

Learning from Returning III

RETURN TO WORK FUND 2011-2012 ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT

Ann-Louise Hordacre, Kate Barnett and John Spoehr
August 2012

Report prepared for WorkCoverSA

WISeR
Informing Decisions



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WorkCoverSA

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The Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre (WISeR) focuses on work and socio-economic change. WISeR is particularly interested in how organisational structure and practices, technology and economic systems, policy and institutions, environment and culture interact to influence the performance of workplaces and the wellbeing of individuals, households and communities.

WISeR also specialises in socio-economic impact assessment including the distributional impacts and human dimensions of change on different population groups and localities. Our research plays a key role in informing policy and strategy development at a national, local and international level.

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KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

It has been three years since the commencement of Project activity with the RTW Fund. At August 2012, 385 injured workers had directly participated in thirteen Projects piloting innovative approaches to return to work. Eleven Projects had completed their activity, and two were still active. Projects funded through the RTW Fund fall into three broad categories - noting there is some degree of overlap between them.

- **TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT PROJECTS** work directly with clients to ensure they have the appropriate training for sustainable employment and/or to provide job search or placement support. Training for many clients has focused on short courses to develop computer literacy skills. Projects have also helped injured workers to identify suitable and sustainable job opportunities, as well as helping develop resumes and interview skills.
- **MOTIVATION AND SUPPORT PROJECTS** have focused attention on restoring the injured workers' confidence and reducing the psychological impact of workplace injury. The projects have used trained counsellors to engage with injured workers usually in a group environment.
- **BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS** work to inform and provide resources to businesses about the benefits of return to work to the business and injured workers.

These Projects have provided a range of innovative programs, support and activities for injured workers. At this time, the RTW Fund has supported:

- 385 injured workers in Projects to receive training and job placement or motivation and support.
- 132 injured workers to commence training.
- 82 injured workers to return to work.
- The delivery of 37 programs or workshops for injured workers.

The RTW Fund developed a set of clear objectives and six goals that matched the strategic direction of *WorkCoverSA*. All Projects were required to address at least one objective. The objectives and how Projects addressed these are shown below.

1. **FINDING SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS TO INJURED WORKERS STAYING AT OR RETURNING TO WORK.** The RTW Fund has -
 - ✓ Provided funding to 13 Projects (with 3 extensions) that have used different and innovative methods to support RTW for injured workers. Two Projects demonstrating success in supporting training and return to work for long-term *WorkCoverSA* recipients were extended. One Project providing motivation and personal support was also extended.
 - ✓ 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.
 - ✓ Provided support and programs to ensure injured workers are psychologically ready and motivated for return to work after a long time on workers compensation.
 - ✓ Explored 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 TRAINING 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.
 - ✓ Supported a developmental model to build confidence, capacity and skills through a series of courses.
 - ✓ Identified the most appropriate training for injured workers is in the classroom (not online) so they can benefit from peer support.



- ✓ Ensured prior learning is recognised and receives appropriate training credits.
 - ✓ Developed a Training Strategy to embed training opportunities within the worker's compensation system.
3. **DEVELOPING GREATER WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION OPTIONS FOR INJURED WORKERS.** The RTW Fund has -
- ✓ Developed resources for business and health care providers to identify opportunities for RTW with reduced capacity.
 - ✓ Educated businesses and GPs about the benefits of RTW with reduced capacity.
 - ✓ 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 affects them if an employee sustains an injury.
 - ✓ Ensured training is provided in industries with sustainable employment.
4. **IMPROVING THE SKILLS OF PEOPLE OPERATING WITHIN 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.
 - ✓ Engaged with claims agent and case managers.
 - ✓ Developed a Workforce Development Strategy to ensure appropriate ongoing performance development and training for employees working in the worker's compensation system.
5. **DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL AND TIMELY OUTCOMES FOR INJURED WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS.** The RTW Fund has -
- ✓ Targeted high claim sectors for intervention.
 - ✓ Developed construction industry job dictionaries to help medical professionals determine capacity and return injured workers to suitable duties.
 - ✓ Provided education and training for construction site-safety supervisors and co-workers.
6. **EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLES OF EMPLOYERS AND INJURED WORKERS TO ACHIEVE THE BEST OUTCOMES.** The RTW Fund has -
- ✓ Engaged and educated small businesses about obligations to injured workers
 - ✓ Linked rehabilitation providers and businesses interested in providing work opportunities for injured workers
 - ✓ Improved communication within and between stakeholders.

The RTW Fund did not set out with easy goals. The original design of the RTW Fund with a call for expression of interest, drew in people with limited direct knowledge of the workers' compensation system, but with experience in other fields such as training, job search and motivation. This created obstacles due to a lack of knowledge about relevant compensation policy. However, this generated opportunities as Project staff challenged and called into question entrenched policy and procedures. While this method did not work perfectly, it did work well in many cases.

Much has been learned from the RTW Fund to date. At a system level, the RTW Fund Management have developed a draft Workforce Development Strategy and draft Training Strategy for Injured Workers. These strategies work in tandem to solve some of the issues identified by RTW Fund Projects.

- The **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** seeks to improve the training and professional learning and development opportunities for persons operating in the worker's compensation scheme. This includes those working for WorkCover, the Agent, rehabilitation consultants and rehabilitation and return to work coordinators. This strategy also underpins and supports the Training Strategy
- The **TRAINING STRATEGY** is using the learning of the RTW Fund to provide greater training opportunities for injured workers. The Strategy aims to embed training as an early intervention; and increase Agent and provider knowledge about training opportunities, availability, process and access.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 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 *WorkCoverSA* 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 innovative ideas and projects were encouraged to engage with the Fund. The RTW Fund developed a set of clear objectives that matched the strategic direction of *WorkCoverSA* at the time. All funded Projects were expected to address at least one objective. The following objectives were in place for all projects approved during 2009 to 2011 –

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.

The RTW Fund objectives were reviewed and updated by the *WorkCoverSA* Board in November 2011. The relatively minor changes were made to be more relevant and align with *WorkCover's* strategic goals and directions for 2011-16¹. Revised objectives are shown in Box 1.

BOX 1: RTW FUND OBJECTIVES (REVISED NOVEMBER 2011)

The Revised RTW Fund objectives are to:

1. Finding solutions to barriers to injured workers staying at or returning to work.
2. Expanding training options for injured workers.
3. Developing greater workforce participation options for injured workers.
4. Improving the skills of people operating within the South Australian workers compensation scheme.
5. Developing and implementing industry-specific solutions to achieve successful and timely outcomes for injured workers and employers.
6. Educating people about the importance of the roles of employers and injured workers to achieve the best outcomes.

1.2 EVALUATION

The Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre (WISeR)² at The University of Adelaide was selected by *WorkCoverSA* to provide the RTW Fund evaluation. This evaluation was designed to develop, implement, collect and analyse both performance (monitoring) data and

¹ http://main.workcover.com/site/workcover/workcover/strategic_plan_and_annual_report.aspx

² Formerly Australian Institute for Social Research (AISR)

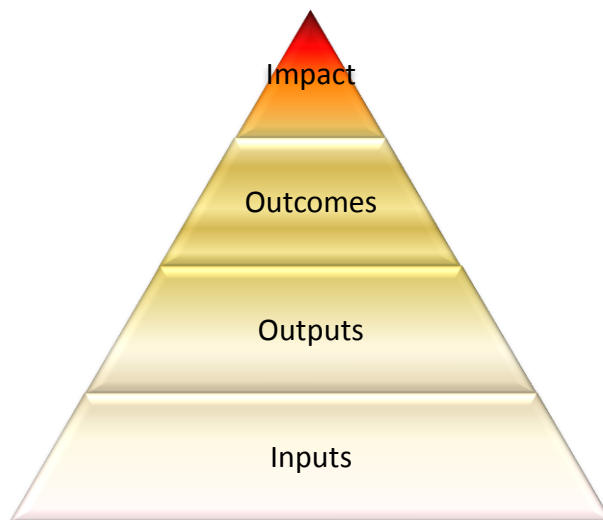
outcome and impact (evaluative) data to provide an assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of the Initiative.

In summary, this formative meta-evaluation recognises that prospective projects vary considerably in terms of duration, size, complexity, topic and proposed outcomes. WISeR 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. WISeR collects, analyses and reports on all aspects (quantitative and qualitative) of the Project's progress. In addition, the WISeR team is working closely with RTW Fund Management to ensure that higher level targets and goals are met, that *WorkCoverSA* 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 (see Figure 1). Many of the Projects are showing outcomes as well as inputs and outputs. The impact of this work relates to return to employment outcomes that are sustained over time, and to broader changes in the workers' compensation system – these too are being realised.

FIGURE 1: OUTCOMES HIERARCHY STRUCTURING THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



1.3 REPORTING

WISeR collects, analyses and reports quarterly on the progress of the RTW Fund, the activities and progress of Projects funded through the RTW Fund and on the evaluation-related activities and support provided by WISeR. The content and format of the reports have been designed to meet the information needs of *WorkCoverSA*, 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.

WorkCoverSA has modified their approach to assessing and approving proposals for the RTW Fund. This new approach recognises and builds on the learning from past Projects. Accepting the need to provide a 'historical' timeline for RTW Fund Projects to demonstrate the maturity of the RTW Fund structure and processes, Projects are now clustered by the year they were approved and/or commenced.

Note that some activity contained in the previous Annual Reports is abridged in this report. Note also that reports on Project activity draw heavily from the quarterly or final reports provided by Projects and in some cases paraphrase or reproduce content.

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

2.1 RTW FUND - STRATEGY AND POLICY

Around 34,000 South Australian workers are injured in the workplace each year. For many, these injuries are minor. A high number of workers return to work quickly after injury. Around three-quarters return to work without any income maintenance and an additional 5% return within two weeks³. Those who don't return to work within three months have significantly poorer outcomes in terms of long term health and employment.

The 52,800 *registered employers* employed around 60% of South Australian workers in 2010-11, with the remainder of the workforce employed by 68 *self-insured employers* and the public sector workforce. Workers of registered employers initiated approximately 6,000 income *maintenance* claims in 2010-11 – this represents around one-third of all claims. Including active claims from previous years, there were 6,380 maintenance claims active at 30 June 2011.

Work is health sustaining and promoting for most people, and this does not change when a worker is injured. Staying at work or returning to work quickly after an injury or illness is critical for recovery and reduces the social, financial and emotional strain of work injuries and absences on individuals, their families and the workplace. The WorkCoverSA Strategic Plan for 2008-2011, which was in place at the implementation of the RTW Fund, included the performance area of return to work along with financial performance, scheme integrity and stakeholder satisfaction. This was extended in the Strategic Directions for 2011-2016 to include the core goal of injured workers 'remaining at work'. Although recognising that work capacity may be reduced or altered, the notion of remaining at work encourages organisations to support the majority of injured workers to remain actively engaged in the workplace even if this means taking on different but meaningful activities.

The South Australian workers' compensation scheme does not always fare well in comparison with other Australian schemes⁴. In 2010-11, a significantly lower RTW rate (80%) was reported for South Australian injured workers than the national average (86%)⁵. Durable RTW rates (ie those who return to work and are still working) in South Australia (70%) were also significantly lower than the national average (77%). Partial RTW rates were higher in South Australia with 38% of South Australian injured workers deriving income from both WorkCoverSA and their employment after returning to work compared to other jurisdictions (26%). Higher proportions of South Australians also returned to work on lighter duties and/or on reduced hours compared with the Australian average.

However, jurisdictional factors are not always adequately examined when making comparisons at the national level. Funding arrangements differ between jurisdictions with some publicly managed and others privately and some a mix of both⁶. There are also significant differences in the size of organisations supported by worker's compensations schemes across Australian states and territories. WorkCoverSA 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, inclusion or exclusion of common law settlements cannot be overlooked when drawing comparisons between workers' compensation systems and RTW in Australian states and territories.

³ This figure only included injured workers who have submitted a claim to WorkCoverSA. It does not include injured workers from self-insured employers.

⁴ Campbell Research (2011) *Australia and New Zealand Return to Work Monitor 2010/11*.

⁵ 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).

⁶ Campbell Research (2011)

There is also a qualitative (but insignificant) difference in how South Australians feel after injury, in that 84% who had not returned to work reported this was because they were still injured or in pain (compared to 78% of the Australian cohort). Injured South Australian workers were significantly less likely to feel they were valued in the workplace.

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 - 72% in 2010-11 (up from 69% in 2009-10) - with most of these workers (86%) contributing to the development of the Plan⁷. In contrast, across Australia only 54% of injured workers had RTW Plans in 2010-11 (declining from 56% the previous year), and only 79% 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 continued to indicate the plan was less helpful than did workers 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)⁸. 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 (a finding consistent with 2009-10).

To date the RTW Fund Projects have focused on long-term injured workers, targeting participants that have been on the workers' compensation system for over a year and a half. The outcomes generated by the RTW Fund Projects are particularly significant given this. In 2011-12, Projects have continued to successfully engage with long-term injured workers, recognise existing skills and prior learning and have 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 addition, the learnings from the RTW Fund have been used to underpin structural changes within WorkCover, including the development of the Training Strategy and the Workforce Development Strategy.

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

We have previously acknowledged that systemic issues take time to change with the RTW Fund in an ideal and powerful position to understand, explore and resolve issues with the workers' compensation system. The Fund is working from the top down via the RTW Fund Management, from the ground up through Projects, injured workers and employers, and also from the middle out, from case management and rehabilitation providers. Although Projects are usually designed and implemented in isolation, they often identify the same elements as successes. Box 2 provides an overview of progress against the RTW Fund objectives (as revised November 2011). It is clear from this overview that RTW Fund management has chosen a range of Projects that have addressed all high level Fund objectives.

385 long-term WorkCoverSA recipients have participated in RTW Fund Projects

⁷ Campbell Research (2010)

⁸ Ibid.

BOX 2: OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST REVISED RTW FUND OBJECTIVES**OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST REVISED RTW FUND OBJECTIVES**

1. FINDING SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS TO INJURED WORKERS STAYING AT OR RETURNING TO WORK. THE RTW FUND HAS -
 - ✓ Provided funding to 13 Projects (with 3 extensions) that have used different and innovative methods to support RTW for injured workers. Two Projects demonstrating success in supporting training and return to work for long-term WorkCover recipients were extended. One Project providing motivation and personal support was also extended.
 - ✓ 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.
 - ✓ Provided support and programs to ensure injured workers are psychologically ready and motivated for return to work after a long time on workers compensation.
 - ✓ Explored 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 TRAINING 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.
 - ✓ Supported a developmental model to build confidence, capacity and skills through a series of courses.
 - ✓ Identified the most appropriate training for injured workers is in the classroom (not online) so they can benefit from peer support.
 - ✓ Ensured prior learning is recognised and receives appropriate training credits.
 - ✓ Developed a Training Strategy to embed training opportunities within the worker's compensation system.

3. DEVELOPING GREATER WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION OPTIONS FOR INJURED WORKERS. THE RTW FUND HAS -
 - ✓ Developed resources for business and health care providers to identify opportunities for RTW with reduced capacity.
 - ✓ Educated businesses and GPs about the benefits of RTW with reduced capacity.
 - ✓ 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 affects them if an employee sustains an injury.
 - ✓ Ensured training is provided in industries with sustainable employment.

4. IMPROVING THE SKILLS OF PEOPLE OPERATING WITHIN 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.
 - ✓ Engaged with claims agent and case managers.
 - ✓ Developed a Workforce Development Strategy to ensure appropriate ongoing performance development and training for employees working in the worker's compensation system.

5. DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL AND TIMELY OUTCOMES FOR INJURED WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS. THE RTW FUND HAS -
 - ✓ Targeted high claim sectors for intervention.
 - ✓ Developed construction industry job dictionaries to help medical professionals determine capacity and return injured workers to suitable duties.
 - ✓ Provided education and training for construction site-safety supervisors and co-workers.

6. EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLES OF EMPLOYERS AND INJURED WORKERS TO ACHIEVE THE BEST OUTCOMES. THE RTW FUND HAS-
 - ✓ Engaged and educated small businesses about obligations to injured workers
 - ✓ Linked rehabilitation providers and businesses interested in providing work opportunities for injured workers
 - ✓ Improved communication within and between stakeholders.

2.2.1 COMMUNICATION

Communication systems and collaboration have been cited continually as both challenges and successes over the three years of Project engagement with the RTW Fund. This involves all levels of the system from WorkCover, key stakeholders (including case managers, rehabilitation consultants, health care providers, training providers etc), Projects, employers and injured workers. Some of this has been anecdotal with injured workers relating the difficulties they have experienced. Negative experiences range from complete lack of communication to an overly officious approach illustrated in the claims management and compliance approach to engagement with injured workers. We have previously discussed the profound impact of staff turnover on injured workers who are often required to engage with multiple stakeholders in a siloed system.

Many Projects discussed the issues they had in communicating the purpose and process of their work to key stakeholders. Projects were most effective in this when their work was clearly defined. However, communicating the Project message in a group setting was invariably difficult. For example, organised information sessions for small to large groups of stakeholders were either poorly attended or were cancelled due to lack of interest. Communication was consistently most successful when dealing with individuals. Projects assigned an individual case manager or rehabilitation provider to work with and/or recruit clients invariably identified these collaborations as successful (particularly after the relationship had time to develop). However, in an environment with high staff turnover this approach falters. A new case manager requires the establishment of a new relationship, which can be time and labour intensive. So while the one-on-one approach has some merit for small scale interventions, it does not lead to system change.

2.2.2 HOLISTIC APPROACH

Projects continue to identify and discuss the merits of recognising and treating injured workers as individuals. Moreover, workers continue to respond to this individualised and holistic approach. This is evident in the level of commitment and engagement shown by injured workers who have, in many cases, been off work for in excess of two years. Although varied in their target, design and approach, Projects have managed to connect with most participants. In many cases this has involved motivating them individually or in groups, and guiding them back to the workforce. This is particularly noteworthy given the extended period that many participants had been off work prior to engagement with RTW Fund Projects.

However, Projects underestimated the time, effort and commitment required to get some injured workers back to work. For some Projects there appeared to be an assumption that injured workers would be similar to other long-term unemployed persons. However, injured workers recruited by Projects are clearly different in a range of ways. Many have not had full medical clearance and are still suffering from physical or psychological injury. Moreover, they have had sustained engagement with both the health and workers' compensation systems. As such, their experience of detachment from their pre-injury employer is profoundly different to the experience of most 'unemployed' people – whether long- or short-term.

In some cases, only a small level of support has been required to motivate an injured worker to participate in training or seek employment. This motivation may be provided by one-on-one personal support, by group sessions or through a course specifically designed to stimulate action. What is clear is that some sort of external intervention has been required to break the cycle, particularly for long term WorkCoverSA clients.

2.2.3 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

When work injury impacts on the permanent capacity of an individual to continue in the work role they previously filled, it is necessary to identify a different occupation – sometimes in a different industry. However, applying oneself to education and training through necessity can be quite different to when it is a considered decision about a career change in the absence of injury. Therefore, the motivation and capacity of injured workers to participate in education and training is invariably different to that of the general population.

132 WorkCoverSA recipients had participated in training initiated by RTW Fund Projects

It is not that injured workers are necessarily less capable, but rather that they may lack confidence in their ability to learn in a structured environment. It is also the case that after years in the workforce some innovations and technologies may have passed them by. For these individuals the best approach has been to build capacity and confidence through a series of training opportunities, aimed at the key outcome of sustainable employment. It is of note that the relatively small investment in training available through the SA Unions (averaging less than \$3,000 per worker, see Section 3.3.5), pales in comparison to ongoing salary maintenance and other associated costs for those on the worker's compensation system.

In addition, the experience of education or training for injured workers can be somewhat different than for the general population and therefore method of delivery is extremely important. Although recognising individual circumstances will result in exceptions, injured workers are more inclined to thrive in a class (rather than online) environment. Training delivered in a class or group provides the additional benefit of peer support and motivation. This is particularly relevant when some of one's class mates have also sustained a work-related injury.

A number of Projects have facilitated training opportunities for injured workers. Some of these have been particularly successful in providing tailored training opportunities with strong potential for sustainable employment. However, it has also been clear that there continues to be a lack of clear process for training approval and payment. Some Projects have expressed frustration that an injured worker's access to training opportunities is determined by individual case manager decision making, rather than by formal policy or protocol. Concern has also been expressed about delays to course payments resulting in access to course materials being denied and graduation delayed. The development of a clear process for training approval and payment would benefit injured workers on RTW Fund Projects, but would also benefit the broader cohort of injured workers in the WorkCoverSA system.

2.2.4 JOB SEEKING AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

The delivery of education and training for many injured workers is vital as they reconfigure their work life and look to a future employed in a new job and often in a new industry. The retraining received not only brings new skills, but builds confidence in personal ability and capacity to transition to a different role. However, re-entering the labour market also requires skills in job hunting, preparation of applications and interviews. In addition, people need forbearance to deal with potentially multiple rejections. This is particularly the case for workers after injury as there is a stigma associated with workplace injury and the perception that many of those receiving compensation are bludging and/or rorting the system. Many injured workers, therefore, would benefit from access to intensive job-seeking support once their medical restriction is lifted and/or on completion of training. WorkCover's Re-employment Incentive Scheme for Employers (RISE) program has been used to good effect by Interwork to encourage employers to take a chance on an injured worker.

82 WorkCoverSA recipients were back at work after participating in RTW Fund Projects

It is well known that many jobs are found through internal application or informal means (such as word of mouth). This 'hidden' employment market works to both the benefit and detriment of Project participants. SA Unions identified this phenomenon was at play within their cohort. They recognised the benefit from field placements and personal connections between TAFE lecturing staff and employers, and how these led to solid employment opportunities for students. However, in the absence of these connections, injured workers are left to the competitive open market or cold calling. This hidden employment market, potentially accounts for around half of job opportunities, and calls into question some techniques for identifying sustainable employment which only use advertised jobs.

2.2.5 RECRUITMENT

Over the last three years participant recruitment has been an ongoing issue and bone of contention between Projects and the Agent. The Agent has continued to cite difficulties with Projects' ill-defined and changing inclusion and exclusion criteria. In addition, the Agent has expressed concern that Projects had unrealistic expectations about the size of the available pool of

clients. In this, Projects have been influenced by reports of six thousand WorkCoverSA recipients receiving income maintenance on an annual basis. However, identifying and recruiting participants has not proven to be a simple process. Multiple recruitment methods have been trialled. Projects have attempted to recruit by indirect methods (including advertisement, information sessions or targeting rehabilitation consultants). These attempts have been extremely time-consuming, with poor numbers achieved for extensive effort.

By far, recruitment has been most successful when participants were identified by the Agent. The Agent has always been in the best position to do this, through their case managers they can identify clients who fit project criteria and seek the required approvals (client and medical) without compromising client confidentiality. However, to do this the Agent needs to be provided with clearly specified recruitment criteria, which allows the identification of those who would most benefit from the services or opportunities they offer. There has clearly been a tension between Agent concerns about the complexities of sourcing clients with criteria viewed as 'restrictive' and Project attempts to be innovative in their approach and target selected client groups. For example, Project attempts to recruit clients who have been on the system less than twelve months, clients under the age of 30 years or clients with particular socio-demographic characteristics have, to a large extent, been unsuccessful.

2.2.6 PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT WITH PROJECT STAFF

The development of a close relationship between Project staff and participants has been noted in a number of different Projects, most recently in the Projects facilitated by SA Unions, Mary Saloniklis Vocational Services (MSVS), the Adelaide Comedy School (ACS) and Mindful Movement Physiotherapy (MMP). Many participants have responded favourably about these Projects and particularly about Project staff. MMP has also reported examining the link between participant and facilitator and the relationship to outcomes. They found when a participant had greater contact with a facilitator; this participant also evidenced more positive change in terms of their Project outcomes. Other Projects have not reported with the same level of insight about the impact of interpersonal engagement on Project outcomes, however, we believe the same forces are at play.

The development of trusting relationships between Project staff and participants can be an extremely positive feature of a successful Project. Many of the key theories of motivation and behaviour discuss the need to satisfy interpersonal relationships and achieve social approval. However, it is important to ensure participants are appropriately transitioned from all Projects, and that inappropriate bonds (those that cannot be sustained after the completion of the Project) do not develop. This is particularly important for clients of Projects which involve intensive engagement over a brief period.

Transition is about more than simply exiting from the Project – it means a smooth passage out of a Project and back to the Agent. It also means that Case Managers are aware of the possible change in client circumstance, motivation and/or expectations.

Participants are particularly susceptible to both positive and negative engagement at the time they exit a RTW Fund Project. It has been suggested that this should be a time of intensive activity by the Agent, to back up the potential Project gains using the resources available to them to support a timely return to sustainable employment. The evaluators understand that this has been discussed between WorkCoverSA and the Agent. However, quarterly reports from the Agent have not provided information about the commencement of any additional activity.

2.2.7 EMBEDDING SYSTEM CHANGE

The RTW Fund did not set out with easy goals. These are: To innovatively solve problems in the workers' compensation system that act as employment barriers to injured workers. To improve access and outcomes of training. To get more injured workers back to work quickly. To improve the workers' compensation system by improving the skills of those working within it. And to inform and educate employers, injured workers and the broader community about the importance of returning to work quickly after injury.

The original design of the RTW Fund with a call for expressions of interest drew in people with limited direct knowledge of the workers' compensation system, but with experience in other fields such as training, job searching and motivation. This created obstacles through a lack of knowledge about relevant compensation policy. However, as previously discussed, this created opportunities as Project staff challenged and called into question entrenched policy and procedures. This method did not work perfectly, but in many cases it did work. **The RTW Fund through Project activity has been directly responsible for returning 82 injured workers to work, providing training for 132 participants and motivational and support workshops to 197 clients.**

Much has been learned from the RTW Fund to date providing a spotlight from the injured worker perspective on issues of concern within the South Australian worker's compensation system. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)⁹ discussed the barriers caused by the current case management model. They reported –

Whilst there is a general conceptual understanding of best practice principles by agent case managers, such as early intervention, communication and consideration of psychosocial risks, there is little evidence of such outcomes-focused behaviour translating to engagement with vocational rehabilitation providers and injured workers.(p.5)

They report the vocational rehabilitation model should be defined by "quality and skill" that the existing model –

...does not adequately promote or reward timely and durable return to work. In fact, the use of hourly rate billing practice and fixed fee for service may encourage rehabilitation to be prolonged and solutions to be 'off the shelf', rather than tailored to an injured worker's circumstance.(p.4)

The RTW Fund Projects implemented by SA Unions and Interwork demonstrated the success of a flexible case management approach where Project staff had a broad knowledge and were highly skilled in training and job placement, respectively. The successes achieved by these Projects reinforce the findings of the PwC report. The worker's compensation workforce should be upskilled in appropriate and early intervention and focused on return to work outcomes to achieve the best outcomes for injured workers.

At a system level, the RTW Fund Management have developed a draft Workforce Development Strategy and draft Training Strategy for Injured Workers. These strategies work in tandem to solve some of the issues identified by RTW Fund Projects. It is recommended that both of these strategies are included in the RTW Fund prospective evaluation.

- The **Workforce Development Strategy** seeks to improve the training and professional learning and development opportunities for persons operating in the worker's compensation scheme. This includes employees of WorkCover, case managers, rehabilitation consultants and rehabilitation and return to work coordinators. This strategy also underpins and supports the Training Strategy
- The **Training Strategy** is using the learning of the RTW Fund to provide greater training opportunities for injured workers. The Strategy aims to embed training as an early intervention; and increase Agent and provider knowledge about training opportunities, availability, process and access.

As part of these strategies it would be timely to encourage broader collaboration within the worker's compensation system to incorporate the best elements of the SA Unions and Interwork Projects into a new model with different scope. Recognising that vulnerable injured workers require specialist services, specialist education/training or employment consultants could either be paired with or embedded within rehabilitation organisations. The SA Centre for Economic Studies (SACES)¹⁰ suggest a triaging approach to identify potentially high risk claims. We suggest this opportunity could be used to determine access to specialist services.

⁹ PricewaterhouseCoopers (2011). *Vocational rehabilitation framework – Model options. Final report.*

¹⁰ SA Centre for Economic Studies (2011). *The role of training in supporting return to work: A strategy for WorkCoverSA. Final report: Stage 2.*

WorkCoverSA has developed a revised injury impact model following Loisel, Kendall and their colleagues^{11,12}. This differentiates the societal impacts on work disability using a systems model incorporating personal coping, workplace, health care and the compensation system with this overlaid with a modified flag system using yellow, blue, red and black to represent the systems, respectively. A simplified version of the revised model is shown in Figure 2 along with related challenges identified through the RTW Fund. To date much of the effort of the RTW Fund has gone into instigating change at the system and personal level, this is evident in both the Workforce Development Strategy and the Training Strategy.

While change at the workplace level may be impacted through a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator, this role is not in place in all organisations.¹³ Accordingly there is a need to improve the impact and role of the workplace and healthcare system. These present greater challenges, as these systems are not so easily defined.

The evaluators recognise the complexity of identifying and recruiting clients to varying concurrent Projects. This was made even more difficult when so much client information is only available in paper records. The Agent has reported recent successes in meeting recruitment targets with tight timelines. It would be interesting to receive a report from the Agent of their learning and the new strategies they have implemented to improve recruitment systems after three years of working with RTW Fund Projects. This would add to the body of knowledge generated by the RTW Fund.

To date, much of the monitoring of Project activities and client outcomes has been via Project quarterly reports. Project engagement with evaluation including the monitoring and reporting of client outcomes has been an efficient way to ensure Projects remain focused on the issues they were funded to address. It has also proved most effective when a close working relationship has been established between client and Project staff. This approach has also been important given the difficulties in accessing timely and relevant return to work data from the WorkCoverSA Curam data system. In the current system, when Projects close and Project staff are no longer engaged with clients, information about client return to work status, the sustainability of employment and the level of ongoing WorkCoverSA maintenance has not been available to the evaluators at this time. However, WorkCoverSA is exploring options for access to this data in the future.

The long term impact of Projects on individual injured workers and WorkCoverSA return to work rates can only be determined by ongoing monitoring of WorkCoverSA data. Optimally, this would involve accessing the live system and drawing relevant socio-demographic, injury and return to work client data, including as a minimum data set including socio-demographic (age, gender, country of birth), employment (pre-injury occupation, income and employment fraction), injury (date, type, medical capacity/restriction, detachment date), and return to work data (date, occupation, income, employment fraction, duration of employment).

