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LEARNING FROM RETURNING

Return to Work Fund

July 2010 - June 2011 Annual Report

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WorkCover SA*

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AISR
Informing Decisions

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RTW FUND PROGRESS FOR THE RETURN TO WORK FUND EVALUATION

1.1 RTW FUND - STRATEGY AND POLICY

For most people, work is good for their health. For injured workers this is particularly true. Staying at work or returning to work quickly after an injury is critical for recovery and reduces the social, financial and emotional strain of work injuries on individuals, their families and the workplace. The WorkCover SA Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 includes the performance area of return to work along with financial performance, scheme integrity and stakeholder satisfaction. The recently released Strategic Directions for 2011-2016 have extended this to include the core goal of injured workers remaining at work. It is also clear that whilst work capacity may be reduced or altered, this should not prevent injured workers from returning to their jobs to engage in different but meaningful activities.

The South Australian workers' compensation scheme does not always fare well in comparison with other Australian schemes¹. South Australian injured workers are often reported as having a significantly poorer RTW rate than the national average (80% in South Australia compared to 85% in Australia)². However, durable RTW rates (ie those who RTW and are still working) in South Australia do not significantly differ from the national average. Partial RTW is higher in South Australia than other jurisdictions (27%), with 36% of South Australian injured workers deriving income from both WorkCover SA and their employment after returning to work (noting that 5% of injured workers did not know if they were receiving worker compensation payments).

However, it is important to understand state level factors that get lost in examination of national trends. In their report on RTW in Australia, Campbell Research acknowledge significant differences in the size of organisations supported by worker's compensations schemes across Australian jurisdictions. WorkCover SA has significantly more injured workers from medium size organisations, and significantly fewer injured workers from large and very large organisations than the Australian average. Factors such as the role of self-insurers within the jurisdiction, varying government policies, funding and claims management models cannot be overlooked when drawing comparisons between workers' compensation systems and RTW in Australian states and territories.

There also appears to be a qualitative difference, in that 89% of South Australians who had not returned to work (compared to 82% of Australians) reported this was because they were still injured or in pain. In addition, South Australian workplaces were clearly responding to workplace legislation that includes strategies to keep people in their pre-injury workplaces and, more recently, utilising RTW Plans.

South Australia appears to have more success in supporting people to continue in their pre-injury jobs, with only 14% stating they were not working as they had been retrenched or dismissed and a further 14% not working as they had left their pre-injury employment, compared with the national average of 18% and 20%, respectively. Remaining in the workplace was accommodated by modified duties, with 75% of South Australian injured workers reporting changes such as lighter duties or avoidance of heavy lifting. This compares to 69% of Australian workers reporting modified duties facilitating return to work. Correspondingly, inability to return to work in South Australia because of inappropriate workplace hours or duties was negligible (1%), but was at 7% for Australian injured workers.

¹ Campbell Research (2010) *Australia and New Zealand Return to Work Monitor 2009/10*.

² Noting the RTW rate is the proportion of injured workers with a minimum claim duration of 10 days, who had returned to work between the time of the claim and interview (7-9 months post-claim).

There is a need to continue efforts designed to ensure RTW Plans are both well implemented *and* useful. South Australian injured workers have significantly better access to RTW or rehabilitation Plans (69%), with most of these workers (85%) contributing to the development of the Plan³. In contrast, across Australia only 56% of injured workers have RTW Plans, and only 78% of those with plans contributed to their development. Although the higher number of RTW Plans in South Australia is a positive finding, South Australian injured workers indicated the plan was less helpful than those from other jurisdictions, and they received less assistance to follow their plan.

Injured workers in South Australia had significantly more contact with their claim agents than other Australian workers (54% and 47%, respectively)⁴. South Australians rated the quality of this engagement moderately, as did other Australians at around 3.5 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The only significant difference was a lower rating for how the claim agent handled communication in South Australia compared to other jurisdictions.

Approximately 34,000 South Australian workers sustain an injury in the workplace each year. In most cases these injuries are minor. Most injured workers⁵ (around 79%) do not lose time off work or return to work in some capacity within two weeks. Those who don't return to work within three months have significantly poorer outcomes.

The RTW Fund has been targeting the hardest end of the spectrum engaging with participants who have been on the workers' compensation system for over a year and a half. The outcomes evinced by the RTW Fund Projects are particularly profound given this difficult cohort.

In many cases Projects have successfully engaged with long-term injured workers, recognised existing skills and prior learning and translated this to new areas of work, provided support and encouragement to attend and complete training, and ultimately, helped their participants find meaningful employment. In the process, they are yielding valuable information for continuous improvement purposes while the innovative models they are applying are fulfilling the purposes of the RTW Fund.

³ Campbell Research (2010)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ This figure only included injured workers who have submitted a claim to WorkCover SA. It does not include injured workers from self-insured employers.

1.2 RTW FUND AIM, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Recognising that innovation was required to test the boundaries of the current worker's compensation system, the *Return to Work (RTW) Fund* was established by the *WorkCover SA* Board in June 2008, with \$15 million to implement initiatives that contribute to the improved return of injured workers to work. Organisations and individuals with novel ideas, which fell outside the traditional funding model, were encouraged to engage with the Fund. The RTW Fund had clear objectives that match the strategic direction of *WorkCover SA* (shown in Box 1). All funded Projects are expected to address at least one objective.

Box 1: RTW Fund objectives

The RTW Fund objectives are to:

1. Foster innovation to find solutions to known barriers to return to work and enhance the effect of factors that support return to work.
2. Expand retraining options for injured workers.
3. Develop greater workforce participation options.
4. Improve the skills of persons operating in the South Australian workers compensation scheme.
5. Establish workplace initiatives which develop and implement sustainable programs to help those sectors with known difficulties in achieving successful and timely return to work outcomes.
6. Raise awareness and promote the rehabilitation and return to work message.

1.2.1 EVALUATION

The Australian Institute for Social Research (AISR) at The University of Adelaide was selected by *WorkCover SA* to provide the RTW Fund evaluation over three years to end July 2012, with the contract finalised between the two organisations on 23 July 2009. This evaluation was designed to develop, implement, collect and analyse both performance (monitoring) data and outcome and impact (evaluative) data to provide an assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of the Initiative.

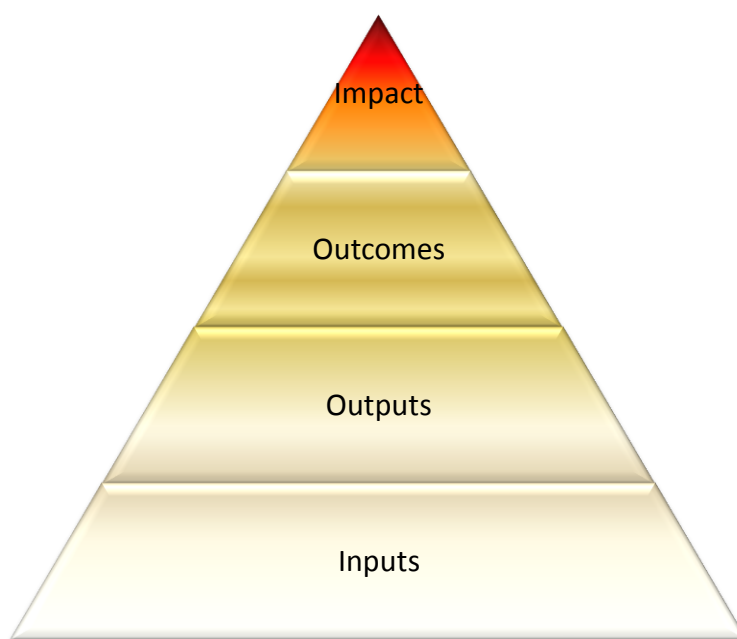
In summary, this formative meta-evaluation recognises that prospective projects vary considerably in terms of duration, size, complexity, topic and proposed outcomes. The AISR have developed an evaluation framework that focuses on the provision of constructive, practical and targeted support to individual RTW Fund project managers to enable them to develop evaluation strategies, plans and performance indicators that meet the needs of individual Projects while being consistent with the objectives and purpose of the RTW Fund as a whole.

This approach has ensured that Projects are fully engaged with the evaluation process, and have a personal investment in the project outcomes. The AISR collect, analyse and report on all aspects (quantitative and qualitative) of the Project's progress. In addition, the AISR are working closely with RTW Fund Management to ensure that higher level targets and goals are met, that *WorkCover SA* are informed about the progress of the projects, and that they are

alerted immediately to any potential risks. This evaluation approach provides a strong evidence-based foundation for the RTW Fund and identifies projects or project elements that make a significant impact on the program goals.

The overarching Evaluation Framework uses a program logic approach, wherein a hierarchy of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact are identified. At this stage, Projects commencing in 2009 and early 2010 are showing outcomes as well as inputs and outputs. Impact will relate to return to employment outcomes that are sustained over time, and to changes in the different elements of the workers' compensation system that are affected by the funded Projects. The chart below summarises the hierarchy. A summary of Inputs, outputs and outcomes for the first seven Projects is shown in Section 0. Latter Projects will be included, when they have progressed sufficiently. The summary project participant report is provided in Table 11. More details about Projects can be found in *Chapter 2*.

Figure 1: Outcomes Hierarchy structuring the Evaluation Framework



1.2.1.1 REPORTING

The AISR collect, analyse and report quarterly on the progress of the RTW Fund, the activities and progress of Projects funded through the RTW Fund and the activities and support provided by the AISR. The content and format of the reports have been designed to meet the information needs of *WorkCover SA*, to address the objectives of the evaluation and to determine the success of the components of the Fund in meeting the objectives. Reports are updated quarterly with new information and as such provide a comprehensive overview of RTW Fund activity to date.

WorkCover SA is now assessing and approving proposals for the RTW Fund received in response to advertised project opportunities rather than in structured Rounds. This method ensures approved Projects are able to commence in a timely manner. Recognising the need to provide a 'historical' timeline for RTW Fund Projects to demonstrate the maturity of the RTW Fund structure and processes, accordingly Projects are now clustered by the year they were approved.

Note that reports on Project activity draw heavily from the quarterly or final reports provided by Projects and in some cases paraphrase or reproduce content.

1.3 THE RTW FUND – AN OVERVIEW OF SYSTEMIC SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

Twelve Projects have been approved under the Return to Work Fund with two Projects refunded to extend the successes and learning from Projects scheduled to conclude (details about these Projects can be seen in Chapter 2). In reflecting on the achievements and challenges of the RTW Fund and the early Projects, it is important to recognise that injured workers in the first five RTW Fund Projects fell into the category of those who were least likely to return to work. Most had been out of work for over 500 days, with Projects from SA Unions and JF Consulting engaged with workers who had been injured an average of 643 and 681 days, respectively. Interwork, who achieved the most success in returning participants to work, did so for 16 workers (a remarkable 40% of their cohort) – an average of 524 days since injury.

The successes achieved in getting injured workers back to meaningful work and into appropriate training prove that with the right support mechanisms, long-term injured workers can achieve sustainable return to work. However, it is clear from the feedback to Project teams that many injured workers do, themselves, often feel hopeless in attempting to deal with what is often described as a faceless and overly bureaucratic system. In contrast, Project participants have felt supported, and in many instances, sufficiently comfortable to address personal and other issues that have hindered their RTW.

In the view of the evaluators it is unlikely that these personal RTW success stories would have been realised without the innovative approaches provided by Projects and supported through the RTW Fund. But the reach of the Projects and the RTW Fund extends beyond the level of individuals. The Fund is also designed to shift entrenched and ineffective procedures, and point to policies that can benefit from change. Structural change is more challenging than individual change. It is embedded in systems and invariably it takes those outside the system to notice the cracks. Coming from the outside, RTW Projects have held up a lens to the system, and sometimes shed a light on cracks that were not visible from the inside. Their perspectives may sometimes be considered as naive by those inside that system, but they bring fresh eyes and often raise questions that are not evident to those who are closely involved with the workers' compensation system.

The first Projects both benefited and were confined by their early involvement in the RTW Fund. They enjoyed greater freedom of scope and Project design, and came from a number of non-traditional areas. However, lack of knowledge in the RTW arena did lead to some frustration and specifics of client eligibility being overlooked. Moreover, there were incorrect assumptions made about the ease of access to suitable clients. It is fair to say that without exception all Projects expected the process of client referrals and engagement to be considerably more streamlined than it was and continues to be.

It is also fair to say that *WorkCover SA* and EML did not anticipate the difficulties experienced by these Projects. Both *WorkCover SA* and EML have demonstrated learnings from the experience of the first seven Projects, and have put in place new structures which will benefit subsequent Projects and other stakeholders. Box 2 provides an overview of progress against RTW Fund objectives, with the following sections addressing mainly structural issues raised by RTW Fund Projects and the *WorkCover SA* and EML response. At the end of this section we discuss the issues that remain unresolved.

Box 2: Overview of progress against RTW Fund objectives

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST RTW FUND OBJECTIVES

1. *To foster innovation to find solutions to known barriers to return to work and enhance the effect of factors that support return to work. The RTW Fund has -*
 - ✓ Provided funding to 12 Projects that have used different and innovative methods to support RTW for injured workers.
 - ✓ Re funding has been approved for 2 Projects demonstrating success in supporting training and return to work for long-term WorkCover recipients.
 - ✓ Employed a holistic person-centred approach to working with clients including visiting the client in their home.
 - ✓ Incorporated the disability employment model for RTW clients, to learn from a different sector.
 - ✓ Included a family-focused counselling intervention to ensure the client's personal support base understand the impact of the injury and the workings of the compensation system.
2. *Expand retraining options for injured workers. The RTW Fund has -*
 - ✓ Tested new initiatives including adult learning packages.
 - ✓ Targeted training to provide sustainable work options and also meet the needs (and interests) of injured clients.
 - ✓ Ensured prior learning is recognised and receives appropriate training credits.
3. *To develop greater workforce participation options. The RTW Fund has -*
 - ✓ Engaged small business as avenues to integrate injured workers back into the workforce.
 - ✓ Provided information sessions to businesses to ensure they understand the RTW legislation as it effects them if an employee sustains an injury.
4. *To improve the skills of persons operating in the South Australian workers compensation scheme. The RTW Fund has -*
 - ✓ Provided opportunities for learning about different ways of working with clients.
 - ✓ Facilitated the development of an RTW 'learning community' to inform program and policy development.
 - ✓ Challenged the status quo, resulting in changes to organisational processes.
5. *To establish workplace initiatives which develop and implement sustainable programs to help those sectors with known difficulties in achieving successful and timely return to work outcomes. The RTW Fund -*
 - ✓ Targets high claim sectors for intervention.
6. *To raise awareness and promote the rehabilitation and return to work message. The RTW Fund -*
 - ✓ Has improved communication within and between stakeholders.

1.3.1 INTRODUCING NEW PROCESSES

- ✓ *Improved communication between EML and Projects through the implementation of EML Project Management staff.*
- ✓ *Increased number of staff dedicated to supporting the operationalisation of the RTW Fund within WorkCover SA.*
- ✓ *Monthly participant reporting implemented to ensure EML is aware of client progress, employment and/or need for reintegration.*
- ✓ *Exit strategies for all participants initiated as Projects approved in 2009 draw to a close.*
- ✓ *EML to manage RTW Plans internally, when required for subsequent Projects.*
- ✓ *EML have refined the claim identification process using internal data and reporting to review claims.*
- ✓ *Preparation of information pack summarising roles and responsibilities in Workers' Compensation system to be provided to all potential new Projects.*
- ✓ *A RTW Fund Management report is now provided to the evaluators to ensure Fund progress is captured.*
- ✓ *WorkCover SA is developing RTW Fund communication strategy.*
- ✓ *Contracting processes ensure new Projects give appropriate consideration to factors critical to success, including familiarisation with the scheme, agreeing participant inclusion and exclusion criteria, reporting on progress of participants, communicating with interested parties, and exiting, withdrawal and replacement of participants.*

1.3.2 ENHANCING MUTUAL AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

- ✓ *Implementation of the EML Project team facilitated information sharing within EML. Case Managers are now better informed about RTW Fund and Projects due to information sessions and EML communication tools.*
- ✓ *Improved understanding of the boundaries, roles and responsibilities of all RTW Fund and Project stakeholders.*
- ✓ *EML have reported the benefits of learning from the experiences of the Projects and gaining a different understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by those assisting injured workers.*
- ✓ *All Projects are contractually obliged to familiarise themselves with the scheme, the rights and obligations of injured workers and employers, and the role of the claims agent.*
- ✓ *Regular meetings (approximately every 6 weeks) are now scheduled between WorkCover SA, EML and all new RTW Fund Projects.*
- ✓ *Projects are now required to clearly define inclusion and exclusion criteria prior to approval.*
- ✓ *WorkCover SA provides an information pack to organisations submitting an expression of interest.*

1.3.3 UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN ACHIEVING RETURN TO WORK

- ✓ *Improved understanding of 'suitable' training options, focusing on jobs that are in demand, offer sustainable work outcomes and are appealing to the injured worker.*
- ✓ *Growing understanding of the interface between the training system, the rehabilitation system, and the workers' compensation system*
- ✓ *EML have reported the benefits of learning from the experiences of the Projects and gaining a different understanding of the barriers of RTW, training and the importance of recognition of prior learning (RPL)*
- ✓ *Recognition of the importance of engagement and understanding between the rehabilitation and the training sector.*

1.3.4 INDIVIDUALISED AND HOLISTIC INTERVENTIONS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE RETURN TO WORK

- ✓ *All Projects report on the benefits of an individualised and holistic approach to injured workers, this has included visiting the injured worker at home.*
- ✓ *EML have acknowledged the benefits of this individualised approach.*

1.3.5 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Given that four of the first five funded Projects had a training focus, it is not surprising that issues relating to training were an area of early concern. Projects reported a lack of clear process for training approval and payment. It was felt that decisions about approval and payment for training were made at the discretion of the EML Case Manager rather than as part of system-based policy. If the Case Manager didn't see value then training was declined. This was felt to be a subjective and haphazard approach rather than one drawn from policy and/or procedure, and one leading to inequity between claimants. It was clear that when Projects acted as advocates for their clients, outcomes in terms of approved training were much more likely to be achieved. Whilst this is beneficial for injured workers engaged in RTW Fund Projects, other injured workers are missing out. Moreover, there are indications that many rehabilitation providers have stopped asking for training because previous requests have been declined.

From 1 April 2009, the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986* was amended to introduce a work capacity review (sometimes referred to as the '130 week review'). This review is conducted to determine entitlements beyond 130 weeks post injury. The review decides if the injured worker has maximised their work capacity and has been raised as a source of concern by Projects. They suggest that injured workers are not receiving their entitlement to training, and to similar support, as case managers are 'waiting out' the 130 week rule to avoid paying for training. They have also found that case managers will not approve training that straddles or goes beyond the 130 week time period. Projects also indicated that job seeking support and assistance should be implemented as an early intervention approach, rather than being provided two and a half years after injury.

The SA Unions Project also identifies the need for enhanced working relationships between the rehabilitation and training sectors, including improved understanding of each other's provisions. This includes assisting workers, rehabilitation providers and case managers to easily access information about real time training pathways, and in the process providing more user-friendly information about what is a very complex system (vocational education and training) for those who are not part of it.

The RTW Fund Management have taken a number of steps to ensure appropriate Projects are engaged to meet the objectives of the Fund, and that Projects are better informed about the worker compensation system. Whilst recognising the need for rigorous process and delays caused by other organisations, the evaluators remain concerned about the length of time involved in processing new contracts for the RTW Fund. *WorkCover SA* have developed a new strategy with the aim that contract negotiation does not exceed one month. It is expected this new approach will lead to improved contract timelines.

Similarly, it would appear that internal processes have delayed the release of the communication strategy. The evaluators believe that promoting findings arising from the innovative approaches to return to work demonstrated by RTW Fund could be effective in addressing some of the recent criticism of *WorkCover SA*.

It would also benefit the work of the RTW Fund if all EML case managers were made aware of the Projects. This can help with recruitment of injured workers, which continues to be an ongoing issue for Projects. It is the evaluators' belief that EML recruitment of Project participants continues to be the most effective and only sustainable recruitment strategy. Moreover, there continues to be a need to transfer lessons learned by EML Project staff more broadly within EML, so the benefits can flow on to clients not engaged in the RTW Fund.

To date Projects have predominantly focused on long-term injured workers who have been detached from their workplace. The emphasis on training and job seeking for the first five Projects approved in 2009-10 meant that 'detached' clients were more suitable. Moreover, Projects reported difficulties engaging with employers of the 'attached' workers. However, the evaluators believe it would be useful for some future Projects to focus on attached workers and the RTW issues that are specific to them.

The evaluators suggest that future Projects could explore the role of early intervention working with clients commencing no more than six months post-injury. The evaluators also acknowledge that SA Unions has included criteria for a cohort of early intervention and younger workers (aged less than 30 years) in their refunded Project.

Injured workers often felt that having sustained an injury they were viewed as a less desirable employee. This 'feeling' was often grounded in experience by workers who had been 'detached' after injury, but it also reflected their confidence levels after having been on the 'system' for a considerable time. Projects have discussed the importance of a holistic individualised approach and the benefits of this approach have been acknowledged by EML. However, it bears reiterating that if the case management model focuses on the compensable medical condition, it can lose sight of the bio-psycho-social model resulting in barriers that don't fit the compensable condition being overlooked or ignored.

1.4 THE RTW FUND PROJECTS – OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

1.4.1 RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS CAREER TRANSITION PROJECT

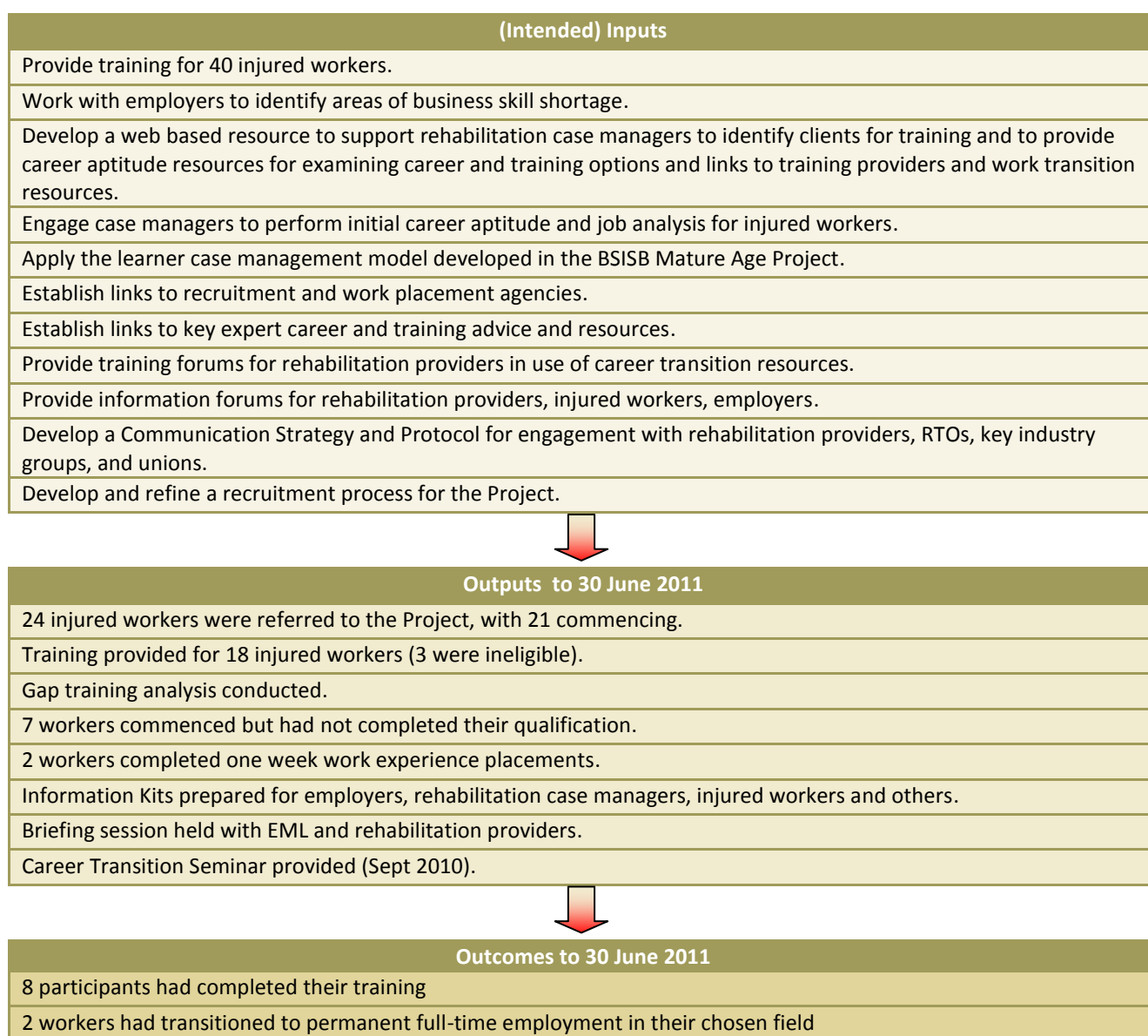
Provider: BUSINESS SERVICES INDUSTRY SKILLS BOARD

Commenced: 13 August 2009 **Completion (due):** 30 June 2011

Project Purpose: The Project aims to identify and prepare a cohort of 40 injured workers for retraining and/or up-skilling to new positions or careers to assist their transition back to work - with their existing employer, with a new employer, as a contractor, or in self employment.

Figure 2 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

Figure 2: BSISB: Retraining Injured Workers Career Transition Project



⚠ No information has been supplied by BSISB regarding progress against PIs, and against delivery of most of the Inputs identified for the Project.

⚠ Only 18 (45%) of a proposed 40 injured workers commenced training, with 8 (20%) completing the training.

