

CHIA Victoria

# Employment pathways & programs: overview for Victorian community housing organisations



**Community Housing**  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

**CHIA Victoria (CHIA Vic)** is the peak body that represents the not-for-profit community housing sector in Victoria. CHIA Vic works to support the growth of community housing as the most effective and efficient means of ensuring more disadvantaged Victorians can enjoy the dignity of safe, secure and appropriate housing. CHIA Vic's member community housing organisations (CHOs) are committed to providing secure, affordable and decent housing for people on low to middle incomes. Members include the organisations registered as housing associations or housing providers under the Victorian regulatory framework for non-profit housing providers, plus other organisations and individuals interested in housing. CHIA Vic's member organisations manage more than 21,734 tenancies. For more information visit <[www.chiavic.com.au](http://www.chiavic.com.au)>.

#### **Published by**

CHIA Victoria  
Level 1/128 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne, Victoria 3000  
Australia

ABN 93 973 661 067  
P (03) 9654 6077  
[www.chiavic.com.au](http://www.chiavic.com.au)

© CHIA Victoria 2023

Apart from fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism, or review, as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* and subsequent amendments, no part of this paper may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Enquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

# Executive summary

- CHIA Victoria is supporting community housing organisations to improve their understanding of employment services and the different ways they can assist renters to gain meaningful employment. This resource will improve members' understanding of employment pathways and programs for any organisations interested in delivering outcomes in this space, either individually or through partnerships
- Alongside stable housing, employment provides a foundation for renters' community connection and participation, financial wellbeing, and personal empowerment. Employment outcomes can also assist community housing organisations (CHOs) to increase rental incomes, reduce arrears, improve competitiveness for future grants and tenders, and support their renters to clear any debt
- CHOs are well-placed to promote renter employment pathways because they have strong relationships with their renters, take a long-term approach to support, are often significant employers in their own right, have established community connections, and can utilise their own resources as well as attracting investment. There is great diversity in the range and scope of activities currently being pursued to connect renters with employment or improve their work readiness. Overall, CHOs can draw from four key approaches:
  - **Partnering with or referring to existing services** – working with local communities, businesses, and/or service providers to facilitate outcomes. Referring renters to local labour market programs is the simplest way to support renters to gain work; this pathway is most appropriate for renters with some degree of work-ready skills and interest. CHOs can play a key role in developing good referral pathways into these types of services. These approaches are relatively low-risk and can be added to over time by both referring to and drawing upon existing community resources
  - **Assisting renters to become more work ready** – CHOs may choose to take a more (pro)active role by providing employment-related supports 'in house', assisting renters to become more work ready and/or proactively supporting the efforts of other services. While this may seem like a stretch, there is strong overlap between activities undertaken to improve tenancy outcomes and addressing barriers to gaining or retaining work (e.g. financial management skills, confidence, digital inclusion, care responsibilities, educational attainment, disability and/or physical or mental ill-health). Many of these services are already a core part of tenancy management and routine business activities
  - **Providing direct employment opportunities** – utilising operations to create job outcomes for renters. Opportunities can vary from unpaid roles to short-term work-experience and/or longer-term jobs. Currently, most programs are at small scale but there is potential to grow, strengthening links between tenancy management activities, housing services, and positive impacts for renters
  - **Utilising organisational procurement** – procurement can create opportunities via organisational expenditure, supply chain diversity, and/or links with businesses seeking to employ workers. CHOs outlay significant expenditure on routine goods and services; each contract is an opportunity to create social value. CHOs can also benefit from opportunities created by the procurement needs of other businesses (where relationships exist and renters are appropriately skilled and work-ready)
- A range of employment, education and training programs are available to community housing renters in Victoria. With so many options, it may be a challenge to determine which programs are appropriate. In general, local, personalised services that recognise individual circumstances are an important factor for sustained employment outcomes. CHIA Victoria has also developed an assessment tool that highlights which supports are available under which programs (see [Appendix A](#)). CHIA Vic has also summarised individual program information for different employment services (see [Appendix B](#)). Together, these resources will assist CHOs to identify which programs are available and appropriate for their renters
- CHIA Vic is committed to supporting CHOs maximise their social impacts. If there is any specific support needed or if you are interested in discussing your activities with CHIA Vic, we encourage you to get in touch with James Finnis, Policy Officer Social Outcomes, via [james.finnis@chiavic.com.au](mailto:james.finnis@chiavic.com.au)

## Purpose and scope of this document

The purpose of this resource is to enhance members' understanding of employment services and the different ways that community housing organisations (CHOs) can assist renters to gain employment.

Based on engagement with members, this paper profiles different case studies that show how CHOs already facilitate employment outcomes. Resources and tools aim to improve CHIA Vic members' understanding of employment pathways and programs for organisations who are interested in delivering outcomes in this space, either individually or through partnerships.

In promoting renters' employment outcomes, CHIA Vic is responding to:

1. Interest among members in ensuring their renters benefit not only from secure housing, but via greater economic participation, financial wellbeing, and connection with their communities
2. An ongoing need for CHOs to maximise revenues as part of core business activities
3. The growing focus on social procurement, including employment targets and policies, in Victorian Government tenders.

These issues strengthen the case for CHOs seeking to increase their employment activities, with results also supporting organisations' tenancy management, operations, and better renter outcomes.

## Why should CHOs be interested?

Supporting renters into employment is not a straightforward task. Yet, activities provide various positive flow-on impacts for housing and deliver lasting change for renters themselves. Assisting renters to achieve their employment goals also provides opportunities for CHOs to deliver on their social mission.

Alongside stable housing, suitable employment provides a foundation for renters to fully benefit from community connection and participation, financial wellbeing, and personal empowerment. For CHOs, secondary benefits include the ability to boost rental revenue, minimise arrears, improve competitiveness for future grants and/or tenders, and can assist renters to clear any debt.<sup>1</sup> These benefits also contribute to CHOs financial sustainability and assist in generating the income needed to increase the overall supply of housing and provide other services and benefits for renters.

Linking renters with employment may not be the right fit for all CHOs, like those who mainly work with people in crisis or who are generally further away from being 'work-ready'. However, stable housing and employment help break cycles of disadvantage and provide various other benefits. Evidence shows that assisting renters to identify and work towards employment, even as a longer-term aspiration, improves outcomes for all involved. Renters with complex needs can start small and gradually, incrementally move to different kinds of work – potentially ending up with jobs in the open labour market, where appropriate for them.

