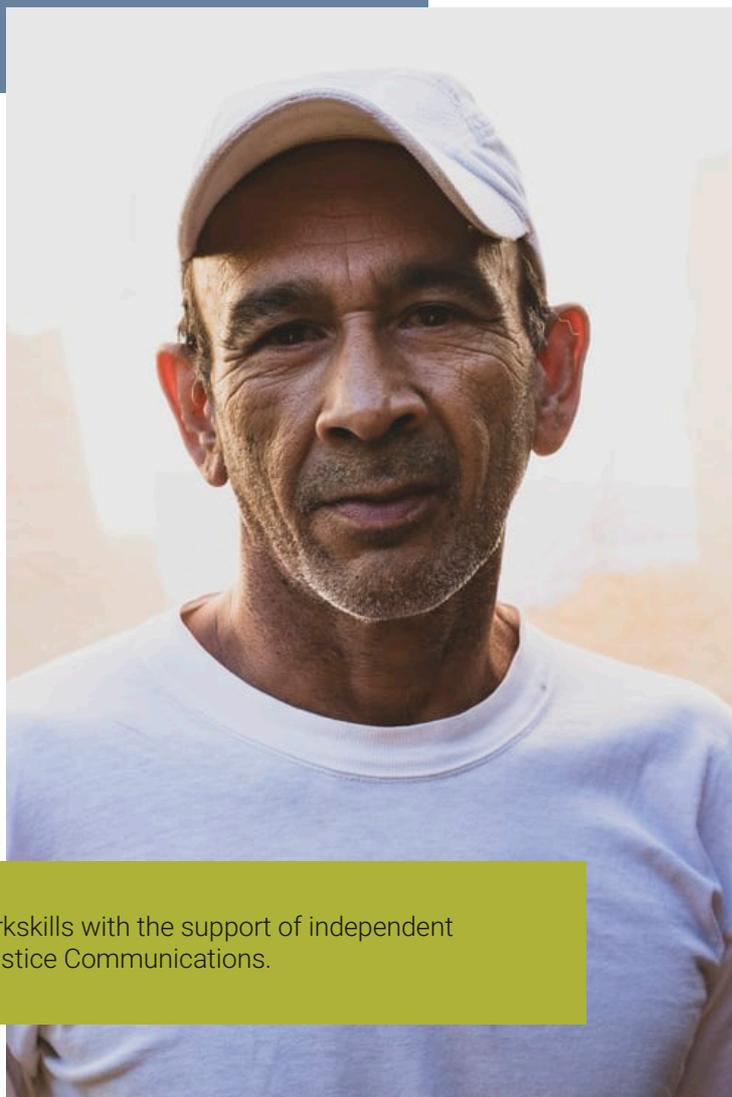




Evaluation of the  
Advanced Job Reach  
Program Trial  
*for job seekers aged  
45 years plus*  
in Hobart and  
Southern Tasmania  
2019-2020

June 2020

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This evaluation report was produced by Workskills with the support of independent evaluator Mathew Fagan, Director, Social Justice Communications.

Workskills is the only not-for-profit provider of the Australian Government's *jobactive* employment services in Southern Tasmania. It has operated over four decades, supporting thousands of Tasmanians to gain work, escape poverty and improve local communities. The Advanced Job Reach (AJR) program was developed and delivered by Impact Communities, a division of Workskills that tests new and innovative approaches to employment services.

In particular, the Impact Communities team focuses on developing specialised approaches to employment services for groups of Tasmanians that experience specific disadvantages in the labour force due to age, gender, cultural background or socio-economic status.

AJR is a specialised trial program for older jobseekers. Most of the historical research and datasets define an 'older jobseeker' as someone aged over 50-65 years, but recently the Australian Government has indicated that specialised approaches should be delivered to those aged 45 years and over.

The AJR trial was undertaken from August 2018 to February 2019, across three intakes. The first intake was for 12 weeks, with the second two intakes were 8 weeks each. The target number of participants was 10-14 per intake.