1.4.2 CHANGE YOUR MIND ... CHANGE YOUR LIFE

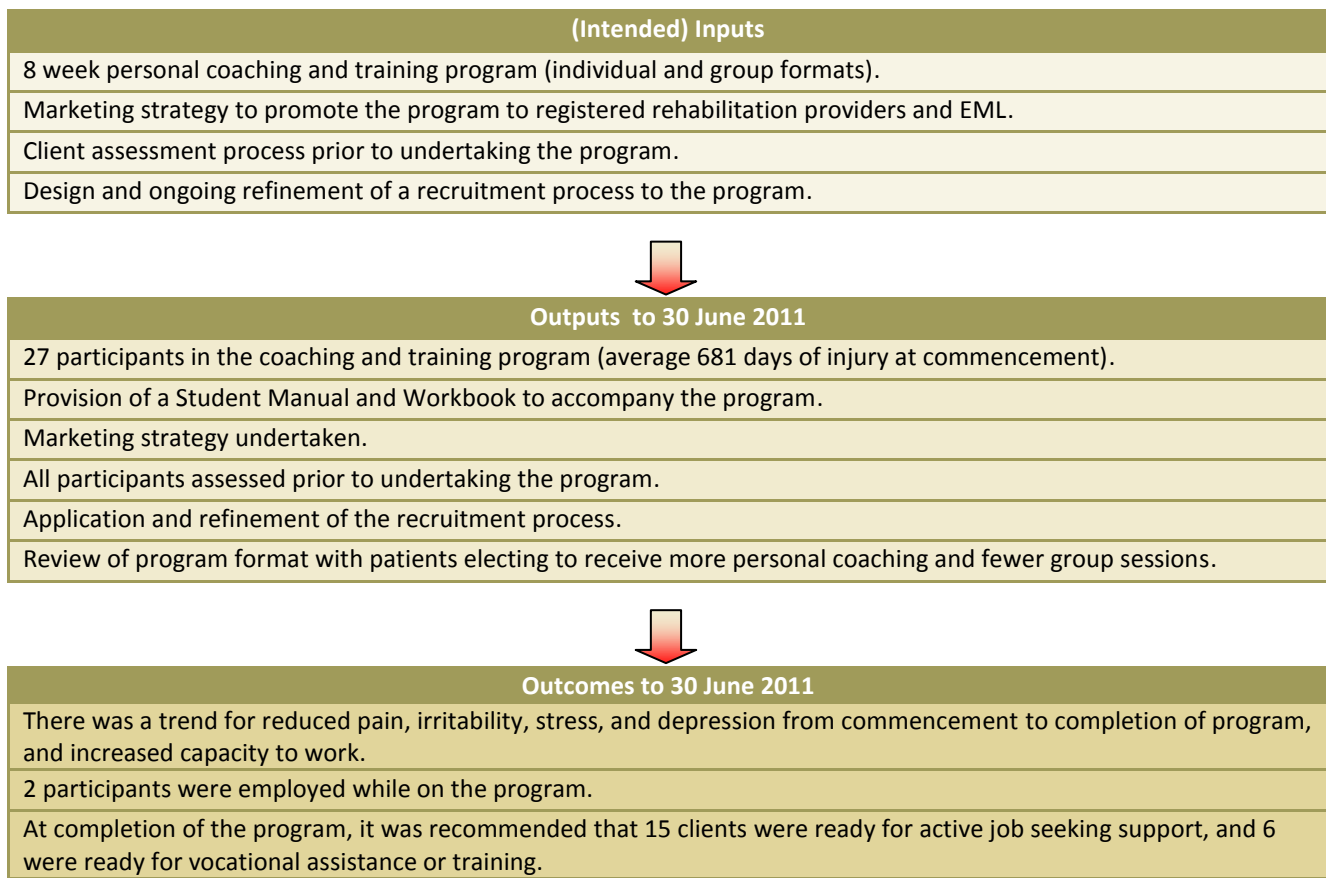
Provider: JANE FIELDER CONSULTING

Commenced: 1 October 2009 **Completed:** 30 June 2011

Project Purpose: This Project addresses the psychological dimensions of return to work by applying counselling and coaching techniques designed to shift the injured worker's focus away from pain and feelings of powerlessness to a positive approach to returning to work.

Figure 3 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at completion, 30 June 2011.

Figure 3: Change your Mind ... Change your Life



This Project shows significant promise, but more data are needed regarding Outcomes.

Only 27 (67.5%) of 40 proposed clients were referred to the Project.

The evaluation protocol implemented by JF Consulting required the completion self-assessment forms at the commencement and completion of the program, and at 3, 6 and 12 months post-program. However, non response at 3, 6 and 12 months means ongoing benefits cannot be assessed.

1.4.3 THE NEXT STEP TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

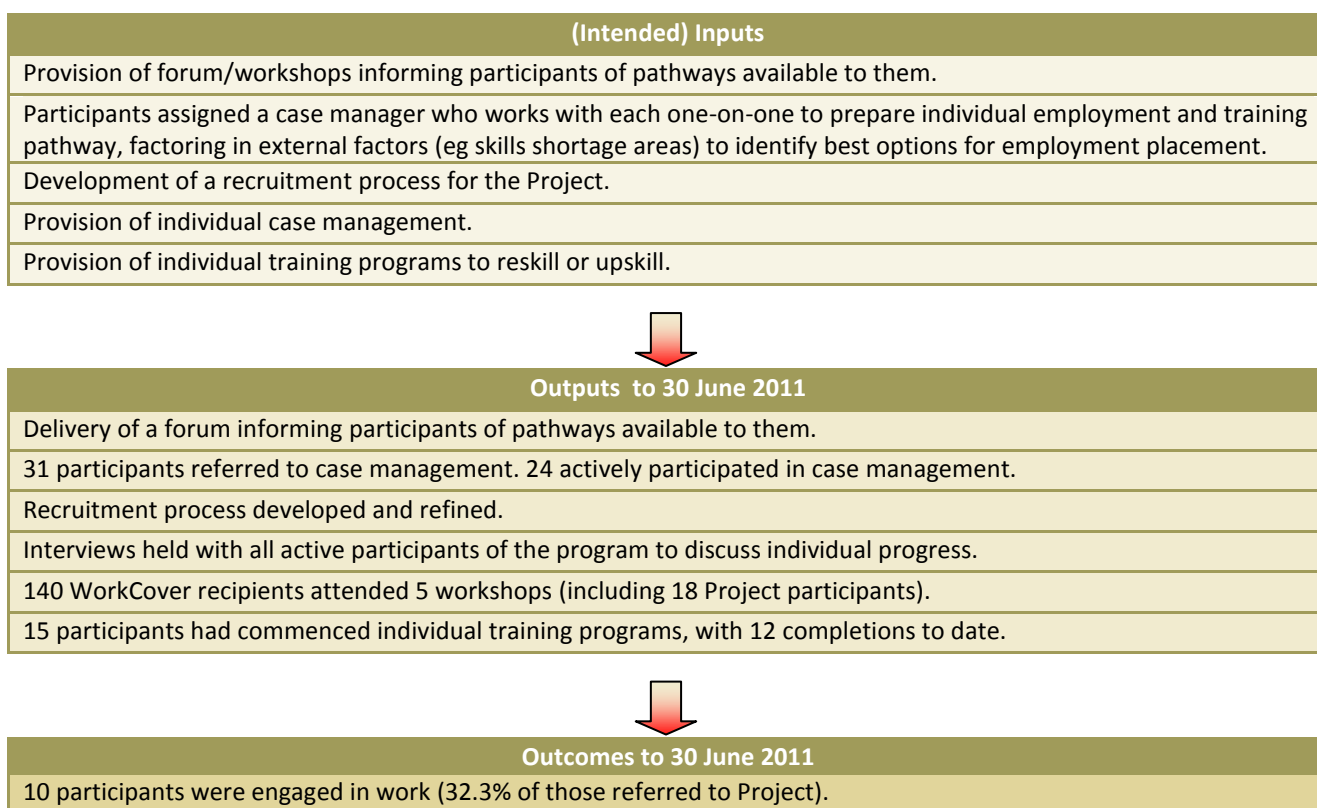
Provider: Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)

Commenced: 1 October 2009 **Completed:** 30 June 2011

Project Purpose: This Project is designed to provide 40 recently injured workers with a package of interventions (skills assessment, training, case management, job seeking, employment placement and post-placement support) to facilitate their return to work.

Figure 4 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at completion, 30 June 2011.

Figure 4: Next Step Training and Employment Program



- ☑ This Project shows some promise drawing 140 WorkCover participants to Workshops.
- ☑ Ten employment outcomes were achieved, representing employment for 32.3% of the 31 workers commencing the Project (5 positions were casual, 3 part-time and 2 full-time).

- ☒ Only 31 (77.5%) of the proposed 40 injured workers commenced the Project.
- ☒ Only 24 (77.4%) of the 31 participants engaged in case management.

1.4.4 PATHWAYS TO WORK

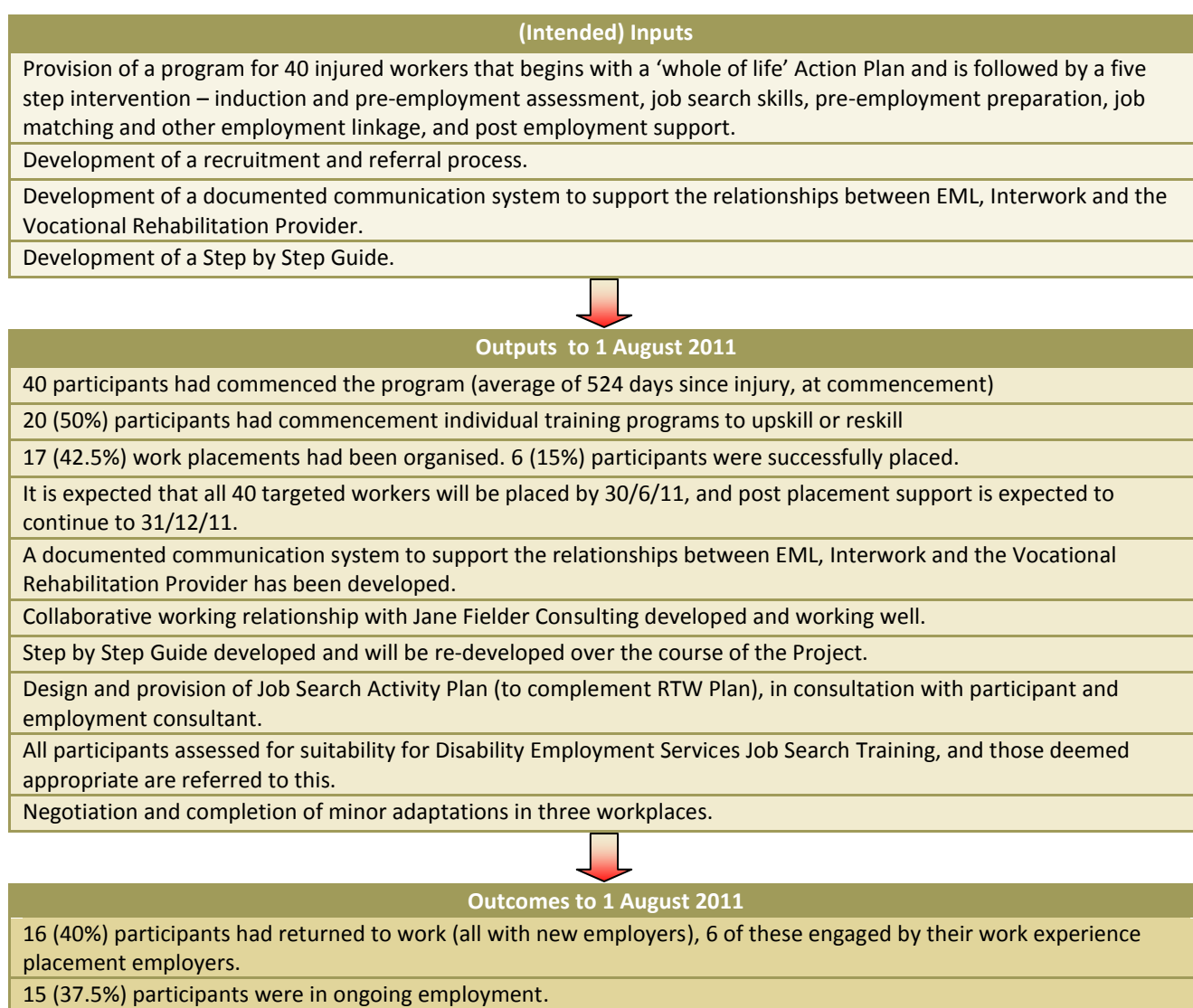
Provider: INTERWORK

Commenced: 4 November 2009 **Completion (due):** 31 August 2011

Project Purpose: This Project applies successful strategies being applied in the disability employment sector to achieving return to work of injured workers. In the process, the Project is testing the disability employment model for its relevance to the workers' compensation sector. It targets workers who have been on the WorkCover SA system for a considerable time and applies a holistic approach that includes workers and their families.

Figure 5 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 1 August 2011.

Figure 5: Pathways to Work Project



- ☑ This Project shows significant promise, with the applicability of the disability employment sector model showing relevance to the workers' compensation sector that deserves wider exploration.
- ☑ This Project doubled its employment target with 16 of 40 workers (40%) achieving employment.
- ☑ This Project almost quadrupled its target for sustained employment with 15 of 40 workers (37.5%) in a sustainable position.

1.4.5 RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

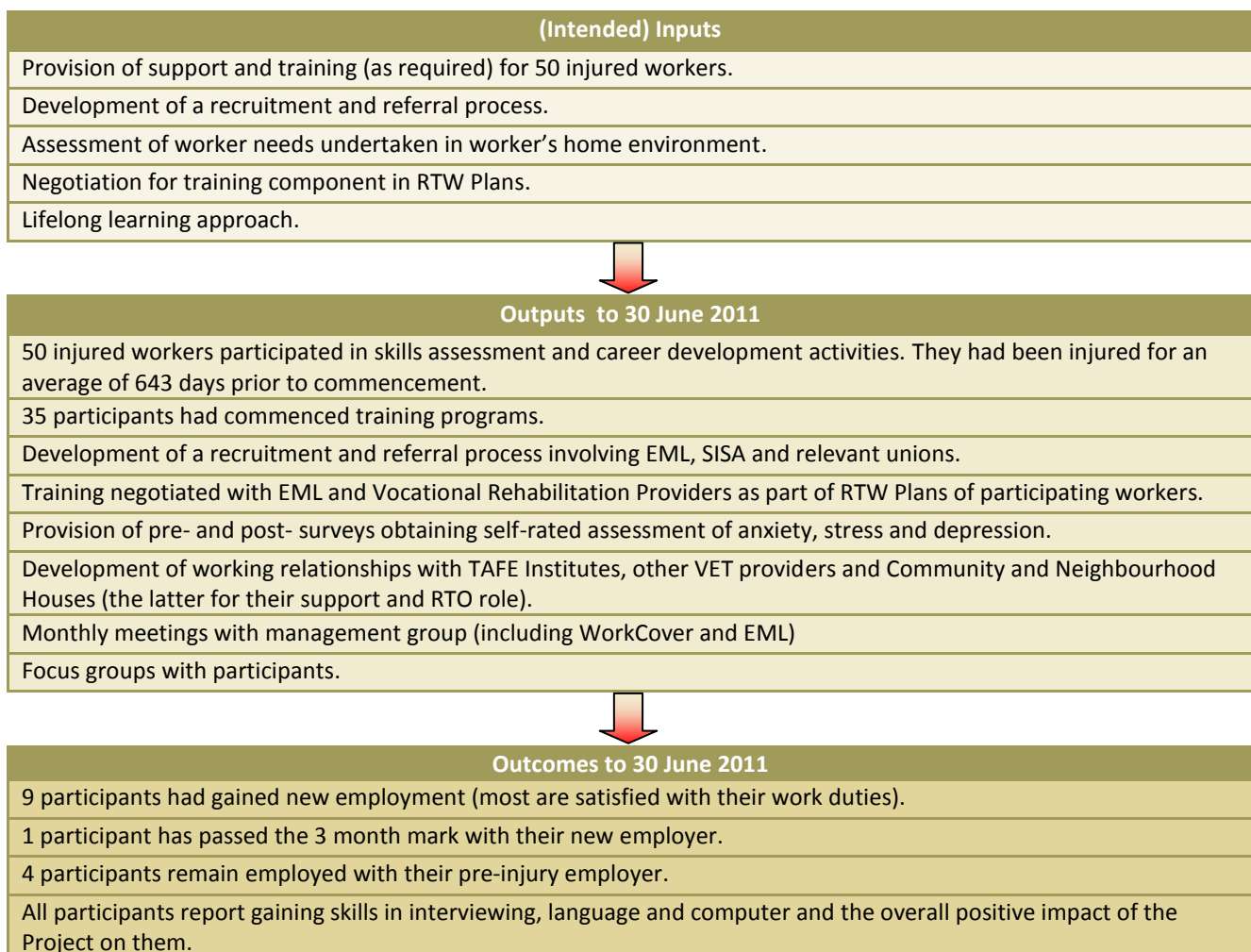
Provider: SA UNIONS

Commenced: 21 January 2010 **Completion (due):** 1 August 2011

Project Purpose: This Project is designed to provide wrap-around services and soft-skill training opportunities, within an overarching and holistic rehabilitation program, for 50 workers from the Manufacturing and Health and Community Services industries. As such the Project is exploring ways to improve the interface between the workers' compensation sector and the vocational training sector, and in particular, the role of training in achieving return to work.

Figure 6 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

Figure 6: Retraining injured workers for employment Project



- ☑ This Project has achieved its intended outcomes, and demonstrated the important role of RPL assessments and training in achieving return to work. It has also shown the importance of an improved relationship between the training and workers' compensation sectors.
- ☑ It has also identified the potential role of Community and Neighbourhood Houses as sources of training and local support for injured workers.
- ⚠ However, they identified that the 130 week review affects eligibility for training. This may compromise sustainable employment and return to work for long term injured workers, and is an issue that requires addressing at a systems level.
- ⚠ The Project also identified the need for a set of online tools to ensure better and more comprehensive information about real time training pathways.

1.4.6 SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT

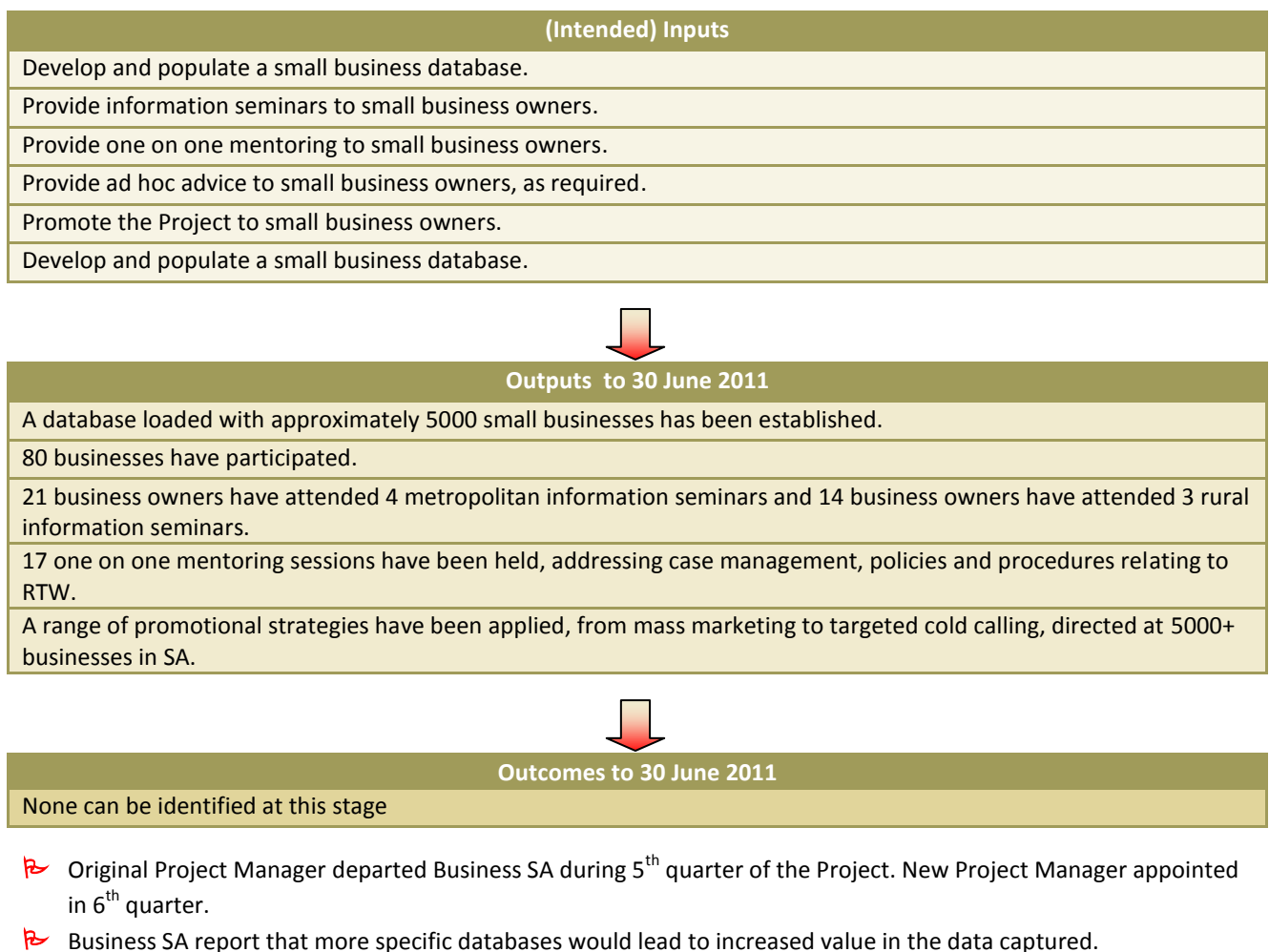
Provider: BUSINESS SA

Commenced: February 2010 **Completion (due):** 31 December 2011

Project Purpose: This Project is designed to educate and mentor small business owners about the return to work process, the benefits of alternate duties, and other support mechanisms. It will design and populate a database with all required information, identify small businesses using that database and disseminate promotional material to them. It will also provide free information sessions which outline the steps needed to reduce the impact of workplace injury and offer one on one mentoring sessions to ensure all elements are in place to facilitate the RTW process.

Figure 7 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

Figure 7: The Small Business Project



1.4.7 WORK HARDENING PROJECT

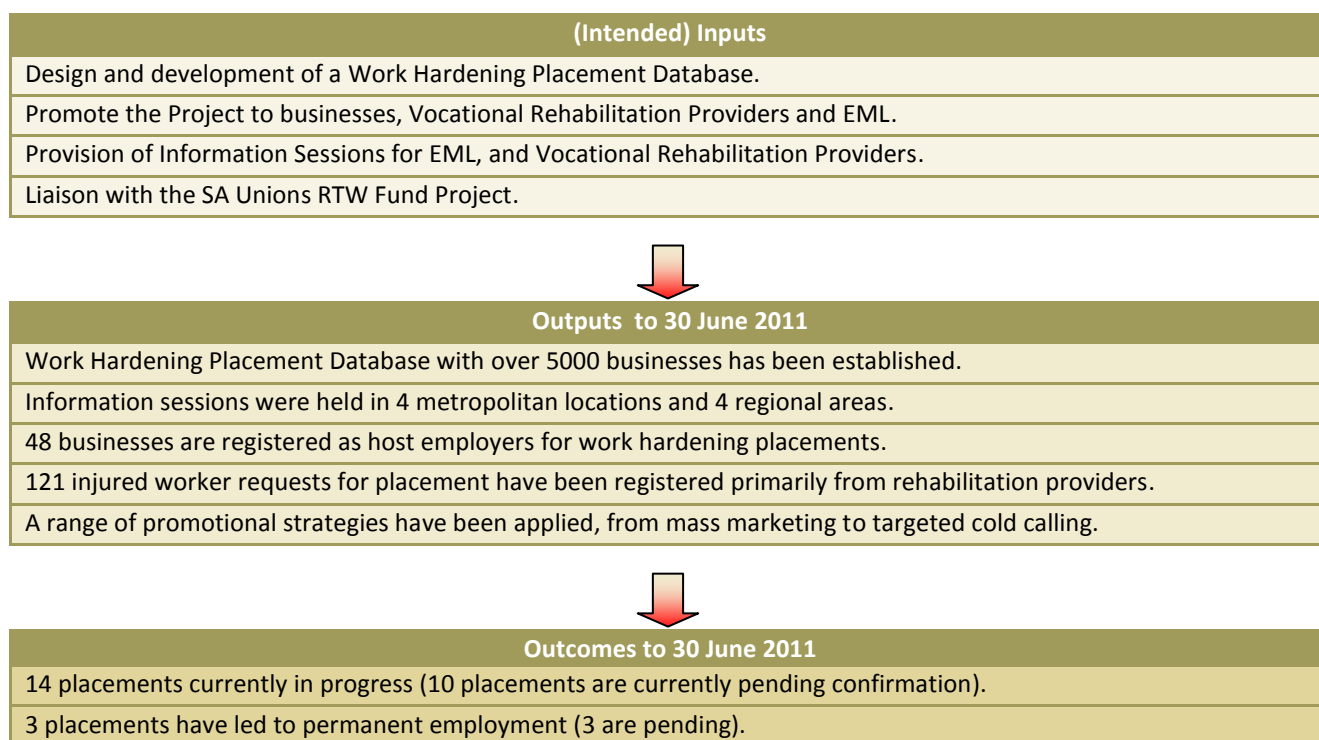
Provider: BUSINESS SA


Commenced: February 2010 **Completion (due):** 31 December 2011


Project Purpose: This Project is designed to address the difficulties of locating work placements for injured workers who are unable to return to their pre-injury workplace. It involves establishing a database of placements to be monitored and updated regularly. The database will document the roles and skills required to perform the placements, and their accompanying timeframe. The model is to be promoted to EML Case Managers and Vocational Rehabilitation Providers as a one stop shop to support the RTW process. It will then assist VRPs to organise a placement.

Figure 8 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

Figure 8: The Work Hardening Project



 Original Project Manager departed Business SA during 5th quarter of the Project. New Project Manager appointed in 6th quarter.

 Business SA report that more specific databases would lead to increased value in the data captured.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY OF PROJECT PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE RTW FUND EVALUATION

2.1 RTW FUND PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2009

The following sections provide a brief overview of RTW Fund Projects approved in 2009 including a summary of reported activity and progress to date. Please refer to individual Project reports for more information. An overview of Project participants to date is shown in Appendix B.

2.1.1 BSISB: RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS CAREER TRANSITION PROJECT

This project was completed 30 June 2011.

