_P31).

The dual benefit of such activities was therefore not only in building relationships, but also in skill development for employment.

Aside from these implementation successes, other successes from the perspective of employers are included in Box 3.

Box 3 Successes from the perspective of employers

Employers highlighted three key successes or benefits of the **your job your way** model from their perspective:

1. By accessing young people who had not worked before through **your job your way**, employers could train young people from scratch in the preferred ways of their own workplace:

“I think [the program] is great because I guess when they are new to the workforce, we can kind of train them to work the way that we like them to” (E_P03).

2. The support from **your job your way** meant that employers could “take a punt on people that we would not normally pick out of our selection criteria” (E_P14). The financial support for young people's positions in particular meant that “the government incentives were there to [help us] take the risk [on young people]” (E_P14).

3. Financial resources available to **your job your way** clients for training and licensing (e.g. forklift licenses) not only benefited young people, but also enabled workplaces to gain more staff with qualifications, without the business having to pay for those qualifications directly:

“The [young person] got a forklift license, which was great and that is a skill that he'll take with him all the way. He's got that as well, which was good for us [as a business]. It is [usually] like a – I think it's about a \$600 odd exercise [that we would have to pay]” (E_P07).

Implementation successes in the context of COVID-19

Beyond the implementation successes of the **your job your way** program in general, staff also mentioned specific successes of the program during the COVID-19 crisis. These successes are particularly notable, given the extenuating circumstances in which the program was operating.

Staff were proud of the fact that despite running **your job your way** almost entirely by phone during the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority of young people remained engaged with the program:

“They don’t have the mutual obligation requirements – [those] have been suspended ... [but] all of our members have chosen to continue to participate, except for two... so for 98% of them, it’s been no change at all. They continue to engage with us and participate” (ST_S06).

While external factors meant that it was harder for young people to find employment during the COVID-19 crisis, staff noted that young people continued to work with **your job your way** staff on their development: “they’re still engaging, still talking, we’re still working on different things, it’s just a bit of a push backward getting them into employment” (ST_S08). Staff noted that it was easiest to keep engaged with the young people who had been in the program the longest, as they already had trusting relationships established with them.

Other successes during the COVID-19 crisis included that both staff and young people felt that the move to virtual contact had gone successfully. In most cases, staff contacted young people by phone. Staff noted that, despite some initial challenges as they got used to the new arrangements, the phone calls had been working well:

“We find anyway that clients are a lot more contactable via phone ... [with] today’s society with phones and text messages, that’s quite useful” (ST_S08).

“We’ve offered them the opportunities to do Zoom sessions or sessions on video or video calls and they’ve all said ‘no’ to that, they’re not interested, they’re more than happy with phone calls” (ST_S07).

“Initially when we started going over the phone it was very difficult to keep them on the phone and keep them engaged, but they’ve gotten much better at it definitely and I suppose I have as well. Because it’s just very different over the phone than having them with you... just not having that face-to-face interaction” (ST_S07).

The young people also confirmed that phone contact worked well for them:

“Well, there’s no face-to-face contact anymore, so it’s all been over the phone, but it’s still been like the same effect” (YP_P30).

“We haven’t been able to see... our workers face-to-face, but we’ve been having a lot of phone conversations and that, so it’s been really good still” (YP_P32).

In some instances, other technological options were used, including FaceTime and Facebook Messenger – to excellent effect for a small number of staff, particularly those who did intensive emotional support work – although on the whole, staff noted that young people preferred phone calls, as these did not affect their data download limits. Phone calls also appeared to work well for staff themselves, a few of whom were not confident using the video technologies. As noted elsewhere in the report, staff also counted it as a success that the extra phone calls gave them the opportunity to practice and improve young people’s conversational phone skills.

Implementation challenges

There were a range of challenges in the implementation of the **your job your way** program, which are summarised in this section. The key challenge – misunderstanding of the **your job your way** model by others – potentially feeds into a range of the other challenges, as detailed below.

Key challenge: Misunderstanding of the your job your way model by others

A central challenge of the **your job your way** program was ensuring that others within the landscape of employment and youth support understood the **your job your way** model and its differences from other employment programs. Staff frequently commented that colleagues in jobactive and other related services did not understand why their caseloads were smaller or the difference in what the more intensive support included in the **your job your way** model required of staff:

“There was [comments like] ‘Oh, you guys have got it made, you’ve only got 25 clients’... but they didn’t understand all of the other stuff, all the other admin things that we had to do as part of it as well and how time consuming that was... When we put in applications, we do the whole applications – [jobactive] will just send the job to the client and say ‘Apply for this’, whereas we will sit with the client and do the actual application and help them actually put the application in, which is much more individual[ised]” (ST_S02).

“I think there are definitely some times when... people’s external assumptions about what you’re doing and whether it’s of merit can be a bit of a pain... I’ve gotten spoken to a couple of times about not having enough appointments booked in... but ultimately my responsibilities are not just appointment based” (ST_S03).

“There have been times over the two years where I’ve been questioned about why am I not doing marketing to employers? And that is not something that does actually fall within my role – I looked and I checked and I was like I don’t really think that’s my job” (ST_S03).

“I mean some of the challenges have been with other people outside of the program as well not entirely being happy with the perceived autonomy that [my **your job your way** colleague] and I had. So people... probably not fully understanding the program to start with and being a little oppositional towards it” (ST_S06).

These misunderstandings of the **your job your way** model made it difficult for staff to have their work appropriately acknowledged while they worked alongside colleagues in more traditional employment services and programs. It is possible that misunderstandings of the model also fed into some of the management, training and resourcing challenges noted later in the report, in that others did not understand the scope of support and resources required by the **your job your way** model and its staff.

Misunderstandings of the model may also have fed into some of the challenges in collaboration with employers and jobactive/other service providers discussed later in the report, if there was not a mutual understanding of the model and its purpose and points of difference.

Further, misunderstandings of the model may also have contributed to some data collection and recording keeping challenges, also mentioned later in the report, where it appeared there were duplicated record keeping arrangements across **your job your way** and jobactive systems, perhaps because of a poor understanding of how the two systems integrated.

In addition, a manager noted that misunderstandings of the **your job your way** model’s intention to provide preventative support (often at greater cost than traditional employment programs) to save money later might affect the scalability of the model to more sites around Australia and its potential to remain a key piece of **yourtown**’s employment services, given budgetary constraints.

In this respect, the findings highlight that a strong understanding of the **your job your way** model not only by **yourtown** staff, but also by others in related services, is critical to its ongoing implementation and success.

Clients, personnel and resourcing

Staff of **your job your way** reported a range of challenges related to: recruiting and placing sufficient clients to meet targets; adequately supporting managers; and resourcing clients and staff appropriately. In many cases, these challenges affected some sites more than others, given their specific circumstances (e.g. geographic location), and in some cases, the challenges were resolved as the **your job your way** program became better established over time.

- **Recruitment and placement targets.** One site noted significant challenges meeting both their client recruitment and work placement targets, noting that it had been difficult to both attract the target number of young people to the program as well as find appropriate work for them. This was a regional site, which noted that their local community had both fewer young people and fewer employment opportunities. While the site gained momentum and better met their targets over time, there were periods where the required targets felt discouraging: “With placement targets, I’ve kind of felt a little unrealistic at times given our circumstances as a regional area – that’s been a challenge” (ST_S06).
- **Management practice.** Staff at two sites noted that inconsistent and disengaged management practice had affected the implementation of the **your job your way** program at specific points in time, although this challenge had usually eventually been resolved. Managerial problems were generally either because of turnover in positions, leading to a loss of knowledge and engagement of managers, or because managers oversaw multiple employment programs and **your job your way** was not highlighted as a priority or as properly within their reporting lines. In some cases, problems with management practice led to flow-on issues, such as, in one case, staff being pulled out of **your job your way** to act in unoccupied positions in another employment program. Overall, this challenge speaks to the findings discussed earlier that one of the key challenges of **your job your way** was misunderstanding by others of the model. It also highlights the importance of clear reporting lines and management responsibilities to the successful implementation of **your job your way**.
- **Training.** Staff in two sites noted that training and orientation opportunities had been limited when joining the **your job your way** program, especially on-the-job training. This is possibly related to the turnover in managers highlighted earlier and was particularly problematic for staff who had not come from roles in jobactive and therefore had less familiarity with the overall employment services system. One staff member noted that lack of on-the-job training meant that two years into her role, there were still some aspects that she was learning. She expected that further training would be available when **your job your way** was no longer a pilot program.
- **Resourcing.** There were a small number of examples of **your job your way** sites reporting initial resourcing problems, particularly during their establishment phase, although some of the problems resolved over time. One site noted initially needing to share the program’s car, which negatively impacted the flexibility and timing of transport they could offer to young people. While common across the different **your job your way** sites, one site noted the difficulty of sharing office space with a number of other similar programs (jobactive and other employment agencies), which meant that it was hard to maintain the point of difference between their services. Another staff member noted a lack of private space in their office, which made it hard to engage with young people in a personal way onsite.

