

ATTACHMENT JB-3

This is the attachment marked "**JB-3**" referred to in the witness statement of Jocelyn Bignold dated 13 July 2015.



McAuley Community
Services for Women
a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

McAuley Works Evaluation

2011-12

“There is a tremendous rapport that is built. The worker looks at the skills and when you’re unemployed, your self-esteem plummets and you fear entering the workforce after not being in for many years - she has the ability to rebuild that lost confidence.”

ACSO Research and Evaluation Unit - 2012

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1. Executive Summary

This report provides the results of an evaluation of the McAuleyWorks program for the ten month period July 2011 to April 2012.

Background

McAuley Community Services for Women (MCSW) first established the McAuleyWorks program in 2010. Further funding was secured to implement an expanded pilot phase of the program from July 2011, which is the focus of this evaluation. The Program aims to assist women who have experienced homelessness, mental illness or family violence to develop pathways to financial independence and recovery. The program aims to assist women to gain vocational qualifications, work experience and sustainable employment.

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation was conducted by the Research and Evaluation Unit of the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO). The evaluation focussed on both process and outcome elements of the program and examined program operations for the period July 2011 to April 2012. Data sources for the evaluation included analysis of participant demographics and service provision records from the program database, telephone interviews with participants (n=27), interviews with program staff (n=3), a survey of referring organisations (n=4) and consultations with the program steering committee.

Findings

1. During the ten month period of program operation 83 participants were engaged by the program, across metropolitan Melbourne. Most women were between 22 and 50 years of age, born in Australia or Asia, and all experienced mental health issues, unstable housing and/or family violence. Thirty of these women achieved an employment outcome (consisting of 36 employment placements), and 41 received 'training' through the program.
2. There was strong agreement between program stakeholders (participants, staff and referring organisations) that the key strength of the McAuley Works' program model is its personalised relationship-based approach to working with women. This includes the holistic way the program aims to address both direct employment related needs (e.g. résumés and interview skills) and broader non-vocational needs likely to influence a woman's capacity to gain and maintain employment (e.g. self-esteem, housing, safety). A key feature of the program model that is strongly advocated for by the program staff is that it aims to build the confidence of

participants and supports them to deal directly with employers, rather than program staff connecting with employers.

3. The program has a wide geographic catchment area and does not limit the duration of support for participants. As awareness of the program has increased, this has resulted in an increasing referral rate to the program and worker caseloads that are nearing capacity. Going forward, the program will either need to secure increased funding resources to employ more workers or refine its catchment areas, target group and throughput processes if the key strengths of the program model, such as its holistic approach, are not to be negatively impacted.
4. As well as working directly with women, a key element of the program was intended to be activities with employers to increase their awareness of family violence issues and assistance for them to develop supportive practices in the workplace. Within the timeframe of the project, only limited progress has been made in this area. However, some foundational work has taken place and it is envisaged that this will be an increasing area of development for the program in the future.
5. Overall, the first ten months operation of the McAuley Works Program has demonstrated the initial development of a valuable model of engaging and working with women who have experienced issues such as family violence and who require a sensitive, individualised and holistic approach to achieving employment outcomes. A key area for future development of the program will be the implementation of appropriate activities and resources to improve employer awareness of family violence issues in the workplace.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Violence against women is a serious issue. One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence at some stage in their life (ABS, 2005). This is an alarming statistic, with violence against women forming one of the leading contributors to death, disability and illness for women aged 15 to 44, surpassing many serious health conditions (VicHealth, 2004). In these cases, the phrase 'violence against women' refers to any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993). For the purposes of this evaluation, the term 'family violence' will be used to describe violence against women by their intimate partner.

McAuley Community Services for Women

McAuley Community Services for Women (MCSW) provides accommodation, support and advocacy for women and their children who are homeless, primarily as a result of family violence or mental illness. MCSW was formed in 2008 by the Sisters of Mercy to expand its commitment to women and children and to incorporate its two existing long term services:

1. McAuleyCare (est. 1988): A 24 hour accessible safe house providing crisis accommodation and support for women and their children who have experienced family violence, and
2. McAuley House (est. 1986): Medium term, transitional accommodation for women who have experienced homelessness and mental illness.

McAuley Works

The McAuley Works Program was introduced in 2010. The Program assists women who have experienced homelessness, mental illness or family violence to develop pathways to financial independence and recovery. The Program assists women to gain vocational qualifications, work experience and sustainable employment, and has two components:

1. Working with women - the program works with women to develop pathways to meaningful employment through education and training, work experience, or direct work placement. The Program:
 - mentors women to identify employment and training objectives;
 - supports women in creating a personal development plan;
 - identifies training and development pathways for women, including sourcing relevant courses;
 - assists with non-vocational barriers to employment; and
 - provides women with work readiness training and mentoring.
2. Working with employers - the program also works with employers to:

- develop opportunities for women to obtain work experience or work placements;
- raise awareness of family violence issues, particularly as they relate to employment and the workplace; and
- assists employers to develop supportive practices or programs that help women experiencing family violence to maintain employment.

The Program is further integrated with McAuley Community Services for Women's case management programs, such as the Family Violence 'Safe at Home' Program. This integration allows McAuley staff to work with vulnerable women on a range of personal and health barriers simultaneously.

Clients of McAuley Works

While participation in the McAuley Works Program is voluntary, the program was established to support women using McAuley services, and includes clients of programs funded by State Government, such as Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Services, Home and Community Care, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and the Family Violence service system. Women using MCSW services may also be clients of State Government services, such as area mental health services.

Many women using MCSW services have limited experience and opportunities to engage in paid employment. Cumulative with these women's other non-vocational concerns, they face fundamental barriers to achieving emotional and mental wellbeing and financial independence. As a result, many women using MCSW services have long term histories of chronic unemployment. The challenges of placing the McAuley Works target group in jobs are well known and extensively documented in the literature, and they are predominantly 'stream four jobseekers', which categorises the most highly disadvantaged job seekers with severe non-vocational barriers.

Why Family Violence is a Workplace Issue

Two thirds of women who report family violence with their current partner are in paid employment (Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project, 2011). Consequently, family violence is a workplace issue; for the women themselves, their colleagues and their employers. The following are key ways that family violence can affect the workplace:

1. *Family violence can impact upon women's attendance at work.* Women who experience family violence in the home may require unplanned leave after actual or threatened violence. These women may also be unable to attend work intermittently because their partner has removed or destroyed their work clothes, or their method of transportation (Swanberg and Logan 2005).

2. *Abusive behaviours can occur at the workplace.* If women form relationships within the workplace that become violent, then harassment, abuse or assault can occur both at home and in the workplace. Even when the intimate relationship has not formed at work, abusive partners can still harass the victim in the workplace, as women are vulnerable there given that most work occurs at set times and locations, and/or to also jeopardise a woman's employment. For example, the abusive partner may repeatedly call or email their victim at work, or follow the victim to and from their work premises (Calaf, 2003).

3. *The effects of domestic violence can also be felt across a workplace.* Co-workers productivity can be reduced if they attempt to shield the victim from harassing calls. Co-workers may also take stress leave and other unplanned forms of leave if they feel intimidated by their colleague's abuser. Managers and other colleagues may choose to look for other forms of employment if they feel their safety is threatened (Karin, 2009).

How Workplace Issues Affect Family Violence

The Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project recently found, "women who are subjected to domestic violence have a more disrupted work history, are on lower personal incomes, have had to change jobs [more] frequently, and are very often employed in casual and part time work (2011: 4). Moreover, a range of studies have shown that women who experience disrupted work histories can become dependent on welfare payments, and as a result, may feel forced to remain or return to an abusive situation in order to maintain secure housing and financial security (see for example Access Economics, 2004 and Widiss, 2008). Ultimately a woman can become entrapped in a cycle unemployment and violence, and it has been increasingly demonstrated that for victims of family violence, employment is a key pathway to escape violent relationships. Sustained periods of employment can provide financial security, independence, social networks and increased self-esteem (Rothman, Hathaway, Stidsen and de Vries, 2007). The key issue, therefore, is identify which factors help or hinder women in the workforce.

One of the key factors that has the potential to both help or hinder women in the workforce is disclosing abuse. Many studies indicate that women experiencing family violence are reluctant to disclose their situation to work colleagues or managers. Typically, women's reluctance to disclose stems from:

- feeling too embarrassed about their situation (Swanberg, Logan and Macke, 2005);
- fear that they will be stigmatised in the workplace; and/or
- fear that they will lose their job (Lemon, 2001).

However, without disclosing their situation, women are more likely to choose or be made to leave employment in order to hide their situation, or to only seek casual work which can

better accommodate their needs for unplanned leave (Swanberg, Logan and Macke, 2005). In contrast, women who disclose their situation to their employer have been shown, at least in the short term, to receive greater informal and formal support leading to some level of employment retainment (Swanberg and Logan, 2005).