The Business Services Industry Skills Board (BSISB) was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 13 August 2009 to provide the *Retraining Injured Workers Career Transition* Project for the RTW Fund. The Project aimed to identify and prepare a cohort of 40 injured workers for retraining and/or up skilling to new careers/positions with either their existing employer or a new employer, or as a contractor or as self-employed. In brief, the Project was designed to:

- ⇒ Work with employers to identify areas of business skill shortage (current and future).
- ⇒ Source injured workers from EML.
- ⇒ Develop and provide training and professional development for a web-based resource to support rehabilitation case managers (RCMs) to identify clients for business services skills training.
- ⇒ Engage case managers to perform initial career aptitude and job analysis for injured worker.
- ⇒ Target training of injured worker with registered training organisations (RTOs) that meet BSISB standards, including the application of the robust learner case management model developed in the BSISB Mature Age Project.
- ⇒ Assist the transition of injured workers into the workplace (existing or new).

BSISB – SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover 13 August 2009

At the completion of the Project on 30 June 2011 -

BSISB had received eligible referrals for 24 injured workers. This represented 60% of the 40 workers agreed and contracted with WorkCover.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- The average age of all participants was 45 years, 79% were male with almost all (83%) spoke English as their first language.
- Back and musculoskeletal injuries were the most common complaints, present in around 80%.
- Most came from the transport, trades or construction sectors.
- Two thirds had basic or no computer skills, with 16 clients opting to receive introductory or refresher courses in this area.
- Participants had significant experience in their pre-injury role, with 30% reporting 3 to 10 years' and approximately 55% more than 10 years' experience.

OUTCOMES

- **Training** – Of the 24 participants (at 31 March 2011) 15 had either completed or commenced their training:
 - 8 (33% of 24) participants had completed their training and achieved a qualification;
 - 7 (29% of 24) had commenced but not completed their training;
 - 3 (12% of 24) commenced but withdrew prior to completion;
 - 3 (12% of 24) withdrew prior to commencement; and
 - 3 (12% of 24) had not met requirements for training.
- **Work experience:** Two (8% of 24) clients completed work experience after receiving OH&S qualifications
- **Withdrawal:** Three (12% of 24) clients withdrew prior to commencement of training, three commenced but withdrew prior to completion (one of whom withdrew due to a work placement)
- **Work:** Twelve (50% of 24) participants were engaged in work when they commenced the Project, all on reduced hours.
- **Career transition:** Two (8% of 24) participants have transitioned and obtained permanent employment in their chosen field, both of these are now using their skills and experience to train others.

2.1.1.1 BSISB 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

From 13 August to the end of September 2009, BSISB commenced developing their evaluation plan, held preliminary meetings with EML and *WorkCover SA* and prepared draft material for the web resource. All these activities were expected to be completed before the end of 2009.

2.1.1.2 BSISB 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

BSISB reported minor teething problems in the early stages of the Project (eg contractual processes) as they were the first Project approved under the RTW Fund. However, they reported these had no major impact on Project progress. BSISB finalised and submitted their evaluation plan on 8 December 2009. During this period they also prepared

information kits for employers, rehabilitation case managers, injured workers, industry contributors and mentors, and held a briefing session with EML and rehabilitation providers on 24 November 2009.

BSISB cited frustration during this period with regard to the process for recruitment of injured workers through EML. They felt that the recruitment process had been negatively impacted by the turnover of staff (including case managers and management) at EML, which was perceived to have led to a lack of continuity and process. (The evaluators note that EML dispute the rate of staff turnover). With no clients forthcoming by the end of 2009, BSISB informed *WorkCover SA* that it would advertise for clients via *The Messenger* and *The Advertiser* in early January 2010.

2.1.1.3 BSISB 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

Thirty potential clients responded to the recruitment strategies outlined above (Section 2.1.1.2) during January 2010, with direct advertising reported as the most successful approach. BSISB approved 15 of these clients for their project. Three of these were deemed ineligible by EML, and one was subject to ongoing negotiation. The proposed cohort was due to commence in April 2010. They had an average age of 43 years, and one-quarter were female. Back and musculoskeletal injuries were the most common complaints and around 60% came from the trades or construction sectors.

BSISB again reported that the process of EML approval of clients had caused delay to the start date for the first cohort, expressing continued frustration about their experience working with EML. BSISB perceived problems with the internal communication processes at EML which again they believed were exacerbated by high turnover of case managers. They stated that injured workers had similar complaints and that workers believed this was a barrier to their ability to access retraining and other assistance.

2.1.1.4 BSISB 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

The 4th report of BSISB activity was prepared in May 2010 and included two months of activity. At the time of reporting information had not been provided to AISR for the month of June 2010.

By the fourth quarter, BSISB reported that Project deliverables and timelines were 'back on track' - although recruitment remained a challenge and had required the implementation of new strategies. The most successful recruitment method was reported to be direct advertising targeting injured workers, although there has been some evidence of a 'snowball' effect when rehabilitation providers already have a client on the Project. Recruitment for the second round of participants included advertisements in *The Messenger* in April 2010, direct contact with rehabilitation providers in May 2010 and an advertisement in the *Building Industry Association Journal* in June 2010. BSISB had tightened up the information in their advertisements to ensure injured workers met baseline criteria.

BSISB also reported that using a key contact at EML had resolved some of the issues previously reported by them – the allocation of responsibility to a key contact for all EML communication with BSISB and for communicating internally at EML with case managers had proved to be an effective strategy. BSISB also reported that the EML project manager worked cooperatively to progress the Project. BSISB, WorkCover SA and EML also successfully negotiated a process for assessment and approval of participants that accommodates the '130 weeks rule' (this includes exemption from this provision by agreement), and a change to the requirement that a client must have been on WorkCover for at least six months prior to commencement with the Project.

BSISB identified a number of other challenges including:

- Difficulty communicating with potential clients (eg some potential clients expressed interest in participating but failed to respond to BSISB attempts to contact them, in other cases contact details were not active).
- Rehabilitation providers giving inaccurate information to potential clients (eg telling them they were ineligible) or failing to attend BSISB information session (when they weren't being paid).
- Potential clients being already engaged on other RTW Fund projects.
- Employers trying to evade their responsibility to injured workers by forcing them to participate in retraining.

- Workers not completing training as they get a new job (however, whilst this may interfere with training, it may also be viewed as a positive result for the Project).

2.1.1.5 BSISB 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

BSISB reported that 'Project deliverables to timelines are now effectively back on course'. The recruitment of the 2nd cohort of injured workers was also nearing completion.

As with other Projects, BSISB continued to report ongoing challenges in recruiting participants. However, initial resistance from Rehabilitation Providers was found to have gradually decreased. Those who had attended Project forums in November 2009 or in January 2010 were followed up with direct contact in May 2010 and BSISB reported that direct referrals from this stakeholder group were increasingly steadily as they become more aware and informed about the Project. This applied particularly to those providers with an existing client participating in the Project.

In response to recruitment difficulties experienced in relation to EML, BSISB reported the joint strategy implemented by BSISB and EML of a single point of contact had proven to be effective with the process described as 'now working effectively'. The BSISB stated that it '... now effectively deals only through the EML contact and responsibility for communication to Case Managers and update of EML files and processes is managed by the EML contact.' (This conflicts with the EML RTW Project Manager's report "... there was never an agreement for EML to provide injured workers to this project. From day 1, BSISB reported that they would recruit themselves.")

2.1.1.6 BSISB 6TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

At the end of December 2010, 17 injured workers (who could not return to their previous position) had commenced training, with six of these having obtained their qualification.

Clients averaged 45 years in age, with most being male (78.3%). No applicants were accepted into the program during this period, however four existing clients commenced training at this time. BSISB reported that close to half the participants already had a Certificate III or higher VET qualification. Many clients had limited computer use in their previous workplace, which no doubt contributed to low computer literacy. Sixteen clients opted to receive introductory or refresher courses to up-skill them in computer use. Approximately 30% of clients had more than 10 years' experience working in the sector where they sustained their injury. BSISB saw these clients as being 'most suited to becoming workplace trainers or OHS officers because of their in-depth knowledge of the industry sector'.

BSISB reported that most participants rated the training as good or very good, and found it informative and challenging. Communication with BSISB was rated at the same level (good or very good), with clients commenting that things were well organised and they had received good support. The Career Transitions seminar (run in September 2010) also received positive feedback. It included information on preparation of resumes and cover letters, participation in interviews, as well as superannuation and legal advice. The presentations by David Platten (on injured workers) and by paralympian, Michelle Errichiello helped put their own circumstance into perspective.

Communication issues were identified as the biggest challenges. These occurred on multiple fronts. In some cases applicants who had expressed interest in training opportunities could not be contacted (or did not respond). BSISB, EML and WorkCover worked together to resolve a difficulty in client participation and the '130 week rule' (which precludes workers from retraining once this threshold has been met). A process of assessment and approval was agreed accommodating the 130 week rule with some flexibility for the provision of exemptions, by agreement.

Systemic issues were also identified as BSISB eligibility criteria alone were not sufficient to identify suitable applicants. For example, pending medical and legal issues meant that some applicants could not participate, rehabilitation providers had their own criteria which ruled some applicants ineligible, and some applicants attempted to participate in more than one RTW Fund project.

Two clients, who had completed the OH&S training, obtained work experience placements. However, they reported the one week placements were too short, and the employer agreed, noting that the clients required a “more thorough understanding of OHS Act and Regulations, legislation, management systems and principles” before they were ready for the workforce.

2.1.1.7 BSISB 7TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

BSISB sought an extension to their contract, which was granted by WorkCover to 30 June 2011 principally for the maintenance and management of existing clients, and to finalise the evaluation process.

BSISB engaged in its final recruitment early in 2011 with another Messenger Press advertisement. Six potential applicants were received, although none applied to progress with the Project (see Table 1). Three applicants from a previous round started training during this period. In total 20 participants commenced training with BSISB in the 15 month period from January 2010 to March 2011 – half the number originally proposed by the Project.

Table 1: Number of BSISB clients recruited per quarter

End of quarter	Number of applicants	Applied to progress	Response rate %	Number of participants started training
Sept-Dec 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jan-Mar 2010	28	11	39.3%	1
Apr-June 2010	9	4	44.4%	12
Jul-Sep 2010	22	9	40.9%	0
Oct-Dec 2010	Nil	Nil	Nil	4
Jan-Mar 2011	6	Nil	0%	3
Total	59	24	40.7%	20

Given that literacy issues precluded some applicants from involvement in the Project, BSISB indicated they would explore English literacy programs, or lower level Certificates for 2011 applicants. Gap analysis identified training required for the three new participants in the areas of technical need, computer literacy, study skills and literacy/numeracy.

Twelve of the participants who applied to progress were not working at the time, with the remaining 12 working on reduced hours (three of this group had their work hours increased to full time and therefore did not commence training with BSISB).

At 21 March 2011, a total of 24 participants had applied to progress with the BSISB Project. Eight participants had completed their qualification, and 7 had commenced, but not completed their qualification. In addition, three withdrew prior to commencement, three commenced but withdrew prior to completion, and three had not met requirements for the training. Two participants had career transitioned and obtained permanent employment in their chosen field, both of these then applying their skills and experience to train others.

2.1.1.8 BSISB PROGRESS AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The evaluators note with concern the number of Performance Indicators against which no information has been provided by BSISB. Only one of fifteen indicators has been addressed in BSISB reporting. This means the evaluation plan has not been fully implemented and raises questions about what has been achieved with the funding allocated by WorkCover SA.

PI-1: Career transition & learner management model developed and implemented

Details not provided.

PI-2: Common barriers to successful retraining & career transition identified and strategies to address barriers described.

Details not provided.

PI-3: Web-based resources created and adopted for use by rehabilitation providers.

Details not provided.

PI-4: Up to 40 injured workers retrained in areas of skills demand.

Cohort 1 recruitment completed March 2009 with 37 applicants, 15 applying to progress and 13 starting training. Cohort 2 recruitment was completed by September 2010 with 22 recruited and 9 approved. Four of these applicants commenced training in October to December 2010 and three commenced in January to March 2011. No further applicants can be commenced by BSISB.

Only half the proposed number of injured workers (20 of the proposed 40) commenced training with BSISB during the course of the Project (August 2009 to March 2011).

PI-5: Web resources available on current skills areas and training options in areas of Business Services.

Details not provided.

PI-6: Career aptitude resources for examining career and training options identified and available on web resource.

Details not provided.

PI-7: Links established to training providers and work transition resources for RTW on web resource.

Details not provided.

PI-8: Early employer engagement protocol for analysis of job demand established.

Details not provided.

PI-9: Established process for identifying career and job role transition options for injured workers.

Details not provided.

PI-10: Established links to recruitment and work placement agencies.

Details not provided.

PI-11: Protocol for assistance to injured workers in finding new employment established.

Details not provided.

PI-12: Training forums for Rehabilitation providers in use of career transition resources.

Details not provided.

PI-13: Links to key expert career and training advice and resources provided.

Details not provided.

PI-14: Information forums held for rehabilitation providers; injured workers; employers.

Details not provided.

PI-15: Communication strategy and protocol for engagement with; RTOs, recruitment and employment agencies, key industry groups, unions.

Details not provided.

2.1.1.9 BSISB CRITICAL LEARNINGS

BSISB reported challenges with the referral process used in the early stages of the Project and disappointment that rehabilitation consultants did not engage. However, as understanding about the Project and its intended impact increased, referrals from rehabilitation consultants increased. Literacy was an issue for some clients and BSISB recommended that some injured workers could have benefited from courses in English literacy or lower level qualifications (Certificate III instead of IV).

2.1.2 JF CONSULTING: CHANGE YOUR MIND . . . CHANGE YOUR LIFE

This project was completed 30 June 2011.

Jane Fielder Consulting (JF Consulting, formerly ProActiv Life Solutions) was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 1 October 2009 to provide '*Change Your Mind... Change Your Life*' coaching to approximately 38 injured workers. Attitudes and beliefs have a strong role to play in the return to work process and for some workers these can be obstacles that are too hard to overcome. The '*Change Your Mind... Change Your Life*' Project was designed to challenge negative beliefs and attitudes, helping to restore a positive mental approach to the issue of returning to work.

The program was based on several counselling and coaching techniques which aim for change of client focus from perceived and/or real barriers experienced while on *WorkCover SA* to a positive framework of success in a return to work program and employment. The Project aimed to refocus clients - directing them from injury, pain and other issues, to empowerment and self-reliance, and was expected to increase participation rates in returning to work and/or successful participation in other retraining and return to work initiatives.

Injured workers took part in an eight-week holistic personal coaching and/or group training program designed to assist them to overcome any perceived obstacles in their path to recovery and the 'fear cycle' of return to work. JF Consulting worked closely with individual workers to assist them in identifying areas for change and growth in relation to their *WorkCover SA* experience and employment.

Topics for the program included:

- Change your focus, change your life
- Move to Success, change your life
- Change your habits, change your life
- Reduce your stress, change your life
- Reduce your anxiety, change your life
- Reduce your depression, change your life
- Manage your pain, change your life
- Better sleep, change your life
- Change your lifestyle, change your life
- Change your thoughts, change your life
- Build your confidence, change your life
- Return to work, change your life

In addition, JF Consulting focused on participant readiness and aspirations related to:

- ✓ Preparing to Return to work
- ✓ Coping with transition such as job seeking

- ✓ Become more confident
- ✓ Strategies for feeling less stressed
- ✓ Self-help strategies for behaviours and managing your pain
- ✓ How to change the way you think about yourself and your life so that you can move forward more positively

Box 4: Jane Fielder Consulting – Summary at completion of Project, 30 June 2011

JANE FIELDER CONSULTING – SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover SA 1 October 2009

At the completion of the Project on 30 June 2011 -

JF Consulting had provided services to 27 injured workers in this Project. This represented 67.5% of the 40 workers agreed and contracted with WorkCover.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Data were collected about the 27 injured workers who commenced the program.

- The average age of participants was 47 years, 63% were male, all but one spoke English well or very well.
- All but one had medical restrictions with back injury the most common complaint.
- Pre-injury around one-third had been either cooks or cleaners.
- Participants had worked between half a year and 27 years in their pre-injury role, with an average of 5.7 years.
- 23% of clients were currently attached to their pre-injury employer and two others on placement (both at around 0.2 FTE).
- Workers had been injured for an average of 681 days at commencement of Project (ranging from 175 to 1074 days).

OUTCOMES

- **First program** for seven clients commenced 15 March 2010 and completed on 6 May 2010.
- **Second program** for five clients commenced 11 August 2010 and completed 1 October 2010.
- **Third program** for seven clients commenced 5 November 2010 and completed 22 December 2010.
- **Fourth program** used a flexible approach with eight clients commencing between February and May 2011.
- **Completions:** 18 clients completed the program.
 - Withdrawals: 3 withdrew due to health reasons
 - 5 clients were exited by the Project (2 due to failure to attend, 3 due to health)
- Participants reported the program was enjoyable and beneficial.
- There appeared to be a trend for a reduction in overall psychological injury and pain index scores from the first assessment (prior to counselling) to the assessment at the conclusion of counselling*. However, too few responses were available to identify any further trends.

2.1.2.1 JF CONSULTING 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

JF Consulting had prepared marketing brochures for *WorkCover SA* prior to the formal commencement of the Project. Other project activity, including the preparation of the Evaluation Plan and the commencement of referrals, were impacted by slower than expected contract negotiations. This also led to timelines for client recruitment encroaching

on the Christmas period. Accordingly, a decision was made not to commence coaching or counselling activities until early 2010. At the time of reporting, JF Consulting had not identified if these delays would impact on the contractual date for Project completion (31 August 2010).

Following commencement of the Project, changes were made to the recruitment methodology. The original Project plan identified that all referrals would come direct from EML. It was subsequently agreed between JF Consulting, *WorkCover SA*, EML, *ProActiv People Solutions* and the RTW Funded *InterWork* Project that *ProActiv People Solutions* would provide between 25 and 30 injured workers, and *InterWork* would provide the balance (10-15 injured workers). The referral list would be screened by EML to ensure clients under a Section 35 review were not included (as per eligibility requirements for the Project).

2.1.2.2 JF CONSULTING 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

On 19 February 2010 a meeting was held between Jane Fielder, key EML case managers and rehabilitation consultants from *ProActiv People Solutions* where Jane described the Project and answered questions. Although prior attempts had been made to start recruitment, it was only at this meeting that the first four referrals were provided, with the remaining referrals forwarded within a week. In addition, *Interwork* had referred one client (resulting in 11 referrals). Eligibility criteria became more explicit during this period excluding clients under Section 35 review, those who were strongly opposed to participation, and those deemed unsuitable by their treating provider.

Referred clients ranged in age from 21 to 56 with an average age of 42 years, and around 60% were male. Most referred clients had been employed from six months to six years, with an outlier of one client reporting 17 years with his pre-injury employer. Medical restrictions (at different levels) were in place for all clients. Only 20% of clients were still attached to their pre-injury employer.

Initial assessment of clients began on 15 March 2010. JF Consulting reported that all but one client did not understand why they had been referred, and were agitated or angry about it. As most potential clients were willing to participate once the Project was explained, this indicated that those providing a referral either did not understand the Project, or did not convey its purpose adequately to the clients.

Four referred clients were subsequently excluded (or deferred) due to the client's physical or mental health. Remaining clients later indicated they had been advised by case managers that failure to participate in the program would mean they would be in breach - leading to fear of legal ramifications. These issues were raised with EML. JF Consulting was advised that participation for clients in RTW Fund Projects was voluntary, and that EML would investigate the referral process.

JF Consulting also suggested additional refinements to the referral process. They suggested that medical and rehabilitation providers be contacted as part of the referral process, prior to client acceptance into the program, to ensure that appropriate information is shared with the Project and a more informed decision regarding client participation can be made. In addition, clients would be contacted by JF Consulting to ensure they understood the Project's goals as well as the benefits and implications of involvement.

The first 8 week program commenced mid-March with seven clients. JF Consulting reported preliminary achievements against performance indicators. These included benefits to some clients in terms of a reduction in the 'fear cycle', chronic pain and negative emotional states. These were positive early indicators.

2.1.2.3 JF CONSULTING 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

The first cohort had commenced the group program during the previous quarter on 15 March 2010. This was completed on 6 May 2010. JF Consulting identified the challenge in retaining clients once they have expressed an interest in participation. Four of the seven clients eligible for participation in the Project attended most sessions and completed the program (details are shown in Box 4). These clients also reported to JF Consulting that they found the Program beneficial.

Ongoing challenges for recruitment continued to be identified in relation to participants understanding the purpose of the Project, and in relation to medical and rehabilitation providers being aware of the Project and able to appreciate the potential benefits for their patients. Due to difficulties in finding an appropriate group of injured workers for the first cohort, an alternate method of recruitment was trialled to broaden the scope for the second cohort. JF Consulting placed an advertisement in the Messenger Press in early June 2010. This resulted in five enquiries. Four of these were approved by EML for participation in the Project. This method of recruitment was not viewed as successful.

JF Consulting were responsive and reflexive about the implementation of the Project and the content of the coaching program. They incorporated stress and general coping information in the training content. They also recognised the limited capacity of some clients to participate in a group environment. At the time of reporting they were exploring the possibility of employing a rotation method for the group training to ameliorate the need to wait for sufficient numbers of clients to commence.

2.1.2.4 JF CONSULTING 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

By the end of September 2010, JF Consulting had supported two groups of program participants, using different recruitment methods for each, and in the process identified more streamlined approaches to recruitment. The project had obtained participants through *ProActiv People Solutions* (a vocational rehabilitation provider), advertising in *The Messenger* as well as through EML. Another RTW Fund Project (Interwork) also recommended injured workers to the Project.

A meeting was held with EML Team Leaders on 13 September 2010 regarding Jane Fielder Consulting as a new rehabilitation provider. This offered an excellent opportunity to discuss the Project and resulted in positive interest. JF Consulting reported that Case Managers had begun to call them to enquire about the program and were contacting the relevant rehabilitation consultants and suggesting they talk to their injured workers for referral consideration. This was described as *'an important turning point for our project in respect to having case managers aware of the project and potential benefits to injured workers'*.

2.1.2.5 JF CONSULTING 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

JF Consulting successfully used direct marketing to rehabilitation providers to achieve improved recruitment outcomes in October to December 2010, with seven (of the ten invited) commencing the program during this period. As a result of an information session at De Poi Consulting (22/11/10) and the Project mail out to all WorkCover registered rehabilitation providers, JF Consulting was contacted directly by providers with referrals, who then helped arrange meetings with their injured client.

In total at the end of 2010, nineteen people had started the program. Two injured workers who had been approached about the project in this quarter did not commence as they were more suited to an intensive job seeking program (and were referred to Interwork), and one did not commence due to personal reasons but was expected to rejoin the program in 2011. The average age of participants was 46 years, 73% were male, 62% married or in a de facto relationship, and all but one spoke English well or very well. The education level was relatively low with 71% reporting less than Year 12 as their highest educational attainment. Back injury remained the most common complaint. Clients reported an average of 5.7 years with their pre-injury employer. However, only 20% were still employed at the time they commenced the program.

JF Consulting reported that their main barrier to recruitment was having a sufficient number of clients (n>5) to commence the program. Changing the recruitment process to accept ongoing referrals and rotate injured workers through the training sessions resulted in improvements and was found to better suit both rehabilitation providers and EML.

Participants indicated a preference for larger numbers in the group sessions, and were also found to enjoy the guest speakers who were either injured workers (providing their own stories of injury and recovery), or were allied health professionals (providing training in ergonomics, manual handling and lifestyle factors). Demonstrating flexibility, JF

Consulting accommodated one request for the delivery of coaching services in a rural location, by successfully engaging the services of a local rehabilitation consultant. They were also in the process of making the program available as an e-resource at the time of reporting.

The individually tailored approach, and the packaging of both one-on-one coaching and group training was viewed positively by participants, who valued the opportunity to learn from others. JF Consulting recommended this project be used as an early intervention tool, rather than a 'mop-up' tool for protracted claims or difficult clients.

2.1.2.6 JF CONSULTING 6TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

An extension for this Project was granted to 30 June 2011.

Eight clients were invited to participate in the Project during the period January to March 2011, with seven commencing. All of these clients were recruited by direct marketing to rehabilitation providers, which was found to be a successful strategy for this Project. JF Consulting also continued their flexible open referral process, which reduced waiting times for commencement and better met the needs of referrers, injured workers and EML.

At this time a total of 26 injured workers had commenced the program with an average age of 47 years, and with males making up 63% of participants. Participants had been injured for an average of 681 days at the time they commenced with the Project.

Table 2: Number of JF Consulting clients recruited per quarter

End of quarter	Number invited to participate (a)	Number starting program during period (b)	Response rate % (b/a*100)
Sept-Dec 2009	Nil	Nil	NA
Jan-Mar 2010	11	7	63%
Apr-June 2010	2*	0	0*
Jul-Sep 2010	5	5	100%
Oct-Dec 2010	10	7	70%
Jan-Mar 2011	8	7	87.5%
Apr-Jun 2011	1	1	100%
Total	34	27	79.4%

*Note: 2 from the Apr-June quarter were rolled into the Jul-Sept group.

JF Consulting asked injured workers in their Project to provide responses to a simple survey at the beginning (period 1) and completion (period 2) of the program and followed them at 3, 6 and 12 months (periods 3, 4 and 5). At the time of reporting, they had responses from around 26 at commencement. Not surprisingly there was participant attrition with 16 providing responses at the end of the program. At the time of reporting, there were only six respondents for period 3 (which was also affected by the limited time since completion of the second and third programs). The data suggest a slight downward trend in responses indicating reduction in fear, fewer psychological implications, and reduced pain from commencement to completion of the program. In addition, respondents also recommended this approach be available to injured workers, as they learned to conceptualise and understand their injury and personal circumstances differently.

Participants elected to receive more personal coaching, and less group sessions than had been originally planned, with ten personal coaching sessions deemed optimum. It was also noted that during this quarter most participants were either job seeking or preparing for the outcome of their 130 week capacity review. These factors were expected to have some impact on how participants respond to the surveys.

2.1.2.7 JF CONSULTING PROGRESS AGAINST PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The *Change Your Mind...Change Your Life* RTW Project successfully completed working with three rounds of injured workers by the end of December 2010. Those who completed the course reported benefitting from, and enjoying their participation in the Project.