Collaboration

To be effective, the **your job your way** program requires successful collaborative relationships with a range of others. This includes potential employers of young people and staff in other related services,

such as jobactive, other employment services and other services for youth support. There were some challenges with these relationships, as summarised below.

- **Employer engagement.** Across the **your job your way** sites, many staff mentioned that they felt ‘employer engagement’ was an area that had not been sufficiently covered in their work. Staff were aware that employers did not necessarily have good experiences with employment services, and felt that not enough had been done to build **your job your way**’s relationships with employers or explain the difference of their model to them; this connects back to the issues around misunderstandings of the **your job your way** model discussed earlier. Staff noted that there were clear opportunities to have more of an overall engagement strategy directed towards employers:

“It doesn’t matter how fancy we talk about the program, we’re just an employment agency and most [employers] don’t want to deal with us... I think we need to build more of a stakeholder engagement with our community and the businesses here in [our state]” (ST_S04).

“I wouldn’t mind having a networking business meeting happening, so that everyone knows each other, all the business owners, and then we can like have like a presentation about what our program is like. We started it but it fell through... I think we need to bring that back” (ST_S04).

Staff noted the impact of a lack of employer engagement, particularly regarding ongoing support to **your job your way** clients once they were in a job; while a small number of employers were happy to have ongoing support from **your job your way** staff for their employees, many did not want to engage further with the **your job your way** program or **yourtown**, after making a hire. While recognising that this type of further engagement is a “personal choice and that’s fair – they’ve got a job to do” (ST_S06), many **your job your way** staff nevertheless appeared to feel this was a lost opportunity to continue to support young people.

From the perspective of employers, while none explicitly commented on a lack of engagement from **your job your way**, some noted having issues with young people in their workplace which might have been resolved with greater ongoing involvement from **your job your way** staff. For example, while many employers were happy with their **your job your way** hires, others commented on experiencing difficulty with issues such as young people’s attitude to work, commitment, reliability, accountability, punctuality, presentation/appearance, motivation, mastery of soft skills (e.g. communication) and use of drugs and alcohol. These issues tended to be more of a concern for employers than young people being inexperienced, having had time out of the workforce or only having entry-level skills:

“Most people have got a pretty good reason why they’ve been unemployed for a while. I don’t find it makes too much of a difference, as long as they’ve got the right attitude towards work... [the right attitude is] just kind of a willingness to learn, kind of taking initiative, more than skills or qualifications. We believe that everything can be trained except for attitude” (E_P03).

In other cases, employers commented that they did not feel that young people had been well matched to their workplace, in that they were not interested in the area of work being undertaken there, and that this prevented them from engaging well at work:

“... a lot of them just use their phone and they go ‘This is not for me, I don’t want to do this’ and then you’ll never see them again ... We do go through some vigorous training ... it’s a bit discouraging when you go through three days training [with] someone [who doesn’t want to be there]” (E_P14).

Further, some employers commented on other areas where they could better work together with **your job your way** staff to enable more employment opportunities, if there was closer attention to

their business needs – for example, better aligning employers’ hiring timelines with **your job your way** timelines for providing workers:

“Well, if I need people now, it’s easier if [it’s] a backpacker – if we put up on a backpacker’s job board, often people can start now or the next day... the window of opportunity is so narrow for [our business]... so I don’t care who it is [that I employ] at the end of the day. If **yourtown** cannot supply someone immediately, well, bad luck” (E_P01).

Notably, all of these issues regarding young people’s attitude, the suitability of placements and matching **your job your way** placements to employers’ timelines are ones which **your job your way** may have been able to assist employers with managing, if there had been greater proactive and ongoing engagement between young people, **your job your way** staff and employers, to understand employer needs and experiences in hiring young people from the program. As such, this suggests that improving **your job your way**’s approach to ‘employer engagement’ is critical to further improving outcomes for young people.

- **Relationship with jobactive and other service providers.** There were mixed reports from **your job your way** staff about the success of collaborating with jobactive staff and other related service providers. Some staff noted communicating and cooperating well with jobactive and other employment services staff to ensure there was no competition or disagreements about taking each other’s clients, while other staff noted that this had been a more difficult issue in their site:

“We talk to jobactive and we talk to **yourtown Plus** to make sure that they’re happy to let [their clients] go [to **your job your way**], because we don’t want to take their clients that they’ve almost got into a job or [disrupt] things that they’re working on with the client that are working well” (ST_S02).

“We were doing okay, but in the last six months this has changed because the members who are eligible for our program, if we made contact with them... we’d have a heated conversation [with] their previous consultants to not touch them, because they’re working with them.... the last six months it was ‘No, you can’t take them, because I’ve been working closely with them and they’re going to be employed in the next two weeks’” (ST_S04).

These comments suggest that how the relationship and collaboration with other service providers was managed varied across the **your job your way** program and its sites, and over time. Similarly, there was variation in the extent to which **your job your way** collaborated with and referred on clients to other service providers to assist in the range of holistic wellbeing issues that young people might be experiencing. Some **your job your way** staff noted successfully referring clients on to GPs, headspace, psychologists and driving instructors to assist young people. By comparison other staff noted that there was more capacity to draw on the range of skills and experience available within the broader **yourtown** staffing more generally, beyond the employment services skillset. Overall, strong communication and collaborative practice was a key benefit to the implementation of the **your job your way** model where it happened well.

Data collection and record keeping

Data collection and record keeping presented a range of challenges across **your job your way**, including with regard to attitudes to the data being collected and the processes for collecting it.

- **Assessment tools used with young people.** The assessment tools used with young people attracted mixed reports. The WorkStar™ was generally seen as easy to implement with young people and both staff and young people noted that **your job your way** clients appreciated seeing their

improvement on its outcomes. One staff member is quoted on this below, and further evidence from young people is included in Chapter 3 of the report:

“... the WorkStar™ – a lot of the members quite enjoy that; they really like seeing where they’re at and the progress that they’re making in life and in their educational achievements. So I think that’s actually a really handy tool to have” (ST_S06).

While the WorkStar™ was generally well-liked, some staff commented that young people did not appreciate the BSKB assessment tool, which focused on literacy and numeracy. This was for a range of reasons, including that **your job your way** clients felt they were being tested when the tool was implemented with them, and that they worried that staff would have a poor opinion of them if their scores were low. In another case, a staff member commented on the goal of the **your job your way** program that young people should achieve 80% of a Level 3 score on the BSKB, noting that she felt young people resented this goal as it “feels a bit one size fits all to them” (ST_03) and was not necessarily a priority for young people themselves. No young people commented on this point directly in their interviews, however. The comparison of young people’s perspectives on the WorkStar™ and BSKB suggests that assessment tools that are motivational and that help young people visualise their own improvement, without being measured against a particular goal, are most youth friendly. Staff also commented on the difficulty of getting follow up data from young people once they had commenced working.

- **Intensive and duplicated record keeping.** Intensive and duplicated record keeping was a further data challenge for **your job your way**. Staff commented that overall the collection of information on young people was “very intensive” and there was “a lot of double handling of information”. One staff member explained that the same information frequently needed to be recorded in up to four different places (that is, ESS, a daily report for jobactive, a **your job your way** internal spreadsheet and the **your job your way** client database), which was a drain on staff time, and also confusing to keep track of and confusing to know who was responsible for recording what information where. In addition, the reporting requirements changed over the life of the program and some of the original mechanisms (e.g. Work Success Forms and Journey Planner) became less utilised over time, but without clear communication to staff about the reasons for this. The multitude of data that was collected also led to confusion about the need to collect intake and review data for some measures (K10 and PWI).