Looking further into the relationship between disclosure and employment, Perrin, Yragui, Hanson and Glass (2011) found a correlation between the level of abuse experienced by women, the readiness of the woman to change their situation, and the type of support wanted by women. In their study, Perrin and colleagues found that women experiencing family violence would seek one of the three following types of support:

- *Support in every way* - women who wanted support in every way typically experienced the most interference at work from their partner, and were also in a position where they were moving towards a stage of action about their situation (for example, seeking legal or financial assistance from employers).
- *Emotional support or time off* - women seeking emotional support, or time-off typically had already sought a restraining order against their abusive partner and appeared to be in a contemplation stage of change. Often these women had already disclosed their situation in the past to colleagues or managers, but were now considering seeking further support from their employer.
- *Limited Support* - women who wanted limited support tended to still be in abusive relationships and did not want their supervisor to know that there was anything wrong at home. These women, while still experiencing violence, typically did not experience violence to the same extent or severity as their counterparts.

Given the individualised nature of both women's experiences of family violence, their readiness to change their situation, and the type of response they desire, it is and will remain necessary for employers to develop a range of initiatives to address family violence in the workplace. Below is a brief account of Australia's current response to these issues.

Australia's response to family violence and the workplace

The United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada have addressed family violence as a workplace issue for over a decade. Australia's history is much shorter. While a handful of Australian organisations have been working to address family violence as a workplace issue for the past decade (see for example, Australia's CEO Challenge¹), it has only been since 2009 that there has been significant progress in Australia in relation to awareness and introduction of family violence workplace rights.

Four key examples of the work that has been undertaken over the past three years include:

¹ Australia's CEO Challenge is a charity organisation that targets domestic violence. The organisation has developed partnerships between employers and family violence services for over a decade, and now also offers a series of corporate awareness sessions and training seminars focused on domestic violence and the workplace.

- In 2010, a DEEWR grant funded the *Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project*, to address the impact of domestic violence in the workplace and promote domestic violence entitlements through enterprise bargaining. To date, the Project has developed a range of resources for employees, employers and unions, and has undertaken a national domestic violence and the workplace survey (McFerran, 2011).
- The Australian Law Reform Commission undertook an inquiry into family violence and commonwealth laws. The Commission proposed a series of recommendations in relation to workplace and work related laws, including the recommendation that “where relevant and appropriate, all Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, Department of Human Services, Australian Taxation Office and superannuation fund material, should provide for a consistent definition of family violence” (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2011: 15).
- White Ribbon has developed a pilot model for a National Workplace Program that aims to create long-term sustainable change in attitudes to violence and to implementing prevention strategies through the workplace. It will soon launch the Workplace Accreditation Pilot Project to support workplaces to prevent and respond to violence against women by asking organisations to adapt organisational cultures, practices and procedures to promote safe workplaces for women. (White Ribbon, 2012).
- The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse and the Community and Public Sector Union (NSW) moved to log a model domestic violence clause within Enterprise Bargaining at NSW universities, which commenced at University of NSW in 2010. In 2011, the Surf Coast Shire Council introduced 20 days leave for victims of family violence (Australian Services Union, 2011).

Given Australia’s brief history in engaging with family violence as a workplace issue, there are still many gaps in Australia’s approach to ensuring that women experiencing family violence are provided with the financial security and support necessary to leave abusive situations. McAuley Works was designed to fill some of these gaps.

2.2 McAuley Works Review 2011

As noted, the McAuley Works Program was introduced in 2010. The Program assists women who have experienced homelessness, mental illness or family violence to develop pathways to financial independence and recovery. The Program assists women to gain vocational qualifications, work experience and sustainable employment.

A review of the McAuley Works Program was undertaken in January 2011. At the time of the review, 41 women had registered in the program, with 14 in employment and 13 assisted into training. Each of these women had experienced homelessness, mental illness, and/or family violence, and most had little or no employment experience or vocational qualifications.

As part of the review, 16 women were invited to complete a phone survey to discuss their experience of the McAuley Works Program. Eleven of the invited women were available to be interviewed (a 69 percent response rate).

The interviews were conducted by a worker on secondment from the Department of Health. This person was selected to conduct the interviews due to their greater capacity to remain objective about the program, and to elicit honest feedback from participants.

During the interviews, women discussed the reasons they sought employment, their potential to gain employment, and their experience of the program. Much of the feedback provided by the women was consistent with current evidence about the barriers for this cohort, and the tools necessary to overcome them. For example, the predominant reason women in the program sought employment was to gain financial independence and move away from government benefits. Other motivational factors for seeking employment included their desires to “go forward”, to “achieve our goal”, and to earn “money for ourselves”. This feedback is consistent with the common finding that employment acts as a key means through which women experiencing family violence can develop sustainable lifestyles away from abusive relationship.

For the majority of women interviewed, the crucial element to seeking and gaining employment was the support they received from Program staff. Some of the women involved in the program had previously worked with other employment agencies. When asked about their experiences with these agencies, women commented that other services, including disability employment services, were seen to “judge” them, not help them find work or appropriate training, and treat them as if they were “just a number”. In contrast, the majority of women interviewed as part of the review did not believe they could have obtained employment without the assistance of the McAuley Works Program. For these women, the personalised nature of the program was crucial to their experience. Women spoke of Program staff “always trying to fit (me) in”. Women also spoke of the responsiveness of the program, commenting on how Program staff were “so quick” and “extraordinarily helpful”. One of the most useful features of the support identified by the women was the development of individual resumes, which, as one woman explained, it “gets you in”.

Of the women who gained employment through the program, many discussed their feelings of increased confidence and self-assurance. Women commented that: “I now have the confidence to do other things”, the program has “changed my life”, or I now have “a big future”, and the program has helped me “to stand up”. One woman who had experienced family violence and moved 12 times, commented that the program was “the best thing that’s happened to me”.

The majority of the women interviewed also expressed a positive future outlook for either finding initial employment, undertaking training, or continuing to work in their current

position, depending on their current employment status. One woman said that she could now “start her other life”, another said that her “body is better” and another said that she now had a “sense of purpose”.

The current evaluation of the McAuley Works Program will, amongst other things, determine if these positive outcomes have continued.

2.3 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is threefold:

1. to determine the key outputs and outcomes of the McAuley Works Program;
2. to provide information to stakeholders and funding bodies about the outputs and outcomes of the program, focusing on such things as the program’s effects, potential limitations, or apparent strengths; and
3. to provide findings to assist the service provider to improve program delivery going forward.

The McAuley Works Program has sought to achieve a number of key outputs and outcomes. Key outputs include:

- the number of women McAuley Works has assisted;
- the number of women in employment;
- the number of women in education/training;
- the diversity of the women assisted (that is, a range of women from different age groups, cultural backgrounds and family types); and
- the type and value of assistance McAuley Works has provided to each woman.

In relation to these outputs, the program had a range of key performance indicators determined at commencement:

1. Employment assistance:

- a minimum of 75 women registered with the program;
- a minimum of 60 women have received intensive employment;
- a minimum of 60 women have engaged in education or training; and
- a minimum of 46 women have received a work placement.

2. Employer capacity building:

- a minimum of six employers will have engaged in the program;
- A minimum of six employers providing employment placements for participants.

3. Other

- A sustainability plan is implemented.

The McAuley Works Program has also sought to achieve two key short-term outcomes. These outcomes are:

1. Participating in the McAuley Works Program will assist women to feel confident that they:

- have the skills and knowledge to gain or maintain employment;
- can be financially independent; and
- will remain free of violent partners.

2. Employers participating in the McAuley Works Program will feel:

- satisfied with the quality of applicants referred to their companies;
- satisfied with the quality of information provided about family violence; and
- confident that their organisational practices in relation to family violence are appropriate and workable.

It is further anticipated that in the long-term the program will increase women's financial and emotional self-reliance, decrease their dependence on violent partners and reduce the likelihood of them being in unsafe relationships.

3. **Methodology**

3.1 Evaluation Framework

3.2 Data Sources

Program data

Since the commencement of the program in July 2011, staff have collected information from clients, guided by the referral form. They have also recorded in detail, program contacts with clients and for the assistance of clients. These have been provided to the evaluators in the form of a Microsoft Excel file.

Referrer Surveys

A 'Referrer Survey' was sent to seven common referral sources for McAuley Works. It was hoped that this would result in at least ten surveys completed. Four responses were received from four individual agencies.

Interviews

Program participants:

The original evaluation framework stated that participants would be provided surveys upon exit from the program, and potentially interviewed. However, the model is such that it does not feature planned client exits from the program, and this did not occur. Therefore, approximately one month prior to the final report being due, the contact numbers of almost all clients were provided to the evaluators. All clients whose number was provided was contacted, and either an in-person or over the phone interview was arranged. On many occasions, the pre-arranged interview did not eventuate, and clients were given opportunities to reschedule. Twenty seven participants completed the phone interview and were included in the data set for this evaluation.

Staff:

Interviews were undertaken with the two program staff providing direct services to clients and the program coordinator. The interviews focussed on how the program works day-to-day with clients, the intended program outcomes, the program model and any particular issues with the model and overall impressions of what has worked well and what could be done differently or improved in how the program operates.

3.3 Participant profile

3.3.1 Age

As shown in Table 1, participants represented all age groups, but were predominately in the 31 to 50 year age bracket. The youngest woman was just 18 years, and the eldest was 61 years.