The AJR trial was based on an intensive coaching and peer support approach, using the Coaching You for Success (CYFS) model. The CYFS model incorporates both one-on-one and group coaching sessions, and is based on self-assessment, goal setting and action commitments. Participants are focused on both 'Life Goals' and 'Career Goals'. It is designed to be used by participants beyond the life of the program. The AJR trial program also included skills building sessions matched to the issues identified by participants in the CYFS process, including digital literacy exercises and tailored job application preparation.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected as part of the trial, and analysed for this evaluation. This included participant assessments at commencement and completion; participant surveys; stakeholder interviews; and vocational and non-vocational participant outcome data. This information was collected by Impact Communities staff, and reviewed by an independent evaluator.

In summary, the evaluation found that the AJR approach was highly valued by participants and stakeholders. Both the CYFS coaching methodology and the peer support strategies were embraced by older jobseekers. Most participants self-identified positive personal impacts from their involvement in the AJR trial, and for some participants this impact was 'life changing'.

The AJR was delivered in substantial accordance with the Program Logic (set out on page 6) and met most of its Key Result targets (pages 7-8). An internal review was completed by Impact Communities after each Intake, and the program was iteratively adjusted to enable improvements throughout the trial.

AJR was not, however, successful in enabling participants to achieve sustained employment outcomes at a higher rate. This was partly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a number of AJR participants being laid off from new work placements due to the COVID-related restrictions and associated downturn in the Tasmanian labour market. Yet even before the impacts of the pandemic, the paid employment outcomes from the trial were no greater than those achieved in Workskills' broader employment services for the same cohort.

Overall, the AJR was a worthwhile and successful trial, which provided methods of coaching and engagement that should be implemented more broadly across employment services, particularly with the introduction of proposed New Employment Services model in 2022. The program can be improved with structured engagement with employers before and during the program implementation, and more active engagement with participants from culturally diverse backgrounds.

## Background research

The development of the Advanced Job Reach (AJR) project involved extensive academic research, data analysis, and field interviews. The desktop research included the Australian Government's Priority Investment Approach (PIA) dataset; the Commonwealth Department of Social Security (DSS) Payment Demographic Data series; the Labour Market Information Portal datasets; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census and Labour Force data; the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) *Willing to Work* National Inquiry (2016); the Brotherhood of St Laurence's *Working for Everyone* research project (2018); COTA Tasmania's *Recruiting for Life Experience* Report (2017) and *Getting to Work* Report (2019). The field research included consultations with mature age jobseekers, social service organisations, advocacy groups and *jobactive* employment consultants in Southern Tasmania.

The need to provide specialised employment services to older jobseekers seems clear.

On 28 February 2019, there were 2120 persons aged over 50 registered with *jobactive* providers in Hobart and Southern Tasmania. This represented 23.7% of all job seekers registered with *jobactive* in the region. On 31 May 2020, with the impact of the COVID-19, there were 3071 persons aged over 50 registered with *jobactive* providers in Hobart and Southern Tasmania, representing 25.4% of *jobactive* participants.

Australians aged over 50 years receiving income support are at high risk of long-term welfare dependence, and this trend is consistent in Southern Tasmania. In June 2017, approximately 77% of people aged over 50 receiving income support had been unemployed for more than 12 months. In November 2015, the average duration of unemployment for mature-age people was 68 weeks, compared with 30 weeks for those aged 15–24 year. In 2016, Tasmania had the highest proportion of the labour force aged over 45 years in Australia, and the fastest growth in this proportion in Australia between 2011 and 2016.

The ARHC *Willing to Work* research indicates that one in ten businesses will not recruit persons over the age of 50, and at least 71% of Australians face discrimination based on age within the workforce and community.

As set out in COTA Tasmania's *Recruiting for Life Experience*, older Tasmanian job seekers face multiple additional challenges including:

- conscious and unconscious bias in recruitment and human resource practice
- the transition to an online job market requiring new skills that may be unfamiliar to older workers
- structural policy barriers such as restricted benefits from workers compensation and income insurance
- lack of flexible arrangements that support working part-time due to caring responsibilities, and transition to retirement
- lack of health and wellbeing programs and appropriate working environments that support workplace diversity.

The research also consistently identifies a gap between what mature age jobseekers perceive they need and what employment services currently deliver. According to older jobseekers, current services are:

- struggling to link older jobseekers with jobs that match their skills or experience
- rarely providing services, activities or training that provide a realistic pathway to paid work for older jobseekers
- out of touch with the lived experience of older job seekers and their pre-employment needs.

The research also demonstrates that employers perceive that older jobseekers have 'less energy and enthusiasm'; are 'close-minded and inflexible' with 'an inability to embrace ideas or change'; and could struggle with information technology.