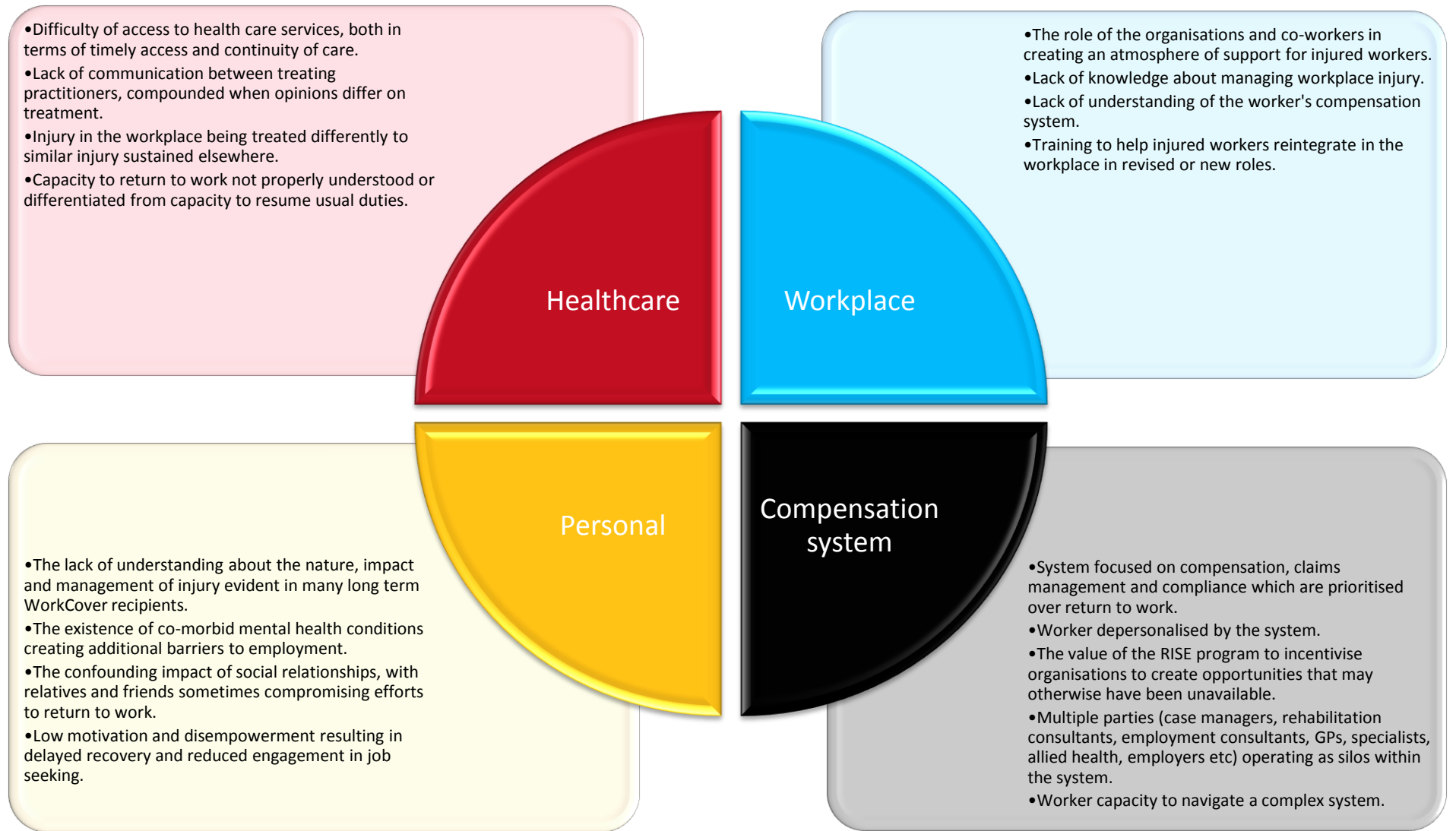
A cohort of injured workers could be used as a matched control group and identify the long term impact of RTW Fund Projects and differentiate between Project impact. It is particularly important to test the motivation Projects as it was predicted that increases in psychological wellbeing would lead to improved return to work outcomes. A similar method could be used to determine the impact of the new Training Strategy.

¹¹ Loisel, P., Buchbinder, R., Hazard, R., Keller, R., Scheel, I., van Tulder, M., et al. (2005). Prevention of Work Disability Due to Musculoskeletal Disorders: The Challenge of Implementing Evidence. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 15(4), 507-524.

¹² Kendall, N., Burton, K., Main, C., & Watson, P. (2009). *Tackling Musculoskeletal Problems: A Guide for Clinic and Workplace. Identifying Obstacles Using the Psychosocial Flags Framework*. TSO (The Stationery Office).

¹³ All organisations with 30 or more employees have been required to appoint a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator since 1 January 2009.

FIGURE 2: CHALLENGES FOR THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COMPENSATION SYSTEM



Note. Model adapted from Loisel et al (2005) and Kendall et al (2009).

2.3 THE RTW FUND PROJECTS – OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

It has been almost three years since the commencement of Project activity with the RTW Fund. At this time, 385 injured workers have directly participated in 13 Projects piloting innovative approaches to return to work. By the end of July 2012, eleven Projects had completed their activity, and two were still active. Summaries for each Project are shown throughout this Section, with a RTW Fund-level summary shown in Box 3.

Box 3: RTW FUND – SUMMARY AT JULY 2012

RTW FUND – SUMMARY	
At July 2012 -	
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Projects have been funded since the commencement of Project activity in August 2009. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 11 Projects were complete. b. 2 Projects were active. • Projects have been funded in the areas of training and job placement, motivation and support, and business engagement. • Projects have been funded for an average of 16 months each.
Injured workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 385 had commenced Projects to receive training and job placement or motivation and support. • 224 had completed all Project activity. • 132 had commenced training • 82 had been reported by Projects as having RTW outcomes. • 37 programs or workshops have been held for injured workers.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 information sessions were held for businesses.

Note: the summary includes aggregates of Project data. This is subject to adjustment up to completion of the Project final reports.

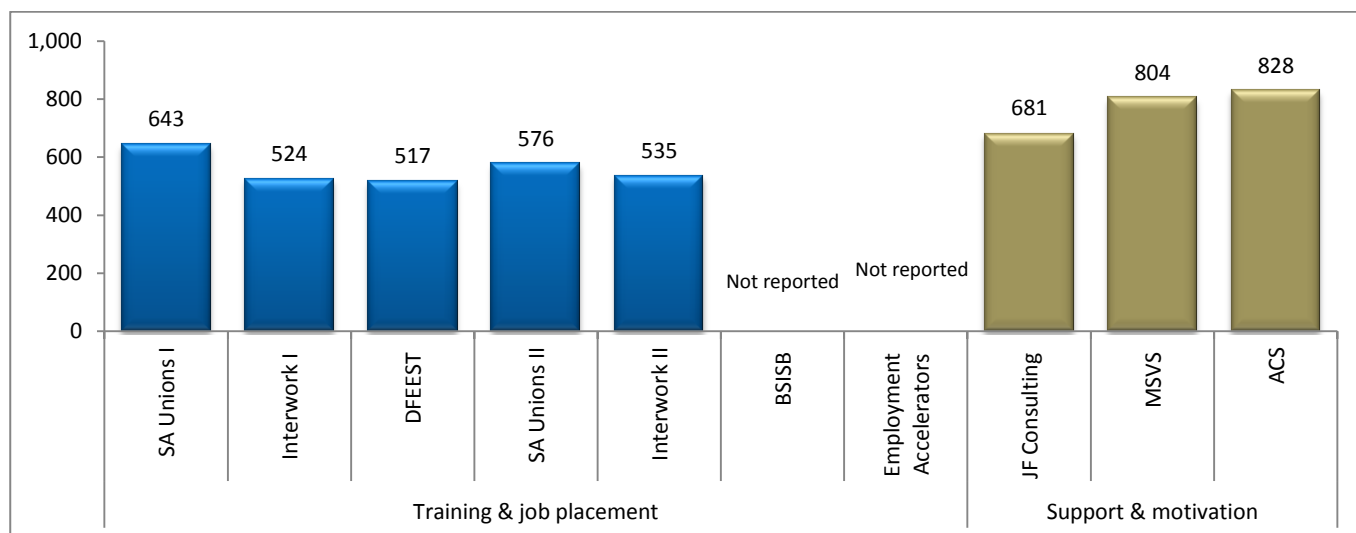
Projects funded through the RTW Fund currently fall into three broad categories - noting there is some degree of overlap between them. These categories are summarised below, with Projects and providers listed by category in Table 1. *Training and job placement projects* work directly with clients to ensure they have the appropriate training for sustainable employment and/or to provide job search or placement support. Training for many clients has focused on short courses to develop computer literacy skills. Projects have also helped injured workers to identify suitable and sustainable job opportunities, as well as helping develop resumes and interview skills. *Motivation and support projects* have focused attention on restoring the injured workers' confidence and reducing the psychological impact of workplace injury. The projects have used trained counsellors to engage with injured workers usually in a group environment. The *business engagement projects* work to inform and provide resources to businesses about the benefits of return to work to the business and injured workers.

TABLE 1: PROJECTS AND PROVIDERS

Project	Provider	Report section
Training and Job Placement Projects		
<i>Retraining Injured Workers Career Transition Project</i>	Business Services Industry Skills Board (BSISB)	2.3.1
<i>The Next Step Training and Employment Program</i>	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)	2.3.3
<i>Pathways to Work Project (extended)</i>	Interwork	2.3.4 & 2.3.14
<i>Retraining Injured workers for Employment Project (extended)</i>	SA Unions	2.3.5 & 2.3.13
<i>Back on Track Project</i>	Employment Accelerators	2.3.10
Motivation and Support Projects		
<i>Change your Mind.... Change Your Life Project</i>	Jane Fielder (JF) Consulting	2.3.2
<i>Families... Working Together to Work Project</i>	Beckmann & Associates	2.3.8
<i>Re-invent Yourself... Life After Injury Project</i>	Mary Saloniklis Vocational Services (MSVS)	2.3.9
<i>Moving Mindfully Toward Health Project</i>	Mindful Movement Physiotherapy (MMP)	2.3.11
<i>Stand Up with Confidence</i>	Adelaide Comedy School (ACS)	2.3.15
Business Engagement Projects		
<i>Small Business Project</i>	Business SA	2.3.6
<i>Work Hardening Project</i>	Business SA	2.3.7
<i>Achieving Cultural Change in the Construction Industry</i>	Master Builders	2.3.12

Thirteen Projects have been approved under the Return to Work Fund with three Projects provided with additional funding to extend their successes and learning (summaries of these Projects are shown in the sections below). In reflecting on the achievements and challenges of the RTW Fund and the early Projects, it is important to recognise that injured workers engaged in RTW Fund Projects to date have been on the worker's compensation system for over a year and a half (on average) and as such are clients that are least likely to return to work. On average, clients in each *training and job placement* Project had been out of work for well over 500 days (see Figure 3). *Support and motivation* Projects worked with clients out of work for an average of 681 days (JF Consulting), 804 days (MSVS) and 828 days (ACS). Interwork, who achieved the most success in returning participants to work, did so for 16 Project I participants, and 14 of 15 Project II participants (93%) – a remarkable return to work rate of 61% overall.

FIGURE 3: AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS FOR CLIENT SINCE INJURY TO COMMENCING WITH PROJECT



2.3.1 RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS CAREER TRANSITION PROJECT

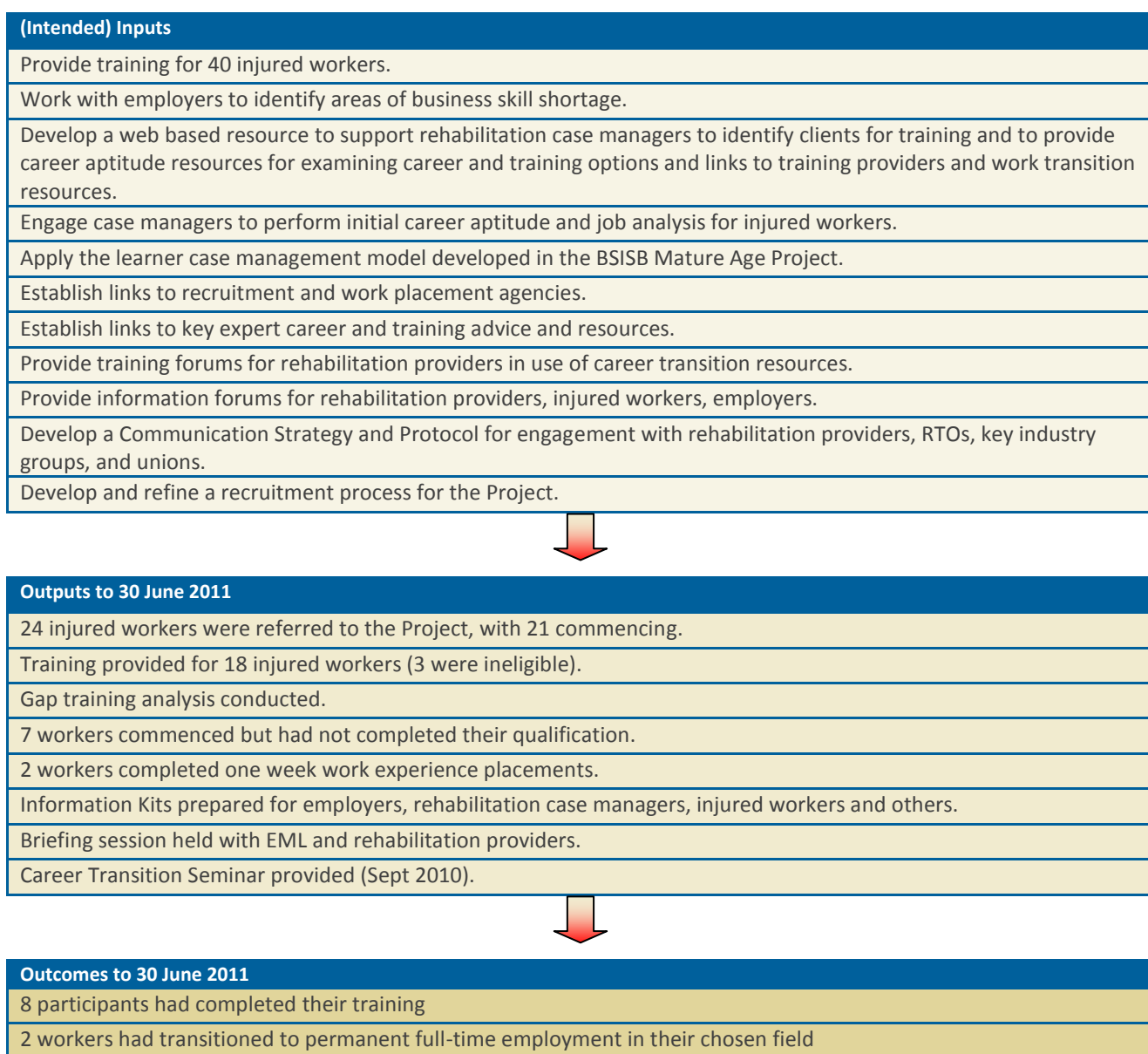
Provider: **BUSINESS SERVICES INDUSTRY SKILLS BOARD (BSISB)**

Commenced: 13 August 2009 **Completed:** 30 June 2011

Project Purpose: The Project aimed 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 4 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

FIGURE 4: BSISB: RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS CAREER TRANSITION PROJECT



 No information was 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.