Implementation challenges in the context of COVID-19

The key challenge of the **your job your way** program implementation during the COVID-19 crisis was that social distancing requirements curtailed the range of activities offered by the program. While staff remained highly engaged with young people over the phone and continued to offer them support, there were a range of functions that the program could not provide when staff were unable to see young people face-to-face. This included a lack of ability to transport young people to job interviews, work, healthcare or other appointments; cancellation of workshops and engagement activities; no emotional support provided face-to-face; and lack of opportunity to visit young people at work or to touch base in-person with employers. The effect of this was that some staff felt that the key point of difference between **your job your way** and jobactive was curtailed, as it had been precisely these kinds of activities that made **your job your way** different and more intensive compared to jobactive:

“I suppose a big difference from jobactive was our flexibility and our transport and things like that, so being able to meet the young people in a café or being able to pick them up from home and go for a bit of drive – that’s been a big change definitely, and having to do everything over the phone” (ST_S07).

In some cases, however, some of the **your job your way** point of difference could still be offered, even

if the full service could not:

“We do have still access to the Employment Fund for things like top ups for fuel vouchers, to get people to and from things, but it’s more of a ‘You’ve got to get yourself there’, because we can’t say ‘Okay, if you’re worried about getting here on time, we can pick you up’” (ST_S03).

Notably, while many young people seemed to cope well with the smaller range of supports, for some young people, the effects of the curtailed range of support from **your job your way** were more serious. One staff member gave the example of a young person who had been seeking mental health support with the help of **your job your way** staff, but his opportunity and motivation to attend diminished with a lack of transport assistance:

“Yes, [we are restricted from] getting them to places. So I have a client at the moment who I’m trying to get in to have an assessment by a GP for mental health issues and alcohol use... he came on with us just before all this closed down and we had a couple of weeks that we worked with him and he was kind of contemplating that change. And so I tried to get him into a doctor, a GP, to get that started. He missed the first appointment and then it’s just gone downhill” (ST_S02).

The curtailed range of program activities was also a challenge for staff workload. As **your job your way** is based on an intensive amount of work with a small caseload, some staff found that when they were unable to provide the full range of services, their workload diminished to the point where they needed to split their time across other programs, therefore taking their focus away from **your job your way**:

“The program itself – given the caseloads are so small already then taking that offline ... it’s been very difficult for the program to continue... Since the COVID-19 thing happened, we probably haven’t really needed two people in the program and given that situation I actually broke [staff member’s] role up in the last couple of weeks. So split her 50/50 between **your job your way** and [another program], that was (a) because there was a business need for it and (b) [she] was becoming quite bored with the level of workload that wasn’t there for her anymore” (ST_S09).

Breaking up staff time across other programs presents a risk for **your job your way**, as there is potential for staff not to be brought back full-time to the program, even when their usual workload, caseload and full range of **your job your way** services returns. This would be a viability risk for the program.

5 Cost effectiveness analysis

This section compares the costs of achieving key outcome across **your job your way** and jobactive. Being client-centred and more resource-intensive, **your job your way** was expected to have a greater cost per person compared to jobactive. It was also expected that the larger investment would lead to long-term cost savings and better outcomes for young people. For the purpose of this cost effectiveness analysis we considered achieving the 26-week outcome the key program outcome as it provides an indication that the young person is likely to remain employed and, hence, achieve the goal of the program – break the cycle of long-term unemployment. While as demonstrated throughout this report a range of vocational and non-vocational outcomes were achieved, all of which contribute to young people achieving employment and leading safe, happy lives, many are difficult to express in monetary terms, or have not been monitored across comparable employment programs, such as jobactive. They are, however, important outcomes to consider in addition to the 26-week outcome and this economic analysis.

The 26-week outcome data was collected across all three sites for both **your job your way** and jobactive clients, allowing a comparison of outcomes, costs and potential savings. Costs were made available for both programs. Additional data on the cost of unemployment was sourced from Department of Social Services (2019).

The total **your job your way** cost over the two-year period of pilot implementation across the three sites was \$1,375,774. This was significantly lower than the cost of implementing jobactive across the three sites, \$4,249,829 (Table 17).

Table 17 Costs, your job your way and jobactive, July 2018 – June 2020, across all three sites

Cost	your job your way	jobactive
Total staff expenses	\$968,244	\$2,861,535
Property expenses	\$250,641	\$1,007,559
IT expenses	\$53,809	\$128,670
Motor vehicle expenses	\$46,745	\$68,109
Marketing and PR	\$0	\$0
Direct client expenses	\$4,266	\$3,777
Administration expenses	\$31,317	\$31,460
Depreciation	\$20,036	\$148,130
Other	\$715	\$589
Total	\$1,375,774	\$4,249,829

Source: **yourtown** General ledger. The figures are exclusive of corporate/head office overheads.

Forty-five 26-week outcomes were achieved across the three sites by **your job your way** clients compared to 41 such outcomes in jobactive²². Over the two years **your job your way** engaged with 210 and jobactive engaged with 481 long-term unemployed (LTUE) young people. In addition to the LTUE 15 to 24-year-olds, jobactive serviced a wide range of clients across the three sites, including people older than 24 or who were not LTUE. As such, accounting for all clients, the total number of 26-week outcomes achieved by jobactive clients across the three sites between July 2018 and June 2020 was 334, including 41 outcomes for LTUE young people and 293 for non-LTUE and LTUE clients of all ages (Table 18).

The financial reporting does not allow differentiation between the costs of achieving the 26-week outcome for LTUE and non-LTUE in jobactive, or by age groups. However, understanding the total number of 26-week outcomes (334 outcomes) and the total cost of the program allows us to average the cost of a 26-week outcome in jobactive to \$13,066. Similarly, the cost of a 26-week outcome in **your job your way** can be calculated at \$30,573. To be noted, however, that many of the jobactive outcomes were achieved by non-LTUE or LTUE older than 24 (n=293) while the **your job your way** outcomes were achieved by LTUE 15-24 year-olds (Table 18). As the costs of achieving an outcome for a non-LTUE person is likely to be lower than that of achieving an outcome for a LTUE, the current estimation is conservative.

Stage 1: The first step of the cost-effectiveness analysis compares the number of 26-week outcomes achieved by **your job your way** and jobactive in the scenario that both programs engaged with the same number of clients (n=481 clients, the total number of LTUE youth jobactive engaged with over the two years). The ratio of 26-week outcomes achieved by LTUE 15-24-year-old clients as a proportion of commencements was calculated at 21.4% for **your job your way** and 8.5% for jobactive (Table 13 and Figure 10). The 21.4% conversion ratio was then applied to the jobactive caseload (n=481 clients aged 15-24) to hypothesize that if **your job your way** engaged with 481 clients over the two years, the number of 26-week outcomes would have been 103 (21.4% conversion ratio times 481 commencements). This indicates some additional 62 outcomes would have been achieved for LTUE young people, compared to the current 41 outcomes achieved by jobactive (Table 19).

Table 18 Average cost per 26-week outcome, your job your way and jobactive

Outcome	your job your way	jobactive
26-week LTUE outcome, young people (1)	45	41
26-week outcome (clients older than 24) (2)	N/A	293
Total 26-week outcome (3)	45	334
Total LTUE clients (total program commencements), young people (4)	210	481
LTUE 26-week outcome/commencement ratio (1) / (4)	21.4%	8.5%
Total program cost (5)	\$1,375,774	\$4,364,205
Average cost per 26-week outcome (5) / (3)	\$30,573	\$13,066
Cost for 62 additional outcomes (scenario 1)	\$1895,526	N/A

Source: **yourtown**, General Ledger Finance Division.

²² These are 26-week outcomes for long-term unemployed youth (15-24-year-olds).

Table 19 Additional outcomes and costs if your job your way and jobactive engaged with the same number of clients (Step 1 Cost effectiveness analysis)

Step 1 Cost effectiveness analysis	your job your way	jobactive actual
Number of clients (1)	481	481
LTUE 26-week outcome/commencement ratio (2)	21.4%	8.5%
Number of 26-week outcomes (3) = (2) * (1)	103	41
Additional outcomes (your job your way – jobactive difference) (4)	62	N/A
Average cost per 26-week outcome (5)	\$30,573	\$13,066
Cost for 62 additional outcomes (6) = (4) * (5)	\$1,895,526	N/A

Stage 2: The second step of the analysis is to understand the value of these additional 62 outcomes and how that translates to savings. At a calculated average cost of \$30,573 per LTUE 26-week outcome, it would cost \$1,895,526 for **your job your way** to achieve the additional 62 outcomes (Table 19).

