Integrated local employment and learning support service

CREATING EFFECTIVE PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING FOR THE EMPLOYMENT DISADVANTAGED IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

A project of the Northern Territory Council of Social Service
and conducted by a team of researchers from the
Charles Darwin University Learning Research Group

October 2004
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Creating effective pathways to employment and training for the employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory

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and conducted by a team of researchers from the
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Project auspiced by NTCOSS

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We also acknowledge the high quality of advice and input from the Steering Committee for the project. Members provided the vital and knowledgeable link between the research team and the various sectors and stakeholders of the employment disadvantaged people who are the subject of this report. Support was more tangible in many instances, such as assistance in arranging and supporting client and other groups of people to talk with the research team. Government assisted in many ways, including the provision of meeting rooms for our Cross-sectoral Workshop in June 2004.

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Ian Falk
Allan Arnott
Ray Blohm
Mike Grenfell
John Guenther
Ruth Wallace
1 Executive summary

1.1 Background and purpose

The purpose of the research reported here is to investigate how pathways to employment and training opportunities in the Northern Territory can be created and improved for employment disadvantaged groups. This report contains the outcomes of the research project that spanned five months in 2004. During this time, a team of researchers from Charles Darwin University (CDU), working in close conjunction with the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS), Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and the representative Steering Committee, conducted intensive literature reviews paralleled by interviews with representative clients, service providers, government agencies, advocacy and industry groups across the Northern Territory. Regional and rural areas were targeted, as well as the areas of higher population around Alice Springs and Darwin/Palmerston. Advice on all issues related to remote locations was sought from the relevant providers and agencies in those areas.

The project is seen as a pilot that covers in detail only five of the nine identified areas of employment disadvantage. The five employment disadvantaged groups taking part in this study are:

- Youth;
- People with disabilities, including mental health;
- Long term unemployed;
- Mature aged people; and
- People from a non-English speaking background (NESB).

Indigenous issues have not been included as one of the groups for detailed study in this project as barriers to employment for Indigenous people would be a large project in itself. However, Indigenous participants are explicitly included in four of the five groups identified above (NESB excludes Indigenous here). Indigenous issues are also the subject of one of the four additional sections where the literature and statistics are provided: (a) Indigenous people, (b) women, (c) those with a criminal record and (d) the hidden unemployed/underemployed.

1.2 Report structure

The report begins with an introduction to employment disadvantage in the Northern Territory. The first chapter provides some background to the project in terms of the socio-economic context of employment disadvantage in the Northern Territory. The chapter includes a section titled ‘nine profiles of employment and training disadvantage’, which can be treated as a stand-alone document. These profiles summarise available statistics at a national, Territory and regional level drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and other reliable sources. The chapter concludes with a section on scope and definitions.

The next chapter reviews relevant Australian and international literature relating to each of the nine employment disadvantaged groups. The last section of the chapter reviews
literature relating to the evidence base for effective policy and program implementation and describes principles that underpin effective policy implementation.

The third major chapter reports and discusses the findings of the research. The chapter also includes a section titled ‘What works’, which reviews examples of effective programs in the Northern Territory and refereed programs from most states. The final chapter of the report provides conclusions and recommendations that come out of the project. Throughout the report sidebar comments are included, which are intended to bring out the key points made in each section.

1.3 Methodology

The project team consulted with clients, service providers, government agencies and advocacy and industry groups across the Northern Territory about the detailed characteristics of people in the following five employment disadvantaged groups: youth, people with a disability (including mental health), long term unemployed, mature aged people and people from a non-English speaking background.

The discussions ranged across the barriers and issues for the various groups related to employment and training issues. Successful strategies, programs, policies and characteristics of personnel were identified. The data collected from the interviews was processed in a variety of ways and then analysed according to established research procedures.

The volume of data from the interviews is large. The aim of a report such as this is to make sense of this volume of information by clustering it into meaningful categories, ensuring that the integrity of the information is maintained through checking back with representatives of sectors and stakeholders.

1.4 Overview of findings

The most consistent finding gained from all groups of participants in the study was the need for clearer information, pathways and access points for employment disadvantaged clients. It was felt that this could be achieved through the operation of a brokering and support system that provided strongly networked connections to the various sectors and programs. The physical presence, the preferred option for respondents, was seen as being supplemented by on-line, internet and print-based resources and information. Included in the functions of the service would be counselling services, communication strategies (including promotion and marketing), the brokering of employment options between employers and the employment disadvantaged and the question of mentoring and case management.

Case management and mentoring are found to be highly valued and important strategies in the nine areas of employment disadvantage. However, the information gathered in the interviews for this study does not clarify the often overlapping and intertwined meanings attributed to the terms ‘case management’ and ‘mentoring’ by different individuals in different sectors. They are used with different meanings in many instances, and often used with sector-specific implications, leading to the need for a recommendation in this area.

The analysis of ‘what works’ programs and support structures that has occurred through this project reveals a number of findings concerning the learning provisions
that optimise assistance, access and support for clients in their efforts to seek and secure employment. These provisions are built on the principles outlined in the introduction to the conclusions and recommendations section, and include a needs-based approach to learning and training provision as being the model that assures employment outcomes. In addition, the term ‘training’ often did not appear to include the kinds of learning provisions that were deemed the most effective for many clients and groups of clients.

The data contains a number of strong themes in relation to learning and training, from the market domination of Charles Darwin University as a training provider, to the lack of flexibility and appropriateness of the learning and training for the client groups in question. When this information is viewed in conjunction with programs reviewed in the ‘What work’ section (see section 4.3 of this report), it is clear that a more consistent approach to relevant and culturally appropriate learning arrangements needs to be considered.

A range of findings concerning evaluation and data collection emerged from the study. For example, there is very little evidence that programs and policies in the Northern Territory have been effective in meeting their outcomes. There is also some evidence that objective evaluations (not necessarily of Northern Territory programs) resulting in criticism of some initiatives have not been made available for wider consideration (it is these very criticisms that could help shape strategies and programs so that they do, in fact, achieve their outcomes more effectively and efficiently). Further, a number of gaps in the data have been identified during the course of this project.

As noted in Section 2.3.4 and throughout the literature review, meaningful work needs to be available for the employment disadvantaged. This may not be necessarily a case of ‘growing’ further work opportunities, but instead better quarantining and defining work opportunities for employment disadvantaged groups. A significant finding of the study is that there needs to be better mechanisms for quarantining an identifiable labour market for the employment disadvantaged.

It is also found that a major source of problems for clients and service providers across all areas of disadvantage stem from the chop-and-change of programs from one funding cycle to another. As funding for one program is coming to an end, it is often not clear that the program will continue, due to the need to reapply for funds for its continuance. This insecurity proves to be highly cost-inefficient in terms of the loss of human resources. Staff cannot make decisions to stay on due to the insecurity and are forced to take whatever employment arises first. Their knowledge of clients, learning needs, program details and assessment issues is therefore lost, and valuable time is taken by new staff learning these matters on induction when a new program cycle begins with a new round of funding. Ultimately it is the clients who suffer.

From this summary of the discussion and findings of the interview data, we now move to a section setting out the principles derived from the research and the related recommendations.
1.5 Principles and recommendations

Key to the effectiveness of the recommendations outlined here are ten principles of ‘best practice’ distilled from both the available research and from the primary data gathered in this project. These principles have been established as an evaluative framework on which to base the selection and development of recommendations as reflecting the best fit-for-purpose, cost-effectiveness and practicality:

**Principle 1:** Effective policy depends on understanding the dynamics of change at the ‘local’ level.

**Principle 2:** Gaining sustained benefits from policy depends on engaging the intended recipients.

**Principle 3:** Policy cycle effectiveness requires availability and responsiveness of an evidentiary base.

**Principle 4:** Short- and long-term sustainable success requires provision for ensuring continuity of resources and consistent and complete knowledge management, including that of infrastructure and personnel.

**Principle 5:** ‘Market forces’ need to be supplemented with resourced and collaborative capacity-generation.

**Principle 6:** Inclusive and consultative processes are slow, but they pay off.

**Principle 7:** Continuous and iterative evaluation underpins implementation success and sustainability of policy.

**Principle 8:** The purpose of any measure recommended here is to enhance the employment and learning opportunities of people in the designated groups.

**Principle 9:** Priorities in support services and strategies for clients in the designated groups should be grounded in the principle of ‘local solutions for local needs’.

**Principle 10:** Cost-benefit principles underlie these recommendations.

From these principles, the report now turns to forward the recommendations and the rationale for each.

1.5.1 Key Recommendation Group Two: Needs-based training and learning support

The recommendations in Group One below relate to supporting the development of the ‘portal’—a structure that is here referred to as the integrated local employment and learning support service (ILELSS). The ILELSS will eventually provide a coordinated and integrated support service. It would provide clear information, pathways and access points for employment disadvantaged clients through the operation of a brokering and support system that would provide strongly networked connections between the employment.
Recommendation 1: It is recommended that a full-time position be established as the employment disadvantage worker here referred to as a ‘broker’. The broker’s roles will include communicating across the employment disadvantaged sectors, developing projects that will further trial and evaluate aspects of the ILELSS and liaising with the relevant government agency personnel and bodies (such as the Employment Taskforce and the Ministerial Advisory Board for Employment and Training) to ensure that accurate, evidence-based and consultatively gathered information is available and provided.

Recommendation 2: By reference to a representative steering group of employment disadvantaged providers, it is recommended that a Northern Territory-wide directory of service providers, programs, support services, mentoring and case management services, and other information as identified by a representative reference group be developed. In addition, this is to be paralleled by the establishment of a 1800 telephone service to act as a referral and information point.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that consultative mechanisms for employment disadvantage be strengthened through (a) explicit representation on the Ministerial Advisory Board for Employment and Training (MABET) that would link with (b) a new body, an Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that government, in conjunction with the Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged, develop a stakeholder-inclusive charter of inclusivity, the principles of which would guide the development of the detailed strategic and business plans across sectoral stakeholders in all areas of employment disadvantage.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that, through the MABET representative and the Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged, a short term project be conducted that looks at clarifying and documenting as a resource what and where the various ‘case management’ and ‘mentoring’ practices across the nine sectors of employment disadvantage are. The outcome would be the agreed functional definition of these two terms, with cross-sectoral variations reconciled.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) expand existing successful programs and establish new support programs to assist transitions from school to post-school disadvantaged sectors, employers and the range of training, employment and social support programs.
pathways in education, training and/or work for clients at risk of being in the nine areas of employment disadvantage.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that a specific project be commissioned on a short timeframe to synthesise existing research on the Indigenous area of learning, training and employment disadvantage (as has occurred in this project with the five target groups), and to identify any gaps where further research is required; this project to be framed and conducted in the light of parallel activities by the employment disadvantage broker who is concurrently developing aspects of the ILELSS model as it may apply in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Northern Territory Government Employment Taskforce, in conjunction with appropriate Commonwealth government representatives, review policies, program subsidies and concessions across the whole of government with respect to their potential to act as a disincentive to employment and training for those who are employment disadvantaged.

1.5.2 Key Recommendations Group Two: Needs-based training and learning support

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the appropriate body of Northern Territory DEET trigger and coordinate a new project that develops an audit of learning needs for each employment disadvantaged sector, which results in the production of a guide for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The criteria for a needs-based learning approach would then be incorporated into training contracts. The work of this recommendation would link with that of the broker, and with the later recommendations concerning program evaluation.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the appropriate body of Northern Territory DEET investigate ways of incorporating resourcing provision (for example by a 'loading' mechanism) in training contracts that requires the additional and appropriate learning requirements of employment disadvantaged clients for a more open-entry, open-exit model of learning: that is, face to face delivery, academic and personal support, additional tutorial time, and a cycle of learning that allows some people to do a course more than once to address their issues and be ready for the next stage. Evaluations of such programs would then account for resource utilization against these sector-specific learning needs.

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that an accredited mentoring course be identified and introduced, perhaps at a Certificate III-IV level. This would assist those undertaking mentoring on a voluntary
basis to gain some transferable recognition for their work, and provide paid mentors with recognition for their skills and knowledge.

Recommendation 12: It is recommended that learning and training for Indigenous clients on remote communities be linked to community employment opportunities and enterprise initiatives, recognising that partnerships will usually be required between training/learning providers and community initiatives.

1.5.3 Key Recommendation Group Three: Evaluation, and data collection

Recommendation 13: It is recommended that a project be commissioned, which in consultation with service providers, government departments and other relevant stakeholders (a) scopes current evaluation activity across the sectors and programs to determine: the level of activity, monitoring mechanisms, criteria used and level (e.g. program, agency, community, region) at which it is entrenched, and (b) recommends structures, systems and criteria in the area of data gathering and management.

Recommendation 14: It is recommended that Workforce NT and the Employment Taskforce be endorsed as the body to ensure that cross-portfolio mechanisms are in place to manage data liaison from a regional level (for example via broker and ILELSS), and a requirement to evaluate the program/strategy’s effectiveness. The Taskforce would incorporate the advice of an advisory body for employment and training (See Recommendation 2) with cross-sectoral expertise in the areas of employment disadvantage, advocacy, agency, business and data/evaluation expertise.

Recommendation 15: It is recommended that the broker (see Recommendation 1) should act (a) as the collection/coordination/collation/consistency agency for all locally produced data that is not currently collected by the ABS, (b) as the liaison point with the Workforce NT Unit to ensure the data is transmitted to government data officers for central collation and analysis, and (c) to facilitate Northern Territory DEET including in their database of training participation and outcomes, identifiers for disability, non-English speaking background and criminal history (where feasible and possible).

Recommendation 16: It is recommended that all tenders that are let include a requirement to evaluate with associated evaluation criteria.
1.5.4 Recommendations Group Four: Labour force issues

Recommendation 17: It is recommended that the Northern Territory government establish or make available targeted program funding, through either Northern Territory funding or joint Commonwealth and Northern Territory funding, which is aimed at ensuring that non-government organisations, communities, businesses, and training bodies work together to achieve positive employment outcomes for employment disadvantaged groups. This could include models such as regional development that provides funding for achieving positive community outcomes while also providing employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged employment groups. It could also include specific funding being provided to organisations to establish local community enterprises that are targeted at specific employment disadvantaged groups or to provide assistance to employment disadvantaged groups in accessing employment and training.

Recommendation 18: In relation to tenders and contracts, it is recommended that the Northern Territory government develop purchasing guidelines that incorporate high weighting to strategies for (a) employing disadvantaged groups and (b) incorporating traineeships. It is recognised that support systems should be provided. Performance of successful tenderers in this area is to be monitored for compliance and appropriate contractual penalties imposed where unsatisfactory.

Recommendation 19: It is recommended that the Northern Territory government acknowledge their obligation to be an exemplar in the provision of training and employment for disadvantaged job seekers; and that agencies formalise a quota of their salary budgets for the employment of job seekers from designated disadvantaged groups; and that the performance of agencies in this area is reflected in the CEO's key performance indicators.

Recommendation 20: It is recommended that: (a) Northern Territory DEET take up with both Northern Territory and relevant Commonwealth agencies the issue of funding continuity and its impact on both sustainability of quality employment programs and on effective employment outcomes for the employment disadvantaged; and (b) that Northern Territory DEET and other funding bodies work collaboratively with service providers to establish mechanisms for ensuring better continuity and transitions from one program cycle to the next. These mechanisms could include explicit criteria covering transition issues in the tenders themselves, as well as explicit funding within the tender resources for transition management. The aim is to ensure there is sufficient overlap and lead-time to allow the more seamless and appropriate
transfer of knowledge and management issues from one program cycle to another.

Recommendation 21: It is recommended that the Northern Territory government trigger consultations with the (Commonwealth) Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to work with Job Network members to strengthen the contractual obligations on the Job Network members for the provision of improved information on the benefits and availability of programs such as the “Jobseeker Account”.

2 Introduction: Employment disadvantage in the Northern Territory

2.1 Introduction

This report contains the outcomes of the research project that spanned five months in 2004. During this time, a team of researchers from Charles Darwin University (CDU), working in close conjunction with the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) and the representative Steering Committee, conducted intensive literature reviews. The desk-based research was paralleled by interviews with representative clients, service providers, government agencies and advocacy and industry groups across the Northern Territory. Regional and remote areas were targeted (Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy), as well as the areas of higher population around Alice Springs and Darwin/Palmerston. Advice on all issues related to remote locations was sought from the relevant providers and agencies in those areas.

The purpose of the research has been to investigate how pathways to employment and training opportunities in the Northern Territory can be created and improved. This section overviews the background, socio-economic context of employment disadvantage in the Northern Territory and the methodology employed by the project team.

2.1.1 Background to the research

The research described in this report arose from the need for an analysis and synthesis of available and newly gathered evidence on how to improve access for the employment disadvantaged to employment and training opportunities.

The goal for the project has been to identify, through comprehensive research, the training and employment needs of the employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory and develop recommendations and options for creating effective pathways to employment and training for people who are employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory.

The objectives incorporated under this broad goal are as follows:

- With relation to all groups, to develop a profile on who is employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory. This includes statistics and information on employment in the Northern Territory, and the make up of each of the employment disadvantaged groups;
- To identify what supports and services are currently being provided to those people who are employment disadvantaged and the effectiveness of these supports in creating effective pathways to employment and training for people who are employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory;
- To undertake an environmental scan and literature review on strategies and models for addressing the employment and training support needs of people who are employment disadvantaged. This to include an assessment of current State/Territory and Commonwealth government policies, and programs in relation to employment and training and its effectiveness in meeting the employment and training needs of the employment disadvantaged;
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- Through research and community consultation identify the specific support gaps and barriers for people who are employment disadvantaged in both gaining access to and completing vocational training, and also in gaining access to long term and full time employment; and

- Through this pilot project develop, in consultation with key stakeholders, recommendations, and well researched service models and options for addressing the specific employment and training support needs of people who are employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory and for creating effective pathways to employment and training for employment disadvantaged groups in the Northern Territory.

Because of resourcing issues, this project is seen as a pilot that covers in detail only five of the nine identified areas of employment disadvantage. The five employment disadvantaged groups taking part in this study are:

- Youth;
- People with disabilities, including mental health;
- Long term unemployed;
- Mature aged people; and
- People from a non-English speaking background (NESB).

Indigenous issues have not been included as one of the groups for detailed study in this project as barriers to employment for Indigenous people would be a large project in itself. However, Indigenous participants are explicitly included in each of the five groups identified above. Indigenous issues are also the subject of one of four additional sections: four additional areas where the literature and statistics are provided are: (a) Indigenous people and the CDEP, (b) women, (c) those with a criminal record and (d) the hidden unemployed/underemployed.

Given the diversity of the Northern Territory’s population in demographic, social, cultural and geographic terms, a primary consideration for the research is to locate it in the socio-economic context that assists a broader understanding of the particular issues and factors impinging on employment and training issues.

2.1.2 Socio-economic context

The socio-economic context is the starting point for profiles of the nine areas of employment disadvantage (see section 2.2). These nine profiles are in turn based on uniform and readily available statistics and other information. These profiles can then be used as a basis for development of regular reporting, program implementation and evaluation strategies to provide enhanced provision and monitoring capacity for the Northern Territory.

In very general terms, the available research—desk-based and from the fieldwork—indicates that employment and training outcomes can be improved by ensuring that they have close relevance to the purposes and needs of individuals, organisations, communities and jurisdictions. Building links between people’s needs at the local level and the infrastructure and resources of the wider society appears to be the most effective way of creating and enhancing pathways to employment and training; it is only
through these links that can people see (a) the economic relevance of certain kinds of employment and training, and (b) use these links as communication channels to access employment and training. These same links are also used to access the support structures and resources to sustain employment and training efforts.

Underlying any strategies that are designed to improve employment and training outcomes is the assumption that (a) there is employment available to the potential participants, and (b) that training will both be available and relevant to the gaining of employment opportunities. These are matters that the report takes up in tangible form as the recommendations are developed in Section 5.

Set in the socio-economic context outlined above, the focus for the profiles, literature review and data collection components of this project is on five major groups, with a secondary focus on an additional four groups of employment disadvantage to make a total of nine. It is emphasised that there is considerable cross-over between the groups, for example, mature aged and young people are found within all five focus areas.

2.1.3 How the research was carried out

Following initial consultation with the Steering Committee, key project outcomes were agreed upon. These included a detailed review of literature relating to the nine employment disadvantaged groups identified and a series of profiles, which would provide a statistical basis for the research and its recommendations. Another key outcome was a comprehensive review of issues relating to employment disadvantage as found in the Northern Territory. The process used to achieve this first involved a number of consultations with representatives of the Steering Group, followed by consultation with peak bodies involved with service delivery in the Northern Territory, and finally a series of interviews with individuals and groups of stakeholders identified during this process.

In essence, the project team asked clients, service providers, government agencies and advocacy and industry groups across the Northern Territory about the detailed nature of employment disadvantage for people in the following five employment disadvantaged groups: youth, people with a disability (including mental health), long term unemployed, mature aged people and people from a non-English speaking background. Interviews were conducted with representatives from Darwin and Palmerston, the main regional centres of Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek, and representatives from remote locations.

The first set of questions identified the barriers and issues related to the various groups. The next group of questions focused in on employment and training issues. A group of questions then teased out what strategies, programs, policies and characteristics of personnel exerted an influence on the effectiveness of pathways to employment and training for these groups of people (see Appendix C: Instruments for sample instrument).

Once the interviews were completed, the information was processed into a variety of computer packages, for example, nVivo™, Excel™ and Word™ tables and searches. The information was then analysed according to established research procedures detailed in the literature (for example, Cresswell 1998; Patton 1990) for the clustering of data into themes and trends, clustered into meaningful schema and sections then re-
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processed examining for both outlying incidences of data and for thematic compatibility.

Specifically, the data underwent open coding for main categories. Properties within categories were identified, from which process aspects of dimensionality emerged. Following the open coding, an axial coding process was undertaken to establish the generic themes across the data and its sub-categories, in which the data was assembled in new ways to ensure a cross-checking and triangulation of the available information.

The volume of data from the interviews is large. The aim of a report such as this is to make sense of a large volume of information by clustering it into meaningful categories, ensuring that the integrity of the information is maintained through checking back with representatives of sectors and stakeholders. For example, the Steering Committee encompasses all services providers across all sectors, and has been actively involved in all stages of the project in scanning, providing input and suggesting amendments to the data received. A major workshop on the merging finds that extended the composition of the Steering Committee to a regional and grassroots constituency was held on Darwin on 4 June 2004 for validating findings and considering solutions, and this was followed by a set of consultative steps sending the integrated results of the workshop to the participants and others for additional input and validation.

Finally, a Working Party of researchers, service providers and sectoral representatives including government, was then established to develop conceptual depth and detail around the findings, conclusions and recommendations, especially on the emerging model of service and program delivery that resulted from the data analyses of the 'What works' component of the data (see section 4.4).

2.2 The nine profiles of employment and training disadvantage

The nine employment disadvantage profiles attached provide a comparison of statistics, initiatives and services for disadvantaged groups in the Northern Territory, with those for Australia as a whole. This section begins by outlining the bases for the measures of the nine profiles, moves to data issues and then leads onto services and initiatives. This is followed by the presentation of the nine profiles themselves.

The profiles can each be read as stand-alone documents that provide a succinct summary of available statistics relating to employment and training among employment disadvantaged groups. The profiles also summarise Commonwealth, state and territory services available to each group and compare these with services/initiatives provided by the Northern Territory government. For handy reference, data sources have been supplied at the conclusion of the profiles. The services listed should not be seen as an exhaustive list but rather an indicative sample of accessible programs.

2.2.1 Basis for measures

The data comes from official sources and is considered to be the most up to date and reliable source of information available at the time of printing. The most commonly used source is Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data, which provides directly comparable information down to a regional level. While these data are three years old and it is acknowledged that changes have occurred since 2001 for many of the
groups, the absence of reliable, comparable and authoritative information means that the 2001 data are still the most recent, reliable and comparable data for this purpose.

The basis for measuring unemployment by the ABS depends on participation in the labour force. Because participation in the labour force among Indigenous people is relatively low compared to the non-Indigenous population, official measures of unemployment, particularly in remote areas of the Northern Territory could be considered to be somewhat understated. The reader should take this into account when reviewing unemployment data shown in several profiles where the Indigenous cohort is large.

2.2.2 Data issues

A number of considerations need to be taken into account when interpreting the attached profiles. These relate to definitional considerations, the impact of Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP) participation, data sampling variability and issues of self-identification.

Definitional considerations

For the purpose of the profiles, definitions for the various employment disadvantaged groups are primarily determined by the data source. ABS data shown therefore assume ABS definitions. Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) data assumes definitions used by that agency. A succinct definition of each group is given on each Profile.

Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP)

ABS definitions currently show CDEP participants as ‘employed’. For the Indigenous profile, the data is broken down to show the impact of CDEP on the data. However, for other groups, this breakdown is not shown because it is not given in the source data. It is acknowledged by many that including CDEP participants as ‘employed’ is problematic (see section 3.6.2, Is CDEP Real work? page 60). Because of the relatively high proportion of the population in the Northern Territory engaged in CDEP, comparison with other jurisdictions is made more difficult.

Data sampling variability

The data for the Northern Territory is provided subject to warnings from the ABS that sampling variability for many data sets is too high for use practical purposes. This sampling variability is largely due to the difficulties associated with gathering data from remote locations in the Northern Territory. Caution should be taken with non-Census data shown—that is anything other than ABS 2001—because in some cases estimates for remote areas of the Territory may not be reliable, or may be excluded from the reported data.

Indigenous self-identification and identification of the Indigenous population within the cohort

Data for the Indigenous profile is based on Indigenous self-identification. The factors determining a person’s self-identification as Indigenous vary from state to state.
Therefore comparison of Indigenous data at a State and Territory level is further complicated.

It has been suggested that the Indigenous population within a particular cohort could be identified in order to determine the extent of the problems associated with Indigenous youth, Indigenous women, Indigenous ex-offenders and Indigenous people with disabilities, long-term unemployed Indigenous people and mature aged Indigenous persons. In the few cases where it was possible to do so, (women, youth and mature aged) disaggregating the Indigenous component of the population for these groups could lead to confused interpretation because of definitional (including CDEP/employment), sampling, self-identification and interstate comparability issues. The extent of Indigenous and multiple/overlapping disadvantages therefore needs to be treated separately and is outside the scope of the nine attached profiles.

**Missing data**

Employment and training data for many of the disadvantaged groups was unavailable, often at a regional level, but in some cases at a Territory or national level. The profiles indicate this as ‘data not available’. This may or may not suggest that the data is recorded.

**2.2.3 Services and initiatives**

The services, programs and initiatives listed in the profiles show only those that have a specific and stated employment and training focus. There are many complimentary services and programs that cater for employment disadvantaged but these are not included in the profiles. The state programs listed are only a selection of government funded initiatives and serve as examples only (rather than a definitive list).
### Table 2-1 Youth profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of disadvantage</td>
<td>The barriers to employment for this group include low educational attainment, limited recent work experience and a lack of vocational qualifications. Those youth who have not completed Year 12 are considered to be less likely to be employed than those who have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth in population (2001)</td>
<td>30133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations* with the most youth in the population (2001)</td>
<td>Litchfield (S) - Pt A (SLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brinkin (SLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Arm (SLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria (SLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment (2001)</td>
<td>1767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth with VET qualifications</td>
<td>Certificate III &amp; IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations where youth unemployment is greatest (2001)</td>
<td>Narrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bathurst-Melville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsey-Bal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moulden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</td>
<td>Job Find (Darwin, Top End) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission Employment (Palmerston) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tangentyere Jobshop (Alice Springs) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nyangatjarra Aboriginal Corporation (Yulara) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Training NT (Darwin, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy) [GT, NAC]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiwi Islands Group Training (Darwin) [GT]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burridj ( Katherine) [GT]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building Skills (Darwin) [GT]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Myriad Group [NAAP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centacare NT ( Katherine, Palmerston, Alice Springs) [JN, JPET]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alice Springs Youth Accommodation &amp; Support Services (Alice Springs) [JPET]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darwin Skills Development Scheme, (Darwin, Nhulunbuy)[JN, JPP, JPET]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Training Employment Counsel (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group</td>
<td>Youth Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newstart Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greencorps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</td>
<td>Future Directions for Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accelerated Literacy Program, Training for Remote Area Youth (TRY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jobs Plan: Building a Northern Territory Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NT Employment Incentive Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth Desk, Getting Started Seminars, Youth Business Network Group, Get VET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Northern Territory locations (SLAs) are localised to allow problem areas to be pinpointed, while locations at the national areas (SDs) are much larger population groups.*
### Table 2-2 Disability profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>People with a disability (including mental health and chronically ill)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group definition</strong></td>
<td>Persons unemployed who have a disability, medical condition or addiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of disadvantage</strong></td>
<td>Job seekers with a disability are likely to experience discrimination from employers. This may be because of perceptions or because of the need for additional on the job support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People with a disability in population</strong></td>
<td>Northern Territory: 20,600 (ABS 1999a) 13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations with the most people with disabilities</strong></td>
<td>Northern Territory: Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment among this group (Nov 2003)</strong></td>
<td>3,168 (FaCS 2004) 8.6% (ABS 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People with disabilities having VET qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Certificate III &amp; IV: Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations where unemployment among people with disabilities is greatest</strong></td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Bindi Inc (Alice Springs) [DESO] Employment Access (Alice Springs) [DESO]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Newstart Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>NT Workforce Employment and Training Strategy 2003-2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FaCS 2004 figures are based on Jobseekers receiving income support from Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance, described as 'incapacitated'. The figures exclude those who have a permanent disability, who may be receiving a Disability Support Pension but who are currently looking for work.

ABS 2004: Unemployment rate for people with no disability in 1998 was reported as 5.0%
### Table 2-3 Long term unemployed profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Long term unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group definition</td>
<td>Persons unemployed for more than 52 weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of disadvantage</td>
<td>Job seekers who do not have recent work experience are more likely to be rejected by employers because of a perception that they do not have the necessary skills or experience. They may suffer from a lack of confidence and low self esteem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployed persons in population (Apr 2004)</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>574 100 (ABS 2004e)</th>
<th>5.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locations with the most unemployed in the population (2001)</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>Cox-Finniss</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elsey – Bal</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moulden</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bathurst-Melville</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term unemployment (Nov 2003)</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term unemployed with VET qualifications</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations where long term unemployment is greatest (2001)</td>
<td>Hunter(a) (NSW)</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mersey-Lyell(b) (TAS)</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Western Melbourne(a) (VIC)</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wide Bay-Burnett(a) (QLD)</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</th>
<th>Job Find (Darwin, Palmerston, Top End) [JN]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxnetwork PTY LTD (Darwin) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darwin Skills Development Scheme (Darwin, Nhulunbuy)[JN, PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission Employment (Darwin, Palmerston) [JN, TW]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nyangatadjara Aboriginal Corporation (Yulara) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Training Employment Counsel (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine) [JN, TW]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turning Point Case Management (Darwin) [PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Futures (Alice Springs) [PSP]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group</th>
<th>Newstart Allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition to Work (TW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Support Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work for the Dole (WFD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group | NT Workforce Employment and Training Strategy 2003-2005 |

FaCS 2004 figures are based on Jobseekers receiving income support from Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance at May 2004.
ABS 2004e figures are based on stated duration of unemployment at July 2003.
### Table 2-4 Mature aged profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Mature aged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group definition</strong></td>
<td>Persons aged 50+.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of disadvantage</strong></td>
<td>Job seeker aged 50 years or more may encounter reluctance or bias from some prospective employers concerning health issues. Older employees are sometimes seen as inflexible and they are often the first to be retrenched in organisations that downsize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory</strong></td>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persons aged 50+ in population (2001)</strong></td>
<td>50-64 29839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65+ 10616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations with the most mature aged in the population (2001)</strong></td>
<td>Lee Point-Leanyer Swamp 50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alice Springs (T) – Heavitree 37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winnellie 32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cox-Finniss 32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>50+ unemployment (2001)</strong></td>
<td>827 4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mature aged with VET qualifications [55+ only]</strong></td>
<td>Certificate III &amp; IV 13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate I &amp; II 2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Locations where mature aged (55+)</em> unemployment is greatest (2001)</em>*</td>
<td>Lee Point-Leanyer Swamp 17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cox-Finniss 15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Driver 12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennant Creek-Bal 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Centacare NT (Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine) [JN, PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darwin Skills Development Scheme (Darwin, Nhulunbuy)[JN, PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Find (Darwin, Palmerston, Top End) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxnetwork PTY LTD (Darwin) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission Employment (Darwin, Palmerston) [JN, PSP, TW]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tangentyere Jobshop (Alice Springs) [JN] Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (Yulara) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turning Point Case Management (Darwin) [PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Futures (Alice Springs) [PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Training Employment Counsel (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine) [JN, TW]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Transition to Work (TW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Literacy and Numeracy Supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centrelink Personal Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Credits, Training Account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NT Strategy for Senior Territorians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back to work program (QLD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Business Employment program (VIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Jobs Program (VIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mature Workers Program (NSW)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profit From Experience (WA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*some data only available from 55+ age groups, **funding ceased as of July 2004
**Table 2-5 Non-English speaking background profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Non-English speaking background (NESB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group definition</strong></td>
<td>Persons with a non-English speaking background (excluding Indigenous languages).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of disadvantage</strong></td>
<td>Job seekers from a non-English speaking background are sometimes disadvantaged because of poor English literacy skills. Qualifications obtained in another country may not be recognised in Australia. Networks required to access jobs may not be known or accessible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons who speak another language (2001)*</td>
<td>14895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations with the most non-English speakers in population (2001)**</td>
<td>Wagaman 15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nakara 11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karama 10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wanguri 10.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data not available</th>
<th>Data not available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NESB unemployment (2001)</td>
<td>NESB with VET qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III &amp; IV</td>
<td>Certificate I &amp; II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data not available</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations where NESB unemployment is greatest (2001)</th>
<th>Data not available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</th>
<th>JN Job Network provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other JN providers and Job Placement Organisations (including Harvest Labour agencies) operate in the NT. None of these specialise in NESB needs. However, JN providers are able to advise and refer people from NESB.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Find (Darwin, Top End) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxnetwork PTY LTD (Darwin) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Employment (Darwin, Palmerston) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centacare NT (Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin Skills Development Scheme (Darwin, Nhulunbuy) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group</th>
<th>Language, Literacy And Numeracy Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
<td>The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centres &amp; Migrant Service Agencies (Not in NT)</td>
<td>Skilled Migration Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Settlement Services Scheme</td>
<td>Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink Multilingual Services</td>
<td>Adult Multicultural Education Services (VIC, NSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business and Skilled Migration Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Skilled Migration Unit (VIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office of Ethic Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP) Program (QLD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* excludes Indigenous language speakers ** excludes Indigenous language speakers and those who can speak English very well.