Many Victorian CHOs already provide flexible employment opportunities that act as a bridge (back) into work, including leveraging jobs created by routine housing activities. CHOs are best placed to begin this work, having regular access to renters, being able to identify people's needs, assist them to connect with different services, and potentially even support people to remain in work.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lynch L (2016), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, NSW Federation of Housing Associations, Sydney;

CHIA NSW (2022), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, CHIA NSW, Sydney.



## Enhancing renter outcomes and wellbeing

CHOs have a broader social mission, and employment is a key means of delivering benefits for renters. Safe, stable and affordable housing is a foundation for outcomes including work and financial stability, breaking out of poverty, improved self-esteem, positive routines and life skills, interpersonal relationships, and community connections. Lifting employment rates also affects the social mix of housing sites and renters' physical health, safety and wellbeing. Far from a peripheral activity, employment underpins other key objectives. As a 2019 evaluation of employment supports for social housing renters in New South Wales summarised: 'Employment is critically important to an individual's wellbeing. It significantly contributes to [people's] living standards and quality of life, through the development of skills and knowledge, income, sense of purpose and social engagement.'<sup>2</sup> These wellbeing benefits alone present a compelling argument for CHOs to become more involved in employment.

While not appropriate for all renters, like those in crisis accommodation or with long-term, complex needs like chronic health conditions, addiction or mental illness, many renters want to work and need some help to start their journey.<sup>3</sup> Stable housing and personal supports are both important to renters' job prospects and outcomes. Stable housing remains a prerequisite to gaining and maintaining work. Yet, employment can also have a big impact on housing and renters' long-term quality of life.<sup>4</sup>

CHOs can begin with conversations about renters' needs, aspirations, and long-term goals. Some renters, particularly those out of the labour market for a long time, may require more support to identify their goals and shift back to the routine of work and community engagement. Once renters have identified these goals, upskilling, training and/or formal education may be important next steps. Discussions are typically driven by case managers or community development workers but can be initiated by any staff with regular interactions with renters. One Victorian housing association raised providing employment resources as part of 'induction packs' for new renters. Actions do not have to be 'big' to have a significant impact.

---

<sup>2</sup> Blair K (2019), *How can we support people in social housing to gain and maintain employment? An evidence check*, Family and Community Services Insights, Analysis and Research, Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Government, Sydney.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to emphasise that while all renters will have different backgrounds, experiences, and needs, these needs may include building employment skills, job seeking, volunteering and/or achieving personal independence goals. In a renter's 'hierarchy of service priority needs', employment and independence follow issues management, housing, and survival in order of importance. See: Thielking M, McLeod B, Mackelprang J, Spiers J, Callis Z, Seivwright A and Flatau P (2020), *A qualitative study of Sacred Heart Mission's Journey to Social Inclusion (J2SI) Phase 2 Program: Experiences and perspectives of J2SI study participants*, Swinburn University of Technology, Melbourne: 8, 19–20. However, earning a sustainable income has also been identified as a significant factor protecting against homelessness and supporting secure tenancies.

<sup>4</sup> Most international studies show labour market initiatives are more likely to result in positive outcomes if people are also receiving housing assistance. Outcomes are attributed to a combination of: secure, stable housing that supports job seeking; geographical proximity to employment opportunities, where housing costs may otherwise be higher; assisting low-income workers to keep jobs by freeing up resources that can be used to meet work-related expenses (e.g. childcare or transport); overlaps between worklessness and social housing that lead to greater impacts in areas with more social housing; and, support to avoid or mitigate 'income traps' that deter participation. Australian evidence suggests that housing alone may have little impact on getting a job, supporting the argument that specific supports are required to help renters fully benefit from the opportunities afforded by stable housing. This more neutral outcome is attributed to structural factors like welfare accessibility and the design of mainstream employment services. See: Feeny S, Ong R, Spong H and Wood G (2012), 'The impact of housing assistance on the employment outcomes of labour market programme participants in Australia', *Urban Studies*, 49(4): 821-844; Productivity Commission (2015), *Housing assistance and employment in Australia*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

## Addressing unmet need

There is a genuine need for employment programs for community housing renters and organisations. CHOs are well aware that, '[social housing] residents face considerable disadvantage [...] are less likely to be in work than [other renters], and those out of work are much less likely to be looking for work or available for work.'<sup>5</sup> The last national survey of social housing renters in Australia to record employment status found that around 73 per cent of renters were 'not in the labour force' (i.e. unable or not intending to work due to retirement, illness, disability or injury, care responsibilities and/or study).<sup>6</sup> Numbers are even higher for groups like Aboriginal Victorians or people with disability.<sup>7</sup> Many renters want to work but face hurdles that can feel overwhelming, particularly for people who have been out of work for long periods or with large skill gaps. People experiencing long-term unemployment and with complex needs are unlikely to transition into work without support. With few cross-sector employment programs for CHOs or their renters, there is an opportunity for organisations to take a more proactive role.

## Improving organisational competitiveness

The Victorian Social Procurement Framework,<sup>8</sup> Local Jobs First policy and other initiatives mean CHOs will increasingly need to show social impacts, including employment outcomes, when applying for future tenders or grants. Employment targets are increasingly an element of government projects, including the Big Housing Build. Women, Aboriginal Victorians, and jobseekers experiencing disadvantage are specifically called out in the Social Procurement Framework. In 2022, for example, Social Housing Growth Fund applications for grants above \$20 million required CHOs to demonstrate how they would generate employment opportunities for disadvantaged Victorians. Yet, all applicants were required to demonstrate inclusive employment practices, like diversity and inclusion plans, pathways for diverse jobseekers, and cultural-competency training. While requirements relate mostly to contractors and/or suppliers, in future CHOs themselves will need to show how they are achieving social impacts – employment pathways for renters is one way that CHOs can take greater control of this opportunity.<sup>9</sup>

## Increasing rental revenue and minimising arrears

Evidence demonstrates that renter employment outcomes assist organisations to maximise rents collected, reduce arrears, and promote more secure tenancies over longer periods of time.<sup>10</sup> For example, *Hand Up*, a small-scale rent arrears management pilot in New South Wales, saw participants repay 22 per cent of accumulated debt through

---

<sup>5</sup> Wilson T, Bivand P, Rahman A and Hoya C (2015), *Worklessness, welfare and social housing: A report for the National Housing Federation*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, London: 3.