Table 1. Participants by age

	Up to 21	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	NK	Total
No. clients	4	20	25	24	6	1	3	83

3.3.2 Cultural identity

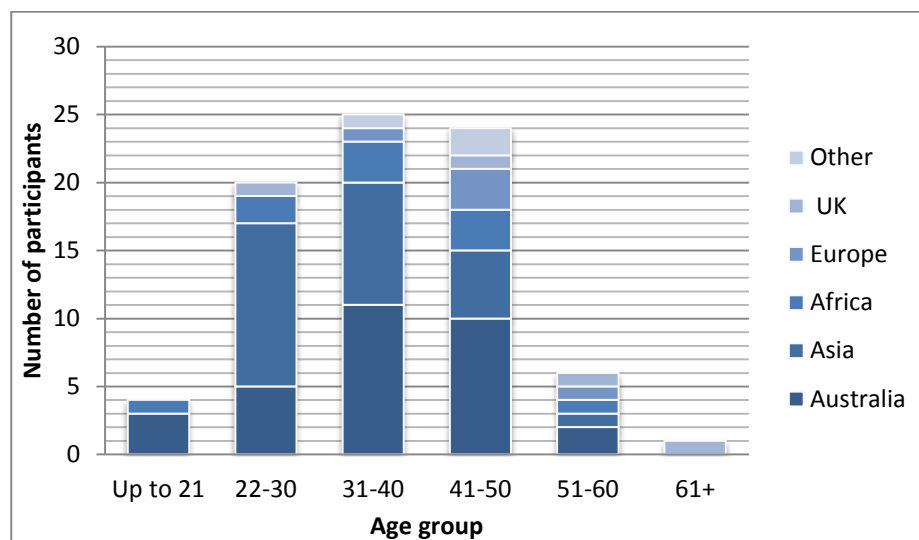
McAuley Works participants comprised a very diverse cultural group of women. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, almost 40% of the participants were born in Australia, being the most common birthplace for almost all main age groups. The exception is those aged 22 to 30 years of age, who were most commonly born in Asia; the second most common (32%) continent of origin. Eight of these twelve women were born in India. The 'other' category includes South America, New Zealand, and Russia.

Table 2. Participants by age and region of birth

Region	Up to 21	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+	NK	Total	%
Australia	3	5	11	10	2		1	32	38%
Asia		12	9	5	1			27	32%
Africa	1	2	3	3	1			10	12%
Europe			1	3	1		1	6	7%
UK		1		1	1	1		4	5%
Other			1	2			1	4	5%
Total	4	20	25	24	6	1	3	83	

Nb. This is current age.

Figure 2. Participants by age and region of birth (where known)



3.3.3 Geographic coverage

Refer to 4.8 Catchment area/region.

3.3.4 Participant concerns and barriers to employment

At referral into the program, workers identify the following range of circumstances that apply to the participant. As shown in Table 3, of those identified, family violence was the most prevalent concern affecting 85% of the participants. This was followed by mental health issues (69%) and homelessness or risk thereof (63%).

What is also noteworthy, is the co-morbidity of concerns. Sixty-four percent of the participants with family violence concerns, also reported mental health issues, and 61% reported concerns regarding homelessness. There is also a reasonable cohort (26 women) who is experiencing all three of these most prevalent concerns.

Table 3. Prevalence and co-morbidity of participant concerns at referral

Participant Concern	Mental health issues	Homelessness or risk of	Family violence	Disability
Yes	57 (69%)	52 (63%)	70 (85%)	18 (22%)
No	26 (31%)	30 (37%)	12 (15%)	65 (78%)
Of those with the above issues, number who had other concerns also.				
Mental Health Issues	N/A	34	45	17
Homelessness or risk of	34	N/A	43	11
Family Violence	45	43	N/A	12
Disability	17	11	12	N/A

3.3.5 Participants with caring responsibilities

Given the demographics of the women involved in the program, it is unsurprising that most of them had children in their care. Most women had either one or two children, but seven women had between three and five children. This factor was considerable in relation to the women's preference for part-time employment.

Of the group who reported experiencing all three of the most prevalent concerns above (mental health, homelessness, family violence), 13 women also had caring responsibilities.

Table 4. Number of participants with caring responsibilities

No. of children currently in client's care	No. of participants
1	20
2	20
3	4
4	2
5	1
Total	47

Note: There were some data anomalies, with:

- * four women who reported that they didn't have caring responsibilities, had children currently in their care (between 1-3 children); and
- * one woman who reported having caring responsibilities had no children in their care.

3.3.6 Eligibility to work in Australia and residency status

All participants were eligible to work in Australia; 70 women were either Australian citizens or permanent residents. The remaining women were on Bridging Visas or on/awaiting other kinds of Visa's, and only one record detailed a work restriction of a maximum of 20hrs/week due to a student visa.

Case Study – E■■■

E■■■ is a ■■ year old sole parent with ■■■ male children under ■■■ years' old. The client came to us having experienced recent family violence and has an intervention order in place against her former partner. The client has visa restrictions, as she arrived in Australia on a Spousal Visa from ■■■ with her husband. The visa restrictions meant the client was ineligible for Centrelink and / or JSA assistance. At the time of engaging with McAuley Works the client was facing homelessness and was highly distressed about how she would be able to support her two children.

We updated E■■■'s résumé, assisted her in sending out application letters and helped her with cold calling, as well as direct marketing to employers for housekeeping and cleaning work, which the client identified as her target industries. We also assisted her with obtaining her Learner's licence as the client identified this as one of her major goals.

As a result of the work E■■■ did with McAuley Works, and the assistance provided to her, the client commenced work in a housekeeping role, obtaining permanent shifts that fit around her caring responsibilities. The client has stated that she is feeling very positive that she can now move on with her life after family violence and is confident in her capacity provide for her and her boys' future.

3.4 Employer awareness

As part of their scoping for potential employer training clients, McAuley Works conducted an employer awareness survey through VECCI's Radar newsletter and their employer contacts. They received a combined response of 15 participants across industries including education, community sector, consulting, state government, local council, and private sector.

The survey found that although only one respondent indicated family violence had 'followed' an employee into the workplace, about half indicated that they believed at least one of their employees could be experiencing family violence. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they would consider family violence as a cause, if they noticed reduced employee performance, but only 18% thought that their workplace had a family violence support program or policy in place. Ten respondents indicated they would be interested in contact regarding training and assistance.

3.5 Scope

The evaluators can only report against information provided to them. Additional client information was collected throughout the program, however this exists in unavailable physical participant files. Some information regarding models of sustainability were 'in confidence' and are not in scope of this report. No employers were identified to evaluators as being available to contact for feedback.

3.6 Limitations

A key limitation to the evaluation report is the timing of the evaluation. Evaluation had to commence within nine months of the program commencement, therefore limiting the data available and the capacity to identify longer term client outcomes and impacts of the program.