Employers have emphasised the importance of *jobactive* assisting jobseekers to identify their transferable skills and tailor their job applications to different roles, particularly when moving from declining industries to other sectors.

This is supported by older workers themselves, who report their understanding of recruitment processes and job interview skills are often 'out of date'.

In the last 40 years, demand in the Southern Tasmanian labour market has shifted from production industries to services industries. Sectors such as forestry and manufacturing have seen declines in labour demand, while sectors such as tourism, hospitality and social services have experienced growth. Older jobseekers with work backgrounds in production industries are impacted by this change.

Older jobseekers report that changes to job application processes and work practices present barriers. There are higher expectations that workers will be competent in digital workplaces and work outside of normal business hours. In 1978, 13% of jobs were part-time. By 2017, more than 30% of jobs were part-time, and most new jobs were part-time or casual. In 1998, most jobs were still advertised in newspapers. In 2018, less than 10% of jobs are advertised in newspapers, 50% of all jobs are advertised online and social media platforms are increasingly used for recruitment.

*jobactive* providers consistently advise that older jobseekers need specialised support. However, the process of identifying transferable skills and immersing participants in the 'new world of work' requires time and coaching expertise, which is not always available in *jobactive* due to high caseloads and compliance demands. Some providers also suggested the Australian Government's Jobseeker Classification Instrument (JSCI), does not adequately capture the challenges facing older jobseekers.

*jobactive* consultants report that older jobseekers lack confidence that training will lead to employment and lack motivation to participate in activities. They also cite a lack of interest from employers in the Restart wage subsidy, and insufficient resources to make employers aware of the benefits of employing older workers.

## **Design of Advanced Job Reach matched to identified needs of mature jobseekers, employers and employment service providers**

AJR addresses the needs identified by older jobseekers through:

- Intensive one on one and group coaching using a goal setting approach called 'Coaching You For Success'
- clear links between activities and job placement
- supporting job seekers to leverage their years of strengths of lived experience into a work or training outcome

AJR addresses the concerns identified by employers including:

- providing techniques for older jobseekers to embrace new ideas and change
- encouraging participants to meet accountabilities for actions they set themselves
- building digital literacy and confidence to operate in a contemporary work environment

AJR addresses the service gap identified by *jobactive* employment consultants through:

- intensive coaching support
- progressive setting and action achievement
- a peer support environment
- proven techniques to improve focus and motivation
- multi-layered participant assessment and evaluation.

# Advanced Job Reach Trial - Program Logic

## Long Term Impacts

Reduced rate of unemployment for Tasmanians 45 years and over  
Reduced number of long-term unemployed Tasmanians 45 years and older  
Reduced number of Tasmanians aged over 45 years living in poverty

## Short to Medium Term Impacts

AJR participants are employed in long-term, sustainable and meaningful work  
AJR participants achieve education and/or training qualifications  
AJR participants experiencing significant health, family violence and/or housing security issues are receiving long-term appropriate support  
More effective methods of preparing older job seekers for work are implemented across Workskills and other Tasmanian employment service providers

## Project Outcomes

AJR participants are self-implementing strategies and actions to achieve their goals for success in life and work.  
AJR participants are placed in a paid job; commence formal education/training; or commence regular, structured volunteering/work experience.  
AJR participants experiencing profound, long term personal barriers that prevent achievement of vocational outcomes in the short to medium term, are receiving structured support.

## Project Outputs

### Commencement

Older job seekers engage with AJR  
AJR participants are assessed for employability skills and support  
AJR participants commit to AJR coaching process

### Coaching

Participants identify life and career goals and achievable steps to achieve these goals  
Participants identify vocational and non-vocational barriers and actions to address these barriers

### Employment and Education

Participants acquire market knowledge and current job seeking abilities  
Participants have improved range of employment opportunities and post-placement support

## Project Activities

- Market AJR to unemployed Tasmanians over the age of 45 years, particularly in high risk unemployed areas
- Commence up to 12 participants per session, with priority for job seekers facing significant barriers
- Assess commenced participants for employability skills and personal strengths
- Maintain records on participation progress
- Facilitate sessions in a safe working and learning environment
- Implement the CYFS tools and methodology through one on one coaching and group sessions
- Provide structured group sessions for participants to address and build 10 key employability skills
- Refer participants to non-vocational supports
- Support participants to apply for jobs and perform well at interviews to maximise chances of placement
- Provide tailored post-session and post-placement support
- Internally evaluate each AJR session and externally evaluate first three AJR sessions