2.3.2 CHANGE YOUR MIND ... CHANGE YOUR LIFE

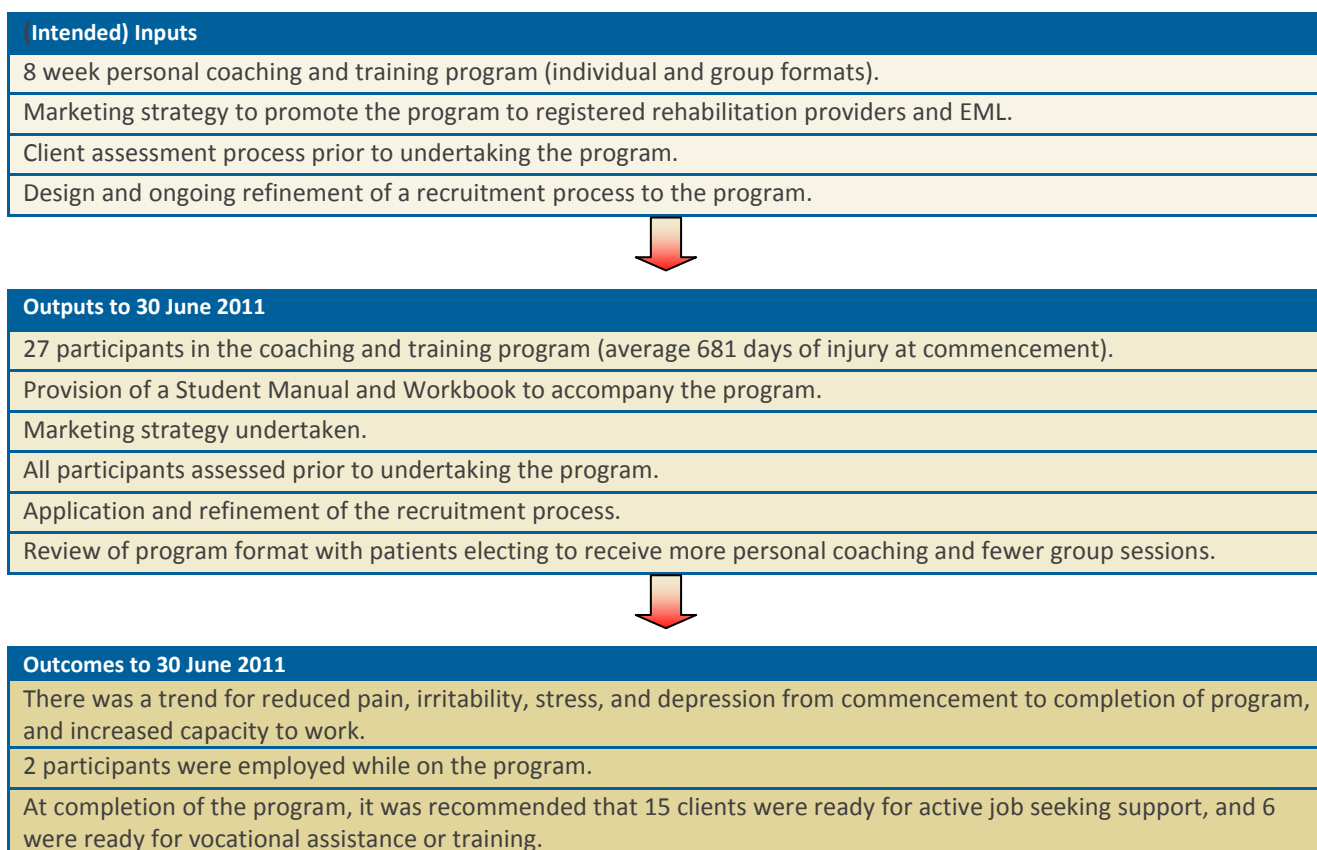
Provider: **JANE FIELDER (JF) CONSULTING**

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

Project Purpose: This Project addressed 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 5 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at completion, 30 June 2011.

FIGURE 5: CHANGE YOUR MIND ... CHANGE YOUR LIFE



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

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

R 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.

2.3.3 THE NEXT STEP TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

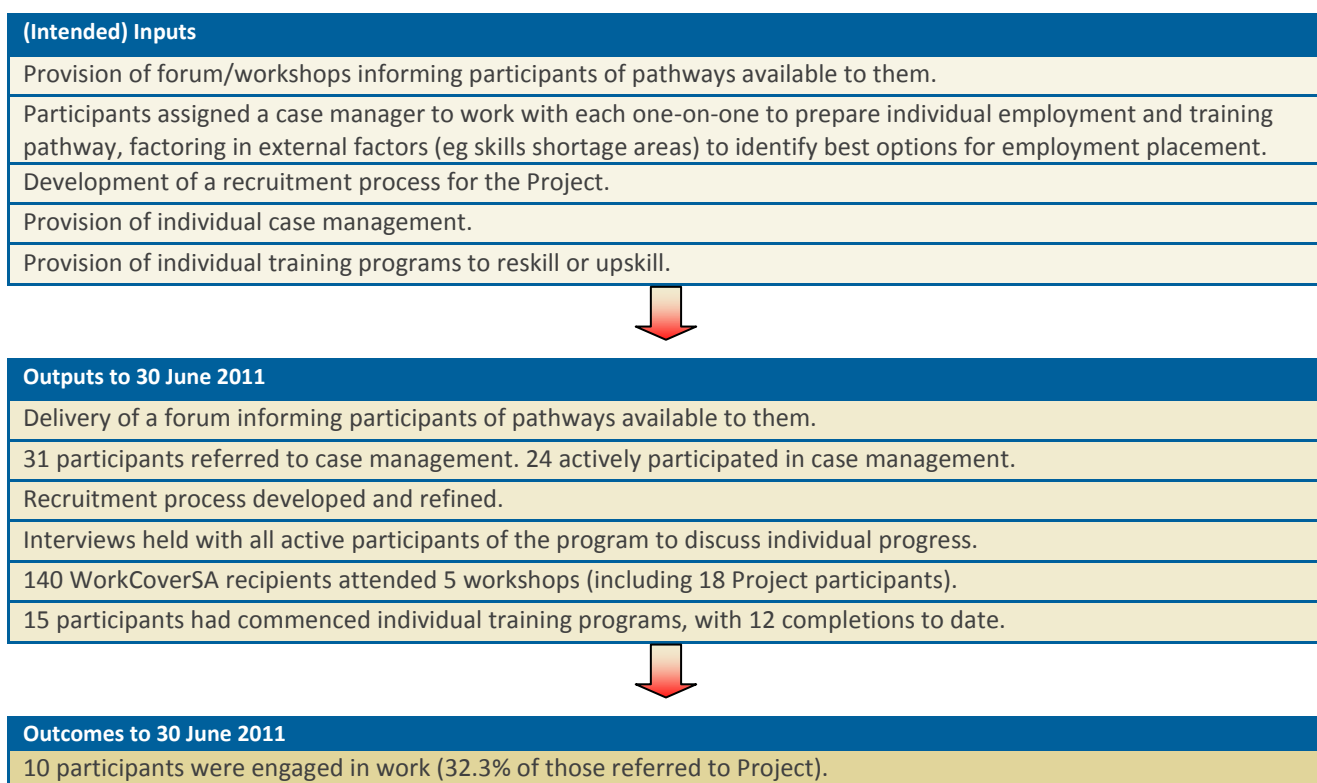
Provider: **DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DFEEST)**

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

Project Purpose: This Project was 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 6 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at completion, 30 June 2011.

FIGURE 6: NEXT STEP TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM



- This Project shows some promise drawing 140 WorkCoverSA 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).

R Only 31 (77.5%) of the proposed 40 injured workers commenced the Project.

R Only 24 (77.4%) of the 31 participants engaged in case management.

2.3.4 PATHWAYS TO WORK

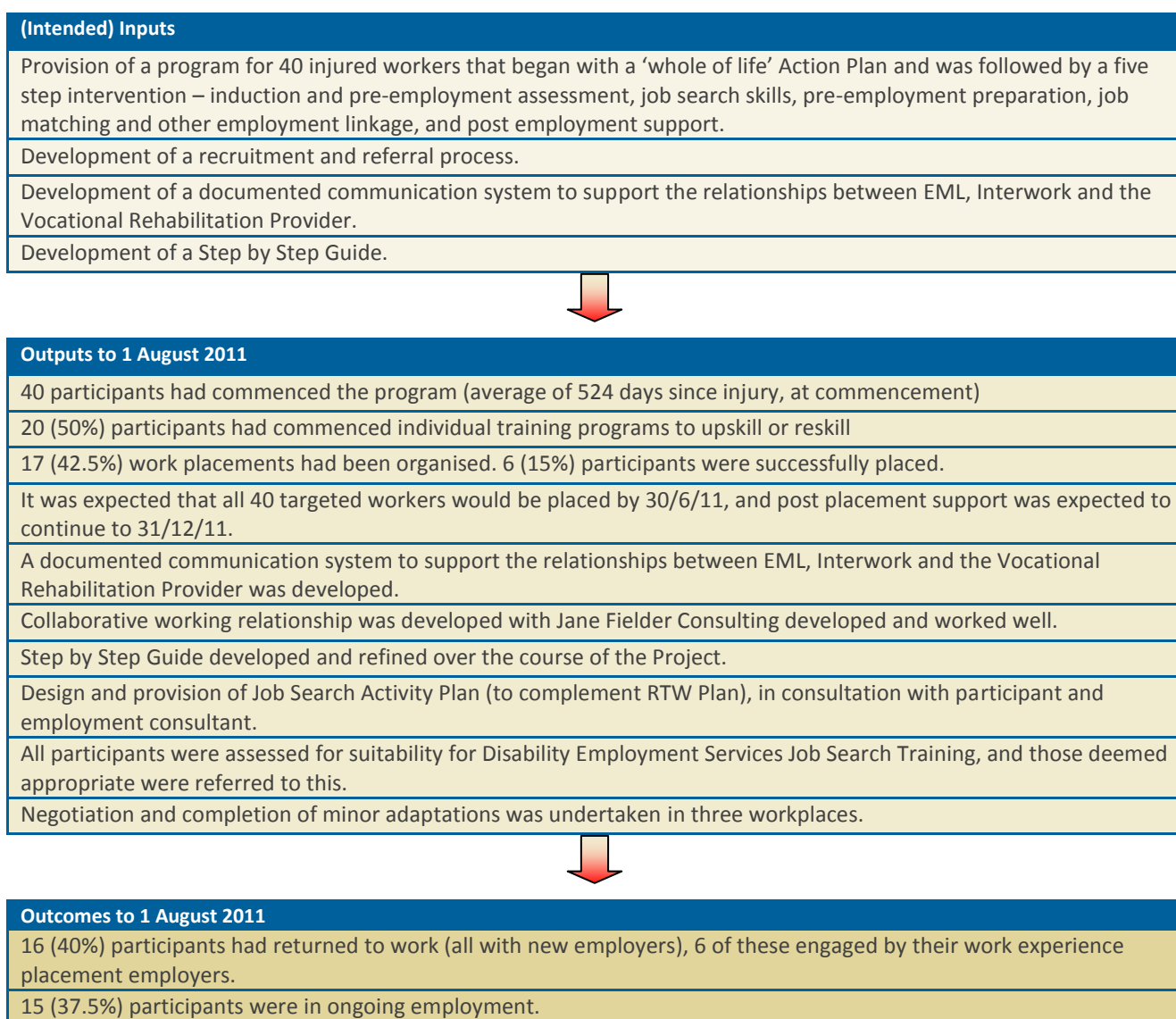
Provider: **INTERWORK I**

Commenced: 4 November 2009 **Completed:** July 2011

Project Purpose: This Project applied successful strategies existing in the disability employment sector to achieving return to work of injured workers. In the process, the Project tested the disability employment model for its relevance to the workers' compensation sector. It targeted workers who had been on the WorkCoverSA system for a considerable time and applied a holistic approach that included workers and their families.

Figure 7 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 1 August 2011. The extension of this Project is reported in Section 2.3.14.

FIGURE 7: 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.

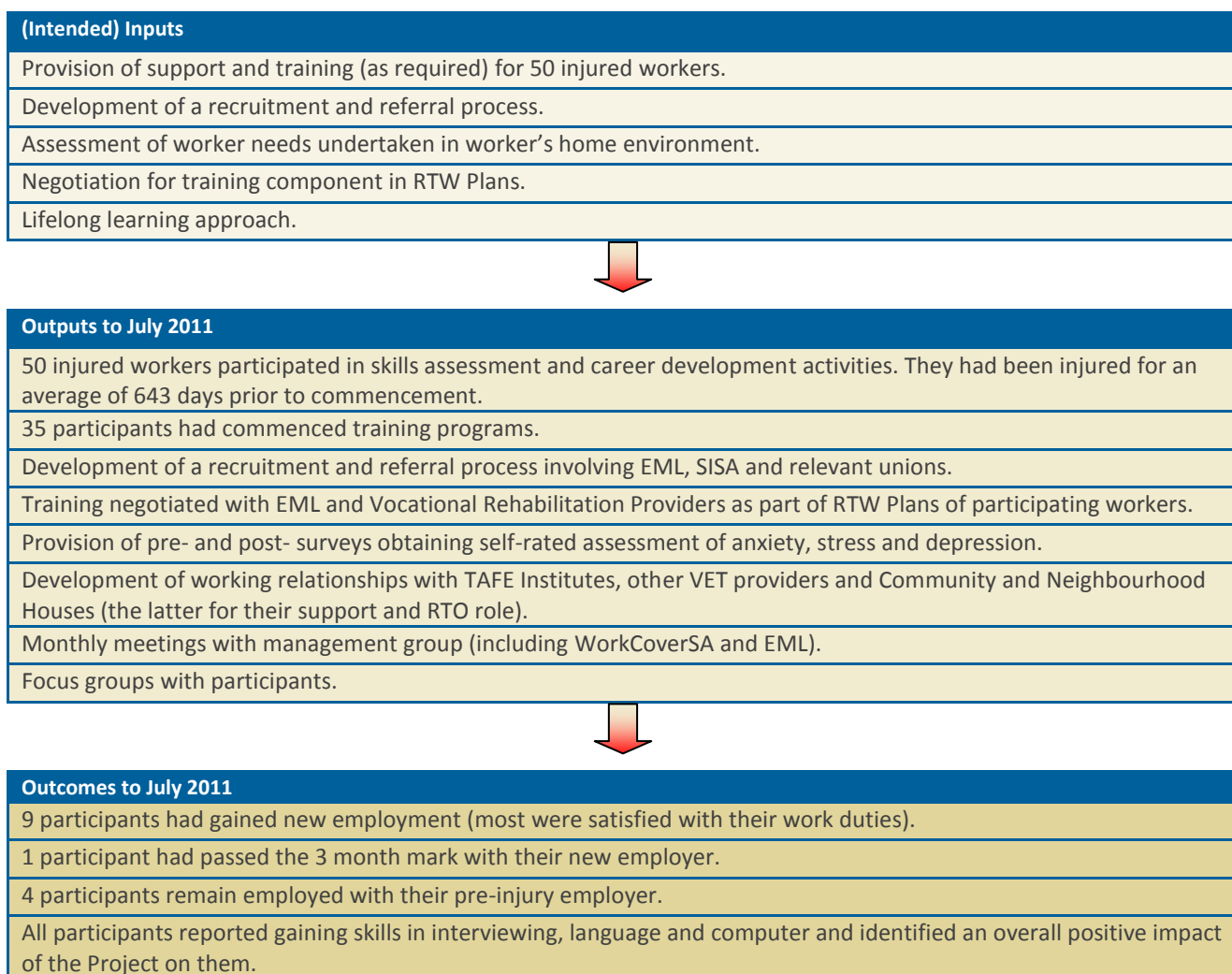
2.3.5 RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Provider: **SA UNIONS I**

Commenced: 21 January 2010 **Completed:** July 2011

Project Purpose: This 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. As such the Project explored ways to improve the interface between the workers' compensation sector and the vocational education and training (VET) sector, and in particular, the role of training in achieving return to work. Figure 8 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at completion, July 2011. The extension of this Project is reported in Section 2.3.13.