<sup>6</sup> AIHW (2017), *Social housing: working-age renters*, 2016 National Social Housing Survey, AIHW, cat. no. HOU 291: 3.

<sup>7</sup> Gaining and retaining employment is most challenging for people experiencing intersectional barriers (i.e. overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage based on personal attributes including Aboriginality, age, disability, race or ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation). Aboriginal Victorians face a particularly severe combination of factors that require culturally appropriate and safe service provision. See: Wilson T, Bivand P, Rahman A and Hoya C (2015), *Worklessness, welfare and social housing*: 21-30; Borland J, Considine M, Kalb G and Ribar D (2016), *What are best-practice programs for jobseekers facing high barriers to employment?*, Policy Brief no. 4/16, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research: 7; etc.

<sup>8</sup> Victoria's Social Procurement Framework puts social and sustainable outcomes at the centre of government purchasing. The Framework requires government agencies to use their buying power to generate social outcomes above and beyond the value of the goods, services or construction – maximising social, economic, and environmental benefits. See: Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2021), *Social procurement strategy 2021-22*, Victorian Government, Melbourne: 10 etc.

<sup>9</sup> CHIA Vic has a Social Outcomes Framework that is available for CHOs to use to better understand and respond to the experiences of their renters, and to inform funders, decision makers and the wider community about the role community housing plays for renters and communities. See: CHIA Victoria (2019), *Through renter eyes: measuring the social impact of community housing. Sector Outcomes Framework*, CHIA Victoria. <<https://chiavic.com.au/resources/social-outcomes/>>.

<sup>10</sup> Lynch L (2016), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, NSW Federation of Housing Associations, Sydney: 6; CHIA NSW (2022), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, CHIA NSW, Sydney.

participation in skills programs, employment support, education, financial counselling and other activities.<sup>11</sup> Employment provides considerable benefits for CHOs who are interested in maximising revenues. Increased revenues can also help CHOs 'stretch' grants, donations, and other income.

## How can CHOs create employment pathways for their renters?

By working with local communities, businesses, and service providers – including government-funded labour market programs – CHOs can achieve employment outcomes for their renters at little or no cost. Alternatively, organisations can choose to take a more (pro)active role by providing employment-related supports, assisting renters to become more work ready, and/or enhancing the efforts of other services. CHOs and their renters will see benefits from whatever option. Anecdotally, many Victorian housing providers already assist renters to connect with local employment-related services. In most cases, these referrals can be integrated into CHOs' normal operations. CHOs can facilitate employment opportunities in the following ways:



### PARTNERING WITH OR REFERRING TO EXISTING SERVICES

*(e.g. referring renters to labour market, education and/or training services; partnering with a local service provider to engage and work with renters)*



### ASSISTING RENTERS TO BECOME MORE WORK READY

*including through direct supports or assistance*



### PROVIDING DIRECT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*including recruiting renters in the businesses (e.g. providing job opportunities to support renters to gain experience and/or become more work-ready)*



### UTILISING ORGANISATIONAL PROCUREMENT

*promoting supplier diversity and/or social outcomes (e.g. setting employment targets in contracts; procuring goods or services from social enterprises or Aboriginal businesses).*

CHOs are placed in a particularly strong position to promote employment because they:

- have strong relationships with their renters
- often already operate in areas facing disadvantage
- take a long-term approach to working with renters (and local communities)
- are major employers, with established networks that can be a source of opportunities
- may employ multi-disciplinary teams (or peer mentors) with engagement capabilities
- have a good understanding of local communities, labour markets and their unique challenges
- can use their own resources as well as attracting investment from partners.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Leishman C, Cebulla A and Petrou K (2018), *Supporting people in social housing gain and maintain employment. An Evidence Check rapid review brokered by the Sax Institute for NSW Family and Community Services*, Sax Institute, Sydney: 16; Rintoul D, Rintoul K (2017), *Evaluation of the 'Hand up' Arrears Management Program*, Rooftop Social, Sydney.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson T, Bivand P, Rahman A and Hoya C (2015), *Worklessness, welfare and social housing: A report for the National Housing Federation*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, London: 48-49.



## 1 Partnering with or referring to existing services

CHOs have an important role in developing good referral pathways. Referring renters to labour market programs is the simplest way to support renters to gain work – this pathway is most appropriate for renters with some degree of work-ready skills and interest. Referrals can be made on a case-by-case basis or through formal relationships, based on what services are available, CHOs' readiness, and renter needs. Results can be achieved with minimal resource commitments by sharing support requirements between services.

### MORE THAN A LANDLORD

Recognising the overrepresentation of Aboriginal Victorians in social housing, Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) has developed and implemented the **More than a Landlord** (MTAL) program to address the specific needs of their renters (including cultural safety).

MTAL is based around a person-centred, aspirational model that supports participants to identify and then meet short- and long-term goals. MTAL has the overall aims of: improving understanding of Aboriginal social housing renters, their health, wellbeing and families; improving service coordination and integration; and improving uptake of nutrition and health promotion activities. Based on findings of a 2018 evaluation, for many participants, their goals involved employment.

While just 10.9 per cent of participants were in paid employment, 26 per cent highlighted gaining and/or keeping employment as their most important short-term goal. Employment was also an important long-term goal for participants, alongside their health and wellbeing.

Employment was not only an aspiration for participants, but was shown to be an important enabler of other participant outcomes. As noted in the evaluation: 'There appears to be an association between the achievement of some aspirations and progress towards others, as many aspirations are mutually beneficial. For example, employment factors, such as gaining a job, working more hours or finding a better job, were shown to be the most important way for participants to achieve their goals.'<sup>13</sup> Working towards these goals involved recognising and addressing personal barriers, including personal support for participants to become job ready.

Referrals are simple, but CHOs can have limited oversight once renters join programs. This may be an asset or limitation, depending on various other factors. Because of this, some CHOs prefer longer-term partnerships and developing relationships with complementary services – sharing the support needs of renters between them.<sup>13</sup> Trusting relationships enable CHOs to understand the types of services being provided and, potentially, to give feedback or input into the supports renters receive.

A range of programs are available to renters. Victoria has a variety of programs including Skills and Jobs Centres, Reconnect, and Work and Learning Centres. These programs are funded by the Victorian Government and delivered by community service providers. Many programs can support jobseekers who are also engaged with other services. Alternative employment pathways include Workforce Australia (formerly Jobactive), other Commonwealth-funded programs (such as Transition to Work or Disability Employment Services), other community service and/or housing providers, the vocational education and training system, and social enterprises. Many Jobs Victoria employment services, previously available statewide, were impacted by the 2023–24 Victorian Budget and will be lapsing from July 2023.