Note: Publicly available data relating to the NESB group is difficult to access. Of the available data, the basis of measurement varies from country of origin to proficiency in English language. Some data such as ABS Job Search Experience data is reportedly unreliable, particularly for the smaller jurisdictions such as the Northern Territory.
### Table 2-6 Underemployed profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Underemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group definition</strong></td>
<td>Employed people working part time (by ABS definition, less than 35 hours per week) who want to, and who are available to work more hours. Underemployed people may receive income support benefits, they may not be counted as being 'unemployed' in statistics; they suffer from low incomes and may not be entitled to the same levels of support from Job Network or employment service agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of disadvantage</strong></td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory</strong></td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part time workers as a percent of labour force</strong></td>
<td>26 919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations with the most part time workers in the population (2001)</strong></td>
<td>Lee Point-Leanyer Swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sandover – Bal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennant Creek – Bal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underemployment (2003) as a percent of the labour force</strong></td>
<td>3 900**(ABS 2004a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underemployed with VET qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations where underemployment is greatest</strong></td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ability to access Job Network services is dependent on an individual receiving a Centrelink allowance. A single person with dependent children may earn up to $679.71 per fortnight before payments reduce to zero. However according to the JSCI, those working less than 8 hours per week are considered to be almost as disadvantaged as those who are not working at all. TW support is dependent on fairly strict employment history conditions.

** refers to mainly urban areas only
### Table 2-7  Women profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group definition</strong></td>
<td>Unemployed females aged 15+.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of disadvantage</strong></td>
<td>Women of specific age groups are more likely to be unemployed than males. These include those in the 15-19 and the 30-49 age groups. Reasons for the disadvantage include perceptions of employers and barriers associated with returning to work after having children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women aged 15+ in population (2001)</strong></td>
<td>Northern Territory  76 587</td>
<td>Northern Territory  36.5%</td>
<td>Australia  7 694 880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations with the most women in the population (2001)</strong></td>
<td>Durack  53.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide  42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moulden  53.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moreton  41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiwi  52.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Hobart  41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alice Springs (T) – Larapinta  51.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne  41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female unemployment (2004)</strong></td>
<td>2 400</td>
<td>Northern Territory  5.2%</td>
<td>Australia  266 742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women with VET qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Certificate III &amp; IV  5.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Richmond-Tweed (NSW)  10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Certificate I &amp; II  2.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mid North Coast (NSW)  11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locations where female unemployment is greatest (2001)</strong></td>
<td>Narrows  14.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mersey-Lyell (TAS)  10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsey – Bal  14.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wide Bay-Burnett (QLD)  9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winnellie  13.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moulden  11.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Centacare NT (Alice Springs) [JN]</td>
<td>Job Find (Darwin, Top End) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxnetwork PTY LTD (Darwin) [JN]</td>
<td>Tangentyere Jobshop (Alice Springs) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darwin Skills Development Scheme (Darwin, Nhulunbuy)[JN, PSP]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission Employment (Darwin, Palmerston) [JN, TW]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (Yulara) [JN]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industry Training Employment Counsel (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine) [JN, TW]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turning Point Case Management (Darwin) [PSP]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Futures (Alice Springs) [PSP]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td>Jobs, Employment and Training (JET)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition to Work (TW)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Support Programme (PSP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</strong></td>
<td><strong>NT Workforce Employment and Training Strategy 2003-2005</strong></td>
<td><strong>Office of Women’s Policy</strong></td>
<td><strong>NSW Government Action Plan for Women 2002-2004</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Working Women’s Centres (Each state and territory)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile</td>
<td>Ex-offenders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group definition</td>
<td>People with a criminal record of conviction who have left prison.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of disadvantage</td>
<td>Disadvantage associated with being an ex-offender is related to a number of factors. Employers may be reluctant to employ because of a criminal record. Skills, employment networks and work habits that ex-offenders may have had prior to incarceration may have been lost.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex-offenders in population (2001)</th>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data not available*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations with the most ex-offenders in the population (2001)</th>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data not available*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex-offender unemployment (2004)</th>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data not available*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex-offenders with VET qualifications</th>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III &amp; IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate I &amp; II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data not available*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations where ex-offender unemployment is greatest (2001)</th>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No dedicated Job Network specialists are available for ex-offenders. However, ex-offenders have access to Job Network and other programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centacare NT (Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Find (Darwin, Palmerston) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxnetwork PTY LTD (Darwin) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangentyere Jobshop (Alice Springs) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin Skills Development Scheme (Darwin, Nhulunbuy)[JN, JPET, PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Employment (Darwin, Palmerston) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyangatjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (Yulara) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Training Employment Counsel (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine) [JN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Point Case Management (Darwin) [PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Futures (Alice Springs) [PSP]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Springs Youth Accommodation &amp; Support Services (Alice Springs) [JPET]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newstart Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Support Programme (PSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement and Employment Program (JPET)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NT Workforce Employment and Training Strategy 2003-2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Assistance Service for Prisoners Post-Release (QLD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Justice Reform Strategy (VIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Re-entry Program (WA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ABS Statistics focus on numbers of people in prison. No data is publicly available that indicates how many people have a record of criminal conviction or a prison sentence.
Table 2-9 Indigenous profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic profile</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Northern Territory</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group definition</td>
<td>People who self-identify as Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of disadvantage</td>
<td>Indigenous persons may be disadvantaged because of a number of factors associated with this demographic group. These include health, education, cultural differences, access to services (particularly in remote areas) and other socio economic factors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Indigenous persons in population (2001) | 50 785 | 25.1% | 410 003 | 2.2% |
| Locations with the most Indigenous persons in the population (2001) | Bathurst-Melville | 90.7% | Northern Territory – Bal (NT) | 41.6% |
| East Arnhem – Bal | 89.2% | Kimberley (WA) | 32.3% |
| West Arnhem | 85.9% | North West (QLD) | 21.8% |
| Tanami | 79.5% | Pilbara (WA) | 13.4% |
| Indigenous unemployment (2001) | Excluding CDEP: 1594 | 13.5% | 25 044 | 20.0% |
| Including CDEP: 6751 | 57.4% | 42 849 | 34.2% |
| Indigenous people with VET qualifications | Certificate III & IV** | 2.6% | Certificates (level not indicated) | 5.7% |
| Certificate I & II | 0.9% | |
| Locations where Indigenous unemployment is greatest (2001) (excludes CDEP) | The Gardens | 50.0% | Tamworth (AREG 05)* | 30.0% |
| Narrows | 47.4% | Perth (AREG 20) | 27.5% |
| Fannie Bay | 41.4% | Coffs Harbour (AREG 03) | 27.4% |
| Marrara | 33.3% | Rockhampton (AREG 13) | 25.7% |
| Service providers catering for the employment and training needs of this group | Mission Employment (Palmerston) [JN] | Maxnetwork PTY LTD (Darwin) | JN | Job Network provider |
| Centacare NT (Alice Springs) [JN] | Job Find (Darwin, Top End) [JN] | JNS | Job Network (Indigenous specialist) |
| Job Futures—Tangentyere Jobshop (Alice Springs) [JNS] | | IEC | Indigenous Employment Centre |
| Darwin Skills Development Scheme (Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala, Umbakumba)[JNS] | | | |
| Job Futures—Nyangatjatjarra Aboriginal Corporation (Yulara) [JNS] | | | |
| ITEC Employment (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, several remote communities) [JN] | | | |
| Darwin Regional CDEP [IEC] | | | |
| Various ISBF and STEP program projects (updated regularly at www.workplace.gov.au) | | | |

Federal government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment needs of this group

| Indigenous Employment Policy: includes | Indigenous Employment Centres (IEC) |
| Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP) | Indigenous Small Business Fund (ISBF) |
| Structured Training and Employment Programme (STEP) | Community Development Employment Projects Placement Incentive |
| Wage Assistance | New Careers for Aboriginal People (NSW) |
| Northern Territory and other State government programs and initiatives that cater for the employment and training needs of this group | Stronger communities (WA) |
| NT Workforce Employment and Training Strategy 2003-2005 | Youth Enterprise Development, Indigenous Business Incubator (SA) |
| Building Strong Arts Business | |
| Building Stronger Regions Stronger Futures | |
| Indigenous Employment Forum | |
| Indigenous Economic Forum | |
| Office of Indigenous Policy | |

* ATSIC regions (ABS 2002c)
** Territory data supplied by DEET from ABS
2.2.4  **Demographic profile data sources**

Data sources used for presentation of data are as follows:

**All profiles**


**Disability**

ABS 1999a, *Disability, Aging and Carers: Summary of findings*, Cat. 4430.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

ABS 2004c, *Disability, Aging and Carers: Summary of findings*, Cat. 4430.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

FaCS 2004, *Labour market and related payments: A monthly profile, January 2004*, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra

**Long term unemployed**

FaCS 2004, *Labour market and related payments: A monthly profile, May 2004*, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra


ABS 2004a, *Underemployed workers, Australia*. Cat 6265.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

**Indigenous**

The review focuses on five major groups experiencing employment disadvantage and four subsidiary groups. The major groups are: youth (persons aged 15-24, including early school leavers); persons who have a disability, (including medical condition or addiction and those experiencing mental illness); long term unemployed (persons permanently unemployed for 52 weeks or longer); mature aged people (persons aged 50+) and people from a non-English speaking background (NESB). The subsidiary groups include: Indigenous people, (with particular reference to the CDEP program); women; ex-offenders (those possessing a criminal record); and the underemployed (including those who could be described as the hidden unemployed).

Because of the extensive nature of employment disadvantage, it is difficult to tease apart the contributing factors or to quantify with any degree of accuracy the numbers of persons within each of these groups. Take for example the hypothetical case of a young person aged between 15 and 24 with poor literacy and numeracy skills, who may have never finished Year 10, who may come from a migrant family for whom English is not the language spoken at home, who possesses a physical or mental disability, and who has been unemployed for more than 52 weeks. Or, perhaps this hypothetical person is female, a single parent, with some experience of limited part-time employment but who has fallen out of the job market, is an ex-offender with a criminal record, identifies as Aboriginal and is living in a remote area of the Territory with no provision for secondary education. Such scenarios present us with considerable problems of classification and because of the lack of systematic record keeping, our hypothetical persons will probably be counted within a number of groups.

**2.3.1 Employment disadvantage**

The literature shows that it is not possible to come up with a short, all-embracing, one-size-fits-all definition of employment disadvantage. There are multiple, overlapping forms of disadvantage, which all contribute to employment disadvantage (Zappala et al 2002). The term implies comparison with some conception of ‘average’, provoking widespread contestation and disagreement (Fincher & Saunders 2001). The tendency has been to consider employment disadvantage in terms of income, instead of social, institutional and political effects. The search for a definition is complicated by a reliance on historical approaches which are no longer relevant in a globalised world (Watson & Buchanan 2001).

The term ‘employment disadvantage’ needs to be considered in terms of employment provision and connection to the labour market. Hence in this review employment disadvantage is taken to refer to disconnection from the labour market and the so-called knowledge economy for a number of reasons. These include:

- Limited or unfinished education attributable to differential educational access (Alston & Kent 2003; Chapman & Gray 2002; Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2003 on young people at risk of disconnection; McMillan & Marks 2003 on disengagement from school), inadequate levels of literacy and numeracy, an increasingly polarised digital divide, and poor educational provision;
INTRODUCTION

• Persistent, rolling, cumulative skills deficits and inadequate, inappropriate skills training;

• Poverty, homelessness, and financial deprivation and the existence of poverty traps. (Nevile 2002; Whelan et al 1991 on poverty and psychological distress);

• Homelessness and breakdown in social support systems. (Szarkowicz & Guenther 2003; Taylor 2002);

• Lack of affordable child care (ACOSS 2003b) impacting particularly on the choices available to women;

• Geographical isolation and remoteness impacting on geographical and population mobility (Bradbury and Chalmers 2003) and contributing to social exclusion (Alston & Kent 2003);

• Continuous or chronic ill-health often associated with physical and/or mental impairment and disability (ACOSS 2003a) leading to a medicalised model of disability (ANTA 2000a; Argyrous & Neale, 2003; Sherry 2002);

• Incarceration and imprisonment (DEWR 2004a);

• Political, social and employer attitudes towards those considered ‘undeserving’ (Sammartino et al 2003);

• An unpromising employment history characterised by a succession of casual positions and long periods of withdrawal from the workforce;

• Labour market segmentation based on racial, ethnic and gender segmentation (Arbon et al 2000 on the Indigenous Labour Market in the Northern Territory; Barnes & Preston 2002; Cobb-Clark & Connolly, 2001 on experiences of immigrant women; Gregory & Xin Meng 2001; Hunter and Taylor 2002; Zappala et al 2002);

• Underemployment and structural unemployment (Barrett 2002) often resulting from severance effects of current labour market policies (Tingle, 2004a on operation of Job Network; Saunders 2002 and Borland & Tseng 2003 on WfD; Dockery 2002);

• A lack of understanding of the operation of the labour market (NTSPC 2003 on difficulties faced by migrants and refugees); and

• Cumulative impacts of disengagement from the labour market which lead to psychological, material and intergenerational inequalities (Baum 2003).

However, even those who are connected to the labour market and enjoy employment opportunities may suffer employment disadvantage. This is partly induced by the fact that the market is a managed or ‘quasi’ market (Cowling & Mitchell 2002). Potential job seekers may undergo a process of ‘scarring’, by which job seekers are scarred by their experience of providers (Chapman & Gray 2002). The long term unemployed and those with mental disabilities speak of the prevalence of ‘creaming’ and ‘parking’ (Cowling & Mitchell 2002) and many people have experienced a reduction in job quality characterised by reduction in autonomy, erosion of rights and benefits and excessive hours for those in work (Barnes & Preston 2002; Burgess 2002; Wooden 2002).
2.3.2 Causes of employment disadvantage

The causes of employment disadvantage are many and complex and affect all groups in differing ways. However, it is possible to classify them using the following framework; under headings of global and technological, economic and structural; institutional and systemic causes, social, educational and personal causes. Each cause is discussed below.

**Global and technological**

Economic policy is influenced by global pressures, which have brought about redistribution of income, outsourcing, the movement of jobs offshore, changing capital flows, changes in the nature of work including job obsolescence and the creation of new forms of employment and job opportunities as a result of the knowledge economy. (Falk & Guenther 2002; Florida 2003; Reich 1991). The emergence of conglomerates in the agricultural, pharmaceutical, textile and other industries may undermine local initiative, resourcefulness and self-reliance (Bennholdt-Thomsen, Faracas, & Von Werlof, 2001).

It is generally believed that technological advance will increase employment opportunity, improve the standard of living and enhance the quality of life. More recently, economists (e.g., Shiller 2004) have sounded a warning that advances in computer technology are putting at risk many jobs and that the situation cannot be seriously reversed by retraining and education programs. Shiller argues for improved risk management and the redistribution of risk that may involve a progressive tax system to subsidise low-wage jobs. Global and technological factors influence the economic policies and market structures adopted by individual countries.

**Economic and structural**

Economic and structural causes relate to the macro-economic policies adopted by the government of the day and stem from labour market deregulation, the move away from Keynesian welfare economics, competition policy, downsizing, outsourcing and provision of infrastructure, the minimum wage, growth of part-time jobs and contract work. Complicating the analysis here are considerations of poverty and homelessness which are variously attributed to macro-economic policies, social and class structures, and personal or individual characteristics.

**Institutional and systemic**

Institutional and system-wide causes include a lack of an integrated, holistic, systemic approach to unemployment, the maintenance of institutional rigidities and boundaries, institutional racism, discrimination on the grounds of gender and age, a reliance on bureaucratic, computerised processes lacking in humanity, poor communication and sharing, a lack of accountability for reaching equity targets set out in employment plans, poor communication procedures, poor reporting procedures, and the retention of restrictive work-place practices.

**Social and cultural**

Social causes include: attitudes towards employment and unemployment and deeply embedded cultural beliefs. There are intergenerational issues including retirement and...
ageism, mutual obligation, compulsion and contractual issues and ethical issues with regards to the distribution of work, community fragmentation and reductions in social capital. There are perceptions of the long-term unemployed as idle, lazy, work-shy bludgers, the presence of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination, collaboration, networking and partnership, social support mechanisms including presence of family and child care facilities.

**Educational**

Included here are those issues surrounding transitions and pathways from school to work, ‘stuck’ schools and restrictions on subject choice, inappropriate pedagogy and approaches offered, lack of engagement, retention and motivation of students, and failure to provide entrepreneurial (or ‘enterprise’) education and careers education. It also includes state of health, cultural issues and other daily living issues that impact on learning.

**Individual and psychological**

Included here are those personal and psychological issues which affect individual work-seekers at different times in their occupational lives. They include prior dispositions and histories; individual perspectives about work; issues of autonomy, self-identity and self-management; the erosion of pride, self-respect and dignity; responses to stress and continually changing work-place practices such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal; and substance abuse.

**2.3.3 Patterns associated with employment disadvantaged**

Lamb and McKenzie (2001) identified various patterns for some of the groups experiencing employment disadvantage including women, early leavers, people with disabilities, those from a non-English speaking background, and those from rural and remote regions.

### Women

In Lamb and McKenzie’s study, seven years after leaving school, 78 per cent of males in the sample were in full-time study, in apprenticeships or traineeships or in full-time work, compared to 70 per cent for females. Rates for women in part-time work were double that of men. The proportion of women in apprenticeships was much smaller than for men (p. 9). The proportion of females not in the labour force in the seventh year is almost six times that for males. (p. 9). Females were more reliant on part-time work in transition from school; six per cent compared to three per cent for males. Of the women not in the labour force, 85 per cent were engaged in childrearing responsibilities. By end of seventh year 86 per cent have children, compared to 43 per cent in the first year. Those not so engaged represent the hidden unemployed (p. 47).

### Early leavers and those with low school achievement

Over 12 per cent of male non-completers experienced four or more years of unemployment in the first seven post-school years compared to seven per cent for male year 12 leavers. Twenty-three per cent of female early leavers were not in the labour force for most of the initial seven years compared to seven per cent of Year 12 leavers (p. 31). The situation was worse for those leaving before end of Year 10. Over 20 per
cent of males remained unemployed for four years or more. For females, nearly 60 per cent of those exiting from Year 9 were mainly not in the labour force across the first seven post-school years, compared to 25 per cent of those exiting at Year 10 (p. 31).

**People with disabilities**

Those with disabilities experienced substantial difficulties in making the transition—18 per cent did not make the labour force at all in the seven post-school years compared to five per cent of those without a disability. People with disabilities experienced more long-term unemployment, and undertook disproportionate amount of part-time work or full-time work with lengthy periods of unemployment. Only 46 per cent of people with a disability had smooth transitions to full-time employment compared to 71 per cent for those without disabilities (p. 34).

**Non-English speaking background**

Those from non-English speaking backgrounds were more likely to experience long-term unemployment on entry to labour market. Far fewer moved from school directly into work as many elected for further study.

**Rural and remote**

There were few differences in the pathways of young people who went to secondary school in rural areas compared to those from urban centres, except for those moving into apprenticeships before full-time work (p. 3). Only 34 per cent of young people who attended secondary school in rural areas went on to University or a TAFE associate diploma compared to 48 per cent of those in urban areas (p. 4). Apprenticeships were more important to males in rural areas and there were marginally higher rates of engagement in full-time jobs or in apprenticeships. Women experienced a similar pattern.

Lamb and McKenzie (2001, p. 21) observed that in this study, stable employment was measured by activity and duration and referred to three or more years of continuous full-time work. This means that the pattern of transition is lost when the activities are presented as aggregate annual participation rates. The aggregate figures can conceal a considerable amount of movement between activities for different individuals. Periods of transition are therefore more volatile than annual activity rates suggest.

Labour market entry involved a large turnover of jobs—40 per cent had six or more jobs over the initial seven years while 10 per cent had 10 or more. The highest amount of job turnover occurred amongst the unemployed, those in part-time work, and those not in the labour market. This turnover also reflects the difficulties of trying to find full-time employment. Remaining in part-time jobs for so long might suggest that having a job is better than not having a job at all. Part-time work acted as stepping stone to full employment for one third of those who experienced brief interruption in transition from school to full-time work. This contrasts with relatively low rate at which those unemployed for the major part of the initial seven years, worked in part-time jobs during that time. Entering and remaining in full-time work after leaving school was not a guarantee of job stability. Only one in five who enjoyed a smooth transition remained in the same job for the initial seven post-school years (Lamb & McKenzie 2001, p. 38).
It was also noticeable that one of the advantages associated with entering full-employment was the increased amount of employer-provided staff-development and training received leading to wider skills acquisition.

### 2.3.4 Addressing employment disadvantage

Employment disadvantage can be addressed in two major ways: firstly through a process of job redistribution to ensure parity and equity; and secondly through the creation of new jobs. In the first case it could be argued that to ensure parity for mature aged people who are not well represented amongst service providers, they should be awarded jobs with service providers and job agencies to redress the balance in those particular sectors. Or, it might be argued that priority should be given to the employment and training of Indigenous people in remote communities. In either case this would mean putting someone else out of work. Another approach may be to restrict the excessive hours that some managers and executives work so that work can be redistributed. This might be achieved by legislation to ensure such policies are put into effect as in recent moves in France (Meda 1995).

In the second case, employment disadvantaged can be addressed by the creation of more targeted jobs and employment opportunities in conjunction with regional strategic planning or State or Territory Job Plans. This might include an increase in employment opportunities resulting from a major infrastructure initiative such as the building of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway or the development of a niche industry in tourism or horticulture. Where such developments can be predicted ahead, training packages can be offered through Vocational Education and Training (VET) to ensure work readiness. In other cases a wide range of training might be provided in the anticipation of improved economic conditions in the near future.

The more specific strategies used to address employment disadvantage are considered under headings relating to each of the nine employment disadvantage groups, discussed in the next chapter. These strategies include provision of support, education and training options as well as other targeted measures for particular groups. State governments also use programs alongside existing Commonwealth initiatives to address employment disadvantage. Many of these are summarised in the profiles (section 2.2). Perhaps the most comprehensive of these state based programs is Queensland’s ‘Breaking the unemployment cycle’ initiative, which is referred to in the ‘What works’ section (section 4.4.2) of this report. At a national level, the Commonwealth government’s ‘Australians Working Together’ program aims to address multiple barriers to employment through a four ‘pathways’:

- **Job search support**, for job-ready people who are expected to look for employment and participate in Job Search Training after three months.
- **Intensive support**, available through Job Network providers, for people in or at risk of long-term unemployment.
- **Transition Support**, for parents, mature-age job seekers and carers not yet ready for active job search due to limited recent work experience, lack of confidence or other vocational barriers.
• **Community participation**, support for people who need more intensive help to address problems such as homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness.

While the initiative was initially announced in May 2001 and implementation was completed at September 2003, apart from an outcomes report in 2002, (Commonwealth of Australia 2002) a formal evaluation of the program has not been released to date. An interim evaluation report was scheduled for release in June 2004 (DEWR/FaCS 2002).

It is important to recognise that each state’s programs are quite clearly targeted and cannot necessarily be duplicated in the Northern Territory for a variety of reasons. However, what can be gleaned from these programs—and others initiated by non-government organisations—are a set of principles that can be applied across jurisdictions. These are discussed later in the report (sections 3.10.2 and 4.4.3).

### 2.3.5 Problems and limitations of the literature review

There are a number of limitations in carrying out a comprehensive literature search of this kind. These limitations included issues related to accuracy and availability of data at a regional and Territory level; definitional differences and blurred jurisdictional responsibilities.

The researchers found that accurate, comprehensive, reliable and timely data was not always readily available. Concurring with the researchers, Moir (2004a), for example, found that disabilities information in the Territory was almost non-existent, particularly with regard to remote and sparsely-populated areas. Figures for the Territory provided in national surveys as in the ABS (2004a) study of underemployed workers are often too small to be statistically reliable. Requests for information from government bodies encounter delays with overworked project officers having to collect disparate materials from archives. This suggests that there is an institutional culture which does not see disadvantaged groups as a priority either in terms of their own employment plans, or in terms of equity and social justice, or in terms of reducing the amount and cost of unemployment.

Obtaining detailed, up-to-date information on the progress of labour market projects in the Northern Territory proved exceedingly difficult. Some projects that were reported on in Arbon et al (2000) appear to have been discontinued and other projects which demonstrate exceptional promise have not been properly evaluated.

Definitional differences affect the way numbers of disadvantaged job seekers are calculated in each State and Territory, which may in turn affect entitlements to programs and prevent comparisons from being made. Disagreement existed over what constitutes unemployment. For example, there is continuing dispute over the status of the CDEP program with some commentators not recognising or questioning the interpretation and conclusions of the Spicer (1997) report, which stipulated that CDEP program participants should be classified as employed and those not working should be moved onto welfare payments.
Further, Commonwealth, state and local responsibilities are sometimes blurred, imprecise and sometimes contentious, causing a mismatch between policy and funding at the Federal level and policy implementation at the State level, with the result that the States are virtually excluded from labour market program (Ranzijn et al 2002, p. 18). It should be noted however that some states (notably Queensland) have extensive labour market programs, some of which work independently of Commonwealth programs and others that work alongside federally funded programs (DET 2002).

The research stands outside of the supply side debate and considerations of macro-economic policy driven by economic rationalism (Argy 1998; Burtless 2002). Some writers such as Langmore and Quiggin (1994) maintain that what needs to be done to create increased employment is already known. Individuals, communities and businesses have to work within the framework and policies established by government and find ways to exploit the situation to gain local and regional advantage (Juniper 2002).
3 Literature review

This section reviews literature relating to the nine areas of employment disadvantage summarised in the previous section. Literature for the first five groups (youth, people with a disability, long term unemployed, mature aged and people from a non-English speaking background) is examined in some detail while the remaining four areas (Indigenous, women, ex-offenders and underemployed), which were not the focus of this research, are considered more briefly.

3.1 Group 1. Persons aged 15-24, including early school leavers

This section focuses predominantly on early and later school leavers. Those who remain out of work after one year of leaving school are dealt with as part of the section on the long-term unemployed. It begins with an examination of pathways to employment, before providing an overview of educational, training and labour market activities. A detailed socio-economic and educational profile is presented followed by an overview of education, training and labour market activities which examines the nature of transitions between schools, training institutions and the labour market. After looking at early leaving in the Northern Territory, a number of possible responses are considered.

3.1.1 Pathways to employment

Following Angwin et al (2001b) pathways planning is taken to be that intersecting set of processes and decisions that young people engage in as they make choices about future educational and work options’ (p. 15). The usefulness of the pathways metaphor is currently under challenge as the complexity of the choices facing young people becomes clear.

In the past pathways could be described as bridges over a creek, well sign posted so you knew where you were heading and how you were going to get there. Now the bridges have been washed away and all that is left are a series of rocks. You don’t know how stable they are from the surface, how long they will last or what the currents will do. The path is forward, sideways, backwards and you don’t know where you will end up on the other side. New skills are required to negotiate this path (Angwin et al 2001a).

Transitions are no longer considered uniform or linear in ways that they once were. Young people are now confronted with a maze or labyrinth rather than a clearly set out pathway and this has implications for identity construction, the role of agency, autonomy and social responsibility. We cannot consider employment pathways and school-to-work transitions without considering the social pathways. These social pathways involve connections with other young people, immediate family, and the people who comprise the local community. Whilst individual members of the community may not have an immediate duty of care, these people confer a social identity and a social role beyond that of achieving outcomes and competencies, or achieving an individual identity (Carter 2001, p. 60).
Angwin et al. (2001b, p. 32) comment on the complexity of the post-compulsory section as follows:

Another major constraint for those working with young people’s transitions out of school, is the complexity of the post-compulsory sector. In no other sector of education is there such a range of programs, providers, funding arrangements, and professional backgrounds, all with slightly different aims and ways of working. As a result of both Federal and State policy constraints, including short term funding, casual and part time employment and a plethora of different recognition frameworks, it is extremely difficult for schools, teachers and others working with young people to provide advice as to the extensive range of options which might be available at any one time. It is difficult for teachers, let alone the young people and their parents, to keep abreast of what programs are being offered, by which organisation, how long a program should run and how it is connected to further education or work. As other research has shown, it is crucial for young people to form ongoing relationships with their teachers or workers in order to succeed at a later stage in work or further education.

A further difficulty can be found in the changes in work that have resulted from the knowledge economy. Not many teachers and even fewer parents are aware of the pathways to knowledge work. Cully (2003) demonstrates how some jobs such as nursing have become increasingly professionalised, whereas others have become obsolete. A new generation of jobs predominates, including dieticians, financial advisors, massage therapists, fitness instructors, travel agents, cleaners and waiters (Falk & Guenther 2002), all of which depend on relatively high levels of literacy and numeracy and advanced skill levels.

The notion of pathways is built around a number of normative assumptions (Bye 2000). For example, it is assumed that the pathways are there, waiting to be identified and capable of being followed. Official institutional pathways research tends to ignore the dynamics of inequality and the social and economic exclusion that results. Nevertheless if we are to intervene in the process, we need to know the general routes that young people are likely to take, the points at which they intersect, and who will be travelling those routes.

### 3.1.2 Evidence for pathways

Using two samples drawn from the Australian Youth Survey, ten years apart, Lamb and McKenzie (2001) focused on the 60 per cent of young Australians who did not enrol for a university degree or a TAFE qualification after leaving school. They encountered a relatively smooth transition and were able to identify eight pathways which fell into two distinct groups: those experiencing relatively little difficulty in transition, and those for whom transition was not so smooth. The pathways were highly individualized and there was great diversity and mobility across the pathways.

The first group were those experiencing relatively little difficulty in transition. These included: leavers who obtain a full-time job on leaving school and remain in full-time work for the next seven years; those who obtain apprenticeships or traineeships which lead to continuous full-time work; school leavers who undertake further study and later gain long-term employment; and young people who experience only a short period of unemployment or part-time work before entering lasting full-time employment.

The second group were those for whom the transition was not so smooth. This group was characterised by those who had experienced extended periods of unemployment,
underemployment, interspersed with short periods of casual, part time and occasional full time employment.

### 3.1.3 Overview of educational, training and labour market activities

The report by McMillan and Marks (2003) provides a snapshot of the main educational, training and labour market activities of the 1995 Year 9 cohort in each year between 1997 and 2000 as either early leavers, non-completers and completers. They found that of the three groups of school leavers, early leavers were the most likely to be in full-time employment, followed by later leavers, and then completers. They acknowledge that this is at least partly explained by their length of time in the labour market.

Substantially higher proportions of non-completers than completers were unemployed (that is, not working, but looking for work). Non-completers were also more likely than completers to be outside the labour force (and not studying).

### 3.1.4 Scale and seriousness of the problem

McMillan and Marks found both positive and negative messages in their findings as did Saunders and Taylor (2002) who found that proportion of recent non-completers experiencing problematic transitions was smaller than is commonly believed (McMillan & Marks 2003, p. 90). Part-time work was frequently used as a stepping stone to full-time employment, and the majority had gained full-time work by age 19. Whilst movement between jobs was high but much of this job mobility initiated for positive reasons.

There is considerable debate over the size and seriousness of the problem. For example, Chapman and Gray (2002) argue that the problem is often overstated and they point to the fact that aggregate unemployment has not changed over last two decades. They also point out that the change in the nature of employment from full to part-time is critical to an assessment of the problem. Nevertheless they agree that those with long or frequent spells of unemployment have poor future labour market outcomes, whilst many experience 'scarring' as a result of unsuccessful labour market experiences (Chapman & Gray 2002, pp. 86-7).

Figures obtained from the ABS labour force data show only a slight fall in the proportion of those aged 20-24 involved in full time labour market during the period 1980-2000, but for teenagers, the proportion declined from 50-20 per cent in the same period. These figures need to be treated with caution as a large number of young people will be counted as unemployed even if enrolled in full-time education, and may possess part-time work (Chapman & Gray 2002, p. 88).
Table 3-1 shows unemployment rates for selected groups aged 15-24 in 1999. This helps put the problem in perspective.

Table 3-1  Percentage Australian unemployment rates for selected groups aged 15-24, 1996 (Source: Chapman & Gray 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
<th>Unemployment rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher degree, postgraduate diploma or bachelor degree</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate diploma or associate diploma</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled vocational</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic vocational</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed secondary school</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete secondary school</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-indigenous</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures demonstrate quite clearly the effects of non-completion of secondary school and the differentiation between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous groups.