## Project Inputs

- Willing job seekers 45 yrs plus
- Coaches trained in CYFS
- *jobactive* and income support systems
- Workskills investment in innovative program development
- Workskills knowledge, networks, systems, management, personnel, equipment, infrastructure
- CYFS methodology and resources
- Social support services
- Education providers
- Employers
- Active labour market
- External evaluator

# AJR Participant Profile

The profile presented below is based on information from 32 participants (35 commenced the program).

	Gender	Female	Male	Non-binary	
		36%	64%	0%	
	Age	45-49	50-54	55 +	
		44%	22%	33%	
	Cultural Diversity	Indigenous	Refugee	Other	
		8%	0%	92%	
	Socio-economic profile	Live in suburb with exceptionally high unemployment		Registered with <i>jobactive</i> more than 12 months	
		33%		56%	
	Identified participant barriers at commencement	<i>jobactive</i> Stream B/C	Health Issues	Housing/ Transport	Ex-Offender
		75%	71%	43%	11%



# Key result areas

AJR Key Results Areas – Core Assessment			
Element	KPI	Headline Assessment	Notes on Assessment (External Evaluation)
Efficiency	Commencement	Target: 32 (89% of a targeted 36 enrolments)	The program exceeded the commencement target, with 35 participants attending the first session across three Intakes. There were 10 commencements in Intake 1; 11 in Intake 2; and 14 in Intake 3. Of 39 participants who 'enrolled', 90% commenced.
	Attendance	Target: 80%	The program exceeded the attendance target in Intakes 1 and 2, with an overall attendance rate of 82%. Intake 3 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 50% of participants unable to attend the final two sessions due to being in 'high risk' cohorts.
	Completion	Target: 75%	The program exceeded the completion target in Intakes 1 and 2, with 76% of participants completing all sessions and requirements. Intake 3 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with only 29% completing the full AJR program.
Effectiveness	Project Outcome 1: AJR participants are self-implementing strategies and actions to achieve their goals for success in life and work.	Target: 80%	The program met this target, with 81% of participants engaging in full with the CYFS program, setting goals, formulating strategies, committing to action, reporting back achievement of actions, and setting new actions.
	Project Outcome 2: AJR participants are placed in a paid job; commence formal education/training; or commence regular, structured volunteering/work experience.	Target: 55%	The program exceeded this target, with 61% of participants achieving a 'vocational outcome' as defined in the Program Logic. It should be noted, however, that this did not translate into 'outcomes' as defined in <i>jobactive</i> (which are ultimately based on the participant no longer receiving income support after 26 weeks in a paid job). There were multiple examples of participants being laid off from jobs achieved during or after AJR due to COVID-19 pandemic.
	Project Outcome 3: AJR participants experiencing profound, long term personal barriers that prevent achievement of vocational outcomes in the short to medium term, are receiving structured support.	Target: 25%	The program exceeded this target, with 50% of participants receiving structured support to address serious barriers. These included serious health issues, drug and alcohol addiction, housing insecurity, family breakdown, and extreme social isolation. The number of participants with serious barriers was greater than expected and not necessarily aligned with <i>jobactive</i> Streams A-C.
Quality	Participants would recommend AJR to a friend or colleague	Target: 80%	The program exceeded the target, with 92% of participants who responded to a completion survey stating they were highly likely to recommend the AJR to others.
	AJR delivered in a manner consistent with Program Logic	Target: 100% (External evaluation Y/N assessment)	The external evaluator (Mathew Fagan, Social Justice Communications), assessed the first three AJR sessions as having been delivered in 'substantial accordance' with the Program Logic.