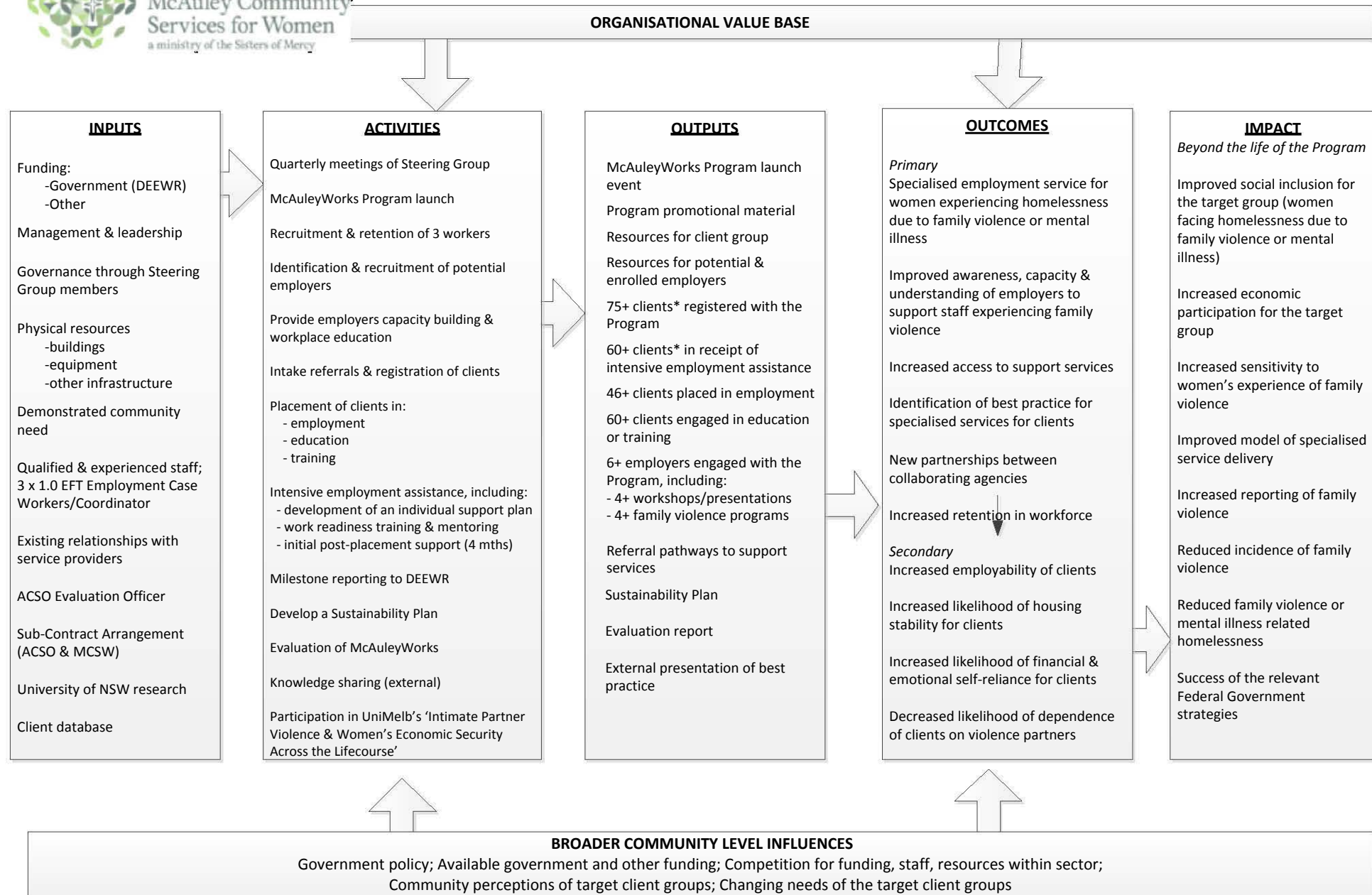
4. McAuley Works Model & Process

4.1 Program Logic Model



McAuley Community Services for Women
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Figure 3. McAuleyWorks Program Logic Model



4.2 Referral process

Referrers' feedback on the referral process itself was positive, with several comments commending the timeliness of the response to the referral; *"The referral form was simple and easy, and the worker was always easily contactable and always replied via email promptly."* One referrer was impressed that they were contacted within 24 hours.

Data was available for just over half of the clients (N=46), with regards to the date of referral and date of first contact by workers. Where known, 85% of clients were contacted on the same day of referral, and the remaining were contacted the next day, indicating they were most likely all contacted within 24 hours of referral. This is a feature of the program that McAuley Works are very proud of, and sets them apart from other employment services programs.

4.3 Approach to working with participants

From the perspective of the program staff, there were consistent views that program is very focussed on developing a relationship with the participant, identifying their needs and then working collaboratively with them to achieve whatever goals they have. *"Client centric/ client focus is important. What has happened to them in their abusive situations is that they have lost their own voice and their own identity. So the client-centric model is very important because what it does it enables them to feel like they have been validated as focussing on their needs and then working with them to achieve their goals."* (worker) Another important aspect of the model was seen as its holistic focus and capacity to focus on more than just the narrow employment issue. The program coordinator suggests *"A lot of the work is pretty heavy duty mentoring... It's the whole thing- it's actually genuinely taking it from a holistic point of view. Everyone bandies that word around but that is actually what we do. We look at all the things that are getting in the way."* The non-vocational support is reflected in the range of services referred to.

This core approach of the McAuley Works program was mirrored from the perspective of program participants. Many of the participants interviewed commented on the supportive relationship that had developed with their worker and how they felt the workers understood their situation and were able to assist them to start re-building their self-confidence. This is reflected in the following comments from three participants:

"There is tremendous rapport that is built. (Worker) looks at the skills and when you're unemployed your self esteem plummets and you fear entering the workforce after not being in it for many years. (Worker) has the ability to rebuild that lost confidence."

“You are not just guided to get a job, you are first re-created, you are told what changes you need to do both positive and negative things, so you can judge yourself and put yourself on the right track.”

“My emotions and problems... I feel like everyone is a good listener, they support me they say you are not alone we are here, everyone goes through things, it makes me feel like I am aware of my problems and I can get over them, and work on it and everything is getting better you know.”

The other important aspect of the approach to working with participants is that it is not office-based and services are provided to participants on an outreach basis. Most direct contacts with clients take place in public places such as cafes, or where appropriate the participant’s home. As a worker suggests, *“I think the outreach is superb. They are relieved, it is like a sigh of relief because we are coming to see them and they don’t need to feel intimidated by coming to an officious building. And the fact that we buy them a coffee sets up the hospitality mode of setting them at peace and at ease and they feel open to us.”*

Overall, one of the most consistent findings across both the staff and participant interviews was the strength of the relationship based approach to working with participants that has been adopted by the program and which appears to be highly valued by participants for its capacity to assist them to rebuild

Case Study – Christine

C■■■■■ is a ■ year old woman with a history of family violence. She has a current intervention order on both her parents and has suffers from social isolation, homelessness, depression, financial distress and has had a number of previous suicide attempts.

The client had indicated she has high motivation to improve her personal circumstances, however, prior to engaging with McAuley Works, she has had difficulty obtaining assistance to gain employment and has struggled to understand and engage with mainstream employment services.

C■■■■■ has a résumé, however it is long (6 pages) and does very little to sell the client effectively into work. She was also struggling to follow through on her work goals and therefore had become desperate to ‘just get any job’.

We have updated the client’s resume, removing all irrelevant content and refocusing it to better sell the client’s skills and target industry. We assisted her in applying for work through targeted cover letters and job applications. We also referred C■■■■■ to Fitted for Work to ensure she was interview ready.

As a result the client received two requests for interview and was recently offered full time employment, within her goal industry, which commences in February. C■■■■■ is clear that without the assistance she received from McAuley Works, which was thorough, targeted and very specific, she would be still struggling to find work. The client is now able to consider her options for housing.

confidence and self-esteem. It is also clear that the ability of the program to work at addressing a range of issues that impact on a woman's capacity to find and maintain employment but which may not be directly employment related (eg. housing) is also a key feature of the model that is valued by staff and participants alike. However, this core approach to working with participants takes considerable worker time and there is a tension for the ongoing operation of the program to balance this approach with the demands of increasing caseloads, broad geographic catchment areas for the program, lack of clarity about when and how participants are exited from the program, and the finite resources within the current funded capacity of the program.

4.4 Caseloads

Caseloads for each worker are currently at 40-50 participants per worker with the total program caseload estimated to be 80-100 participants by the end of the current contract. It was suggested by the coordinator that a caseload of 60 could be reasonably catered for by each worker if there was the usual mix of participants needing more or less intensive support and some inactive participants and this would not be unusual in similar JSA employment programs. However, it was noted that given the complex presentation of many women who have been referred to the program to date, a caseload of 30-40 participants would be the ideal level if program resourcing enabled it. It was on this point that there appears to be a tension between managing the increasing caseload and maintaining what are seen as some of the unique elements of the McAuley Works program with its capacity to take a more personalised and flexible approach to working with participants that incorporates an holistic approach to their needs. All staff agreed higher caseloads would be possible but recognised this might start to influence and change the type of services that could be provided. As one worker suggested the increasing caseload is already changing the nature of the services that can be provided: *"Focus has now had to move to employment and employment only. When we were smaller and more boutique we could assist with attending and reporting and advocating to housing services."*

From a participant perspective, several noted in the interviews that the workers seemed rushed and it was sometimes difficult to get an appointment quickly, although agreed if there was an urgent need to see the worker this would likely be accommodated. The comments from participants tended more towards concern for the workers who they viewed as working very hard and being very responsive rather than as a criticism of the program as demonstrated by this participant's thoughts *"... put on more workers like (worker)- so that they have more time..... It is often that you get an appointment after 15-20 days, it would have been better if I had of got it more frequently."*

As the program continues to develop, finding a suitable balance between responsiveness (ie. increasing caseloads to meet demands for the service) and maintaining the key strengths of the program model such as its focus on working holistically and in a personalised way with women will be a key challenge. Increased funding and resources for the program would partly address this issue, although in the absence of such developments the program may need to consider more specific targeting of its services to maintain reasonable caseloads that protect the strengths of the current program model.

4.5 Pressures for staff and staff support

It was noted by staff that working for the program can be stressful. This is perceived to be due to the nature of the work which is supporting women who have experienced family violence, the ability to provide the same level of service to participants as the caseload has risen, and the sometimes isolating nature of the work given the workers are outreach-based and usually working alone. *“Workers are on the road a lot and responsible for their own time a lot. And if you have ever had to spend a lot of time with yourself it can become quite isolating. So it is making them feel like they are part of a team is really important.”*

The employment workers stated that while the work could be stressful and isolating, the support structures that have been put in place and which continue to be developed are useful. This includes the weekly team meeting that serves basically as a relaxed de-brief that enables staff to talk about the clients they are working with and share experiences and strategies within the team. The workers also suggested that while the lone outreach worker model could be isolating, it also allowed them to manage their own caseloads and be given a sense of independence and trust from the organisation in their role. There are safety procedures in place to ensure the coordinator knows which participants are being seen and the workers notify the coordinator when they have safely finished for the day and are on their way home.

4.6 Program throughput

Currently very few participants have formally exited the program because they no longer require services or because of losing contact with the program. (see section 6.8 for more detail on program exits). Program staff indicate that one of the reasons they are reluctant to exit participants from the program is that participants often wish to re-connect with the program or re-commence more intensive support at some time in the future. Program throughput also influences other elements of the program such as caseload levels and overall program capacity.