3.1.5  Socio-demographic profile and educational profile of school leavers

There have been a number of studies which have looked at employment disadvantage as it affects school leavers in Australia, particularly early leavers, (those who leave school early, before the completion of year 10), and later school leavers, those who drop out before completing year 12. In McMillan and Marks (2003) the sociodemographic and educational profiles of non-completers revealed that a low level of literacy and numeracy achievement was a major influence on school non-completion. Low achievers were not only more likely to leave school early, but they were among the first to do so. The influence of literacy and numeracy on school non-completion was stronger for boys than girls. Boys were less likely than girls to complete senior secondary school. Approximately 26 per cent of males did not complete school, compared with only 16 per cent of girls.

Socioeconomic background was associated with school non-completion. Of young people whose parents were employed in unskilled manual jobs, 26 per cent did not stay on to complete Year 12, compared with only 15 per cent of those whose parents were professionals or managers. Similarly, parental education was associated with young people’s school leaving patterns. Furthermore, multivariate analyses show that among students with similar achievement levels (measured by literacy and numeracy scores), there was a small but significant relationship between socioeconomic background and school non-completion.

Other studies confirm these findings. For example, The Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD 2001) found that:

Home background influences educational success, and socio-economic status may reinforce its effects. Although PISA shows that poor performance in school does not automatically follow from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, it appears to be one of the most powerful
factors influencing performance on the PISA reading, mathematical and scientific literacy scales. (p. 210)

Similarly, Kilpatrick and Guenther (2000) found that parents of VET in schools trainees were more likely to have lower aspirations for their children than parents with higher educational qualifications.

Other findings from the McMillan and Marks study showed that Indigenous Australians were the most disadvantaged group. Students from English-speaking backgrounds (measured by main language spoken in the home) were more likely than those from language backgrounds other than English to become non-completers. The influence of language background remained significant after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics and literacy and numeracy. Students who attended schools in rural or remote areas, or to a lesser extent in regional areas, showed higher rates of early school leaving than their metropolitan counterparts. Independent and Catholic school students were less likely than government school students to become non-completers (11, 12 and 26 per cent, respectively). These school sector differences in non-completion can be partially explained by the socioeconomic and academic mix of the school (McMillan & Marks 2003, pp. x-xi).

Year 12 completion is of critical importance. Guenther (2004), exploring the link between completions and certificate qualifications across 41 mainly Indigenous communities in remote Northern Territory, found that there was a strong connection between completing year 12 and having a certificate qualification. This, couples with a strong linkage between employment and VET qualifications, also found in the study, suggest that completion of secondary school to year 12 is critical for reducing employment disadvantage.

Reasons for leaving school early were primarily associated with the availability of work or apprenticeships. Just getting an opportunity to get into the workforce or to earn their own money often provided sufficient incentive. School-related factors were less prominent. Only a third of non-completers (or 6 per cent of the total cohort) cited a school-related factor such as failure, liking or course offerings. These findings are supported by the work of Polesel and Helme (2003).

McMillan and Marks (2003) caution that disengagement from school is not same as disengagement from education. Around half of non-completers engaged in some form of education and training but less than one per cent enrolled in a bachelor’s degree, compared to 40 per cent of completers.

3.1.6 Typologies of early school leavers and patterns of transition

Research such as that carried out by Lamb and McKenzie (2001), Chapman and Gray (2002) and McMillan and Marks (2003), often makes the mistake of homogenizing those who leave school early. There is a tendency to assume that any form of early leaving constitutes a ‘moral hazard’, and is potentially harmful to the economy. Patterns of transition are considered linear and uniform, and any variation from these constitutes deviancy. This can make it difficult to decide how to engage with employment disadvantage and when to rectify it. It is vital to recognize the diversity of circumstances...
facing young people and realize that early leaving can also be a positive experience for some.

Maguire, Ball and Macrae (2001, p. 199) worked with a group of 59 post-adolescents, some of whom were part of the local Pupil Reference Unit (PRU)—off-site provision for young people for whom mainstream schooling was inappropriate. They caution against making young people sound more serious, more organised and planned than they really are (or ever intend to be). They found a situation where the ‘youth phase’ was being extended and adulthood was being postponed or ‘refused’. There is no longer any straightforward transition from education to employment and from dependence to independence. This new stage is characterised by flexibility, manoeuvrability, postponement, delay and interruption (p. 198). Young people are not rational calculators, risk managers or biographical engineers (p. 199). Approaches which rely on compulsion, coercion, external controls and sanctions will therefore be counter-productive.

In their work with early school leavers on the NSW Central Coast, McIntrye and Melville (2000, p. 117) adopted the typologies of early school leavers identified by Dwyer and associates (1990 and 1996) in association with patterns of transition. These are summarised below in Table 3-2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School leaver types</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive choice to take up a job</td>
<td>Leave school to follow a career in a preferred area of work. Highly focused and positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportune leavers</td>
<td>Take an opportunity to leave school on finding a job or establishing a personal relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would be leavers</td>
<td>Stay reluctantly at school for lack of opportunity to leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstantial leavers</td>
<td>Those forced out of school for largely non-educational reasons such as need for income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged leavers</td>
<td>Those who leave because of lack of success in schooling and whose level of performance and interest is low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienated leavers</td>
<td>Similar to discouraged leavers, but likely to be identified as behaviour problems, be suspended or expelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of transition</td>
<td>Vocational, occupational, context (influenced by family and lifestyle), altered patterns, mixed patterns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their analysis of the interviews, McIntrye and Melville (2000) conclude amongst other things that not dropping out of school may be related to personality factors required for enduring and adjusting to steady employment (p. 118); the responsibility of schools to early leavers seems to be minimal and does not currently embrace the idea that early leavers should be followed up via some well-established community-based arrangements (p. 122); and it is not simply a question of providing better career advice and job preparation during middle years of school, but of encouraging and utilizing the informal networks and established linkages that the positive leavers employ (p. 122).

### 3.1.7 Transitions between educational, training and labour market activities

The report by McMillan and Marks (2003) also provides an examination of the extent to which young people move between educational, training and labour market activities in the early post-school years. Of particular concern are those who remain in economically marginal activities over a number of years.
economically marginal activities over a number of years. Marginal activities comprise part-time work not coupled with full-time study, part-time study not coupled with full-time work, unemployment, and being outside the labour force and not studying.

In a final comment on school non-completion, McMillan and Marks (2003) draw attention to a number of ironies emerging from the research.

In some regards during the late teenage years, non-completers fare better than completers who do not enter higher education: they are more likely to be in full-time employment, receive higher hourly earnings, display greater job stability, and report being in the type of job they would like as a career. However, on other counts non-completers experience less successful transitions from school than those of completers: compared with completers not in higher education, male non-completers are more likely to be unemployed, and female non-completers are more likely to be outside the labour force. Taken together, the results indicate that during the late teenage years, school non-completers are not unequivocally ‘worse off’ than school completers who do not enter higher education. Further analysis at a later time point may reveal different and more substantial differences between the labour market activities of these groups of non-completers and completers (p. xiv).

3.1.8 Role of the schools

Besides the sheer complexity of navigating school-employment pathways, there are a number of other constraints faced by young people, including what Angwin et al (2001b) have called the ‘habits of schools’ and Smyth, McNerny and Hattam (2003) refer to as ‘continuities of practice’. It appears that youth at risk are not considered the core business of many schools. Such schools exhibit a continuing dominance of the academic curriculum, whilst few young people saw careers programs as able to inform them or assist with their decision making. Very few teachers interviewed for the study had a good understanding of the employment options available, and disregarded the transition work that young people engage in. A kind of unofficial exclusion process was countenanced with teachers bypassing the administration; parents being invited to find another school for their child; schools organising transfers to more suitable schools; and work experience and TAFE studies organized to ensure some children were never at school.

There is unlikely to be a great deal of progress in dealing with early leaving until the problem is tackled at its source. Smyth, McNerny and Hattam (2003) maintain that schools are largely stuck in ‘continuities of practice’, ‘attached to particular scripted pedagogical routines’. Such schools ignore clients and fail to listen to the voices of students in an undemocratic and authoritarian manner. They are preoccupied with passing on content, remain ‘disrespectful of young lives’, demonstrate unwavering support for isolationist teaching; adopt inauthentic assessment and testing procedures; are preoccupied with industrial notions of time, payment and reward; remain disconnected from critical social issues; exhibit a dependence on externally imposed controls, proformas, and exemplars; are lukewarm to notions of reform involved in restructuring, reculturing and revisioning; and embrace stasis rather than transformation. Part of the problem is the lack of trust in the hierarchy, the managerialist way in which teachers are processed, and a profound suspicion that curriculum advisors don’t know what they are talking about.
With post compulsory retention rates now running at 71 per cent, schooling is not working for increasing numbers of young people, particularly for many living in disadvantage. The focus should be on schools that are creating spaces within which to reform trajectories for themselves, in contrast to being pushed along by processes (Smyth, McInerny & Hattam 2003, p. 178). One approach would be to interrogate the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment so as to ask if those are working in the interests of the students rather than those of the school, the system, or policymakers.

3.1.9 **Provision of vocational education and training (VET)**

The Secondary Education Review in the Northern Territory (CDU/NTDEET 2004) identified a lack of on-site pathways and career advice. The report also expressed a number of concerns with VET delivery in the Northern Territory but saw little possibility of achieving change as a result of the inflexible and lock-step nature of VET programs. These concerns included:

- The peripheral involvement of industry, especially small business.
- The difficulty of having some VET units or courses count towards Stage 2 of the Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) or towards a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER). This was compounded by limited opportunities for students to change track, and disputes over funding if VET course were to be fully integrated into the core curriculum as a compulsory element of Stage 1.
- Restrictive subject offerings resulting in students having to select subjects in which they have limited ability or interest. Instances were cited where no effective ‘elective’ or options program were offered.
- Irrelevant programs based on a system designed and built for major industry work skills and assumed literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pedagogical weakness resulting from the assessment-driven nature of the courses and a demonstrated lack of training in adult learning techniques and principles (p. 44).
- Timetabling rigidities. For instance, in Darwin, many of the VET in Schools programs are conducted on a particular day. This means students are only able to pursue one such course. Additionally a number of schools do not re-structure their timetable to account for this, and students may miss other subjects that are timetabled on the same day as the VET course (p. 114).
- The funding regime. The funding formula for VET courses is based on Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC) and actively works against both sustaining and expanding delivery on site. Funding based on nominal hours means that conditions in remote areas of the Territory are not taken into account (p. 240).
- On-off, stop-start programs. The way funding is provided for some programs such as Training for Remote Youth (TRY) means participating schools can be given no guarantee that the program will be ongoing. At the same time, engagement, attendance or real work outcomes not used to assess worthwhileness.
- The limited involvement of Centrelink and/or group training providers (p. 113).
- The lack of involvement of town councils and new regional authorities (p. 226).
Pathways to employment and training for the employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory

- The failure of schools to track students after they have left the school resulting in a paucity of information as to how they travel the pathways or manage the transition. However, whilst acknowledging the ecological nature of skills, the report believes VET provision can be aligned to address local skill requirements. Predicting skill requirements is a complex process as local and rural businesses have to respond to unforeseen opportunities and developments.

Farrell and Wyse (2003) also examined the way that VET met client needs and found that key stakeholder groups were not comprehensively identified and represented. Certain categories of student were overlooked within local and regional VET systems. Potential students were rarely given separate mention as stakeholders. With the exception of Indigenous students studying in identified Indigenous programs, needs were not considered in negotiations about training.

‘The needs of some groups of students (notably seasonal workers and young people who were out of school and out of work) were not generally adequately met, or even identified’. (p. 20)

Farrell and Wyse also found that collaboration in the successful customisation of training packages was rarely achieved and was often prohibitively expensive in terms of time and skill demands demanded of the workplace trainer involved. Moreover, methods of negotiating training (p. 33 et seq) received little attention. Farrell and Wyse (2003) point out that partnerships that are based on inclusivity, consultation, negotiation and responsiveness have not yet become an enduring character within the system as urged in Djama and VET (ANTARAC 1998, p. 38). Virtually no providers mentioned the need to involve students, other than Indigenous students, in negotiating the design or implementation of programs. Cross-industry qualifications were rarely achieved. The need for cross-occupational training in agriculture to meet needs of seasonal and casual workers was identified (p. 14). Customising competencies to meet the specific needs of local contexts was rarely achieved and there was little understanding of the part played by knowledge and skill in a ‘new’ economy. There is strong evidence to suggest that, particularly in rural and regional contexts, partnerships between providers, industry and community are what make them effective (Kilpatrick & Guenther 2003).

In this connection Farrell and Wyse (2003) point to the way in which the demand for new knowledge actually drives the economy. Here they are not simply referring solely to communications technology but also the importance of considering the needs of a civil society (p. 9). They commented on the existence of globalised niche markets which are continually changing and impacting on the kinds of skill required to operate effectively in the workplace and communication, problem-solving and decision making that assume greater focus so that learning itself is the new form of labour (pp. 9-10).

They noted that workforces are increasingly mobile and contingent and no longer available for traditional delivery of formal training except in isolated pockets for short run production. It is therefore not immediately clear what training is appropriate. Further, communities of practice are increasingly geographically and temporally dispersed which means that young people are no longer learning skills from working alongside experienced workers. Additionally, local, contextualised skills need to be taught alongside and in conjunction with global understanding of multiple sectors and varied locations.
3.1.10 Early leaving in the Northern Territory

Data collected by Moir (2004a), reveal a lower percentage of students completing Year 12 in the Northern Territory compared to Australia as a whole. However, the numbers are not as large as might be expected. Overall, 5.8 per cent fewer students complete Year 12 in the Northern Territory. Future Directions (CDU/DEET 2004, p. 19) estimates that some 3,500 or more secondary age people in the Territory, or 20 per cent of the secondary-age population, do not attend school at all, which shows this figure in a different light.

One of the reasons is that the Northern Territory has almost double the national average of language background other than English students.

The figures for retention rates are particularly revealing. The national average ‘apparent’ retention rate (not taking account of emigration, student movements between jurisdictions and students repeating year levels) from the commencement of Year 10, is given as 98 per cent. The Northern Territory rate is well below this, at 82 per cent, and this is the lowest in the country. The Territory also has the lowest apparent retention rate to Year 10 for Indigenous students at 58 per cent (CDU/DEET 2004, p. 22). These figures need to be considered alongside the generally poor attendance rates in remote area schools.

Looking at the intersection with other disadvantaged groups, 23 per cent of secondary students enrolled in government and non-government schools are classified by the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) as English as a second language (ESL) learners. Indigenous students make up 83 per cent of the total number of ESL students in all primary and secondary schools government schools, with 68 per cent of these attending remote schools. The Northern Territory has almost double the national average of language background other than English (LBOTE) students: 32 per cent as against 17 per cent nationally. The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of students with disabilities: 13 per cent as compared with 4 per cent nationally. Leaving aside differences in classification, the incidence of Indigenous students with conductive hearing loss together with the poorer health status of people living in the Territory would be expected to increase the overall percentage of those with disabilities. The level of homelessness amongst the youth population runs at 69 per thousand of which 75 per cent are Indigenous young people, a significantly higher figure than elsewhere in Australia.

3.1.11 Possible responses

The major policy implication resulting from the work of McMillan and Marks, which was taken up by government, concerns the need to improve literacy and numeracy. However, although the push by government through the Service Providers has been to repair or improve the literacy and numeracy levels of school leavers, little attention has been paid to the way that literacy and numeracy are taught in formal, school-based education. Whilst leavers do not attribute the decision to leave early to school-based factors, this may be because they have already dismissed school as irrelevant to their needs. There is more than enough evidence to suggest that informal and non-formal community-based methods that provide for situated learning are needed. Schools need to provide for engagement and seek ways to overcome the apathy, alienation and rejection.
Unfortunately, many researchers can advocate little more than a re-constituted VET as a way of improving the quality of transitions. A more transformative approach would encompass the following:

- A community-orientated approach in which schools become much more involved in creating community partnerships with students at all levels including the planning and integration of services among agencies. The community context is crucial to overcoming the ‘cracked mosaic’ for those considered at risk of failing to make a successful transition from school to adult life through work and study (McIntrye & Melville 2000, p. 116);

- An integrated curriculum involving the principles governing the New Basics in Queensland and the EsseNTial Learnings in the Northern Territory;

- A much greater focus on productive education;

- Programs incorporating redistributive justice which consciously and deliberately focus on civic responsibilities, mutual obligation, and rights and equity issues including employment disadvantage;

- A return to full service schools (DETYA 2001; James & St Leger 2003) or the adoption of an integrated services approach (CDU/NTDEET 2004, Recommendation 50, p. 313). Full Service Schooling derives from the USA where it is described as an holistic approach that integrates within a school a number of educational, medical, social and human services, to provide for children, youth and their families. (James & St Leger 2003, p. 4, citing Calfee et al 1998).

Drawing on Kemmis (2000), James and St. Leger distinguish between ‘an integrated services’ model and a ‘community development model’ in which student are viewed as participants rather than recipients. This is more closely aligned to the concept of an inclusive school. Successful implementation of the full service concept involves improved brokering across school-community boundaries. The Victorian Full Service Schools (FSS) program was funded by the Commonwealth from mid 1999 to 2000 and was directed specifically at improving retention of students said to be at risk of not completing Year 12. FSS funding enabled the employment of additional staff including youth workers to organise new partnership arrangements for individuals and groups. The additional staff acted as case managers for particular students to develop clear work-related goals and personal action plans. One of the crucial factors in the success of the program was the recruitment of caring, patient staff with appropriate skills and understandings and having a coordinator with drive, skills and persistence.

Both Learning to Work, the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training (HRSCET 2004) and Future Directions (CDU/NTDEET 2004) advocate that all students should have access to professionally trained and well informed career advisers (HRSCET 2004, Recommendation 42, p. 152) or pathway mentors (CDU/NTDEET 2004. Recommendation 12, p. 108). Pathway mentors would work with students for one year after completion to advise on and manage student progress through their chosen learning and career pathways. Teachers working as pathways mentors would not be expected to give specific career advice but refer the student to trained careers advisers. Each student would be expected to complete a Futures Profile. Schools would be expected to collect destination data to assist with system-wide decision making and reporting.
3.1.12  Indigenous youth

A number of factors confuse the picture of unemployment for Indigenous youth in the Northern Territory, compared to the non-Indigenous population. Firstly Census data (ABS 2002c) shows that Indigenous people under the age of 25 make up 56 per cent of the Indigenous population. By contrast the same age groups make up only 33 per cent of the non-Indigenous population. This suggests quite plainly that data about youth unemployment in the Northern Territory cannot be applied homogenously across both population groups. It also means that comparing youth unemployment rates in the Northern Territory with national figures is highly problematic, because nowhere in other parts of Australia is there such a high concentration of young Indigenous people.

The second confusing factor relates to what constitutes unemployment. The ABS Census data suggests that 18.6 per cent of Indigenous youth were unemployed in the Northern Territory in 2001. This compares with 8.7 per cent for non-Indigenous youth. This suggests that while the non-Indigenous population is substantially better off in terms of employment than youth in Australia as a whole (where the average unemployment rate was 13.8 per cent - see Table 2-1), the Indigenous youth population is far worse off.

Thirdly, the unemployment rate does not take into account the impact of CDEP employment, which accounts for 49 per cent of the youth labour force in the Northern Territory. While there is some debate about whether CDEP should be counted as employment (see Is CDEP Real work?, page 60) at the very best, the CDEP data masks a largely underemployed cohort of the Northern Territory population.

Another notable feature of the ABS Census data is the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous labour force participation. About 63 per cent of Indigenous youth are not in the labour force. This compares with just 25 per cent of non-Indigenous youth.

Taking all the above factors into account a few conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, non-Indigenous youth unemployment is apparently much lower than for Australia as a whole. Second, even counting CDEP as employment, Indigenous youth unemployment is more than twice the rate of that for non-Indigenous youth. Third, if those not participating in the labour force are taken into account the true unemployment rate for Indigenous youth is conservatively five times higher than for non-Indigenous youth.

3.2  Group 2. Persons who have a disability, medical condition or addiction (with a specific focus on those experiencing mental illness)

3.2.1  Definitions and introduction

There is little argument in literature about what constitutes disability. Many Australian agencies (ABS 2004c; AIHW 2003) have adopted the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) definition, which describes ‘disability’ as an umbrella term for any or all of the components: impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction, as influenced by environmental factors (WHO 2002). Australians are also restricted in their interpretation of ‘disability’ by the Disability...
Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth of Australia 2004a), which in some ways could be considered to be a broader definition, based on loss of function, disease, illness or disorders or the potential for the above.

However, operational definitions and approaches to measuring disability vary substantially, depending on the purpose for which they are developed (AIHW 2003). For example, Centrelink’s (2004) criteria for assessing eligibility of Disability Support Pension (DSP) payments is dependent on whether an individual is:

- Aged 16 or over and under Age Pension age, and
- Assessed as not being able to work full time or be retrained for full time work for at least two years because of your illness, injury or disability, or
- Permanently blind, or
- Participating in the Supported Wage System (SWS).

The assessment process attempts to quantify the extent of disability according to one of a number of instruments described by Centrelink (2004) as ‘impairment tables’ and described in the Social Security Act 1991 (Commonwealth of Australia 2004b) as an ‘Adult Disability Assessment Tool’. Other tools such as the Job Seeker Classification Index (JSCI) are used to determine whether a person is eligible for intensive assistance from a Disability Employment Service Outlet (DESO) or Job Network Specialist. These differences in definition need to be taken into account when considering approaches to employment and training for people with disabilities.

This section now goes on to identify some of the barriers and disincentives to employment experienced by people with disabilities and then looks at some possible responses including the adoption of a competitive employment approach. It concludes with a consideration of issues relating specifically to VET.

According to the ABS (2004c), 20 per cent of the Australian population had a disability in 2003. The 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (ABS 2004c) found that people with disabilities were more likely to be unemployed, more likely to be engaged in part time work and had lower labour force participation rates. They were also less likely to have completed a higher educational qualification than those without a disability.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA 2000a) state that while 80 per cent of the general population is participating in the workforce, only 53 per cent of people with a disability do. The proportion of the Australian population with a disability aged between 15 and 64 who currently participate in Vocational Education and Training is estimated at less than 2.5 per cent, yet the proportion of all Australians aged between 15-64 who currently participate in VET is about 12.5 per cent (ABS 2003d, NCVER 2004). More recently, ANTA (2003) has acknowledged that:

"People with a disability are significantly underrepresented in the national system, and their training is not leading to jobs often enough."

These differences in definition need to be taken into account when considering approaches to employment and training for people with disabilities.
3.2.2 **Barriers to employment for people with disabilities**

It is well known that physical and/or mental disabilities constitute barriers to participation and that paid work is not common amongst those with an on-going medical condition, or for those in receipt of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) (Saunders 2002).

An extensive range of barriers faced by people with disabilities in seeking employment has been identified in a number of reports. Citing the National Caucus of Disability Consumer Organisations (NCDCO) submission to the McClure committee, ACOSS (2003b, p. 8) identifies the main disincentives to work for people with disabilities as: inadequate support at the work place, inaccessible transport and buildings, discriminatory community and employer attitudes, inflexible working conditions, and poorly designed means tested programs.

In addition people with disabilities face higher living costs in respect of medication, equipment, modified housing, transport, care services and house maintenance. ACOSS (2003b) comments that these issues are not always well recognised by social security system in that there are significant penalties for moving off a pension and into work or study, and the episodic nature of many disabilities and chronic illnesses may not be taken into account. They face discrimination, work rigidity, inappropriate or inadequate assistance and support, physical and other access issues.

The opportunities available to people with disabilities are frequently limited because of false assumptions made about their abilities. Shaddock *et al* (2001) point out that new models of work are opening up for people with disabilities. They are not simply aspiring to be employees but seek to run businesses, work in cooperatives, and move beyond the employer-employee paradigm.

Other barriers are created by the way in which labour market programs are implemented and include the medical model of disability. This mitigates against the provision of social support. A medical model defines disability as an individual problem and personal tragedy. In the process, disability becomes seen as a personal defect, requiring rehabilitation so people can lead normal lives. This serves to disempower people with disabilities and to depoliticise their experience. The social model, on the other hand, is based on the distinction between impairment and disability, and seeks to provide social support and positive social identities (Sherry 2002, p. 3).

Another barrier to full time employment is the changed criteria adopted for income support, which attempts to transition people with disabilities back to work. Assessment of disability has been made more rigorous to force more people with disabilities into the labour market. Whereas previously medical practitioners worked on the basis of 'permanent incapacity for work to an extent of 85 per cent,' they are now expected to administer a new measure of 'those unable to work at least 30 hours per week for at least the next two years,' a measure thought to facilitate 'smooth transition from DSP to work' (IRS 2002). This requirement is—according to some—consistent with the growth in part-time employment. (Argyrous & Neale 2003, p. 19). The reason for this is that people with disabilities are fearful of losing their DSP if they work more than 30 hours.
The way in which the mutual obligation regime is implemented also contributes to the disadvantages faced by people with a disability. Ziguras, Duffy and Considine (2003) in a study into the long-term unemployed for the Brotherhood of St Lawrence, found a substantial minority, especially those with mental health problems, found the activity test requirements complex, confusing and stressful. Job seekers experienced difficulties with meeting deadlines for forms, remembering appointments, chasing up various forms from doctors, and problems with payments (p. 35).

For people with disabilities suffering from mental illness, one of the major barriers is the stigma associated with the condition. People suffering from schizophrenia want healthcare workers who ‘treated them with more respect’, who would appreciate ‘just how far a little kindness goes’, and a community that ‘would understand we are not lazy or weak’, and that recovery is not simply a matter of ‘pulling yourself together’. (Hocking 2003). The effects of stigma mean that many people are reluctant to seek help, less likely to cooperate with treatment, and slower to recover self-esteem and confidence. Stigma and its associated prejudice form a very real barrier to recovery and may even be fatal. Hocking also believes that medical professionals contribute to the stigma through careless use of diagnostic labels.

3.2.3 Approaches and solutions

Besides the changes to labour market policy called for by Ziguras, Duffy and Considine (2003) reviewed in the section on the long-term unemployed (see section 3.3.6), the following approaches should be considered in the search for solutions.

Adoption of a ‘rights’ approach

Nicaaise et al (1995) support the adoption of a human rights approach to disability and unemployment whereby social objectives are placed ahead of more narrow, immediate considerations of economic efficiency. A human rights approach incorporates the entitlement to be included in the workforce and permits job seekers with disabilities to enjoy access to the ‘material, cultural and social resources that [enable one to have] a minimum acceptable way of life’ (cited in Dockery 2002, p. 186). This ‘inclusive’ approach runs contrary to ‘exclusive’ norms often encountered in the workplace.

Daly and Smith (2003) define exclusions broadly as ‘multiple deprivations resulting from a lack of personal, social, political or financial opportunities’ (p. 4). Exclusions are usually defined in economic terms in income disparities and variations in standard of living, whilst children at risk of exclusions are seen as ‘growing up in circumstances that limit the development of their potential, compromise their health, and impair their sense of self’. This definition misses the powerful social pressures for exclusion which hold these limitations in place and are part of institutionalised racism.

Inclusion of a mobility policy

Ranzijn (2002) argues for the adoption of a mobility policy that guarantees improved access for people with disabilities and treats mobility as a human right. Restricted employment options make it more difficult to run a car, which make it more difficult to find another job. The Hawke Centre website argues that we should not talk in terms of road or transport policy but refocus on mobility policy which ensures access to services, diminishes risk, optimises choice and reinforces citizenship rights.
Consideration of an employment assistance guarantee

ACOSS (2003b, p. 35) has argued for the provision of an employment assistance guarantee. Such a guarantee may involve government as an employer of last resort as suggested by Argyrous and Neale (2003) in their study of the ‘disabled’ labour market. ACOSS also suggest that activity requirements for social security should be tailored to individual circumstances and underpinned by a strong investment in labour market assistance. It points to the need for flexible policies that take account of disabilities and caring responsibilities (ACOSS 2003b). It goes on to push for the adoption of more stringent criteria for service providers and argues that the assumption that joblessness is a behavioural problem, which is common amongst some service providers, must be removed. Dockery (2002) calls attention to the demotivating and stigmatising nature of compulsory work programs and emphasizes the need to provide the widest possible choice.

Adoption of a competitive employment approach

The term ‘competitive employment’ is used frequently in North American literature to cover a range of competitive employment policies consistent with a social support model should be instituted. Competitive Employment (Wehman, Revell & Brooke 2003) is being increasingly adopted in the United States as a response to overcoming the employment disadvantage of people with serious/acute disabilities. In this context ‘Employment outcome’ is now defined by the United States Department of Education as meaning an individual with a disability working in an integrated setting. (Wehman, Revell & Brooke 2003, p. 164). Hence, competitive employment sets out to demystify the concept of disability and publicise the positive attributes of supported employment.

The provision of measures to increase social support

Shaddock et al (2001) emphasise the need to take into account the provision of social support. They found that most jobs were never advertised, observing that ‘Family and friends of existing employees are a reliable, simple and inexpensive means to identify suitable new employees.’ They cite a New Zealand study by Reid and Bray (1997) which revealed that no worker found paid work for themselves and no job was obtained via newspaper ads. Usually support workers matched people to jobs. They understood the worker’s potential, knew employment legislation and regulations, matched the person and position and had networks and entrepreneurial flair. However it was unlikely for an employer to approach an agency in order to employ a person with disabilities. Jobs were found and filled through a referral model of personal networking. This suggests that that a job-match approach may over-emphasise task factors at the expense of other personal, social and family supports.

Shaddock et al (2001) point to the need to involve family and friends more extensively with career planning and involve them early, ‘Those involved in assisting young people for the transition to post-school life should actively network with their local communities in order to assist them to take advantage of local employment conditions.’ Although education and training programs may go some way to reducing employment disadvantage, a more comprehensive range of supports is needed at the individual level if young people are to achieve satisfactory employment outcomes. Social networks of people with disabilities tend to be restricted and lack complexity and employees with disabilities are less likely to see work colleagues outside of work hours.
For workers with disabilities who are in jobs, the importance of building up internal support through feedback and positive encouragement from co-workers, supervisors and managers is crucial for this leads to increased self-worth and a greater awareness of self and possibility. An over-reliance on external agencies tends to remove support and reduces responsibility and control over work options and future employment goals. Agencies therefore need to develop and nurture internal supports (McNamee 1997, p. 229).

Increased networking

The importance of networking is illustrated in a study of Indigenous people with psychiatric disabilities in the City of Darebin in Melbourne (Macali 1999). In this project, success was not evaluated in terms of numbers of placements, but in terms of the wider community contribution. Links were established between Work Force and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and local geriatric community health centre, the Darebin Aboriginal Network and the Koori Employment Support Network. Open communication about appropriateness of referrals was encouraged and no separate employment program was developed. The development of networking fits well with the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) approach referred to in the What works? Section, page 98.

3.2.4 Reforms to education and training

There is evidence to suggest that occupationally oriented vocational programs reduce the probability of school drop outs and produce higher rates of post school employment (Shaddock et al 2001). However, the ANTA report Bridging Pathways (2000a) found that people with disabilities were under-represented in VET programs, were not recording the same progress or satisfaction with VET as other students, and failed to reap the same benefits as other graduates on completion. In addition VET was not fully complying with Commonwealth and state disability legislation or the access and equity standards within the Australian Recognition Framework.

In order to overcome systemic inequalities, ANTA (2000a) believes the VET sector needs to ensure people with a disability can choose preferred training options, know they can participate and succeed in their individual vocational goals, and have clear avenues for informing the system about meeting their needs individually and collectively. ANTA also suggests that employers ought to actively make an investment in employing people with a disability and know they can access resources to accommodate the workplace and training needs of their employees. It suggests that training providers should have access to resources to support people with a disability in training, know how to include and support them and be willing to do so. It envisions that planners and policy makers access expert advice on disability issues, treat disability as a high priority and incorporate disability specific actions in all stages of policy, planning and reporting (p. 7).

At the same time, a competitive employment approach will not succeed without far-reaching reforms to education and training. Shaddock et al (2001) claim that Australia’s decline in international competitiveness can be attributed to effects of competency based training.
3.2.5 **Indigenous people with disabilities**

While it is possible to quantify Indigenous youth unemployment and compare it with non-Indigenous youth unemployment, given that the data for unemployment among disability groups generally is scant (see Table 2-2), it is impossible, with current available data sets, to compare Indigenous disability unemployment rates. Given however that Indigenous hospitalisation and infant mortality rates in many remote areas of the Northern Territory are at levels 60 per cent above rates for metropolitan areas (BRS 1999), it could be expected that incapacity to work because of disease or accidents is likely to be markedly higher in areas where the majority of Indigenous people live.

3.3 **Group 3. Persons permanently unemployed for 52 weeks or more**

3.3.1 **Introduction**

After considering the size and composition of this group, this section focuses on psychological barriers (Dollard & Winefield 2002) and the discouraging effect of Mutual Obligation as evidenced by the increasing number of breach notices (Lackner 2003; Schooneveldt & Tomlinson 2003; Ziguras, Duffy, & Considine 2003), and the lack of success of work-for-the-dole programs in getting people back into work (Borland & Tseng 2003; Saunders 2002). It is argued that the mutual obligation regime as currently enforced, adds to the psychological barriers experienced by this group. A variety of tentative solutions is then put forward, which borrow from the American approach to specifically targeted placements, person-centred approaches, and the preparation of highly trained professional job coaches (Gray, McDermott & Butkus 2000).