The Student Manual and Workbook was updated and Group Training sessions were updated to meet the reported initial needs. Injured workers reported that the workbook was a valuable tool which they will refer to post-course.

The evaluation protocol implemented by JF Consulting required the completion of self-assessment forms at the commencement and completion of the program, and at 3, 6 and 12 months post-program. However, non response at 3, 6 and 12 months meant ongoing benefits could not be assessed at the time of reporting.

PI-1: Number of injured workers who report reduction of fear cycle of return to work activities

This Performance Indicator is measured from the participants' results on the *Self Rate Survey Form* which was to be completed at Project commencement and cessation, and at 3, 6 and 12 months post-Project participation. This uses 8 dimensions for Psychological aspects of injury and 2 dimensions for Physical aspects. Results are very promising showing that –

- There appeared to be a trend for a reduction in overall psychological injury from the first assessment (prior to counselling) to the assessment at the conclusion of counselling. However, too few responses were available to identify any further trends.

Low responses to surveys at 3, 6 and 12 months mean this performance indicator cannot be assessed at these intervals.

PI-2: Number of injured workers who report reduction of experienced level of chronic pain

- Similarly, there appeared to be a trend for a reduction in overall pain index scores from the first assessment (prior to counselling) to the assessment undertaken at the conclusion of counselling. However, again too few responses were available to identify any further trends.

PI-3: Number of injured workers who report enhanced ability to overcome negative emotional states

- Participants reported reduced irritability, stress and depression levels from commencement in the Project to post 3 months of participation.
- They also reported reduced interference from their work related injury with general activities, with normal work activities, with their personal relationships, with their sleep and with their enjoyment of life.

PI-4: Number of injured workers who report enhanced ability to successfully participate in vocational rehabilitation programs

Low responses to surveys at 3, 6 and 12 months mean this performance indicator cannot be fully assessed.

- However, all participants from Group 3 reported increased capacity to work and were motivated with regard to employment transition and job seeking. This was evident in one participant realising (and improving) his negative attitude to job seeking, another commencing a work placement and another shifting focus from past incidents to future potential.
- In addition, JF Consulting indicated that at the completion of the program 15 clients were ready for active job seeking support, and 6 were ready for vocational assistance or training.

PI-5: Number of injured workers who report an increase in medical capacity for return to work

- With regard to Group 1, four participants did not complete the Self-Rate Survey Forms. Two participants had medical capacity for a return to work.

- Eighteen participants indicated that they had capacity to return to work at the commencement of the program, while fifteen reported this at completion of the program (of 16 responses); this included two injured workers who had indicated they had no capacity at the commencement of the program.

PI-6: Number of injured workers who return to work

- Two participants returned to work while on the program.

PI-7: Number of injured workers who sustain employment for 3 months

Low responses to surveys at 3, 6 and 12 months mean this performance indicator cannot be fully assessed.

PI-8: Number of injured workers who sustain employment for 12 months

Low responses to surveys at 3, 6 and 12 months mean this performance indicator cannot be fully assessed.

2.1.2.8 JF CONSULTING CRITICAL LEARNINGS

Twenty-seven clients were referred to the Project, with eighteen of these completing the program. All three participants who withdrew did so for health reasons. Five injured workers were referred to the project and then exited by JF Consulting, due to -

- 2 failing to attend the sessions
- 2 deemed medically unfit to attend
- 1 had a non-compensable condition.

Based on feedback from participants, JF Consulting updated their manual and workbook early in the Project to include more topics participants could work on during and after the Project. The Workbook was considered by participants and their families to be a valuable resource which would be used after the end of active Project engagement.

JF Consulting reported ongoing difficulty with participant referrals throughout the Project. This was compounded by the fact that the Project design relied on six to eight participants commencing group training at the same time. To work around this, the Project introduced a method of rotating sessions - which allowed participants to commence at different stages of the program. This was more difficult from a program management perspective, but more flexible for injured workers who could avoid the frustrations of waiting weeks for the new program to commence. Subsequent to this, based on further feedback from participants it was determined that more individual benefit could be gained from increasing individual coaching sessions and ceasing group training altogether.

The Project reported:

- The best individual outcomes were from referrals driven by the injured worker themselves.
- Frustration from injured workers that many of them were approaching 130 weeks without receiving assistance or support for job seeking. They felt this should be included in an early intervention approach.
- A focus on medical rehabilitation to the exclusion of vocational rehabilitation.
- A lack of clear process for gaining approval and payment for training.

The project also provided self rated survey results from commencement (baseline) to completion of the program, with workers reporting –

- Less anxiety and fear about returning to work
- Better management of, or a reduction in, pain levels
- Pain levels interfering less with home and work activities
- Improved quality of relationships, sleep and enjoyment of life.

Whilst reported results are positive, JF Consulting acknowledged the problem of injured workers not returning surveys at the three, six and twelve month periods. Given the low response rates for these time period, results cannot be reported.

At completion of the Project, JF consulting reported:

- 2 clients were in employment;
- 15 clients were expected to receive active job seeking support; and
- 6 clients were expected to receive vocational assistance or training.

It was recommended that four of the above clients continue counselling. In addition, one client was still in rehabilitation for their injury, and information was unavailable about three as the program had not been completed.

2.1.3 DFEEST: THE NEXT STEP TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

This project was completed 30 June 2011.

The Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 1 October 2009 to provide the *Next Step Training and Employment* Program. This is a self-directed, self-paced, industry demand-driven program designed for clients of *WorkCover SA* to provide a minimum of 40 newly injured workers with innovative employment opportunities to facilitate their return to the workforce. It is tailored for each injured worker and includes a combination of skills assessment, targeted training, industry identified need, case management, job seeking, employment placement/brokerage and post-placement support.

Individuals participating in the Project began their journey back to employment with attendance at a forum to provide them with an opportunity to discover the new and varied pathways available to them. Each participant was assigned a case manager who worked with them one-on-one to prepare an individual employment and training pathway, factoring in external elements (eg skills shortage areas) to determine the best options for employment placement.

Success in the Project was identified as including the achievement of the identified target outcomes and the creation of a suitable working model that allows flexibility and engages participants and partners. The Project was structured to operate actively over a 12 month period in the first instance. As a result of recruitment delays that were outside their control, DFEEST requested and subsequently was granted an extension for their project. Employment consultants were allocated to work with clients up to 31 March 2011, with the final evaluation report from DFEEST due 30 June 2011.

DFEEST – PROJECT SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover SA 1 October 2009

At the completion of the Project on 30 June 2011 -

DFEEST had provided services to 31 injured workers in this Project. This represented 82.5% of the 40 workers agreed and contracted with WorkCover.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Data collected about the 31 Project participants receiving case management support show:

- Half the participants were aged between 35 and 44 years, with two-thirds male.
- Back and musculoskeletal injuries were the most common complaints.
- Participants had been employed in a variety of jobs including process workers, heavy truck drivers and personal care workers.
- Workers had been injured an average of 517 days prior to commencement with the Project (ranging from 202 to 1016 days).
- Participants had significant experience in their pre-injury role, with an average of 5.2 years.
- In arranging the training, employment consultants considered participant wishes, work and medical capacity, as well as potential employment opportunities.

OUTCOMES

- **Workshops:** 140 WorkCover recipients had attended the five workshops facilitated by DFEEST. This included 18 of the 31 Project participants.
- **Case management:** 31 participants were referred to case management. Ultimately, 24 of these actively participated.
- **Training:** 15 participants had commenced individual training programs to reskill or upskill (12 completed the training).
- **Employment and training plans:** participants referred to case management support were involved in the development of an individual employment and training plan as well as a Return to Work plan. Again, 24 (77.4%) participated in this process.
- **Withdrawal:** Seven clients had withdrawn.
- **Work:** Ten participants were engaged in work at the completion of the Project.

2.1.3.1 DFEEST 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

Although DFEEST also experienced slower than expected contract negotiations (with the contract signed 30 September 2009), this did not adversely affect the implementation of the Project, which was originally due for completion March 2011. DFEEST called for Expressions of Interest for four Project components (introductory workshops, employment case management, work preparation project, and individual training providers) in August 2009, subsequently contracting six organisations. DFEEST also facilitated an information session for relevant parties including *WorkCover SA*, DFEEST providers, EML case managers, and rehabilitation providers (on 30 October 2009). Ten *WorkCover SA* clients were identified by EML for participation in the first (held on 30 Sept 2009) or second (30 November 2009) workshop. Case management for the first ten clients commenced in December 2009, slightly behind schedule.

DFEEST reported the success of the introductory workshops and positive feedback from participants. However, they also reported delays in client recruitment attributed to program parties not understanding how clients would benefit from involvement.

In addition, DFEEST cited the benefit of having participated in the pilot program in 2008-09. This had resulted in a better understanding of the *WorkCover SA* system, legislation and relationships with EML and providers. Lessons from the pilot were incorporated in the design of the current Project including –

- ✓ Provision of information sessions for relevant parties,
- ✓ Development of protocols for client replacement,
- ✓ Designation of a single point of contact for the client,
- ✓ Ensuring voluntary participation and
- ✓ Provision of information for participants.

2.1.3.2 DFEEST 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

To the end of March 2010, a total of 20 clients had been recruited into the DFEEST project (this included the ten clients recruited during the 1st quarter). These clients ranged in age from 33 to 61 years (with an average of 46 years), two-thirds were male. In terms of injuries – 25% reported back injuries and another 25% reported either neurological or psychological problems. Other client information was not available at the time of quarterly reporting. Individual employment and training plans were in development for all 20 clients.

DFEEST held discussions with EML about the minimum number of clients required to implement the *Work Preparation Projects*. These minimums made ongoing rolling recruitment of clients inefficient, and so EML agreed to provide the remainder of Project clients by 30 June 2010.

On 24 February 2010, the third introductory workshop was held with 27 attendees and DFEEST again reported positive feedback. In this instance, females made up 56% of attendees (compared with 32% and 24% at the 2 earlier workshops). The second meeting of the program delivery network was held on 4 March 2010, which again provided the opportunity to share information and resolve issues.

DFEEST reported significant interaction with both EML and *Recover* (responsible for managing the rehabilitation for clients). After the first round of recruitment it was agreed that the flow of communication between these parties would be facilitated by discussing the specifics of client history prior to meeting with the client. This has proved to be a successful strategy.

2.1.3.3 DFEEST 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

At the time this quarterly report was submitted, DFEEST was still waiting to receive its full allocation of program participants. Referral delays were in large part due to changes to the *WorkCover SA* IT system⁶. Accordingly, only five injured workers were invited to participate during this period of whom three commenced with the Project.

DFEEST implemented a process of quarterly meetings between employment consultants, EML case managers and *Recover* rehabilitation consultants to aid the flow of information between the parties and ensure appropriate service delivery to clients. At a meeting during this period, discussion centred on the process for retraining approvals, resulting in a clear process being developed for timely approvals. The fourth introductory workshop was held on 16

⁶ Note that due to new IT system introduced by *WorkCover SA* on 27 April 2010, no claims data was available between 22 April 2010 and 30 June 2010 – this resulted in referrals being delayed during this period.

June 2010, with 13 participants. DFEEST was planning to run an additional two workshops in the following six months to recruit the remaining 17 participants.

2.1.3.4 DFEEST 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Despite discussions with EML and an agreement to provide the remaining Project clients by end June 2010, at the time of reporting DFEEST noted they had not received their full allocation of program participants. This made it impossible for placements to be achieved by 1 October 2010 as outlined in their original program submission. DFEEST then requested and was granted an extension of contract for a period of three months to 31 March 2011, with a final program evaluation to be submitted by 30 June 2011.

Recruitment processes remained unsuccessful during this quarter with no new referrals entering the Project. However, EML reported that two referrals in July were not progressed due to personal leave of the DFEEST Project Manager and internal restructuring within DFEEST.

2.1.3.5 DFEEST 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Recruitment of all 40 participants had still not occurred by 31 December 2010. Two of the three employment consultants indicated they were unable to take further participants, as they would not be able to provide sufficient support for the short time remaining for the Project. Therefore, it was decided that no further participants would be accepted after 31 January 2011. Given the recruitment difficulties experienced, DFEEST would request all clients be "provided upfront" if the project was re-funded. Employment consultants could then have a full case load and the appropriate time to support clients into training and/or employment.

At the time, a total of 140 participants had attended the five workshops facilitated by DFEEST since the Project commenced. The forum scheduled for 20 October 2010 was cancelled due to low registration numbers. However, the forum scheduled for 16 December was successful with 25 registrations and 16 attending. DFEEST were approached by the WorkCover Event and Sponsorship Coordination Unit to partner in an initiative with the Australian Paralympic Committee. This worked successfully with an athlete presenting at the introductory workshop in December 2010.

At the end of the fifth quarter 28 people had participated in the project; of these, 67.7% were male and their average age was 42.7. The most common injury was back-related, followed by neurological/psychological and shoulder injuries.

2.1.3.6 DFEEST 6TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Limited additional information was provided by DFEEST about clients for this quarter of activity. DFEEST reported that exit interviews had been held for all active (ie not employed nor exited) participants of the program. These interviews were organised by DFEEST and involved EML case managers, rehabilitation and employment consultants along with program participants. The aim of the interviews was to discuss participant progress and hand case notes back to EML case managers.

2.1.3.7 DFEEST PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

DFEEST commenced services for 31 injured workers in this Project. This represented 77.5% of the 40 workers agreed and contracted with WorkCover.

PI-1: Identification of training appropriate to the individual in line with employment and training plans

PI-2: A minimum of 10 participants enter into training programs to either reskill or upskill in order to assist their return to work

- At the end of December 2010, a total of fifteen (48.4% of the 31) program participants had undertaken further training through the Project to reskill or upskill in order to return to employment. Twelve of the fifteen participants had completed their training and were continuing their search for employment. This exceeded the minimum proposed.
- This training was approved in line with employment and training plans developed by employment consultants and in collaboration with the injured worker.
- Training had been approved in line with recommendations made as part of employment and training plans developed by Employment Consultants. Training undertaken included:
 - Introduction to Pharmacy training
 - Certificate IV in Youth Work and Mental Health
 - Certificate III in Aged Care
 - HR and HC License
 - Haul Truck Training
 - Certificate II and III in Security Operations
 - Certificate II and III in Business Administration
 - Front End Loader training
 - White Card training
 - Forklift training
 - Certificate IV in OHS&W.
- In arranging the training, employment consultants considered participant wishes, work and medical capacity, as well as potential employment opportunities.

PI-3: Attendance by 40 injured workers at introductory workshops

- Eighteen (58.1% of the 31) program participants had attended an Introductory Workshop. This performance indicator was not achieved as referrals to the Project did not always align with the timing of the Workshops, and it was not considered appropriate to delay participant commencement.
- However, a total of 140 WorkCover recipients attended a workshop (as workshops were open to any WorkCover recipient regardless of Project eligibility).

PI-4: All 40 program participants participate in and complete case management

- All 31 program participants were referred to Case Management by the employment consultants. However, due to non-compliance and exits from the program only 24 (77.4% of the 31) actively participated in the case management process.
- Of the seven workers referred but who exited the program –
 - 1 withdrew to take up another training opportunity (with independent organisation)
 - 1 withdrew as they were under medical review
 - 1 suffered a re-injury
 - 1 withdrew on the Project recommendation for health reasons
 - 1 was located in a rural region and was unable to meet with employment consultant.
 - 1 had child care issues
 - 1 was physically unable to undertake employment.

PI-5: Participants are made aware of skill shortage areas and job opportunities are explored in detail

- This process has occurred as part of the development of an employment and training plan, where job opportunities and the pathways individuals will take are discussed in detail. Injured workers are encouraged, but

not pressured, to pursue opportunities in areas of skills shortages. However, as the Project has an individualised focus, attention is also paid to areas of employment that suit their personal skills, wants and needs.

PI-6: Development of employment and training plans for 40 program participants

- The 24 active case management participants engaged in the development of individual employment and training and return to work plans, to determine the pathway designed to support their return to work.
- Exit interviews (between injured workers, EML case managers, rehabilitation and employment consultants) were held for any participant who had not gained employment or exited the program. At this interview case notes were returned to EML.

PI-7: Number of injured workers who returned to work

- Ten employment outcomes were achieved, representing employment for 32.3% of the 31 workers commencing the Project.
 - 5 positions were casual;
 - 3 part-time; and
 - 2 full-time.

PI-8: Number of injured workers who returned to work at an equivalent level that they left resulting in a liability release for WorkCover

- Not available at the time of reporting.

2.1.3.8 DFEEST CRITICAL LEARNINGS

- DFEEST report that while physical injuries may heal, there is often a psychological component for workers who have suffered from long term injury. This may manifest in a fear to return to work.
 - DFEEST therefore recommend a holistic approach which addresses both physical and psychological sequelae of work injury.
- DFEEST report a lack of shared understanding about injury and the subsequent restrictions which sometimes resulted in lack of participation in the program, training and employment.
 - DFEEST therefore recommend a case conference be held between the injured worker, case manager, rehabilitation provider and treating doctor to ensure a shared understanding of physical and psychological capacity.
- Referral to an employment consultant to develop an employment and training plan, and to support them during early employment was found to be critical to the Program. The Program had difficulty in managing the intermittent provision of a small number of injured workers -
 - DFEEST therefore recommend the engagement of an employment consultant.
 - DFEEST therefore recommend the identification of all participants up front, prior to Project commencement.

2.1.4 INTERWORK: PATHWAYS TO WORK

This project will be finalised 31 August 2011.

Interwork was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 4 November 2009 to provide the *Pathways to Work* Project which proposes an outcome focused model, and aims to return 40 injured workers to a safe and meaningful job as soon as practicable with either their pre-injury employer or a new employer. This Project built on *Interwork's* successful experience in achieving employment outcomes through the Job Network and Disability Employment Services (DES – formerly DEN) program, and was expected to operate in Adelaide and a number of regional settings.

The disability employment model was applied and tested for its relevance to achieving return to work following workplace injury. Employment focused 'whole of life' action plans (the model pursued by DES providers) aim to

increase return to work rates while identifying and managing the impact on the injured worker and their family. Experienced employment consultants focus on individual abilities, skills, knowledge and career aspirations; identify and address barriers to employment; and target sectors with skills shortages.

The project had 5 stages -

1. Induction and Pre-employment Assessment
2. Job Search Skills/Employer Expectations
3. Pre-employment Programming
4. Employment Opportunity (including job matching)
5. Post Employment Support.

The *Interwork* Project targeted clients who had been on the *WorkCover SA* system for a considerable time. These clients were expected to be more challenging than short term clients as their original injuries were more debilitating, and they may have become more entrenched within the system.

Box 6: Interwork – Summary at completion of Project, 1 August 2011

INTERWORK – SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover 4 November 2009

At the completion of the Project on 30 June 2011 -

Interwork had provided services to 40 injured workers in this Project. This represented 100% of the 40 workers agreed and contracted with WorkCover.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- A full caseload of 40 participants began the Project.
- The average age of referred clients was 44 years, and 40% were female, while seven were born overseas.
- Almost all spoke English well or very well, with around half educated below year 12 level.
- Back and musculoskeletal injuries were the most common complaints, with 80% having medical restrictions.
- Participants had an average of 4.3 years with their pre-injury employer.
- Workers had been injured an average of 524 days prior to commencement with the Project (ranging from 170 to 993 days).

OUTCOMES

- **Work experience:** 17 (42.5%) placements were organised resulting in six participants (15%) successfully placed in new jobs.
- **Training:** 20 (50%) participants had commenced individual training programs to reskill or upskill.
- **Work:** Sixteen (40%) participants returned to work - double the original target.
 - Fifteen (37.5%) were in ongoing employment, almost four times the original target.

2.1.4.1 INTERWORK 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

As with the other Projects commencing in 2009 and early 2010, *Interwork* experienced contractual delays that resulted in a later starting date and inability to meet the original timeline for delivery of their Evaluation Plan. However, the Project evaluation plan was well underway at the time of quarterly reporting, and the *Interwork* Employment Consultants had commenced work with 10 detached clients from the Adelaide metropolitan region

following referrals from EML. The 10 clients averaged 484 days from the time of injury to when they started on the Project (ranging from 223 days through to 645 days).

Although it was originally anticipated that Project activity and clients would be 'integrated' into the other caseloads of existing staff, once commenced it became more practicable to establish a separate RTW Project team. Client handover with EML had progressed smoothly due to close liaison. However, concerns from the contracted vocational rehabilitation provider about the use of innovative approaches with attached clients were identified as needing to be managed.

2.1.4.2 INTERWORK 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

Interwork reported that criteria for client inclusion and exclusion had become better defined during this period due to the referral of 10 attached workers with very limited work capacity. After staff attached to *Interwork* expressed concern about their ability to understand and meet the complex legislative requirements for attached workers and pre-injury employers, *WorkCover SA* and *Interwork* agreed that the DES model was more appropriate for new employer outcomes. Therefore, *Interwork* rejected the 10 attached referrals and no new clients were accepted into the Project in this quarter. The new referral criteria were for detached workers with a minimum of 8 hour work capacity. New clients were expected to be referred from EML by mid-April.

Progress was made with clients accepted in the first round. Two clients were placed as a result of five work experience placements. One of these placements appeared to be at risk of failing. However, the engagement of a support worker to provide individual assistance led to major improvement in work performance, and contributed to the employer taking a positive and long term view about the client. *Interwork* identified the importance of 'empowering' injured workers to actively participate in their own job search early in the process, due to the tendency for the workers to allow *Interwork* staff to do the 'hard work' of the job search. *Interwork* staff also became quicker at identifying appropriate job options and gaining medical approval.

The difficulties experienced in the first quarter in managing the new roles and relationships between EML, *Interwork* and the vocational rehabilitation provider were largely resolved through better understanding and appreciation of each other's roles and skills. An established and documented communication system contributed to this outcome, as did the early successes and creative work solutions. In addition, *Interwork* reports the development of a collaborative partnership with JF Consulting, with Jane Fielder working with one unmotivated client at this time.

Interwork identified three major lessons at the end of their second quarter:

1. Injured workers exhibit different characteristics to 'unemployed' people, although a barrier to participation in the workforce is 'just a barrier' to overcome.
2. In gaining confidence in their own processes, *Interwork* will be more positive and direct with injured workers from the early stages.
3. Communication, communication, communication.

2.1.4.3 INTERWORK 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

The new *WorkCover SA* computer system was reported to have impacted on the referral process, with no new referrals received during the quarter. *Interwork* did acknowledge the 16 referrals received in early July 2010, which were being processed at the time their report was being prepared. *Interwork* expected to receive the final referrals in the next couple of months. *Interwork* had referred one client to JF Consulting, and had been forwarded referrals from them (resulting from JF Consulting's advertisement in the Messenger Press). However, these candidates were determined not eligible for *Interwork's* Project.

Some changes were made to *Interwork's* original Project design. *Interwork* had been unaware of the specific details of legislative requirements, including the need for RTW Plans, which were subsequently included. In addition, the

Interwork Consultant worked individually with each candidate, as group referrals were found to be too difficult to achieve.

Interwork reported progress against their indicators. In addition, the first iteration of the Step-by-Step Guide was developed, and was under review at the time of reporting to reflect new strategies and approaches. An outcome focussed communication process was developed recognising the business drivers of other stakeholders. Three partnerships were developed during this quarter. *Interwork* noted that injured workers expect work to be found for them, and tend not to actively engage in job-seeking.

Interwork also reported ongoing and new challenges including a lack of clarity of understanding between key stakeholders, which was being managed by ensuring that communication channels remained open. They also expressed concern about the turnaround time for training approval from EML. In addition, within *Interwork*, the Project was seen as a drain on resources, as it struggled to break even in the face of unanticipated delays impeding its ability to provide its services.

2.1.4.4 INTERWORK 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

WorkCover's new Curam computer system was operational during this period resulting in four new referrals. Some issues were raised by one employer and some injured workers regarding an *Interwork* employment consultant (who was subsequently replaced).

Interwork found that the use of a Support Worker was important to achieving Project outcomes. They reported also that *WorkCover SA* had agreed to fund a Support Worker to support one client to complete accredited training that was important to their employment. The worker addressed a range of issues, including low confidence levels that were likely to affect completion of training, indicating a transferable model for other injured workers facing similar challenges.

The following challenges were also identified:

- ⇒ Waning support from within the *Interwork* organisation due to the unanticipated costs to the organisation for delivering on Project activities.
- ⇒ Tensions regarding turnaround times for approval for training. *Interwork* noted that it was unable to be responsive with turnaround times of up to one to two weeks.
- ⇒ A continued lack of understanding between key stakeholders.

Interwork reported that it had been unable to conduct the Project according to its agreed terms of reference, describing three barriers -

1. The lack of group referrals to fill the workshops which were proposed. This led to the *Interwork* Consultant working one on one with each candidate.
2. The amount of confusion in relation to the respective roles and responsibilities of *Workcover*, EML and *Interwork*. *Interwork* did not anticipate the high level of case management work and preparation of RTW Plans which were legislative requirements.
3. *Interwork* reported that it has been struggling to keep the Project adequately resourced because it had not been able to break even financially. This again was attributed to the number of issues which were not anticipated in the Project development stage.

2.1.4.5 INTERWORK 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Interwork reported that inclusion criteria for clients were not sufficient to determine suitability for the Project until after several assessment appointments. This had not been costed and had implications for the Project and organisation. However, given *Interwork* were nearing referral capacity by the fifth quarter, they felt that they were 'on track' with the Project. *Interwork* reported staff changes progressed smoothly both with the new project staff, and an in-house VRS provider. With hindsight, they could see the benefit in terms of working relationships of having a VRS

Provider closely aligned with the Project. During this period, Interwork negotiated a change to the length of time spent on post placement support to 26 weeks (from 39 weeks).

At the end of December 2010, 37 participants had commenced with the project. Referred clients had an average age of 43 years and were 40% female. Most (80%) had medical restrictions.

2.1.4.6 INTERWORK 6TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

With the inclusion of 3 new clients, Interwork reached its full caseload of 40 injured workers during this period. It was expected that all workers would be placed by the end of June 2011, with post placement support to continue for 26 weeks (to the end of December 2011). Interwork also noted that setting the work capacity (on referral) to 8 hours was a positive change.