The Department of Social Services and PwC (DSS 2019) calculated the average lifetime welfare cost of a Youth Allowance Other recipient at \$392,000. The average lifetime cost of the rest of the population is \$189,000 (DSS, 2019). As such, the saving generated by breaking the cycle of long-term unemployment is valued at \$203,000 per person. Two scenarios are considered to calculate the savings generated by the 62 additional outcomes at the cost of \$1.9m (Table 20).

Scenario 1: Clients achieve the 26-week outcome and remain employed, no one returns to unemployment. The 62 additional outcomes will then equate to a lifetime welfare saving of \$12,586,000. Compared to the initial, upfront investment of \$1,895,526 needed for clients to engage with **your job your way** this equates to a saving of \$10,690,474 for only 62 additional 26-week outcomes across the three sites. For every additional dollar invested, the return is likely to be sixfold (1 to 6.6 return ratio). The savings are likely to be in the reach of billions if the investment is extrapolated nationally for the program to engage with all long-term unemployed youth.

Scenario 2: It may be that some clients achieve more than one outcome, for example if they lose the job past the 26-week point and they return to the program to then achieve another 26-week outcome and remain employed. A conservative assumption in this scenario is that every other person achieves two rather than one 26-week outcome, reducing the number of additional people who break the cycle of unemployment to 41²³ (62 additional 26-week outcomes are achieved by 41 clients). In this situation the cost to deliver the **your job your way** program to these 41 clients remains the same (\$1,895,526), because the program works to deliver 62 outcomes²⁴. The savings from breaking the cycle of LTUE for the 41 young people would be 41*\$203,000=\$8,323,000. Less the upfront investment of \$1,895,526 results in a net saving to government of \$7,237,566. The rate of return on the investment would be 4.4 (Table 20).

²³ 21 clients would achieve 2 outcomes each (42 outcomes) and 20 clients would achieve one outcome each (20 outcomes), to a total of 62 outcomes across 41 clients.

²⁴ Indeed, the additional cost per outcome for individuals achieving the outcome the second time may be lower as they would need less intensive intervention the second time, however, to remain conservative, we consider a constant cost per outcome.

Table 20 Additional costs and savings if your job your way and jobactive engaged with the same number of clients (Stage 2 Cost effectiveness analysis)

Step 2 analysis	
Number of additional outcomes	62
Cost for additional outcomes (1)	\$1,895,526
Youth Allowance Other recipient average lifetime welfare cost (2)	\$392,000
Rest of the population average lifetime welfare cost (3)	\$189,000
Average lifetime cost savings from breaking the cycle of unemployment (4) = (3) – (2)	\$203,000
Scenario 1	
Number of clients breaking the cycle of LTUE (5)	62
Total lifetime cost savings (6) = (5) * (4)	\$12,586,000
your job your way savings (7) = (6) – (1)	\$10,690,474
your job your way cost to savings ratio (8) = (1) : (6)	1:6.6
Scenario 2	
Number of clients breaking the cycle of LTUE (9)	41
Total lifetime cost savings (10) = (9) * (4)	\$8,323,000
your job your way savings (11) = (10) – (1)	\$6,427,474
your job your way cost to savings ratio (12) = (1) : (10)	1:4.4

This evaluation utilised data collected between July 2018 and June 2020, for the two years since the establishment of the **your job your way** pilot. It is likely that the outcomes assessed in this evaluation are further improved, as it can take up to three years before performance is at a consistently high level (**yourtown** 2020).

Box 4 Cost analysis – key figures

- Average cost of 26-week outcome **your job your way** \$30,573
- Average cost of 26-week outcome jobactive \$13,066
- 210 commencements and 45 26-week outcomes in **your job your way** (21.4% conversion rate); 481 commencements and 41 26-week outcomes in jobactive (8.5% conversion rate)
- 62 additional 26-week outcomes achieved if **your job your way** engaged with 481 clients (21.4% conversion rate), at the cost of \$1,895,526
- Youth Allowance Other recipient lifetime welfare cost \$392,000; average lifetime cost of the rest of the population \$189,000 – saving generated by breaking the cycle of unemployment is \$203,000 per person (\$12,586,000 for 62 people)
- *Scenario 1:* \$10,690,474 saving from breaking the cycle of unemployment for 62 young people (over \$6 of return for every \$1 invested upfront)
- *Scenario 2:* every other client returns to unemployment shortly after having achieved the 26-week outcome. The 62 outcomes would be achieved by 41 clients (21 clients achieve 2 outcomes, 20 clients achieve one outcome), with total lifetime savings of \$8,323,000 for the \$1,895,526 upfront investment (over \$4 return for every \$1 invested upfront).

6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following recommendations are made to retain and strengthen the **your job your way** program into the future:

1. Continue to prioritise and resource the relationship-based practice of the **your job your way** model.

The relationship-based practice of **your job your way** is a clear strength of the model and, in the accounts of young people, their family, partners and friends, as well as staff, the critical factor which meant that the program could achieve the positive outcomes it did. Notably, strong relationships between clients and staff were particularly cited as critical to the program continuing to achieve positive outcomes during the challenging COVID-19 crisis.

For these reasons, while time- and resource-intensive, there is a very clear case for continuing to prioritise the relationship-based practice of the **your job your way** model. The evaluation highlighted that there were five key elements of the program design which enabled relationship-based practice, and therefore these program design elements should continue to be part of any forthcoming **your job your way** model and should also be considered for further resourcing in future:

- Smaller caseloads compared to the jobactive model.
- Intensive support.
- Skilled and ‘youth friendly’ staffing within a dual servicing model.
- Staff discretion about how some program funds are spent and where services are delivered.
- Social activities to complement the employment focused work of **your job your way**.

2. Communicate a clear account of the **your job your way** model and its purpose and points of difference compared to other employment services to all staff and stakeholders.

Misunderstandings of the **your job your way** model challenged many aspects of the program’s implementation, including appropriately acknowledging staffs’ workloads; ensuring appropriate management practice, training and resourcing; hampering collaboration efforts; and complicating data collection and record keeping.

For this reason, communicating a clear account of the **your job your way** model and, importantly, its purpose and points of difference compared to other employment services is critically important. This account should be communicated to all stakeholders of **your job your way**, including **yourtown**’s own staff; managers; staff in related services (e.g. jobactive, other employment services and agencies, staff in other service provider organisations); potential employers; and young people, and their family, partners and friends.

All stakeholders should be given the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns, in order to enable the best understanding and collaborative practice possible. The messaging may need to differ based on each stakeholder’s needs; the critical function of the messaging should be ensuring that, from the perspective of their own interests in **your job your way**, each stakeholder understands how and why **your job your way** is different to other employment service models and what this means for how that stakeholder needs to engage with staff and clients of the program.

This messaging should be communicated not only by **yourtown**'s marketing staff but should also be embedded in roles and responsibilities whenever a new **your job your way** site is set up.

3. Improve program governance.

Improving program governance would include clarifying reporting lines, roles and responsibilities for all **yourtown** and **your job your way** staff (within the context of other employment services). Additionally, it would cover appropriate formal and on-the-job training and induction processes for new staff, and ensure that each site has physical resourcing (e.g. cars, office space) which is conducive to enabling the program and staff to meet their responsibilities. Where possible, physical resources that are separate to other employment services should be prioritised.

4. Create and embed an 'employer engagement strategy' within the your job your way model, with staffing and accountability structures to ensure it is thoroughly implemented.

Numerous staff noted that 'employer engagement' had not occurred as successfully as hoped within the **your job your way** model and that this had some impact on both the employment opportunities available to young people and the degree to which **your job your way** staff could continue to support **your job your way** clients once they had found a job. There was also evidence from employers that they experienced some continuing problems with managing **your job your way** clients in the workplace, which may have been addressed if **your job your way** staff had been able to have better continuing involvement with **your job your way** clients once they had found a job.

For this reason, creating and embedding an 'employer engagement strategy' within the **your job your way** model is critically important for the ongoing improvement of the program. As staff interviews suggested that this kind of employer engagement work had been hard to maintain within their existing roles, it is important to ensure that there are staffing and accountability structures to ensure that the employer engagement work takes place. The role of educating employers about the **your job your way** model might usefully be undertaken by a staff member separate to the staff who engage directly with young people, but the employment mentor from each site would still need to have relationships with employers, to ensure they can enter the workplace to continue to support young people once they have found a job.