3.3.2 **Size and composition**

While there remains some debate at a political level about whether the plight of long-term and very long term unemployed people is getting better or worse (ABC 2004a), the ACOSS submission to *The House of Representatives Inquiry into Employment: Increasing participation in paid work* (ACOSS 2003b, p. 32) identified 144,220 people as long-term unemployed (unemployed for more than 12 months) in Australia. This constitutes 23.2 per cent of the unemployed population. Of these, 86,600 had been unemployed for 2 years and constitute the very long-term unemployed (VLTU). To these need to be added those in part-time work who were not earning enough to come off income support, and those receiving unemployment benefits (373,700) for longer than 12 months, and those who have less than three months continuous employment and who were moving in and out of short-term casual employment.

The long term unemployed can be found amongst all the groups considered in this report. They appear amongst school leavers who remain unemployed for more than one year after leaving school, and mature aged workers many of whom have been retrenched, and those suffering a mental illness where depression, lack of self-esteem and lack of agency are compounded. In addition, they are found at all levels of society and employment ranging from blue collar operatives to managers and executives. However, despite the broad-ranging nature of people experiencing long term
unemployment, there is strong evidence to suggest that long term unemployed people are more likely to be living in poverty (Commonwealth of Australia 2004c).

### 3.3.3 Barriers

The barriers experienced by the long term unemployed have been succinctly summarised by Burtless (2002) who writes

> Among the long-term unemployed, the economically disadvantaged face four kinds of obstacles to holding and keeping a job: (a) work-limiting health conditions, (b) deficiencies in education and basic skills, (c) child care responsibilities, and (d) transportation.

The ABS (2004d) shows that the reason most often given by long term unemployed job seekers for being rejected by employers was that they were considered too young or too old. The second reason was that they did not have the necessary skills or experience. More than half of all long term unemployed people gave these two reasons.

These barriers are frequently aggravated by spatial and locational factors, compounded by mobility problems. However it is the motivational and psychological barriers which are the most powerful obstacles in the case of the long term unemployed. One of the most significant barriers is being unemployed for any extended periods of time because employers tend to select staff on the basis of recent employment (ACOSS 2003b):

> Employers use the duration of unemployment as a yardstick of a person's employability, even where the person is capable of performing the work (p. 33).

### 3.3.4 Motivational and psychological barriers

Work connects people with social opportunities. Absence of work disconnects people and their families from opportunities and is a major cause of social isolation (DEWRSB 1999). Dollard and Winefield (2002) argue that increased income inequality has negative health consequences for all members of society. This is frequently attributed to the breakdown of social cohesion. They also suggest that economic insecurity and precarious employment is another source of poor mental and physical health. Job loss results in a serious deterioration of affective well-being whilst not enough work can also lead to psychological effects (Pathways to Work Coalition 2001).

A big debate relates to whether we can attribute differences between employed and unemployed people’s psychological health to employment status (or ‘exposure’ to work), or whether there is a pre-existing difference in psychological well-being which influences whether one will obtain or retain employment (the ‘selection’ hypothesis) (Dollard & Winefield 2002, p. 12).

The particular psychological theories of unemployment adopted, influence intervention and relate to theories of agency. If we assume that people are fundamentally proactive and independent any external restrictions on agency are likely to cause anxiety and distress.

The principal material and psychological benefits derived from a job have been identified by Whelan, Hannan and Creighton (1991) in their study of unemployment, poverty and psychological stress in Ireland. These writers argue that vulnerability to the

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The reason most often given by long term unemployed job seekers for being rejected by employers was that they were considered too young or too old.

Job loss results in a serious deterioration of affective well-being whilst not enough work can also lead to psychological effects.

One question relates to whether long term unemployed people are so because of poor psychological health or whether unemployment leads to ill-health.

There are material and psychological benefits derived from having a job.
impact of unemployment differs according to the individual situation and relates to pre-existing notions of appropriate gender roles. Thus, in Ireland, employment for married women has a clear positive effect in situations where husbands are not at work, whereas women in home duties had particularly higher distress scores. This was attributed to restrictions on their ability to pursue other avenues to self-development (p. 125).

3.3.5 Mutual obligation and Work for the Dole (WfD)

It has been argued that mutual obligation as constructed in Australia is characterised by a new paternalism which assumes people need direction and supervision, with the State acting as an understanding, but firm father figure, deciding how people who do not know about such things, should go about meeting their ambitions (Ziguras et al, 2003).

Unfortunately, the ‘tough love’ policy associated with mutual obligation has, in many cases, only aggravated the difficulties in which the long term unemployed find themselves. This section looks at the application of breach penalties as part of the mutual obligation regime, and the success of programs such as Work for the Dole (WfD).

Breach penalties

Concern has been expressed at the dramatic increase in the number of breach penalties issued by Centrelink, particularly among Indigenous groups (NTCOSS 2001). Schooneveldt & Tomlinson (2002) for instance, view Centrelink breach penalties as part of a compliance control strategy, whereby Centrelink is authorised to temporarily withhold partial or total payment from a welfare recipient who is deemed by a Centrelink officer, to be in breach of an ‘administrative’ or ‘activity test’ requirement imposed under the Mutual Obligation regime.

Lackner (2003) revealed the extent of breaching and the increasing numbers of ‘revoked’ or unfair breaches and the income-related reductions which result. In the case of the long term unemployed, it appears that employment service providers use breaching as a way of getting difficult clients off their books who would otherwise obstruct the flow of income. Up to 72 per cent of recommended breaches made by third party agencies such as Job Network Providers, Community Work Coordinators and Work for the Dole Providers during 2001-2, were found to be inappropriately recommended, or were subsequently overturned on appeal. Clients were frequently not made aware of breaching moves. This amounts to a form of government sponsored harassment making it more difficult for single parents and the long term unemployed to secure work. Under such conditions it would appear that Mutual Obligation breeds mistrust and discrimination rather than social cohesion.

This analysis is supported by the work of Schooneveldt and Tomlinson (2002) who found that government rhetoric encouraged the increase in number of breach penalties imposed. Job seekers are ‘not to be given the benefit of the doubt’ according to INTRALINK, Centrelink’s internal policy manual (Cited p. 181 from the ACOSS submission, 2001). A sense of unfair treatment predominated. Most long term unemployed consulted, thought their self-esteem had been reduced, and most did not realise beforehand they were to be breached. As a result 21 per cent needed to move into less desirable accommodation. The overall result was to discourage people and force them out of the Mutual Obligation regime which failed to provide the promised
safety net for those in genuine need. This is a case of the ‘socially advantaged imposing obligations as a form of repayment upon the least financially advantaged people’. (Schooneveldt & Tomlinson 2002, p. 187, citing Kinnear 2000).

The construction and application of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) is an integral part of the information technology system that links Centrelink, the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Job Network members. According to McDonald, Marston and Buckley (2002) this amounts to a regime of governance that severely limits the personal agency of the job seeker. Once in the system, an unemployed person cannot avoid participation in the Job Network and that participation is electronically monitored. Such a system relies heavily on self-disclosure by securing the active co-operation and participation of the unemployed. However there is a complete lack of transparency in the process which calls into question the degree of mutuality envisaged.

The JSCI is portrayed as similar to and sharing the characteristics of a psychometric model which obviates subjective assessment and is designed to produce a relative, not absolute, measure of job seeker disadvantage. However McDonald, Marston and Buckley (2002) reveal that the Members Information Guide is not in the public domain and proved difficult to obtain. Moreover, there is no independent way of assessing reliability and validity.

Underlying the construction of the JSCI is a view of the ideal self. The approach is reformist and relies on correction. Secondary classification incorporates behavioural competencies and includes list of appropriate observable behaviours. For example, the secondary classification concentrates on presentation and appearance and includes considerations of poor hygiene, obesity, unusual physical aberrations, dental disfigurement, tattoos and non-conformist dress (p. 136). The clustering of these symptoms is considered indicative of something more than pathological (p. 137).

The Instrument distinguishes between those who are ‘job ready’ (or low risk) and those who are not and therefore require reform. The unemployed are considered as a ‘risky’ population, requiring significant personal remediation, irrespective of the structural conditions of the job market (p. 138). However, it is important to stress that this interpretation did not apply to all individual job providers. Some are spoken of very highly elsewhere in the research as helpful, considerate and caring.

Nevertheless as McDonald, Marston and Buckley (2002) observe, jobseekers are

positioned as anything but active in the JSCI text itself. The problem with the unemployed is the unemployed themselves who are said to require a course of ‘improvement’ (p. 135).

**Work for the Dole (WfD) programs**

A number of researchers have examined the effectiveness of Work-for-the-Dole programs (WfDs) in Australia. Borland & Tseng (2003) worked with a group of New Start Allowance (NSA) recipients aged 18-24 during 1997-8 on the full rate of income support who had been in receipt of support for six months or longer, just prior to the introduction of mutual obligation. They measured the effects of the program by examining: (1) the incidence of exit from payments six months and one year after commencement of WfD; (2) whether recipients remained on payments at nine months
and 15 months after commencement; and (3) the number of fortnights on payments during the six months and 12 months after commencement. Payments outcomes for a treatment group of NSA recipients were compared with a matched control group who never commenced WfD.

Borland and Tseng (2003) found quite large, significant, adverse effects of participation in WfD. More non-participants were off payments at six months and 12 months, more WfD participants were on payments after nine months and 15 months, and the number of fortnights on payments was higher for WfD participants.

Disaggregating the results revealed those for females were slightly more adverse than for men. There was no significant ordering of effects by payment history, but some association with regions with above-median rates of unemployment was found. The effects were more adverse for those who had been compelled to undertake WfD or who had not participated in Job Start programs in the previous 12 months. This suggested a ‘chilling’ of job search activity whilst on WfD.

These findings are supported by Cowling and Mitchell (2002) as part of their investigation into *What has Job Network delivered?* Drawing on a net impact evaluation carried out by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWRSB 2001, DEWR 2002a) using a compliance effect, a program effect and an attachment effect, they found although cost-cutting efficiencies were obtained and costs per employment outcome in Intensive Assistance were more than halved, only very small gains were noted for those who commenced programs, and in the number of referrals. Cowling and Mitchell (2002) suggest a majority of job seekers who attained employment after being referred to, or participating in, Intensive Assistance would have found a job anyway (p. 60).

ACOSS (2000) go as far as to say:

*Work for the Dole is poorly designed as a labour market program to assist long-term unemployed people overcome barriers to employment.* (p. 9)

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations’ own comparative assessments (DEWR 2004b) of five employment programs (Intensive Assistance, Job Search training, Job Matching, New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and Work for the Dole) rate Work for the Dole as the least effective in terms of sustainable ‘off income support’ outcomes. In conclusion, it should be remembered that most employment schemes achieve little in the reduction of unemployment. Many initiatives are not job creation oriented but are responses to a broader range of social needs in areas which carry multiple burdens. Policy makers and planners need to give explicit recognition to this reality (Whelan Hannan & Creighton 1991, p. 141, citing Ronayane et al 1986).

### 3.3.6 Approaches and solutions

**View long-term unemployed people as proactive and independent**

Dollard and Winefield (2002) point out that the psychological theories of unemployment adopted by policy makers influence the intervention processes adopted. Although these writers focus on the management of work stress and mental health, what they have to say applies particularly to our understanding of the long term unemployed. For example, there are important concerns regarding the way in which unemployed individuals are ‘framed’ and they compare Fryer’s (1986) Agency
Restriction Theory which assumes people are fundamentally proactive and independent, with Deprivation Theory which assumes them to be fundamentally reactive and dependent as in the Mutual Obligation regime.

**Equip with coping strategies**

Older workers who enter the ranks of the long term unemployed are more comfortable in continuing to work in accustomed ways. They tend to resist rationalisation, new technologies and new procedures, and feel inadequate or incapable of changing. This suggests that the approach to intervention should rely on preparing young people whilst still in school, and workers whilst in employment, to adopt adaptive coping strategies so that they can learn how to manage change. To achieve this will require new policies at both the national and the institutional/organisational level.

**Adopt a more personalised approach**

There is therefore a need to adopt a policy that will move away from one that encourages passive acceptance and dependency, to one which encourages the active exploration of risk; from one which concentrates on compulsion, obligation and imposition to one which promotes motivation, empowerment and hope. Compulsory requirements and punishments have been shown to be counterproductive and a more personalized approach is required. Current assessment procedures have been shown to be inadequate and there is a reluctance to disclose problems to Centrelink staff. In addition, Ziguras Duffy and Considine (2003) found evidence that personal problems and difficulties were frequently not recorded by Centrelink staff.

A number of these proposals can also be found in the Twelve Budget Priorities adopted by ACOSS (2003a). These proposals require a substantial public investment in growing jobs and include among other things: a transitional jobs scheme for the very long term unemployed to replace Work for the Dole to provide work-experience in real jobs; enhanced customised assistance and personalised assistance and more affordable childcare. They estimate that such a program would involve substantial costs of $1.326b in 2003-4, and $2.032b in 2004-5. However, assuming that there are accompanying improvements in the agency, motivation, self-esteem and mental health of the long term unemployed, there would be compensatory savings in a variety of other areas.

**Make use of job coaches**

The ACOSS proposals (2003a) imply a need for professionalising the service provided to job seekers. The work of Wehman and colleagues (Wehman & Gibson 1998; Wehman & West 1998) in the United States has been dealt with under the section on Disabilities. One of the most promising initiatives involves the use of highly trained, professional jobs coaches. For example, Gray, McDermott and Butkus (2000) concluded that the employment of individuals with mental illness was positively influenced by the ratio of job coaches to individuals served, although this relationship was modified by local employment availability and the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of the individuals served. Effects were most noticeable in urban areas with low or intermediate unemployment rates.
Support a more active labour market policy

For Ziguras, Duffy and Considine (2003, p. vi) a more effective active labour market policy would:

- Place more emphasis on personal engagement and fostering individuals’ own goals rather than simply compliance with requirements;
- Devote more attention to the barriers to employment experienced by disadvantaged job seekers through better assessment processes at Centrelink and training for Centrelink staff;
- Provide more resources to programs which target disadvantaged job seekers, to enable better access to training, work experience and personal support;
- Address the lack of rewards for undertaking some forms of paid employment; and
- Acknowledge that for as long as there is a structural shortfall in jobs, those least able to compete will always be at risk of unemployment (Executive summary, p vi).

Improve facilitation

Ziguras, Duffy and Considine (2003, pp. 41-42) recommend that a potentially useful way forward, based on that outlined in the Hanover Welfare Services report (Hanover Welfare Services 2003), would be to develop a program that could overcome the limitations of current arrangements. This could be done by providing: access to stable and affordable accommodation for the period of the program; pre-work programs to build self-esteem, encouragement and motivation; access to personal, health and social support services; substantial work experience placement; access to structured training resulting in a recognised qualification; assistance to transfer to a job vacancy at the end of the training/work experience phase; and post-placement support.

3.3.7 Long-term unemployed Indigenous people

The definition of long-term unemployment in an Indigenous context in the Northern Territory is largely influenced by whether or not CDEP is counted as work and whether or not labour force participation is taken into account. A more realistic approach to employment may be to take labour force participation as the indicator of engagement with the labour market rather than raw unemployment. Recent research by Guenther (2003) and Moir (2004b) support the view that the proportion of the working aged population not in the labour force should be the measure used to compare unemployment rates across the Northern Territory. However, the ABS data does not show how long people have been disengaged from the labour force and it is therefore impossible to make an accurate assessment of the problem of long-term unemployment among Indigenous people in the Northern Territory.
3.4 Group 4. Persons aged 50 years or older

3.4.1 Introduction

This section looks at the composition of mature aged job seekers many of whom wish to enter the workforce and examines the positive and negative considerations of employing older workers. It identifies the barriers to employment beginning with age discrimination and other compounding aspects of the problem, before ending with a consideration of some of the possible responses to assisting mature aged people back into the workforce.

The importance of reducing employment disadvantage for those aged 50 years or older has to be seen in conjunction with the demographic effects of Australia’s aging workforce. Australia ranks twelfth in the OECD league table of total workforce participation, and the economic burden of population aging is of serious concern to the current government (Costello 2004).

A recent ABS survey into job-search experience (ABS 2004d) shows that 30 per cent of unemployed people aged 45 to 54 believed that their main difficulty in finding work was because of their age. This figure rises to 59 per cent for those aged 55 years and older. For men aged 55-59, the workforce participation rate was 61 per cent compared with 63 per cent for the whole working age population, for those between 60 and 64 years of age the figure fell to 38 per cent, whilst only six per cent of men over the age of 65 were participating in the workforce.

The average effective retirement age is now at 62.3 years. The trend to lower workforce participation amongst those aged 50 or older is commonly thought to be getting worse as Australians bring forward their retirement age. However, Toohey (2004) claims the challenge of longevity is well within society’s normal adaptive capacity and cites ABS figures which suggest that the over 55s have increased their share of employment from 8 per cent to 11.5 per cent over the last year, whilst the participation rate has increased from 22.7 per cent to 27.5 per cent over the last five years. Foreshadowing recent government changes with regards to retirement age and access to superannuation, Encel (2001) condemned involuntary retirement and early exit from the workforce as a short-term solution to problems of employment.

3.4.2 Mature aged job seekers

Mature aged job seekers comprise a highly heterogeneous, diversified group and include long-term unemployed, retrenched senior or middle managers, people accessing pensions and other supports and women who have returned to work or who are seeking full time work (COTA 1999, p11-12).

The long-term unemployed are generally males, but include some females, who are receiving Newstart Allowance and are eligible for Intensive Assistance through Job Network. This is a highly vulnerable group who often consider they have been ‘parked’ by case managers. People in this category spoke to the Council on the Ageing (COTA 1999) of the absurdity and unfairness of the government’s mutual obligation policies when they could barely manage on the income support payments they received. Job search is generally seen by such people as a corrosive activity accompanied by constant knock backs. However, the Active Participation Model introduced in July 2003 is
intended to simplify access to services for job seekers and streamline services provided by Centrelink, Job Placement Agencies, Job Network members and complementary employment and training programs (DEWR 2003, p. 10). It remains to be seen if these changes have been successful.

With respect to retrenched workers, a study by Webber and Weller (2002, pp. 150-1) into the operation of a Labour Adjustment Package to assist workers in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear industries discovered that a third of these workers never worked again, a third worked in jobs that represented substantial downgrading of their pay, status or conditions, and only a third experienced stable or improved conditions. They also found that retrenchment resulted in a significant amount of deskilling and the impact of redundancy did not end when a worker was reemployed in a first post-retrenchment job, but the impact reverberated through subsequent work histories and led to chaotic individual career patterns. They also found that ‘transition costs … represented permanent effects and many retrenched workers remained disadvantaged for the rest of their lives.

With regards to women, some commentators have seen a continuing gendering of employment opportunities together with the gendered provision of welfare support across all ages groups. Barnes and Preston (2002, p. 24), for example, demonstrate how casualisation and part-time jobs have disadvantaged women, and they provide evidence of hidden unemployment constituting approximately 36 per cent of total female employment. Many women who remain as the primary carer to children or another ‘dependent’ person, find later employment choices and options are limited (Barnes & Preston 2002, p. 29).

Encel (2001) classifies the definitions of ‘older worker’ according to the following typology:

- **Legal/chronological** which, as the Treasurer’s recent announcement indicates, is subject to pragmatic change;
- **Functional** which pertains to various measures of performance such as sight and hearing;
- **Psycho-social** which embraces many of the public stereotypes of aging behaviour;
- **Organisational**, encompassing the length of time in the job and role in the organisation. This is associated with ‘delayering’, the process designed to redistribute experience concentrated at the top; and
- **Individual or ‘life-span’** approaches which challenge conventional views of chronology and which is where those involved in service delivery and job placement organizations will need to direct their attention as a matter of urgency (taken from Encel 2001, pp. 69-70, with slight modification).

Clearly labour market chances are affected by which definition is adopted. Competing definitions can also result in policy confusion and imprecision, particularly if annual work tests are introduced as required in the proposed new legislation.
3.4.3 Negative and positive considerations of employing mature aged job seekers

In his review of the literature, Encel (2001) identified a number of positive and negative considerations of employing mature aged workers from the employer perspective. Positive considerations included:

- Dependability in terms of attendance and punctuality;
- Better developed skills;
- Greater experience;
- Higher qualifications;
- Loyalty and commitment to employer;
- Commitment to quality; and
- Better able to carry out instructions.

Negative considerations included:

- Preference for younger workers who seen as more creative, innovative, and adaptable;
- Older people should make way for younger workers;
- Anticipated difficulties with trade union organizations;
- More subject to illness and injury;
- Deterioration of mental and physical abilities;
- Unwillingness to undertake retraining; and
- Inflexibility and complacency.

As might be expected, there are a number of unproblematised contradictions in these two lists. The main problem relates to the historical situatedness of employment. Employers are now faced with a whole new set of pragmatic considerations and are no longer operating in a buyers’ market (Dychtwald, Erickson & Morison 2004). As Encel points out (2001, p. 71), older workers can no longer be considered at a disadvantage. Employers may well need to consider the cost benefits of providing more extended retraining and reskilling in areas where older workers are perceived as lacking flexibility and competence with the new technologies, rather than moving offshore, engaging in robotics, or paying excessive recruitment bonuses to attract skilled immigrants in particular fields.

The employment disadvantage of mature aged people, including those displaced through redundancy will not disappear unless there is a fundamental overhaul of human resource management strategies. There is considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that some young managers are inexperienced at dealing with older workers, and do not know how to capitalize on the advantages they bring, or work around the perceived disadvantages. At the same time, research into productivity of older workers requires greater sophistication.
3.4.4 Barriers to employment

The principal barrier to the employment of mature aged job seekers is age discrimination. This is compounded by a number of other problems some of which are shared with other disadvantaged groups.

Age discrimination

According to Encel (2001), the greatest obstacle facing people of mature age who want to return to the workforce, stems from employer attitudes linked to age discrimination. Commenting on an article titled ‘Willing band shunned by sceptical employers’ by Murphy (2004a), Encel comments:

Generally speaking,… 45 is the age which most of the literature regards as the threshold when people become sufficiently ‘mature’ to suffer age discrimination. However, the age at which discrimination becomes apparent, differs according to other characteristics affecting job availability.

Ranzijn, Carson and Winefield, 2002 (on the Hawke Policy Website) point out that such views are fallacious and that there is considerable evidence to show that older people are not a drain on the economy, are productive workers and continue to contribute to society after retirement. Very few employers have policies regarding mature aged workers and most seem unaware of the implications of population ageing. This gives rise to a ‘substantial lost generation’ of mature aged unemployed who may well live for another 30-40 years.

Compounding problems

The strength and virulence of age discrimination should not be underestimated. However, Encel cautions that measures to counteract age discrimination will, of themselves, not be enough to overcome the problems experienced by many mature aged people (Encel 2001, p. 16). The plight of those suffering age discrimination is compounded by the problems of:

- Finding a job while unemployed;
- Poor human relations management and employer insensitivities as apparent in swift, unplanned retrenchments;
- The longer one is unemployed, the higher the probability of remaining unemployed (Kumar & De Maio 2002);
- The resulting loss of self-esteem and confidence (Whelan, Hannan & Creighton 1991);
- Inability to adjust to a flatter workforce structure and new forms of labour organization such as contracting and casualisation; and
- Being genuinely uncompetitive due to lack of appropriate technological skills.

Further questions arise as to whether the Commonwealth is forcing people on DSP back into the workforce. The Commonwealth government’s plans to force those mature aged people on the Disability Support Pension (DSP) back into the workforce are also likely to confound the problem. Writing in The Australian Financial Review (26 February, 2004), Chris Wright refers to the proposed revised annual work test for people aged 65-74, pointing out that there is no indication of what that work test might actually be. John
Wasiliev in an article on ‘Your Super’ elsewhere in the same edition (p. 45) believes any such test will have to be flexible enough to cope with seasonal and regular part-time work.

Katharine Murphy (2004b, p. 9) also reveals the coercive nature of government’s plans to force those in Disability Support Pension back into the workforce. There are currently over 650,000 DSP recipients of whom 225,000 are men aged between 50 and 64 years of age. Once benefits are secured, those over the age of 50 rarely re-enter the workforce. DSP provides a more generous benefit than the unemployment benefit: $452 per fortnight, compared to $380-$416 a fortnight.

3.4.5 Approaches and solutions

Adopt a policy based on opportunity, choice, flexibility and appropriateness

The Council on the Ageing (COTA 1999) advocates a framework marked by:

- Opportunity and choice;
- Flexibility to assist people to change the nature and extent of their labour force participation as they age; and
- Appropriateness to take into account the distinctive characteristics of those who are part of the broad groups referred to earlier and accord them dignity.

Introduce targeted and innovative programs

Returning to targeted programs for specific groups, Ranzijn et al. (2002, p. 4) point out that there are few dedicated programs for mature aged unemployed people and evidence indicates that most do not receive intensive assistance in their search for work.

Innovative job generation projects need to be developed. It is critical that any such projects involve additional employment opportunities and do not substitute for existing jobs or undercut wages and conditions for existing workers (COTA 1999, p. 19).

Provide incentives for mature aged people to undertake training

There ought to be incentives for mature aged people to undertake retraining. COTA points to the problems posed by the user pays system in vocational education and Higher Education courses, and associated cost and time barriers which should be addressed urgently. They suggest greater employer involvement in promoting life-long learning, the extension of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provisions, and the recognition of voluntary work within the National Competencies Standards.

Introduce support mechanisms for low risk small businesses.

In addition to providing seeding funds for niche businesses, support mechanisms for low risk small businesses. Relatively low levels of capitalization are required. This is a relatively limited option for many mature aged people due to a high level of financial risk but governments can assist by:

- Providing small business training and advisory services;
- Allowing the individual to remain on income support payments in the establishment phase of the business;
- Providing tax incentives and small business development grants; and
- Providing a framework for a mature aged person to become an independent contractor for a particular industry whereby no capitalization is required (p. 20).

The collaborative venture between BHP and the University of Newcastle to retrain qualified trades people facing redundancy as secondary school teachers \textit{during employer time} provides a model of the extent and scope of retraining and how this might be undertaken (Grenfell 1999).

\textbf{Extension of community work as part of a community development approach}

Whilst this approach is already paying dividends in some areas COTA (1999, p. 22) sounds a cautionary note with regard to community work. Community work needs to be meaningful, varied and valid and take account of a great variety of backgrounds and skills. Community organisations have limitations around how many volunteers they can take on and train. It is not a simple business, and requires significant investment in training by the sponsoring organization and the identification of resourceful, innovative and capable managers on the ground. Accredited training for occupations in community services would also be required.

There are however good examples of models that demonstrate how community work can assist in the process of enabling older people to return to meaningful employment. The Commonwealth’s Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, for example, has funded several innovative projects that are aimed at building community capacity through a variety of means. A recent evaluation of one such project in Tasmania in a region with high levels of older people showed how community engagement sometimes facilitated a return to work for some program participants (Guenther & Millar 2004). A key to the success of this program was the re-establishment of networks that had been lost due to relocation. Another factor was the role of the facilitator of the program, who was able to connect people with organisations both within and outside the community.

\textbf{Provide for greater representation of mature aged people}

Public sector opportunities for mature aged people could be opened up to provide for the staffing of key government agencies where there was substantial interaction with mature aged people. In addition family-friendly policies, particularly addressed to the needs of mature aged women returning to work who may have responsibilities as carers could be introduced (Szarkowicz & Guenther 2003). In private enterprise, these measures have proven to be effective in terms of cost efficiency and in terms of employee retention (Worklifebalance 2003) and further, satisfy the needs of older workers (DEWR 2002b). Improved recruitment techniques could also address such issues as the choice of words in job advertisements, considerate and respectful interviewing techniques, and the introduction of Senior Leaders programs as at Deloitte Consulting in the USA (Dychtwald, Erickson & Morison 2004, p. 53).
Triple bottom line reporting

Triple bottom line reporting obliges employers to include costings for environmental and social responsibilities into their accounts (Pritchard et al. 2003). For instance, costs of implementing flexible working hours as part of a family-friendly approach would be reported here. NTCOSS (2002, 2003) in their Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee - Inquiry into Poverty in Australia, and their submissions to recent Northern Territory Budgets also recommend the adoption of triple bottom line reporting.

Provision of social support

Whelan, Hannan and Creighton (1991) explain how the provision of social support, whilst not a panacea, is crucial in buffering people from pathogenic effects of stress (p. 38), and show how local action taken within national strategies and provisions to combat disadvantage, can alleviate problems of poverty and disadvantage (p. 140). The provision of social support is discussed at greater length in the section on Disabilities.

3.4.6 Mature aged Indigenous people

The issue of mature aged Indigenous unemployment is compounded by three factors: (a) employment opportunities are limited in many indigenous communities, (b) mature aged indigenous people are more likely to be generating traditional learning across generations in the interests of preserving their cultural and country heritage, and (c) health issues and short life expectancy continue to pervade the Indigenous population of Australia. At age 65, Indigenous people make up less than half the proportion of their total population compared to the non-Indigenous population in the Northern Territory (ABS 2002c). Further, only one quarter of 55-64 year old Indigenous people are recorded as being in the labour force, compared to 55 per cent of non-Indigenous people in the Northern Territory.

3.4.7 Conclusion

It is ironic that many of the proposals for increasing the workforce participation of older workers that are being canvassed, such as taking up voluntary work and community service, are already part of the services that are meant to be provided as part of the contracts held by Job Network providers (Encel 2001).

The potential contribution of mature aged workers needs to be re-assessed. Whilst there is evidence that at a pragmatic level this is already taking place (Toohey 2004), there is an apparent need at all levels for increased dialogue to determine how best to build on the experience of mature aged displaced workers and to avoid the worst excesses of the mutual obligation regime. So far, coercive measures have not succeeded in getting more people into work although they may have depressed the numbers of people who are classified as unemployed. They have only served to increase employment disadvantage, reduce self-esteem and erode social support. Agency capacity to address specific needs of mature aged workers is constrained under the current policy regime, and unless changes are instituted, mature aged people will continue to be disadvantaged in finding employment. Older unemployed people have quite specific job search and job training needs and they need to be fully involved in deciding how these can be met (Kerr, Carson & Goddard, 2002 on the Hawke Policy Website).
3.5 Group 5. Persons from a non-English speaking background

3.5.1 Definitions and Introduction

For the purposes of this report, persons from a non-English speaking background are those whose first language is not English and whose ethnic origins are not within Australia. This definition excludes Indigenous Australians, even though for many, employment disadvantage is greater. However, Indigenous Australians whose first language is not English have a different set of issues to contend with, especially those living in remote areas of the continent. The definition does however include those people who were born in Australia, but whose first language is not English. The definition includes those who are not yet Australian citizens or permanent residents.

Recent changes in immigration policy may suggest that employment disadvantage experienced by migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) is declining. However, there is still a relatively large pool of migrants together with family members and fiancées, refugees and successful asylum seekers who require the services of specialist providers. This section looks at the effects of recent changes in immigration policy on the labour market, considers the continuing difficulties faced by those who entered Australia prior to these changes, and then looks at how the Northern Territory might position itself in the face of changing labour market conditions.

3.5.2 Immigrants in the Australian economy

The degree to which new immigrants contribute to improved economic performance has given rise to extended debate. According to Birrell (2003, p. 42), the current Commonwealth government claims that maintaining the focus on skilled migration will deliver substantial increases of up to $344 per head in living standards in 2007-8 for all Australians. If this is correct, then the contribution of immigration is, at best, only mildly positive (Birrell 2003, p. 37).

Whether the new immigrants working as part of the knowledge industry remain in Australia for any extended period of time is open to question. Khoo (2002) does not see the shift in emphasis to skilled migration as having delivered more skilled migrants than before. The new migrants are not simply resilient and comfortable with risk, but are also ‘transilient’ and more likely to be associated with temporary migration.

According to figures from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 2004) skilled migrants accounted for 66,050 people, or 61 per cent of Australia’s migration program in 2002-03, with up to 68,000 places being allocated in 2003-04. Over 105,000 residence visas were granted in 2002-03 to fill specific skilled positions under the Employer Nomination Scheme. The sources of Victoria’s skilled migrants were Britain, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa. 90 per cent gained maximum points for their command of English. 44 per cent are skilled in areas where there is a national shortage and demonstrate higher labour force participation than the national average.

which was only 4 per cent higher by 2000. For immigrants, the ratio was 7 per cent higher at start of the period, but declined a remarkable 16 per cent by the end of the period, leading to a ratio which is currently 13 per cent below that of the Australian born. Birrell (2003, p. 44) highlights the low ratio of employment to population for migrants in Australia compared to the USA and native-born Australians.

There was a relative decline in immigrant employment until 1993 when the trend stabilised (Gregory & Xin Meng 2001, pp. 61-2). When Gregory and Xin Meng disaggregated the figures, they found that immigrant employment-population ratios have fallen, relative to the native born, in every age and gender category except for males 25-44 years of age (p. 63). The employment-population decline was largest among young immigrants, 15-24 years of age.

Gregory and Xin Meng suggest that there are more than demographic effects at work here and point to a huge increase in attendance at educational institutions associated with the imposition of student visa conditions restricting employment opportunities. Whilst the increase in attendance of the Australian born was 12.4 per cent and 20.2 per cent for men and women respectively, that for immigrants was greater. For young non-English speaking background men the increase was 30.9 per cent and 33.7 per cent for women. For English speaking background immigrants the increase was 24 per cent for men and 33.5 per cent for women.