The program recognises that some participants essentially become “inactive” meaning they have little contact with the program but are still deemed to be in the program should they wish to more actively re-engage support services. As the program continues to develop, it may be useful to more fully articulate the different phases typical participants may go through in their level of contact with the program, from intensive support through to limited occasional contact, and how a successful program completion (ie. not currently needing any further support) versus an unplanned loss of contact with the program is defined. It should be noted that articulating these definitions would in no way mean participants could not actively re-engage with the program if required and would be useful from both a program evaluation perspective and from the perspective of participants having a sense of progress through their engagement with the program.

4.7 ICT support/ Admin processes

One worker noted the limitations of the current data collection systems for the program, which have been developed primarily as a response to having multiple funding sources. In particular, there is a requirement to enter participant related data more than once such as separate excel spreadsheet for evaluation and different spreadsheet for casenote and program related data. Information also needs to be entered into the spreadsheets at the office and it is not possible to enter the data remotely while out seeing clients. It was suggested that as the program develops much better use of technology could be made to rationalise the program data collection systems and improve the ease with which data can be entered by workers.

From an evaluation perspective, more robust systems of data collection would assist in future program monitoring and outcome evaluation activities. For example, in a largely outreach-based program it would be useful to collect all contact information including contact type and duration as well as information on travel time between contacts. From a program perspective, data is important to guide quality improvement (e.g. time spent in travel might lead to a locally based response) however, balance also needs to be achieved in data collection verses delivery of service. It is widely recognised that jobs services are overburdened by administrative processes which can impact on the capacity to provide direct services.

4.8 Catchment area/region

At this pilot stage, few limits have been placed on participants’ location ie. the program accepts all eligible referrals. The program has no specific catchment area or regional boundaries and thus referrals are accepted primarily on the basis of eligibility and program

capacity. In practice this means while referrals may be accepted for participants living in broader metropolitan Melbourne, it has not been feasible, at this stage, to provide services to participants living in country areas (other than to Tarrengower Prison). Table 5 below provides a summary of where participants were residing at the time of referral to the program. Most participants reside in the western and north-western metropolitan area, which is consistent with the operating area of the primary referral agency. There is a smaller proportion in the southern and eastern metropolitan regions, and a cohort in the City of Melbourne which includes inner northern suburbs where McAuley House is based. It should also be recognised that some participants are referred to the program while they are part of state-wide service with which the program has close links, and the program continues to work with the women when they move locations.

Table 5. Participants by Local Government Area

Region	Local Government Area (LGA)	Number of clients by LGA	Number of clients by region
	City of Melbourne	13	13
Northern Metro	City of Moonee Valley (NW)	5	15
	Moreland City	3	
	City of Darebin	3	
	City of Monash	2	
	Hume City	1	
	Banyule (NE)	1	
Western Metro	City of Wyndham	15	41
	City of Brimbank	11	
	City of Melton	7	
	City of Maribyrnong	4	
	Hobsons Bay	4	
South Metro	Glen Eira	3	6
	City of Port Phillip	1	
	Kingston City	1	
	Mornington Peninsula Shire	1	
Eastern Metro	City of Manningham	1	4
	Knox City	1	
	City of Whitehorse	1	
	City of Yarra	1	
Other	No fixed address	1	1
	No entry	3	3
Total			83

*Approximate. Note that some suburbs fall across multiple LGAs.

Program workers noted that family violence has no geographic boundaries and thus felt it was important that the program be able to accept referrals from across the metropolitan area. However, the impact of this approach on caseloads and capacity to meet client needs was acknowledged. The workers noted that driving to appointments with participants constituted a significant proportion of their working time given the dispersed geographic locations of participants (e.g. estimated one to two hours per day travel time per worker). The Coordinator noted the strong desire not to limit the program's catchment area while recognising that the current program capacity of two direct employment workers was close to capacity- *"I think we probably are at the point of needing someone else because we really don't want to turn anyone away. But as our reputation grows more and more referrals are coming in from more and more sources. So it is something we think about constantly and obviously I don't want to burn (workers) out."*

From some participants' perspective, the wide geographic coverage of the program is seen as contributing to the pressures the workers are under to manage their caseload and provide individual services to participants. As this participant suggests, *"(worker) always seemed so rushed but she is from what I understand very busy – which is probably why I haven't heard from her in a while – a bit more time, so they are not so rushed with a client, a bit more time so they can breathe too...had driven like 200 km before she had got to me, from a team leader point of view I would look at having a more localised service, more localised clients so they are not doing all that travelling."*

4.9 McAuley Works compared to other employment services

From the staff perspective, the main difference between McAuley Works and other employment services is the flexibility to spend more time with the participant and look more holistically at their direct employment needs (e.g. interview skills) and other broader needs that might directly impact on their ability to work (e.g. housing, safety issues). They are also able to more closely assess the woman's current capacity undertake required tasks herself, and step in and advocate where required.

The staff view of the McAuley Works program is strongly reflected in the views of participants. Some of the participants interviewed previously were, or concurrently are, involved with other employment related services and generally viewed the McAuley Works program as much more flexible, much more personal and caring and having an approach that is much more understanding of the participants' needs and the impact of issues such as family violence on self-confidence and self-esteem. It was also suggested that the program staff were more likely to be knowledgeable and understanding of issues such as mental illness and having a criminal history and how this impacts on finding a job. *"I think it is great I think it is a lot more personal and obviously they have had a lot of experience, I am*

guessing, with people who have made a mistake obviously with a criminal record and what they do, they are kind of warm, they don't judge you, when you go to another agency and believe me I have been there, as soon as you tell them that you have a criminal record it is like, hmm it's going to be very hard to get you a job. They sort of just put you on the back burner, and for some people you still want to work you still want to get out there and do something with your life." (participant)

The following case study demonstrates the program's emphasis on non-vocational barriers that often need to be addressed for a participant to stabilise and be work ready.

Case Study- J■■■■■

J■■■■■ was referred to McAuley Works for employment assistance by a Community Centre. She and her two young children had spent three years fleeing her violent husband – each time a family violence or homelessness service assisted her with housing, her husband found her and she was forced to leave. Each time she fled from him she disengaged with support. She then had to re-engage with new services in a new region (she even moved states) creating instability for herself and her children.

When she first sought help Victoria Police assisted her to obtain an Intervention Order and she was advised that this had been served on him. Each time he breached the Order she reported this to the Police, but no action was ever taken. She believed this was because he told Police he would be leaving the country, but in fact the Intervention Order had never been served. Unfortunately none of the services she received support from had followed up on her Intervention Order and Police hadn't communicated clearly with her so the situation continued for three years.

In the course of following up the multiple breaches, MCSW discovered that the Intervention Order was never served and requested that it be retrieved from the Court archives, and advocated for it to be served. MCSW also tried to ascertain if J■■■■■'s husband has left the country. These matters remain unresolved, despite active advocacy on J■■■■■'s behalf. If these matters were followed through when she first sought assistance the likelihood of her spending three years homeless and unemployed would have been significantly reduced.

Working with McAuley Works and McAuley Community Services for Women, J■■■■■ and her children have been placed in secure, temporary accommodation, and she has received assistance to complete her Seg1 application for public housing. Prior to linking with McAuley Works J■■■■■ was couch surfing with her two children and struggling to get assistance for housing from the local housing services as she had no fixed address.

Now that her housing is somewhat stable J■■■■■ is able to focus on looking for work. McAuley Works has supported J■■■■■ to complete her Cert III in Children's Services and has helped her to continue onto further study to complete her Diploma of Children's Services. We have supported her with the development of a professional resume and are undertaking intensive coaching with her to ensure she is able to access employment opportunities as they arise.

The referral sources surveyed believed that there were other appropriate programs they could refer clients to, such as JobCo (Disability Employment Services Provider) or JSA's,

however they chose McAuley Works because *“it is female specific”, “clients had bad experience with JSA’s”, and “The employment workers at McAuley Works have an understanding of the client group we work with, they show compassion, patience and go the extra mile to achieve great outcomes.”*

The referral agencies were asked if they would refer other people to McAuley Works, and all said yes. One added that *“I think your service is extremely valuable as many individuals can feel unsure about returning to work/study, and also do not know how to find out about what is available or how to apply.”*

4.10 Strengths of the McAuley Works Model

Across all information sources, it is apparent that a strength of the program is the support that it provides to clients. Client feedback indicated that the workers provided an immense level of support, that has had a significant positive impact across their lives.

“No I can just say that I think it is a great service and that they just need to put it out there a lot more, I really believe so that they can get some better funding and stuff like that and really help other people.” (participant)

“The support, the constant being there, if there any issues if I have got any troubles she will give me details to be able to do something about it if she can’t do it herself.” (participant)

“The support and allowing me to find me.’ (participant)

McAuley Works is a valuable service, I have seen the changes in the clients I have referred, their self esteem and sense of self worth is clearly enhanced since working with this service.

~Referrer

Referrers were asked what feedback they received from their clients about the program. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with much of it relating to the workers, including their quality, commitment and professionalism.