5. Use all assessment tools to measure young people's individual progress without pre-set standardised goals.

Young people and staff's feedback showed that **your job your way** clients preferred the WorkStar™ to the BSKB, when evaluating the assessment tools used with them. This was because they found the WorkStar™ more motivational, whereas the BSKB felt more like a test and young people resented having a goal pre-set by **your job your way** of the BSKB scores the program wanted them to achieve.

Going forward, the **your job your way** program should therefore consider how all assessment tools can be implemented with young people in the most 'youth friendly' way possible. This should mean using the assessments to help young people visualise their own progress and improvement, without being measured against a particular or standardised goal. This approach should be taken with multiple tools, including not only the WorkStar™, but also the BSKB.

Similarly, it should be explained to young people the benefits of repeatedly collecting some

information, such as K10 or PWI, and the importance of engaging with these tools as mechanisms for tracking their progress and tailoring service activities to their needs.

6. Consider options for simplifying and streamlining the data and record keeping requirements for your job your way.

Staff noted that the data and record keeping requirements **for your job your way** were intensive and duplicative, as the same information frequently needed to be recorded in up to four different places (that is, ESS, a daily report for jobactive, a **your job your way** internal spreadsheet and the **your job your way** client database).

Simplifying and streamlining **your job your way's** data and record keeping process – and investigating whether there are feasible options to separate the **your job your way** record keeping from that of jobactive or to have jobactive data linked to **your job your way** records (that is, to auto-populate and avoid duplication of data collection) – is therefore important, and would significantly reduce workload burden on staff. It would also allow for a clearer and more streamlined outcomes measurement process, to understand the impact of the program on young people.

7. Promote the your job your way model as a cost-effective option in addressing long term youth unemployment, noting it is likely to generate a 1:6 cost-saving to government in welfare payments over the life course.

Appendix 1 Methodology

The evaluation of **your job your way** and methodology has been informed by a number of evaluation questions. The evaluation questions are summarised below and mapped against the research methods being used to answer each of the questions.

Table A 1 Evaluation questions and research methods

Evaluation questions	Methods							
	Client record analysis	Other program data	Young people (program member) interviews	Service provider interviews	Employer interviews/surveys	Family, partner, friend interviews	Other secondary data	Economic evaluation
What have been the challenges and successes in establishing your job your way ?				X				
What have been the challenges and successes in implementing your job your way ?				X				
What activities and outputs has your job your way produced or achieved?		X						
What are the strengths of your job your way ? What is working well?	X		X	X	X	X	X	
What improvements should be made to your job your way ?			X	X	X	X		
What other (internal/external) factors may be affecting the implementation of actions and achievement of outcomes?		X		X			X	
Are the intended your job your way outcomes being achieved? For whom?	X		X	X	X	X	X	
How has your job your way contributed to achievement of outcomes?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
What, if anything, are the			X	X	X	X	X	

unintended outcomes/consequences of your job your way ?								
How cost effective is your job your way ?								X
What is the cost-benefit ratio of your job your way ? What is the total cost of the program? What is the \$ value of outcomes?								X

Administrative data/client record analysis

A key part of the evaluation is the analysis of **your job your way** client record data. The **your job your way** client dataset includes a number of output and outcome variables that are of interest to the evaluation (Table A 2 Program data for analysis). This data is used to measure outcomes for young people and to understand for which young people the program works, and in what circumstances.

Young people engaged in the program were asked if they consented to their deidentified client records being used for research and evaluation purposes. Records have been analysed for all program participants who provided this consent during the pilot program. Administrative data comes from a number of sources including:

- **your job your way** Intake and Assessment form (see Appendix 3, includes K-10 measure of psychological distress & PWD)
- **Monthly reports per client completed by program staff on how the tailored, intensive support was provided.**
- Employment Services System (ESS) data collected as part of the jobactive program (which included employment outcomes, financial and internship data)²⁵
- The WorkStar™
- BSKB

The Work Star™ Scale measures the following items:

1. **Job skills and experience.** Job-specific and transferable skills, qualifications, training, volunteering, learning at work.
2. **Aspiration and motivation.** Wanting to work, widening scope, raising ambition, feeling confident, being realistic.
3. **Job-search skills.** Researching opportunities, applying for jobs, presenting yourself well.
4. **Stability.** Finances, housing, family, relationships, drug and alcohol misuse.

²⁵ ESS is the administrative data system implemented by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment as part of the jobactive program.

5. **Basic skills.** English, literacy, numeracy, IT and using computers.
6. **Workplace and social skills.** Presentation, timekeeping, behavior at work, getting on with people, working in a team.
7. **Health and wellbeing.** Health and wellbeing, stress, anxiety and depression, confidence and self-esteem.

Other program data

Analysis has also been conducted on other program data, summarised below.

Table A 2 Program data for analysis

Outputs
Total number of young people currently engaged in your job your way
Total number of refusals (e.g. didn't want to participate)
Total number of young people completed your job your way
Total number of young people who have exited your job your way prior to completion
Number of interviews received (total at each location and per young person)
Number of workshops and workshop attendance

Interviews

The research team conducted qualitative interviews with a range of stakeholders of the **your job your way** program, to gain in-depth understanding of the program for both the process and outcomes evaluations. Details of the interviews are included below.

Young people (program clients)

Interviews were conducted with young people who were clients of the **your job your way** program. In each site, two cohorts of young people were included. The purpose of following more than one cohort was to track young people participating during different stages of the program's development. A longitudinal interview process was adopted and young people had the opportunity to be interviewed up to three times during the course of the evaluation, at roughly 6-month intervals: near the start of their engagement in the program (interview 1, approximately 5-6 months into program), when they might reasonably be in employment (interview 2, approximately 10-11 months into program), and when they might reasonably have exited the program (interview 3, approximately 15-16 months after starting the program). The interviews were initially conducted mostly face-to-face but shifted exclusively to telephone under COVID-19 restrictions. Young people who participated in an interview were given the choice of a double movie pass or \$35 Coles/Myer gift voucher to thank and recompense them for participating in the research.

Family, partners and friends

Family members (e.g. mainly parents, but also a grandparent and a sibling), partners and friends of **your job your way** clients were also interviewed, in order to understand their perspective on how the program was implemented and its outcomes for participants. This group had the opportunity to be interviewed once during the evaluation (during Year 2 of the evaluation), and most of their interviews

were by telephone. Young people were asked to nominate a family member, partner or friend to be interviewed.

Service providers

Staff relevant to the **your job your way program** – including the dual support team in each site (Pathway Coach and Employment Mentor), Regional Managers and **yourtown** Senior Management staff – were also interviewed for the evaluation. Dual support team staff and Regional Managers had to opportunity to be interviewed up to four times, in line with the timing of young people’s interviews, while Senior Management staff were interviewed once, late in the evaluation to capture their summative insights. A combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted, depending on timing, preference and circumstance.

Employers

A selection of employers who had taken on a young person from the **your job your way** program were also interviewed for the evaluation, to understand their perspective on how well the program had prepared young people for the workplace. Employers had the opportunity to be interviewed once during the evaluation (during Year 2 of the evaluation) and most interviews were conducted by telephone. All employers who had taken on a **your job your way** member were invited and could then self-select to participate, except those who were listed as ineligible or unsuitable for participation by **yourtown** staff/records.

Secondary data analysis

Where benchmarking data exists in other secondary datasets (e.g. ESS data, K-10 data, PWI data), we used this to compare outcomes of **your job your way** clients with other young people. Having reliable benchmarking data is essential to assess the impact of an intervention. Data collected from jobactive clients provided essential evidence to assess the impact of **your job your way**, as it allowed the comparison of the outcomes of young people in the program to those of other long-term unemployed young people (that is, what would have happened had the intervention not been in place). PWI population level data was useful to benchmark change in young people’s wellbeing and the self-assessed mental health was benchmarked against a cohort of young people aged 15 to 24 from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey.

Outcome eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria was applied to the calculation of placement and outcome conversion rates:

1. If there are multiple placements for a job seeker that are tracking from the original placement’s outcome start date, only the first placement is counted and the succeeding placements are removed from the denominator. This rule applies to all conversion rates.
2. If the employment cease date is known and is less than 21 days (that is, 3 weeks) from the outcome start date, the placement is removed from the denominator for the 4-week outcome conversion.
3. If the end of the reporting date (that is, 30 June 2020) is less than 21 days (that is, 3 weeks) from the outcome start date, the placement is removed from the denominator for the 4-week outcome conversion.