3.5.3 Non-English speaking background people in the Northern Territory

Statistical data released by Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) Northern Territory (OEA 2003) reveal a gradual decline in the percentage of the population born overseas from 15.5 per cent in 1991 to 14.4 per cent in 2001, although the rate of reduction appears to be stabilizing. Similarly the proportion of non-English speakers has steadily declined in the ten years to 2001 from 8.6 per cent down to 7.1 per cent (ABS 2003c). As shown in the profile (see Table 2-5) the highest proportion of people from a non-English speaking background are located in the Darwin suburbs (up to 15 per cent). The Palmerston region has between 3 per cent and 4 per cent non-English speakers while Alice Springs has between 1 per cent and 2 per cent non-English speakers (ABS 2003c). While the focus of service delivery therefore could be expected to be in the Darwin region, this does not mean that the needs of people from a non-English speaking background in regional centres are any less.

3.5.4 Barriers experienced by those from a non-English speaking background

Institutional and employer attitudes

The terms NESB and ESL (English as a second language) have been criticised for revealing particular institutional attitudes towards migrants. In the first case migrants are being defined in terms of lack and what they are not. In the second instance, their language heritage is being disregarded and they are treated as perpetually secondary. It could be argued that government institutions need to convey a much higher regard for the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of new immigrants. Attitudes to people from culturally different backgrounds form the basis of the need for legislation such as the Racial Discrimination Act (Commonwealth of Australia 2004d).
Many employers are not comfortable with dealing with difference (NTSPC 2003). They remain suspicious of members of cultural and racial groups who adopt different beliefs, norms and values. Whilst recognising the strong personal qualities of migrants, they remain fearful of the necessary adjustments that may be required and the implications this may have for their business and workplace practice.

**Educational and language barriers**

In a study of youth employment outcomes in Melbourne, Kelly and Lewis (2000) found that one of the factors negatively associated with employment was non-English speaking background status, based on language spoken at home. Citing Miller (1998), they concluded that the reasons for this negative correlation are related to literacy, numeracy and the transferability of qualifications from overseas to the Australian context. DEWR (2004) supported by ABS research (ABS 1997) acknowledges that both country of origin and proficiency in English language, literacy and numeracy are factors that govern the likelihood of the need for intensive support.

**The response of Job Network and labour market providers**

The work of Dockery (2002), which looked at the impact of labour market programs for the work-deprived and long-term unemployed, including those from a non-English speaking background, found that such programs made only a limited contribution. Dockery identified five clusters of the long-term unemployed and related these to language spoken. Each cluster had distinct disadvantages related to accessing and maintaining employment and training.

Dockery (2002) concluded that little has been learned as to what programs work for different people and why, and drew attention to deficiencies in evaluation efforts and the lack of rigorous research design. In the case of people from a non-English speaking background, Dockery concluded that more specialised, targeted assistance was required. A major limitation was the lack of information on proximate causes of unsuccessful job search. In addition, there was no statistically reliable information on social and health histories or circumstances leading to an employment disability.

**3.5.5 Approaches and solutions**

In looking at how governments should respond to unemployment disadvantage faced by people from a non-English speaking background, the Northern Territory Settlement Planning Committee (NTSPC 2003) identified four priority issues, which are discussed below.

**Assisting immigrants to understand the labour market**

The Committee identified the need for migrants and refugees to understand and be better skilled at accessing the labour market of the Northern Territory. They needed to know what employers look for in applicants, how to communicate personal skills and capacities, which key positions are in high demand, what are the pathways and entry points, how to prepare good job applications, and how best to promote themselves. Proposed action included joint forums to elicit employers’ perspectives, regular information and small-group training sessions, and small group training sessions to prepare individual action plans.
Marketing the competitive advantages of employing migrants and refugees

The Committee observed that some employers were recruiting to positions that constantly become vacant. With this in mind, the strong personal qualities of migrants and refugees needed to be acknowledged such as the willingness to apply themselves, their commitment to a strong work ethic, and efficiency and resourcefulness coupled with a powerful desire to succeed. Proposed action included the need to market these qualities to employers through the development of marketing tools, guides and communication products; business breakfasts; and case studies to profile skills and experiences and highlight benefits to business.

Improving the performance of migrants and refugees in job interviews

Employers were thought to be fearful of employing people from different cultural backgrounds or those with ‘accents’. The Committee concluded that potential employees needed to be aware of differences in the work culture of Australian business and there was a need for greater work experience so that migrants could fit in and contribute more effectively. Proposed action included building in an ‘employment orientation component’ into the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP). With regard to work experience, the committee suggested wage subsidies be used for job seekers who engaged in the job network, and recommended that a full range of funded work experience programs be mapped with information on how to apply. The committee considered that community workers were currently unable to assist migrants and refugees adequately.

Schwarz (2002) agrees with this and points out that overseas migrants with professional qualifications who arrive as refugees and asylum seekers who are matched to appropriate employers, still face many workplace challenges and cites Victorian initiatives based on 13 week orientation and familiarization programs whereby professionals work for six weeks in their field.

Improving access to Job Network assistance

The committee pointed to confusion over the level of assistance migrants were eligible for, and concluded that individual help was not available for individuals because job network facilities were over-stretched. More importantly, providers do not market services to migrants and refugees as a separate and discrete target group. Proposed action included bilingual community information sessions and translated fact sheets.

Other responses

Another response might include a demand for Triple Bottom Line reporting as adopted by the Bureau of Rural Science (Pritchard et al 2003) and also suggested by NTCOSS in recent Territory Budget submissions (NTCOSS 2002). This could include a subcategory under each line for NESB performance. Birrell (2003) has suggested the development of entrepreneurial and small business workshops to harness the versatility of new migrants brought in under the business migrant program. This would cater for the many who do not establish a business at all, or do so on a very modest basis (p. 42).
3.6 Group 6. Indigenous people and the CDEP

3.6.1 Introduction

According to ABS (2004b), Indigenous people make up nearly 30 per cent of the Northern Territory population. In the area outside of the Darwin Statistical Division, the proportion of Indigenous people is about 44 per cent—81 per cent of Indigenous Territorians live in this region (ABS 2002c). Given this, and the fact that the Indigenous population in the Northern Territory is growing at almost twice the rate of the non-Indigenous population (ABS 2003c), the employment and training issues relating to remote communities and Indigenous people generally, cannot be ignored. The range of urgent Indigenous issues that needs addressing is well beyond the scope of the brief discussion in this section. These issues include health and mortality rates, substance abuse, literacy and numeracy, educational outcomes as well as employment outcomes. However the focus of the discussion in this section will be to clarify some of the issues relating to Community Development and Employment Programs (CDEP) and Indigenous employment.

3.6.2 CDEP and Indigenous employment

Is CDEP Real work?

There is a broad distinction in the wider community between CDEP employment and ‘real jobs’ (Ah Kit 2003; NLC 2003; Stirling 2003), the assumption being that CDEP does not generally lead to employment and that training provided in CDEP is ‘training for training’s sake’ or of limited value (Buchan 2003; NT Government 2003b). There are however examples of CDEP programs that do lead to ‘real’ jobs and self-sustaining enterprise (ABC 2003a, 2003b; Collins 2000). A positive socio-economic impact of CDEP on socio-economic well-being cannot be ruled out (Altman & Gray 2000) but there is a divergence of opinion about the value of CDEP, even among Indigenous leaders (ATSIC 1998; Spicer 1997; Yunupingu 2003).

The position of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory was examined in detail in Negotiating Work, the report into the Indigenous Labour Market in the Northern Territory (Arbon et al 2000) carried out for the Northern Territory Area Consultative Committee (NTACC). One of the central issues discussed in the report was the role of CDEP. Four years later, there is still some dispute over the nature of jobs created under the CDEP scheme and whether CDEP workers should be counted as ‘employed’. Although the ABS treats CDEP scheme workers as employed for statistical purposes, Hunter (2002, p. 2) points to the fact that the current employment status of CDEP scheme participants is ambiguous in many regards. The CDEP program more than quadrupled in size between 1986 and 2001 by which time it had expanded to 35,400 participants. The Spicer (1997) Review considered the scheme an employment program and encouraged movement off the scheme of non-working participants. According to Spicer, all registered participants should therefore now be classified as employed. To what extent those employed are engaged in purposeful work is not certain and depends on what are considered to be ‘real’ jobs. Hunter (2002, p. 2), for example, claims that the expansion of the number of external CDEP scheme jobs (real jobs external to the scheme rather than jobs simply created to occupy participants) may be slightly overstated.
The scheme currently employs about 25 per cent of the Indigenous workforce throughout Australia. In the Northern Territory, CDEP accounts for 44 per cent of the Indigenous labour force (ABS 2002c). In July 2001 approximately 269 CDEP organizations were funded and supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). One third of these were located in non-remote Australia where the CDEP provides for only a small percentage of Indigenous employment in the main cities and is a minor source of employment in other urban areas, especially for females. The converse is true in remote and rural areas where the CDEP provides about one-half of all jobs (Hunter 2002, p. 3).

ACOSS (2003c, p. 16) takes the view that CDEP participants should really be counted amongst the underemployed because although they are officially counted as employed, they are experiencing similar levels of employment disadvantage and economic exclusion as people who are unemployed, thus leading to systematic disadvantage and discrimination. If they were included in the unemployment figures, the jobless rate amongst Indigenous people in Australia would rise to 40 per cent.

**CDEP and capacity building**

Although the nature of CDEP in urban areas is fundamentally different, Macfie (2002) illustrates the potential of the CDEP in some communities to build community capacity and lead to long term ‘real jobs’ using a study of the Bungala CDEP in Port Augusta undertaken by Gray and Thacker (2001). The CDEP enabled Bungala to provide a number of participants with full-time, relatively well paid work, creating an internal labour market and incentives for participants; excellent training for participants in the form of traineeships and apprenticeships in areas for which there were local employment opportunities; and a quality finished product which engenders positive local business perceptions of scheme participants. Several participants leave the Bungala CDEP for mainstream employment each year.

The achievements of the Bungala CDEP were due, in part, to substantial additional support from federal and state government. Commercial activities may generate income but they are unlikely to be strictly profitable given high level of training required. Even the highly acclaimed Moree Indigenous Employment Strategy (see Moree Aboriginal Employment Strategy, page 99) has been criticised for the levels of support required by government (Lewis 2001). Costs are however off-set when savings to welfare, improved tax receipts, and improved lifestyle are considered.

It is argued that for this reason a triple bottom line accounting model should be introduced by DEWR, which contains a community development component that includes the financial costs of capacity building amongst individual communities. This would include provision for alternative forms of employment to the mainstream, social purpose and improved lifestyle. In other words ‘fixing up problems, making money for the place and developing the culture’ (Macfie 2002).

**Women and CDEP**

The Northern Territory Indigenous Labour Market Report (Arbon et al 2000) gave special attention to the role of women in the CDEP and found a particular bias towards men. According to Cameron’s (1999) study of the CDEP for the Papunya Regional Council, women had the same overall problems and concerns in each
community; they wanted their training needs addressed, a separate budget, and more involvement in the planning and management of CDEP activities. Since then the Northern Territory Working Women’s Centre (NTWWC 2003) has highlighted the injustices faced by women more generally through a series of revealing case studies. The Centre’s recommendations are particularly pertinent in that they recognize the need to provide:

- More extended training to ATSIC women’s officers;
- Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as industrial relations advisors and human relations counsellors within their communities;
- Recognition of work skills, qualifications and job entitlements as required in law;
- Relevant and accredited training for CDEP coordinators to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women CDEP participants are involved in planning, monitoring and review of ongoing employment and training programs provided under the CDEP scheme;
- Fairer working conditions and working hours and ongoing training and accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to allow them to take care of essential services within their communities;
- Access to superannuation schemes;
- Cross-cultural courses to combat bullying and intimidation in their workplaces; and
- Awareness of consumer rights and Australian Workplace Relations legislation so that, for example, no deduction to be made from CDEP wages without the written consent of the employee.

Quantifying the impact of CDEP on employment and training data

Unravelling the impact of CDEP employment from other labour force data is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, accurate participation rates in CDEP are difficult to ascertain. Moir (2004b) found that in some cases ABS participation rates were only half those given by the National CDEP Program Centre. Hunter (2004) confirms that nationally, only 58 per cent of CDEP participants are accounted for in the Census. The ABS (1999b, 2002b) itself acknowledges the difficulties associated with counting Indigenous populations, particularly in remote areas.

A second issue relates to the comparability of Northern Territory data with other jurisdictions. It is almost impossible to make direct comparisons because of the extent of CDEP in the Northern Territory and the fact that Indigenous counts are based on self-identification. Further, the socio-economic context for Indigenous employment and training in the Northern Territory is significantly different than other states.
A third issue relates to the impact of labour force participation rates among Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. This has a masking effect that tends to understate the true picture shown in many of the profiles shown earlier, especially the Youth profile, the Long term unemployed profile, the Underemployed profile, the Women profile and the Indigenous profile (see pages 7 to 15). Overall, a significant decline in unemployment rates among Indigenous people from around 35 per cent in 1986 down to 20 per cent in 2001 can be attributed to increasing participation in CDEP (Hunter 2004). Meanwhile, the Indigenous labour force participation rate is about half that for the non-Indigenous population (ABS 2002c), with CDEP included as employment. Quantifying the impact of low participation in the labour force and increasing participation in CDEP on the true picture of youth and female unemployment, long term unemployment and underemployment, is an enormous task, well beyond the scope of this study.

3.6.3 Summary

The issues of whether CDEP should or should not be considered as ‘real’ work remains contentious. The value of CDEP for communities continues to be disputed. It would appear that there is considerable opportunity for the growing of meaningful jobs in Indigenous communities in the areas of human resource management, program coordination, community development, community services and women’s affairs. Indeed in many communities the jobs are there. They are however often filled by non-Indigenous people. In some cases jobs that are funded through CDEP would in other Australian communities be funded as part of the usual range of services offered by a local government body—and therefore be considered to be ‘real jobs’. Why this is the case often comes back to cultural and other fundamental issues of health and education, which have been well documented in other studies (ABS 2003b, ATSIC 1999; HREOC 2000; NTDE 1999; SCRGSP 2003) and recognised by the Northern Territory government (NT Government 2003a). Unravelling the impact of low Indigenous labour force participation and increasing participation in CDEP on the overall picture for youth, long term unemployed, women and underemployed people in the Northern Territory would require a much more extensive and separate study.
3.7  Group 7. Unemployment disadvantage and the position of women

3.7.1  Introduction

This section focuses briefly on the employment disadvantage experienced by women in each of the five major disadvantaged groups under review. The position of Indigenous women in rural and remote areas was dealt with in the section on the CDEP (see Women and CDEP, page 61). The employment position of women remains a cause for concern. Barnes and Preston (2002) argue that labour market deregulation and welfare reforms have adversely affected the position of women and limited their choices. Detrimental effects were identified in a number of areas.

3.7.2  Labour reform, welfare and participation

Women, particularly sole mothers, were frequently seen as contributing to the ‘moral hazard’ and creating a culture of dependency in a situation where benefits go to those who are ‘deserving’, thus compounding the discrimination of women (Barnes & Preston 2002, p. 23).

Casualisation and part-time jobs have disadvantaged women (p. 24) and swelled the ranks of the hidden unemployed. In analysis of trends in working hours, Szarkowicz and Guenther (2003) showed that while employment growth for women was about double that of males in the ten years to 2001, females were twice as likely to be employed part-time. Women who choose to register as undertaking unpaid work, rather than be registered as unemployed and counted as not actively looking for work, remain relatively invisible in such situations, whilst remaining as the primary carer to children or another ‘dependent’ person may limit later employment choices and options. Any human capital accumulated under such conditions is less transportable.

3.7.3  Pay setting arrangements and income support

Women are more dependent on the award system and are not in the same position to engage in enterprise bargaining. Wage increases are deliberately constrained to be below those in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement scheme (Barnes & Preston 2002, p. 26). Women remain in a relatively vulnerable and exposed position, and there has been significant deterioration in relative earnings of women over the last decade.

Application of the regulations creates insecurity. Women’s decisions to work or not work are limited to issues of economic and financial viability. These amount to constrained or bounded choices (Ranzijn et al 2002). The need to factor in formal childcare, travel costs, market substitutions for women’s labour, and rising living costs means the cost of work may outweigh any financial benefit from working (Barnes & Preston 2002, p. 29).
3.7.4 Employment characteristics and job quality

Part-time work is not accorded the same status and conditions, and is usually devoid of entitlements with respect to leave and holiday pay (ACTU 2000). Casual part-time work is therefore seen as marginal with limited or no access to training, communication and promotion. Women are subject to programs of government surveillance if they seek income support but casual workers often receive irregular income and work unpredictable hours. They are frequently called upon to work an extended working day and find this difficult to resist. This means it is easy to depict such women as welfare cheats and makes them subject to further government investigation. In such circumstances, the costs and ‘stresses’ of employment outweigh any benefits derived from work (Barnes & Preston 2002, p. 30). As a result of such discrimination, women sink into quagmire of social, economic and political disadvantage (p. 31).

It is acknowledged that part-time work suits the domestic needs of many women and carers. However, in their report on family friendly practices, Szarkowicz & Guenther (2003) conclude that regular or permanent part-time work tends to be available only to employees in larger organizations which can support flexible hours (including flex time). Telecommuting and home working were seldom formalised in collective agreements and were more frequent amongst white-collar and service intensive industries.

Szarkowicz & Guenther (2003) also draw attention to changes in family structure. Half of single parents work and in 26 per cent of couple families, the female partner is employed full-time. Couple families in urban centres in the Northern Territory are more likely to have two incomes than those in the states, with the exception of Western Australia (p. 3). Although the father’s share of household childcare is now running at one third in 1997, there is still some reluctance among men to take advantage of family-friendly arrangements in case it is seen as lack of commitment to employer, a finding confirmed by Bittmann, Hoffmann and Thompson (2004).

Lamb & McKenzie (2001, p. 39) considered the gap in average earnings in their pathways study. For each pathway men reported higher earnings than women: $558 per week compared to $495 for those in full-time employment. There was a gap of $88 between males who had experienced poor or delayed transition and those who obtained continuous work on leaving school. For females the gap was $68.

Szarkowicz & Guenther (2003) identified two particular ‘priority responses to employment disadvantage amongst women’. The first was for improved legislation and making use of the regulatory framework. Results of voluntary approaches by employers to adopt flexible work practices are often patchy and can lead to an inequitable distribution of benefits, promoting further differentiation within the workforce (p. 29). Whilst over-restrictive legislation can affect flexibility and negotiation of local workplace agreements, a period review or audit of compliance with the available legislation should be instituted as part of governance and accountability procedures. The second priority was for improving the organisational culture. There is an urgent need to address the ‘long hours’ culture to allow workers to access family friendly provisions, develop leadership and demonstrated commitment, incorporate policies into strategic directions and business goals, and improve communication strategies to provide for inclusivity, dialogue, and accommodation.
3.8 Group 8. Those possessing a criminal record

3.8.1 Introduction

It is difficult to determine the number of offenders exiting the prison system each year who are looking for employment. Assistance can be given in the form of education and training whilst in prison, and through broking activities with both ex-offenders and potential employers after completion of a custodial sentence. Some idea of the size of the client group can be obtained from the Annual Report of the Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services for 2000-2001 which reveals that the total number of students enrolled in first semester of 2001 was 315 of whom just over two thirds were Indigenous. At the same time, the number of accredited courses offered internally during the same period was 17. In 1997-8, 73 per cent of prisoners in custody in the Territory were of Indigenous decent and the average age of all prisoners was 30 years. Alcohol related offences accounted for approximately 75 per cent of all imprisonments. The recidivism rate was 35 per cent (Fitzgerald, Manners & Hunter 1999).

This section looks at the difficulties encountered by ex-offenders, refutes some of the myths which surround employment and considers some approaches being used to find solutions including Ending Offending (Fitzgerald, Manners and Hunter 1999) developed in the Northern Territory.

3.8.2 Difficulties faced by ex-offenders

The difficulties faced by ex-offenders seeking employment include the stigma attached to incarceration. Possession of a criminal record in itself prevents entry to many professions and occupations, although it is acknowledged that refusal is determined by type of offence not by the existence of an offence per se. The lack of recent job experience in cases of prolonged incarceration; weakened social contacts that normally would have led to employment opportunities; diminished feelings of self-efficacy (Visher & Winterfield 2003, p. 2) and myths about employing people with criminal records (See the paper ‘Employer Support’ on the Outcare (2004) website at http://members.iinet.net.au/~outcare) also contribute to employment disadvantage.

Noonan (2004) highlights the increasing complexity of prisoner profiles throughout Australia. These included unresolved drug and alcohol issues, social disadvantage, low educational achievement, poor employment history, significant health problems including mental illness, and unsatisfactory family and social skills.

In addition we know from the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult prisoners (ANTA 2000b, p. 7) that the largest age cohort of adult offenders is young (18-29) and is increasing despite the decline in this group of the general population and most prisoners are likely to have been in prison more than once, and over half will have breached community correction orders. Less than one-quarter of prisoners have completed secondary school and a large number have limited literacy and/or numeracy in both native English speaking and non-English speaking populations.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are greatly over-represented and men comprise the great majority of offenders (over 90 per cent) while the proportion of female offenders has increased in recent years and the accumulated disadvantages of female offenders are generally more severe than for males.

An earlier study by Henson (1990) identified the following characteristics of offenders:

- Limited social, educational and employment skills;
- Low self-expectancy with many expecting to fail;
- 78 per cent had an educational level of less than Year 10 with less than four per cent having completed Year 12;
- Only 22 per cent had professional or trade qualification; and
- Often comprised a second generation of offenders, having received no positive role models.

It is difficult to obtain reliable figures on offenders engaging in VET training, and there is considerable variation in participation rates. The Northern Territory appears to have had the highest participation rate of eligible prisoners enrolled in education and training programs at just over 68 per cent compared to a national average of 46 per cent (NTCS 2001, p. 47). However, this appears to have fallen to around 55 per cent in 2003, second only to Western Australia with 58 per cent (Noonan 2004).

### 3.8.3 Approaches and solutions

This section looks at three approaches to preparing ex-offenders for employment whilst they are still incarcerated. These can broadly classed as equity approaches, skill-based training approaches, and business and enterprise approaches. They are not incompatible and can be introduced alongside each other.

Noonan (2004) claims that ANTA equity approaches have had limited influence to date. The two main approaches have been used are (1) social justice and (2) managing diversity. Noonan (2004) advocates a ‘whole-of-life’ approach to learning, similar to that adopted in *Ending Offending* (Fitzgerald, Manners and Hunter 1999) which is dealt with below. Noonan (2004) cites extensive research from the USA and Canada, as well as the United Kingdom, to suggest that education and training reduces recidivism and improves the lives and employment prospects of prisoners by providing for economic independence. Those not taking part in education programs had three times more chance of being re-convicted according to one British study. Inmates had a better chance of dealing with everyday real-life situations based on assessed risk factors where training was delivered in conjunction with career counselling and pre- and post-release support.

Henson (1990) found that approaches based on discouraging re-offending such as Neighbourhood Watch and School Watch, or approaches which are diversionary and based on social and recreational activities, only addressed part of the problem and failed to develop participatory skills. Many activities were punitive and not rehabilitative, incorporating repetitive and low skill activity such as sweeping up leaves. Visher and Winterfield (2003) report mixed to negative support for the effectiveness of in-prison job training programs.
The changing demographics in the United Kingdom have created a shortage of skilled labour. This is forcing employers to reassess disadvantaged groups that were formerly ignored. For this reason it is important to introduce employers to prisons to help prepare inmates for work and participate in skills audits to identify local requirements.

Employer involvement in institutions has taken a number of forms. One option is owning and operating businesses inside the prison. The company has control over hiring and firing and supervision and pays award wages. Prisoners soon establish themselves and the company contracts with prisoners for a fee. One example cited involved an animal grooming business. Participants acquire skills and can set up own businesses on leaving prison whilst being exposed to levels of performance expected of a normal workforce. Forced savings accounts are mandated by the prison authorities which means that offenders leave prison with money in their pocket.

An Australian example of a reportedly effective enterprise based program is the Bathurst based Koori Inmate Program (see Koori Inmate Pilot Program, page 100) which, according to an evaluation report (PNC 2000) was successful in terms of the educational outcomes. Whereas successful programs run by organizations like Outcare have operated on a welfare model, there is now a clear need to attack the problem using an enterprise model in which skills are acquired and sold through the provision of services, without relying government handouts (Henson 1990, p. 309).

**Dispelling the myths**

This approach may require the re-education of employers with regards to employing ex-offenders. Outcare (2004) shows how to combat the myths surrounding employing people with criminal records. This section of the site is quoted with some modification and adaptation:

- Ex-offenders are only capable of doing manual or repetitive work. The recent spate of high profile sentencing for insider trading, illegal and unauthorized investment practices, and trading knowing a company was bankrupt is testimony to the fallacy of this myth.
- Exoffenders are unreliable - they arrive late or not at all, whereas, in general, they are as reliable as other workers.
- Ex-offenders require continual watching and are a high risk group. Outcare point out that only two of the 300 placements made over a four year period had offended against their employers.
- Other employees won’t want to work with them, suggesting that confidentiality and privacy may have been breached at the work place.
- A criminal conviction is an indication of being untrustworthy and indicates a character flaw.
- Ex-offenders will not be conscientious workers and would only be working for the money, whereas most ex-offenders feel they have something to prove and will be loyal and conscientious workers.
- “Once a crim always a crim”. Given the fact that over 30 per cent of the WA workforce has a criminal record, including employers as well as employees and
people out of work, it stands to reason that people can and do put their past behind them if given the opportunity.

• Some employers ask why they should go out of their way to employ an ex-offender when there are so many other unemployed people available implying that are doing them a favour. In fact, with correct recruitment procedures, the person will have been employed on their merit and skills as with any other unemployed applicant.

3.8.4  The Northern Territory Response

Ending Offending - Our Message (Fitzgerald, Manners and Hunter 1999) is a best practice intervention with an emphasis on whole-of-life approaches, offender management plans, and skills profiling. The project provides real opportunities for prisoners to develop skills in the areas of art and music by producing artwork, a music CD, a website (www.ourmessage.org) video and stories whilst exploring, conceptualising and sharing with others their stories about drinking, offending, culture, family, country and community (p. 2). It incorporates units from Certificate II in Art and Craft, the Certificate in Entry Levels Music Industry Skills, Certificate I in General Education, the Certificate in Access to Employment and Further Study, and National Office Skills. These programs are an integral part of prisoner management plans and are recognised as integral to the rehabilitation process. Over 150 male and female prisoners were involved in project in 1999 out of 600 inmates.

This project combines equity, skills-based and enterprise approaches. It is not known to what extent the project has been taken up and supported by other providers elsewhere in Australia. Nor is there any apparent evaluation of the program.

3.9  Group 9. The hidden unemployed and the underemployed

3.9.1  Introduction

It is imperative to take into account the existence of hidden unemployment and the presence of underemployment if we are to gain a complete picture of employment disadvantage. The issues of under-employment, job quality and equity relate to a consideration of what is meant by employment disadvantage and ‘participation’ in the workforce. It is not a question of simply having a job and being grateful for it, or that any job is better than none. Such simplistic assumptions mask the extent and seriousness of the problem.

3.9.2  Size of the problem

This issue is treated at length by ACOSS (2003c) which estimates there are 716,000 hidden unemployed people excluded from the official rate. If we include excluded jobless people (that is, those who are only marginally attached to the labour force and have a preference for working), and the underemployed (those who are working for less than sixteen hours per week and would prefer to work more hours) in the calculations, then we have an unemployment plus rate that is double the official unemployment rate (ACOSS 2003c, p. 7), currently running at 5.6 per cent nationally (ABS 2004c). There is also a gender dimension here as 50 per cent more females are affected than males – 15.8 per cent as against 10.5 per cent.
These figures give rise to what ACOSS has called the Unemployment Plus Rate. ACOSS believes they comprise a conservative estimate, because they exclude the voluntary jobless who are marginally attached to the labour market but appear to have a preference not to work, and those who are so discouraged from participating in the labour force that they do not show up as excluded jobless.

The ACOSS figures focus more closely on employment disadvantage whilst the ABS prefers to talk of the labour under-utilisation rate (ACOSS 2003c, p. 31). Either way, it is clear that the unemployment figures ignore the economic and social costs of hidden unemployment. The Unemployment Plus Rate is a social measure, rather than a measure of the impact of unemployment on the economy.

3.9.3 What constitutes participation?

Saunders (2002) is particularly sceptical of treating all forms of paid work as ‘participation’. Saunders believes that insecure, and low paid jobs offer few financial or non-financial benefits compared to social transfers, and claims that ‘participation’ involves junk jobs that would normally have been driven out of existence by labour market forces. Whilst it might be true that low-paid, insecure jobs may represent a stepping stone to a better job for some individuals, and that any employment may be preferable to unemployment after a long period of poverty, Saunders (2002, p. 340) argues that requiring the unemployed to engage in activities designed to increase the probability of employment cannot be justified in terms of increased well-being.

There is also a need to decide on whether those engaged in voluntary work should be counted amongst the underemployed. Saunders (2002, p. 354) concludes that volunteer work fulfils a useful function for those with a disability that makes participation in paid work difficult. In all cases the hours devoted to volunteer work were below those spend in paid work. When asked why they participated in volunteer work, relatively few people indicated that they were primarily motivated by a need to gain work experience.

There is therefore a need to better understand the extent, nature and determinants of what constitutes ‘participation’. Burgess (2002) has suggested a social partnership approach to improving job quality and job satisfaction by providing for increased worker autonomy and improved management practices. This would enable us to define the criteria for what constitutes participation in employment. It would also help us to exclude from the figures ‘welfare work’ being performed by ‘welfare participants’ for ‘welfare purposes’ (Saunders 2002, p. 354).

3.9.4 Calculating the cost of unemployment and underemployment

Eardley (2002, p. 44) distinguishes between economic costs and social costs. Financial costs include the loss of productive output, foregone revenue, budgetary costs arising from unemployment insurance or welfare provision and estimates of individual financial losses resulting from prolonged unemployment (p. 44). Calculating the cost of lost output as a result of underemployment is beset by problems of overestimation and understimation. One of sources of underestimation is the static and short-term nature of the calculation and the difficulty of factoring in returns on labour market programs over the long term.
Social costs include poverty, poor health and premature mortality, psychological stress and suicide, criminal behaviour, loss of human capital, and family breakdown and can be divided into two categories: ‘social pathologies’ such as depression, substance abuse, gambling and so forth; and ‘societal’ costs such as the provision of services to handle the effects of these pathologies. As we have seen, it is difficult to establish direct causality or to attach a dollar value to this relationship, even if causality can be established. There is also ‘an exaggerated belief that if only unemployment would come down, many other social problems would be greatly reduced’. (Eardley 2002, p. 61). Social and family costs are also influenced by the need to work longer hours and give up leave entitlements in order to retain one’s job.

3.9.5 Estimating underemployment in the Northern Territory

The size of underemployment in the Northern Territory is difficult to determine. Estimated figures for underemployed workers in the Northern Territory are supplied in Table 3-3 (ABS 2004a). However, the ABS emphasises that the figures have a relative standard error of 25-50 per cent and are biased towards urban areas, and therefore need to be used with caution.

Table 3-3. Labour force status, Northern Territory urban areas only, (Source: ABS 2004a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour force status</th>
<th>Northern Territory statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total employed (males and females):</td>
<td>76,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time workers:</td>
<td>63,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time workers:</td>
<td>13,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time workers wanting more hours</td>
<td>3,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time workers wanting more hours who had been looking for work with more hours or were available to start work with more hour in the reference week or within four weeks:</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Underemployed workers are said to comprise 3,900 or some 5 per cent of the total employed in urban areas. Note that the data shown in the table excludes those living in rural/remote areas of the Northern Territory. The underemployment figures for those areas would undoubtedly be significantly higher. It could be expected that CDEP would contribute to much of the higher level.

3.9.6 Conclusion

Hidden unemployment has remained substantially stable while official unemployment has declined (ACOSS 2003c, p. 45). It affects all the disadvantaged groups embraced in this survey: young people, the vast majority of whom are attending an educational institution; mature aged people many of whom have been forced into involuntary retirement and have withdrawn from the market because of lack of relevant experience and training; a large number of mothers who want paid employment but are not actively seeking it due to parenting responsibilities; people with disabilities, the vast majority of whom have little or no attachment to the labour force; and Indigenous Australians for whom, if it were not for the CDEP, job deprivation rates would be are extremely high.
3.10 Evidence base for effective policy and program implementation

A common reason for policy and program failure is not the quality of the policy or program documents themselves, but the lack of planning provision for the effective implementation of those policies and programs. The research contained in this report has the central purpose of informing policy and programs associated with enhancing employment and training outcomes for employment disadvantaged, and to further the effectiveness of the recommendations contained herein, the research associated with the elements of effective policy and program implementation is now overviewed. All public policies have a particular *content* and a *process* whereby that content is expected to reach target groups of people (Falk 2003). The *content* might be to do with health, family welfare, industrial conditions, or, as is the case in question, employment and training. The direct outputs of the policy content is expected to be a *process* whereby the resources tied to the policy will be spent on the target groups. However, it is often the case that policy implementation processes do not always succeed in delivering the tied resources to the policy content. The research shows that the mismatch between policy statement and what the policy implementation process delivers can result in (a) no change to the *status quo*, and (b) a loss of trust between governments and their constituencies caused by making policy promises and then not delivering on those promises (e.g., Hugonnier 1999; Steelman 2001).