“...(the worker) goes above and beyond to support them in their individual goals by addressing their needs.”

The survey asked referrers to identify what they see as strengths of the McAuley Works Program. The comments picked up on the following features of the program’s:

- flexibility in employment options,
- range of supports provided,
- timeliness in responding to clients,
- female focus,

- inclusiveness with regards to the client,
- understanding of the client group, and demonstration of compassion, and
- patience afforded to the clients, acknowledging their time out of the workforce.

Additional strengths of the McAuley Works Program have been covered throughout previous sections of the report.

4.11 Limitations of the McAuley Works Model

From the referrer perspective two responses were noted with regards to how the program can be improved, and these referred to increased government funding, support, and resources including workers.

From the staff perspective some key areas for improvement or development included:

- Improved office space and physical resources given that the coordinator is located at a different site.
- Improved financial resources for the program including capacity to pay staff at a higher rate that recognises the significant contribution they make.
- Improved financial resources to increase staff capacity within the program .
- The nature of the program as being subject to short term funding contracts means the future is never sure and can contribute to anxieties about what will happen to the program.
- Technology could be better used to support the program (eg. database that could be accessed from remote locations when outreaching).

From the participant perspective some key areas for development included:

- More resources for the program so that workers are not so rushed and can spend more time with individual participants.
- More contacts/linkages between the program and employers which might mean there are employers who are willing to offer jobs to participants with limited experience and/or employers who could offer work placements on a paid or voluntary basis that would enable participants to gain valuable experience.

Case Study- L■■■■■

L■■■■■ was referred to the McAuley Works program with a limited work history and long periods of unemployment. This included several years of unemployment since her husband died four years previously, a period during which she had applied for over 100 jobs without getting an interview. Prior to her husband's death, she had been ■■■ years in a marriage that was violent and was characterised by physical, emotional, and financial abuse since its beginning. She had also been emotionally abused by other family members and her self-confidence was very low.

Upon commencing with McAuley Works, several issues for L■■■■■ were identified. Her resume was poorly organised and did not reflect the skills and training she had acquired. She had difficulty responding to selection criteria and other job selection process requirements. Most importantly, her confidence in her own abilities was very low and she had little hope for her future prospects of obtaining employment.

The McAuley Works employment worker starting working intensively with L■■■■■ and initially concentrated on working with her to create a new resume, developing skills in responding to job selection criteria and developing self-confidence through coaching and mock interviews. Following on from these activities she was supported to respond to several job opportunities. Over the subsequent three months she applied for seven jobs and got five interviews. She also started to rebuild her relationships with her children and her self-confidence and self-esteem grew immensely. L■■■■■ is now working in a temporary position and hoping this will be a stepping stone to her securing full time work.

As her employment worker suggested when she commenced with the program: *"When I first met L■■■■■ she spoke with a monotone voice and her eyes appeared dull and lifeless. She had no confidence at all."*

L■■■■■ speaking recently about her progress since starting with McAuley Works notes: *"I feel so much better in myself so that I can contact more jobs and I feel so much more confident than I did before. She has made me feel much better person in myself. Now I am on my way, before I felt like I was getting nowhere, no future. I had nothing, it was absolutely horrible and now I feel my whole life has changed around and now I am going to get a job really soon. Well I have a temp job but I am going to get a full time job coming my way, it's my year, last year was my preparation and this year is the dream job come true."*

5. Financials

Please refer to the audited financial report, to be provided in July 2012.

6. Results and Outcomes

6.1 Incoming Referrals

As shown in Table 6, over half of the referrals to McAuley Works were from two agencies. With 31 referrals, Women's Health West is the most common referral source, following by McAuley House (formerly Regina Coeli), with 16.

Table 6. Number of referrals by agency

Referral Source		Number of clients
Affiliation of McAuley		26%
	McAuley House	16
	McAuley Works	1
	McAuley Care	3
	Sisters of Mercy	1
	Not specified	1
Employment Services Provider		5%
	Matchworks	2
	Life Works	1
	Job Prospects	1
Community Service Agency		58%
	Women's Health West	31
	Melbourne City Mission	5
	Relationships Australia	2
	Eastern DV Service	2
	Hanover	2
	Vincent Care Youth Service	3
	Fitted for Work	1
	Nth Melb Community Centre	1
	WIRE	1
Other		11%
	Self	3
	Psychologist	1
	City of Melbourne	1
	Private Citizen	1
	Not identified (inc Brendon House)	3
TOTAL		83

6.2 Assistance received and its perceived value

Interviewed clients were asked what kind of assistance they received from McAuley Works as part of their engagement with the program, selecting from the lists below (Table 7). They were also asked to provide an assessment of how useful this assistance was.²

Table 7. Types of assistance received and participants' assessment of value

Type of assistance	Very*	Moderately*	Not*
Vocational assessment	8	3	2
Education/training opportunities	10	1	1
Work opportunities	14	1	0
Placement support	2	0	0
Interviewing skills	13	2	1
General worker access/support	16	1	1
Other	12	0	0

*Note: The participant only rated the assistance types that they had received.

The provision of work opportunities and general worker access/support were two types of assistance that clients received and overwhelmingly found very beneficial. Participants were very appreciative of the linkages to services, and assistance with navigating service systems which they previously were not accessible to.

Most clients who received vocational assessments found them very useful. Where they were not as useful, or where the client was not sure as to their value, this was generally due to the client already knowing what they wanted to do.

As discussed, participant's experience and feedback regarding worker support is a real strength of the program. Where a client reported that this assistance was not valuable, this was due to the worker being "very busy".

The 'other' category included various responses, including some that were included in the options provided; mainly emotional, personal and practical support including résumé development and referrals to agencies for assistance such as Fitted for Work.

² Given that these were conducted over the phone, where participants were not able to see the list of options, the table below should be treated as indicative.

Table 8 identifies clients' referrals in more detail, with a total of 98 referrals being made for 47 individuals. Unsurprisingly, four of the top five referral types relate directly to accessing employment and/or education, with family violence crisis services being the other main service to which they are linked.

The 'other' referrals referred to above include for stream service reassessment, student services, medical assessment, driver's licence, food vouchers, parenting, nursing registration and NEIS.

Table 8. Outgoing referrals for participants

Referral type	No. referrals
Work clothing	34
Education	13
Employment services	13
Family violence crisis services	10
Education assistance, inc RPL	9
Other	8
Housing	5
Personal assistance	2
Mental health	2
Legal services	2
Total	98

6.3 Participants' achievement of goals

Interviewed participants were asked what their goals were when they commenced with the program, and these were generally either to obtain employment in their field, or more commonly, to get assistance in looking for work and accessing services, or to obtain personal support.

Participants were also asked to rate on the following four-point scale, how well they achieved their goals. As shown in Table 9, the majority of clients reporting partially achieving goals, which is expected from a less than one year program where many clients are still active. In assessing whether they achieved their goals, participants' responses didn't necessarily reflect their original goals. For example, one participant had a goal to get full-time employment in Community Services, and assessed themselves as 'exceeding their goals'; "Well I haven't got a full-time job but things have completely turned around for me and I have actually got temporary work at the moment due to McAuley where had nothing at all."

Table 9. Participants' self assessment of goal achievement

Goal attainment	Exceeded goals	Achieved goals	Partially achieved goals	Did not achieve goals
No. responses	2	6	14	4

Referrers were asked if their clients achieved their aim when referred to the program. Three of the four respondents replied that the clients achieved their stated aims, with the remaining agency's clients being 'no' and 'not sure'. One worker stated that the program *"...worked collaboratively with myself and other organizations to advocate on behalf of, and plan services to meet the needs of vulnerable clients. The stated aims achieved include employment, advocacy, engagement and support."*

Participants were also asked what they believed were the most significant factors that affected how well they achieved your goals, with the following factors used as prompts. The results in Table 10 support other feedback, indicating a very strong positive influence of the program worker, and a negative influence relating to their personal circumstances. The 'other' response related to confidence and encouragement.

Table 10. Contributing factors to participants' goal achievement

Factors	Positively	Negatively
Motivation	4	0
Program worker	12	0
Work/education/training opportunities	4	1
Personal circumstances	1	7
Other	3	0

6.4 Participants' self-assessment of personal domains

Participants interviewed were asked, 'compared to before you commenced with McAuley Works, how would you rate the following?' As per Table 11, the most profound improvements were in relation to their self-perceptions of employability, emotional self-reliance, and self-confidence, with at least 80% of respondents reporting an increase in these domains. Stability of housing was the domain on which the least improvement was observed, with 72% reporting this as unchanged. However it should be noted that not all participants were experiencing unstable housing at the time of engagement. In relation to sense of safety and financial self-reliance, over half reported that these had improved during their program involvement.

Table 11. Perception of personal domains pre and post engagement

Domain	Greater	Same	Lesser
Employability	20	5	0
Housing stability	5	18	0
Self-reliance (emotional)	21	5	0
Self-confidence	24	3	0
Sense of safety	15	9	1
Self-reliance (financial)	14	11	1

6.5 Employment placement details

The data in this section relates to 36 episodes of employment, for 30 participants, including five with repeat episodes. As shown in Table 12, half of the clients were placed in casual positions, and almost one in three in part-time permanent positions.