4. If the employment cease date is known and less than 56 days (that is, 8 weeks) from the outcome start date, the placement is removed from the denominator for the 12-week outcome conversion.
5. If the end of the reporting date (that is, 30 June 2020) is less than 56 days (that is, 8 weeks) from the outcome start date, the placement is removed from the denominator for the 12-week outcome conversion.
6. If the placement is not claimed OR not eligible for the 12-week outcome, then the placement is not eligible for the 26-week outcome.
7. All 12-week claimed outcomes are eligible for 26-week outcomes unless there is less than 182 days (that is, 26 weeks) between the employment cease date OR end of the reporting date (that is, 30 June 2020) and the outcome start date.
8. If the 4/12/26-week outcome is 'still tracking' at the end of the reporting period (that is, 30 June 2020), it is not eligible as this will fall outside of the reporting period.
9. Placements with unknown employment cease dates are assumed to be eligible.

Economic analysis

A cost-effectiveness analysis was conducted, comparing the cost of achieving the 26-week outcomes for long-term unemployed (LTUE) young people aged 15-24 in **your job your way** and jobactive. As jobactive data comprises outcomes and costs for clients of all ages, both LTUE and non-LTUE, an average cost per 26-week outcome is a conservative estimate of the cost per LTUE 26-week outcome. This is due to the likelihood of clients who are older or non-LTUE needing less support to achieve the 26-week outcome.

It is likely that a client achieves more than one 26-week outcome, in which case the number of outcomes does not equate to the number of people breaking the cycle of unemployment. For this reason, an alternative scenario was sketched, to estimate additional costs and savings from having every other client achieve two outcomes (that is, they lose their job after they achieved the 26-week outcome, return to the program and achieve a 26-week outcome again, then remain employed).

The average lifetime costs of welfare for Youth Allowance Other recipients and all other population from the Department of Social Services (DSS 2019) was used to estimate potential savings.

Limitations

Limitations of the data and analysis in this report include the following:

- The Employment Services System (ESS) is a government-generated administrative dataset that is primarily used to measure service delivery performance and to inform operational and strategic directions. The data set may be used for evaluation purposes. However, assumptions were made, and business counting rules were adjusted to correspond to the methodology parameters of the **your job your way** evaluation; therefore enabling direct comparisons between jobactive and **your job your way** to be drawn from the data set. One example of an assumption is that if a job placement does not have a known employment cease date, then it is assumed that the employment is continuing and therefore eligible for an employment outcome. The reason for this assumption is that ESS data does not record job placement end dates. One example of an adjusted counting rule is that if there are multiple placements for a job seeker that are tracking from the original placement's outcome start date, then only the first placement is counted and the succeeding placements are removed from the eligibility denominator. The reason for this adjusted counting

rule is to be able to track the original placement's progression to its 4, 12, and 26-week outcomes and so as not to dilute the conversion rates. As there are inherent challenges in converting government-generated data (that is, ESS data) for evaluation purposes, caution must be exercised when making comparisons between the data presented in this evaluation and jobactive data that are published by the government or other service providers.

- The primary purposes of WorkStar™ and BKSB structured within the **your job your way** program have been as comprehensive, evidence-based assessment tools which identify strengths and barriers to workforce participation and influence program service delivery. The WorkStar™ is a validated outcomes measure which is completed online, collaboratively with the young person by discussing each area and referring to the WorkStar™ 'scales'. There is not a benchmarked standard within the WorkStar™ readings and while the data is reported based on professional and individual service user judgement, it may be largely influenced by the participant's self-assessment. Therefore, their reading may be a representation of the participant's perception of their circumstances which may differ to that of the worker. Literacy and numeracy assessments are conducted online via BKSB and are designed to be self-directed with interactive development resources. Factors which may have influenced participation and therefore data could include: motivation, different learning styles and environment, or previous learning experiences. Consideration should therefore be taken in relation to the reliability of both the WorkStar™ and BKSB data, and the regularity with which this data was collected.
- Limitations of the qualitative data include that young people who were more engaged with the **your job your way** program were more likely to participate in interviews; this inherently provided less opportunity to understand the experiences of those who disengaged with the program, which potentially included any young people who had a very poor experience of it. In addition, other limitations of the qualitative data are that a family member, partner or friend was not interviewed for every young person who participated and that not all employers were asked to be part of an interview, so those who were ineligible, those who were excluded by **yourtown** as being unsuitable and those who chose not to be interviewed may have had different views to those who were interviewed. Taken together, these limitations suggest that the views represented in the report are those of the stakeholders who were most engaged with the program, and that the report uncovers less information about why others may have disengaged.

Appendix 2 Outcomes and indicators framework

Table A 3 Outcomes and indicators framework

Domains	Outcomes	Indicators/outputs	Data collection methods	Comparative data available	
Engagement	YP is engaged with program	Attendance	Admin data: ESS SP interview YP interview	N/A	
	YP maintains engagement	Level of engagement	YP interview SP interview	N/A	
	YP engaged with PC & EM	Relationship with PC and EM	YP interview SP interview	N/A	
	Increased motivation	Level of motivation	YP interview SP interview	N/A	
	YP is satisfied with program	Satisfaction with SP, quality of service, help received	YP interview	N/A	
	YP referred to other sources of support	Satisfaction with information on other support services available to them	YP interview SP interview		
	YP demonstrates help seeking behaviour	Demonstrated help seeking behaviour	YP interview	N/A	
	Job ready	YP has the skills to do the job they seek	Skills level; Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™	N/A
				YP interview	
SP interview					

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Domains	Outcomes	Indicators/outputs	Data collection methods	Comparative data available
	YP is able to look for a job	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™ YP interview	N/A
	YP is ready to look for a job	YP has resume YP has referees lined up YP has completed job search program/employability program Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™ YP interview	N/A
	YP can effectively search for their goal job	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™, intake data YP interview SP interview	Workstar™ benchmarks
	YP is motivated to work	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™ YP interview	N/A
	YP has job goal	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™ YP interview Family, partners and friends interview	N/A
	YP has achievable job goal	YP has completed skills analysis	Admin data: Workstar™, SP interview	N/A
	YP has basic skills	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™	N/A
	YP understands workplace practices	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™ YP interview SP interview	N/A

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Domains	Outcomes	Indicators/outputs	Data collection methods	Comparative data available
Non-vocational barriers	Non-vocational barriers to work are removed/managed	Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™, intake data YP interview SP interview Family, partners and friends interviews	N/A
	Improved self-esteem	PWI; Workstar™ score	Admin data: Workstar™; PWI intake and review data YP interviews, Family, partners and friends interviews	PWI National data
	Improved mental health	Kessler-10 Psychological Distress Scale	Admin data: intake and review data Family, partners and friends interview	Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey
	Improved health and wellbeing	PWI, Workstar™ score	Admin data: intake data, review data, Workstar™ YP interview, Family, partners and friends interviews	PWI National data
Employment	YP gains employment	Employment outcomes	Admin data: ESS	DESE jobactive data
	YP maintains employment	Employment outcomes at 4-, 12-, 26-weeks	Admin data: ESS	DESE jobactive data
	YP has improved employment and other life opportunities	Perception of opportunities	YP interview, SP interview Family, partners and friends interviews	N/A

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Domains	Outcomes	Indicators/outputs	Data collection methods	Comparative data available
Employer outcomes	Improved attitudes to LTUE YP	Perceptions of LTUE YP	Employer interview SP interview	N/A
	Increased awareness of your job your way	Level of awareness	Employer interview SP interview	N/A
	Increased support of your job your way	Likelihood to employ another LTUE YP	Employer interview SP interview	N/A
	Increased knowledge of issues facing LTUE YP, their strengths & challenges	Level of knowledge and awareness	Employer interview SP interview	N/A
	Increased commitment to LTUE YP	Likelihood to recommend LTUE to other employers	Employer interview SP interview	N/A
	Satisfaction with the YP employed	Level of satisfaction	Employer interview SP interview	N/A
	Program outcomes	Positive relationships develop between EM and employers	Nature of relationships between EM and employers	Employer interview SP interview
Employers and community engage with the program		Level of engagement	Employer interview SP interview	N/A

Note: YP: young people; LTUE: long term unemployed; PC: pathways coach; EM: employment mentor; SP: service provider; DESE: Department of Education, Skills and Employment; ESS: Employment Services System; PWI: Personal Wellbeing Index; K10: Kessler Score.