FIGURE 8: 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 VET 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.
- ✎ *The Project 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.*

2.3.6 SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT

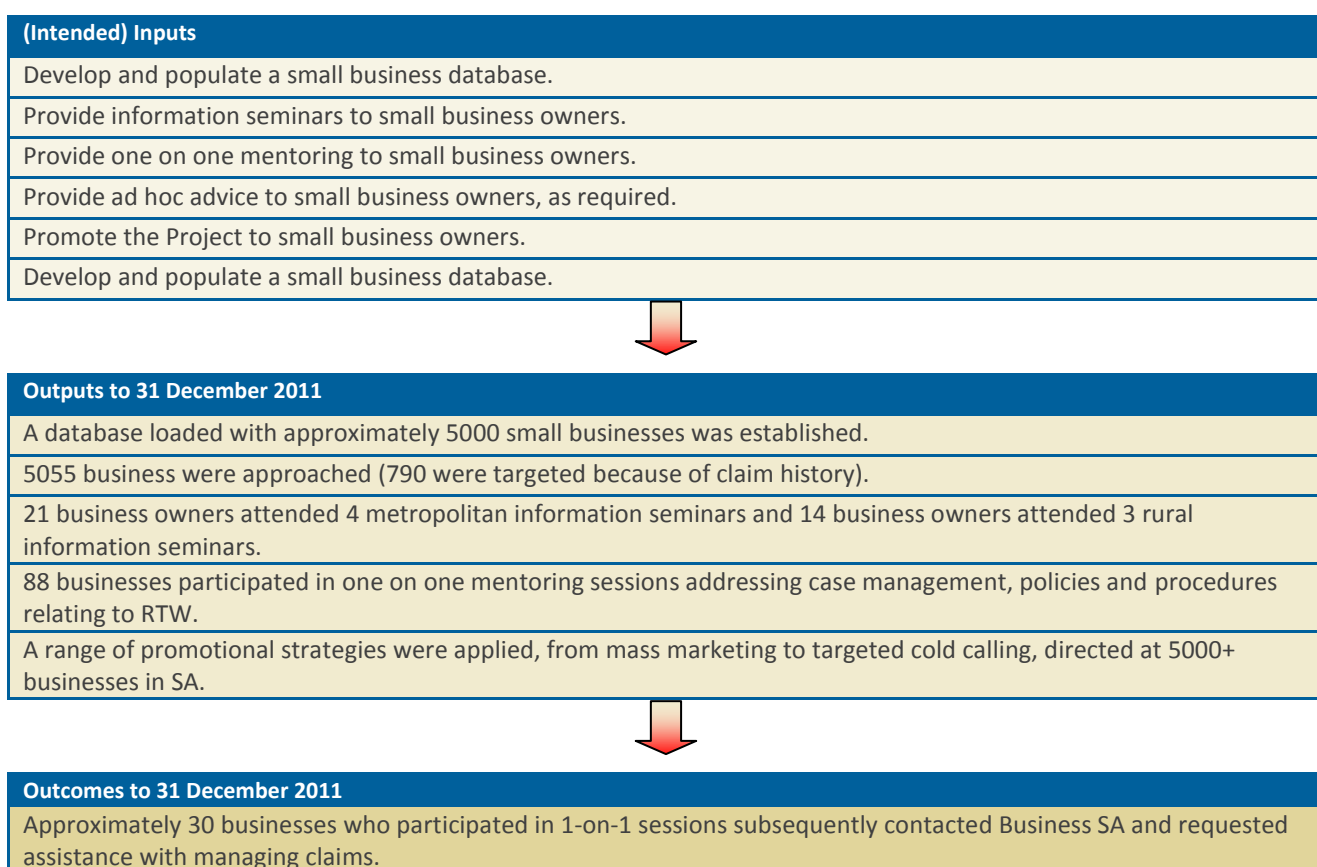
Provider: **BUSINESS SA**

Commenced: February 2010 **Completed:** 31 December 2011

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

Figure 9 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

FIGURE 9: THE SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT



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

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

Business SA's inability to identify and report on Project outcomes is an issue.

2.3.7 WORK HARDENING PROJECT

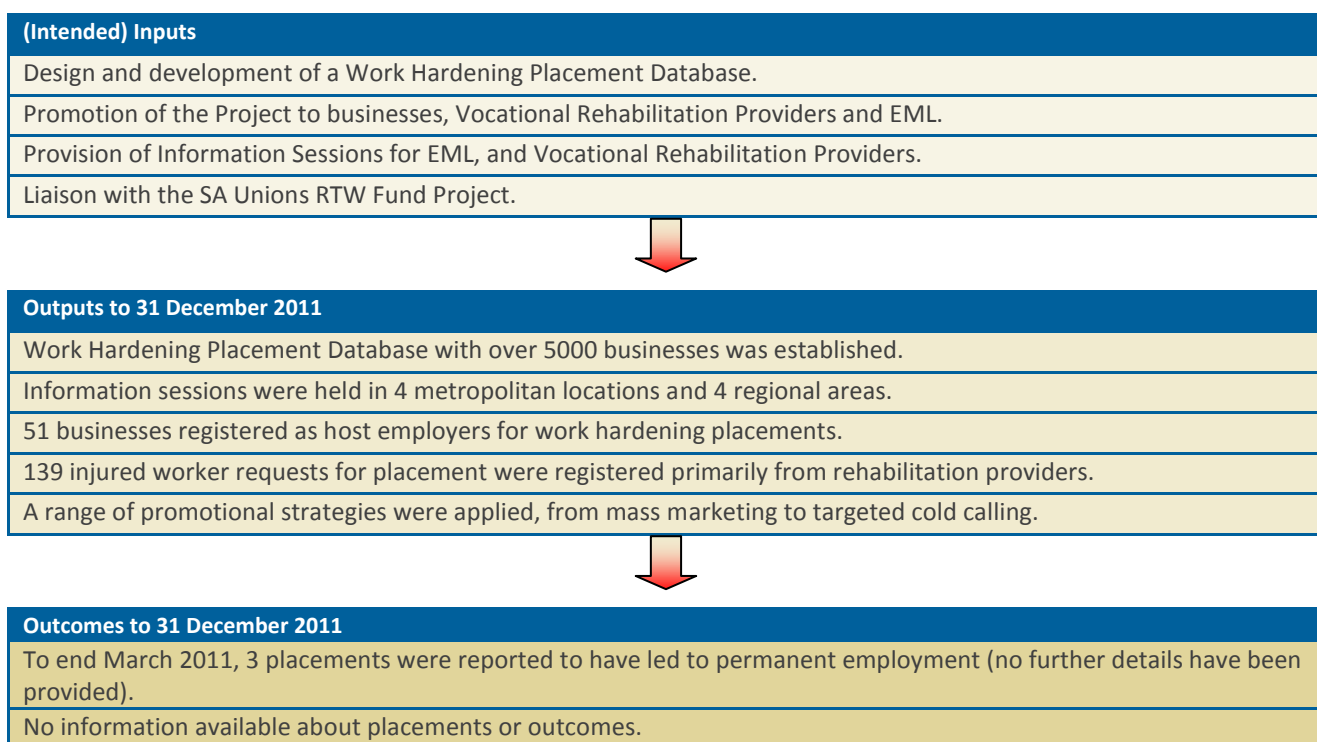
Provider: **BUSINESS SA**

Commenced: February 2010 **Completed:** 31 December 2011

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

Figure 10 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2011.

FIGURE 10: 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.

Business SA's inability to identify and report on Project outcomes is an issue.

2.3.8 FAMILIES.... WORKING TOGETHER TO WORK

Provider: **BECKMANN & ASSOCIATES**

Commenced: 29 December 2010

Suspended (due to lack of participants): 5 September 2011

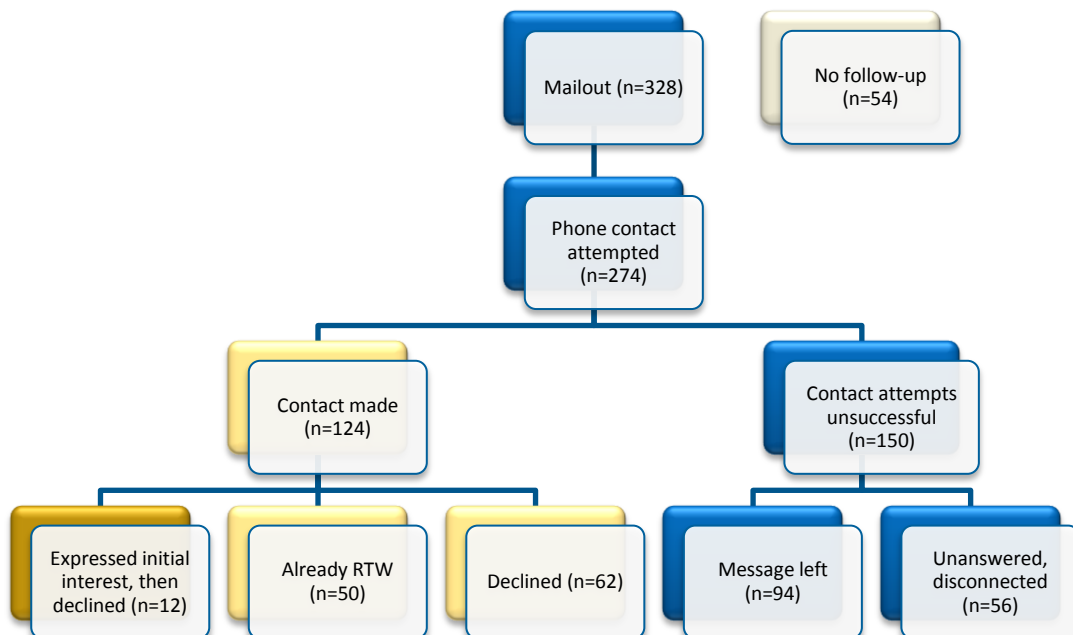
Project Purpose: This Project was designed to provide family based counselling and education for injured workers in order to raise awareness and enhance the effect of family support as an acknowledged critical factor in return to work. Counselling sessions would identify and address gaps in knowledge and discuss the effect of the injury on the worker and their family. They were also designed to be motivational and plan strategies for effective return to work.

Figure 11 summarises the intended Inputs for this project.

FIGURE 11: THE FAMILIES.... WORKING TOGETHER TO WORK PROJECT

(Intended) Inputs
Provide two family counselling sessions no less than six weeks apart for 20 injured workers
Report on injured worker capacity for RTW at 3, 6 and 12 months
Provide services in four locations (including three regional locations)
Identify personal and family obstacles for return to work
Promote the importance of family support in successful return to work

Key Project activity: The Beckmann & Associates Project Manager prepared the evaluation framework with performance indicators. Project questionnaires were designed to assess the progress of potential participants and the Project's success in achieving its performance indicators. Attempts to recruit participants are outlined (in brief) in the flow chart below.



Despite rigorous attempts over a number of months no injured worker was identified as appropriate and willing to participate in the Project.

Lists identifying potentially suitable clients were out of date for Project purposes and included a high proportion of individuals who had already returned to work.

Some individuals who had returned to work expressed interest in the Project, and felt it would have been valuable to them.

2.3.9 RE-INVENT YOURSELF ... LIFE AFTER INJURY

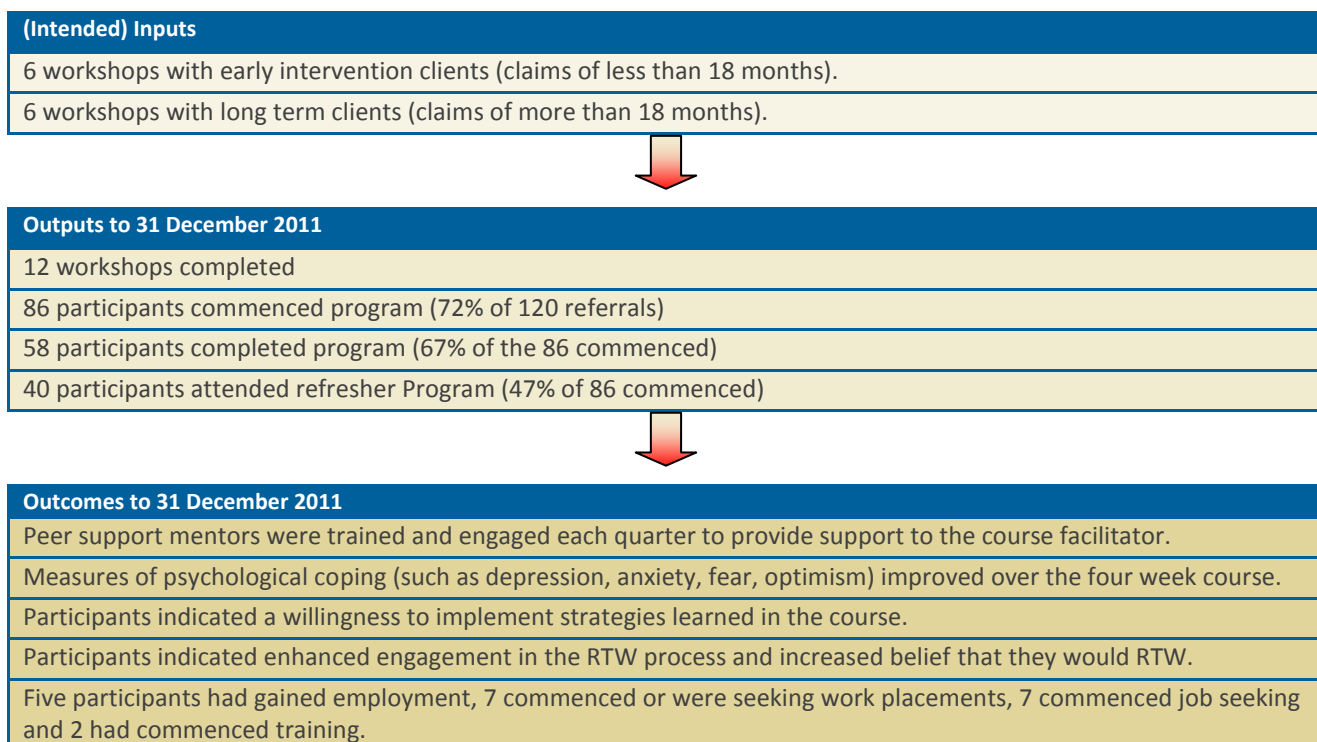
Provider: **MARY SALONIKLIS VOCATIONAL SERVICES (MSVS)**

Commenced: January 2011 **Completed:** 31 December 2011

Project Purpose: 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.

Figure 12 summarises the Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 31 December 2011.

FIGURE 12: RE-INVENT YOURSELF ... LIFE AFTER INJURY



- ☑ This Project shows significant promise. Participants completing the course improved in terms of psychological coping, had learned new skills, reported a reduction in RTW barriers, and were more engaged with their rehabilitation provider.
- ☑ The Project reported the benefits of the course coordinator having direct personal experience of the worker's compensation system (as an injured worker) and appropriate qualifications as contributing to the Project's success.

R Few differences were evident between the early intervention and long term cohorts. Criteria for 'early intervention clients' are likely to have influenced this, as this cohort sustained their injury more than a year prior to commencing with the *Project* (average 485 days).