In addition, the number of placements had increased as the two employment consultants and the Interwork workplace rehabilitation consultant (WRC) had refined their placement strategies. Consequently, they expected a minimum of four new employment outcomes in the next quarter. Interwork acknowledged the need to engage a WRC to ensure that legislated requirements are met. The employment of the WRC had impacted positively in the project and improved interactions with EML.

Furthermore, Interwork had benefited organisationally from the learnings of the Project. They reported a more sophisticated approach to new projects and opportunities, including the identification of risks. They learned that resourcing and relationships need to be carefully managed from the outset of any project. Interwork also developed a standardised model for funding and evaluations.

Table 3: Number of Interwork clients recruited per quarter

End of quarter	Number invited to participate (a)	Number starting program during period (b)	Response rate % (b/a*100)
Sept-Dec 2009	10 (detached)	10	100%
Jan-Mar 2010	10 (attached)	0	0%
Apr-June 2010	16 (detached)	16	100%
Jul-Sep 2010	4 (detached)	0	0%
Oct-Dec 2010	11 (detached)	11	100%
Jan-Mar 2011	3 (detached)	3	100%
Total	54	40	74.1%

At the time of reporting, Interwork were planning on drawing on the lessons they have learned, and planned to propose a cost-effective alternative to the vocational rehabilitation model through using disability employment service employment consultants. In addition, Interwork was interested in exploring the role of health literacy, with the belief that improvement to injured workers' understanding of their injury and its management will help achieve and sustain a return to work.

2.1.4.7 INTERWORK 7TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Interwork included only minor updates in their 7th quarterly report. This period represented a phasing down of the Project. Based on their successful *Pathways to Work* Project, Interwork submitted an application for new Project funding through the RTW Fund. This application outlined a number of important but sometimes subtle changes and modifications based on learning from this Project. The application was successful with contract negotiations finalised with WorkCover for a new Project to commence in mid-2011.

2.1.4.8 INTERWORK PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Step-by-step guide developed

While the initial Step by Step Guide was achieved, it is to be re-developed as *Interwork* tries new strategies to resource the Project.

PI-2: Proportion of workers able to actively participate in their own job search

Interwork reported that most of the workers referred expected *Interwork* to 'find them jobs' and their expectations about ownership of the job search process needed to be changed in order to achieve this PI. They also noted that willingness to actively participate in the job seeking process appeared to be closely linked to confidence levels. However, *Interwork* found that the additional staff member had resulted in a job search activity plan (which is more user friendly than the RTW Plan), developed in consultation between the participant and employment consultant. Each worker will also be assessed for suitability for group DES Job Search Training, and referred where appropriate.

PI-3: Documented communication processes to support partnerships

Interwork reported that their communication system had been documented, refined, and worked well and that communication with stakeholders, including EML case managers and the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant, was increasingly effective.

PI-4: Number of partnerships developed

The following 3 partnerships were reported –

- JF Consulting
- Brock Harcourt:
- Christmas Parties for Special Children.

PI-5: Number of referrals to other RTW fund projects

Interwork reported that JF Consulting's Project was the only Project commencing in 2009-10 suitable for referrals. There were two referrals.

PI-6: Number of injured workers undertaking training, education and achieving qualifications

Twenty injured workers were involved in some form of training, six of these in computer literacy.

PI-7: Training reflective of outcome

Of the sixteen workers placed, three received training in order to gain employment. Of the remaining workers, existing skills, aptitude and experience were drawn on for the new workplaces. Clients receiving intensive training through the Project had little or no transferable skills and non-vocational barriers. The training environment was used as an opportunity to address these barriers.

PI-8: Proportion of injured workers completing work experience placements

Seventeen participants completed work experience placements. Placements were varied and tailored to the skills of the individual. Three placements were in retail sales, two in administration, with the others in a range of different areas including property management, nursery hand, solar panel installation, delivery driving, and cleaning.

PI-9: Proportion of injured workers employed by work experience employers

Six clients had been employed by their work experience employers at the end of March 2011.

PI-10: Number of injured workers and businesses matched

Eleven matches were achieved.

PI-11: Successful negotiation and completion of required workplace modifications

Minor adaptations were required at this stage (adaptive keyboard & mouse, and chair) in three workplaces.

PI-12: Number of referrals to return to work coordinators in workplace

Nil - currently out of scope for this Project as no pre-injury employers were involved.

PI-13: Number of medical certificate approving a return to work to specific duties

All workers placed in either a work trial or paid employment had medical certificates approving return to specific duties.

PI-14: Number of employer confirmation forms

Fifteen employer confirmations were achieved.

2.1.4.9 INTERWORK CRITICAL LEARNINGS

The Interwork Project used a model based on the Disability Employment Services (DES) Case Management Model incorporating five key stages: induction and pre-employment assessment; job search skills/ employer expectations; pre-employment programming; employment opportunity and post-employment support. Key features of this model include the services to be delivered by an employment consultant trained in the DES model (rather than a workplace rehabilitation consultant), and a funding model based on outcomes rather than hourly service fees.

Specifically, the DES model involves:

- **Early intervention** – Uses an ‘opportunity’ and ‘market’ driven approach incorporating a broad-based or multiple and concurrent opportunity approach – by increasing the number of opportunities for clients, they increase the likelihood of sustainable employment. In contrast, the rehabilitation model is process and system driven toward applying the ‘right’ intervention to achieve an agreed and single endpoint.
- **High impact intervention** – Recognises that people who have been separated from the workplace for a considerable time will have a ‘cluster’ of immediate needs. To achieve high impact a number of interventions may need to be applied in rapid succession or concurrently, accompanied by a high level of client support.
- **Specialist roles** – Supports specialist employment/ employer focused roles (employment consultants and business development officers) ensuring pre-employment interventions are developed and supported for the worker and staffing needs met for the employer.
- **Hybrid employment consultant & workplace rehabilitation consultant services** – Incorporates collaboration between workplace rehabilitation consultants (who develop the RTW Plan) and employment consultants who are responsible for supporting the injured worker to get back to work.

Some of the key differences between the usual model (In-House Workplace Rehabilitation) and the RTW employment consultant using the DES model are elaborated below.

RTW Employment Consultant (DES model) <i>Employment focus</i>	In-house Workplace Rehabilitation consultant (usual model) <i>Medical and Rehabilitation focus</i>
Accepts referrals from EML to the Project	Accepts referrals from EML for workplace rehabilitation
Explain Project and employment consultant roles and responsibilities	Explain workplace rehabilitation consultant roles and responsibilities
Participant receives an Interwork diary containing disability service standards, complaint policy, code of conduct etc	
Establishes a contact regime (minimum of one face-to-face contact per week)	Establishes a contact regime (generally less than one contact per week)
Collaborative assessment focusing on employment options	Clarification of capacity, establish RTW Plan, confirm medical support for employment goal and training, address compliance barriers, provide ongoing rehabilitation services focusing on empowering workers through health literacy
Career plan development	
Resume development, job search and interview skills	
Supported job search	
Development and submission of applications for suitable employment	
Identification and referral to skills and/or vocational training	
Reverse marketing (contacting potential employers on behalf of workers to promote services from Interwork and RISE)	
Supported interview	
Clarify RTW expectations of employer and worker, support learning and education processes	Ensure workplace assessment/job analysis is complete (if required), RISE negotiations, establish work placement agreements
Ensure employer understands benefits of post placement support	
Provides post placement support for 6 months (included site visits and phone)	
File closure	File closure

2.2 RTW FUND PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2010

The following sections provide a brief overview of RTW Fund Projects approved in 2010 including a summary of reported activity and progress to date. Please refer to individual Project reports for more information.

2.2.1 SA UNIONS: RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

SA Unions was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 21 January 2010 to provide the *Retraining injured workers for employment* Project. This person-centred project was designed to provide wrap around services and soft-skill training opportunities (within an overarching and holistic rehabilitation program) for 50 workers from the Manufacturing and Health and Community Services industries. (These are the two sectors with the highest claims for workers' compensation in South Australia.) As such it has also explored the interface between the workers' compensation and the training sectors in achieving sustained return to work. The Project was to run for 15 months, operating in metropolitan Adelaide and in one regional centre (Whyalla).

The Project was designed to help workers acquire the necessary self-esteem, skills and knowledge to return to meaningful work, and has been structured by these multiple aims:

1. Increase skills in a group of injured workers enabling them to be employed in suitable duties with existing or new employers.
2. Improve information and support for employers to better meet Section 58B obligations through the provision of retraining.
3. Increase understanding by case managers of, and coordination with, the training system, with improved embedding of training activities within the rehabilitation and return to work process.
4. Improve understanding within the rehabilitation industry of, and coordination with, the training system, and the subsequent incorporation of more effective training opportunities.
5. Improve understanding within the training industry of the workers' compensation and rehabilitation and return to work systems, and improve access for those in these systems to opportunities and information in the training sector.

Underscoring these explicit aims, the Project sought to change the way training and employment opportunities for injured workers are perceived in the return to work process. In so doing, it was hoped that a change to the existing culture and practice would evolve, and generate more sustainable return to work outcomes.

SA UNIONS – SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover 21 January 2010

At the completion of the Project on 30 June 2011 -

SA Unions had provided services to 50 injured workers. This represented 100% of the 50 workers agreed and contracted with WorkCover.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 50 injured workers were in the SA Unions cohort.
- The average age of participants was 46 years, they were 54% male, with all but three speaking English well. There were two Aboriginal participants.
- 61% had post school qualifications - either a certificate, diploma or associate diploma.
- Back and musculoskeletal injuries were the most common complaints, with most restrictions related to time limited sitting and standing, driving and lifting.
- All were from the manufacturing or community services sectors (as per the inclusion criteria).
- They had been in their pre-injury role for an average of 4.8 years.
- Workers had been injured an average of 578 days prior to commencement with the Project (ranging from 112 to 1050 days)
- Four clients were attached to their pre-injury employer.

OUTCOMES

- **Training:** 35 participants had commenced training programs (including 8 who commenced TAFE Certificate IV in Community Services).
 - 8 participants achieved status for recognition of prior learning.
- **Withdrawal:** Four clients had withdrawn. Ten clients did not progress as they were unsuitable.
- **Work:** Nine participants gained employment. The four 'attached' workers remained employed with pre-injury employer.

2.2.1.1 SA UNIONS 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

As with other Projects commencing in 2009 and early 2010, there were delays with the initial contracting process, resulting in some deliverable dates requiring review. However, Project staff did commence some activity early as they were employed by SA Unions in December, and after the first quarter had not reported changes to the Project completion date. The Project was managed and administered by a team of three core staff, reporting monthly to a small management group, and established a reference group which met approximately quarterly.

During the first quarter, SA Unions focused activity on stakeholder orientation, the development of their Evaluation Plan and finalising project governance, specifications and documentation. The Project was officially launched by the *WorkCover SA Ombudsman* on 24 March 2010.

Participants were primarily recruited from EML, with the Self-Insurers of South Australia (SISA), and relevant unions also asked to provide referrals. At the end of the first quarter, SISA had been responsible for four potential referrals. Unions provided two referrals, who were not considered appropriate for the Project, and were passed on to the DFEEST RTW Project. The recruitment process with EML was reported to be slow and SA Unions noted that they had been asked to define their eligibility criteria a number of times. Ten clients were referred from EML on 24 March 2010, with two of these unsuitable as they did not belong to the Community Services or Manufacturing industries. To

prevent a recurrence of these delays in the future, SA Unions suggested that mutually agreed processes for EML referrals be formalised in advance so collaborating parties clearly know what is expected.

SA Unions reported that the sector was excited and broadly supportive about their Project. They also reported strong stakeholder engagement as evidenced by the enthusiasm at the first reference group meeting. With one exception, other RTW Fund Projects were reported to have been very supportive and interested in exploring how they could work collaboratively with SA Unions.

Challenges identified by SA Unions included learning the language and processes associated with *WorkCover SA* and return to work, and the delicate process of dealing with applicants who are ineligible for the Project.

2.2.1.2 SA UNIONS 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

SA Unions reported that as the Project was very slow to gain momentum they applied to *WorkCover SA* to extend the timeline for a further two months and to reduce the Project Officer hours to 21 per week. This was approved.

At the end of the second quarter, SA Unions had 14 suitable participants referred to the Project, of whom 10 had signed consent to participate. Referrals continued to be very slow and SA Unions discussed this with EML in monthly Management Meetings.

At the end of this period another 14 participants were referred. Of these 6 were not suitable as they were not in the Manufacturing or Community Services Sector, meaning that a further 22 people had been referred, making a total of 36 referrals to date.

The Project was unique in that project staff gained permission to go to the participants' homes for some of the visits. SA Unions reported that they found this not only helps to develop rapport but gives a more holistic understanding of the person and their needs.

Participant feedback was described as very positive and the Project reported positive contact with all participants' rehabilitation providers. SA Unions also met with EML Detached Case Managers and the EML Community Services Team of Case Managers to clarify the project and its processes.

At the time of reporting, negotiation for training in RTW Plans was underway with both Rehabilitation Providers and EML, and EML was seeking to identify suitable participants from Whyalla.

2.2.1.3 SA UNIONS 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

By the end of the third quarter, the Project had 39 suitably referred participants, with 10 yet to sign consent. One participant had obtained employment. SA Unions reported that they had continued to promote their Project and link with other RTW Projects to determine collaborative potential. One RTW Fund Project had declined to meet with SA Unions, which was viewed as disappointing.

Assistance, support and promotion of the Project was received from WorkCover's RTW Inspectorate & Support Unit, SACOSS, CANH (Community and Neighbourhood Houses), and SISA and the Project had also been promoted on the SA Unions website. Referrals were reported as continuing to be a barrier to the Project, although prior to reporting a significant increase in referrals had occurred. The Project requested 10 referrals from Whyalla and had achieved three at the time of reporting.

At the end of September 2010, the Project had 28 recruited participants. Two (not counted) were attached to their pre-injury employer with one not signed due to imminent changes to their employment circumstances. The other attached participant had been difficult to contact. A number of participants had recently been referred increasing the cohort to potentially 38.

At the start of the Project, the Return to Work Facilitator reported that ALL participants presented with low self esteem, lack of confidence and very low expectations. SA Unions conducted DASS (Depression, Anxiety & Stress Survey) self scoring surveys with seven participants (some declined to complete) and found that 4 out of 7 had moderate scores for depression, 3 out of 7 had moderate scores for anxiety, and two out of seven had moderate scores for stress. It was decided to repeat these tests on a regular basis to measure any changes. At the third quarter reporting interval, SA Unions reported that this trend had continued with participants presenting with high measured anxiety and depression levels.

2.2.1.4 SA UNIONS 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

SA Unions reported that their cohort had reached 45, one participant had been withdrawn by the rehabilitation consultant, as training was no longer required (due to delays in the referral being received by SA Unions). Difficulties with contacting referrals was also an issue, and compounding this, SA Unions reported that a number of referral forms contained incorrect or inadequate information. SA Unions found that working with attached workers was highly complex, with workers afraid and uncertain about the implications for their current role if they became involved with the Project.

A total of 44 participants had commenced the Project, from 51 potentials. The average age of participants was 45 years, with 55.6% male. Two-thirds were born in Australia, and all but three spoke English well. Clients had been with their pre-injury employer for an average of 5.2 years. Five workers were attached to their pre-injury employer when they commenced with the Project. Workers had sustained their injury an average of 563 days prior to commencement with the Project (with a range of 112 to 1345 days).

SA Unions expressed concern to WorkCover about the mental health of a number of their clients as more than half had reported emotional reactions such as anger, sadness and frustration regarding the claims system. They reported some disagreements with the decisions implemented by EML, but also described a stronger working relationship with EML, rehabilitation consultants and training providers. The Project also expressed the belief that all detached injured workers should have access to the GMAD project prior to embarking on a training pathway.

SA Unions reported that participants in their project focus group commented positively indicating that they felt that they were “not just a number”. While there were positive outcomes for many participants, SA Unions also acknowledged that contacting and maintaining contact with some injured workers has been extremely challenging.

2.2.1.5 SA UNIONS 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

SA Unions reported fewer barriers to recruitment as the Project progressed and EML became better at targeting referrals. However, they expressed some concern that participants consented to Project involvement due to pressure from case managers, rather than a desire to pursue training.

Successful engagement with most of the injured worker cohort was reported as the major success of the Project – “treating people like human beings, it is not rocket science”. Correspondingly, their inability to engage a small number of injured workers was seen as an ongoing challenge. A recent meeting with EML where concerns about these workers were raised and information exchanges was viewed as productive.

SA Unions expressed concern that the existing level of support for job seeking was weak, and RTW Plans lacked clarity, with medically unfit workers being told by their rehabilitation consultant that they needed to complete a work diary and apply for seven jobs a week.

Table 4 summarises participation patterns at the end of the fifth quarter.

Table 4: Number of SA Unions participants recruited per quarter

End of quarter	Number invited to participate (a)	Number starting program during period (b)	Response rate % (b/a*100)
Dec 2009 – Mar 2010	n/a	n/a	n/a
Apr - June 2010	18	14	82%
Jul - Sep 2010	16	16	100%
Oct – Dec 2010	17	14	82%
Jan – Mar 2011	5	5	100
Total	56	49*	87.5%

*Note SA Unions claims a total of 50 on the program.

Fourteen injured workers either were unsuitable or withdrew from the Project.

- Of the ten unsuitable participants
 - 5 were ineligible as they were not from the manufacturing or community services sectors;
 - 3 ‘attached’ workers failed to sign consent;
 - 1 had no capacity for training due to the severity of their injury; and
 - 1 had a work hardening placement with guaranteed employment.

- Of the four participants who withdrew
 - 2 withdrew for health reasons;
 - One was participating in another RTW Fund Project; and
 - One ‘attached’ worker withdrew as he was apprehensive about training and was considering retirement.

2.2.1.6 PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Increase skills in injured workers

PI-1.1: Increase in worker skills and aptitudes

All fifty injured workers participated in skills assessment and career development activities. Thirty-five participants attended training. Participants reported gaining skills including interview skills, language and computer skills, and dealing with complex situations (eg navigating the vocational education and training system). At each focus group, injured workers reported the positive impact of the Project, noting that they had never been asked what they wanted to do before. In addition, SA Unions identified a positive change in the presentation and confidence of those attending Certificate IV in Community Services.

PI-1.2: Proportion of workers employed with new employers

Nine participants have now achieved employment. Two participants reported a high number of ‘knock backs’ when they sought work due to the fact they were on WorkCover. SA Unions reported a lack of support and appropriate planning in the workers’ compensation system for injured workers with poor assessments of their suitability for employment, as well as inadequate resumes, together with the requirement for job diaries not aligned with their individual circumstances.

PI-1.3: Proportion of workers employed with existing employers

Four participants were employed with their pre-injury employer

PI-1.4: Proportion of workers still employed after 3 months

One participant had continued in employment after the three month milestone.

PI-1.5: Workers placed with duties matching their skills and aptitudes

All employed participants except one was placed in employment that matched their skills and aptitudes. One participant attended and completed a training program that was not recommended by the Project, and he was unable to take up subsequent suitable employment.

PI-1.6: Workers satisfied with employment duties

The majority of participants reported they were satisfied with their employment duties.

PI-1.7: Workers still with employer at 3, 6 and 12 months

One worker had been in employment for four months. The project will monitor all employed participants' employment outcomes by keeping contact with them on a quarterly basis during the life of Project 2 and reporting progress through ongoing evaluation reports to the AISR and the Project database.

PI-2: Improve information and support for employers

PI-2.1: Increase in number of employers understanding their obligations to meet section 58B

The Project worked with only five attached participants. SA Unions found it difficult to access employers to discuss Section 58B, and believe this issue requires significant attention.

Anecdotal evidence indicated concerns by some employers about their obligations in relation to training (ie that they will then have to provide suitable employment). It also suggests that other employers were waiting out their 130 week review (enabling them to detach the worker).

PI-3: Increase case manager understanding, and embedding of training activities in RTW process

PI-3.1: Increased collaboration between case managers and training providers

SA Unions continue to work to improve communication with EML Managers and Team Leaders. Monthly Management meetings with a small Management group (which includes *WorkCover SA* and EML representatives) were found to provide a positive strategy for communication between different stakeholders. They noted that EML's employment of an assistant to the Manager of the RTW Project and an Education Manager (in the Attached area) led to increased interest in identifying good training providers. They also reported that awareness about the RTW Fund initiative had increased among Case Managers and there was significant benefit in working with a single EML case manager who is committed to the provision of training.

The Certificate IV group training delivered by TAFESA required interaction between the Agent Case Managers, Rehabilitation Consultants and VET (vocational education and training) providers. The Case Manager organised transport for those with driving restrictions and kept in touch with the TAFE lecturer. Project staff worked with both the Rehabilitation Consultant and relevant community organisations to research and arrange suitable placements for Project participants. The process was a complex cross sector collaboration which generated much learning and the delineation of a staged process.

PI-3.2: Increased number of participants in relevant training

At the time of reporting there were 35 participants in training which represented 70% of their cohort. However, disagreement with EML about suitable training options remained a concern. SA Unions expressed belief that some decisions not to provide training failed to adequately consider the circumstances of the injured worker, noting that

supporting documentation for the 'suitable option' was often sparse and "not entirely mindful of the worker's injury or sustainable employment options".

SA Unions' protocol for identifying relevant training includes three visits with each participant to gather information about preferred skills, values and the industry sectors that offer interesting long term employment. In addition, employment outcomes are investigated to determine the range of possible jobs available for the qualification, whether there is a demand for the work and if it is likely to be long term.

PI-3.3: Trained workers gain employment relevant to their training

Of the nine participants who gained employment, six were directly related to the training received. Two others gained confidence through the training, one of whom believed it was an important indicator of his commitment to find work (and therefore it helped him gain work in a different area).

PI-4: Improve understanding within the rehabilitation industry of effective training opportunities

PI-4.1: Increased number of workers approved for training in their RTW plan

This Project was successful in obtaining approvals for training for 35 participants.

SA Unions had met with nearly all Rehabilitation Providers and conducted a focus group with De Poi with whom they had twelve participants in common. One Rehabilitation Consultant said that they found the Project's assistance 'empowering' as they had previously found it extremely difficult to obtain training approval through EML. SA Unions expressed concern about the substantial decrease in retraining dollars spent by EML on injured workers during the last three years.

Injured workers, particularly those in constant pain, have reported that they would prefer to resolve their physical and psychological issues before they consider training. This has implications for the funding of training options when training cannot be completed prior to 130 weeks. Case Managers constrained by the 130 week limitation were making decisions about training that fit the timeframe, rather than training that suited the needs of individual injured workers.

SA Unions also expressed concern about the lack of clarity and consistency in the documentation of some RTW Plans.

PI-4.2: Increased collaboration between the rehabilitation and training sectors

At commencement of the Project, rehabilitation providers were reticent to request training as they believed the Claims Agent would not approve it. However, the Project's observed success in obtaining training was reported to have altered their expectations. On more than one occasion, rehabilitation consultants either accompanied Project staff to meet with the training provider, or organised the proposed training themselves. In the most complex cases SA Unions Project staff organised the training and accompanied injured workers to enrol.

The SA Unions Project team also developed a work experience placement process for the six participants studying the Certificate IV - Community Services in consultation with the participating TAFE Lecturer and Vocational Placement Coordinator. The placement process was distributed to all rehabilitation consultants and students to ensure a clear understanding of the steps and each person's role and responsibility in organising the placement. The process increased communication between the rehabilitation consultants and the training provider while enhancing the communication skills of students in securing an appropriate placement. The process was described as being very different from existing practice in securing work hardening placements.

At the De Poi Focus Group, SA Unions recommended to rehabilitation consultants the use of the Manufacturing Industry Skills Advisory Group website. The Consultants expressed the need for easy access to Employment and Training Pathways. The SA Unions Project Officer told them about the "my future" Website www.myfuture.edu.au/ which was designed for this purpose but which needed further maintaining to function adequately. It was agreed that better and more comprehensive online tools were needed because of the widespread difficulty in easily accessing

information about real time training pathways. Therefore, this component of the Project remains in its early development.

SA Unions described the rehabilitation and training sectors work in 'silos' without processes in place for them to coordinate their efforts. Therefore the Project has relied on forging relationships with individuals in each sector.

PI-5: Improve training industries understanding of workers compensation and RTW systems, and improve access

PI-5.1: Increased flexibility in the training sector to cater for injured workers

TAFE SA was identified by the Project as its preferred training provider due to its flexibility and capacity to understand the needs of Project participants, and its relatively greater experience in working with disadvantaged groups compared to private RTOs (Registered Training Organisations). However, a challenge faced as been the great diversity across TAFE campuses,.SA Unions has identified the need for an advocate during the enrolment process (and possibly later) given the inconsistency and complexity of enrolment practices. They have encouraged rehabilitation consultants to contact TAFE staff and arrange additional support where needed.

Recognition of prior learning was achieved by eight participants.

PI-5.2: Increased partnerships between the training sector and other RTW stakeholders

To date, SA Unions has worked with six TAFE institutes, 14 local community centres and nine other training organisations. Linking clients to Community Neighbour Houses has been valuable as they have acted as both learning and support centres (and were not previously known to participants). In addition, as providers of adult and community education, they are known for building supported pathways into VET for disadvantaged learners. Industry Training Advisory Boards have also been supportive of the Project and were represented on the Project Reference Group.

SA Unions reported that the Certificate IV in Community Services program that was specifically negotiated for their Project has been of great interest to EML, WorkCover and other stakeholders. They reported that trainers who take the time to cater to individual learning styles can assist injured workers into new pathways of employment.

PI-6: To address known barriers to RTW

PI-6.1: Better and more meaningful return to work outcomes

Six of the nine Project participants were reported as being in meaningful work at the time of reporting. The remaining three were employed on a casual basis, which was considered to be precarious. The Project focused on the need for targeted work hardening to match skills and training. It identified that the current process is insensitive to the specific needs of individuals and sometimes counterproductive to meaningful return to work. Injured workers identified that stress was placed on them due to poor design of work hardening places.

The Project also identified the need for an exploration of the skills of injured workers other than what is presented on paper (resume). Conversations with injured workers revealed hidden skills that the participant had never articulated as such, and also identified a need for assistance for injured workers who have lost confidence to articulate their competencies and skills. The Project also reported the need for small and targeted steps in the retraining process.

