

CPD Roundtables on Transitions to Employment Roundtables 3 & 4

On 10 June 2020, CPD convened the next two in a series of virtual roundtables to discuss entrenched unemployment and underemployment, as part of the *Transitions to Employment* initiative. The first two roundtables were held on 15 April and focussed on a) the overall cohort of long-term unemployed and underemployed, and b) people with disability. The next two roundtables brought together experts from government, civil society and the private sector to discuss other cohorts we have targeted in this initiative: a) people in contact with the criminal justice system, and b) refugees and vulnerable migrants. For all roundtables, the key question has been: *What interventions can the private sector, civil society and government pursue to tackle entrenched unemployment and underemployment for the groups in our society facing the greatest disadvantage?*

These roundtables were planned before the COVID-19 pandemic made boosting employment opportunities an even greater national priority. We are now facing the most significant labour market disruption of our lifetimes, and it's important to keep a focus on the job seekers who were already experiencing challenges. In both conversations, it was clear that interventions need to be framed beyond just getting a job. For people in contact with the criminal justice system, job readiness was crucial for success, and with refugees and vulnerable migrants, a broader framing of employment to include economic independence and participation is needed. Roundtable participants considered opportunities to include these groups in potential new initiatives and current COVID-19 responses, as well as ways to build back stronger after the pandemic.

a) People in contact with the criminal justice system

During this roundtable we heard insights from **Lill Healy** (Deputy Secretary — Service System Reform, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet), **Marius Smith** (Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders), **Peter Severin** (Commissioner, Corrective Services New South Wales), **Tanya Hosch** (General Manager, Inclusion and Social Policy, Australian Football League) and **Leigh Hardingham** (General Manager, Social Procurement and Inclusion, John Holland), among others.

Participants discussed the major barriers to employment for people in contact with the criminal justice system, and recognised that more needs to be done to ensure people with lived experience are central to any reform process. Addressing systemic barriers to employment like housing and trauma was also a clear theme of the discussion, as was ensuring individuals are ready before pursuing a job or further training.

We heard about existing community initiatives already making a big difference on the ground. Addressing systemic barriers to employment like housing and trauma was also a clear theme, as was ensuring individuals are ready before pursuing a job or further training. Social procurement and community approaches that use throughcare models were recognised as big opportunities. Linking up tailored services, as well as working with people well before release and across their reintegration into the community, showed the most effective results. Participants also identified the importance of making the business case to employers in a coordinated fashion, and for larger employers to lead by example in the recruitment and retention of people with criminal histories.

Specific proposals were highlighted, including a new employment program for prison leavers, joint housing-employment initiatives, the chance to coordinate efforts by sporting organisations (as employers and mentors) and using new technology to sustain family and community connections during incarceration. Scaling existing place-based work and expanding the focus of existing trials to include people in contact with the criminal justice system was also discussed.

b) Refugees and vulnerable migrants

During this roundtable we heard insights from **Alison Larkins** (Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services), **Paris Aristotle AO** (Chief Executive Officer, Foundation House) and **Huy Truong** (Co-Founder and Deputy Chair, Thrive Refugee Enterprise), both on the Refugee and Migrant Services Advisory Council and **Robyn Shannon** (First Assistant Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment).

A key takeaway from this roundtable was the recognition of significant levels of interest from employers to employ vulnerable migrants and refugees. The main barrier was not the lack of employers who are willing and ready. Rather, the challenge was building greater knowledge within businesses about the background of migrants and refugees, and how to practically contact these groups to build pathways to employment. We discussed the need for more granularity on the demand and supply side at regional and local level, updated for COVID-19 impacts, and how that information will allow communities, providers and employers to respond in a more productive and coordinated way.

We also spoke about the opportunity to reframe thinking on economic participation to include social enterprise and self-employment, giving refugees and vulnerable migrants more control over their participation. Both these conversations led us to place, where there was common ground on the opportunity to connect services and employers more effectively with individuals and families at a regional and community level.

Where to next?

As outlined in the briefing materials, we have seen five themes emerging as key components for building employment pathways for the four targeted cohorts:

- National Employment Services Reform Agenda
- Collecting and sharing data
- Backing regional/local approaches
- Public-private job opportunities
- Covid-19 - the “new normal”

Now that these roundtables have been convened, we will continue to build on these themes, as the ideas and analysis generated will be compiled and taken forward by the Steering Group and key stakeholders. Some ideas and proposals from the first two roundtables in April are already progressing.