With so many options, it may be a challenge to determine which programs are appropriate. In general, local, personalised services that recognise individual circumstances sustain employment outcomes. While supports differ between employment service programs, those with stronger case management elements are more effective in supporting renters with complex needs.

<sup>13</sup> CHIA NSW (2022), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, CHIA NSW, Sydney: 19-20.

<sup>14</sup> First 1000 Days Australia and Aboriginal Housing Victoria (2018), *More than a Landlord household Pilot study: report*, Indigenous Health Equity Unity, University of Melbourne, University of Melbourne and Aboriginal Housing Victoria: 13.



While partnerships may involve additional commitments from CHOs, many approaches to employment are fairly low-risk and can be added on over time by both referring to and drawing upon existing community resources. With many employment activities falling outside CHOs' routine business activities, supports are often delivered in partnership with other community organisations, specialist providers or local employers. Taking a community-based approach ensures the best results for CHOs and renters.<sup>15</sup> Organisational collaboration and flexibility are important enablers, as working with other agencies or programs can help maximise service access and available opportunities.

Building referrals into routine, business-as-usual activities is an effective means for CHOs to facilitate connections between renters and employment services. Employment pathways can begin from the first day of staff-renter interaction. CHOs operations, including home visits by tenancy or community development workers, are a chance to identify renters who have employment or other support needs. Organisations can then introduce renters to employment or other specialist support services.<sup>16</sup> Some CHOs in Victoria engage with renters shortly after they have been housed to assess their needs, with others providing ongoing opportunities for employment services staff to interact and connect with renters. Informal interactions can be just as important as direct referrals.

## BRIDGE TO WORK (COACT)

An example of effective partnerships is **Bridge to Work**. CoAct, an employment service provider, have partnered with Launch Housing and HousingFirst to deliver supports targeted towards renters. Bridge to Work provides intensive case management support to help jobseekers address barriers to employment.

Available supports include one-on-one coaching and mentoring, developing goal-oriented employment action plans, work-readiness support (e.g. CV development or interview preparation), connections with education and training opportunities, and up to 26 weeks of post-placement supports. Bridge to Work guarantees a rent freeze for six months to incentivise job uptake and help renters settle into their new roles. After this freeze, participating CHOs work with renters to set their new rental payments in a fair and transparent manner. Employment Support Coordinators (ESCs) have relatively low caseloads, to ensure they can provide tailored supports. ESCs are also embedded at housing sites to improve accessibility for renters. HousingFirst also facilitates additional opportunities for renters to connect with ESCs, including via social meals at rooming houses, operating job-fairs, and ongoing outreach activities.

A 2019 pilot evaluation of Bridge to Work in Sydney found the model was 'successful across demographic groups' and 'achieved significantly better [employment outcomes]' across a 12-week period. Approximately 49 per cent of participants were placed in employment or were interviewing for jobs at the end of the pilot. A further 9 per cent returned to full-time study.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Rallings MK and Coburn J (2014), *Strategic approaches to employment: responding to change in the sector. Lessons from an action-learning programme*, HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust), London.

<sup>16</sup> Lynch L (2016), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, NSW Federation of Housing Associations, Sydney: 20.

<sup>17</sup> CoAct Employment (2019), *Social housing renters. Employment prospects and engagement in employment programs: the case for local, holistic employment partnership solutions*, Inca Consulting and CoAct, Sydney: 2; CHIA NSW (2022), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, CHIA NSW, Sydney: 21-23.



## 2 Assisting renters to become more work ready

CHOs might choose to deliver employment-related supports on their own. Doing this can be time and/or resource intensive and interested organisations should undertake activities aware of potential impacts, as well as benefits. However, there is a clear case for providing this assistance. As outlined, there are many reasons why housing organisations would provide these services. Internationally, there are many examples of social/public housing providers delivering programs that help their residents prepare for and secure work.<sup>18</sup> Motivations vary, but organisations are typically driven by a desire to fully deliver on the potential of social housing and provide wide-ranging benefits for renters, with economic inclusion a key part of this offer.

Although varying in complexity, scope, and findings, studies demonstrate many common elements. This work suggests that, broadly, CHOs can promote job uptake and retention in four ways:<sup>19</sup>

- enabling renters to improve their skills or qualifications via referrals and direct supports
- promoting digital and financial inclusion and/or ICT skills among renters
- working with other service providers to deliver shared employment outcomes, and
- supporting renters to remain in work, training and/or grow their incomes.

Where CHOs choose to provide direct employment supports, services offered may include:<sup>20</sup>

- connecting renters to education or training
- sponsorships, bursaries or scholarships
- courses linked to specific job-ready skills
- financial literacy education
- supporting local social enterprises
- providing ICT equipment or access

### WORK AND LEARNING CENTRES

**Work and Learning Centres** are a place-based approach that assist public housing renters and other jobseekers facing disadvantage into employment.

Participants can receive one-on-one support, training, pre-employment skills development, post-placement support and continued assistance (as needed). Centres also connect jobseekers with local employers and those businesses offering traineeships and apprenticeships.

A 2019 independent evaluation revealed a high conversation rate into jobs, with 35 per cent of registrants transitioning into sustained employment (measured as 26 weeks or more). A place-based delivery model was a crucial success factor.

There are five Centres located in Ballarat, Fitzroy, Geelong, Moe and Shepparton – these services are funded by the Victorian Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) and delivered by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Northern Futures, Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, and Gippsland Employment Skills Training.

<sup>18</sup> See: Wilson T, Bivand P, Rahman A and Hoya C (2015), *Worklessness, welfare and social housing: A report for the National Housing Federation*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, London: 48-49; Beatty C, Crisp R, Foden M, Lawless P and Wilson I (2009), *Understanding and tackling worklessness volume 2: Neighbourhood level problems, interventions, and outcomes, Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme, report prepared for the Department for Communities and Local Government*, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University; Gardiner L and Simmonds D (2012), *Housing providers' approaches to tackling worklessness: assessing value and impact, report prepared for HACT*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, London; Greenberg DM, Aceves A, Quiroz-Becerra V, Greenberg DH and Oppenheim A (2015), *The second generation of Jobs-Plus programs: implementation lessons from San Antonio and the Bronx*, MDRC, New York; etc.