# Key result areas

AJR Key Results Areas – Strength Based Delivery Priorities		
Element	Headline Assessment	Notes on Assessment (External Evaluation)
Client centred planning, delivery and decision making	✓	The AJR program was structured around the Coaching You for Success (CYFS) methodology, which is centred on client-centred goal setting, action and self-assessment. The CYFS methodology was consistently implemented and client survey results indicate significant improvements in client self-empowerment. The proportion of participants self-reporting 'positivity and hope for the future' increased from 27% at commencement to 71% at completion.
Understanding needs of older jobseekers	✓	The AJR Program Logic and design was based on extensive research including (but not limited to) the Australian Government Labour Market Information Portal datasets; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census and Labour Force data; the Australian Human Rights Commission's 'Willing to Work' National Inquiry (2016); the Brotherhood of St Laurence's 'Working for Everyone' research project (2018); resources on the WORK45+ website; the structure of the Career Transition Assistance program; and interviews with mature age jobseekers, employers and <i>jobactive</i> providers in Southern Tasmania. The Council on the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania was a key project stakeholder, and the peer group processes ensured the needs of older jobseekers were at the centre of program delivery, as confirmed in participant feedback.
Support for people facing barriers and entrenched disadvantage	✓	The AJR program included an extensive assessment of participants at project commencement and completion, which involved participants self-identifying Health, Socio-Cultural, Personal, Legal and Environmental barriers. Support was provided to self-address these barriers through: the CYFS coaching methodology; the provision of information about support options; and warm referrals to external providers. Participants self-reported significant improvements in their capacity to manage or overcome barriers between program commencement and program completion.
Cultural appropriateness	-	While there was nothing to suggest that the AJR was culturally inappropriate, the program did not incorporate specific strategies in design, participant recruitment or program delivery to reflect the specific needs of Indigenous or CALD participants. There were no participants from the refugee communities of Southern Tasmania.
Links with employers and industry associations	-	The AJR did not have specific links with employers or industry associations, instead relying on staff servicing all Workskills' <i>jobactive</i> clients to provide job placement referrals. The program could have been improved by incorporating 'employer partners', including pre-arranged work experience, internship and paid work opportunities for 'graduates' of the AJR.
Appropriately skilled staff	✓	AJR was delivered by staff within Workskills' Employment Innovation Hub (Impact Communities Division). The program staff had extensive experience and training in delivering the CYFS methodology and working with unemployed Tasmanians experiencing significant disadvantage and long-term unemployment.

# Participant Voices

Rob\*

Martine\*

Anne\*

## The challenges

Technology. We grew up in an age where we were taught with pencil and paper and today there's no job that doesn't require computers. Having the confidence to say that you are digitally literate is important...

Being only 50 I thought that finding employment wouldn't be an issue but what I was trying to achieve didn't match my values and lifestyle. Also having elderly parents and choosing to work part time hampered my success.

For me it's my ability to keep up with 'today'. Everything seems so fast paced. Also, I think employers look at an age, and before they have met us determine that we are too old and not capable of doing the job.

## How it worked

CYFS identified that my Digital Literacy was not great, actually really poor. With one on one coaching and up to date knowledge I enrolled in a free computer course at the library. I have since completed all of the free courses and even purchased my first computer. This new found confidence and freedom has been a life turning event for me and I am now able to achieve so much more.

What I liked about AJR was that we were of a similar age and we all wanted to be there. The coach showed a genuine interest in our goals and personal aspirations. AJR gave me the confidence to actually take action on a lifelong dream. Not only did I take action, I have a realistic plan to ensure that I achieve what I have set out to do.

At first, I was hesitant to be a part of something like this, but I soon realised that I was with a group of similar people who were all in the same boat as me. Advanced Job Reach helped me reaffirm that I was on the right track and that my chosen career was one that aligned with my skills and values.

## Success factors

Confidence! Every AJR session I was fully engaged and took so much away that I could build upon in my own time. When my work trial with a bus company was not ongoing, I was determined and with new confidence I 'cold canvased', and was successful in securing a job.

AJR enabled me to steer my career in a new direction. With the positive coaching at AJR I came to my own realisation and decided to attend a TasTafe Open Day. I was invited to attend an interview for the Certificate II Horticulture Course. I gave it my best and I am now enrolled full-time.

AJR made me reflect that after 2 years of unemployment the approach I was taking wasn't working. I was sure I was employable but was never successful in getting over the line. One thing I changed was to research the company beforehand. I still had knock backs however I persisted, and the effort paid off.

## The difference

I love being connected to people and working gives me this opportunity. Being employed has enabled me to have even more confidence and given me the ability to afford the things in life that I couldn't whilst I was unemployed.