SA Unions reported positive feedback from the EML Strategies Manager regarding their success with RPL (as presented at their reference group meeting). Additional funding will be sought from WorkCover to conduct RPL with injured workers.

This Project sought to assess the skills, aptitude and work goals of the injured worker in an inclusive way, and identified the steps required to get them back to work. Workers were reported to have gained confidence in navigating the systems, and taking responsibility for achieving those goals.

PI-7: Increased stakeholder knowledge of improved strategies for the RTW process

SA Unions presented information about Project learnings to a WorkCover Stakeholders Forum, in the presence of the CEO. Project staff met with the WorkCover RISE coordinator which led to SA Unions receiving 50 RISE packages for workers who are job seeking. SA Unions have continued to work to share the ideas and learnings from their Project with WorkCover, and have been invited to participate on a national panel.

Collaboration with rehabilitation consultants has achieved mixed outcomes. Some consultants adopted the suggestions and practices from SA Unions and integrated them into their own processes. In other cases, the Project was seen as more peripheral – rehabilitation consultants didn't record SA Unions involvement with clients and they were not notified of change of consultants.

PI-8: Increased awareness by stakeholders of improvements to the system

The Project has contributed to a number of forums involving different stakeholders and has participated in relevant *WorkCover SA* events. Project staff have also attended EML training and RRTWC Forums for both learning and networking purposes.

The Claims Agent Case Manager assigned to the Project's 'detached' workers was very supportive and worked hard to ensure that the proposals submitted for training of injured workers were given full consideration.

2.2.1.7 SA UNIONS CRITICAL LEARNINGS

SA Unions reported five critical learnings from their Project, which may better inform practice throughout the system. They reported on the importance of:

- 1) A person-centred holistic approach, including consideration of their social and family relationships.
- 2) A collaborative approach, building trust across sectors and with individual stakeholders.
- 3) A focus on existing skills, but alternative training and employment options.
- 4) Using existing community resources and services for support and to reduce isolation (such as community centres, and adult and community education).
- 5) The importance of a healthy workplace culture.

Developing and Maintaining the Injured Worker Relationship

The project found participants responded best when:

- The injured worker is viewed with respect, dignity and capacity, and where self confidence is encouraged along with the principles of 'inclusion, meaningful existence and active participation'.
- Home visits are conducted (if suitable) for the participant to identify barriers, resources and access to local services.
- A genuine interest is shown in both the injured worker and their family.
- The value of wrap around services is recognised and utilised.
- The worker is clearly advised and understands their rights and responsibilities, and the system.
- Regular contact is maintained with the worker.
- Trust is established and sustained with the worker.
- Decisions are communicated clearly so injured workers understand the implications without needing to obtain legal advice.

Discovering the Training Pathway

Training opportunities should include:

- An informed decision from the injured worker and practical up skilling for a sustainable employment pathway.

- An individually tailored approach that thoroughly researches training options and employment pathways in consultation with the injured worker.
- Thorough skills assessments with identification of potential for new learning.
- Support to navigate and understand the training system; this may include accompanying the injured worker to their first meeting to clarify the training offered and explore any RPL possibilities.
- 'Detached' injured workers may also benefit from access to a personal development course before they embark on a training pathway.

Case Managers and Rehabilitation Consultants should be encouraged to:

- Improve knowledge about training, pathways and skills shortages.
- Provide a timely process of approval for training (with consideration of enrolment and commencement dates).
- Explore training options for "attached" workers within their workplace.

Employer Behaviour and Actions

Employers should be encouraged to:

- Promote and embrace a learning culture for all workers.
- Value workers.
- Understand injury can be managed as an integral part of work, rather than in a crisis situation.
- Explore using Section 58B/C for retraining options as well as modified duties in order to keep people at work and using their skills and abilities..

Improving the System

- Use continual quality assurance reviews to ensure that support of injured workers is carried out in a consistent and mindful manner.
- Encourage an early intervention approach to identify psychosocial and compounding issues in situations where these are likely to be a barrier to return to work.

Workcover SA, the Agent and rehabilitation providers should:

- Promote retraining as an important part of rehabilitation.
- Support the development of flexible training approaches and learning support services.
- Build strong relationships with TAFE and the ACE sector to enhance mutual understanding of available options and issues facing injured workers.
- Develop policy that supports an effective interface between training, rehabilitation and the workers' compensation system.
- Promote and celebrate best practice employers who promote a learning culture.
- Recognise that step-downs and other parts of the legislation cause barriers to participation in training.
- Examine options available for injured workers in the *Skills for All Initiative* and Commonwealth training programs and funding.

2.2.2 BUSINESS SA: SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT

The Business SA 'Small Business Project' was contracted by the RTW Fund in early February 2010. This Project was designed to complement the implementation of the Rehabilitation RTW Coordinator role (a position now mandated for SA business with over 30 employees). Small businesses (ie those with less than 30 employees) are often ill-equipped with the knowledge and skills to facilitate the timely return to work of injured workers. They also lack understanding of the relationship between businesses failing to assist injured workers' return to work and increased costs of the scheme, with the flow-on effect of increased cost to business.

This Project, therefore, was designed to educate and mentor small business owners about the return to work process, the benefits of modified duties and other support mechanisms. Specifically, Business SA aims to:

1. Develop and populate a Business SA database with all required information.
2. Identify small businesses using the Business SA database, and disseminate advertising and promotional material to them.
3. Provide free 2 hour information seminars to small businesses which outline the steps required to reduce the impact of injury in the workplace (held in both metropolitan and regional centres).
4. Offer free one-on-one mentoring sessions (2-3 hours) in the workplace to ensure all protocols, policies and procedures are appropriate to facilitate the return to work process.
5. Provide *ad hoc* practical advice, as required, to business participating in the Project if an injury occurs.

Box 8: Business SA Small Business – Summary to end of June 2011

BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS – SUMMARY
Project contracted to WorkCover 1 February 2010

At the end of June 2011:

- The Business SA small business database had been designed, tested and implemented.
- The database was loaded with over 5000 businesses.
- 80 businesses successfully participated in the project.
- **Information sessions:** 21 participants attended four metropolitan information sessions; and 14 attended three rural sessions.
- **1-on-1 sessions:** 17 were held addressing case management, policies and procedures.
- Successes and achievements for employers include:
 - Improved understanding of legislation, obligations and penalties;
 - Successful closure of claims (including detachment); and
 - Adjustments or corrections to notional earnings or payments.
- Challenges for employers include:
 - Ongoing changes to workers' compensation system (including decisions about medical panels); and
 - Organisational size and staff skill level to manage claims and/or issues.

2.2.2.1 BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

As with other RTW projects, this Project also experienced some contracting delays, however, Business SA did not indicate at the end of the first quarter that this would impact on the Project timelines. Business SA was working with the AISR to finalise its evaluation plan to be completed in April 2010.

At the time of reporting, the establishment of the database had commenced and it was anticipated that approximately 5,000 businesses with between 10 and 30 employees would be eligible for the Project. Advertising to these businesses commenced through newspapers, Business SA website and distribution of DL flyers (which are one-third A4 size).

The first free information sessions were scheduled for April 2010 with additional marketing activity to occur prior to the sessions. Business SA reported some minor delays with the distribution of the DL flyers, which may have resulted in insufficient time for employers to register and attend the April information sessions. They also reported that data integrity of the contact lists needed to be addressed, with more time allocated to cleaning or checking the data.

Business SA reported early support from EML and rehabilitation providers, and were hopeful that a constructive and mutually beneficial relationship was being established.

2.2.2.2 BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

The Project continued to advertise their information sessions during this period, through both metropolitan and regional newspapers. In order to increase attendance at the sessions, targeted cold-calling of local business was also used.

Business SA reported that many small businesses were not prepared to commit the amount of time (1 to 2 hours plus travel) required to attend the information sessions. However, this did not indicate a lack of interest in the Project as a number booked 1-on-1 sessions with Project staff at their premises. Given the low attendance at the information sessions, Business SA were considering a new targeted approach.

Business SA also reported receiving positive feedback from EML and Rehabilitation Providers. In particular EML was complimentary about Business SA including them at the outset of the Project.

'As a result we can anticipate their support and buy-in to developing a constructive relationship which directly leads to achieving successful outcomes.'

Business SA made this comment about stakeholder relationships.

We have experienced very positive relations with key stakeholders (AISR, EML, Rehabilitation Providers). It has been noticeable that the absence of a dedicated WorkCover projects coordinator had had some effect on the progress of this project.

2.2.2.3 BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

This quarter saw a review of the recruitment process away from mass marketing and communications to general and targeted direct 'cold calling'. Although the strategy was in its early stage, Business SA reported that it was becoming apparent that higher success rates were being achieved. Additionally there had been new ideas and some development on alternative recruitment strategies for consideration at a later stage.

Business SA reported that –

- ⇒ employers typically required a minimum of one hour and up to 4 hours of more intensive education in order to develop their capacity to contribute to improving workers' compensation scheme outcomes.
- ⇒ They also identified that resources were a major issue, particularly in relation to access to OHS specialists. A significant lack of specialty providers was apparent in regional locations.
- ⇒ While the education of small business owners was found to be critical, so too was that of other responsible workers (managers and team leaders).

Business SA made this observation about the issue of client confidentiality, which affects the database content.

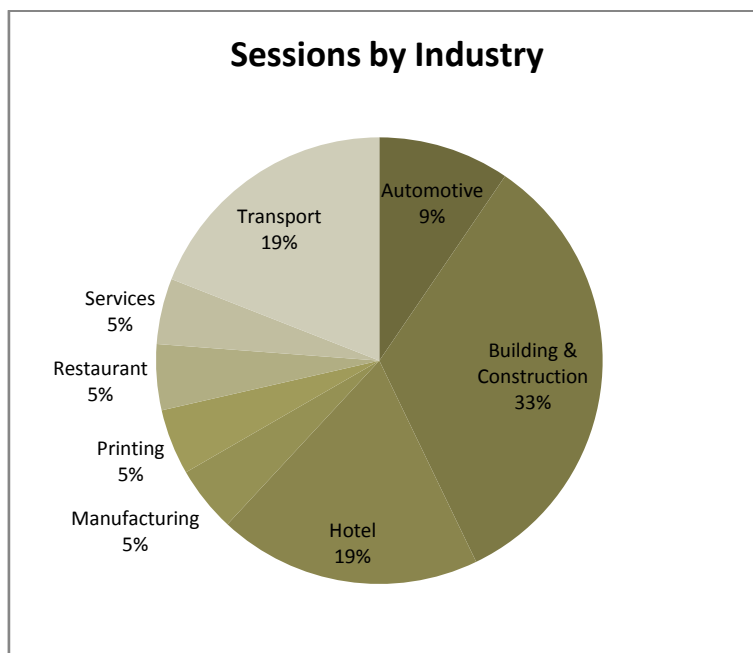
One issue observed from EML is client confidentiality and the fact they have a client service area dedicated to this function. Sharing of information to assist the better management of small employers will improve the success of the scheme overall.

2.2.2.4 BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Cold calling was continued during this period. In addition, a number of business areas were targeted in a marketing campaign using direct cold call visits, with marginal success only. Business SA reported a reduction in interest from businesses during the pre-Christmas period. Other businesses did not engage with the Project as they had no claims, never expected a claim, or felt there was no point as they would not be able to influence the way the claims agent

made decisions. The successful visits were the result of utilising small employers with existing claims from the employee list.

The chart below summarises the key features of participating businesses, showing the largest participation coming from the building and construction sector, followed by transport and hospitality.



2.2.2.5 BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Business SA's quarterly report was delayed due to the departure of the Project Manager.

Business SA reported that businesses with claims experience were much more likely to engage with the Project, and that these could be identified initially through the SA WorkCover Tribunal cause list, with contact details sourced via the Business SA database or the web. Business SA believed their Project would be more successful under the newly proposed premium system which could also help with a continuous improvement focus.

The Project had involved a total of 66 businesses by the end of March 2011. Improvements in targeting led to an improved response rate and more business participation. A number of reasons for business non-participation in the project were provided including database entries being out of date or incorrect. In other cases some employers had initiated their own training or education in the area and had no need for the Business SA service.

Business SA claimed achievements in terms of improved business engagement with the workers, and a focus on the longer term goals of RTW. Productive learning relationships which have resulted in clearer employer understanding of the claims process and the pivotal role they have in helping injured workers RTW were also identified. Employers were found to have low levels of awareness about the support available to them to assist RTW. Therefore, it was concluded that education and effective communication were critical.

Business SA reported some frustration that despite ongoing attempts to engage EML and their case managers, many case managers remained unaware of the Project and its scope.

2.2.2.6 BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 6TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Business SA continued to utilise the daily 'cause list' to identify employers with recent claims experience for participation in the Project. This continued to be the most successful approach for recruiting participants, although in some cases multiple invitations were sent before acceptance. It was felt that news about WorkCover's shift to a new premium model may have also generated business interest and subsequent participation during this quarter. New

mass marketing materials were prepared and distributed at all Business SA events, this 'cold call' approach resulted in only slight increases to participant numbers, and were not as successful as had been anticipated. Reasons given for non-participation included lack of interest, previous experience, cost, time commitment and negative expectations.

Table 5: Number of businesses recruited per quarter

End of quarter	Number invited to participate (a)	Number participating in program during period (b)	Response rate
Jan-Mar 2010	~ 5000*	n/a	Na
Apr-June 2010	~ 5000*	3	Na
Jul-Sep 2010	169	13	7.6%
Oct-Dec 2010	98 - targeted	13	13.3%
Jan-March 2011	166 - targeted	37	22.3%
Apr-Jun 2011	>500*	14	Na
Total	Approximately 5000	80	Na

*Includes mass marketing email, mail and dissemination of promotional material at all Business SA events.

Successes and achievements identified for employers included:

- Improved understanding of legislation, obligations and penalties;
- Successful closure of claims (including detachment); and
- Adjustments or corrections to notional earnings or payments.

Challenges for employers include:

- Ongoing changes to the workers' compensation system (including decisions about medical panels); and
- Organisational size and staff skill level to manage claims and/or issues.

2.2.2.7 SMALL BUSINESS PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Develop advertising and promotional material

The first milestone period delivered the key communications to 5,000+ employers in South Australia through advertising on the BusinessSA website and in newspapers, and through distribution of DL Flyers.

Continued advertising occurred during the April to June 2010 period to metropolitan and regional newspapers. A second round of DL Flyers was distributed to a targeted distribution list. Targeted cold calling was initiated during this period to specific regions.

During the July to September 2010 quarter, direct electronic promotional material was sent to a number of employers in South Australia. Discussions with, and identification of a number of Development and Industry Boards, were undertaken to further promote the Project and increase the provision of these services to employers. Business SA further refined their marketing to implement a more targeted approach.

PI-2: Creation and maintenance of Database of Records

During the April to June 2010 quarter, the RTW Small Business database was established and tested. In addition the loading of approximately 9,000 businesses was completed. Further work on the database architecture document was completed with some minor amendments made.

Most recent activity has been associated with updating outdated or unknown information about small businesses, resulting in greater accuracy and integrity of employer details. Business SA note that the database collects information on workers rather than employers which is identified as a problem.

PI-3: Conduct information sessions for employers

The first Information seminars commenced in March 2010. Table 6 summarises the delivery of seminars by the end of September 2010. For this period there were 21 information sessions provided, with 35 attendees from a total of 163 direct targeted calls to employers.

Table 6: Information sessions delivered May to September 2010

Date of Information Session	Location	Number of bookings (a)	Number attended (b)	Response rate % (b/a*100)
10 May 2010	Mount Gambier	0	Cancelled	Deferred to July
13 May 2010	Barossa	1	1	100%
20 April 2010	Metro (Thebarton)	11	8	73%
21 April 2010	Metro (Mawson Lakes)	7	4	57%
20 May 2010	Port Lincoln	1	0	0%
25 May 2010	Berri	1	deferred	n/a
26 May 2010	Port Augusta	5	5	100%
8 June 2010	Metro (Mawson Lakes)	6	5	83%
16 June 2010	Metro (Thebarton)	7	4	57%
9 September 2010	Mount Gambier	9	8	89%
Total		48	35	70%

Due to low rates of attendance and high costs, Business SA reported that from 2011 they were no longer conducting employer group sessions, instead focusing efforts on 1-on-1 sessions.

PI-4: Improve the skills and responsibilities of small businesses

Six 1-on-1 sessions were delivered in the May to July period, with an additional 11 sessions held to December 2010. Business SA found it was important to clearly articulate in the promotion of the sessions that they are designed to educate and assist employers in relation to the workers' compensation scheme, as most were found to anticipate that any communication regarding the scheme would be focused on auditing or reviewing (which acts as a barrier to their participation if it is not addressed). Once the businesses understand the basic concepts and principles they are more engaged in the process.

Business SA report that feedback has been a positive acknowledgement of the improved skills and responsibilities of small businesses. From the 1-on-1 sessions conducted most interest and discussion was in the following areas:

- ⇒ Benefits of training and a RTW focus (rather than litigation)
- ⇒ Claim Review and Information relating to a Claim
- ⇒ EML, their role and the basis for decision making
- ⇒ Legislative changes and injury management.

2.2.3 BUSINESS SA: WORK HARDENING PROJECT

The Business SA 'Work Hardening Project' was contracted by the RTW Fund in early February 2010. The Project addressed the difficulties of locating work placements for injured workers who were unable (in the short or long term) to return to their pre-injury workplace. Fundamental to this Project was the development and establishment of a database of placements, to be monitored and updated on a regular basis. The database was designed to document roles, skills required to perform the roles (eg manual dexterity), whether training is available, and the timeframe for the placement.

The model was promoted to both EML case managers and rehabilitation providers as a 'one-stop shop' to assist in the return to work process, involving these five main components: –

- ⇒ Business SA develop a database and identify businesses willing and able to provide placements for injured workers.
- ⇒ Rehabilitation providers contact Business SA for current placements.
- ⇒ The database matches injured workers' capacity and skills with available placements.
- ⇒ Business details are given to rehabilitation providers, who can then organise the placement.
- ⇒ Business SA maintain the database, and keep it up to date by confirming the current status of each placement with the 'host employer/s'.

Box 9: Business SA Work Hardening – Summary to end of June 2011

BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING – SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover 1 February 2010

As of the end of June 2011 -

- The Business SA work hardening database was established and tested.
- The database was loaded with over 5,000 businesses.
- **Requests for placements:** 121 injured workers were registered
 - Most injured clients were 40-49 years , they were 31% female
 - The injury status was unknown for most clients, however, around half the reported injuries were back-related.
 - Placements were usually generated through rehabilitation consultants.
- **Host employers:** 48 businesses registered
 - 14 placements were in progress
 - 10 placements were pending confirmation
 - 3 placements led to permanent employment
 - 3 placements were expected to result in permanent employment
 - 4 employers who offered placements were unable to offer employment
 - 4 placements were not continued
 - There were 10 vacancies.

2.2.3.1 BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

The minor contracting delays experienced by this Project were not expected to impact on most timelines and deliverables. Business SA finalised its Evaluation Plan with AISR during this quarter. Database design commenced in early March and was scheduled for completion by the end of May 2010. It was estimated that approximately 6,000 businesses were eligible for this Project.

DL flyers were used to promote the benefits of the work hardening placement to businesses and were supported by newspaper advertising, and promotion through other Business SA events in March 2010. In addition, Business SA made cold calls to targeted employers inviting them to attend free information seminars (in both metropolitan and regional centres). However, interest in, and attendance at, the first round of information sessions was low.

Business SA identified a number of factors that were likely to have affected low attendance rates, including timing (proximity to Easter and insufficient advance notice) and conflict with other commitments (ie employers too busy to attend). Business SA recognised the need to revisit their recruitment method if this trend continued. However,

Business SA identified two early opportunities for work hardening placements identified through the cold calling process.

Business SA acknowledged the positive engagement from EML and rehabilitation providers during this quarter, and expected that this would lay the foundation for a constructive long-term relationship with these key stakeholders.

2.2.3.2 BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

During the April to June period, Business SA undertook an initial round of newspaper advertising, marketing to employers the benefits of the Project, followed by DL Flyers sent by direct mail to employers inviting them to attend free Information Seminars in their locations, and to identify potential Work Hardening opportunities.

Information sessions were provided for EML and Rehabilitation Providers, and liaison was undertaken with the SA Unions Project being funded by the RTW Fund.

As with the other RTW Fund Project being undertaken by Business SA, most employers were found to be too busy to travel to attend sessions, however, some were keen to take on clients and provide placement opportunities. A total of 28 injured workers were recorded on the database as current or pending Work Hardening placements. They were being referred through Rehabilitation Providers.

Business SA had engaged with key stakeholders, conducting information sessions for EML and rehabilitation providers and liaising with SA Unions. The Project adjusted its procedures for working with rehabilitation providers with regard to collecting information about injured clients. All referrals of injured workers during this quarter were received through rehabilitation providers. Work hardening placements tended to be of short duration, but feedback from both host employers and injured workers was reported to be favourable. As the Project progressed, Business SA noted that injured clients with very specific skills or work requirements were being put forward by rehabilitation providers.

2.2.3.3 BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

This quarter saw a review of the recruitment process away from mass marketing and communications to general and targeted direct cold calling with this strategy yielding higher response rates. Further activity was undertaken directly with Rehabilitation Providers.

Business SA also met with EML again to promote awareness of the Project to Case Managers. Business SA found that group based Information Sessions had not been effective, and that direct and individualised communication with individual employers was more productive. Improved results were also obtained from providing one-on-one information sessions with Industry Boards or Associations and with Rehabilitation Providers.

Business SA identified the importance of an effective working relationship with rehabilitation providers in order to recruit clients for the Project and to ensure successful outcomes. However, privacy issues should not be ignored.

It is critical that a strong relationship exists between the Rehabilitation Providers and employers to ensure successful outcomes. There is also the need for appropriate information relating to demographic, skills and capabilities of injured workers along with specific and accurate up to date details of the work hardening placements to ensure the best chance of securing the best likelihood for paid employment. Feedback and timely status information is crucial to ensuring the Project continues effectively, this is an area requiring significant change and improved activity.

2.2.3.4 BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

To the end of December 2010, a total of 73 businesses had been approached with 39 businesses listed on the database as current or pending work hardening placements. Greater awareness of rehabilitation providers led to increased registration of work hardening candidates. However, finding employers able to offer a potential work

hardening placement continued to be a challenge. Once work hardening employers are identified and the placement brokered, it is important that monitoring occurs to ensure the placement commences, progresses appropriately and continues for the allocated time.

This quarter saw increased involvement from rehabilitation providers. However of concern, the increased demand for placements could not be met, as Business SA could not match the workers to suitable employers.

2.2.3.5 BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Business SA's quarterly report was delayed due to the departure of the Project Manager.

A total of 46 clients (businesses) were recorded on the database as current or pending work hardening placement listings. During this quarter, Business SA focused on securing more regional workers and employers in areas including Port Lincoln and Mt Gambier. There were some difficulties garnering interest from rehabilitation providers in regional areas.⁷

2.2.3.6 BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 6TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

In this quarter, Business SA included Whyalla and Mt Gambier in its regional focus. Additional placements were sought in Elizabeth, Wingfield and Regency Park. The Project continued to be promoted through rehabilitation consultants as well as by direct marketing.

Barriers identified to recruitment included poor timing, cost, employer attitudes to WorkCover and prior negative experience with claims (these were similar to barriers reported in the small business project). A total of 48 clients (businesses) were listed as current or pending work hardening placements, with 121 injured workers registered for placements.

Successes in work hardening included, for one worker, an increased capacity from 3 hours a day twice a week to a five day week comprised of 6 hours a day twice a week and 4 hours a day for the other three days. This was found to have improved the worker's self esteem, their confidence, and reduced their injury, leaving them ready to seek paid employment. Another placement was found to have improved the confidence and skill level of an older worker who was better able to seek employment.

Business SA recognised the investment in time spent building and maintaining relationships with host employers and rehabilitation providers. This was important to sustain interest from employers.

Business SA expressed the belief that while funding is available through the RISE program for subsidised employment, financial incentive is also required to support businesses with work hardening placements. This could be in the form of a reduced levy or financial support for the development of job dictionaries or OH&S support.

2.2.3.7 WORK HARDENING PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Develop advertising and promotional material

The January to March 2010 period of the Project saw the delivery of the key communications to 6,000+ employers in South Australia through newspaper ads, advertising on the BusinessSA website, and through distribution of DL Flyers. The April to June 2010 quarter saw the continuing of advertising to metropolitan and regional newspapers. A second round of DL Flyers was distributed to a targeted distribution list. At the end of the second quarter (June 2010),

⁷ WorkCover and EML have subsequently offered to assist by approaching case managers and rehabilitation providers and advising of the opportunities (email 4 May 2011).

Business SA concluded that the advertising and marketing campaign did not effectively reach the target market, and developed a more focused marketing/advertising campaign that included targeted cold calling.

In the July to September 2010 quarter, additional electronic Flyers were disseminated to targeted clients as well as at other Business SA run events. In September the 'placement press' electronic article was developed and distributed to rehabilitation providers on a monthly basis.

During October to December 2010, Business SA prepared a new electronic brochure for distribution in early 2011. This was designed to engage new clients into the Project.

PI-2: Creation and maintenance of Database of Records

During the April to June 2010 period, the RTW Work Hardening database was established and tested. In addition the loading of approximately 6,000 businesses was completed. The July to December 2010 period continued the process of updating and adding new data on injured workers and participating businesses.

PI-3: Conduct information sessions for employers

The first Information seminars commenced in March 2010. Further Information Sessions were held thereafter and including the July to September 2010 period, and the results are shown below. Additional Information sessions were successfully held with rehabilitation providers generating new placements, and initiated a supported approach with the Project for increasing the number of employers participating in the Project. Information sessions were not held in 2011 due to the low attendance rates and input costs.