Table 12. Participants' employment status

Employment status	No. clients
Casual	18
Part-time permanent	10
Full-time permanent	7
Fixed term contract	1
Total	36

As part of the interviews with clients, they were asked about their employment preferences. In relation to what kind of work they are interested in³, the most common responses were community services (N = 5), retail or sales (N=4), followed by financial (N=3), and administration/reception (N=3). Clients were also asked their preference in relation to employment hours and status (Table 13). There was an almost equal mix in relation to preference for part-time or full-time hours, but a strong preference for a permanent position due to the need for financial security.

³ A minority of clients nominated multiple areas.

Table 13. Participants' employment preferences

Client employment preferences		
Preference for employment hours	Part-time	48%
	Full-time	52%
Preference for employment status	Permanent	85%
	Casual	15%

*Of those answers recorded.

Client hours

Clients employed on a casual basis, reported a large variation in hours, from less than one day, to full time hours (Table 14). This was also reflected in the hours of part-time permanent employees.

Table 14. Participants' weekly hours by employment status

Client hours by status	No. clients
Casual	18
10 hours or less	2
11- 19 hours	4
20-29 hours	2
30-38hrs/F/T hours	4
On call	3
Shift/varied	4
Fixed term contract	1
4-6 hrs pw	1
Full-time permanent	7
20*	1
25+*	1
F/T	5
Part-time permanent	10
10 hours or less	3
11-19 hours	2
20-29 hours	3
F/T	1
Shift	1
Total	36

*Unclear re: classification and hours' contradiction.

Employment status

Table 15 shows that 28 clients were in ongoing employment, and six placements had ceased for a variety of reasons including returning to study, reduction in agreed hours, and injury.

Table 15. Status of participants' employment placements

Employment status	No. clients
Ongoing employment	28
Reason employment ceased:	
Family reasons & return to FT study	1
Re-secured due to low hours	1
Injury	1
No further shifts available	1
Inappropriate behaviour (employer)	1
Failed to pass trial period	1

Type of work

The 36 employment placements that commenced were across a range of industries, as shown in Table 16, below. The most common sectors were unskilled labour, comprising cleaning, factory positions such as process work or pick-packing, and kitchen-hand work, often at restaurants. There were also many positions involving customer service, and various roles in care assistance. The remaining unclassified positions include everything from cold calling to gardening, to marketing management to personal trainer.

Table 16. Participants' placement field

Placement field	No. clients
Kitchen-hand	5
Factory work	5
Cleaning, housekeeping	5
Customer service	3
Call centre	3
Reception/Admin	3
Care assistant (Childcare, Personal care, Personal Services)	3
Other	9
Total	36

Employee remuneration

As per Table 17, most employees were paid at award wages, which was generally \$15.51 per hour.

Table 17. Participants' placement pay rates

Pay rate	No.
Award	18
\$16 – 19 p/h	8
\$22 p/h	2
Above award	3
TBA, NK	4
Total	35

Duration of placements

The average duration of placements of clients was 17 weeks (Table 18), however obviously this includes placements that are still ongoing. Seven women were in positions that were in excess of six months' duration.

Table 18. Participants' placement length

Length of placement	No.
0 – 13 weeks	12
14 - 26 weeks	8
> 26 weeks	7
Total	28*
Average	17 weeks

*includes one of unknown duration; excludes ceased placements.

6.6 Retention in employment through employer engagement

The benefits of retaining women experiencing domestic violence in employment are significant for both employee and employer. As stated by the DVWREP (2011:4), "Staying in employment is critical to reducing the effects of the violence. By supporting victims to remain in paid employment, workplaces can assist victims on their pathway out of violence and keep the whole workplace safer. Supporting victims to stay in work by implementing domestic violence entitlements not only maintains productivity, but also reduces recruitment and training costs for employers."

As demonstrated in the following case study, McAuley Works also worked with clients to assist in securing their existing employment that was in jeopardy due to issues experienced by this target group.

Case Study - K█████

K█████ was referred to McAuley Care seeking refuge from her violent husband of ██████ months. The violence began soon after they were married when she protected his ██████ sister from his abuse. Her husband was verbally, emotionally and physically abusive to her throughout their marriage. The violence had escalated to him hitting her in the face with a ██████ and her inflicting self-harm to stop him from being violent.

She had an interim Intervention Order put in place and a court date for the final Intervention Order, but needed court assistance. The final Intervention Order was granted and as her husband attended court, it was deemed served.

K█████'s husband had kept her totally isolated and dependent on him. She had never previously lived alone, had never gone shopping or even bought a train ticket. However, she did have a job and her employer was keen for her to continue working.

K█████ spent four days in the McAuley Care crisis service during which she was referred to the McAuley Works Employment Program. McAuley Works facilitated a risk assessment with her and her employer at her workplace to ensure she could return to work safely. She was also referred to a family violence service in the area who assisted her with temporary accommodation while they worked with her on her long-term housing needs.

K█████ is now living on her own in temporary housing, using public transport and doing her own shopping. She has asked her Human Resources Manager to be her workplace mentor; and she is having driving lessons. Without this early intervention response, it is likely that K█████ would have gone into a women's refuge, lost her job due to being too afraid to return to work and become reliant on unemployment benefits. It would have taken her a number of months to find alternative accommodation and a new job. Given the level of distress and uncertainty K█████ exhibited at court, she may well have decided that the cost of leaving was heavier than the cost of staying.

K█████ has been happy with the support offered to her throughout this experience; as such, she has reported that she is more likely to assist her sister-in-law to seek help, thereby preventing further violence to another woman and child.

6.7 Education and training

Forty-one women received ‘training’ through the program, with a total of 118 sessions or courses delivered. As shown in Table 19 below, 69% of all commenced, and 86% of all completed education opportunities, were conducted by McAuley Works case workers. Generally referred to as ‘Foundational Training’, these sessions generally included:

- résumé development, including identification of key achievements and personal attributes,
- construction of selling points,
- cold canvassing,
- interview techniques and debriefing,
- career planning,
- job search strategies,
- writing cover letters, and
- addressing key selection criteria.

Table 19. Training commenced and completed by participants

Training providers	No. trainings commenced	No. trainings completed
AOT <i>Cert III Business Admin (online)</i>	1	
Cambridge RTO <i>Cert IV Training & Assessment</i>	1	
Marguerite Dore <i>Lead lighting course</i>	1	
MCSW <i>Work readiness training</i>	41	24
Meadow Learning Centre <i>Diploma in Beauty</i>	1	
Melbourne First Aid <i>Senior First Aid</i>	1	
NMIT <i>Bachelor Degree IT</i>	1	
North Melbourne Language and Learning NMLL <i>English classes</i>	1	
Open Channel <i>Cert III in Media (Film Making)</i>	1	1

RMIT <i>Cert IV in ESL</i>	1	
Selma Institute <i>Diploma of Children's Services</i>	1	
Smart Connections <i>Cert II Business</i>	1	
Sydenham Community Centre <i>Intro to MYOB</i>	1	1
Victoria University TAFE <i>Cert IV Financial Services</i>	1	1
Wentworth College <i>Cert IV Community Services</i>	1	
Wesley Mission <i>Cert II Hospitality</i>	3	
Wingate Community Centre <i>Intro to MYOB</i>	1	1
Total	59	28

The in-house training sessions are examples of Intensive Employment Assistance, which is described in the Funding Agreement (p.37) as:

- “development of an individual support plan that identifies employment, education and training goals and pathways;
- provision of work readiness training and mentoring;
- provision of ongoing support for first four months of placement in training or work.”

Several of these women also commenced placements with formal training or education providers such as TAFEs, or RTOs, with four of these courses being completed within the timeframe of the program.

6.8 Program Exit

Further to the program data and the observation that only limited numbers of participants had completed and/or exited the program, staff were asked about their perceptions of successful service completion and exit from the program. It was noted that simply securing a job in itself may not necessarily indicate that the participant needs no further support and services and the first casual job is a stepping stone towards other employment. It was suggested that a substantial proportion of participants have not been exited from the program in case they need further support but for the purposes of day-to-day operation of the program have very little ongoing contact. Because the participants often secured a casual job as a stepping stone to another job there would be periods of more intense support while they were securing/changing jobs but this might lessen considerably once they are in a job. ‘... and what I found was that some people would go off and get jobs and

then they would disappear for 6 months and then they would be ready for the next stage- so I think it all balances out.' (worker) Thus the relatively small number of formal exits from the program is leading to increasing caseloads for the workers although, at this stage, in the opinion of the workers and coordinator the caseloads are manageable due to the variability in the needs of participants and their different stages of engagement with the program. However, as the program continues a clear strategy around dealing with program exits in both the case of successful completions as well as where the participant has been "lost" to the program would seem important both for program capacity and program evaluation reasons.

For the program staff a successful completion in the program *'can be either that they have realised that they don't want to work, so that is a successful completion, and the other one is when they are confident they don't need our assistance any more'* (worker). Thus, while securing employment is an expected outcome of the program overall successful completion of the program is deemed to include a wider range of factors than just employment and could in some cases include situations where the participant has not secured a job. Furthermore it is considered some participants may require very long term support even if they have successfully secured a job and for practical purposes there routine contact with the program may be very limited.