I am positive that I am on the right track to becoming employed once I complete my Cert II. I have realised that as I get older I don't want to settle for just anything. I want a job and career that suits me and what I want to do. If that means studying and upskilling I'm prepared to do that.

I have now been employed for over 12 weeks and my general wellbeing has improved immensely. I am less stressed about money and how I am going to pay the bills. This has positively impacted my mental health and I am now on my way to living life the way I want to.

\* The above three participants shared their post-AJR experiences and reflections via telephone for this evaluation. Their names have been changed in this document.

## COTA\*

I was thrilled to know that there was a project like AJR available and thought it would be of great benefit to older job seekers. The evidence from the COTA focus groups... suggests that a program like this would benefit job seekers enormously. The AJR program focused on the real needs of this age group and was designed to build confidence...as well as so much more.

I expect the duration of the program allowed job seekers to improve their prospects, views and resilience to today's workforce.

Yes, definitely. It is wonderful to have a program like this to tell older job seekers about. Since the Work45+ website was launched I've had phone calls from job seekers and it was great to be able to tell them about AJR. Even though it's on the website, some people who visited the site preferred to ask for suggestions directly from me and I was very pleased to be able to tell

It is possible that the program could have been better promoted to the wider community as there are many that could have benefited from this positive intervention.

## Digital Ready\*\*

Working in the digital space, I was naturally curious about the barriers that Mature Age job seekers faced, especially with regard to technology and how we as an organisation could come in and fill the gap.

One of the first things I picked up on was the positive peer support. Regardless of their digital literacy ability everyone helped and shared knowledge particularly for those that have been a job seeker for a number of years. No one was left behind with one on one support available. I'm positive that all participants that engaged in the Digital TAS sessions left with new knowledge and confidence.

Definitely. I am still working closely on similar projects within Workskills to improve the Digital Literacy for job seekers of age groups. Throughout the three rounds I was amazed at the different skills gaps that these job seekers faced.

Giving us a better idea of the participant's digital literacy so that we can tailor make sessions and adapt our delivery style, would have benefited. Moving to the smaller group approach to learning was a major win. Participants were encouraged to bring along a device (smartphone, ipad) so that they could work through the processes in real time. However not all participants owned a device that was suitable.

## jobactive\*\*\*

Our whole *jobactive* site was pleased that finally a program was available for Job Seekers over the age of 45 years. For years this age group have struggled, and this was something just for them.

I noticed the positive change in the Job Seekers that were involved in the program. Job Seekers had higher motivation and were more optimistic and eager to get back into work. Initially we didn't see an immediate change however participants that never used to turn up to meetings were now turning up. These participants were telling us that they felt encouraged and had an open mind to possible alternative careers and study options that they had previously not considered.

Absolutely. It opens up more opportunity for our over 45's that may have recently ceased long term employment or those that have been unemployed long term. I would refer to this program for additional support and parallel servicing of this cohort.

More sessions and feedback to sites regarding client's progress. Everyone that was involved found it to be a positive and activating experience and if more sessions were available that motivation could have continued.

### First impressions

### Jobseeker impact

### Worthwhile?

### Improvements

\* Comments provided by officer from the Council for the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania  
 \*\* Comments provided by officer from Digital Ready Tasmania (Department of State Growth)  
 \*\*\* Comments provided by a jobactive employment consultant (Workskills)

## Samantha Lawrence – AJR Pilot Program Coordinator

### Designing

A lot of research and planning went into the Advanced Job Reach program before I came on board as the pilot program coordinator, but I think it was really important that Workskills supported me to draw upon my own life experiences and previous coaching to develop something as holistic as possible.

### Marketing

I've learned that without the buy in and support of *jobactive* consultants, it can prove difficult to recruit older jobseekers to a program such as AJR. It's important to spend time 'selling' a new approach, and then constantly communicating how it works. We tried a few approaches and now have a system that works very well.

### Recruiting

After developing a solid list of potential participants referred by *jobactive* consultants, I called each participant individually to gauge their interest and commitment. Initial engagement was fantastic from the participants and one key difference that I noticed with older jobseekers, as opposed to similar programs with younger cohorts, was their ability to openly communicate with me in relation to issues such as attendance. For most participants this was something very new and way out of their comfort zone, however I started to positively coach them via the phone which eased many of their anxieties.