2.3.10 BACK ON TRACK PROJECT

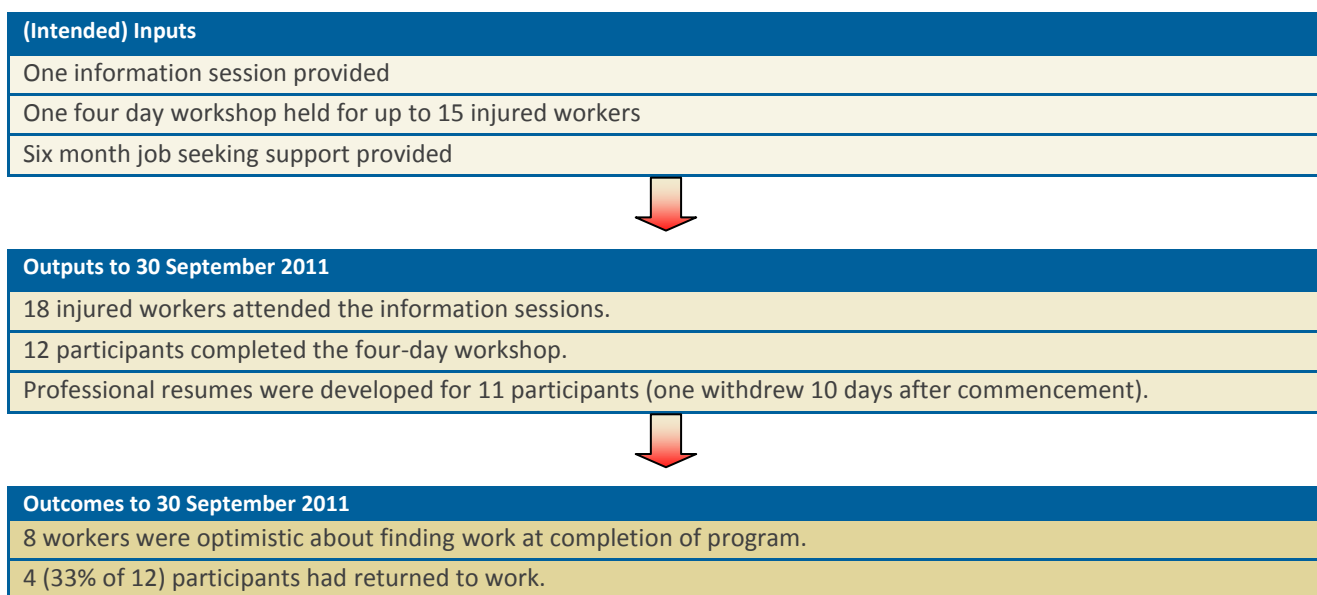
Provider: **EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS**


Commenced: January 2011 **Completion (due):** October 2011

Project Purpose: 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, assist 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.

Figure 13 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 September 2011. *Note this figure has not been updated since the June-September 2011 quarterly report as a final report has not been received.*

FIGURE 13: BACK ON TRACK PROJECT



 The Project has provided limited information to date about its progress and outcomes for clients.

2.3.11 MOVING MINDFULLY TOWARD HEALTH

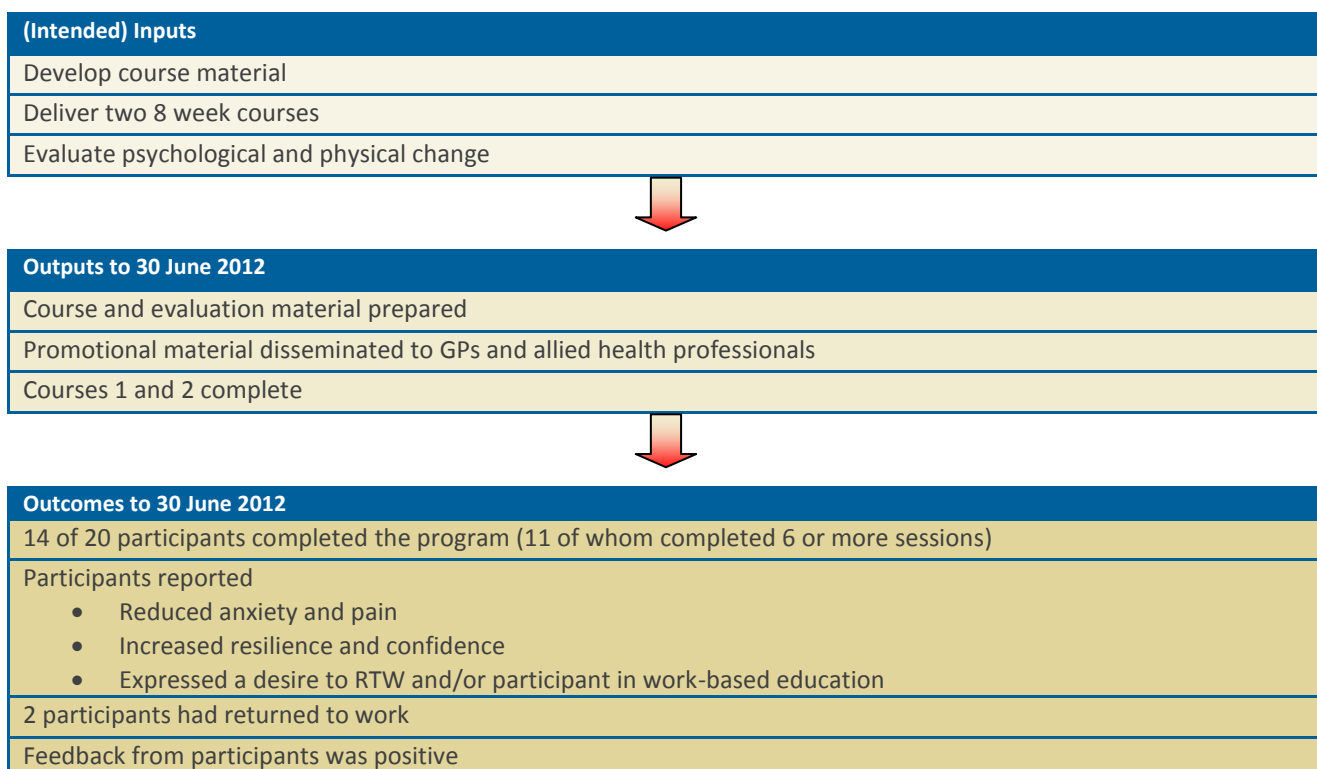
Provider: **MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY (MMP)**

Commenced: 1 June 2011 **Completed:** June 2012

Project Purpose: Through this Project twenty injured workers will participate in one of two 'mindfulness' based courses. These courses designed by MBSR at the University of Massachusetts aim to create positive physical and psychological change. Content of the courses will include short discussions on pain and stress physiology, meditation, mindful movement yoga, group discussions and personal self-reflection exercises. Two rounds of eight week courses and a full Saturday (each comprised of 30 hours in total) will be delivered.

Figure 14 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 31 March 2012.

FIGURE 14: MOVING MINDFULLY TOWARD HEALTH PROJECT



Preliminary Project reports indicate participant motivation increased and pain decreased.

R Recruitment of participants via GPs and other health care providers proved unsuccessful.

R Travel to sessions proved difficult for some clients. MMP found this could be overcome by offering transport options.

2.3.12 ACHIEVING CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

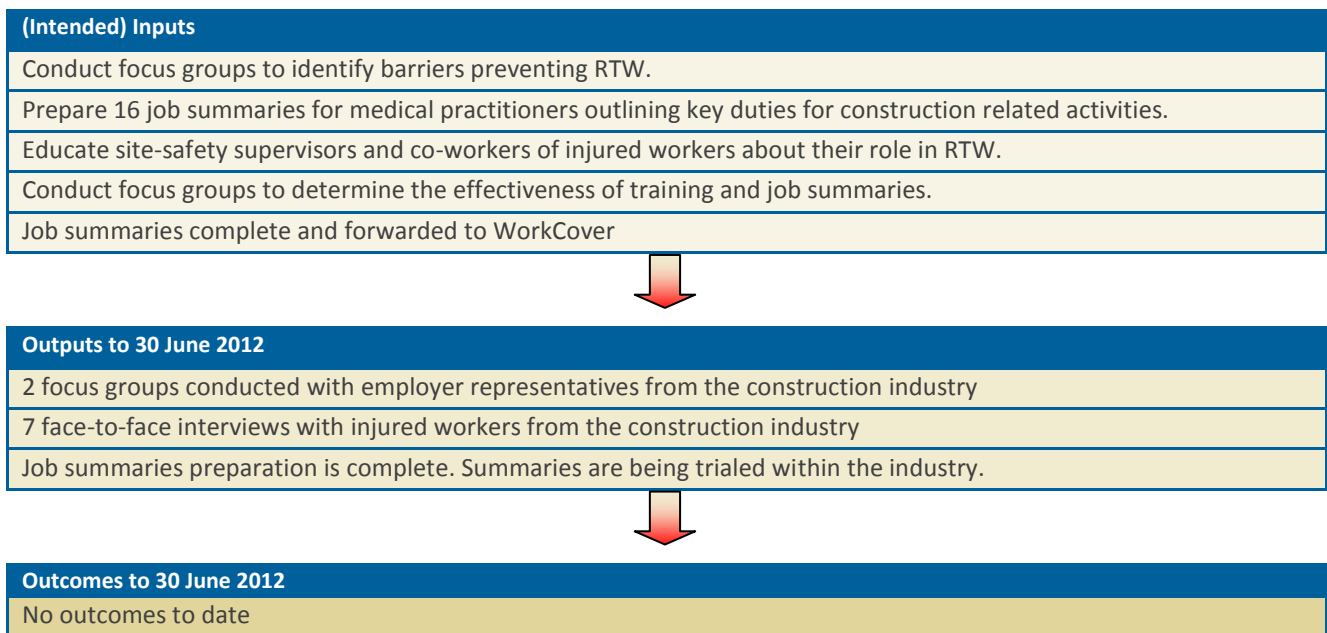
Provider: **MASTER BUILDERS**


Commenced: June 2011 **Completion (due):** 31 December 2012

Project Purpose: The Project was designed to better understand the facilitators and barriers to return to work in the construction industry. Trade contractors are often small employers, who may have insufficient knowledge about how to assist return to work, limited capacity to support injured workers and can view injury as 'someone else's problem'. Other onsite attitudes can also contribute to the belief that injured workers are malingerers.

Figure 15 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2012.

FIGURE 15: ACHIEVING CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



 Project activity appeared to stall during the October to March 2012 quarter, a revised timeline has been proposed by Master Builders.

 Limited information about progress provided in quarterly report.

2.3.13 RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT 2

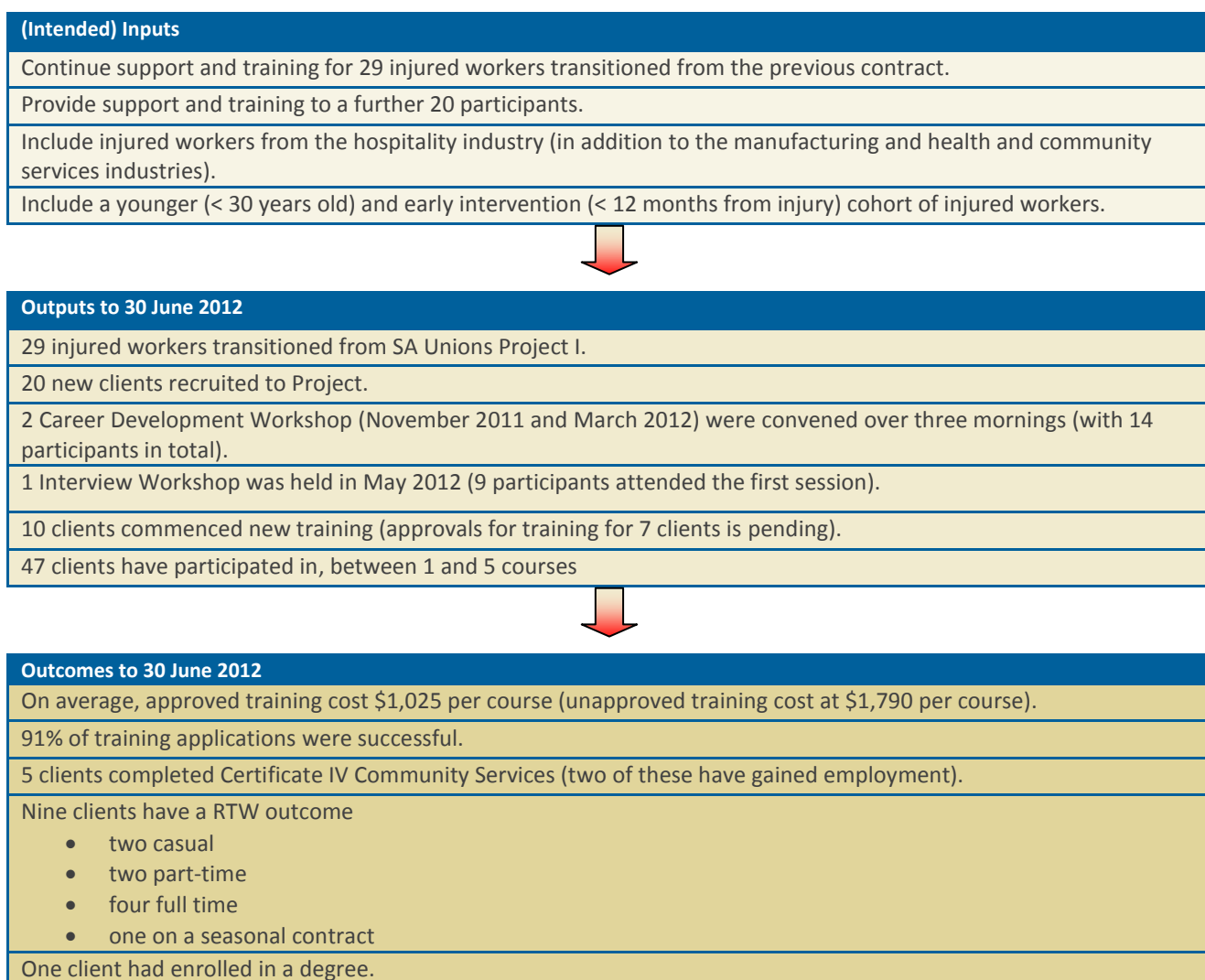
Provider: **SA UNIONS II**

Commenced: 12 July 2011 **Completed:** July 2012

Project Purpose: SA Unions completed the original *Retraining Injured Workers for Employment* Project in July 2011 (see Section 2.3.5 for a Project summary). The current Project II intends to continue support for injured workers already receiving training and support from SA Unions under the previous contract. In addition, SA Unions will provide support and training to a further 20 new participants. The Project scope will be extended to include the hospitality industry and include a minimum of 30% of new participants aged 30 years or younger, detached from their pre-injury employer and injured for less than 12 months. The Project will continue to broker and secure suitable employment opportunities for participating workers.

Figure 16 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 31 March 2012.

FIGURE 16: RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT 2



R 48 injured workers received training, all but three of the Project II cohort.

R SA Unions were successful in 91% of the training applications they made.

R A combined total of 26% of injured workers participating in Project I (n=9) and II (n=9) were returned to work.