Policy processes that have little engagement with stakeholders result in disregard of the policy, a drop of public trust in governance structures and the loss of associated social cohesion (Guenther & Falk 2000), while Steelman (2001) notes that:

> ...theorists and practitioners have called for more public involvement in policymaking and for greater citizen input in decisions. The move towards participatory and community-based approaches in policymaking can be seen as a backlash against more elitist technocratic, top-down models of decisionmaking. (p. 71)

There is evidence for the notion that policy processes that have little engagement with stakeholders result in disregard of the policy (Smyth 2001), a drop of public trust in governance structures and the loss of associated social cohesion (Guenther & Falk 2000), while Steelman (2001) notes that:

> ...theorists and practitioners have called for more public involvement in policymaking and for greater citizen input in decisions. The move towards participatory and community-based approaches in policymaking can be seen as a backlash against more elitist technocratic, top-down models of decisionmaking. (p. 71)

It is possibly the case that not all public policy can, nor, arguably should, be participatory. However, there may still be a case for minimal engagement to be built in to the policy process for two reasons. One is that there are cost savings, as well as social and electoral benefits possible from government adopting a stance that *other* government departments are stakeholders as well. This raises the possibility of a more integrated approach to policy whereby the often discreet policy portfolios (‘policy silos’) such as education, health, social security and so on work more closely together to achieve synergies, cost-effectiveness and impact on the intended recipients, and is often referred to as a whole-of-government or joined-up government approach. In addition, there is little doubt that governments and those they govern would *prefer* to be more involved in policy that affects their lives. In both these cases, the building of links, trust and the resulting social cohesion between these groups adds the dimension of sustainability to the list of potential benefits of an engaged policy approach.
3.10.1 What is effective public policy?

Public policy, as the written and legally documented intent of government, is the public expression of the mandate of a democratically elected government (e.g., Marginson, 1993, p. 55). But what constitutes ‘good policy’? How is a public policy’s effectiveness to be determined? What is it that could be done to make a difference to the fit-for-purpose and adoption of policy and strategy by its target groups?

Policy is characterised, according to Considine (1994, p. 4), by reciprocity between those affected by the policy, and those who need to develop and implement it. That policy may entail:

- Clarification of public values and intentions;
- Commitments of money and services; and
- Granting of rights and entitlements.

Considine defines public policy as “an action which employs governmental authority to commit resources in support of a preferred value” (p. 3). Policy becomes an intervention in people’s lives. The particular values and socio-economic circumstances of the target group must be taken into account. Effective policy that is intended to be implemented (as opposed to purely rhetorical displays of goodwill) needs to be evaluated as part of the policy cycle (Bridgman & Davis 2000). Questions to answer in order to conduct such an evaluation must include ‘has it reached the target groups?’ and ‘how well has it achieved its goals?’.

Noticeable in Western countries’ policy profiles is a move away from what is often referred to as ‘top-down’ in favour of more ‘bottom-up’ policy processes. This is occurring in a revised public climate of mistrust and cynicism portrayed in the media, and concerns the often imposed nature of top-down policy processes that have tended to prevail until the last decade of the twentieth century (e.g., Hugonnier 1999; Norman et al 2002; Stewart-Weeks 2000). Top-down policy processes are coming to be seen as insufficient and less desirable on the part of a citizenry who have unprecedented access to worldwide information sources. Moreover, they are increasingly being found to be ineffective and inefficient in reaching and impacting on their intended target groups.

The point arising from this overview of the research is that there are identified benefits for all stakeholders in a more participative approach to the policy process. Moreover, policy-making personnel themselves are increasingly under pressure to include a greater account of evidence and stakeholder collaboration in policy processes.

Top-down policies are often implemented using mass public education campaigns with minimal consultation and collaboration (Falk 2003). Much public policy is traditionally developed in the government bureaucracies, policy portfolios or ‘silos’ of the key portfolio areas: education, youth, health, transport, social security, information technology and so on. There has been a tendency for this approach to result in a costly duplication of resources through these narrow focuses stemming from a lack of knowledge of one area about another at governmental and grassroots levels. In a nutshell, this is another reason why many government departments are beginning to consider a whole-of-government approach to policy processes.
The participatory, or ‘policy engagement’ approach, arises in the context of recent research, as well as from the trialing, of new models. Hugonnier (1999), for example, describes recent OECD research which analysed the success of policy interventions in 27 OECD countries over the last 20 years for patterns associated with success and sustainability of those interventions. In every case, top-down-driven policies did not succeed while bottom-up policies did succeed. Hugonnier’s work shows that ‘endogenous planning’ (Hugonnier 1999), bottom-up (Kenyon 1999) or inside-out (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993) processes appear to be a crucial variable in success. In regard to policy interventions in developing countries, Pritchett and Woolcock (2002) confirm this point:

The importance of (often idiosyncratic) [policy] “practices” was largely ignored in the 1960s and 70s; however, as planners in developing countries sought to rapidly emulate the service delivery mechanisms of the developed countries, namely standardized (top-down) “programs” managed by a centralized civil service bureaucracy. Although this approach could claim some notable successes in poor countries, it soon became readily apparent that it had failed early and often in virtually all sectors. (p. 1)

Some Australian state systems report similar results (e.g., Balatti & Falk 2001) where there have been promising outcomes from areas that have undertaken their own planning and development. Where the processes are initiated and driven locally at community or regional levels, outcomes are found to be both successful and sustainable (e.g., Allen 1999; CRLRA 2000; Moore & Brooks 1996; Schorr 1997). When it is perceived as ‘top-down’ or in some way imposed from outside (exogenous or outside-in), it is judged unsuccessful and is not sustained (Aigner et al 2001; Gittell & Vidal 1998; Kenyon 1999). Such initiatives have implications for the development of policy in compartmentalised ‘policy silos’.

### 3.10.2 Principles underlying effective policy implementation

These principles can be viewed as emerging ‘guidelines’ that may assist policy personnel, community groups, interested individuals and researchers in understanding the dynamics of ‘real policy’ in relation to the emerging demands for evidence-based and whole-of-government approaches to policy. They have emerged from the analysis of the research (Falk 2003) and therefore account for or the empirical evidence. A greater understanding of the policy dynamics may assist by identifying benefits and drawbacks that, through anticipation, might be alleviated or ameliorated, so enhancing the impact that the policy may have on the wider socio-economic well-being.

**Principle 1: Effective policy depends on understanding the dynamics of change at ‘the local’ level**

The way in which policy interventions mesh with ‘the local’ is little understood. The false assumption of the policy process is that policy itself is a comprehensible unitary object, and that the communities in which it is expected to be adopted are similarly comprehensible and unitary. Neither of these is the way it is in reality. A ‘policy’ manifests itself in a set of ‘strategies’ or ‘programs’, and each of these has its own criteria for success based on policy-making personnel’s needs for accountability up and down the policy tube. Similarly, it is problematic to assume that there will be an automatic engagement between the two ends of the policy tube simply because a policy addresses a demonstrable need.
One way of understanding how vital the local dynamics are in response to the change usually required by a policy intervention is found in the literature on interventions. The implementation of policies occurs through interventions at a community level that follow the stages portrayed in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1. Features of effective interventions**

What this figure helps illustrate is that an effective policy intervention will connect not with a stable and unitary local capacity to respond to it, but with a variable and dynamic local context. Policy from the ‘top’, even if it is designed to fulfil a known need, does not automatically engage with ‘the local’, because local perceptions of needs, and local capacity to respond to those needs may not exist. Effective policy implementation will therefore depend on differential resourcing that fits with the stage at which the local community can be identified on the above schema.

**Principle 2: Gaining sustained benefits from policy depends on engaging the intended recipients**

As noted at the start of this section, there are many reasons why governments may or may not engage stakeholders in establishing the need for a particular policy. Even if information gathering of new policy is carried out through means such as focus groups, surveys and so on, these processes often remain at a distance in time from the internal bureaucratic processes of forming policy, although if sound evidence-based and whole-of-government policy processes is gradually installed, the iterative and continuous evaluation cycle should, in time, take the place of much of the other kinds of information gathering. However, regardless of how the policy need is originally conceived, benefits are shown to be associated with stakeholder representation and ongoing engagement in formation and development processes.
**Principle 3: Policy cycle effectiveness requires availability and responsiveness of an evidenciary base**

Effective public policy processes have certain constraints or dynamics such as (often) short timelines and catering for political and electoral imperatives. Bureaucrats are caught between these constraints and the knowledge that lack of input from continuous evidenciary bases may lead to less than perfect policy. The issue is one of policy quality versus political constraints. The principle stemming from this issue is that a structure for policy processes should allow flexibility in response to timing constraints, while catering for on-going evidenciary availability.

**Principle 4: Short and long term sustainable access requires provision for ensuring continuity of resources and consistent and complete knowledge management, including that of infrastructure and personnel**

Continuity of resources, including policy personnel, is key to success in effective policy implementation. There were also clear benefits in terms of clear and well-founded decision-making and trackable accountability procedures through having continuity of membership of the collaborative groups formed to engage with policy development especially and crucially in terms of local community conditions and issues that will often constrain or prevent the effectiveness of policy initiatives from engaging at local levels. This is an important principle in ensuring the practical links from the rhetoric and intention of policy as reflected in policy documents make connections to the very groups who are the intended recipients of the various strategies.

**Principle 5: ‘Market forces’ need to be supplemented with resourced and collaborative capacity-generation**

It is well-established that when tenders are called for government initiatives, the winners are most frequently those who are already skilled and knowledgeable in the art of writing successful proposals, and are usually the ones possessing most capacity therefore (Falk 2003). Policy implementation has been affected over the years from not having alternatives to this mechanism, but the concept of capacity building does provide some assistance here when coupled with a knowledge of community-response-to-change cycles of intervention, as outlined in Principle 1 above and its accompanying figure. In reality, it is not difficult or costly to establish what stage the community group, agency, association or business is at on this intervention cycle. The specific capacity building needs can be identified, and these needs resourced, with the output being a proposal for funding based on achieving the next stage in the cycle, specifically to address the specific policy strategy criteria.

Market forces have been shown to be blunt instruments (Falk 2003), and they only work partially. It is counter-productive, therefore, to rely solely on markets when it comes to social policy focusing on frequently ‘disadvantaged’ groups because (a) of thin markets in rural and remote areas, and (b) it does not work in terms of reaching target groups whose capacity to know and identify with the rationale and process of ‘writing proposals’ is so limited; here, recourse to a cycle of intervention approach will facilitate better targeting, and (c) lack of social capital in some areas.
Principle 6: Inclusive and consultative processes are slow, but they pay off...

...in both short and long term. The greater the engagement of the policy’s stakeholders, including those from across government, the better the outcomes. In terms of the inclusiveness of policy and strategy/program outcomes, the most significant potential outcomes are in two areas: (a) that future problems will be minimised by an early intervention approach and (b) that present problems will be targeted accurately by the policies and a measure of alleviation experienced. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that this ‘new policy’ approach is able to reach target groups by building a regard for, and resourcing of, local needs-identification and policy roll-out into the policy structure. Partnerships between policy-makers and researchers are shown to be strengthened, and there is certainly evidence that the implementation strategies foster partnerships between State/Territory level and community groups, organisations, enterprises and individuals.

There is also evidence supporting the view that previously disenfranchised groups, such as those who are the subject of this study, participate more in the policy processes and outcomes associated with the newer policy approach. Stakeholders who under usual market forces circumstances exert influence beyond their numbers tend to have their influence curtailed by the collaborative approach that are the subject of this principle. Non-local groups who are already skilled and experienced in writing proposals and winning funds in a competitive funding environment can be encouraged to collaborate and work in a community capacity exchange with less enfranchised local individuals and groups. It is vital, under these circumstances, to ensure that adequate information, evidence and resources are made available to the groups involved in the policy implementation in dealing with the most in-need communities and target groups.

Principle 7: Continuous and iterative evaluation underpins implementation success and sustainability of policy

The ‘official’ evaluation of policies and programs should begin soon after implementation is triggered with the letting of a tender and should be part of the tender requirements. It is, of course, essential to ensure adequate resources are provided through the tender funds to carry out such an evaluation, since it is these evaluations, as they mount in number across a range of like initiatives, that build to a useful evidence base on ‘what works’. The criteria for the evaluation should be firmly based on the principles outlined here, which also form a section of the criteria for program effectiveness. Continuous and iterative evaluation impacts directly on the success and sustainability of policies and their associated programs.
4 Discussion and findings

In this section of the report, we turn to a discussion of the results of analysis of the field data gathered during the project.

An outline of the methodology and procedures for the study appears in section 2.1.3 of this report, but is summarised here for the reader’s convenience. The project team consulted with clients, service providers, government agencies and advocacy and industry groups across the Northern Territory about the detailed characteristics of disadvantage for people in the following five employment disadvantaged groups: youth, people with disabilities (including mental health), long-term unemployed, mature aged and non-English speaking background. While Indigenous issues have not been included as one of the groups for detailed study in this project, Indigenous participants are explicitly included in four of the five groups identified above (NESB excludes Indigenous here).

The discussions ranged across the barriers and issues related to employment and training for the various groups. Successful strategies, programs, policies and characteristics of personnel were identified. The data collected from the interviews was processed and then analysed according to established research procedures.

The volume of data from the interviews is large. The aim of a report such as this is to make sense of this volume of information by clustering it into meaningful categories. During the data gathering period a process of checking back with representatives of sectors and stakeholders was established. This was to ensure that the integrity of the information was maintained. For example, the Steering Committee encompasses all services providers across all sectors, and has been actively involved in all stages of the project in scanning, providing input and suggesting amendments to the data received. A major workshop was held on Darwin on 4 June 2004 to validate findings and consider solutions. The workshop extended the composition of the Steering Committee to a regional and grassroots constituency and was followed by a set of consultative steps that included sending the integrated results of the workshop to the participants and others for additional input and validation.

A working party of researchers, service providers, sectoral and government representatives, was then established to develop conceptual depth and detail around the recommendations, especially on the emerging model of service and program delivery that resulted from the data analyses of the ‘What works’ component of the data.

As noted above, the volume of data gathered has been great. The following sections therefore seek to encapsulate the analytic outcomes in an accessible format that combines an explanatory text format interwoven with some sample quotes to substantiate key points.
4.1 Barriers/Issues to Employment and Training

“The biggest single barrier to employment and training for the “broader disadvantaged” group is attitudinal or perception. i.e.

People from a non-English speaking background are deaf

People in wheelchairs are stupid and deaf

Older people are frail, stupid and deaf”

(A service provider describing how stereotyping and prejudice influence people’s perceptions about employment disadvantaged people.)

The researchers have been mindful that the stakeholders representing the sectors have indicated specific uses of the outcomes of this project. The results on the analysis of the data on barriers and issues are therefore reported here in two sections:

4.2 Key Themes

This section details the key themes as they emerged from the data. Themes are illustrated with quotes from interviews conducted. In many cases examples are given that apply across several sectors. Where comments and issues relate to specific sectors, these are noted in the text.

4.2.1 Poverty and Cost

As might be expected, income level and cost are key issues raised by most clients and sectoral representatives. This embraces the cost of travel to get to job interviews and the cost of childcare and work clothes associated with employment. It is noted that many respondents connected their low level of income with their inability to afford training or inter-related services as is the case with the following two comments:

Training is expensive for us people on the pension.

Another commented:

When you’re on a benefit you can’t afford the luxury of accessing a taxi when there is no public system.

While the Jobseeker Account administered by the Job Network providers can be used to defray costs associated with finding and beginning work, the comments made by a number of clients suggest that many jobseekers have little knowledge of its coverage or benefits. Some client comment received includes:

When you are unemployed for any period of time you just don’t have spare cash and it costs money to find, then kit yourself up for work. This combined with cutting the dole means that often it’s just not worth taking on short-term work.

And again the following comment suggests that the person may not be aware of the possible use of their Job Seeker Account;

Public transport doesn’t really exist here and I can’t afford to reregister my car to get to the jobs that are available.
Apart from a lack of awareness of subsidy options another aspect of cost identified by respondents relates to the restrictive nature of subsidies and funding as they are applied to some disadvantaged groups. For example, while a non-English speaking background person who is a refugee may access assistance through several programs, a migrant with a working Australian partner, may not be entitled to assistance simply because of the income of their partner. Both people may be disadvantaged because of low levels of English literacy and numeracy. While it could be argued that the one who is the partner of a working Australian is not financially disadvantaged, the reality is that even if courses were available (beyond basic Adult Migrant English Programs) the cost of access to these programs is beyond their financial reach.

The Commonwealth, through their benefits, need to look at their eligibility criteria… For those migrants who don’t have access to Centrelink benefits, how do they get the skills they need in order to get employment?

Because cost permeates much of the data, and along with transport is an established area, we will move forwards quickly, while not underestimating the considerable impacts this point has, and the many ways it is reflected in other areas.

4.2.2 Transport (including rural/remote areas)

Many people rely on buses and there are few buses.

To get to work by 8am, people have to catch one bus at 6.30 from Palmerston or Casuarina… I've got big issues with childcare here, where I'd have to get the kids to childcare somehow on the way to get the bus by 6.30 – you just can't do it…

The issue of accessing buses to Darwin from Palmerston and beyond is compounded by the problem of bus interchanges, which according to one respondent further inhibit people with a disability from accessing transport.

[Bus interchanges] tend to attract some of the less palatable parts of younger society and people with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable to those sorts of people. Bus interchanges don't go very well with people with disabilities on their own or in very small groups of one, two or three.

A comment made in one form or another frequently by respondents was that:

Many workplaces are not on bus routes.

One employer (catering for employees with disabilities) who wanted to expand his business at a new site was severely restricted in his choice of site because appropriate industrial sites were not on the bus route.

Public transport in Darwin is abysmal. People with disabilities rely heavily on transport.

In many areas outside of the Darwin metropolitan areas, bus services simply do not exist, or—as is the case in Alice Springs—buses stop running shortly after normal working hours, meaning that while people can get to training courses they cannot get home.
The buses stop at six o’clock and there are some training courses here [at CDU] and because they want to work to earn some money during the day, they can’t come to evening classes because transport is an issue.

The inter-relationships between themes is important to keep in mind, as different client groups encounter differing degrees of severity when they are members of two or more areas of employment disadvantage:

There are huge difficulties getting to work on time and this adds additional stress to already stressed people.

And:

Many do not like catching buses due to panic.

4.2.3 Housing

As with transport, housing was perceived to be a foundational issue that needs to be addressed before issues of employment for disadvantaged people can be tackled. One person working in the disability sector commented:

How can people ever be ready to work if they don’t have a roof over their head?

Similarly, in the youth sector housing was seen as a priority before employment:

Employment seeking is often seen as too far away from our clients’ initial priorities and that might mean that they are often dealing with issues of homelessness… so the employment option doesn’t feel real for the client at that point in time.

The specific issue related to disability regarding housing is summed up by the following comment from a service provider:

When I get additional income I lose my place on the housing queue.

Another respondent from Alice Springs commented:

We have a lot of clients—one in particular—we got her a job part time, it really worked well, her rent rocketed so she was actually working 16 hours a week for $2. It wasn’t a great incentive to keep working.

Another service provider noted that some aspects of Centrelink’s requirements are disincentives, Access to public housing is income-based - if they earn too much, they often couldn’t afford to, or couldn’t manage/organise, alternative accommodation.

4.2.4 Access

Access is an issue that also underlies most of the other themes. In the disability sector, physical access is still an issue in the physical sense where older buildings and worksites do not have adequate wheelchair access and related infrastructure.

Access to information is a major issue for both clients and service providers. The two comments below seem to suggest that access to information is restricted in part because of the narrow focus of some agencies in catering for specific groups, or because the ‘system’ discourages information sharing:
No agency or organisation has or can provide information that covers the FULL range of available programs. This means that single agencies push their own program or solutions even where other agencies may have programs of a better fit. Is this ignorance or parochialism?

It appears that some agencies are actively working against networking and information sharing based on some misplaced notion of probity, privacy or conflict of interest?

Access to information technology was identified as a critical issue for many disadvantaged groups, partly due to the costs associated with access, and partly because of feelings of intimidation. Examples were given of mature aged people having difficulty when they are required to use a touch screen to access information about employment by a Job Network member:

[Some] mature aged people are reluctant to make that investment in a whole new set of skills.

Issues of access include the ability of some people to tap into mainstream support services. For younger people with limited family support, the issue is often about how to access child care or other mainstream services for example.

### 4.2.5 Prejudice and discrimination

While many of the comments received by respondents and included in this section relate to specific groups, there may be an overarching pattern of discrimination and prejudice that covers disadvantaged groups in general. This perception is noted by a well-experienced service provider in the disability sector:

The biggest single barrier to employment and training for the “broader disadvantaged” group is attitudinal or perception. That is,

- People from a non-English speaking background are deaf
- People in wheelchairs are stupid and deaf
- Older people are frail, stupid and deaf

For women, pregnancy discrimination is now the most common form of discrimination impacting both on current jobs:

When employers hear that an employee is pregnant they often downgrade the positions, and often the job goes, making return to the same job difficult or impossible. The thinking underlying it is often: ‘If she’s pregnant she’s a liability to us’.

Domestic violence is also an ongoing impediment:

Violence is a barrier to both training and employment.

In the disability area, there is a specific problem in relation to disclosure of information about their condition on the part of the clients. Examples were provided where exploitation included overwork, and some were forced back onto sickness benefits as a result of undue stress.

If people disclose their mental illness to employers they may not get jobs, but if they do not disclose, they often get exploited.
One respondent described how casual staff were put off in order to employ himself and one other with mental illness because they were funded by the government. He was made to feel as he described it: “de-humanised”.

Informants provided examples of being exploited by being overworked and were forced back on to sickness benefits as a result of undue stress. Employers were sometimes thought to be exploiting the government incentives.

> There are incentives for employing people with disabilities for 12 months. However once the 12 months is over, agencies don’t want to keep them on anymore. This is a big issue and needs to be taken up with government.

Youth are constantly asked for work experience when it is impossible for them to have such a record. As a major training provider commented:

> There needs to be a greater level of supported work experience, preferably provided on a one-to-one basis, to get employment outcomes

The level of youth and apprenticeship wages in general was identified as an issue. Unless clients in these categories received significant parental or other support, continuation of training often became economically impossible.

> I was offered the around $5.70 an hour as an Apprenticed Motor Mechanic while a mate I went to school with was able to get $13.00 an hour or more at a fast food joint. While I know 5 years down the track I will probably be better off it would be great if I could afford to live and have some fun now.

The attitude of employers and youth to old age creates a cultural barrier and stigma. This makes age a barrier to employment and people feel no one is listening to them.

> When you are a little older they ask you how old you are. They say you are close to pension age.

People who have been through redundancy or whose work has come to an end may feel that they are too old. As one service provider observed:

> Barriers to employment include lack of skills especially for people over 45.

The need for mature age classes was voiced by another service provider who felt this is requirement because of the stigma.

There was some evidence that transients constitute a disadvantaged group as they lack knowledge of what programs can help them. There is the need to establish networks of service providers.

People who are not permanent residents are not easily accepted into jobs. There seems to be a mixed set of reasons for this, including a sense that the jobs that are available should go to residents, and of course there is the English language issue:

> There is the need to finish advanced English, however there’s no financial support.
Employers’ attitude is a significant barrier for people of a non-English speaking background:

Many employers/managers want to employ people they know. Or people from a similar culture or background.

People have stereotypes of different nationalities.

The idea that someone is lazy, stupid or can’t learn because of stereotype or low competence in English can be a barrier

The way people dress acts against them when looking for work, e.g. Moslem women wearing the veil. Some people have been told that because of the veil they can’t get work.

### 4.2.6 Workplace culture and conditions

Note was made of various matters relating to workplace conditions (access is one, reported elsewhere) and in a few cases to workplace harassment. It seems that these issues are closely related to the culture of the particular workplace where they occur. One service provider reported that:

One informant spoke of her complaints about sexual harassment being brushed aside and not dealt with. This put a lot of pressure on her when she was feeling very stressed in the workplace to begin with.

Specific issues are reported for women in addition to sexual harassment, such as bullying.

Workplace bullying arises as an issue in some reports. For example, if a woman eventually gets a job after doing the family thing, and has to resign for some reason, there’s no legislative framework to support appeals. She can then be out of a job for some time lacking confidence to re-apply after shoddy treatment.

Bullying is the single biggest issue for NESB women—pay issues next—while for English speaking background women, bullying and unfair dismissal are about equal.

### 4.2.7 The nature of work and jobs

Casualisation has created multiple disadvantage for many clients (e.g., getting to work when called, child care and transport at odd times). Casualisation of work prevents the development of longer-term work relationships and therefore the development of an environment that encourages support and on the job training opportunities. It is seen here, through the words of one service provider, how the issues overlap:

The inability to find childcare at short notice, and a lack of lead time to find money for it, hinder people from getting casual work. Another service provider observed that casual jobs like fruit picking do not provide security to the workers as there is no award system.

Casual staff also are at risk of losing their jobs for the wrong reasons. One informant described how casual staff were put off in order to employ himself and another as they were funded by the government on grounds of disability. Further, intermittent and seasonal work is difficult for people receiving unemployment benefit as the benefit is...
cut during the work and when the job finishes there is no money. The compounding impact of casual work affects the reliability reflected in a person’s job history.

If they were casual or ‘under the table’ people will not have reliable references of job histories.

A number of service providers commented on the changed structure of the labour market which had effectively abolished the “traditional” destinations for many of the disadvantaged jobseekers and in particular those with intellectual disadvantaged.

There are virtually no unskilled jobs with some structure in Darwin outside Kakoda industries; we just don’t have a manufacturing industry. Couple this with a total absence of base grade jobs in both the Commonwealth and Territory Public service and you can see the problem. People don’t understand that there are people that can be happy and fulfilled carrying the files.

It appears that there is some scepticism about the ability of larger corporations to tackle issues of opportunity for employment disadvantaged people. This is despite apparent progress being made by some organisations such as Disability Works Australia (see page 101) in raising awareness of discrimination issues.

One national supermarket chain demands that all staff must be able to fulfil the check out operator role, effectively excluding those potential employees without cash handling skills. Incidentally this chain also does its recruitment by remote control down south allowing no interaction with local service providers.

There are many jobs that are not ‘legitimate’, and, moreover, they are the kinds of jobs that are more common for many employment disadvantaged groups. They may be jobs that are paid by cash with no records, and the issue is noted in this comment:

Under-the-counter jobs do not result the right references required for long term legal jobs.

In Alice Springs some respondents commented on the importance of social networks as a means of finding work, especially for young people.

The experience of some participants, particularly in Alice Springs, was that the close-knit nature of the town meant that people tended to ‘look after each other’.

If you’ve been in town for a while you end up building solid networks, and that’s what seems to work in Alice. And that’s why you do get a service because Joe Bloggs knows someone.

Another respondent spoke of the importance of peer networks among the youth of Alice Springs.

If a good job comes along they’ll hear about it from one of their mates. No one buys the paper in that age group so we’ve had to change the way we market positions.

4.2.8 The Job Network and Centrelink system ‘doesn’t work’ and often prevents people getting jobs

The following snippets provide some of the host of examples offered to substantiate claims about the differing ways in which Job Networks were perceived to need improvement. It needs to be born in mind that the comments are made only in relation to employment and training disadvantaged people, and that none of the comments apply to people who do not fall into the nine areas of disadvantage which form the focus of this study.
One important sub-theme in this theme relates to the chopping and changing that occurs, and the impacts these changes have on clients who often face added barriers such as difficulties with literacy and numeracy (and providers for that matter).

Changes in Centrelink rules mean that people are penalized because they have had a nervous breakdown.

And regarding the policy and funding cycle issue:

A short term fix is more attractive to government than long term solution.

It is a concern that program duration is dictated by electoral time frames and in some cases by the funding cycles of agencies.

The pressure to meeting placement targets is found in a large number of comments across all sectors, for example:

Job centres such as [name withheld] are hopeless. They just want dumping grounds to get people off their books.

[A Job Network] was highly regarded, but needs to be cleaned up ‘cos the administration’s no good.

One client reported how she went in to [a Job Network] to inquire about training to be a nurse. She was pushed into carer training and then pushed to get a job early in the training, long before the training ended. The stresses of holding down both a job and training were too great and she quit both.

4.2.9 Job Networks disempower clients

. . . they take your CV, they do the stuff for you with your CV. You just feel as if you’re not in control.

You can’t do anything yourself once you’re in the system.

The main concerns expressed about the Job Networks and Centrelink are summarised simply by one client and several service providers as: “They just don’t work”. When this issue was teased out, the reasons they are considered not to work are comprehensive, detailed and convincing. The reasons fall into three areas: (a) competition, (b) programmatic pocketisation (meaning scattered or fragmented programs spread among different agencies or providers with no central referral or information capacity) and (c) funding criteria. For example, in regards to competition and programmatic pocketisation, one service provider expressed the issue this way:

No agency or organisation has or can provide information that covers the FULL range of available programs. This means that single agencies push their own program or solutions even where other agencies may have programs of a better fit. Is this ignorance or parochialism?
As the data also shows, the issue of funding criteria in the case of the Job Network agencies lies at the core of the reasons why employment disadvantaged groups remain in the job queues longer. Simply put, Job Networks are paid according to the number of cases that they place in employment in a given period. There is a tendency to place easy cases first. One organisation Chief Executive Officer described it this way:

As an example, on Monday, I could start with a stack of, say, ten folders on the left of my desk and there are 5 people in [employment disadvantaged groups] in that stack. And a stack of, say, five jobs to be filled on the right. I get funded on the basis of how many people I put in jobs that week. [This organization] runs on small margins. So which folder am I going to go for first out of the ones on my left?

In a tight job market, these impacts are likely to be felt more severely by high-needs groups. The combined impacts on service providers and the quality of outcomes they can deliver are considerable, and include the fact that:

It appears that some agencies are actively working against networking and information sharing…

However, some clients commented that “the system” was inadequate. They reported that they felt disempowered when “they take your CV and that you can’t do anything for yourself after that”. Job agencies are then felt to “take over” from the clients’ own initiative in approaching employers, and that they have decisions made for them. Often they can relate instances of others who are placed ahead of them “cos they’re easy to find jobs for”. The issue of red-tape and form-filling arose time and time again as an obstacle to job-seekers, many of whom reported literacy and numeracy difficulties using the printed and computer-based information available to them.

Referral processes were reported as needing attention. Especially in the disability area, it was perceived that Centrelink did not refer adequately, and that their own training was inadequate in preparing Centrelink staff to screen, assess and refer clients to appropriate programs and support services.

Clients and service providers also commented on the issue of disincentives. In some areas, for example, eligibility for housing and the pension cuts out at a certain limit, and taking on a little extra work becomes a disincentive when the red-tape in getting back on these benefits and loss of income and support are simply not tolerable to these clients because of their marginality to the poverty line. Most in the disability and multiple disadvantage areas cannot afford to lose their support for even a day.

4.2.10 ‘Pocketisation’ and fragmentation

The net impact of the above issues are that information, programs and support are difficult to find and access. Service delivery is fragmented. Programs occur in pockets in different providers. For clients, this presents an often bewildering and off-putting process to go through. Competition, as noted above, often results in clients not being supplied (however inadvertently this might be) with information or services or programs available from another provider or source. Some organisations are so focused on their core business, which is placing people in jobs, that they appear to lose sight of the bigger picture, especially as seen from the client’s point of view.
4.2.11 Programs that do not work well

A large amount of information was gathered concerning programs or strategies that have been or are (or even are partly) successful in supporting pathways to employment and training. A more detailed coverage of these occurs in a separate section of the report. There were a number of comments, however, about things that didn’t work so well, and the Job Network issue has already been noted above. The Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP) was the subject of considerable comment. Some simply said “STEP doesn’t work”. Another commented that “STEP is a rort”. More specific reasons why this might be the case were provided, and included the point that STEP does not work in the sense that it appears to be more structured to meet DEWR outcomes than clients’ needs.

In a general sense, the issue of a programmatic structure to provision was raised consistently. One provider elaborated:

“STEP doesn’t work”.
“STEP is a rort”.

STEP does not work in the sense that it appears to be more structured to meet DEWR outcomes than clients’ needs.

“Surely it would make more sense to tailor a long term (or for as long as is needed) program rather than a lifetime or progression of short term program placements”.

This suggestion seems to have inherent value in the Northern Territory context, where jobs in many Indigenous communities are scarce. The quotation above also supports the notion of a community-based (or local initiative) model of provision for the Northern Territory—one that builds employment and related training needs onto the needs and human resource-base of specific communities. Such a model, called the Unemployed Worker’s Network Project, is found in Tasmania, and has been evaluated favourably. Another model that appears to overcome some of the noted shortcomings of the present system is found in the Victorian Local Learning Employment Networks (LLENs) and their evaluation and mode of operation are considered in later sections of this report as well.

4.2.12 Need for case managers

Case management in the form of individualised support was described as a need for many types of groups by several interviewees and focus groups. The kind of support needed varied depending on the context. This support was sometimes seen as a function of the Job Network agencies and sometimes seen as additional to the services that Job Network case managers were able to provide. One example of this kind of support is given by a non-English speaking background representative:

Case management in the form of individualised support was described as a need for many types of groups by several interviewees.
DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Would a move to case based funding create a barrier by restricting the movements of clients through open and supported employment?

While there was a general acceptance that case management and in particular ongoing case management, realises and maintains a higher standard of outcome. It was noted by one service provider that if case management was to be provided through a case based funding approach, for example through FaCS, then a funding barrier may be created by restricting the movement of clients through open and supported employment.

Real case management use to cut out the red tape, listen to what you wanted and know who to contact to make it happen. This doesn’t happen now or not with Job Network provider] anyway.

4.2.13 Education/training/skills

Feedback on education and training identified these issues: (a) lack of flexibility/appropriateness in modes of delivery, (b) literacy and numeracy needs (identification, referral, Information Technology-related and delivery), (c) access issues and (d) specific sectoral needs for, for example, mature aged persons, people from a non-English speaking background and Indigenous people.