Apart from exits deemed to be a successful program completion, the other type of exit from the program is where contact has been lost with the participant. This presents difficulties for the program as sometimes participants will re-engage with the program after many months of lost contact so there is a reluctance to "exit" the participant. For example, all staff noted that as a group the program has had difficulty engaging with women exiting prison- they often engage with the program while they are in prison then lost contact upon release or are not in the right "headspace" to look at employment issues.

Overall, the lack of clarity about program exits due to either successful program completion or to a participant disengaging from the program is an issue for management of caseloads and for evaluation of program outcomes. As one staff member notes *'I guess after a period of a year, we would say they have exited, but they may still come back'* and as another one suggests *'... always leave the door open.'*

6.9 Employer Programs

Capacity Building

The DWREP (2011:8) workplace guide recommends the following steps for workplaces in relation to assisting employees experiencing domestic violence. This includes ‘Domestic violence policies and procedures’, ‘Domestic violence safety planning’, and ‘Managing abusive calls and emails’.

- i. Create a process to develop a domestic violence policy which involves key stakeholders in the workplace,
- ii. Identify key areas of responsibility,
- iii. Develop a policy addressing domestic violence,
- iv. Develop procedures for implementing the clauses/entitlements,
- v. Distribute the policy,
- vi. Provide training,
- vii. Build awareness through workplace communication,
- viii. Create accountability measures for abusers if they work in the organisation.

Employer capacity building was part of the original McAuley Works model as detailed in the Funding Agreement :

“McAuley Works has a dual approach involving working with women directly to assist them to develop pathways to employment and financial independence; and working with employers to build their capacity to support staff who are experiencing family violence.” (p.35)

Commencing in late 2011 (Milestone 2), McAuley Works was to deliver:

“Employer assistance (will be) provided including

- (i) information sessions for management and staff on family violence;
- (ii) assistance to develop relevant policies and practices;
- (iii) assistance to develop mentoring programs;
- (iv) assistance to develop early intervention referral pathways to Family Violence, Mental Health or Homelessness services” (p.38)

In relation to above, the following activities were delivered:

(i) the information sessions, one session of Employer Awareness building was held in early 2012, to seven schools as part of Mercy Secondary Inc. (MESI) a joint audience of MESI, and a three hour training package has been developed with En Masse, to be delivered post-funding period.

(ii) Each of the MESI schools who participated in the initial briefing on the impact of family violence in the workplace has indicated that they would like an awareness session to be delivered at their school (some have also asked for an age appropriate session be conducted for students).

(iii) Catholic Social Services Victoria has convened a forum for McAuley & EnMasse to deliver the training package to member organisations (primarily Catholic NGO's).

(iv) The Significant Women's Network has convened a panel discussion for women in business, featuring McAuley Works and McAuley Employer Awareness programs (along with Fitted for Work) as examples of prevention of homelessness.

'Reverse Marketing' placements

With regards to individual clients, the program workers noted that working with employers or potential employers had not constituted a substantial proportion of the work at this stage of the program's development. There has been limited contact with employers in a couple of situations where it was warranted and the client gave permission for contact on their behalf to occur. However, the program workers contended that while working with both the client and employers had been envisaged as part of the program model, in practice this was hard to achieve due to issues such as privacy and respecting clients' wish that their family violence history not be raised with an employer. On an individual level the preferred approach has been to work with the client to raise their own issues with the employer if required, such as when specific safety procedures may need to be put into place at the workplace.

'And that's a really delicate thing to weigh up but I haven't spoken to an employer saying our family violence victim needs your support because she is frightened at work' (worker).

By the end of the program, six employers were to be engaged and have offered placements to program participants. According to Milestone Report 4, this had occurred with four employers.

The following rationale was provided for the variation:

1. As expressed above, working with employers had been envisaged as part of the program model, however, most participants preferred to keep their situations private, and, where there were no safety issues to consider, this became the adopted practice.
2. The group employer forums (e.g. the three listed above) have a dual purpose (a) raise awareness of the impact that family violence has on the workplace and (b) create an environment whereby an employer may consider recruiting a new employee from the McAuley Works program.
3. McAuley Works has utilised the services of Disability Works Australia and Rosa Micala recruitment to act as an 'intermediary' between Employers and the program participants e.g. both services have conducted group interviews sessions with McAuley Works participants for the purposes of matching them to vacancies. Both

services have extensive employer networks and both have offered jobs to McAuley Works participants.

Post-placement support

It was also recognised that it might be possible to identify employers willing to specifically employ women with a family violence history, but at this stage only limited work has been undertaken in this area. It was noted that a limitation of having identified employers who were specifically willing to target potential employees who had a family violence history was that this led to a tendency to “reverse market” the clients. That is, there is a tendency to try and “fit” the client into being suitable for the vacant positions from a preferred employer and market her to the employer, rather than starting where the participant is and with her particular work aspirations. Another version of reverse marketing is to approach an industry where a number of participants are trying to gain entry, e.g. health. However, McAuley Works doesn’t have the volume of clients available to fit with such a strategy –the work to date has been focused on a one-to-one ‘behind the scenes’ coaching method that empowers women to actively seek the job she is after. *“This program is very woman centred and it is driven by her needs.”* (worker).

Furthermore, where there has been some limited development and use of employers to provide positions specifically for women with a family violence history there have still been issues filling positions. To date, this had occurred primarily with a couple of other health/human service organisations with strong linkages to MCSW “ *... but it is having the women to fit into those roles. I don’t actually have women that fit into those roles. The trouble with having a champion employer is they have specific roles to fit a specific group of people and they don’t fit the rest... what we are looking at is career aspirations, not just about getting a job.*” (worker).

On a broader level, program staff recognised the need for further developments in employer awareness about family violence. *“I think employer awareness stuff is really, really important. I think that will make a difference when employers know what to look for and how to support somebody that might be going through that ... there will be far less loss of jobs. And I think stepping in when a woman is potentially going to lose her job, when she comes to us, that’s really, really important.”* (worker).

Although employer awareness activities were planned to be a key element of the program, so far only one session has been provided for employers. A training program for employers is being developed in partnership with another training provider with the hope that the training can start to be rolled out to employers soon, possibly on a fee-for-service basis. It is

anticipated that this will lead to further development of relevant policies and practices, and mentoring programs.

7. Sustainability

The following section responds to the questions requested to be included by DEEWR.

How successful elements of the project have continued/ could continue

1. In relation to the model: The feedback gained during this evaluation is indicating that the intensive, outreach, one-on-one support model works for women providing the worker: caseload ratio is set at an appropriate level and the travel component of case management is kept to a reasonable time frame – an expansion of the program into other metropolitan areas would resolve both issues.

2. In relation to financial sustainability: McAuley Works has entered into discussions with job services providers to explore the viability of developing a subcontracting model which would draw funding from DEEWR to provide intensive support to eligible women, (it is anticipated that this will take another 12 months to test fully).

Participants who are not eligible for DEEWR funded services are often recipients of State Government services; McAuley Works is also interested in pursuing discussions with State Government departments for funding as the program positively impacts on outcomes related to reduced incidents of violence and homelessness.

How relationships between key partners have continued/ will continue

McAuley Works has an extensive referral network which is continuing to build. A feature of the original design was that participants would be offered co-case management when other issues impacted upon their ability to access the labour market, this came about as a result of the organisations experience of trying to provide employment support through its homelessness/mental health case management program (McAuley House). However, this feature has not always been able to have been realised for a number of reasons:

1. Where program participants have a casemanager prior to being referred to McAuley Works, these links are maintained, however, getting case management support in an emergency is not always achievable and leads the Employment workers to take on those duties e.g. a woman was recently allocated an Office of Housing property with one week to respond – her homelessness supports had ended due to the extended waiting time, so the employment worker assisted her into her new property.

McAuley Works has also initiated a number of partnerships through the development of the Reference Group, the Employer Awareness Training Program and the Skill/Training program.

Each of these partnerships enhance the program model and will be developed further through Memorandum of Understandings.

8. Partnerships and sector communication

An activity to be delivered during Milestone 4 was, that “Best practices (to be) shared with employment and support services, government, and employer bodies; and through journal articles and presentation to relevant conferences or organisations.” (p.42)

McAuley Works have advised that a report on the project would be distributed to key stakeholder via a wide range of networks, such as Catholic Social Services of Victoria, Victorian Council of Social Services, VicServ and the Council to Homeless Persons. The McAuley Works program will be presented at the 2012 Homelessness Conference later in the year and McAuley will seek opportunities to submit a written piece in magazines such as Parity and the Big Issue.

9. Reporting

Milestone reporting to DEEWR

As per the funding agreement, four progress reports have been sent to DEEWR, for the project up until 8 June 2012.

The reports covered:

1. Project activities against performance indicators
2. A summary of project performance and activity to date
3. Milestone Table.

10. References

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11. Attachments

The following attachments can be provided on request.

- Program Participant Survey
- Program Stakeholder Survey
- Program Employer Survey