2.3.14 REVISED PATHWAYS TO WORK PROJECT 2

Provider: **INTERWORK II**

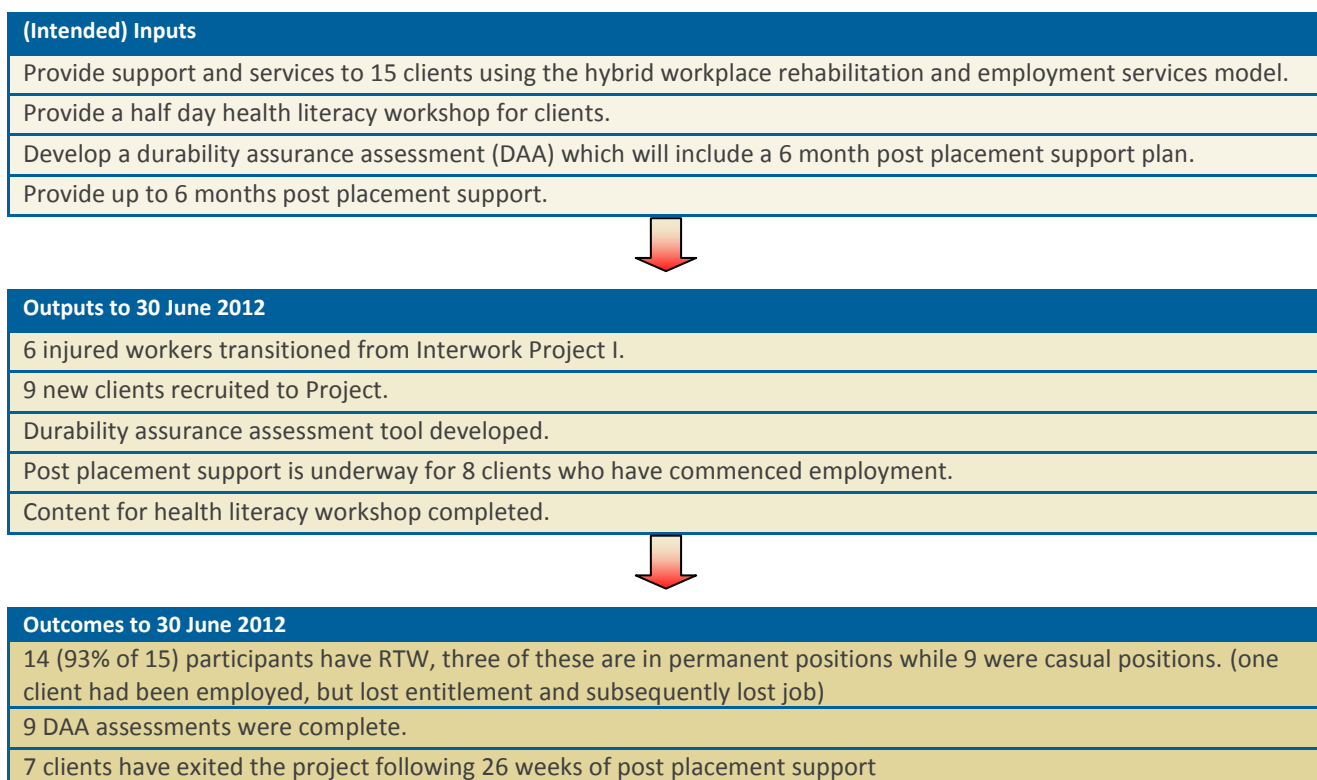
Commenced: July 2011

Completion (due): June 2012

Project Purpose: Interwork completed the original *Pathways to Work* project in June 2011. The revised Project builds on the learning from the original Project and incorporates a hybrid Workplace Rehabilitation and Employment Services Model, which provided for a skilled Employment Consultant to provide clients with job-seeking support. The revised model of service will also include a half day health literacy workshop for clients and a durability assurance assessment (DAA) to develop a 6 month post placement support plan.

Figure 17 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2012.

FIGURE 17: REVISED PATHWAYS TO WORK PROJECT



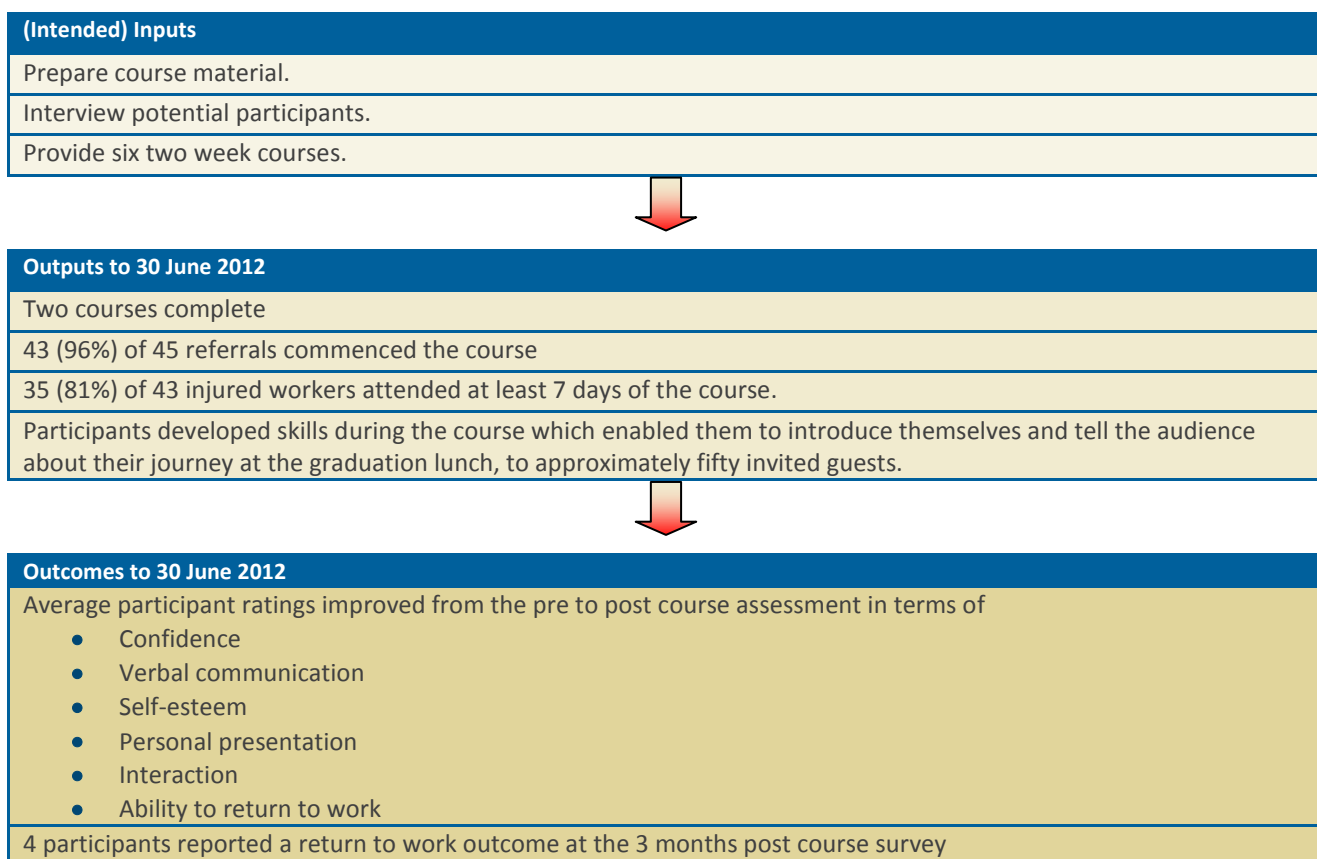
- Interwork has successfully placed 93% of their clients.
- Interwork provided meeting summaries, action lists and responsibilities to all parties after each meeting. This helps ensure good communication and shared understanding.

2.3.15 STAND UP WITH CONFIDENCE

Provider: **ADELAIDE COMEDY SCHOOL****Commenced:** February 2012 **Completion (due):** December 2012

Project Purpose: The Stand Up with Confidence Program was designed by the ACS with the aim to develop the skills, such as communication and confidence, to assist in their goal to secure long term sustainable employment. The program aimed to build these skills and knowledge through teaching the skills to perform in a 'stand up' scenario.

Figure 17 summarises the intended and achieved Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes for this project at 30 June 2012.

FIGURE 18: STAND UP WITH CONFIDENCE

- 81% of participants (in total) completed at least 7 days of the 9 day course.
- The course received an extremely high rating with all participants indicated they would recommend it to others.

R Although ACS assessment of participant improvement over the duration of the course captured the flavour of change, their assessment was considerably more negative about participant skills and feelings pre-course and more favourable post course than the participants themselves. This suggests they should not be used as an independent assessor of participant progress and outcome.

3 SUMMARY OF PROJECT PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE RTW FUND EVALUATION

All Projects with final reports included in the 2010-2011 Annual Report only include summary and critical learning in the current report. More information on these completed Projects has been published in *Learning from Returning – Return to Work Fund. July 2010 – June 2011 Annual Report* and is available on the WorkCoverSA website. An overview of Project participants to date is shown in Appendix B.

Note that with the exception of the Adelaide Comedy School (see Section 3.3.7), Project reports were prepared by Project staff. This is part of the evaluation framework that sees Projects reflexively engaged in their own evaluation. This section provides a summary of these reports. Where possible, information is triangulated with other sources. However, the comments below should be viewed as the perceptions of the Projects.

3.1 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.

3.1.1 BSISB: RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS CAREER TRANSITION PROJECT

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED 30 JUNE 2011.

The Business Services Industry Skills Board (BSISB) was contracted by *WorkCoverSA* 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).

BOX 4: BSISB – SUMMARY AT COMPLETION OF PROJECT, 30 JUNE 2011**BSISB – SUMMARY**

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 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 WorkCoverSA.**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.

BSISB CRITICAL LEARNING

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).

3.1.2 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 WorkCoverSA 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 WorkCoverSA 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 inhibiting effective workforce

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participation, 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 *WorkCoverSA* experience and employment including in the following areas.

- Preparing to Return to work
- Coping with transition such as job seeking
- Becoming more confident
- Strategies for feeling less stressed
- Self-help strategies for behaviours and managing pain
- How to change the way people think about themselves and their lives so that they can move forward more positively.

BOX 5: JANE FIELDER CONSULTING – SUMMARY AT COMPLETION OF PROJECT, 30 JUNE 2011

JANE FIELDER CONSULTING – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 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 WorkCoverSA.

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.

JF CONSULTING CRITICAL LEARNING

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 -

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- 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 at these times, 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.

3.1.3 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 *WorkCoverSA* on 1 October 2009 to provide the *Next Step Training and Employment Program*. This was a self-directed, self-paced, industry demand-driven program designed for clients of *WorkCoverSA* to provide a minimum of 40 newly injured workers with innovative employment opportunities to facilitate their return to the workforce. It was tailored for each injured worker and included 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. 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.

Box 6: DFEEST – SUMMARY AT COMPLETION OF PROJECT, 30 JUNE 2011

DFEEST – PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 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 WorkCoverSA.

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 WorkCoverSA 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.

DFEEST CRITICAL LEARNING

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 consequences of work injury.

DFEEST report a lack of shared understanding between all those engaged in the RTW process regarding the injury and the subsequent restrictions which sometimes resulted in lack of participation in the program, training and employment.

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- 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; and
- the identification of all participants up front, prior to Project commencement.

3.1.4 INTERWORK: PATHWAYS TO WORK

THIS PROJECT WAS FINALISED 30 JUNE 2011.

The successful outcomes of this Project, led to WorkCoverSA recontracting Interwork in mid-2011 to conduct the *Revised Pathways to Work Project*. Details of this Project are provided in Section 3.3.6.

Interwork was contracted by WorkCoverSA on 4 November 2009 to provide the *Pathways to Work Project* which proposed an outcome focused model, and aimed 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) aimed 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 WorkCoverSA 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 were expected to have become more entrenched within the system.

BOX 7: INTERWORK I – SUMMARY AT COMPLETION OF PROJECT, 1 AUGUST 2011**INTERWORK I – SUMMARY**

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 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 WorkCoverSA.

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.

INTERWORK CRITICAL LEARNING

The Interwork Project used a model based on the Disability Employment Services (DES) Case Management Model whose key features include services being 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 involved:

- **Early intervention** – Using 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.

This model appears to offer considerable relevance for improving return to work outcomes, and could become a feature of the SA workers’ compensation system, with individual features applied according to individual injured worker need. 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) Employment focus	In-house Workplace Rehabilitation consultant (usual model) Medical and Rehabilitation focus
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

3.2 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.

3.2.1 SA UNIONS I: RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED 30 JUNE 2011.

The successful outcomes of this Project, led to WorkCoverSA recontracting SA Unions in mid-2011 to conduct the *Retraining Injured Workers for Employment Project 2*. Details of this Project are provided in Section 3.3.5.

SA Unions was contracted by WorkCoverSA 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 existing workplace culture and practice regarding response to injury or illness would evolve, and generate more sustainable return to work outcomes.

Box 8: SA Unions I – Summary at Completion of Project, 30 June 2011

SA UNIONS I – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 21 JANUARY 2010

At the completion of the Project on 30 June 2011 -

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

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 50 injured workers were in the SA Unions I 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.

SA UNIONS CRITICAL LEARNING

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 by those involved in the RTW process in both the injured worker and their family.
- The value of *wrap around* services (ie working across sectors such as training, disability, employment and tailored to individual need) 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.

WorkCoverSA, 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 (Adult Community Education) 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.

3.2.2 BUSINESS SA: SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED 31 DECEMBER 2011.

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 was designed to:

- Develop and populate a Business SA database with all required information.
- Identify small businesses using the Business SA database, and disseminate advertising and promotional material to them.
- 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).
- 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.
- Provide *ad hoc* practical advice, as required, to business participating in the Project if an injury occurs.

BOX 9: BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS – SUMMARY AT COMPLETION OF PROJECT, 31 DECEMBER 2011**BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS – SUMMARY**

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 1 FEBRUARY 2010

At the completion of the Project on 31 December 2011 -

- The Business SA small business database had been designed, tested and implemented.
 - The database was loaded with over 5000 businesses.
- A total of 5055 business were approached to participate in the Project by either participating in an information session or a free one-on-one session.
 - 4420 business were sent letters in the first mailout.
 - 790 employers with a claim history were subsequently approached (155 of these had also been included in the original mailout).
- **Information sessions:** 21 participants attended four metropolitan information sessions; and 14 attended three rural sessions.
- **1-on-1 sessions:** 88 were held addressing case management, policies and procedures.
 - Subsequently, around 30 business have contacted Business SA and requested assistance with managing claims
- 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.

BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

As with other RTW projects, this Project 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 worked with WISeR to finalise its evaluation plan due for completion 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 (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.

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 information sessions. However, it was felt 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 considered a new targeted approach.

WISeR (2012)

Business SA also reported 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 (WISeR, EML, Rehabilitation Providers). It has been noticeable that the absence of a dedicated WorkCoverSA project's coordinator had had some effect on the progress of this project.

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 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).

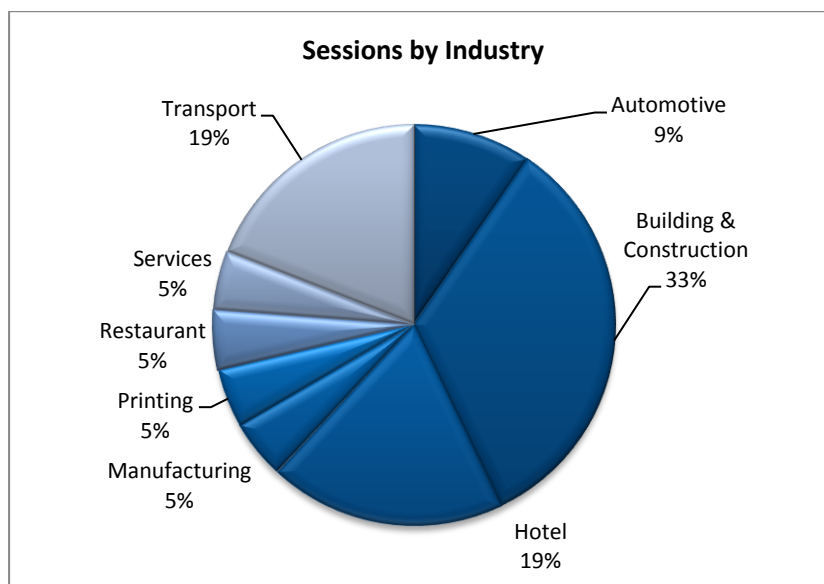
Business SA made this observation about the issue of client confidentiality, which affects the database content.