This roundtable series is convened by the Centre for Policy Development with the support of the Boston Consulting Group and Paul Ramsay Foundation. We thank participants for their time and contribution and look forward to an ongoing conversation about our collective response.

Participants: People in contact with the criminal justice system

Adam Casley	Project Manager, Employment and Parity Initiative-Corporate Affairs, Wesfarmers
Annabel Brown	Program Director, Centre for Policy Development
Cameron Spence	Social and Economic Programs Lead, ArcBlue
Carly Stanley	Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Deadly Connections
Christine McAllister	Manager-Community Learning & Participation, Brimbank City Council, Victoria
Christine Ratnasingham	Head of Systems & Delivery-Programs, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Cindy Penrose	Chief Operating Officer, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Cliff Eberly	Manager Social and Economic Inclusion, Wyndham City Council, Victoria
Daniel Hutt	Chief Operating Officer, User Voice
Darren Hooper	Chief Operating Officer, Max Solutions
David Clements	Deputy Secretary - Inclusion, Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Dean Lloyd	Founder, Lloyd Consulting Co
Glyn Davis AC	Chief Executive Officer, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Ian Palmer	Chief Strategist-Employment, Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO), Emeritus Professor, RMIT University
Jacinta Pollard	Managing Director, Caraniche
Jeni Whalan	Chief Program Officer, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Jo Tabit	Senior Manager-Employment, Brotherhood of St. Laurence
Kathryn Greiner AO	Director, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Keenan Mundine	Co-Founder and Ambassador, Deadly Connections
Krystal Lockwood	Lecturer-School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University, Fellow, Centre for Policy Development
Leigh Hardingham	General Manager-Social Procurement and Inclusion, John Holland
Lill Healy	Deputy Secretary-Service Systems Reform, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet
Marius Smith	Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO)

Marlene Morison	General Manager-Chisholm Road Prison Project, Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, former Commissioner-Queensland Corrections
Peter Severin	Commissioner, Corrective Services New South Wales
Rachel Elliott	Senior Manager-Government Relations and Industry Affairs, Woolworths
Robert Friedman	National Engagement Manager for Priority Populations, NBN
Robert McLean AM	Director, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Rod Marsh	Independent Consultant
Ryan Phillips	Deputy Secretary-Corrections and Justice Services, Department of Justice and Community Safety
Sandra McPhee AM	Chair, New South Wales Public Service Commission Advisory Board; Chair, Australian Government, Expert Advisory Panel review of Employment Services
Shaun Braybrook	General Manager-Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety
Susan Dennison	Professor-Deputy Head of School (Research), School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Deputy Director-Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University
Tanya Hosch	General Manager-Inclusion and Social Policy, AFL
Travers McLeod	Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Policy Development

Participants: Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants

Alison Larkins	Commonwealth Coordinator-General for Migrant Services, Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs
Andrew Asten	Project Leader, Boston Consulting Group
Andrew Keast	Chief Storyteller, Refugee Talent
Annabel Brown	Program Director, Centre for Policy Development
Ben Gauntlett	Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission
Betina Szkudlarek	Associate Professor, University of Sydney
Carolina Gottardo	Director, Jesuit Refugee Services
Cliff Eberly	Manager Social and Economic Inclusion, Wyndham City Council, Victoria
David Clements	Deputy Secretary - Inclusion, Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Eve Lester	Independent Researcher and Consultant
Glyn David AC	Chief Executive Officer, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Huy Truong	Co-Founder and Deputy Chair, Thrive Refugee Enterprise; Council Member, Refugee and Migrant Settlement Advisory Council
Jeni Whalan	Chief Program Officer, Paul Ramsay Foundation
Joseph La Posta	Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW
Katrina Currie	Executive Director-Employment, Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Kerrin Benson	Former Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural Australia
Leigh Hardingham	General Manager-Social Procurement and Inclusion, John Holland
Lill Healy	Deputy Secretary-Service Systems Reform, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet
Lynley Dumble	Acting Director Community Wellbeing, Brimbank City Council, Victoria
Maria Mupanemunda	Research Officer, Brotherhood of St. Laurence
Paris Aristotle AO	Chief Executive Officer, Foundation House, Chair, Refugee and Migrant Settlement Advisory Council
Pat O'Sullivan	Council Member, Refugee and Migrant Settlement Advisory Council
Rachel Mead	Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Woolworths
Robyn Shannon	First Assistant Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills & Employment
Ryan Williams	Head of National Stakeholder Relations, NBN
Selena Choo	Founder, Humans Like Us
Shyla Vohra	Migration Director, Regional Australia Institute
Travers McLeod	Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Policy Development