<sup>19</sup> Rallings MK and Coburn J (2014), *Strategic approaches to employment: responding to change in the sector. Lessons from an action-learning programme*, HACT (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust), London.

<sup>20</sup> CHIA NSW (2022), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, CHIA NSW, Sydney: 12 etc; Leishman C, Cebulla A and Petrou K (2018), *Supporting people in social housing gain and maintain employment. An Evidence Check rapid review brokered by the Sax Institute for NSW Family and Community Services*, Sax Institute, Sydney: 11; Lynch L (2016), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, NSW Federation of Housing Associations, Sydney: 22 etc.

- 'job fairs' or expo-type information sessions
- offering employment incentives
- wardrobe assistance for interviews or work
- promoting community support for work and information sharing via social networks
- employment programs, including employing staff to provide individualised supports
- direct employment opportunities within the organisation or its affiliates.

## SOCIAL HOUSING EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SHEP)

The Social Housing Employment Program (SHEP) is a pilot, funded by the Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) and Homes Victoria. Uniting Vic/Tas and Qualify are leading service delivery. SHEP helps social housing residents and other priority jobseekers find sustainable work. Jobseekers can access training, skills development, and wraparound supports to assist them become work-ready or match with available jobs. The program includes part- and full-time work, as long as roles are for 12 months and at least 18 hours per week.

Jobs are predominantly entry-level roles within the social housing sector, including in cleaning, facilities, and asset maintenance, gardening and property/grounds maintenance, administration, and security. CHOs can either employ people through the program or refer their renters. The program is running from April 2022 to June 2024 (placements closing June 2023) and is available in northern metropolitan Melbourne and Gippsland

As employment can result in an increase in rent or loss of welfare entitlements, CHOs can play a role supporting renters through direct financial assistance or rent-based work incentives. For renters receiving JobSeeker Payment, earning has a particular impact on their incomes.<sup>21</sup> Disincentives may even affect renters' initial willingness to work, particularly where there are no affordable alternatives or safety net in place. 'Rent freezes' are one solution, with CHOs providing a (temporary) inducement to starting work.<sup>22</sup> For example, since 2013 the Northern Territory Government has run an Employment Incentive Scheme (EIS) for public housing renters. The program provides households with a new tenancy agreement for at least 12 months from the start-date of employment or when people increase their hours. The EIS works by slowly increasing rents over six months to offset any disincentives created by workforce participation.<sup>23</sup> In other states, like New South Wales, some CHOs provide renters with a one-off Start Work Bonus.<sup>24</sup> Such short-term investments promote work retention, delivering long-term benefits.

CHOs can also help develop renters' understanding of the benefits of employment. Activities may include understanding and/or developing renters' aspirations and goals around work. Alternatively, conversations may focus on the financial benefits renters can gain from employment. Such 'better off in work calculations' involve working with renters to show how changes in individual or household income can impact rent and welfare benefits. Both activities are essential precursors to employment and are part of ongoing, trust-based relationships with renters.

<sup>21</sup> At 20 September 2022, singles can earn up to \$150 per fortnight pre-tax. Above \$150, payments are reduced by 50 cents for each dollar between \$150 and \$256 and then by 60 cents for each dollar over \$256. See: Services Australia (2022), *Income test*, Commonwealth Government. <<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/income-test-for-jobseeker-payment?context=51411>>.

JobSeeker Payments are approximately \$388 per week including rent assistance and the energy supplement

<sup>22</sup> CHIA Vic notes that rent-based incentives are not a viable option for all members. During consultation, some CHOs noted that increased rental revenue enables them to subsidise other clients who need it most. These organisations also noted that, at sub-market rates, community housing rents remain affordable for most low-income earners. By outlining rent freezes as an option, CHIA Vic is providing interested CHOs with an overview of activities that have been shown to positively impact employment. As noted below, rent-freeze and work incentive schemes are already available for some public housing renters.

<sup>23</sup> Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (2022), *Employment Incentive Scheme fact sheet*, Northern Territory Government. <<https://tfhc.nt.gov.au/publications-and-policies/housing/fact-sheets>>.

<sup>24</sup> CHIA NSW (2022), *Linking renters to employment, training and education*, CHIA NSW, Sydney: 13-14.

When improving tenancy outcomes, CHOs are often addressing barriers to work too. Housing supports provided by CHOs can focus on the same issues that prevent people gaining or retaining work (e.g. financial management skills, confidence, digital inclusion, care responsibilities, educational attainment, disability and/or physical or mental ill-health). For example, a tenancy management worker helping a renter learn to use online banking to pay rent, manage their personal finances, or otherwise maintain their housing. These activities are essential for maintaining housing and holding down work. CHOs provide these services as part of tenancy management and routine business activities. Yet, benefits are often transferable and can be harnessed to assist renters into employment.



### 3 Providing direct employment opportunities

CHOs can take advantage of their operations to create job outcomes for renters. Opportunities currently vary from unpaid roles to short-term work-experience and/or long-term jobs. Most programs are at small scale but there is potential to expand – strengthening links between tenancy management activities, housing services, and positive renter and community impacts. Direct job opportunities in CHOs can also strengthen relationships between renter-employees and their landlords. The emerging use of peer workers is one area where CHOs can create new roles for renters that have major impacts for other renters and employing organisations themselves. CHOs can also partner with other housing organisations to cross-refer renters for relevant, available roles. Employing renters is not without challenges (e.g. renters living at the same property where they work or the potential to access other renters’ information). Working in partnership with other CHOs is one approach to managing risks.

Other CHOs have set up separate businesses to create employment pathways. For example, Unison Housing works with Unison Property Corporation (UPC) – a certified social enterprise – to manage owners-corporation, ground maintenance, cleaning, and other requirements on some of their properties. While associated with Unison Housing, UPC is a separate business with its own commercial footprint and contracts. UPC also provides Unison renters with employment opportunities, supporting them to develop skills, contribute to their communities, and (potentially) transition into jobs in the open labour market. UPC is motivated by a desire to use Unison Housing’s footprint to create pathways for renters and provide positive experiences of work. Currently, most UPC renter-employees are part-time and work around 20 hours per week. All employees are paid according to relevant awards, including leave and other entitlements. Roles are determined for each person based on their skills and work history, interests, or long-term goals. At the six-month point, UPC reviews roles with employees to ensure they are still the right fit or whether renters are ready and want to move on (e.g. to education, training or full-time work). Developing a process for recruiting renters and competition with other, commercial businesses have been key challenges. The business has an agenda to grow and support more renters.