Remembering the client groups for this study are the employment disadvantaged, it is to be expected that education and training issues will be magnified compared with others in the population. In addition, education and training issues are, like most of the themes, inter-related. For example, transport, poverty and access are key issues in this area, as clients have trouble accessing public transport, getting to training classes when they are held at institutions distant from their homes, and the cost of transport to training adds to their financial concerns. Lack of flexibility/mode of delivery is tied up in this as well, since there is a strong perception that training provision is dominated by the largest provider, Charles Darwin University, and that the mode of delivery is often perceived as inappropriate, not localized in terms of accessibility, nor tailored to meet local individual and community needs.

In regards to a lack of flexibility and appropriateness in modes of delivery three themes were persistent throughout the field research. They were duration of training, funding of training and tailoring clients to training. Service providers named a number of past training programs that were considered successful and noted that they had some common elements. They were up to twelve months or more in duration, they included elements of open entry open exit, and allowed for group intakes and the ability to adjust curriculum to the trainee. This included some ‘Jobtrain’ programs that encompassed life skills, pre employment and job search skills, vocational skills and finally post placement support. Also mentioned were the Group One Year Apprentice Scheme (GOYA), the JET program at Maningrida and the McLean Housing project in NSW. Comments related to these concerns include:

“A short-term fix is more attractive to government than long term solution”.

Flexibility:

“...A short-term fix is more attractive to government than long term solution.

It is a concern that program duration is dictated by electoral time frames and in some cases by the funding cycles of agencies.

The most disadvantaged clients are tailored to programs rather than the other way around.”
Literacy and numeracy requirements of work and employment processes affect the employability especially of non-English speaking background people:

The emphasis on filling forms to apply for jobs is a barrier.

Any work in the government bureaucracy requires written skills.

Someone may have skills to be a cleaner but have to be able to negotiate paperwork.

The issues related to access are much the same as those described earlier under the general headings of: Transport (including rural/remote areas), page 81 and Access, page 82. Access to education and training is just as dependent on transport, information and information technology as is access to employment.

In regards to point (d) above on specific sectoral needs, the non-English speaking background sectoral representatives had these issues to raise, related to information/access, duration and costs:

Migrants need more information about training opportunities — what is available, how to access them. Especially training that provides skills that may improve employment prospects such as fork lift training.

The subsidised duration of English language education for migrants is clearly an issue:

510 hours free training is a good start but it is not enough. The hours may only cover level 1 and 2 (basic level but not functioning level) for many people. Many people need 500 hours just to introduce themselves.

And the issue of financial support is frequently raised:

There is the need for more financial support to undertake a range of training to assist with employment.

Mature aged people have a different set of training issues. One group is about the shame of having to “go back to school”. Cost is also an issue, as is the appropriateness of the training:

We really need classes specifically for the mature aged because their learning needs are different, and of course there’s the shame factor.

Shame is often associated with the discrimination or prejudice often experienced by mature aged people returning to work or training:

He didn’t even know my name, kept calling me ‘Dear’ in that way, just the way he treated me.

Definite discrimination.

Indigenous issues in some measure echo the previous two groups, but stress the need for provision to occur closer to home (transport/remoteness are factors here, as is cost) and suggest that mentoring is a successful strategy, critiquing the “full-on class” mode of provision that prevails.
There were a few comments about the educational levels of potential job applicants, a point made by one service provider here:

*Education often does not get people job ready.*

Costs of training and further education in general are increasing, which is hitting the employment disadvantaged:

*Ongoing training is not always feasible for those who have to take a loan or are severely in debt with HECS.*

When the labour market is relatively strong, the disadvantaged are often penalised:

*Traineeships are still a buyer's market.*

And…

*Lots of energy goes into easy clients because that’s where the quick money is. Not much into hard-to-place ones.*

This leads to a situation where the same clients get the jobs and the same ones miss out.

### 4.3 Summary of discussion and findings

The most consistent finding gained from all groups of participants in the study was the need for clearer information, pathways and access points for employment disadvantaged clients. It was felt that this could be achieved through the operation of a brokering and support system that provided strongly networked connections to the various sectors and programs. The physical presence, the preferred option for respondents, was seen as being supplemented by on-line, internet and print-based resources and information. Included in the functions of the service would be counselling services, communication strategies (including promotion and marketing) and the question of mentoring and case management.

The importance of case management and mentoring is a finding emerging from the data, both from the research and interview evidence. However, the data does not help clarify the often overlapping and intertwined meanings attributed to the terms ‘case management’ and ‘mentoring’ by different individuals in different sectors, even though these terms are used prolifically in the data and the research literature, they are nevertheless used with different meanings in many instances, and often used with sector-specific implications.

The analysis of ‘what works’ programs and support structures that has occurred through this project reveals a number of findings concerning the learning provisions that optimise assistance, access and support for clients in their efforts to seek and secure employment. These provisions are built on the principles outlined in the introduction to this recommendations section, and include a needs-based approach to learning and training provision as being the model that assures employment outcomes. In addition, the term ‘training’ often did not appear to include the kinds of learning provisions that were deemed the most effective for many clients and groups of clients.

The data contains a number of strong themes in relation to learning and training, from the market domination of Charles Darwin University as a training provider, to the lack
of flexibility and appropriateness of the learning and training for the client groups in question. When this information is viewed in conjunction with programs reviewed in the ‘What work’s section (see section 4.4), it is clear that a more consistent approach to relevant and culturally appropriate learning arrangements needs to be considered.

A range of findings concerning evaluation and data collection emerged from the study. For example, there is very little evidence that programs and policies in the Northern Territory have been effective in meeting their outcomes. There is also some evidence that objective evaluations (not necessarily of Northern Territory programs) resulting in criticism of some initiatives have not been made available for wider consideration (it is these very criticisms that could help shape strategies and programs so that they do, in fact, achieve their outcomes more effectively and efficiently). Further, a number of gaps in the data have been identified during the course of this project. The findings here fall into two areas. One area concerns the evidenciary bases for current and future strategy, policy and program initiatives that should be systematically gathered through evaluation processes. The other area concerns the collection, maintenance and usability of data on a population-wide basis.

As noted in Section 2.3.4 and throughout the literature review, meaningful work needs to be available for the employment disadvantaged. This may not be necessarily a case of ‘growing’ further work opportunities, but instead better quarantining and defining work opportunities for employment disadvantaged groups. A significant finding of the study is that there needs to be better mechanisms for quarantining an identifiable labour market for the employment disadvantaged.

It is also found that a major source of problems for clients and service providers across all areas of disadvantage stem from the chop-and-change of programs from one funding cycle to another. As funding for one program is coming to an end, it is often not clear that the program will continue, due to the need to reapply for funds for its continuance. This insecurity proves to be highly cost-inefficient in terms of the loss of human resources: staff cannot make decisions to stay on due to the insecurity and are forced to take whatever employment arises first. Their knowledge of clients, learning needs, program details and assessment issues is therefore lost, and valuable time is taken by new staff learning these matters on induction when a new program cycle begins with a new round of funding. Ultimately it is the clients who suffer.

From this summary of the discussion and findings of the interview data, we now move to a section describing the results of the ‘What works’ component of the study, then the report progresses to a more detailed section articulating these findings with related recommendations.
4.4 What works?

In this section we report the results of analysing the interview data in relation to the things that are reported to work. Stakeholders across all sectors were specifically asked about employment and training programs that they considered effective. The resulting list shown below and follows overleaf in Table 4-1. There are probably a number of other programs that exist and the list should not be considered to be exhaustive. It should also be noted that some respondents indicated that some programs listed were in fact counterproductive to achieving employment and training outcomes. These were reported both in the interviews and focus groups, as well as in the Workshop on 4 June that discussed and provided input on the emerging results of the research.

Table 4-1 Programs and target groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/organisation name</th>
<th>Target group for program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Future Directions’ - Alice Springs High School</td>
<td>Aims are vocational outcomes but also completing NTCE/Year 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Group Intakes’</td>
<td>Provide peer support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pathways program” – Charles Darwin University</td>
<td>Young people at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Springs Anglicare</td>
<td>Tries to help youth through a bicycle repair program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
<td>Newly arrived migrants requiring English skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglicare “Refugee and Migrant Settlement” Program</td>
<td>Refugees and Migrants (newly arrived). Employment sessions – invite DEET to talk about what employers want, how to present for interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Programs Employment Training Advisory Council</td>
<td>(no longer in existence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunta Council</td>
<td>Try to build bridges between kids and the employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services</td>
<td>Indigenous people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australians Working Together (Commonwealth and Northern Territory) Employer Incentives</td>
<td>Disability and other including long time unemployed migrants. Apprenticeships in skill shortage – for local government, small business etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP)</td>
<td>Indigenous unemployed people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre based approaches to high – support needs</td>
<td>Disability with high support needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Employment Program, Commonwealth job creation scheme from the 80’s</td>
<td>Long term unemployed (Combines employment for the employment disadvantaged with formal and on the job training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES Vocational Psychologists</td>
<td>Jobseekers with barriers/Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS)</td>
<td>Funded through FaCS to assist mature aged, single parents and people with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Maxinet work experience program</td>
<td>Non-English speaking background immigrants and refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group training conducted at CDU using pre vocational money from DETYA was highly effective.</td>
<td>Conduct training programs and provide subsidies for disadvantaged apprentices. Employers would seek workers directly from graduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Australia ‘mature age month’</td>
<td>An initiative to target mature aged job seekers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled new apprenticeship wage subsidy</td>
<td>Apprentices/Trainees with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled New Apprenticeships Scheme</td>
<td>Disability incentives for employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Social Security (former) Pre-employment training</td>
<td>(former) Pre-employment training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory Driver Training and Licensing Program</td>
<td>Subsidised driver training in schools, 15 – 17 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobnet program</td>
<td>Unemployed people generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee For Service</td>
<td>Top End Northern Territory only – flexible employment provision which encourage participation both socially and economically in remote communities. with the cooperation of Councils and Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Response Funding and Community Response</td>
<td>Indigenous training identified by communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/organisation name</td>
<td>Target group for program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Service Arrangement</td>
<td>In the Katherine and Alice regions, looking at flexible employment opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footprints Forward</td>
<td>Indigenous youth, mentoring – training and employment opportunities (Alice Springs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Training (GTNT)</td>
<td>Younger unemployed people wanting to get formal vocational qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow</td>
<td>Groups, drop ins, camping weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPA Inc.</td>
<td>Employer specialising in physical and intellectual disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Employment Centres – IEC</td>
<td>For Indigenous people who are on CDEP to put them through training and employment off CDEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Employment Program (Chamber of Commerce)</td>
<td>Building awareness and capacity of employers with relation to Indigenous employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Small Business Fund – ISBF</td>
<td>Assists communities and individuals to determine business feasibility, marketing, business plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous wage subsidy – (DEWR)</td>
<td>Indigenous assistance/Employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JET Model – Maningrida</td>
<td>Indigenous women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Club</td>
<td>Long term unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Link</td>
<td>Deals with mentally ill people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Network, Job Network Members</td>
<td>DEWR contracts organisations to provide employment services to all people who are unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Seeker Account</td>
<td>Accessible through Job Network Members to pay for training and tools that will enhance employment opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobnet</td>
<td>Pre-employment for young people with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPET</td>
<td>At risk youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Pathways Program</td>
<td>At risk youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julalikari</td>
<td>Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation, ex Jobnetwork provider, focus for Indigenous, employment and training in Tennant Creek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larrakeyah</td>
<td>Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation is beginning to take a lead role in Indigenous employment, enterprise and training in the Darwin region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)</td>
<td>a DEST program that provides English training for people from a non-English speaking background and those with limited literacy and numeracy skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAXnetwork Employment (Job Network Member)</td>
<td>Employment, health and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre</td>
<td>Employment sessions focussed on jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory working women’s centre – current</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Employment of Intellectually Impaired People</td>
<td>This program is where longer term contracted employment is available into NTPS for Intellectually disadvantaged people (generally young people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Support Program</td>
<td>People not able to access employment – multiple barriers/issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Support Program</td>
<td>For jobseekers with multi-barriers to employment – (PSP) (Job Network)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post school Options – Anglicare NT</td>
<td>School leavers with high/very high support needs – accessing training opportunities to build up skill base for possible employment opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School based apprenticeships</td>
<td>At risk students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood Industry</td>
<td>Provide transport getting from A to B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Transition Education Program</td>
<td>Linking students with disabilities with post school options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Share</td>
<td>old Skill Share now Darwin Skills Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Training and Employment Program</td>
<td>Indigenous people who are registered as Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School to Work Transition</td>
<td>Youth still at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported wage system</td>
<td>People with a disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE English bridging classes</td>
<td>People from a non-English speaking background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangentyere Council</td>
<td>Job Network specialist for Indigenous people in Alice Springs region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Program/organisation name** | **Target group for program**  
--- | ---  
Training for Aboriginals Program | Prevocational pre trade training for Aboriginal people, provided blocks of trade related interest.  
Training Account | Accessible through Job Network members to pay for training after a period of unemployment  
Training for Remote Youth | Training for 14 – 17 year old Indigenous youth  
VET | Vocational Education and Training for youth and less skilled people  
WAGE Assistance | People who have been unemployed and are employed either full-time or part-time.  
Willing and Able | Northern Territory Public Service Employment Strategy targeting people with disabilities  
Women’s Working Centre: Employment sessions – invite DEET to talk about what employers want, how to present for interviews. | Women  
Work for the Dole | All unemployed  
Work start Program NT | Unemployed school leavers who fall between the “major disadvantaged” group and the high achievers i.e.: those who get employment, apprenticeship, etc  
Workplace Modifications Scheme | FaCS funded provision of financial assistance for specific workplace modifications or purchase of special equipment.  
Yirrkala Business Enterprises Pty Ltd, Nhulunbuy | Indigenous-owned enterprise  
YMCA | Focus on who is roaming the streets, provide a place to go  
Your track, Your choice Your future | Indigenous students/youth  

### 4.4.1 Evidence for what works

Following this catalogue, a national scan of strategies and programs (that were accompanied by some form of documentation that indicated they worked) was undertaken, that is, there was an evidence base or an evaluation of them. Table 4-2 lists these programs and strategies, and is followed by a brief description of each. References to the relevant documentation/evidence are included in the table.

The list of programs identified is drawn from examples cited by state Council of Social Service (COSS) agency heads or someone nominated by them. Note that many referees nominated programs outside their jurisdiction. The brief summaries of the programs shown from page 98 are drawn from the documents and websites cited in the table. All state and territory COSS agencies were asked for responses. Not all were able to respond in time for inclusion in this list. The list is offered as a selection of programs and is not intended to be exhaustive of all the programs referred to. They are, however, good examples of what works.

Once the existing programs and their evidence for success were documented, the research into successful policies and programs was re-considered from its overview in section 3.10. The common elements underpinning successful programs and policies are then synthesised and located at the end of this section on ‘What works?’, and listed as principles, subsequently used to guide the development of conclusions and recommendations found in section 5.
## Pathways to employment and training for the employment disadvantaged in the Northern Territory

### Table 4-2 Refereed examples of programs designed to assist disadvantaged groups access employment and training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Program title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Type and quality of reference</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Target group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Unemployed workers network</td>
<td>TasCOSS 2003b</td>
<td>Evaluation report</td>
<td>Vince McCormack</td>
<td>TasCOSS</td>
<td>03 6231 0755</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Afritas Inc.</td>
<td>TasCOSS 2003a</td>
<td>TasCOSS Newsletter</td>
<td>Laura de la Pasca</td>
<td>MRC Hobart</td>
<td>03 6234 9411</td>
<td>Migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Accessing Opportunities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/tas/content/2003/s856956.htm">http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/tas/content/2003/s856956.htm</a></td>
<td>ABC Stateline report</td>
<td>Rocky West</td>
<td>Northern Youth Shelter</td>
<td>03 6331 6176</td>
<td>Long term unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Koori Inmate Pilot Program</td>
<td>PNC 2000</td>
<td>Evaluation Report</td>
<td>Jan Hudson</td>
<td>Western Region Business Innovation Centre</td>
<td>02 6332 1077</td>
<td>Ex-offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td></td>
<td>DET 2002</td>
<td>Initiative review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employment initiatives head office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Disability Recruitment Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinet/ntc/content/nrdc.htm">http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinet/ntc/content/nrdc.htm</a></td>
<td>FaCS website</td>
<td>Tina Zeleznik</td>
<td>Disability Works Australia</td>
<td>08 8186 9900</td>
<td>Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Local Learning and Employment Networks</td>
<td>VLESC 2002</td>
<td>Evaluation report</td>
<td>Patricia Corrie</td>
<td>Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission</td>
<td>03 9637 2802</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 Refereed programs

Unemployed workers network

Referred by: Vince McCormack (TasCOSS)

In July 2000 TasCOSS, with funding from the State government’s Community Support Levy, commenced a 12 month project to support the establishment and operation of a number of networks of unemployed people around Tasmania. Subsequent funding was successfully obtained from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services to enable the Project to continue from January 2002 until June 2004.

The networks sought to develop ideas, strategies and solutions to address the negative effects of unemployment on the lives of individuals, their families and local communities. The Project aimed to establish innovative and ongoing local processes to enable the community itself to protect the vulnerable and marginalised. An evaluation in December 2003 cited six key networks formed across the state (including one that produced the Afritas project, discussed below). The success of the project was described in terms of “significant steps [that] have been made on the pathway to employment by many participants” primarily due to the development of partnerships, commitment at a variety of levels (government, agency, industry) and community involvement.

Afritas Inc.

Referred by: Vince McCormack (TasCOSS)

With the involvement of the Hobart Migrant Resource Centre, and as a result of meetings with the local African community, an association was formed with the purpose of encouraging enterprise and training for this group within the community. The African Community elected to pursue the establishment of an African Restaurant as a job creation and employment training project for members of their community. AfriTas Restaurant provides a fusion of culture and cuisine, combining the exotic flavours of Africa with fresh Tasmanian produce. It is an innovative enterprise, which could be easily modelled by other non-English speaking background groups seeking to develop employment, training and enterprise among migrants.

Accessing Opportunities

Referred by: Vince McCormack (TasCOSS)

Based in Launceston, Tasmania Accessing Opportunities is a program designed to enable long term unemployed people access employment at rural locations around the Tamar Valley. The program is an initiative of the Northern Youth Shelter and is coordinated by social workers Lisa Legge and Tony (Rocky) West. The program works with agricultural enterprises to identify labour shortages, particularly for a variety of seasonal/short term work opportunities, which employers have found difficult to attract reliable employees to. The program overcomes transport barriers by physically driving groups of workers from Launceston to places of employment around the Tamar Valley, typically up to 50km away.
Partnership to jobs (Studentworks)

Referred by: Vince McCormack (TasCOSS)

Studentworks is an incorporated body whose purpose is to provide an intensive and challenging education in a commercial enterprise environment which enables students who are experiencing difficulty in learning in formal academic settings (including students with disabilities and Indigenous students), to develop marketable skills through an intensively practical program. It is based in Launceston, Tasmania and has been in operation for 25 years and provides training for up to 30 Year 9 and 10 students at a time. Keys to the success of the program are reported to be the partnerships that have been developed with industry and the community, student engagement, controlled risk-taking and a shared commitment to common purpose.

Seechange Boat Works (Foundation for Young Australians)

Referred by: Julian Webb (CREEDA - Capital Region Enterprise and Employment Development Association)

Seechange is one of many initiatives supported by the Foundation for Young Australians through the Breakthrough Youth Employment Program. This initiative aims to create a commercially viable boat building enterprise that will serve as a training centre for young people. This includes developing specific boat building modules tailored for working with young people. The initiative employs five young people each year and is based in suburban Melbourne. Breakthrough supports projects that create meaningful jobs for disadvantaged young people, in particular those living in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia experiencing long-term unemployment. As a holistic employment initiative, the program assists young people who have also experienced additional challenges such as homelessness, involvement in the juvenile justice system, violence, abuse, substance abuse, mental illness, early school leaving or disability.

Moree Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Referred by: Julian Webb (CREEDA)

The Moree Aboriginal Employment Strategy is a program initiated by cotton farmers in Moree, NSW in 1997 with a focus on partnerships and mentoring. Apart from building employment and training opportunities for local Indigenous people, the program has seen a change in attitudes among non-Indigenous people towards the local Indigenous population. It’s success is attributed to mentoring, community involvement and a positive media profile. In its first 4 ½ years of operation it achieved over 400 job placements.
DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

New South Wales:

Work Ventures Connect

Referred by: Gary Moore (NCOSS)

“WorkVentures Connect is in the business of turning ex corporate and government PCs and peripheral equipment into affordable systems for disadvantaged families, schools and not for profit organizations around Australia. WorkVentures has been successfully partnering with corporations, state and federal governments for over 20 years and together we have been trying to bridge many of the social problems facing our communities. We want to provide a quality PC with basic warranty and support for our customers with the aim of supplying IT equipment and services to bridge the digital divide in Australia. This venture is also hoping to develop skills and paid work for long-term unemployed job seekers, providing people with a bridge back into the workforce.” WorkVentures is a member of Jobfutures and the Job Network. It aims to generate employment through a number of related IT based initiatives in the Sydney area. These initiatives include Neighbourhood Technology Centres which provide IT access to residents of public housing estates.

Koori Inmate Pilot Program

Referred by: Gary Moore (NCOSS)

The Koori Inmate Pilot was one of several offered by way of example by Jan Hudson from the Western Region Business Innovation Centre at Bathurst, NSW. The target group for the project was incarcerated Indigenous pre-release inmates. The project offered inmates formalised training and post-release it offered mentoring with a view to help them develop business models. An evaluation conducted in June 2000 found that there were high levels of certificate IV completions, with 79 per cent of participants graduating. Inmates reported increased self esteem and confidence. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of networks established by the WRBIC as a key to the success of the program.

Queensland:

Breaking the Unemployment Cycle

Referred by: Shirley Watters (QCOSS)

“Breaking the unemployment cycle” is a Queensland State government initiative that targets youth, long term unemployed, mature aged and Indigenous Queenslanders. It acts as an umbrella for the Education and Training Pathways Program, Community Employment Programs and Indigenous Employment Programs. The initiatives developed under this program have a strong local community emphasis and are targeted to meet the needs identified by the sponsoring organisations. The program, renewed in July 2004 aims to create 100,000 jobs and adds to existing Federal government initiatives. According to budget estimates, since 1998 the program has helped create 71,000 jobs (DET/DIR 2004).
**Salisbury North Employment and Training Program**

Referred by: Vince McCormack (TasCOSS)

The Salisbury North Employment and Training Program is an initiative of the Salisbury City Council in South Australia. It aims to identify long term unemployed people in the local area and connect them with employment opportunities in local businesses. The Coordinator of the program (Michelle Brodie) liaises with a number of local employers looking for staff in a range of industries, including food processing and automotive manufacturing, encouraging them to look locally when searching for the perfect employee. Full training is provided for some of these positions and in some cases, no experience is necessary. The program also assists residents who may not be eligible for employment assistance such as high school students, sole parents and those in the community not receiving any financial assistance from the government. Michelle Brodie was a speaker at the 2004 State Employment Conference, Just Jobs 2, convened by TasCOSS in June 2004.

**Disability Recruitment Coordinator (Disability WORKS Australia)**

Referred by: Julian Webb (CREEDA)

Disability WORKS Australia (DWA) has been contracted by FaCS to provide the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator (NDRC) service in every Australian state and territory from 1 January 2004. DWA is extending offices from its original base in Adelaide to all states and territories. The role of DWA is to facilitate the provision of employment for people with disabilities by providing employers with access to a single, effective contact point for recruiting people with disabilities. Its focus has been on encouraging larger corporations such as Telstra, Westpac, Coles and National Bank to employ people with disabilities. The DWA service particularly provides large employers with an efficient mechanism for recruiting large numbers of people with disabilities. Most large and/or multi-site employers recruit in bulk. Feedback from these employers indicates that they are unwilling to deal with a multitude of disability employment services in order to obtain sufficient job seekers with a disability to meet their bulk recruitment requirements.

**Local Learning and Employment Networks**

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) are an innovation of the Victorian government. They are aimed at (1) reinvigorating local co-operative approaches to planning, community renewal and effective service delivery; and (2) supporting and building shared responsibility and ownership of post-compulsory education and training, especially youth. ‘For 15-19 year olds, the LLENs have demonstrated that they are able to create shared understandings and a sense of community responsibility, which has mobilised community resources and goodwill to make things happen’ (VLESC 2002).
4.4.3 *Ten principles that underlie ‘what works’*

In addition to the seven principles detailed earlier, another three are now added.

The seven principles identified from the research literature and reported at section 3.10 are now supplemented with some additional principles found in the section on ‘What works’. Only the additional principles are explained, as the seven in 3.10 have already been explained there.

Principle 1: Effective policy depends on understanding the dynamics of change at the ‘local’ level.

Principle 2: Gaining sustained benefits from policy depends on engaging the intended recipients.

Principle 3: Policy cycle effectiveness requires availability and responsiveness of an evidentiary base.

Principle 4: Short- and long-term sustainable success requires provision for ensuring continuity of resources and consistent and complete knowledge management, including that of infrastructure and personnel.

Principle 5: ‘Market forces’ need to be supplemented with resourced and collaborative capacity-generation.

Principle 6: Inclusive and consultative processes are slow, but they pay off.

Principle 7: Continuous and iterative evaluation underpins implementation success and sustainability of policy.

Principle 8: The purpose of any measure recommended here is to enhance the employment and learning opportunities of people in the designated groups;

Principle 9: Priorities in support services and strategies for clients in the designated groups should be needs based and grounded in the principle of ‘local solutions for local needs’. That is, it is important for effectiveness that solutions to employment disadvantage must be anchored in the communities where those clients will be located. A significant issue related to this point is the availability of jobs in some areas, and this is addressed through solutions that account for a community employment developmental approach. That is, effective learning and employment pathways are related to jobs programs that stem from community-based needs, and development processes are therefore built into these community developmental principles;

Principle 10: Cost-benefit principles underlie the recommendations. It is well-appreciated by service providers that services and programs exist that target many of the needs of client groups. One issue is that these are not well-known and that there is no integration function to facilitate and broker information. Another issue is that resourcing has often occurred on the assumption that ‘success’ is defined by short-term outcomes alone (such as job-placement). To account for both these contingencies, the recommendations assume that it is most cost-efficient to recommend...
measures that are best placed (in terms of existing evidence and new data) to promote employment and learning opportunities in the optimum (but often not shortest) timeframe. There may be higher upfront costs associated with the targeted support for clients, but the subsequent cost savings in achieving successful outcomes are anticipated to more than compensate;
5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report is based on the findings that emerged from the study. It is structured so that not only will there be continuity from the findings, but also that other information gathered regarding successful programs and ideas to improve the circumstances of the employment disadvantaged are built into the strategies and recommendations outlined below.

To ensure both a pathway through and a coherent structure to this section, we have highlighted the interconnected themes that underpin both the issues identified in our findings and potential responses to those. The first section reviews and lists the ten principles of effective program implementation that have culminated from the review of research and the empirical work of the research process of this project. Then, within each section, we provide first the rationale from the research upon which the recommendation is based, then cite the recommendation itself. There are four groups of recommendations:

Group One: Integrated support services;
Group Two: Needs-based entry level learning support;
Group Three: Data collection, management and evaluation; and
Group Four: Labour force and other issues.

First, the principles are summarised for the reader’s easy reference.

5.1.1 Principles governing the recommendations

Key to the effectiveness of the recommendations outlined here are the following principles, each of which has arisen from the existing research and the primary data gathered during the research, and incorporates the seven principles of effective policy implementation established at the conclusion of the research review in section 3.10, then synthesized at the end of the previous section. They are re-listed here for the reader’s convenience:

**Principle 1:** Effective policy depends on understanding the dynamics of change at the ‘local’ level.

**Principle 2:** Gaining sustained benefits from policy depends on engaging the intended recipients.

**Principle 3:** Policy cycle effectiveness requires availability and responsiveness of an evidenciary base.

**Principle 4:** Short- and long-term sustainable success requires provision for ensuring continuity of resources and consistent and complete knowledge management, including that of infrastructure and personnel.
Principle 5: ‘Market forces’ need to be supplemented with resourced and collaborative capacity-generation.

Principle 6: Inclusive and consultative processes are slow, but they pay off.

Principle 7: Continuous and iterative evaluation underpins implementation success and sustainability of policy.

Principle 8: The purpose of any measure recommended here is to enhance the employment and learning opportunities of people in the designated groups.

Principle 9: Priorities in support services and strategies for clients in the designated groups should be grounded in the principle of ‘local solutions for local needs’.

Principle 10: Cost-benefit principles underlie these recommendations.

From these principles, the report now turns to forward the recommendations and the rationale for each.

5.2 Key Recommendation Group One: Integrated support services and ‘broker’ role

It has been found that there is a significant degree of isolation and insularity between some sections of the stakeholders involved in employment disadvantage, as well as across government and agency portfolios with disparate programs and services. This results in both a fragmentation of information and program location that impacts negatively on access to programs and support by clients in their quest for employment and training.

As noted above, the system is complex and fragmented, with no one organisation having an overview of what type of assistance is available, creating difficulties for all stakeholders—that is, for those working with the employment disadvantaged, employers and in particular employment disadvantaged clients. The study highlighted that people from disadvantaged groups have added barriers which make navigating the service and employment maze system even more difficult. These barriers include: language and literacy, health conditions, disability, lack of self advocacy skills, low self esteem, poverty, homelessness and other stressful life situations. A strong finding identified in the study through both the literature review and the interviews undertaken was the need for a specialist approach whereby employment disadvantaged clients are assisted through the employment and service maze by people who understand the full range of services and support programs and relate these to the particular issues and needs of the clients.

Specific strategies recommended included the provision and use of brokers, case managers, mentors and others. That is, the consistent position suggested by all groups of participants in the study, was the need to provide clearer information, pathways and particularly a single access point for employment disadvantaged clients. The single ‘portal’ to employment disadvantage services and support was seen as a potential benefit for all stakeholders, not just the clients. For example, employers expressed strongly the need for a single entry point for information and advice in their efforts to place
employment disadvantaged people in jobs and find out the appropriate regulations and support available.

As such, the recommendations in Group One below relate to supporting the development of the ‘portal’—a structure that is here referred to as the integrated local employment and learning support service (ILELSS). The ILELSS will eventually provide a coordinated and integrated support service. It would provide clear information, pathways and access points for employment disadvantaged clients through the operation of a brokering and support system that would provide strongly networked connections between the employment disadvantaged sectors, employers and the range of training, employment and social support programs. However, in developing recommendations that will support the ILELSS, the research team has been conscious of the fact that resources are limited and that the contexts in which the ILELSS will operate are complex. Hence the allocated resources must be utilised strategically. There is a cost benefit to be gained through a cautious approach to implementation that builds planning and continuous trialing and evaluation into the implementation steps.

In short, the philosophy underlying the recommendations that follow is based on achieving an integrated support service that will work at the local level, while ensuring a careful, step-by-step, evidence-based approach to a staged implementation. This approach offers the assurance that benefits to clients and stakeholders such as employers will be available early, and at each step of the implementation, and that the benefits are not contingent on getting the ILELSS in place first.

Another key consideration that has informed the development of the recommendations is that the ILELSS may need to take a number of forms depending on local labour markets and other context factors. The ILELSS must therefore be based on the assumption that the form of the ILELSS should follow its functions. However, these forms may vary depending on geographic and cultural conditions.

The key functions of the ILELSS are seen as:

- Bringing stakeholders together including the employment disadvantaged, employers and organisations representing the needs of the employment disadvantaged and Government to achieve better coordination and effort in meeting the employment and training needs of the employment disadvantaged;
- Marketing and community education targeted at employers, the community and the employment disadvantaged;
- A central information and referral service, including the provision of a clearinghouse of services and support available, tools and resources;
- Brokering and problem solving employment and training solutions for employment disadvantaged clients – both on an individual and systemic basis; and
- Research, evaluation and data collection.

The ILELSS may also include a case management and mentoring referral function in relation to achieving employment specific outcomes (either coordinating and developing the function or else providing it in some form).

The preferred physical manifestation of the integrated local employment and learning support service (ILELSS), as reported in the data displayed, is for a physical ‘place’, such as a
building and/or mobile facility staffed by specialist information and networking brokers. The ILELSS could be a central Northern Territory wide body with a range of out-posted sites or with a regional presence either through out-posted staff or regular regional visits or a series of local regional models whose form differs according to local regional needs. The physical presence was seen as being supplemented by on-line, internet and print-based resources and information. However, the data was not conclusive as to the precise form of the ILELSS, rather defining its form as being shaped by its functions in relation to the labour market and other context factors prevailing in each locality it served.

5.2.1 **Recommendation to establish a ‘broker’**

The first step in developing the model for an ILELSS is to recruit a dedicated person with the right skills, knowledge and networking base, to carry out a number of interlocking, practical and strategic processes offering short term practical solutions to problems while building to a long-term overall ‘solution’. This person would carry out the functions listed above, while trialing a number of the strategies seen as necessary for the creation of more effective pathways to employment for employment disadvantaged groups. Therefore:

**Recommendation I:** It is recommended that a full-time position be established as the employment disadvantage worker here referred to as a ‘broker’. The broker’s roles will include communicating across the employment disadvantaged sectors, developing projects that will further trial and evaluate aspects of the ILELSS and liaising with the relevant government agency personnel and bodies (such as the Employment Taskforce and the Ministerial Advisory Board for Employment and Training) to ensure that accurate, evidence-based and consultatively gathered information is available and provided.