Table 7: Information sessions held March to September 2010

Date of Information Session	Location	Number of bookings (a)	Number attended (b)	Response rate % (b/a*100)
30 March 2010	Metro (Thebarton)	7	3	43%
31 March 2010	Metro (Mawson Lakes)	4	3	75%
10 May 2010	Mount Gambier	0	Cancelled	Deferred to July
12 May 2010	Metro (Mawson Lakes)	7	5	71%
13 May 2010	Barossa	4	4	100%
18 May 2010	Metro (Thebarton)	10	6	60%
20 May 2010	Port Lincoln	4	3	75%
25 May 2010	Berri	1	deferred	n/a
26 May 2010	Port Augusta	1	1	100%
9 September 2010	Mount Gambier	1	1	100%
Total		39	26	66.7%

PI-4: A responsive facilitation of work hardening placements

To the end of March 2011 there were a number of placements made, these are summarised below:

- ⇒ 48 Employers had registered as host employers.
- ⇒ A total of 121 requests for injured worker placements had been registered (mostly from Rehabilitation Providers.)
- ⇒ Of the 48 employers, there were:
 - 14 placements in progress
 - 3 secured paid employment
 - 3 expecting a paid employment outcome
 - 4 placements discontinued
 - 10 vacancies
 - 4 employer who offered placement but were unable to offer employment

- 10 placements pending confirmations.

Generally placements were short term, but completed placements were positively received by both clients and host employers. During the April to June 2010 quarter there was a very successful Work Hardening placement that resulted in the permanent employment of a Client. There was also an increase in the number of Rehabilitation Providers providing clients for placement. Business SA reported that employers are keen for the Project to continue as they believe it is a win-win for all.

2.2.4 BECKMANN & ASSOCIATES: FAMILIES.... WORKING TOGETHER TO WORK

Beckmann & Associates was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 29 December 2010 to provide the *Families.... Working Together to Work* Project for the RTW Fund. This Project was designed to provide family based counselling and education for injured workers in order to raise awareness and enhance the effect of family support as an acknowledged critical factor on return to work. While there are many bio-psychosocial factors that affect the success and durability of return to work, there has been no formal attention to the influence of family with follow up measurement.

Families.... Working Together To Work provides two family counselling sessions no less than six weeks apart for 20 injured workers. At the first session the counsellor provides an overview of the scheme, answer any questions relating to the scheme and commences counselling and motivational interviewing. The second session will be held within three weeks. At 3, 6 and 12 months following the final family counselling session, information is collected on whether the injured worker has returned to work and if so to what degree and at what stage. Participants are asked to assess the benefit they received from the sessions and the degree to which the sessions impacted on their return to work.

Each of the sessions is structured around a framework involving:

- Partial exploration of knowledge gaps or misunderstanding;
- Information and discussion to address these knowledge gaps / misunderstandings;
- Discussion and counselling regarding the effect of the injury on the worker, their family and daily activities – aiming to identify any secondary gains or losses;
- Motivational interviewing to achieve a return to work; and
- Collaboration on an action plan for activities and strategies.

The purpose of this Project is to address:

- The importance of family support in the recovery and RTW process and to provide tools to facilitate this;
- Families' lack of knowledge about workers' compensation;
- The impact of secondary gain and loss on the injured worker and the family;
- Distress experienced by the injured worker and the family; and
- Implement change both on an individual and family level (motivational interviewing).

Beckmann & Associates offer this Project from all four of their offices (including three regional locations).

2.2.4.1 BECKMANN & ASSOC 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

Beckmann & Associates reported that the minor variations between proposed and actual start dates were primarily due to an agreement between their organisation and EML regarding recruitment. Client criteria were clearly defined and agreed prior to contracting with WorkCover and EML. Participants were recruited directly by the Project from a list provided by WorkCover. The first contacts (n=50) were sent a letter in the week ending 1 April 2011, and were then contacted personally to determine if they wished to participate.

Beckmann & Associates reported that despite a very good understanding of the workers compensation scheme within SA, the stakeholders, claims agents and process of rehabilitation, the project manager underestimated the quantity of

work required to satisfy the contract expectations regarding marketing/ communications, reporting and evaluations. This resulted in the suggestion and/or acceptance of a delayed start. It has not however required a change to the Project methodology.

2.2.4.2 BECKMANN & ASSOC 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

Using contact details provided by WorkCover, Project information had been mailed in batches to 220 injured workers between April and the end of June 2011. Workers were contacted by phone approximately two weeks after the mail out. The response was often positive with many injured workers indicating they would have been interested, and wished to discuss their recovery and RTW experience and how this impacted the family. However, delays in rolling out the Project meant the contact list was old and many workers had already returned to work and were no longer eligible - therefore actual recruitment was very low.

At the end of June 2011:

- 220 injured workers had been sent information letters.
- Attempts had been made to contact 91 by phone⁸.
 - **2 expressed interest in participating**
 - 33 messages were left
 - 15 had already returned to work
 - 10 calls went unanswered
 - 10 declined without providing further reason
 - 9 numbers were disconnected
 - 4 requested the information be resent
 - 3 declined as family circumstance not considered applicable
 - 3 declined as psychological claims were too complex
 - 1 declined due to resignation
 - 1 declined due to recent surgery.

Counselling sessions were planned to commence in July 2011. Due to the difficulties with recruitment and with only two interested participants identified, Beckmann & Associates renegotiated the Project with WorkCover. Under the revised proposal, five of the original twenty proposed participants would be asked to report on the support provided to families after work injury and present the findings as case studies. Fifteen injured workers would be invited to participate under the original proposal.

2.2.4.3 BECKMANN & ASSOC PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Not applicable at this time.

⁸ The remaining workers were contacted in July. Responses are not reported here.

2.3 RTW FUND PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2011

The following sections provide a brief overview of RTW Fund Projects approved in 2011 including a summary of reported activity and progress to date. Please refer to individual Project reports for more information.

2.3.1 MS VOCATIONAL SERVICES: RE-INVENT YOURSELF ... LIFE AFTER INJURY

Mary Saloniklis Vocational Services (MSVS) was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 13 January 2011 to provide the *Re-invent Yourself...Life after injury* Project for the RTW Fund.

This Project is based on a peer support model focusing on attitudinal healing via assistance from qualified and experienced health educators, facilitators and the life experience of mentors and guest speakers who have themselves been injured. It facilitates barrier breakthrough using outcome based problem solving methodologies. Individuals are encouraged to explore and develop a personal plan using solution focusing that will enable them to move toward a full and rich life, encompassing any long-term physical limitations.

The program is designed to assist and support people to create solutions, take control of their future and reclaim their independence. The program utilises a psychosocial model of rehabilitation and return to work. To address the identified 'yellow flag' indicators of psychosocial behaviour, this program aims to reduce the yellow flags often not prioritised through the management of a claim. Identified and/or unaddressed yellow flags can lead to increased risk of a longer claim.

The '*Re-invent Yourself...life after injury*' Project has been developed using a new innovative peer support model that utilises narrative therapy and links participants with recovered workers. Through a series of workshops facilitated by *Alchemy Training*, participants have the opportunity to explore previous loss and grief, before redefining themselves through new thought processes, goals and personal plans. A key component of the Program is the training of recovered injured workers to be mentors, guest speakers and co-facilitators. This Project applies well researched models of trauma recovery and evaluation systems under the psychosocial model. Utilising a whole of person approach to treatment, the psychosocial indicators (yellow flags) are not only identified, but the worker is empowered to become an active participant in their recovery - leading to higher overall health.

The Project targets two groups of client: early intervention and long-term. Early intervention clients (cohort 1) include workers with claims of less than 18 months. MSVS also seeks to target clients who lack direction and motivation for RTW, who have significant barriers impeding their RTW and who have possible yellow flag indicators. For the purpose of this Project, long term clients (cohort 2) are those with claims over 18 months. In addition to the issues targeted for identifying early intervention clients, MSVS also seeks the inclusion of red flag indicators, and entrenched behaviours and emotions.

In summary, the *Re-invent Yourself...Life after Injury* peer mentoring Project envisages the following outcomes:

- To establish life changing, sustainable thought patterns that will support attitudinal healing
- To provide skill development through group education, awareness raising and peer support
- To develop competency in barrier recognition and problem solving
- To increase re-entry into appropriate work pathways through redefining and developing of skills.

MSVS – SUMMARY

Project contracted to WorkCover 13 January 2011

At the end of June 2011 -

- **Workshops:** 6 series of workshops were complete

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 39 participants commenced the program (71% of 55 referrals).
 - Just over half were female (54%).
 - Average age of 45 years.
 - 23 had been employed on a permanent basis with their pre-injury employer, with nine on seasonal contracts. However, only two were still attached to pre-injury employer.
 - Participants reported having sustained strains, sprains, fractures and psychological injuries.
 - Participants had been injured an average of 838 days prior to attendance at the first workshop.

OUTCOMES

- 26 (67% of 39) participants completed the four week program.
- Eight participants attended the refresher course for the first two programs, these individuals had maintained high levels of optimism and motivation, and reported success in engaging with work.

2.3.1.1 MSVS 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

Minor contractual delays pushed back the project start date by one month, however, MSVS were able to complete the establishment stage within the original time frame. No further delays were experienced.

Recruitment of injured workers was achieved with the assistance of EML through an aggressive marketing strategy promoting the Project to rehabilitation providers through nine information sessions. Another eight sessions were organised, but cancelled as the rehabilitation providers did not invite staff attendance. In addition, the EML RTW Project manager distributed project material at EML case management and team leader meetings.

The first two programs commenced on 3 and 4 February 2010. The Project aimed to recruit at least eight participants for each program, and while this was achieved, with eighteen recruited for the two programs, only eleven of these commenced the program, with six completing the full four week course. Of the seven who did not commence one was deemed medically unfit and five did not turn up to the program (without notifying the facilitator or their peer support mentor).

Of the six program completions, one was actively job seeking working collaboratively with their workplace rehabilitation provider, and another had enlisted an advocate to help navigate the system. Other participants reported shifts in their thinking and ability to deal with the trauma from their injury. The refresher course was run on 24 and 25 March 2010 (no details are available at the time of reporting).

MSVS reported participant retention as the biggest challenge of the Project to date, with eleven commencing at week one and reducing each week to six in the final week (week 4). As the program is not mandatory, participants felt no obligation to notify the trainer when they decided not to attend. The location for the program (Mawson Lakes Community Centre) was difficult for those not living in the northern suburbs, and resulted in fewer referrals from other Adelaide regions (Programs 3 and 4 will be located in Mile End). In addition, only 15 minutes had been allocated

to guest speakers, but interest and group participation meant this could have been allocated an hour in the program. Participants have indicated that they felt the program could have been more helpful if held early in the claim.

2.3.1.2 MSVS 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

MSVS amended the recruitment process to achieve improved retention rates and ensure the engagement of the most suitable clients for the Project. This change was facilitated by the RTW Fund Project staff from EML who identified suitable clients from their database and liaised with case managers to ensure referrals were completed. This proved to be a successful strategy, although there was some confusion expressed by participants who believed involvement was mandatory.

Four programs were delivered during the April to June 2011 quarter, with two refresher courses, which brought the total number of invited participants to 55 and the total commencing the program to 39 (71%). Participants had an average age of 45 years, with just over half being female (54%). Only two remained with their pre-injury employer. Participants had been injured an average of 838 days prior to commencing the Program.

Table 8: Participation and completion information: Re-invent yourself

End of quarter	Program number	Number invited to participate (a)	Number starting program during period (b)	Participation rate % (b/a*100)	Number completing the program (c)	Completion rate (c/b*100)
Jan-Mar 2011	P1 & P2	18	11	61%	6	55%
Apr-Jun 2011	P3	9	9	100%	9	100%
	P4	10	6	60%	4	66%
	P5	9	7	78%	4	57%
	P6	9	6	67%	3	50%
	Refresher 3	9	6	67%	6	100%
	Refresher 4	8	2	25%	3**	
Jul-Sep 2011						
Oct-Dec 2011						
Total*		55	39	71%	26	67%

* Refresher course not included in total.

** As per MSVS report.

MSVS reported that the pain and medication levels of some participants impeded their concentration levels and ability to gain meaningfully from the program. Literacy problems also were evident for some participants. MSVS noted that a rescheduling of programs 5 and 6 to delivery on a Friday resulted in reduced attendance levels. This was an unfortunate (but unavoidable) outcome of the facilitator being stranded interstate by airline disruptions caused by the Chilean volcanic eruption.

Successful strategies for the MSVS project have been identified, namely, the use of a facilitator with personal experience of work injury, a peer support model and the refresher program (run one month after the completion of the main program components).

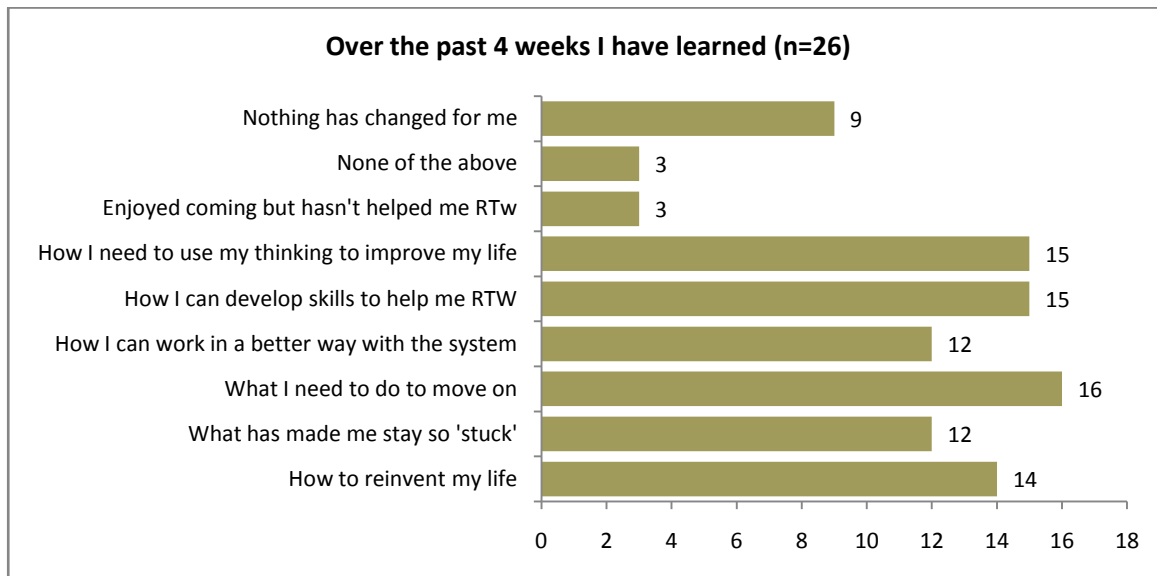
Thirty-five participants (of 39 commencements) reported that had either spoken with their rehabilitation consultant, investigated undertaking increased hours, considered training, commenced a work placement or were actively job seeking since they commenced the program.

2.3.1.3 MSVS PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Demonstrated understanding of the impact of thought processes on mental health

Approximately half of the respondents who completed training indicated they had learned how to improve their thinking, develop skills and reinvent their lives as a result of involvement in the Project (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: MSVS participant learning over four week course



PI-2: Demonstrated ability to understand and implement thinking strategies into life plans

Respondents at the end of four weeks indicated an average of 6.7 on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (every week) that they tried the tips suggested by the program. A number of participants completing the course reported improved understanding of the impact of their injury on other elements of their lives and improvements in how they were feeling.

PI-3: Reduction in reported feelings of isolation and alienation

Measures of psychological coping including depression, anxiety, fear, optimism and isolation improved over the four week course. Most notably there was a reduction in feelings of isolation.

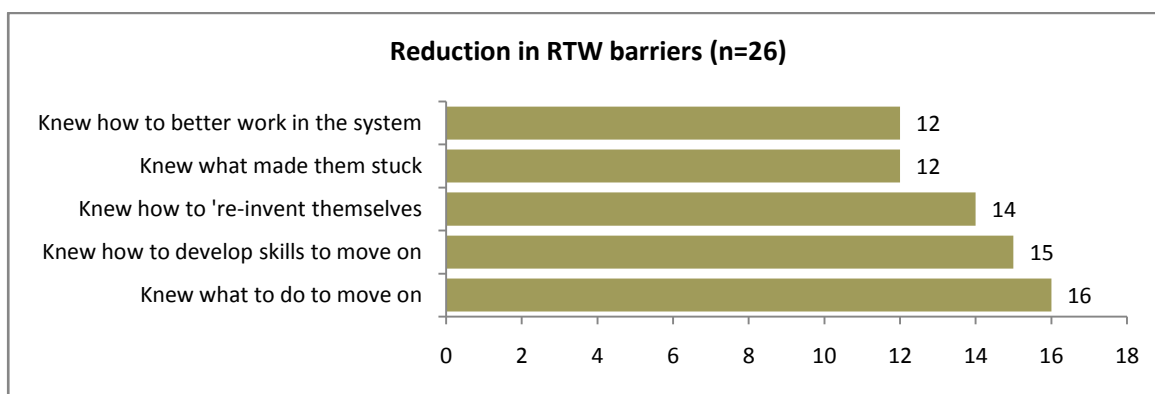
PI-4: Increased levels of happiness

Participants completing the program reported increased happiness levels from 5.4 to 7.3 (on a 10 point scale)

PI-5: Demonstrated reduction of RTW barriers

In week 4 a number of participants demonstrated a clear reduction in, and understanding of, the return to work barriers which had stopped them from progressing through their claim and return to work (see Figure 10). In addition, participants felt that they had gained control over their lives.

Figure 10: MSVS participant reduction in RTW barriers at Week 4



PI-6: Demonstrated ability to identify individual barriers

By the third week, participants were able to identify and understand their own barriers, and how they contributed to the perpetuation of their 'story'. At week four, participants felt better able to handle their situation (improving from 4.3 at week 1 to 7.6 at week 4).

PI-7: Demonstrated ability to develop solutions for RTW

Participants felt upskilled by the things they had learned. They expressed greater confidence in developing their own solutions both in RTW and in their personal lives.

PI-8: Demonstrated higher levels of motivation of RTW

Participants had greater belief in their capacity to RTW during the next 12 months. Some of this motivation was drawn through the experience of engaging with other injured workers.

PI-9: Demonstrated ability to engage training options

Workers reported greater confidence in liaising with others in the system, with 11 reporting they had spoken with their rehabilitation consultant and were considering training options. Four were motivated to increase their hours of work.

PI-10: Demonstrated ability to seek options for self

All participants had sought options for themselves since commencing in the program.

PI-11: Number of injured workers/peer supporters/mentors trained

Three peer support mentors were engaged in the first quarter to provide support to the course facilitator. During the second quarter, two participants were identified as potential candidates for peer mentoring. One of these was undertaking a work training placement at the time of reporting.

PI-12: Number and duration of peer support calls made

Peer support phone calls were made to almost all participants prior to the program commencing. Phone calls were usually around five minutes in duration.

PI-13: Context and content of calls

The peer support mentor was allocated the task of calling each participant prior to the program commencing to encourage participation and work through any concerns/anxiety that participants had about attending the course.

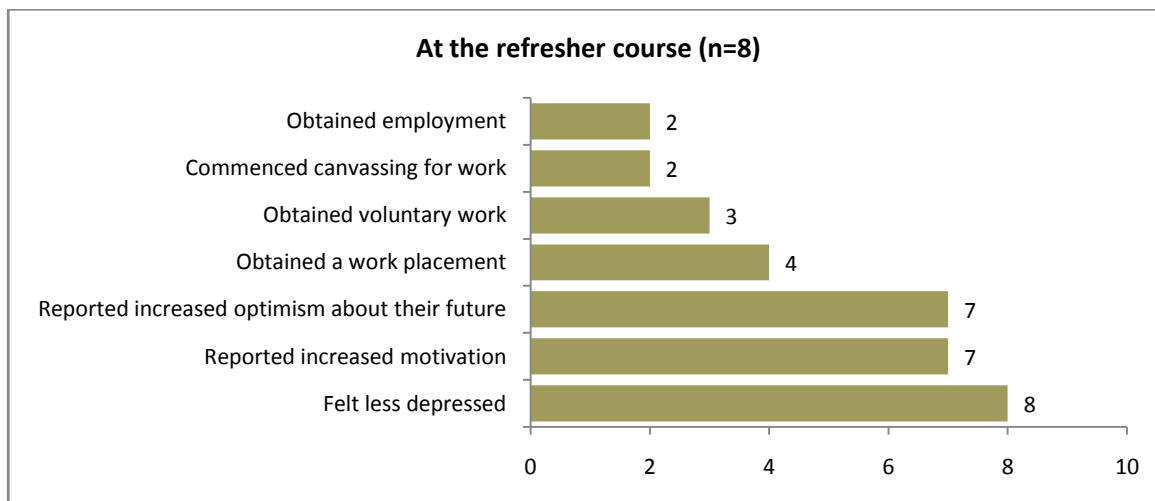
PI-14: Injured workers report increased belief in their ability to RTW

Increases were reported in participants' belief in their ability to RTW from an average of 5.5 in Week 1 to 6.5 in Week 4.

PI-15: Number of injured workers returned to work in 3,6 and 12 months

Eight participants attended the refresher course, these had maintained high levels of optimism and motivation, and reported success in engaging with work (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: MSVS participant responses at the refresher course



2.3.2 EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS – BACK ON TRACK PROJECT

Employment Accelerators (owned and operated by Peter Chapman) was contracted by *WorkCover SA* on 13 January 2011 to provide the *Back on Track* Project for the RTW Fund. This Project is designed to be a group and case management program for injured workers who are ready to return to work. The Project aims to improve the injured worker's self-belief and their motivation to seek work, assisted them to update and target their resumes, whilst rigorously marketing them to employers. The program began with a four day workshop followed by intensive job-seeking support for up to six months. The Project is due for completion in November 2011.

2.3.2.1 EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

Employment Accelerators produced flyers for an information session attended by 18 injured workers on 25 March 2010. Of these, 15 attendees expressed interest in participating in the *Back on Track* Project (one has since withdrawn due to an employment opportunity). This is viewed as a very positive start that has been assisted by input from *WorkCover* and *EML*. *WorkCover* has agreed to increase funding for the Project to include all 14 interested participants (an increase on the 10 workers funded in the contract). All injured workers were contacted to confirm their place on the program, and all expressed commitment to the program. A follow-up letter was then sent two weeks prior to start date to further engage participants.

2.3.2.2 EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

An evaluation plan was approved by the *AISR* and submitted to *WorkCover SA* on 21 April 2011. The Program commenced as scheduled on 2 May 2011, with twelve of the eighteen clients who had attended the information session in March. Eleven of the twelve had a medical restriction.

Of the 12 clients –

- 8 were male;
- 7 were born in Australia;
- 7 had less than a year 12 education; and
- 5 had never been married.

Two clients were successful in gaining employment. One of these resulted from a work trial with a real estate office and benefitted from additional training approved by EML. Employment Accelerators also reported success in assisting an injured worker to gain their driver's licence which greatly improved his employment opportunities. Whilst continuing to vigorously market the participants in the marketplace, Employment Accelerators recognised that few employers were interested in hiring people with the skill level of their participants. This was exacerbated by broader economic pressures with approximately 22% shrinkage in manufacturing in South Australia and retail facing declining consumer confidence.

Employment Accelerators reported their clients lacked certainty and confidence regarding their ability to gain employment. On completion of the four day workshop, ongoing meeting and mentoring were found to be essential to sustaining their motivation, together with evidence of real job opportunities.

2.3.2.3 EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Recruitment for injured workers

- A. 18 injured workers attended the information session;
- B. 12 of those attending the information session signed up for the Program; and
- C. 11 of those participating in the Program remained committed to the program after 2 weeks.
- D. One client withdrew after 10 days.

PI-2: Injured worker presents and talks more positively in workshop

- A. 8 injured workers demonstrated a positive shift in their physiology; and
- B. 8 injured workers demonstrated a positive shift in language patterns.

PI-3: Injured worker is more optimistic about securing work

Only two workers reported they were optimistic about finding work prior to involvement in the program – this increased to eight workers reporting optimism about finding work at the completion of the program. Ten workers reported using new tools and techniques they learned in the workshops.

PI-4: Injured Workers attending four day workshop

The four day workshop was completed by all twelve who commenced.

PI-5: Develop Industry and vocation specific resumes

On commencing the program none of the participants had professional resumes. Professional resumes were developed for 11 participants. As these were targeted to different vocations 7 participants received two resumes, and the remaining 4 participants received three resumes.

PI-6: Develop and execute employment pipeline

A 'pipeline' is a record of employers targeted, focused on and followed up on for each injured worker. It is also used to extract numbers such as the required number of companies to cold call in order to get a 'warm' resume drop off. It also records follow-up calls, positions sourced and interviews gained.

- A. An average of twelve businesses in the pipeline per injured worker.
- B. An average of 240 approaches by phone and 80 approaches by letter and email
- C. An average of 40 'in person' canvasses per worker; and
- D. An average of 20 interviews per worker.

PI-7: Injured Worker successfully returning to work

To date, two participants were reported to have returned to work, two had work arranged to commence in July 2011 and the remaining seven were still seeking employment.

PI-8: Impact of a concentrated effort on injured workers by involvement in program

Employment Accelerators reported eight out of eleven workers are rating five or more in the survey.

PI-9: Execute marketing to employers about benefits of engaging injured worker

- A. Number of follow ups secured – Average 42
- B. Number of interviews generated from marketing letters, emails and calls – Average 20
- C. Number of follow ups to employer after 1 month – Average 20
- D. Number of follow ups to employer after 3 months – n/a

2.4 EML REPORT OF RTW FUND ACTIVITY

EML agreed to provide a quarterly report documenting their experience working with Projects engaged in the RTW Fund. This has provided valuable additional information and another perspective on issues raised by Projects to the evaluation.

2.4.1 SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2010

Some of the scheme related challenges reported by EML to December 2010 were noted in previous AISR quarterly and annual reports, and have been addressed by WorkCover. These include the need for a better communication strategy, improved promotion of the Fund and Projects, and identification of rehabilitation industry issues.

EML reported on the operational difficulty of working with seven projects, each with their own different expectations and demands. Moreover, they noted that Project Managers often commenced the early Projects (in 2009 and early 2010) with a lack of knowledge and understanding of the scheme and accompanying legislation. Monthly reporting from Projects to EML regarding the status of clients and claims was seen as crucial from EML's perspective, but had not been addressed in Project contracts and this made implementation difficult.

Projects have complained about lack of referrals from EML, although there were differing expectations from EML and Projects about the number and type of referrals that were to be provided. The EML claims process is summarised as follows:

- Criteria are developed by Projects
- Claims data are reviewed based on Project criteria, and potential clients identified

- Client files are reviewed to determine ability to participate
- Potential clients are invited to participate (voluntarily)
- If clients are willing, medical approval is sought
- A new rehabilitation referral is required for Interwork and DFEEST Projects
- A record is made that the injured worker is included in Project.