#### JOBS VICTORIA MENTORS

Jobs Victoria complemented Commonwealth employment services by providing more intensive support for jobseekers facing disadvantage. Jobs Victoria is managed by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR). **Jobs Victoria Mentors (Mentors)** provide employment assistance tailored to the needs of eligible jobseekers, local communities, employers, and markets. Key program features include:

- Targeted support/s for long-term jobseekers in the Victorian labour market and other jobseekers who require additional assistance to secure employment
- Voluntary, flexible services that are: tailored to the individual needs of jobseekers facing barriers to employment; and responsive to local opportunities
- Strong, proactive engagement with employers to identify job opportunities and assist businesses to meet industry or workforce needs
- Flexible Job Pathways Funding for other expenses.

Mentors have strong links to other services to ensure the needs of jobseekers are fully met.<sup>25</sup> To be eligible for the program, jobseekers must be unemployed for at least six months or at risk of long-term unemployment, not eligible for other services, not receiving support that meets their needs, and/or likely to benefit from participation. Participants may also need to be resident in a certain area to be eligible.

Following outcomes of the 2023–24 Victorian Budget, Jobs Victoria Mentors will be significantly scaled back and only available in regions with higher needs.

<sup>25</sup> Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee (2020), *Inquiry into sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers*, Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne: 188.





## 4 Leveraging organisational procurement

Social procurement uses organisations' purchasing power to generate broader social value. Impacts can be achieved by including targets or requirements in contracts, working with more social enterprises, policy change (e.g. internal targets), or strategic partnerships with suppliers to promote social benefits.<sup>26</sup> In Victoria, government suppliers and service providers are increasingly being encouraged to integrate social objectives into their service delivery, procurement activities and planning.

Procurement can assist CHOs to create employment opportunities – through organisational expenditure, supply chain diversity, and/or connecting with other businesses seeking to employ particular workers to meet targets. CHOs outlay significant expenditure on routine goods and services, including cleaning, property development and maintenance, or office supplies. Each of these contracts is an opportunity to create social value by engaging a social enterprise or Aboriginal business. Interested CHOs can:

- identify where money is being spent and potential to engage social enterprises
- preference local businesses or those who employ disadvantaged labour market groups
- identify whether their procurement processes are ruling out small-to-medium sized enterprises
- map local business capacity and workforce capability (including gaps that could be filled)
- understand planned procurement activities and workforce pipeline requirements
- break-up larger contracts to ensure small- and medium-sized businesses can participate
- use carve-outs, set-asides, and exemptions to directly procure from social enterprises
- encourage procurement from local providers, businesses, and other suppliers
- consider introducing organisation-wide targets for procurement from social enterprises
- build wider organisational buy in, including from procurement and leadership teams.

In addition to buying social outcomes, CHOs can also benefit from opportunities created by the procurement needs of other businesses (where relationships exist and renters are appropriately skilled and/or work-ready). In Victoria, the Social Procurement Framework seeks to create job opportunities for Victorians experiencing disadvantage and other priority cohorts who are strongly represented in community housing. To be eligible 'social benefit suppliers', businesses must be certified by Social Traders, verified by Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Victoria or Supply Nation as meeting the requirements for a Victorian Indigenous business, or provide assisted employment services to people living with disability.<sup>27</sup> CHOs can engage directly with businesses tendering for services or an intermediary to connect with opportunities for their renters.

---

<sup>26</sup> Bonwick M (2014), *Corporate social procurement in Australia: business creating social value*, Social Traders, Melbourne; Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee (2020), *Inquiry into sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers*, Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne: 212-216; Mupanemunda M (2019), *Social procurement: creating employment opportunities through purchasing expenditure*, Research and Policy Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (2018), *Social procurement framework: building a fair, inclusive and sustainable Victoria through procurement*, Victorian Government, Melbourne.

## What service providers can CHOs work with?

For CHOs interested in working with employment services, CHIA Vic has developed an assessment tool that highlights which supports are available under which programs (see [Appendix A](#)). This tool can support effective referrals and is appropriate for tenancy management or community development workers. CHIA Vic has also summarised individual program information for different employment services (see [Appendix B](#)). This will provide additional context, where required. Together, these resources will assist CHOs to orient themselves in the employment services system and identify which programs are available and appropriate to work with.

## Further information and resources

CHIA Vic is committed to supporting CHOs maximise their social impacts, including through stronger employment service networks and sharing of best practice. In 2023, CHIA Vic will continue supporting members to understand, strengthen and create new employment pathways for renters. This work will include:

- Developing practical tools and resources
- Identifying and collating information to support renter referrals
- Creating opportunities for CHOs to connect with service providers
- Hosting sector briefings and/or forums.

CHIA Vic is keen to provide support and information that is relevant for members, and to effectively represent the sector's priorities to Homes Victoria and other areas of government. If you need any specific support or are interested in discussing your activities with CHIA Vic, we encourage you to get in touch with James Finnis, Policy Officer Social Outcomes, via [james.finnis@chiavic.com.au](mailto:james.finnis@chiavic.com.au) or our central mailbox [admin@chiavic.com.au](mailto:admin@chiavic.com.au)

## Appendix A: Victorian employment services assessment tool (at July 2023)



Provided (in program)



Available (via referral)



Not provided / available

### CORE SERVICES PROVIDED / AVAILABLE

PROGRAM	Sourcing jobs	Placements	Training / upskilling	Mentoring	Career counselling / planning	Case man.	CV / resume development	In-work support	Financial assistance	Equipment (e.g. laptop, phone, etc)
Jobs Victoria Mentors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	+	✓
Skills & Jobs Centres	✗	+	+	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	+	✗
Reconnect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	+	+
Work & Learning Centres	✓	+	✓	✓	✓	+	✓	✓	✗	✗
Workforce Australia	✓	✗	+	✓	✗	+	✓	✓	+	+

## Appendix B: Overview of available employment services and contact information

- CHIA Vic may also be able to assist organisations connect directly with services. Please contact us as needed.
- Note: many employment services funded by the Victorian Government were impacted by the 2023–24 Budget. Changes are reflected in the table below.

PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
<b>Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors</b>	State-wide	Lapsing from 1 July 2023	<p>The Jobs Victoria Career Counsellors program provides up to three free sessions for Victorian jobseekers interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ identifying their career goals and how to achieve them</li> <li>▪ understanding their skills and strengths</li> <li>▪ exploring their interests and how they relate to different jobs</li> <li>▪ finding out more about what sorts of jobs and skills are needed now and in future</li> <li>▪ preparing job applications, and/or</li> <li>▪ connecting with other career support services.</li> </ul> <p>Delivered by the Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV), all Career Counsellors are qualified specialists. Services are available in metropolitan and regional Victoria.</p>	NA
<b>Jobs Victoria Online Hub</b>	State-wide	Lapsing from 1 July 2023	<p>The Jobs Victoria Online Hub is a free service available to anyone looking for work, including prospective employers. Jobseekers can search and apply for jobs via a centralised platform. Employers can advertise vacancies on the Hub. To apply, participants need to register and create a profile with their personal, professional and contact information. Registered jobseekers will get notifications about new jobs that match their interests and location. More information is available on the Jobs Victoria website.</p>	NA
<b>Jobs Victoria Advocates</b>	State-wide	Lapsing from 1 July 2023	<p>Advocates perform a navigation role within the wider employment services system, helping direct jobseekers to the supports that they need. Anyone looking for a pathway to employment or who needs employment-related supports can speak with an Advocate. Key activities performed by Advocates include:</p>	NA

PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ helping jobseekers find employment support, training and education</li> <li>▪ sharing information and tips about getting a job</li> <li>▪ support to apply for jobs on the Jobs Victoria Online Hub</li> <li>▪ connect you to other services such as housing support or counselling</li> </ul> <p>Advocates are available throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria. Advocates work out of community spaces including libraries, community centres, neighbourhood houses or shopping centres. They are also available on the phone and online. Advocates provide support in many different languages and there are also Advocates dedicated to working with Aboriginal Victorians. The program is part of the broader suite of Jobs Victoria services and is funded by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).</p>	
<b>Jobs Victoria Mentors</b>	State-wide	Restricted from 1 July 2023	<p>Mentors provide intensive assistance tailored to the needs of jobseekers, local communities, local employers and local labour markets. Mentors are funded by the Victorian Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR; formerly the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions) to deliver services until July 2023. Actual services are delivered by a range of community service providers and can also be provided under branded names (e.g. Bridge to Work).</p> <p>Overall, Mentors build the work-readiness and resilience of jobseekers through pre- and post-employment supports. Key program features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targeted support/s for long-term jobseekers in the Victorian labour market and other jobseekers who require additional assistance to secure employment</li> <li>▪ Voluntary, flexible services that are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tailored to the particular needs of jobseekers facing barriers; and</li> <li>○ responsive to local and/or regional opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ A focus on long-term jobseekers, defined as six months or more</li> </ul>	Refer to <a href="#">Jobs Victoria website</a> for available services



PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong, proactive engagement with employers to identify job opportunities and assist businesses to meet industry or workforce needs</li> <li>▪ Identifying and addressing gaps, including complementing existing services</li> <li>▪ Flexible Job Pathways Funding to cover additional expenses.</li> </ul> <p>To be eligible for the Mentors program, jobseekers must be unemployed for at least six months or at risk of long-term unemployment, not eligible for other services or not receiving support that meets their needs, and/or assessed as likely to benefit.</p> <p>Identified barriers to employment include: not completing secondary education; lack of post-school qualifications; little or no work experience; low English-language proficiency; low levels of literacy (reading and writing); lack of digital literacy; lack of knowledge of job search techniques and processes; limited social and/or professional networks that can assist with job seeking; personal circumstances that limit employment options or can hinder job search (e.g. experience of family violence, mental health conditions, drug and alcohol dependence); low confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Mentors have strong links to other community support services and can help connect jobseekers with these services to deliver comprehensive, coordinated support and maximise employment outcomes.</p>	
Learn Local	State-wide	No change	<p>Learn Local courses are short courses that are offered at low or no cost to eligible adult Victorians. There are approximately 240 community organisations that offer Learn Local courses. All these organisations, known as providers, are registered and funded by the Victorian Government. There are a wide range of courses available, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ digital and computer skills</li> <li>▪ reading, writing and maths</li> <li>▪ study or employability skills</li> <li>▪ English language proficiency</li> </ul>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Learn Local service map</a></p> <p><a href="#">Partner with a Learn Local provider</a></p>

PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ preparation for various industries such as aged care, food processing, health services, hospitality, construction and warehousing and distribution.</li> </ul> <p>Some Learn Local providers also deliver personal development programs, as well as other services like accredited training, VCE and VCAL, career advice, childcare, disability support services, and school education. Learn Locals can help people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ undertake a pre-employment course to help someone become work-ready</li> <li>▪ improve digital literacy and computer skills</li> <li>▪ improve reading, writing and maths skills</li> <li>▪ access English language classes</li> <li>▪ improve financial literacy skills</li> <li>▪ transition to further study or gain a qualification</li> <li>▪ build people’s confidence and learn something new.</li> </ul> <p>More than 30 per cent of people who undertake Learn Local courses go on to undertake accredited training at a TAFE or other provider, with almost 80 per cent completing that course. Learn Local courses are delivered throughout the year from February to December. Enrolment requirements vary, however courses are flexible and can be tailored to people’s needs (e.g. classroom-based, online or mixed learning). Class sizes are typically small, with training delivered by experienced professionals.</p>	
Reconnect	State-wide	No change	<p>Reconnect is an 18-month program funded by the Victorian Department of Education (formerly the Department of Education and Training, DET) until July 2024. Program delivery partners include Learn Locals, TAFEs, RTOs and community service organisations. Partners support Victorian adults to complete their studies, gain relevant qualifications and connect with industry employment opportunities. Main program elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ wrap-around supports and referrals to address non-vocational barriers</li> </ul>	<p>Local providers <a href="#">via services map</a></p> <p>Additional information in the <a href="#">Reconnect Program Guidelines</a></p>

PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ sourcing job opportunities that align with participants’ goals and aspirations</li> <li>▪ accredited training, learning and development</li> <li>▪ counselling, mentoring and individual learning plans</li> <li>▪ capacity-building, foundational skills and work-ready programs</li> <li>▪ careers information, planning and advice</li> <li>▪ post-placement and on-the-job supports</li> <li>▪ pathway planning for participants to exit Reconnect.</li> </ul> <p>Anyone experiencing disadvantage and/or barriers to education, training or employment can participate in Reconnect if they have been unemployed for six months or more.</p> <p>Priority cohorts – young people (aged 17-19), adults (aged 20-64), young people engaged in the justice system (aged 17-24), including those on Youth Justice Orders, asylum seekers and people with current or previous experience of Child Protection and/or Out of Home Care – can engage straightaway. Exemptions can be approved on a case-by-case basis. A Community of Practice (CoP) helps providers maintain and share best-practice. A CoP is available in each of the four delivery regions (i.e. Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast). DET also hosts quarterly regional CoP meetings to improve collaboration, problem solving and communication.</p>	
<b>Social Housing Employment Program (SHEP)</b>	Metropolitan Melbourne (incl. City of Merri-bek, Hume, Darebin, Whittlesea, Banyule, Nillumbik, Moonee Valley, Manningham, Boroondara,	Limited intake; lapsing 2023	SHEP supports social housing residents and other priority jobseekers find sustainable jobs. Jobseekers can access training, skills development and wraparound supports to assist them become work-ready or match with available jobs. The program includes part-time and full-time work, if roles 12 months and at least 18 hours per week. Uniting Vic/Tas and Qualify are leading service delivery. SHEP is available in the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne and in the Gippsland region of regional Victoria. SHEP is running from April 2022 to June 2024 (with placements closing in June 2023). Jobs are predominantly entry-level roles within the social housing sector, including in cleaning, facilities, and asset maintenance, gardening	<b>Uniting Vic/Tas</b> <u>Additional information</u> Radhika Ittiel, Business Leader (0438 012 761) Jagjeet Kaur, Service Leader (0466 942 964) <b>Qualify</b> <u>Additional information</u>

PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
	<p>Yarra, &amp; Maroondah)</p> <p>Regional Victoria (incl. Baw Baw Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Bass Coast Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire &amp; Latrobe City)</p>		<p>and grounds maintenance, administration, and security. CHOs can either employ people through the program or refer their renters.</p>	<p>Emma Waghorne, Branch Manager, Qualify Gippsland (03 4138 8080 OR 0417 485 819)</p> <p>Glen Robinson, SHEP Employment Consultant, Qualify Gippsland (03 4138 8080 OR 0447 205 340)</p>
<p><b>Skills and Jobs Centres (SJs)</b></p>	<p>State-wide</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Skills and Jobs Centres are available via the TAFE system to support people connect with jobs. All Victorian TAFEs and dual-sector universities located in Victoria are funded to provide Skills and Jobs Centre services. Centres provide education, training and employment opportunities services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ qualified, free and independent careers advice</li> <li>▪ workshops to support people into education, training or employment</li> <li>▪ help with job searching</li> <li>▪ referrals and job-matching to local employment opportunities</li> <li>▪ help preparing resumes</li> <li>▪ apprenticeship and traineeship advice</li> <li>▪ referral to welfare support and financial advice</li> <li>▪ help aligning to a new job or undertaking new training</li> <li>▪ information on employment trends</li> <li>▪ information on areas with a shortage in skills and employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Find local centres <a href="#">via services map</a></p>

PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>help with career and training plans to support a successful career transition.</li> </ul> <p>Skills and Jobs Centres are available to: current and prospective students; apprentices and trainees; people who are unemployed or retrenched; people returning to work; new migrants and refugees; and people looking for a career change. Centres also offer more targeted services for employers looking to upskill or expand their workforce.</p> <p>Skills and Jobs Centres are place-focused, with strong connections to local businesses. Centres also engage with local industries to ensure they meet the needs of their communities. They also work with local councils, State and Commonwealth government departments to support key projects.</p>	
<b>Work and Learning Centres (WLCs)</b>	Melbourne, Geelong, Gippsland, Ballarat and Shepparton	No change	<p>Work and Learning Centres are a place-based approach that assist public housing renters and other jobseekers facing disadvantage into employment. Jobseekers can receive one-on-one support, training, pre-employment skills development, post-placement support and continued assistance (as needed). The Centres also connect jobseekers with local employers and those businesses offering traineeships and apprenticeships. Work and Learning Centres are funded by the Victorian Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR). There are five Centres located in Ballarat, Fitzroy, Geelong, Moe and Shepparton – services are delivered by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Northern Futures, Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, and Gippsland Employment Skills Training.</p>	<p><b>Melbourne</b> (03 9288 9900 OR <a href="mailto:wlcmetro@bsl.org.au">wlcmetro@bsl.org.au</a>)</p> <p><b>Geelong</b> (03 5275 8124)</p> <p><b>Gippsland</b> (03 5127 4544 OR <a href="mailto:frontdesk@gest.com.au">frontdesk@gest.com.au</a>)</p> <p><b>Ballarat</b> (03 5329 3273 OR <a href="mailto:info@ballaratnc.org.au">info@ballaratnc.org.au</a>), and</p> <p><b>Shepparton</b> (0490 120 245 OR <a href="mailto:wlcshpparton@bsl.org.au">wlcshpparton@bsl.org.au</a>)</p>
<b>Commonwealth-funded services</b>	National	No change	<p>The Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of mainstream employment services that are available to any unemployed person. Key programs include Workforce Australia (formerly Jobactive), Disability Employment Services (DES), Transition to Work (TtW), ParentsNext and other programs. Participation in one of these programs, including developing a Job Plan or Participation Plan, may be compulsory for people receiving JobSeeker Payments. A Workforce Australia provider can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>jobseekers write a resume</li> </ul>	Find local providers and learn more via the <a href="#">Workforce Australia website</a>



PROGRAM	AREA	AVAILABLE	PROGRAM SUMMARY / DESCRIPTION	CONTACT INFORMATION
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ prepare jobseekers for interviews</li> <li>▪ assist in skills development</li> <li>▪ connect jobseekers to a range of government initiatives</li> <li>▪ screen and shortlist applicants</li> <li>▪ employees find candidates for their business</li> <li>▪ assist new employees after they start work</li> <li>▪ employers access wage subsidies if they hire an eligible employee.</li> </ul> <p>Under Workforce Australia, jobseekers have minimum 'activation' requirements as part of a new Points-Based Activation System which requires evidence of job search and other employment-related activity. Unless engaged in approved training activities, recipients must agree to actively seek work and accept any job they are assessed as capable of doing. Failure to comply may result in sanctions and eventual suspension of payments. By virtue of being more generalised and having close connections with welfare compliance, Commonwealth services are typically less individualised and therefore less appropriate for jobseekers with complex needs or who are less work ready.</p>	