### Starting

After the very first session, it was clear the AJR approach and the coaching methodology resonated with older jobseekers. I remember leaving that first day feeling incredibly inspired, motivated and grateful that I was chosen to facilitate such an amazing program. As the weeks and sessions rolled on the groups naturally formed their own bonds, with me and each other. Everyone was incredibly supportive of each other and often referred to it as their 'club'.

### Networking

Towards the end of the second AJR intake a group of participants expressed a desire to meet some of the participants from the first intake, through an afternoon tea. Bringing the first two groups together to celebrate their successes provided an opportunity to expand peer networks, with many participants exchanging phone numbers. It was also a great opportunity for Pat Kluver, the CEO of Workskills, to come and meet the past participants, hear their stories and openly listen to their concerns about finding employment at their age.

### Reflecting

At the start of 2020 the largest AJR group started, but then so did the global COVID-19 pandemic. As the weeks rolled on the participant numbers slowly became fewer as they were deemed in a high-risk category due to age. The COVID-19 lockdown did, however, provide an opportunity to reflect upon the first three AJR rounds and how to deliver an AJR program that encompasses all of the positive factors. These reflections were submitted to the AJR evaluation report, which honestly deals with what worked, and what didn't. I believe the AJR is a vital program, that has made the case for delivery throughout the Tasmanian community.



An AJR session focused on job application preparation

## Job placements and engagement with employers

While the target for Program Outcome 2 was met, only 31% of participants achieved paid employment placements during or after AJR, and only one of these is currently tracking to a 26 week jobactive outcome (at time of writing). A number of job placements were discontinued due to the impacts of COVID-19. The program could be improved by incorporating 'employer partners', including pre-arranged work experience, internship and paid work opportunities for 'graduates' of the AJR.

## Diversity

The AJR pilot program did not specifically target or cater for cohorts such as Indigenous, CALD, refugee and LGBTQI clients. Future program delivery could incorporate efforts to engage older jobseekers from these groups, including co-development and co-delivery with organisations representing these cohorts.

## Program length and structure

The first AJR intake ran for 12 weeks, however the coordinator reported that engagement waned in the last few weeks of the program. As a result, the second two intakes were re-designed for delivery over 8 weeks. The condensed programming also enabled the coordinator to have more regular contact and be up to date with each participant's current actions and goals. The coordinator reported that while the program could be delivered over an even shorter timeframe, eight weeks achieved a balance of achieving meaningful engagement and 'keeping the momentum of the program flowing'.

## Location

The AJR 2018-19 trial was mainly based from the (former) Impact Communities offices in Molle St (Hobart CBD). The program also trialled external locations such as Libraries TAS (Glenorchy and Rosny). For many participants coming 'somewhere new' presented challenges of transport, parking and accessibility as well as the anxiety of travelling to an unfamiliar location. The coordinator reported the need to address issues of social isolation, and recommended the following locations for group sessions:

- *Group session 1 – Module 1 – Career Module*  
*Function Space in the City*  
This would provide a professional, workplace environment.
- *Group session 2 – Module 2 – Life Module*  
*Community Centre*  
This would provide ready access and linkages to a range of support services.
- *Group session 3 – Digital Literacy - Resume and cover letter*  
*Libraries TAS*  
Utilizing Libraries TAS allowed participants to sign up to become members and enabled computer access for all participants. This mitigates the need for all participants to have a digital device to participate in the Digital TAS session, and ensures all participants are online for resumes and cover letter amendments. Some additional planning should take place to ensure the Digital TAS session is tightly matched to the AJR methodology.
- *Group session 4 – Creating your pitch / ESO meet and greet / Dress for success*  
*Workskills Site*  
Holding the final group session at a Workskills site allows all participants to engage strongly with the ESO Team and other *jobactive* staff, as they step up their job search.

## Recommended Next Steps

It is recommended:

- That the Impact Communities AJR program is continued in 2020-21 and becomes a permanent feature of Workskills' internal suite of work preparation programs.
- That the learnings listed above are incorporated into the 2020-21 program.
- That the Impact Communities team engages with the provider of the Career Transition Service in Hobart and Southern Tasmania to ensure any duplication is minimised and coordination is maximised.
- That the program continues to be monitored and evaluated in a manner consistent with this evaluation report.

## Evaluation Ends

For more information about the Advanced Job Reach program and other employment program innovations in Hobart and Southern Tasmania contact:

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