EML have struggled to accommodate the number of referrals for 'similar' clients (ie where the selection criteria were similar in different Projects). This problem was exacerbated by changes and ongoing difficulties with the IT system (which had not been designed for this use). In addition, some Projects changed their recruitment criteria during the course of the Projects (often without due consultation or timely notification). EML have provided information, shown in Table 9 and Table 10, detailing the number of claims reviewed for suitability and claims referred to Projects (since the new computer system became available).

Table 9: EML claim identification

Month	No. of Claims Reviewed for Suitability	No. of Claim Files Referred to the RTW Fund Projects	No. of Claims Withdrawn from RTW Fund Projects
August	114	5	7
September	24	18	1
October	18	13	3
November	82	18	4
December	57	3	2
Total	295	57	17

Table 10: EML Project referral numbers

Referrals	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Interwork	0	4	1	9	1	15
SA Unions	0	7	8	1	0	16
DFEEST	0	0	0	5	0	5
Jane Fielder Consulting / Pro Activ	0	3	4	3	2	12
BSISB	5	4	0	0	0	9
Total	5	18	13	18	3	57

EML reported that referrals from them did not always lead to Project participation due to Project staff declining a referral (based on the belief that the Project was not appropriate for the client concerned), the medical practitioner declining approval, or the injured worker deciding they did not wish to participate/continue.

In addition, EML noted that:

- Operational challenges were not adequately considered in contracting Projects
- Some employers and attached injured workers were concerned about participation in Projects (particularly for SA Unions)
- There was confusion over the scope of Project personnel particularly for case workers and rehabilitation providers
- There was a lack of communication from Projects to the case manager
- Alternative Project contacts had not always been available.

To support the RTW Fund and address some of the issues raised early in the process, EML:

- Appointed an additional full-time person to work with the Projects
- Introduced information sessions with operational teams
- Developed communication tools to ensure the key initiatives of the Projects were understood and supported by EML staff
- Formed a team to specialise in the management of claims for the Projects managed by DFEEST, Interwork and SA Unions, with one responsible case manager per Project.

EML also reported a number of learnings from the RTW Fund and the early Projects, including:

- an increased understanding of many of the barriers of RTW and retraining;
- increased understanding of the importance of RPL; and
- increased recognition of the importance of understanding an individual's personal circumstances.

In addition, some of the barriers experienced by Projects led to the testing of new initiatives (such as adult learning packages and increased home visits by SA Unions). Projects were seen to have benefited from better understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by those seeking to assist injured workers. EML reported that training approvals had increased since the commencement of the Projects. While data is not complete at this time, this may indicate a 'flow-on' effect from the Projects with benefits extending beyond clients directly engaged with the Projects.

2.4.2 JANUARY TO MARCH 2011

EML reported continuing challenges in relation to operational impacts to claims management and support to Project participants. Although acknowledging that WorkCover had addressed a number of scheme-related challenges, EML expressed concern about the lack of active promotion of the RTW Fund to external scheme stakeholders including workplace rehabilitation providers and medical practitioners. This concern was particularly salient as new Projects commenced in late 2010 and early 2011.

EML emphasised the importance of appropriate exit strategies for participants as the early Projects draw to a close. They reported that Project personnel provided varied levels of support and attention to this critical issue, which caused concern and frustration to case managers and vocational rehabilitation consultants. Monthly participant reporting has been requested by WorkCover over the last few months, but compliance has been a concern for some Projects⁹. It was noted that early implementation of these reports for Projects could have alleviated this problem and resolved other communication issues regarding process and client progress.

Notably, EML reported positive and effective working relationships with the Interwork and SA Unions Projects, despite some early communication difficulties. EML also noted that the monthly meetings implemented by SA Unions from the commencement of their Project facilitated open communication, and agree that regular meetings should be implemented for all new Projects.

EML reported early concerns with recently implemented Projects. It was suggested that projects need an improved understanding of the WorkCover scheme to clarify roles and expectations. EML further stressed the importance of clear referral processes being in place and agreed by all parties prior to implementation.

EML have implemented strategies to support the RTW Fund including:

⁹ Monthly participant reports are a contractual requirement for Round 2 Projects.

- Managing RTW Plans internally, when required for new Projects – noting that RTW Plans are a legal requirement for any retraining, and these need to be developed by a registered provider.
- Refining the claim identification process when EML has an active role in identifying candidates, using internal data and reporting to review claims where new employment transition has been approved.

2.4.3 APRIL TO JUNE 2011

EML described continuing challenges in relation to operational impacts on claims management and the requirement to support Projects. These involve ongoing concern about the lack of promotion regarding the RTW Fund particularly within the rehabilitation industry. The requirement for voluntary participation in all Projects presents challenges for EML who are more familiar with enforced client obligations (e.g. through administration of RTW Plans). In addition, when clients were attached to pre-injury employers support was limited if proposed training fell outside their work domain.

Projects were notified of new requirements to report the status and engagement of each participant to EML on a monthly basis (a requirement now included in all new contracts). This ensures EML is aware of the monthly status of each client, their progress, and are able to prepare exit strategies for formal return of the case (to EML). However, EML reported this has not always been completed diligently by all Projects. SA Unions expressed concern about compromising the confidentiality of their engagement with injured workers. EML is hopeful that recent changes to the content of these reports will help streamline the process for all active Projects.

Some early implementation problems were identified with three new active Projects. While EML reported promoting new RTW Fund Projects to their staff, they have found the content of some promotional material provided by the Projects to be lacking in clarity. EML have subsequently provided assistance in the review of marketing material produced by Beckmann & Associates. EML expressed concern about the ability of new Projects to independently recruit participants and have subsequently taken a role in referral to the MSVS Project. EML have also provided legislative expertise as support for Employment Accelerators and prepared their RTW Plans.

New lessons highlighted by EML include:

- Liaising with WorkCover to ensure that new Project Managers have a clear understanding of the roles of WorkCover and Employers Mutual in relation to the operation of their Project.
- Liaising with WorkCover to ensure that there are regular meetings with Project Managers to enable the development of strong working relationships and open communication channels with EML.
- Managing Return to Work Plans internally to alleviate additional persons involved in the management of the return to work process and allow Projects to operate as proposed by their Managers
- Ensuring agreed operational procedures and processes between EML and Project Managers are adhered to by all parties, and monitored by WorkCover.
- Ensuring sufficient lead time prior to participant commencement date for new projects to enable effective promotion and achievement of participant numbers, noting that challenges have continued to be encountered with obtaining participant numbers due to participation in the projects being voluntary.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY OF AISR EVALUATION ACTIVITIES & SUPPORT FOR THE RTW FUND

EVALUATION

3.1 AISR EVALUATION SUPPORT

The AISR evaluation of the RTW Fund employs a *Program logic* approach to support the identification of cause and effect relationships between project activities, outputs, intermediate and long term outcomes, and impact. *Program Logic* also facilitates participant understanding of their project's underlying rationale and assumptions, helping to determine realistic outcomes and goals.

The evaluation has been designed to support the development and maintenance of close working relationships between the AISR evaluation team and individual Project managers, and with the RTW Fund management. Fundamental in this is the transfer of monitoring and evaluation skills and knowledge from the evaluators to the stakeholders. Equally importantly is the development of trust between the organisations in order to share all of the lessons learned – the successes, barriers and failures.

3.1.1 WORKING WITH PROJECTS

AISR evaluation team members are available to Projects as a resource to help in the development of individual Project Evaluation Plans which dovetail with the overarching RTW Fund Evaluation Plan developed by AISR. The AISR approach is to support and guide the development of each Project's Evaluation Plan, tailored to the strengths and skills of the Project team. All Projects have enthusiastically engaged with AISR in the development of their Evaluation Plans and associated Performance Indicators.

In the first reporting quarter, the AISR worked with Projects to develop individual Evaluation Plans that were relevant to each while addressing the over-arching evaluation framework. The AISR also developed a number of resources to support Projects, including quarterly reporting templates in both word and excel.

The **Word Reporting Template** was designed to ensure that each project reports on the key elements required by both *WorkCover SA* and the evaluation in a consistent way. As an overview the details included are:

- Section 1: Background information about the Project
- Section 2: Client characteristics
- Section 3: Progress against performance indicators, successes, challenges and lessons learned
- Section 4: Other factors
- Section 5: Reflections on Project sustainability
- Section 6: An update on expenditure.

Projects are also asked to provide an overview of their outcomes to date - this provides a summary of project participant employment and training status.

The **Excel Spreadsheet Reporting Template** was designed to assist Projects with data collection and presentation, and to complement Section 2 of the Word Reporting Template. This template is a one-stop shop for Project data, it:

- Includes data items that are shared between Projects
- Reduces data entry errors and data inconsistency between Projects

- Auto-calculates averages and frequencies
- Auto-generates tables and figures (for presentation in Project reports)
- Includes worksheets for personal details and for Project-specific information.

The AISR has continued to work with Projects, when requested, to update individual spreadsheets to collect Project specific information. Principally this has been requested to assist in the management of survey data – which is collected to monitor progress of injured workers and/or their experience with the programs in which they participate.

3.1.2 WORKING WITH RTW FUND MANAGEMENT

The AISR works with the RTW Fund management in a number of ways to support the ongoing implementation and development of the RTW Fund. Both *WorkCover SA* and the AISR recognise the importance of regular meetings and informal communication, and these have been ongoing since the inception of the evaluation.

The AISR has been invited to attend selected sessions of the RTW Fund Coordination Group convened by *WorkCover SA*. This has usually involved an update of the progress of Projects and responding to questions from the group. On 16 May 2011, the AISR provided the most recent update to the RTW Coordination Group, which focused on each Projects' progress against performance indicators and their achievement of agreed Inputs, Outputs, and where possible, Outcomes.

Two Projects nearing completion, *Pathways to Work* (Interwork) and *Retraining Injured Workers for Employment* (SA Unions) were identified as particularly successful having exceeded their targets for employment or training, and provided innovative approaches to enhancing RTW. These two organisations have submitted successful applications for new Projects (approved mid 2011) drawing on their learnings and experience from their first Projects.

The AISR also prepared a brief report on non-continuing clients to determine reasons for withdrawals. In some cases there appeared to be a failure to differentiate between non-continuing and those who did not qualify or were unsuitable for inclusion.

3.1.3 REPORTING TO WORKCOVER SA

The AISR collect, analyse and report on all aspects (quantitative and qualitative) of the Projects' progress. In addition, the AISR are working closely with RTW Fund Management to ensure that higher level targets and goals are met, that *WorkCover SA* are informed about the progress of the Projects, and that they are alerted promptly to any potential risks.

Reporting is designed to occur quarterly, annually and at the conclusion of the evaluation. The content and format of the reports have been designed to meet the information needs of *WorkCover SA*, to address the objectives of the evaluation and to determine the success of the components of the Fund in meeting its defined objectives.

Reports incorporate quantitative and qualitative data from Projects and Programs. Projects report to AISR for all quarters in which they are active, using the template designed by the AISR to ensure consistency and comparability of reporting, and data from these reports are presented in quarterly reports from AISR to *WorkCover SA*. Data presented

in quarterly reports are re-analysed at the end of the financial year to produce Annual reports, which then feed into the final Evaluation report. The first Annual Report was provided in July 2010¹⁰.

3.1.4 EVALUATION AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

3.1.4.1 WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

In 2009 the AISR team participated in a *WorkCover SA* facilitated workshop for the first seven Projects approved under the RTW Fund. This was undertaken in conjunction with presentations from *WorkCover SA* and Employers Mutual Ltd (EML).

One component of the evaluation methodology involves bringing Project participants together in a series of workshops. In June 2010 the evaluators facilitated its first workshop with Projects which not only provided an opportunity for Project participants to meet and share important information, but also explored key issues relating to project implementation and evaluation. All but one Project sent a representative. Separate evaluation found that participants were very positive about the workshop – a separate Workshop Report and Evaluation Report was provided to *WorkCover SA*.

Dr Ann-Louise Hordacre from the evaluation team presented findings to date from the evaluation at a workshop convened by *WorkCover SA* for current Projects and *WorkCover SA* key staff members on 24 August 2010. Dr Hordacre also worked with *WorkCover SA*'s Research Manager to present findings of the evaluation's survey of RTW Coordinators (as described in Section 3.2.2) to the *WorkCover SA Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator Seminar* series – see Section 3.2.4.

3.1.4.2 WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

The AISR have begun development of a website. The principal purpose of the website is to provide a one-stop resource for relevant RTW Fund resources, documentation and information. Resources and templates developed for Projects will be made available via a secure password protected webpage. Links will be provided to key RTW Fund information and documentation - including the *WorkCover SA* Return to Work Fund webpage, the Injury and Case Management Manual and the Workers' Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. Other documents including the AISR discussion paper *The Role of the Workplace in Return to Work* (also available on the *WorkCover SA* website) will be provided here. The website is still in development and has not been published at this time.

3.2 BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE

The AISR have engaged in a number of research activities and strategies to build an evidence base to inform RTW Fund projects, programs and policy development. This suite of materials contributes to an improved understanding of the workers' compensation system and the issues impacting on key stakeholders working within the system. As elements of a resource kit, this research can contribute to a learning community, fill a knowledge gap, and help inform organisations and individuals when designing potential Projects for the RTW Fund.

¹⁰ Available at: www.workcover.com/public/download.aspx?id=4944

The AISR has developed a case study methodology to complement the evidence base presented in the RTW Discussion Paper (see Section 3.2.1). The methodology incorporates action research, case study investigation and reporting, and stakeholder engagement and capacity development. This combination of research methods is motivated by the need to support the RTW Fund's purpose to capture lessons learned about RTW from key stakeholders in the RTW process, to link the evaluation to the evidence base, and to build the capacity of RTW stakeholders. Feedback for the methodology was sought and received from *WorkCover SA* in May 2010.

The mixed methods approach can be used with the five key groups of stakeholders:

1. RTW Coordinators
2. RTW Case Managers
3. RTW Rehabilitation Providers
4. Employers
5. Injured worker.

Case study information and reporting is structured under these broad headings –

- ⇒ **Key challenges** that need to be addressed (these will include system-based constraints, policy-based constraints, resource based constraints and so on).
- ⇒ **Strategies** that have been developed to address these challenges generally, and specifically.
- ⇒ The **outcomes** (both successful and otherwise) of the application of those strategies. This part of the case study will explore 'What worked? What did not work? Why?'
- ⇒ **Lessons learned** and how these can be transferred across a range of workplaces and industry sectors. This component of the case study will also identify any gaps or needed inputs that could foster ongoing improvement in achieving effective RTW.

To date, the survey and case studies for RTW Coordinators are complete, these are summarised in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

3.2.1 DISCUSSION PAPER

A discussion paper for *WorkCover SA* and the RTW Fund has been produced exploring *The Role of the Workplace in Return to Work*. The paper provides a profile of workplace injury in South Australia and an overview of workplace factors affecting return to work, including workplace culture, organisational size, claim management, and communication processes based on a review of relevant national and international research literature. It also discusses features of a workplace that promote effective return to work.

It is intended that this version of the discussion paper will assist *WorkCover SA* in its planning for the Return to Work Fund, and for RTW Fund Projects to understand the intrinsic role of the workplace in achieving RTW outcomes and their own goals. The discussion paper is designed to provide a brief overview of key findings about RTW in a user-friendly manner, recognising that most of those participating in the Fund will not have the time to undertake a literature review¹¹.

¹¹ Available at: www.workcover.com/public/download.aspx?id=3901

3.2.2 SURVEY OF RTW COORDINATORS

The AISR has conducted an online survey of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators (RRTWCs) to identify barriers and strategies for successful RTW. The results of the survey provide an evidence base to inform decision making, including the design of RTW Fund projects and wider RTW policy. The survey was piloted with 50 randomly selected Coordinators on 8 July 2010 and launched on 13 July 2010. In total 2,156 RRTWCs were invited to participate. At the close of the survey, 575 coordinators (26.4%) had participated in the survey – a very good response rate.

The survey report provides a demographic and workplace profile of Coordinators, and identifies barriers to and strategies for successful RTW. Personal factors, specifically 'negative worker attitude' and 'psychological complications', were rated as the most significant barriers to RTW. Of note, inflexible work roles or conditions were rated as the biggest 'workplace' barrier to RTW. Regular communication with clients and others in the RTW arena were rated highly as strategies to promote successful RTW.

The report of this survey, *Building Bridges – Perspectives of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators*, was provided to WorkCover SA in December 2010 with an overview of findings available in **Error! Reference source not found..**

3.2.3 RTW COORDINATOR CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

Forty survey respondents indicated a willingness to discuss their experiences, and more than 50 were interested in participating in RTW Fund projects or collaborations – a very positive response.

Four interviews of RTW Coordinators were conducted at the end of 2010 with the aim of preparing case studies. A report of these case studies, *Coordination Works – Understanding Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators in South Australia: A case study report*, was provided to WorkCover SA in March 2011. An overview of the critical success factors in return to work identified by the case studies is provided in Box 12.

REHABILITATION AND RETURN TO WORK COORDINATOR CHARACTERISTICS

- 570 RRTWCs participated in the survey, a response rate of 26.4%.
- The average age was 44 years.
- Approximately one third were male.
- Most had a Certificate III-IV or Diploma level qualification (39.5%).
- The most common concurrent role held within the organisation was OH&S manager/ officer (19.3%).
- 42.5% had been in RRTWC role for between 12 and 17 months.

INDUSTRY, ORGANISATIONS AND THE WORKPLACE

- 26.0% of respondents worked in the community services industry, 23.5% worked in manufacturing.
- One quarter of respondents worked in organisations with less than 50 employees.
- On average, RRTWCs provided assistance to 18 workers and had been involved in 16 claims.
 - 17.7% of RRTWCs reported no claims experience.
- 57.4% worked a standard fulltime week of around 37 to 40 hours.
 - 60.7% of respondents reported 0 to 4 hours were spent on RRTWC activities.
 - On average, 16.2% of RRTWCs' working hours per week were spent in the RRTWC role.

THE RRTWC ROLE

- 54.9% reported previous experience in the area of return to work before their current position.
- Half became RRTWCs by nomination.
- Half had completed the three day RRTWC training course.
- Two thirds rated the RRTWC training as effective or extremely effective.
- 60% *agree or strongly agree* that staff value their role, and 65% *agree or strongly agree* that managers value their role.
- All support and professional development activities were rated as useful to some degree
 - *Employers Mutual training seminars/workshops*, and *WorkCover RRTWC networking sessions* were rated as the most useful.

BARRIERS TO RTW

- *Inflexible work roles or conditions* were rated as the most significant 'role and workplace' barrier to RTW.
- *Inadequate treatment by health care providers* was the highest rated 'process' barrier (relating to action from providers or claims managers).
- Personal factors including *negative worker attitudes* and *psychological complications for the worker* were rated as the most significant barriers to RTW by RRTWCs.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE RTW

- *Regular contact with the client* and *working closely with claims/case managers* were rated as the most useful of the communication and support strategies.
- The highest rating for strategies related to workplace policies and procedures was for *early contact with employees* with 64.9% of RRTWCs rating this as very useful.
- *Establishing clarity of responsibility for the RTW process at the worksite* was considered to be the most useful strategy to help the RRTWC perform their role successfully.
- Approximately 60% of RRTWCs were aware of the *Re-employment Incentive Scheme for Employers (RISE)*, with only 40% aware of the RTW Fund.

Box 12: Critical success factors in return to work

The success stories depicted in the four case studies presented in the *Coordination Works* report reinforce the importance of recognised fundamental ingredients for successful return to work. The findings also illustrate the pivotal contribution RRTWCs can make to the RTW process. The critical success factors exemplified in the case studies are summarised below, and related to the two key stakeholders in the workplace –the RRTWC, and the employer - reflecting the interactive effect between them. In addition, all RRTWCs also identified the critical importance of injured worker’s positive attitude and commitment to RTW.

The RRTWC

- ✓ The RRTWC’s flexibility in researching alternative RTW placement that builds on the injured worker’s previous experience and skills.
- ✓ The RRTWC’s education of management and staff about work accommodation and accepting the worker’s return, about focusing on the worker’s strengths rather than their limitations, and about avoiding repeated injury through inappropriate RTW arrangements.
- ✓ The RRTWC ensuring that the recovering worker has appropriate up-skilling opportunities for an alternative work role.
- ✓ The RRTWC’s role in shifting the organisation’s mindset away from accepting only full fitness for RTW.
- ✓ The RRTWC taking into account the non-workplace environment of the injured worker and the influence of this on the worker’s health and well-being.
- ✓ The RRTWC working closely with the injured person’s family and personal networks, acknowledging the important role these play in the RTW process.

The Employer

- ✓ An employer who is willing to be flexible in making workplace accommodations and modifications.
- ✓ An employing organisation that is pro-active in relation to injury prevention, early intervention and effective management of return to work. This includes having established sound policies and practices that underpin effective management of return to work.
- ✓ An employer who promotes injury prevention, ensures effective injury management and early notification of injury, and the application of work conditioning practices.
- ✓ An organisational culture which provides health promotion activities for its workforce, and regards this as an investment in workforce health and productivity, rather than a cost.
- ✓ An effective working relationship between an employing organisation and local medical practitioners to ensure that medical providers are informed and familiar with the work setting and the implications of this for injury or illness management. This assists a collaborative approach between employer and medical practitioner in developing alternative work duties.
- ✓ An employing organisation that has established critical working relationships with other key stakeholders in the RTW process – for example, Occupational Therapists and Vocational Rehabilitation Providers. This enables a team approach that combines the skills and knowledge of different professionals, and relates these specifically to the workplace concerned.

3.2.4 PRESENTATION OF RTW COORDINATOR FINDINGS

Survey findings were presented as part of the *WorkCover SA Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator Seminar* series run in multiple locations throughout the State in May to July 2011. This was an opportunity to give feedback to Coordinators about who they are and what they are doing.

Coordinators were also able to benefit from a learning environment by contributing to shared wisdom and experience. Coordinators were given the opportunity to reflect on, and discuss common barriers to RTW for injured workers. Barriers were structured as a function of individual, workplace, health care and system factors following Loisel *et al* (2005)¹² (see Figure 12). Successful strategies to overcome barriers were also discussed. Feedback from workshop participants was very positive with participants reported they learned from the presenters and other Coordinators.

Figure 12: The Systems Approach to return to work.



¹² Loisel P, Buchbinder R, Hazard R, Keller R, Scheel I, Tulder M & Webster B (2005) Prevention of work disability due to musculoskeletal disorders: The challenge of implementing evidence. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 15, 4, pp.507-524.

Appendix A. RTW FUND KEY DATES

December 2007	Clayton Review
2008-09	DFEEST pilot project
June 2008	RTW Fund implemented by WorkCover SA
November 2008	Close of call for Expressions of Interest for Round 1 Projects
July 2009	AISR contracted to provide evaluation services for RTW Fund
July 2009	Workshop convened by WorkCover SA for Round 1 applicants
August 2009	AISR deliver Evaluation Framework to WorkCoverSA
August 2009	AISR deliver Evaluation Work Plan to WorkCoverSA
August 2009	Business Services Industry Skills Board (BSISB) contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
October 2009	First AISR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
October 2009	Jane Fielder Consulting (formerly ProActiv Life Solutions) contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
October 2009	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
November 2009	Interwork contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
January 2010	Second AISR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
February 2010	SA Unions contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
February 2010	Business SA contracted to deliver two Projects for RTW Fund
March 2010	AISR Discussion Paper <i>“The Role of the Workplace in Return to Work”</i>
April 2010	Third AISR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
June 2010	AISR Workshop 1 for Projects
June 2010	Close of call for Expressions of Interest for Round 2 Projects
July 2010	AISR survey of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators conducted, and Case Study process initiated
July 2010	First AISR Annual Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
October 2010	Fourth AISR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
December 2010	Beckmann and Associates contracted to deliver Project for RTW Fund
January 2011	Fifth AISR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
January 2011	MS Vocational Services contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
January 2011	Peter Chapman Employment Accelerators contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
April 2011	Sixth AISR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
June 2011	Mindful Movement Physiotherapy contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
June 2011	Master Builders SA contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
June 2011	Business Services Industry Skills Board (BSISB) Project completed
June 2011	Jane Fielder Consulting Project completed
June 2011	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) Project completed
August 2011	SA Unions Project completed
August 2011	Interwork Project completed

Appendix B. SUMMARY OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS TO DATE

Table 11: Summary of Project participants to date

		BSISB [^]	JF Consulting	DFEEST	Interwork	SA Unions	Business SA - small employers*	Business SA - work hardening	Beckmann	MSVS	Employment Accelerators
Number of workers	Approved in contract	40	37	40	40	50		118		24	12
	Completed the Project program to date	9	18	31	2	9		48		21	na
	Currently engaged in the Project program to date	24	27	24	28	30		48		38	11
	Have returned to full time work	2	2	na	16	9		3		2	2
	RTW with hours < full time work (from initial zero capacity)			10	4	2		3		2	0
	RTW with hours equivalent to pre-injury hours			na	6	7		3		2	2
	RTW with increased work capacity (above their pre-project participation capacity)			na	0	9		0		10	0
	Completed approved training (arranged through project)		na	15	20	6		0		n/a	1
	Achieved RPL (arranged through project)	*	na		1	8		0		n/a	0
	Not completing program (withdrawn, exited by contractor, non-participating after acceptance)	9	9	7	10	6		1		10	1
Participant response to evaluation questionnaires on value of project	**	100%	5		10		0		36	11	
Number of employers	Approached by project	na	na		100+	5 of 7	>500	>500		na	500+
	Participating in project		na		28	3 of 4	51	46		na	na
	Receiving one-on-one sessions		na		n/a	3	51	na		na	na
	Attending information sessions					na	Na	na		9 sessions	na
	Who found service of value		na		n/a	1	51	46		na	na
	Not interested in service		na		n/a	1	>500	>500		na	na
	Satisfied with service		na		n/a	na	51	46		na	na
	Implementing change due to service		na		n/a	1	na	46		na	na
Number of Information sessions with participants		8	5	nil		0	na			1	

[^] Data to 31 March 2011.

*Note figures for January to June 2011 only.