Appendix 3 Intake and Assessment form

your job your way Intake and Assessment form

To be completed by the Participant with Pathways Mentor / Employment Coach at the Initial Appointment Interview and in conjunction with the *your job your way Procedure*.

Date	/ /	JSID:
Full Name		
Date of Birth	/ /	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to disclose	
Mobile Number		
Email		
Do you have regular access to reliable technology?	Smart Phone Computer Internet Access: Wifi / Mobile Plan / Prepaid Mobile iPad/Tablet None of the above	
How often do you check your emails?	Daily 3-5 times per week Weekly Other:	
Can you access your emails on your phone?	Yes No	
Which is your preferred method of social media?	Facebook Instagram WhatsApp Snapchat Viber <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> I don't use any	
How often do you check your social media?	Daily 3-5 times per week Weekly Other: I don't use any social media	
Next of Kin Name (or best contact)		
Relationship to you		Mobile No:
Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, both <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say		

Employment Skills	
What type of work are you looking for? Please provide 3. <i>(For example, Administration, Horticulture, Hospitality, IT/Computers, Machinery, Retail, Traineeship/Apprenticeship, Warehouse, other...)</i>	
Skills/Occupation	<input type="text"/>
Skills/Occupation	<input type="text"/>
Skills/Occupation	<input type="text"/>
Short Term Goals	<input type="text"/>
Long Term Goals	<input type="text"/>
I don't know	<input type="text"/>

Are you interested in			
Full Time	Traineeships	Indigenous	Other
Part Time	Apprenticeships	Positions	<input type="text"/>
Casual		Graduate Positions	
If part time or casual, please ask how many hours per week they are seeking and why		<input type="text"/>	

Transport	
Do you have:	
Your Learner's Licence?	<input type="text"/>
Your "P's" or open licence?	Y/N
A manual or automatic licence?	<input type="text"/>
Access to a car to get to and from work?	Y/N/only sometimes
How many hours do you have in your log book?	<input type="text"/>
Is your Licence suspended? If so - when does the suspension end?	<input type="text"/>
If you normally catch public transport, what train or bus routes are you familiar with?	<input type="text"/>

Do you have the following? <i>(If you are interested in obtaining any of them, please discuss with your your job your way Consultant.)</i>	Yes	No	Office Use only
A Birth Certificate?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
A Current Tax File Number?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
A Current Bank Account?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
White Card (Construction)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Any Work Related Tickets or Licences?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Questions about your Job Searching	Yes	No	Comments
Did you bring your resume with you today?			
If you have your resume - does it need updating with more current details?			Please provide details to your your job your way Consultant
Do you have appropriate clothes to wear to a job interview?			
Is there anything that prevents you from starting full time work tomorrow?			
How do you normally look for work?			
How often do you look for work each week?			
What date was your last interview with an Employer?	Date: / /		
Who was the Employer?			
Do you have any previous work experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, provide details <input type="checkbox"/> No		
When did you last log into your Personal Page on Australian Job Search?	Date: / /		
How do you rate your computer skills?	None (poor) Limited Basic Good		
Have you created a MyGov account?	Yes No		
If so, do you know how to:	Check appointments Record my jobsearches		
How would you like to be notified of your job match results?	Email SMS Text Message Jobsearch Personal Page		
Education			
What level of schooling did you complete?			
What year and where did you complete this?			
Do you have any other qualifications? (Please don't forget any school based qualifications that you may have received, e.g. Certificate 2 in Business Administration.)			
Is this in the last 12 months?			

Centrelink Benefits	Yes	No	Office Use Only
Do you receive Youth Allowance or Newstart Allowance or Other Allowance(s) from Centrelink?			
Do you have any Centrelink recognised restrictions on the type of work you can do or how many hours per week you need to be working? (please explain if yes)			

Work Requirements (Your <i>your job your way</i> Consultant will tell you how much you need to earn, or how many hours you need to work to be completely off Centrelink benefits)	Office Use Only (To be completed by Employment Consultant)
Rate of Centrelink benefits paid to Job Seeker per fortnight	
Number of Hours per week required - full outcome requirements (Your EC will fill this out and let you know)	
Minimum earnings per week - full outcome requirements (Your EC will fill this out and let you know)	

Other Issues that may be worrying you	Yes	No	Office Use Only
Do you have any problems with reading, writing or maths?			
Do you have any accommodation issues?			
Do you have any caring responsibilities? (children, sisters, brothers, parents, etc.)			
Do you have any family or relationship issues?			
Do you have any work capacity issues such as any disability or ongoing illness? (This could be related to your physical or mental health)			
Do you have any legal issues? (court pending, parole, recorded offence)			
Have you had any trouble at school/work because of drinking or drug use? Please explain if yes			
Are there any behavioural issues e.g. anger or temper issues/ability to work with others etc., you wish to discuss?			
Do you experience confidence and motivation issues?			
Can you get help from your friends and family if you need it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other issues for discussion?			

NOTE: These figures are approximate and change when your DHS/Centrelink benefit changes. Always allow at least \$20 extra each fortnight to ensure you come completely off DHS/Centrelink benefits.

Office Use Only (To be completed by the your job your way Consultant)			
Review and/or Update JSCI or JSCI Created (for direct registrations)	Yes	No	JSCI Update Date / /
Is the Job Seeker assessed an Early School Leaver?	Yes	No	
Volunteer Parent? If so?	Low hours ticked Comments updated in ESS		
Consultant Name			

The following questions were asked at intake and after six months in the program.

Below there are some questions about how you've felt in the past month or so.

In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel...					
	None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
tired out for no good reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
nervous?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
so nervous that nothing could calm you down?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
hopeless?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
restless or fidgety?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
so restless you could not sit still?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
depressed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
that everything was an effort?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
so sad that nothing could cheer you up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
worthless?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The next question is about how you feel about various parts of your life and how you feel about your life as a whole

How satisfied are you with ...?	Not satisfied							Completely satisfied			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Your standard of living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What you are achieving in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your personal relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How safe you feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling part of your community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your future security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your life as a whole	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

These questions are optional but would help us greatly in understanding how COVID-19 has affected you and how you take part in the **your job your way** program.

How much has COVID-19 affected these parts of your life?

	This has gotten a lot worse for me	This has gotten a little worse for me	This has not changed at all for me	This has improved a little for me	This has really improved for me	Not applicable
	1	2	3	4	5	
Physical health (e.g. falling sick)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to look for work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to keep being involved with your job your way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to stay in touch with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to stay in touch with family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to do what you used to do except for work and study. For example look after yourself, prepare meals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you able to participate in **your job your way** program over the phone or from your computer, tablet or mobile?

Yes No Not applicable

If you have taken part in the **your job your way** program since it changed to online/by phone, how has it been? (Tick “Not applicable” if you haven’t participated in the program since it changed to online/by phone)

Not useful at all	Less useful than before	Just as useful as before going online/by phone	More useful than before	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any services that the **your job your way** staff helped you with before, but that you find harder to access now because of COVID-19 restrictions or for other reasons? For example, mental health services/counselling, accommodation assistance, driving lessons, or training?

Some changes to job search requirements and responsibilities are/were in place until 22 May 2020 (no job search requirements, no Work for the Dole). How have these changes and the changes in how you participate in **your job your way** affected you?