Ideally, the broker would be most effective for the employment disadvantaged if they were to be independent of—but with strong and positive connections to—government. Specific projects and roles for the broker would include:

- Co-ordinating the collation of a Northern Territory-wide Directory of service providers, programs, support services, mentoring and case management services, and other information, across the nine areas of employment disadvantage;

- Establish strategic and practical projects that trial and evaluate components of the ILELSS, such as a two to three year action research pilot project to establish a 1800 telephone number, develop and trial a model for an ILELSS in the Northern Territory, consolidate case management and mentoring profiles for each sector and others as identified in the consultative processes;

- Work with the employment disadvantaged, employers, organisations representing the employment disadvantaged and other stakeholders to:

  - develop a strategy for the provision of coordinated information and referral service regarding employment options and initiatives in conjunction with the Employment Disadvantaged Advisory Committee, addressing the needs of employment disadvantaged people and their stakeholder service providers.
should look at the establishment of a coordinated electronic and hard version information directory and a telephone based information and referral service using a 1800 number;

- broker and problem solve training and employment options that meet the needs of the employment disadvantaged. This could include the establishment of specific employment initiatives, with local communities, businesses, non-government organisations and employment disadvantaged groups. It could mean seeking and brokering funding and resources with trusts, funding bodies, business sponsors, local businesses, or piloting within existing resources new ways of doing things which improve pathways to employment and training for the employment disadvantaged;

- develop a regional approach to ILELSS;

- develop and pilot effective marketing and community education strategies; and

- develop a model for case management and mentoring. This will involve in the first instance undertaking further research around defining and developing an agreed understanding and approach to case management, counselling and mentoring. It could also involve the trialing of different models of case management and mentoring. The exact roles will be dependent on which of the specific projects are resourced and supported by government.

While the coordinating and information collation functions of the broker can be seen as an integral part of this person’s role, the significance of these tasks warrants particular attention.

**Recommendation 2:** By reference to a representative steering group of employment disadvantaged providers, it is recommended that a Northern Territory-wide Directory of service providers, programs, support services, mentoring and case management services, and other information as identified by a representative reference group be developed. In addition, this is to be paralleled by the establishment of a 1800 telephone service to act as a referral and information point.

5.2.2 **Recommendation to strengthen consultative mechanisms and structures**

The broker recommended above has the role of putting in place collaboratively derived strategies for assisting employment disadvantaged clients. With the ILELSS as the final goal, the next recommendation focuses on formalising the collaborative mechanisms required.

Currently no specific structures exist which provide effective advice to Government on the needs of the employment disadvantaged. NTCOSS has been convening a group of non-government organisations and other stakeholders around employment issues, particularly addressing the needs of the employment disadvantaged. The Chamber of Commerce (Northern Territory) has been looking at employer needs and issues.
A Ministerial Advisory Committee for Employment and Training (MABET) exists and reports to the Minister, while the DEET Training and Employment Division provides the secretariat support. However there is no specific representation on that committee for the employment disadvantaged. It is considered that the area of employment disadvantage has until recently not received much focus from government in the Northern Territory. As such it is felt that an explicit mechanism should be put in place to provide advice to government on employment and training needs of the employment disadvantaged and to guide the development and implementation of the specific strategies outlined in this document to address the needs of the employment disadvantaged. The mechanism could be a stand-alone committee or it could be linked to an existing advisory structure such as MABET, thus placing it in the broader forum of Employment and Training.

If the latter option is selected, the legislation and guidelines for the current membership of the MABET need to be reviewed and changed. It is recommended that government undertakes a review of MABET and looks at how the employment disadvantaged can be adequately represented on the advisory structure. At the very least the structure needs to be revised to at least ensure a specific mechanism for organisations representing the employment disadvantaged, including Job Networks members to link with MABET. In recognition of the existing legislation, and as an interim measure, an \textit{ex officio} member of MABET could be installed to represent employment disadvantage, and this position would then relate to an employment disadvantaged cross-sectoral advisory committee.

The specific ‘Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged’ needs to have representation from each employment disadvantaged group, NTCOSS, employers, the Chamber of Commerce and training organisations. Representatives from among Job Network members would also be included. The collaborative mechanisms need to ensure a Northern Territory-wide coverage and effective links needs to be made with the employment disadvantaged and organisations at a regional level. This could be achieved through the establishment of the regional structures noted under the broker role (Recommendation 1) such as utilising existing structures and meetings or engaging with new regional options through the development of ILELSS. Therefore, incorporating the structures and mechanisms referred to above:

**Recommendation 3:** It is recommended that consultative mechanisms for employment disadvantage be strengthened through (a) explicit representation on the Ministerial Advisory Board for Employment and Training (MABET) that would link with (b) a new body, an Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged (ACED).

That is, the MABET representative working in collaboration with the Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged would:

- Provide ongoing advice to government regarding the employment and training needs and strategies of the employment disadvantaged;
- Provide directions and feedback regarding the development of a specific strategy/ies for addressing the employment and training needs of the employment disadvantaged; and
• Oversee the implementation of the adopted recommendations of this report and  
the implementation of the specific strategy/ies for the employment disadvantaged.

It is worth noting that this Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged  
could, in time, form the management structure for the ILELSS, and as part of its  
charter provide advice to government regarding the employment disadvantaged.

5.2.3 Recommendation to establish a culture and charter of  
inclusivity

The above recommendations attend to the structural ways in which effective  
coordination between employment disadvantaged stakeholders and strategic advice to  
government could be provided with the aim of establishing coordinated strategic  
services and support for employment disadvantaged clients through the broker role.  
One of the first tasks for the Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged  
and the MABET representative is to work with government to develop a charter of  
inclusivity.

The comprehensive data in the research points to the fragmentation of information,  
programs and services. In order to implement the recommendations from this report it  
is therefore essential at the outset of the process, to foster a culture of inclusivity to  
support the coordination and management of referrals and communication across all  
nine areas of employment disadvantage. Information about networks and appropriate  
programs for each group of employment and training disadvantaged need to be readily  
available to all and would provide a balance between individual and industry focus,  
being equally as accessible for employers, industry and advocacy groups, cross-agency  
personnel and service providers across the range of employment disadvantaged sectors.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that government, in conjunction with the  
Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged,  
develop a stakeholder-inclusive charter of inclusivity, the  
principles of which would guide the development of the  
detailed strategic and business plans across sectoral  
stakeholders in all areas of employment disadvantage.

5.2.4 Recommendation for case management and mentoring

The provision of case management and mentoring services emerge as two key strategies  
from both from the research and interview evidence. They are crucial mechanisms for  
managing employment disadvantage across all the sectors involved and will provide  
cost-effective mechanisms as ILELSS develops through the broker role. However, the  
data does not help clarify the often overlapping and intertwined meanings attributed to  
the terms ‘case management’ and ‘mentoring’ by different individuals in different  
sectors. Even though these terms are used prolifically in the data and the research  
literature, they are nevertheless used with different meanings in many instances, and  
often used with sector-specific implications. While mentoring is clearly not only a  
specific strategy to assist in achieving successful employment for the employment  
disadvantaged but also a learning and training issue (and is therefore dealt with in the  
next group of recommendations), there is a prior issue that needs addressing through  
this recommendation:
Recommendation 5: It is recommended that, through the MABET representative and the Advisory Committee for the Employment Disadvantaged, a short term project be conducted that looks at clarifying and documenting as a resource what and where the various ‘case management’ and ‘mentoring’ practices across the nine sectors of employment disadvantage are. The outcome would be the agreed functional definition of these two terms, with cross-sectoral variations reconciled.

It is anticipated that a period of three months would be sufficient for the life of this project and an organisation such as NTCOSS (possibly in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce) could be well placed to auspice the activity.

5.2.5 Recommendation to support transitions from school to work

A considerable benefit of the recommendations from this report lie in terms of costs and other resource-sharing in the broker role (Recommendation 1), which will broker knowledge of suitable and existing programs and resources across the clients within the different employment disadvantaged sectors. One such sector that is often not well-integrated into the overall employment and training market is the client group in compulsory-level schooling. There is, for example, a school-based Northern Territory program that has an aim to support students with disabilities into employment as part of their access to pathways to employment. This is viewed as a highly successful strategy in terms of a model that achieves its outcomes. However, there is a further need for support programs that assist transitions from school to work for those students identified as being at risk of being in the nine areas of potential employment disadvantage:

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) expand existing successful programs and establish new support programs to assist transitions from school to post-school pathways in education, training and/or work for clients at risk of being in the nine areas of employment disadvantage.

5.2.6 Recommendation for research into Indigenous employment disadvantage

As noted in the Introduction to this report, the “Creating Effective Pathways to Employment and Training for the Disadvantaged in the Northern Territory” Project was, for resource reasons, viewed as being a pilot project. This resulted in five groups being targeted for in-depth research. As noted in the Introduction, the employment disadvantage group of ‘Indigenous people’ (see page 2) was flagged as being in need of a more in-depth and separate project.

However, the current project has been able to make considerable inroads into the practical possibilities that would assist all employment disadvantaged people, namely through the establishment of the broker (Recommendation 1) working towards the ILELSS. Because of the evidence-based principles underlying these recommendations, the research team believes that the ILELSS model has the potential to serve Indigenous
Recommendation 7: It is recommended that a specific project be commissioned on a short timeframe to synthesise existing research on the Indigenous area of learning, training and employment disadvantage (as has occurred in this project with the five target groups), and to identify any gaps where further research is required; this project to be framed and conducted in the light of parallel activities by the employment disadvantage broker who is concurrently developing aspects of the ILELSS model as it may apply in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

5.2.7 Recommendation to support government strategies to assist in accessing employment

It was noted frequently in the research that government policies, strategies and decisions often work against employment disadvantaged people gaining and being able to sustain employment. Some examples include: policies in relation to accessing public housing; rent assistance and tax breaks. There is a need for a short timeframe review of these matters. The purpose of such a review is in aligning policies, subsidies and concessions to achieve sustainable employment and training outcomes for the employment disadvantaged:

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Northern Territory Government Employment Taskforce, in conjunction with appropriate Commonwealth government representatives, review policies, program subsidies and concessions across the whole of government with respect to their potential to act as a disincentive to employment and training for those who are employment disadvantaged.

5.3 Key Recommendation Group Two: Needs-based training and learning support

The analysis of ‘what works’ and support structures that has occurred through this project (see especially sections 3.10 and 4.4) reveals a number of features of the learning provisions that optimise assistance, access and support for clients in their efforts to seek and secure employment. These provisions are built on the principles outlined in the introduction to this recommendations section, and include a needs-based approach to learning and training provision as being the model that assures employment outcomes. In addition, the term ‘training’ often did not appear to include the kinds of learning provisions that were deemed the most effective for, or indeed used by, a significant number of clients and groups of clients.
The data contains a number of strong themes in relation to learning and training, including the market domination of Charles Darwin University as a training provider, and the lack of flexibility and appropriateness of the learning and training for the client groups in question. When this information is viewed in conjunction with programs reviewed in the ‘What work’s section (see section 4.4 of this report), such as the Palmerston-based youth employment program, it is clear that a more consistent approach to relevant and culturally appropriate learning arrangements needs to be established. The relevant stakeholders are already in place (e.g. Training Advisory Committees, Course Advisory Committees, industry bodies, sectoral training agencies and so on) and should be included in this process.

In addition to these more general findings, the following factors should be accounted for in implementing the key Recommendation 8 for this area that follows:

- Funding for training should reflect the priorities and needs of employment disadvantaged clients through ensuring access to financial support for training costs, childcare support, transport, books and stationery. Such funding would be made available and linked to progress in the course, and should be made available through sources other than Job Network members;

- To support the activities of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in their roles involved in (a) more appropriately addressing client needs, and (b) implementing Recommendation 8, professional development will need to made available for RTOs to develop appropriate learning plans and strategies for employment disadvantaged clients and for the staff (including teachers, trainers, mentors and case managers) who will be working with clients. In addition, appropriate curriculum, pedagogy and access issues would need to be established. This should involve engaging with stakeholders and investigating programs throughout Australia. A facility similar to ‘What works’ (see section 4.4) would help showcase good ideas to encourage people to persist in their good practice, and to support their activities through a professional learning communities approach;

- Training ought to be linked to workplace learning where possible through traineeships, supporting current successful programs, partnerships with government, private or volunteer organizations. These provisions need to be considered alongside the recommendations concerning evaluation so as to ensure evaluation of training and linked workplace programs is mandated to find out what works.

**Recommendation 9:** It is recommended that the appropriate body of Northern Territory DEET trigger and coordinate a new project that develops an audit of learning needs for each employment disadvantaged sector, which results in the production of a guide for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The criteria for a needs-based learning approach would then be incorporated into training contracts. The work of this recommendation would link with that of the broker, and with the later recommendations concerning program evaluation.
Further to Recommendation 8, it is important to build on the fact that (a) training funding and evaluation recognise multiple entry and exit points and outcomes that can be legitimately counted as ‘success criteria’, in addition to the existing criteria of obtaining a short term job (this would also assist those who finish a course and are not able to access the industry); and (b) access to pathways in training that lead to workplace placements and learning must be assured. This requires a greater recognition and resourcing of pre-employment programs (e.g. the traineeship in Business Services) in areas such as life skills and computer usage that lead to traineeships.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the appropriate body of Northern Territory DEET investigate ways of incorporating resourcing provision (for example by a ‘loading’ mechanism) in training contracts that requires the additional and appropriate learning requirements of employment disadvantaged clients for a more open-entry, open-exit model of learning: that is, face to face delivery, academic and personal support, additional tutorial time, and a cycle of learning that allows some people to do a course more than once to address their issues and be ready for the next stage. Evaluations of such programs would then account for resource utilization against these sector-specific learning needs.

The information available suggests that outcomes for clients are enhanced when mentoring arrangements are in place. Therefore:

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that an accredited mentoring course be identified and introduced, perhaps at a Certificate III-IV level. This would assist those undertaking mentoring on a voluntary basis to gain some transferable recognition for their work, and provide paid mentors with recognition for their skills and knowledge.

The findings included cautions about applying Western models of employment, training and learning to some Indigenous communities and that this could be counter-productive in achieving good employment and training outcomes. Therefore:

Recommendation 12: It is recommended that learning and training for Indigenous clients on remote communities be linked to community employment opportunities and enterprise initiatives, recognising that partnerships will usually be required between training/learning providers and community initiatives.

5.4 Key Recommendation Group Three: Evaluation and data collection

A range of issues concerning evaluation and data collection emerged from the study. For example, there is very little evidence that programs and policies in the Northern Territory have been effective in meeting their outcomes. There is also some evidence that objective evaluations (not necessarily of Northern Territory programs) resulting in criticism of some initiatives have not been made available for wider consideration when it is these very criticisms that could help shape strategies and programs so that they do,
in fact, achieve their outcomes more effectively and efficiently. Further, a number of gaps in the data have been identified during the course of this project.

The recommendations here fall into two areas. One area concerns the evidentiary bases for current and future strategy, policy and program initiatives that should be systematically gathered through evaluation processes. The other area concerns the collection, maintenance and usability of data on a population-wide basis.

In terms of evaluations, many participants in the study believed that a strong and consistent regime of program evaluations would and should:

- Provide an indication of the real cost of programs in financial, social and human capital terms;
- Capture hard data such as enrolment figures and participation rates for analysis (The ILELSS, for example, could fulfil the coordination and dissemination function);
- Allow the investigation and promotion of best practice;
- Determine effectiveness and so sustain the ‘good’ programs;
- Shift the focus solely from program funding to a broader range of outcomes;
- Establish quality assurance provision across programs; and
- Support the entrenchment of continual evaluation and generic evaluation for service improvement;

For consistency and enhanced capacity to evaluate between programs it was also felt that further work was needed to establish the most appropriate indicators and determinants of employment disadvantaged programs. It is also necessary to entrench an evaluation ‘culture’ in programs and program providers in order to inform practitioners, policy personnel, business and industry as to what works and why. This will require adequate funding and monitoring of programs.

An effective tool for evaluation purposes is the presence of accurate and comparable data. The development of the nine profiles revealed several gaps both in terms of sector specific data, regional specific data and up to date data, which is readily comparable with ABS Census and survey information collected. It is noted that Moir (2004a, 2004b) has had similar difficulties in accessing similar data sets. While many agencies reported ‘knowing’ of problems related to their client groups, there were almost no verifiable statistics that could be presented to the research team to support this knowledge. In particular the research team had difficulty sourcing regionally specific or recently collected employment and/or training data for the following groups:

- Disability;
- Long-term unemployed;
- Non-English speaking background;
- Underemployed; and
- Ex-offenders.
There are several reasons why these data are not available at a regional level. In the case of ABS and FaCS or Centrelink information, these often relate to confidentiality issues and the identification of individuals at a local level. Another reason for the missing data is that some groups are simply not tracked once they have left an agency’s books. For example, while detailed statistics are available for inmates and those with recorded convictions, once the prisoner has been released there are no further records kept to determine the outcomes for these individuals.

In addition to the gaps in the data identified in the section above, there is the issue of the lack of program and strategy evaluation data.

The ‘official’ evaluation of policies and programs should begin soon after implementation is triggered with the letting of a tender and should be part of the tender requirements. It is, of course, essential to ensure adequate resources are provided through the tender funds to carry out such an evaluation, since it is these evaluations, as they mount in number across a range of like initiatives, that build to a useful evidence base on ‘what works’. The criteria for the evaluation should be firmly based on the principles outlined here, which also form a section of the criteria for program effectiveness. Continuous and iterative evaluation impacts directly on the success and sustainability of policies and their associated programs.

The reporting requirements of agencies is already onerous considering their tight resource base. The most constructive and practical way forward is to collaboratively review the data and reporting arrangements and the best means of integrating them into projects.

**Recommendation 13:** It is recommended that a project be commissioned, which in consultation with service providers, government departments and other relevant stakeholders (a) scopes current evaluation activity across the sectors and programs to determine: the level of activity, monitoring mechanisms, criteria used and level (e.g. program, agency, community, region) at which it is entrenched, and (b) recommends structures, systems and criteria in the area of data gathering and management.

**Recommendation 14:** It is recommended that Workforce NT and the Employment Taskforce be endorsed as the body to ensure that cross-portfolio mechanisms are in place to manage data liaison from a regional level (for example via broker and ILELSS), and a requirement to evaluate the program/strategy’s effectiveness. The Taskforce would incorporate the advice of an advisory body for employment and training (See Recommendation 2) with cross-sectoral expertise in the areas of employment disadvantage, advocacy, agency, business and data/evaluation expertise.
Recommendation 15: It is recommended that the broker (see Recommendation 1) should act (a) as the collection/coordination/collation/consistency agency for all locally produced data that is not currently collected by the ABS, (b) as the liaison point with the Workforce NT Unit to ensure the data is transmitted to government data officers for central collation and analysis, and (c) to facilitate Northern Territory DEET including in their database of training participation and outcomes, identifiers for disability, non-English speaking background, and criminal history (where feasible and possible).

Recommendation 16: It is recommended that all tenders that are let include a requirement to evaluate with associated evaluation criteria.

In order to provide some additional human resources to assist in bedding down these procedures across portfolio areas, a source of funding such as the Australian Research Council Linkage grants could be considered.

5.5 Key Recommendation Group Four: Labour force issues

As noted in Section 2.3.4 and throughout the literature review, meaningful work needs to be available for those who are employment disadvantaged. This may not be necessarily a case of ‘growing’ further work opportunities, but instead better quarantining and defining work opportunities for employment disadvantaged groups. The first recommendation for this group therefore addresses the more generic establishment and development of labour force issues from both employment and training perspectives:

Recommendation 17: It is recommended that the Northern Territory government establish or make available targeted program funding, through either Northern Territory funding or joint Commonwealth and Northern Territory funding, which is aimed at ensuring that non-government organisations, communities, businesses, and training bodies work together to achieve positive employment outcomes for employment disadvantaged groups. This could include models such as regional development that provides funding for achieving positive community outcomes while also providing employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged employment groups. It could also include specific funding being provided to organisations to establish local community enterprises that are targeted at specific employment disadvantaged groups or to provide assistance to employment disadvantaged groups in accessing employment and training.

The next recommendation is aimed at better establishing an identifiable labour market for the employment disadvantaged. Furthermore, and supporting the above recommendation, both the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments have had contract clauses specifically in regard to apprenticeship/trainee numbers for 25
years or more. It is not clear that they have ever been monitored or enforced. This is a sound concept but monitoring and enforcement needs to be a component.

**Recommendation 18:** In relation to tenders and contracts, it is recommended that the Northern Territory government develop purchasing guidelines that incorporate high weighting to strategies for (a) employing disadvantaged groups and (b) incorporating traineeships. It is recognised that support systems should be provided. Performance of successful tenderers in this area is to be monitored for compliance and appropriate contractual penalties imposed where unsatisfactory.

Both Commonwealth and Northern Territory government agencies have for many years been encouraged by their respective ministers to contribute to the labour market strategies of the day. However at the same time they have been pressured to achieve efficiencies in resources, that is, to achieve more with less. In the staffing area this is generally achieved by two strategies, multi-skilling and computerisation, which in turn minimises entry level positions. Quite obviously these two policies are diametrically opposed, so how can this ‘lead by example’ be achieved? One way may be to ‘fence off’ a percentage of salary in each agency for the employment of people from specific designated groups. Another would be to include employment outcomes in this area as a key performance indicator for agency CEO’s.

**Recommendation 19:** It is recommended that the Northern Territory government acknowledge their obligation to be an exemplar in the provision of training and employment for disadvantaged job seekers; and that agencies formalise a quota of their salary budgets for the employment of job seekers from designated disadvantaged groups; and that the performance of agencies in this area is reflected in the CEO’s key performance indicators.

A major source of problems for clients and service providers across all areas of disadvantage stem from the chop-and-change of programs from one funding cycle to another. As funding for one program is coming to an end, it is often not clear that the program will continue, due to the need to reapply for funds for its continuance. This insecurity proves to be highly cost-inefficient in terms of the loss of human resources: staff cannot make decisions to stay on due to the insecurity and are forced to take whatever employment arises first. Their knowledge of clients, learning needs, program details and assessment issues is therefore lost, and valuable time is taken by new staff learning these matters on induction when a new program cycle begins with a new round of funding. Ultimately it is the clients who suffer.

Insecurity over program funding renewal impacts on service provision costs as well as planning. The obvious and recurrent cause is the need to re-apply for the funds each cycle through developing proposals. This process is time-consuming, resource-hungry and is questionable in its value in some highly specialised sectors such as employment disadvantage where ‘thin markets’ render the value of competition through tendering questionable. Service providers noted that the short duration of many programs acted against achieving outcomes for clients. The duration is seen as unrealistically short, and the clients are not able to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes in such a time frame. A greater degree of flexibility is required to overcome these issues.
There is, however, recognition that programmatic forms of funding are likely to continue, and this recommendation is formed in that light:

**Recommendation 20:** It is recommended that: (a) Northern Territory DEET take up with both Northern Territory and relevant Commonwealth agencies the issue of funding continuity and its impact on both sustainability of quality employment programs and on effective employment outcomes for the employment disadvantaged; and (b) that Northern Territory DEET and other funding bodies work collaboratively with service providers to establish mechanisms for ensuring better continuity and transitions from one program cycle to the next. These mechanisms could include explicit criteria covering transition issues in the tenders themselves, as well as explicit funding within the tender resources for transition management. The aim is to ensure there is sufficient overlap and lead-time to allow the more seamless and appropriate transfer of knowledge and management issues from one program cycle to another.

It was noted that a great deal of the information received applied not only to Northern Territory programs and issues, but also to Commonwealth programs and issues. Many such cross-over points have already been covered, but one concerning the Jobseeker Account information availability remains:

**Recommendation 21:** It is recommended that the Northern Territory government trigger consultations with the (Commonwealth) Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to work with Job Network members strengthening the contractual obligations on the Job Network members for the provision of improved information on the benefits and availability of programs such as the “Jobseeker Account”.
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Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: List of organisations, agencies and groups consulted

A wide range of personnel from all the employment disadvantaged areas was consulted in the course of the project. This included the clients themselves, staff in community-based agencies, organisations and government branches, as well as key informants from training organisations.

Numbers of clients, staff and other personnel have been deleted in the interests of anonymity. Each sector of employment disadvantage tends to have its own characteristics and stakeholders, and it has been difficult to categorise these. As an example, the mature aged sector, referred to in this table as the Council on the Ageing, was represented in the study by a total of some 90 participants including both advocates from the industry and 'clients' themselves. The cross-over presents another issue for reporting the information in this table, in that, referring to the mature aged group once again, many 'clients' in this group also fall into other groups such as long-term unemployed, those from a non-English speaking background and others (except youth).

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Services - Darwin
ACROD (National Industry Association for Disability Services)
Alice Springs High School
Anglicare Central Australia
Anglicare Top End
Australian Red Cross
Centacare N.T. – Alice Springs
Central Australian Supported Accommodation (CASA) – Alice Springs
Centrelink
Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory
Charles Darwin University
Council on the Ageing & National Seniors (NT)
CRS Australia
Darwin Skill Development Scheme
Northern Territory Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs
Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education & Training
(Commonwealth) Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
Employment Access - Alice Springs
Employment Assistance Service
HPA Incorporated
Human Services Training Advisory Council Inc.
Job Find Centre
Max Network
Migrant English Class CDU
Mission Australia
Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia – Alice Springs
Multicultural Council NT
New Apprenticeship Centre/Group Training NT
New Apprenticeships Centre
Nhulunbuy High School
NT Police
NT Working Women’s Centre
NTCOSS
Office of Senior Territorians
Palmerston City Council
Project Employment
Refugee & Migrant Settlement Services
Senior Advisory Council
Tangenytere Council
Top End Association for Mental Health (Team Health)
University of the 3rd Age
Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi
7.2 Appendix B: Supporting detail for aspects of recommendations

7.2.1 Case management and mentoring

An issue of importance linked to the theme of access and support is that of case management and mentoring. Case management and mentoring were reported to be ways in which the variety of individuals who access employment disadvantaged services can be educated and supported through what are often, for them complex and threatening environments. A more individualised service that followed through on their activities would provide better access and a more user-friendly environment. The service would have features such as:

- Personalised support;
- A Local Area Co-ordinators (LAC) would need to work on a human level not just referral and systems;
- Linking people back in with their existing case managers i.e. mental health, disability;
- A communication Role; and
- Specialise training to fit the person.

Mentoring too is used in the data, and is seen as offering a further strategy of supporting the employment disadvantaged through the plethora of programs and systems that they confront. Mentoring programs are already available in a number of the sectors (such as youth, where big sister little sister and big brother little brother are well recognised examples). There is, however, the opportunity to expand such programs into a range of sectors.

Mentoring is based on the assumptions that:

- Too much emphasis is put on front end and short-term support. On going or longer term mentoring support has the results on the board;
- Personal guidance works;
- Mentoring shouldn’t be seen as generic;
- Mentoring services offered should be characterised by an holistic approach (inclusive of all stakeholders); and
- Mentoring should be employed in a range of environments.

Mentoring services could take the form of:

- Portfolios, pathway mentors – Career advisors – “Your track, your choice, your future DEWR/DEST;
- Telling people how to go about getting work;
- Careers counselling, training, guidance counselling;
- Linking in with Territory and Commonwealth departments; and
• Co-coordinators/Mentors to build and link relationships and troubleshoot between employee and employers with case managers and a range of counselling/support services in regional areas.

While individual sectors and peak bodies are required to develop mentoring programs, there is the need to provide resources and incentives to do so. The question of whether mentors are paid or are volunteers is a real one. Regardless of that decision (and it may well vary between sectors) there is the requirement to provide resources for promotion, recruitment and training.

• Mentors in each region – not necessarily housed in the ILELSS;
• Mentors – peak organisations who work their own mentors up, one stop shop;
• Band of mentors based in a range of organisations with specialist services then links people with mentors. Paid or not paid?;
• Mentors meetings co-ordinated through the ILELSS - one central co-ordinator to support;
• Matching of seniors/retirees with young people or other disadvantaged groups – supporting entry/orientation into workplace culture. Possible matching of seniors/retirees with young people or other disadvantaged groups – supporting entry/orientation into workplace culture;
• Mentor – supporting transition between school/work/training/support services – continuity of strategic support; and
• What would work is the use of brokers – people good at mentoring and supporting. They would have small number of people to look after (say 4) – to find employment for have to buy their time to work with these 4 and broker jobs for them.

7.2.2 Communication

Communication is an issue across a range of levels. It is an issue of access in that a failure to accurately communicate the process and structure of pathways, programs and support mechanisms inhibits peoples access to services thus leading to frustration, uncertainty and failure to engage in the system. Communication is also important on the level of connection and understanding between service providers and their programs. Further, there is a need for co-operation and communication between:

• Service providers;
• Clients; and
• Employers.

There are a number of strategies that are discussed above that will support improved communication between stakeholders, sectors, clients and employers and thus engagement by the employment disadvantaged. There is also need, however, to promote a series of forums where shared understanding and agreement can be established in various areas.
7.2.3  Promotion/marketing

The issue of promotion and marketing is clearly linked to creating and/or strengthening lines of information and communication so as to provide better understanding and therefore appropriate access and use of employment disadvantaged services and programs.

These include:

• Good news stories;
• Promote projects/packages;
• Educate employers/community of what is available;
• Strategic and well funded promotion campaign targeting benefits for employers;
• Employers need education and support to more effectively deal with workers with mental health issues who have periodic issues;
• Ongoing education of employers – subsidised wages;
• Positive profiling – anti stigma;
• Subsidies should be promoted in a way that doesn’t make the disadvantaged feel inferior;
• Positive promotion Matching skills shortage with refugees/migrants and employers’ chamber;
• The use of
  • OSS;
  • Web; and
  • Information book re: available programs/services.

7.2.4  Strategies concerning the roles of various stakeholders

Throughout the study it was apparent that there were a number of roles that various stakeholders could have strengthened and so provide a better service to the employment disadvantaged.

Role of schools

• Mix n match of need and resourcing in schools for higher need students.

Role of government

• Government to pay for RTO to train unemployed people;
• Co-ordination – directly pay for generic training – linked with industry for specialty training;
• Lack of link between unemployed and bureaucrats;
• Co-ordinated approach to planning and funding distribution; and
• More post-placement support for apprentice/employers/traineeships.

**Role of employers**

• Support/incentives for employers;
• Industry needs skills shortages identified;
• Employers consulted to identify priority areas of training before developing RTO funding; and
• Proper support when it gets hard for employers managing young people.

**7.2.5 Resource guide suggested content**

This resource should contain information and contacts about:

• Accommodation
• Health Services
• Income Support
• Transport
• Shops
• Welfare – Food/Service
• Job Networks/Private Agents
• Support Services
• Refuges
• Women’s Services
• Youth Services
• non-English speaking background Immigration/Refugee Services
• Aged care
• Mental Health
• Children Services
• Disability Services
• Centrelink

(Most of this is already included in NTCOSS Electronic database and directory of community services in the Northern Territory. It should give more specific information on how it supports the employment disadvantaged. See also ACCOSS Emergency Handbook)
7.3 Appendix C: Instruments

Interview topics and interviewer’s records

If you are affiliated with a particular group/s of employment disadvantaged people, which group/s? Please tick relevant box(es):

- Long term unemployed,
- Youth,
- Disability, including mental health,
- Mature aged,
- NESB (Non English Speaking Background),
- Other Please list:

TOPIC 1: Barriers

What are the barriers you have found which inhibit employment disadvantaged people from getting a job?

Possible areas to think about

- What things stand in their way when looking for a job?
- What sorts of things stand in the way of looking for or getting jobs?
- What sorts of things stand in the way of getting into training?
- What sorts of things stand in the way of completing training?

TOPIC 2: What works?

Identify initiatives that work (now or in the past) in assisting employment disadvantaged people access employment and training.

Possible areas to think about

- What programs work best? Why?
- How and why do they work? Should they be extended and how?
- What are the “people skills” that make a difference?

TOPIC 3: Employment and training

How can service models and options for service provision for supporting the gaining of employment be improved?

TOPIC 4: Additional information

Please relate instances about any aspect of this project that you feel will throw light on improving the effectiveness of pathways to employment and training for the employment disadvantaged groups with which you are most familiar.
8 Acronyms and abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACOSS</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Advocacy/Industry group</td>
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<td>AHC</td>
<td>Annual Hours Curriculum</td>
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<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
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<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program</td>
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<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
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<td>APETAC</td>
<td>Aboriginal Programs Employment and Training Advisory Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSIC</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission</td>
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<td>ATSIS</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services</td>
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<td>BRS</td>
<td>Bureau of Rural Science</td>
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<td>CDEP</td>
<td>Community Development and Employment Program</td>
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<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>CEP</td>
<td>(Former) Community Employment Program</td>
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<td>(Former) Commonwealth Employment Service</td>
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<td>COTA</td>
<td>Council On The Ageing</td>
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<td>CREEDA</td>
<td>Capital Region Enterprise and Employment Development Association</td>
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<td>CSS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme</td>
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<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
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<td>DEET</td>
<td>(Northern Territory) Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<td>DESO</td>
<td>Disability Employment Service Outlets</td>
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<td>DET</td>
<td>(Queensland) Department of Employment and Training</td>
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<td>(Former Commonwealth) Department of Training and Youth Affairs</td>
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<td>(Former Commonwealth) Department of Social Security</td>
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<td>DTAL</td>
<td>Driver Training and Licensing</td>
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<td>DWA</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
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<td>FaCS</td>
<td>(Commonwealth Department of) Family and Community Services</td>
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<td>GOYA</td>
<td>Group One Year Apprentice</td>
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<td>International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health</td>
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<td>Integrated Learning and Employment Support Service</td>
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