	This has been very hard for me	This has been a little hard for me	This made no difference to me at all	This has improved things for me a little	This has really improved things for me	N/A
Not doing Work for the Dole.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No job search requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No longer having face-to-face interaction with your job your way staff and others while taking part in the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 4 Other tables

Table A 4 Reasons for refusing participation in your job your way

Reasons for refusing participation in your job your way
Want to remain with current case worker (most either studying, studying soon, working or due to commencing work soon, doing internships)
Working or work due to start work, or working and studying part time
Studying or due to start study
Lack of interest
Family reasons (family responsibilities and insufficient time for the program commitments, including having young babies or expecting a baby)
Other reasons: finalizing drivers licence and hoping to achieve employment; relocated out of the area; lack of time

Table A 5 Outcomes as a proportion of eligible placements, your job your way and jobactive, by site, July 2018* – June 2020

	Placement to 4-weeks			Placement to 12-weeks			12 weeks to 26-weeks		
	jobactive	your job your way	Difference	jobactive	your job your way	Difference	jobactive	your job your way	Difference
Burnie-Devonport	61%	87%	+26	70%	80%	+10	59%	89%	+30
Caboolture	67%	76%	+9	56%	83%	+27	71%	88%	+16
Elizabeth	76%	82%	+6	69%	90%	+21	87%	80%	-7
Total	67%	81%	+14	64%	85%	+20	71%	85%	+14

Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, n=183 **your job your way**; n=529 jobactive. Conversion rates are calculated as proportion of the number of young people eligible for that outcome (see Box 1). * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

Table A 6 Placements as proportion of commencements, your job your way and jobactive, by site, July 2018* – June 2020

Placements as proportion of commencements			
	JA	YJYW	Difference
Burnie / Devonport	51%	68%	+17
Caboolture	50%	88%	+38
Elizabeth	47%	85%	+37
Total	49%	82%	+32

Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, n=481 jobactive, n=210 your job your way. * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

Table A 7 Outcomes as proportion of commencements, your job your way and jobactive, by site, July 2018* – June 2020

	4-week outcomes as % of commencements			12-week outcomes as % of commencements			26-week outcomes as % of commencements		
	JA	YJYW	Difference	JA	YJYW	Difference	JA	YJYW	Difference
Burnie / Devonport	20%	51%	+31	21%	38%	+17	7%	15%	+8
Caboolture	24%	49%	+24	19%	40%	+21	9%	24%	+15
Elizabeth	22%	45%	+23	14%	39%	+25	10%	23%	+12
Total	22%	48%	+26	18%	39%	+21	9%	21%	+13

Source: Employment Services System (ESS) data, n=481 jobactive, n=210 **your job your way**. * from January 2019 for Burnie-Devonport.

Table A 8 Personal Wellbeing Index, all at intake (n=202), intake and review (n=48)

Repeated sample (n=48)											
											95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Satisfaction with...	All at intake (n=202)	Intake	Review	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Standard of living	68.4	68.3	73.5	-0.521	2.441	0.352	-1.230	0.188	-1.478	47	0.146
Health*	65.5	63.5	71.5	-0.792	1.879	0.271	-1.337	-0.246	-2.919	47	0.005
What you are achieving in life*	52.2	53.3	66.9	-1.354	2.471	0.357	-2.072	-0.637	-3.797	47	0.000
Relationships	72.5	75	78.8	-0.375	2.228	0.322	-1.022	0.272	-1.166	47	0.249
Safety	83.1	81.9	84.6	-0.271	2.091	0.302	-0.878	0.336	-0.897	47	0.374
Community	66.9	67.1	73.1	-0.604	2.285	0.33	-1.268	0.059	-1.832	47	0.073
Future security	62.7	63.8	70	-0.625	2.13	0.307	-1.244	-0.006	-2.033	47	0.048
Overall PWI*	67.3	67.56	74.048	-0.649	1.441	0.208	-1.067	-0.230	-3.12	47	0.003
How satisfied are you with your life?	67.2	69.4	72.5	-0.312	2.353	0.34	-0.996	0.371	-0.92	47	0.362

Source: PWI, intake and review, **your job your way**. * is significant at p<.005, paired sample t-test, n=48.

Appendix 5 Glossary and terminology

PaTH Internships

PaTH internships (Australian Government n.d.) are short placements in the workplace that give young people an opportunity to demonstrate their skills to a potential employer, develop vocational skills and improve their employment prospects. At the same time, employers can trial young job seekers in a structured work experience placement, to see if they are the right fit for their business.

They are voluntary, and run for 30 to 50 hours per fortnight, over four to 12 weeks. Interns do not receive payment from the employer during this time, but the Government will provide interns with an additional \$200 per fortnight on top of their income support. Employers will receive a payment of \$1000 to help cover the costs of hosting an intern. All interns are insured for the length of their internship.

PaTH Internships do not necessarily lead to ongoing employment, but a host employer can choose to offer an employment placement at any time if they consider that an intern has demonstrated appropriate ability. Although host employers do not employ or pay wages to the participants during the course of the internships, they are eligible to receive a payment of \$1000. This payment will be made to the employer by an employment services provider who can then claim reimbursement from the Government.

To be eligible, participants need to be aged 17 to 24 years; be registered in jobactive, Transition to Work or Disability Employment services; and have been continuously serviced by employment services for at least six months.

Jobseeker Placement

‘Job Seeker Placement’ means a vacancy or a position in an apprenticeship or a traineeship, that is recorded or lodged on the Department’s IT system (that is, ESS) by the Jobactive provider as being occupied by the stream participant in accordance with the jobactive deed (Department of Jobs and Small Business n.d.).

Employment Outcomes

Providers may claim employment outcomes when a job seeker they are helping to move from welfare to work achieves sustainable employment, unsubsidised self-employment, or an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The amount that is paid for an employment outcome reflects the job seeker’s stream, the length of time they have been unemployed, and whether or not they are in a regional location.

There are two types of employment outcomes – full and partial.

- A full outcome is achieved when a job seeker is in employment, unsubsidised self-employment or an apprenticeship or traineeship and has a 100% income support rate reduction, or meets their hourly requirements for the duration of the outcome period. A full outcome for job seekers with a partial work capacity or who are principal carer parents will take into account their part-time requirements.
- The outcome periods are 4-, 12- and 26-weeks from the employment outcome start date

- For the 26-week period, only full outcomes are payable and only where:
 - a 12-week full or partial outcome has been claimed, and
 - the job seeker has a 100% income support rate reduction or meets their hourly requirements for 14 consecutive weeks beginning at any time in the 26-week period after the 12-week outcome was claimed²⁶.
- A partial outcome is achieved when a job seeker is in employment, unsubsidised self-employment or an apprenticeship or traineeship and has their income support reduced by 60% on average or meets a percentage of their hourly requirements. Partial outcomes may be paid at 4 and 12 weeks only – no 26-week partial outcomes are available.

Table A 9 Outcome payments for stream participants in non-regional locations**ANNEXURE B2 – PAYMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT FUND CREDITS****Outcome Payments****TABLE 1A OUTCOME PAYMENTS FOR STREAM PARTICIPANTS IN NON-REGIONAL LOCATIONS**

Employment Outcomes	Duration of Employment satisfying the requirements of an Employment Outcome	Partial Outcome where the Participant's Period of Unemployment is less than 24 months inclusive	Full Outcome where the Participant's Period of Unemployment is less than 24 months inclusive	Partial Outcome where the Participant's Period of Unemployment is 24-59 months inclusive	Full Outcome where the Participant's Period of Unemployment is 24-59 months inclusive	Partial Outcome where the Participant's Period of Unemployment is 60 months inclusive plus	Full Outcome where the Participant's Period of Unemployment is 60 months inclusive plus
Stream A and Volunteers							
	4 Week Period	\$160	\$400	\$200	\$500	\$240	\$600
	12 Week Period	\$200	\$500	\$400	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,250
	26 Week Period	\$0	\$650	\$0	\$1,250	\$0	\$1,550
	Total	\$360	\$1,550	\$600	\$2,750	\$740	\$3,400
Stream B							
	4 Week Period	\$300	\$750	\$400	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,250
	12 Week Period	\$600	\$1,500	\$800	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,500
	26 Week Period	\$0	\$1,900	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$3,150
	Total	\$900	\$4,150	\$1,200	\$5,500	\$1,500	\$6,900
Stream C							
	4 Week Period	\$400	\$1,000	\$600	\$1,500	\$800	\$2,000
	12 Week Period	\$800	\$2,000	\$1,200	\$3,000	\$1,600	\$4,000
	26 Week Period	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$3,750	\$0	\$5,000

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Source: jobactive

The streams are determined by a Jobseeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) run by Services Australia (Centrelink) when clients first apply for unemployment benefits. The JSCI questionnaire determines a job seeker's relative level of disadvantage in the labour market and, therefore, the likely difficulty of obtaining employment. Job seekers are assigned points according to their answers to specific questions which, in turn, indicate factors that correlate with disadvantage in the labour market. The total score is designed to reflect how disadvantaged a job seeker is in the labour market: a higher score should reflect a greater level of disadvantage.

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