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.

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.



BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 5TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Business SA's quarterly report was delayed in this quarter 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 Workers' Compensation 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 engaged a total of 66 businesses by the end of March 2011. Improvements in targeting led to a better 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 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.

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.

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.

BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS 7TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

The daily cause list continued to be the main source for securing employer participation in the Project with 13 new employers engaged during this period. Employers chose not to participate for the same reasons as previous – including cost in terms of time and money, and lack of incentive. Business SA report the biggest challenge for engaging businesses finding appropriate people within the organisation who are in the position to make decision and open to new ideas.

TABLE 2: BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT 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
Jul-Sept 2011		13	na
Total	Approximately 5000	80	Na

*Includes mass marketing email, mail and dissemination of promotional material at all Business SA events. Note, numbers reported in final report do not reconcile with those reported here.

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Develop advertising and promotional material

The first milestone period delivered 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 at this time 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.

Business SA reported some early activity updating outdated or unknown information about small businesses, resulting in greater accuracy and integrity of employer details (however, this activity did not appear to be maintained throughout the project). Business SA note that the database contains 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 3 summarises the delivery of seminars to 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 3: BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS PROJECT 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%

Note, numbers reported in final report do not reconcile with those reported here.

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

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

Six 1-on-1 sessions were delivered from May to July 2010, 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 were 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 participation if it is not addressed). Once the businesses understood the basic concepts and principles of the sessions they were more engaged in the process.

Business SA report 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.

BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS PROJECTS CRITICAL LEARNING

From the beginning of the Project there was considerable overlap in how the Business SA projects (Small Business see Section 3.2.2 and Work Hardening see Section 3.2.3) were implemented. Both Projects included the design and development of a shared database as a performance indicator, with different elements incorporated into the database to accommodate the different Project requirements. Further, information sessions and one-on-one meetings with businesses were identified as a performance indicator by both projects. The crossover of activities between the two Projects also meant economies of scale. Critical learnings for both Projects are discussed at the end of Section 3.2.3.

3.2.3 BUSINESS SA: WORK HARDENING PROJECT

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED 31 DECEMBER 2011.

WISeR (2012)

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 10: BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING – SUMMARY AT COMPLETION OF PROJECT, 31 DECEMBER 2011

BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 1 FEBRUARY 2010

At the completion of the Project on 31 December 2011 -

- The Business SA work hardening database was established and tested.
- The database was loaded with approximately 5,000 businesses.
- **Requests for placements:** 139 injured workers were registered
 - Most injured clients were 40-49 years, they were 36% 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:** 51 businesses registered
 - No information was available about the number of placements achieved with host employers.
 - Of the 23 employers surveyed, five indicated they offered work to the work hardening recipient – four of these accepted (no further information was available about RTW status of injured workers participating in Project)

BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

The minor contracting delays experienced by this Project were not expected to impact on future timelines and deliverables. Business SA finalised its Evaluation Plan with WISeR during this quarter. Database design commenced in early March 2010 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, they identified two early opportunities for work hardening placements 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.

BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

During the April to June 2010 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 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 referred through Rehabilitation Providers.

Business SA engaged with key stakeholders, conducted information sessions for EML and rehabilitation providers and liaised 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.

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 were not effective, however, 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.

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. In addition, once work hardening employers are identified and the placement brokered, monitoring needs to occur 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.

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.¹⁴

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 WorkCoverSA 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.

BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING 7TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

A total of 51 employers and 138 injured workers were recorded on the Business SA database as current or pending work hardening placements. Recruitment this quarter focused on the metropolitan area and included personal contacts of sales executives and training facilitators. Business SA report that an investment with employers and rehabilitation providers yielded improved results. However, they report rehabilitation providers are not advising Business SA of outcomes.

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 continuation of advertising to metropolitan and regional newspapers. A second round of DL Flyers were distributed to a targeted distribution list. At the end of the second quarter (June 2010), Business SA concluded that the advertising and marketing campaign did not effectively

¹⁴ WorkCoverSA and EML have subsequently offered to assist by approaching case managers and rehabilitation providers and advising of the opportunities (email 4 May 2011).

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 and at other Business SA run events. In September the 'placement press' electronic article were developed and then 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 up to 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 4: BUSINESS SA WORK HARDENING PROJECT 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%

Note, numbers reported in final report do not reconcile precisely with those reported here.

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.

BUSINESS SA SMALL BUSINESS AND WORK HARDENING PROJECTS CRITICAL LEARNING

From the inception of the Business SA Projects (Small Business and Work Hardening see Section 3.2.3) there was considerable overlap in how they were implemented. Both Projects included the design and development of a shared database as a performance indicator, with different elements incorporated into the database to accommodate the different Project requirements. Further, information sessions and one-on-one meetings with businesses were identified as a performance indicator by both projects. The crossover of activities between the two Projects also meant economies of scale.

However, as the Projects progressed, the technical and database development elements of the Projects were sidelined. There were a number of reasons for this:

- The Business SA database which formed the starting point for business details was large (more than 5000 entries) and hadn't been regularly reviewed and updated.
- Direct mail to businesses about the Projects provided unsuccessful as a marketing and recruitment strategy.
- The departure of the original Project Manager who had a strong information management and technology background.

After seven information sessions across urban and regional South Australia, Business SA ceased their program of information sessions due to low attendance. They adapted their direct mail approach to one where businesses were specifically targeted. The WorkCoverSA daily 'cause list' was used to identify employers with recent claims experience. This strategy proved more successful as businesses had a vested interest in learning about legislation and obligations to injured workers.

Although registering interest from over one hundred injured workers (via rehabilitation providers) to take work hardening placements and expressed interest from more than fifty employers to provide the places, only a few placements are known to have occurred. Business SA report some level of frustration about not being notified about placements and their outcomes, however, they do not report about whether they were active or passive in attempts to gather this information.

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

THIS PROJECT WAS FORMALLY SUSPENDED 5 SEPTEMBER 2011.

WorkCoverSA in consultation with Beckmann & Associates made the decision to formally suspend this Project due to recruitment difficulties. The progress of the Project leading to this decision is outline below.

Beckmann & Associates was contracted by *WorkCoverSA* 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 for 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.

The purpose of this Project was 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;

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- Distress experienced by the injured worker and the family; and
- Implement change both on an individual and family level (motivational interviewing).

Families.... Working Together To Work was designed to provide two family counselling sessions no less than six weeks apart for 20 injured workers. At the first session the counsellor was to provide an overview of the scheme, answer any questions relating to the scheme and commence counselling and motivational interviewing. The second session was to be held within three weeks. Information collection would continue at 3, 6 and 12 monthly intervals following the final family counselling session, to identify if the injured worker had returned to work, in what capacity and for how long.

Each of the sessions was to be 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.

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

BECKMANN & ASSOC 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

Beckmann & Associates reported that the minor variations between contract 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 WorkCoverSA and EML. Participants were to be recruited directly by the Project from a list provided by WorkCover. The first contacts (n=50) were sent a letter about the Project 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, the stakeholders, claims agents and process of rehabilitation within SA, the Beckmann & Associates 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 acceptance of a delayed start. It did not, however, require a change to the Project methodology.

BECKMANN & ASSOC 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

Using contact details provided by WorkCover, Project information was 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 in this Project, 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 phone¹⁵.
 - 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

¹⁵ The remaining workers were contacted in July. Responses are not reported here.

- 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 support provided to families after work injury and present the findings as case studies. Fifteen injured workers were to be invited to participate under the original proposal.

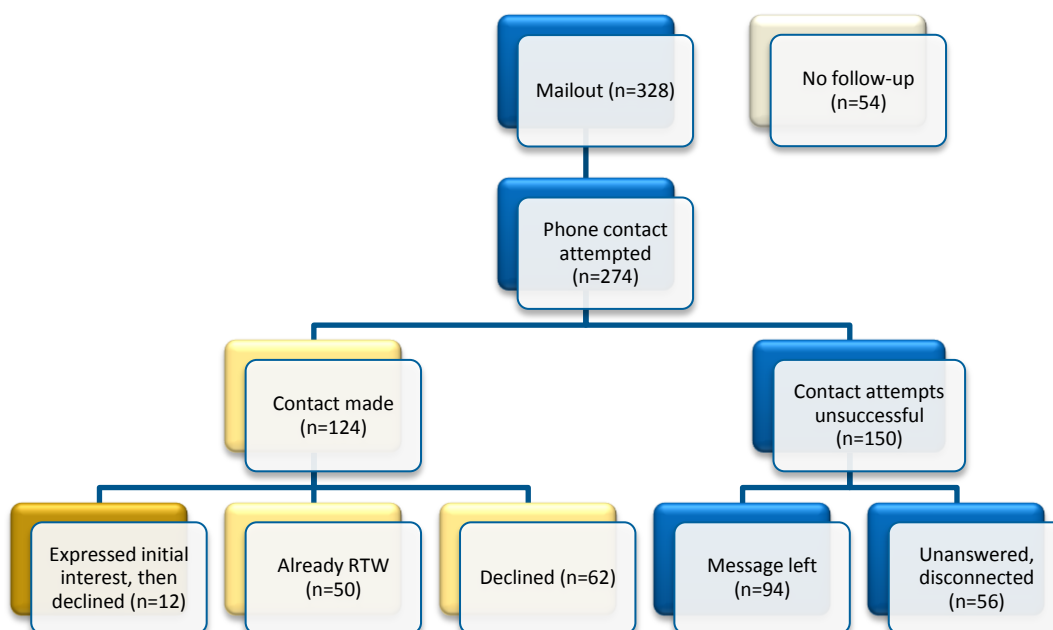
BECKMANN & ASSOC 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

During this period, Beckmann & Associates continued their attempts to recruit participants for the Project, with no additional success. In addition, the revised proposal incorporating case studies was further refined. This was to include targeted questions during a one and a half hour visit with the worker and their family. A further meeting was held with WISeR to discuss elements of the revised proposal.

A meeting between Beckmann & Associates, WorkCoverSA and EML was convened to discuss the future of the Project. It was decided that the Project would be suspended if no viable participants had been recruited by 26 August 2011. On 5 September 2011 it was mutually agreed that the Project be suspended.

In total by the Project's closure, 328 injured workers had been sent information letters about the Project with follow-up attempts to contact 274 by phone (as shown in Figure 19).

FIGURE 19: RECRUITMENT ATTEMPTS BY BECKMANN AND ASSOCIATES



Of the 124 successful contacts –

- 12 expressed initial interest in participating (but were not confirmed or changed mind)
- 50 had already returned to work or work hardening
- 17 declined without providing further reason
- 15 were not interested in the Project
- 6 declined as family circumstance not considered applicable
- 5 were too busy
- 5 couldn't recall the information and said no

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- 4 requested the information be resent
- 4 declined as psychological claims were too complex
- 2 did not speak adequate English
- 1 declined due to resignation
- 1 declined due to recent surgery
- 1 had not sustained a serious enough injury
- 1 was not going to return to work.

Of the 150 unsuccessfully contacts –

- 94 messages were left
- 35 calls went unanswered
- 18 numbers were disconnected or incorrect
- 3 unavailable/ call back.

BECKMANN & ASSOC CRITICAL LEARNING

Despite a sound understanding of the South Australian workers' compensation scheme, the difficulties of recruiting participants for this Project were underestimated. Existing databases from which client contact details were to be drawn did not include fields that supported identification of clients against Project inclusion/exclusion criteria. Project information was therefore sent and significant effort was made to contact ineligible injured workers. This meant that the Project was under-resourced in terms of administration and budget. Moreover, lack of success with recruitment was inevitably de-motivating. In addition, the resignation of a staff member assigned to assist with administration toward the end of the Project compounded this problem. Beckmann & Associates also reported that Project marketing material and the messages contained were often 'lost' on the injured worker due to the abundance of mail relating to their claim.

Beckmann & Associates reported that telephone conversations (in some cases up to 15 minutes) with injured workers revealed a genuine desire to discuss their recovery and return to work experience and the impact of their injury on their families. Some workers also felt that WorkCover's priority was to meet employer's needs. For many of these workers the issues were with timing. Over 40% of injured workers who were contacted by phone had returned to work in some capacity by the time they were contacted (many shortly after injury) – making them ineligible for the Project. This issue may have been overcome by removing criteria limiting recruitment to individuals who had been off work for three months.

3.3 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.

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

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED 13 JANUARY 2012.

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

This Project was based on a peer support model focused 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 facilitated barrier breakthrough using an outcome based problem solving methodology. Individuals were encouraged to explore and develop a personal plan using solution focusing that was designed to enable them to move toward a full and rich life, encompassing any long-term physical limitations.

The program was designed to assist and support people to create solutions, take control of their future and reclaim their independence. The program utilised a psychosocial model of rehabilitation and return to work. To address the identified 'yellow flag' indicators of psychosocial behaviour, this program aimed 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 applied a new innovative peer support model that utilised narrative therapy and linked participants with recovered workers. Through a series of workshops facilitated by Alchemy Training, participants had 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 was the training of recovered injured workers to be mentors, guest speakers and co-facilitators. This Project applied 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) were not only identified, but the worker was empowered to become an active participant in their recovery - leading to higher overall health.

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

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

- To establish life changing, sustainable thought patterns that 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.

BOX 11: MS VOCATIONAL SERVICES – SUMMARY TO END OF DECEMBER 2011**MSVS – SUMMARY**

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 13 JANUARY 2011

At the end of December 2011 -

- **Workshops:** 12 series of workshops were complete.

6 workshops were held for early intervention clients and 6 for long term clients.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 86 participants commenced the program (72% of 120 referrals).
 - Just under half were female (53%).
 - Average age of 44 years.
 - 79% had been born in Australia (5% did not speak English well).
 - 60% had been educated to Year 12 or below.
 - 78% had been employed on a permanent basis with their pre-injury employer, with the remaining on seasonal contracts.
 - Participants reported having sustained musculoskeletal and psychological injuries (93% still had medical restrictions).
 - Participants had been injured an average of 804 days prior to attendance at the first workshop (early intervention clients = 485 days; long term clients = 1034 days).

OUTCOMES

- 58 (67% of 86) participants completed the four week program.
- 40 participants attended the refresher course, these individuals had maintained high levels of optimism and motivation, and reported success in engaging with work.

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 workers' compensation 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 end of the first quarter).

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.

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 appropriate clients from their database and liaised with case managers to ensure referrals were complete. 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.

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.

MSVS 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

MSVS note that most referrals during this quarter were from EML, with repeat referrals from case managers and rehabilitation consultants who had previously made referrals. Programs 9 and 10 were rescheduled to October (due to the resignation of the MSVS Project Manager and a decline in referrals) with Programs 11 and 12 now scheduled for November.

To date 59 participants had commenced the course, 70% of the 84 invited. A total of 40 had completed the course. Forty-two had been invited to attend the early intervention course, 32 of whom had commenced and 23 had completed to date. The same number (n=42) had been invited to participate as the long-term clients, with a reduced number commencing (n=27) and completing (n=17) the course.

In order to improve attendance at the refresher course and responding to a request from participants to be contacted directly, text messages and phone calls were used as reminders about the upcoming refresher. Previously contact about the reminders had been sent to rehabilitation consultants who then forwarded the reminder letter to participants. The new approach proved successful.

MSVS 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Participant recruitment during this quarter was predominantly initiated by EML, with around one quarter received directly from rehabilitation providers. Programs 9 through 12 were run consecutively during this period, which did not appear to affect referral rates. Participants received text message reminders about the commencement of the program and the refresher course again this quarter, which was thought to contribute to improved attendance rates.

Some analyses were conducted to compare Cohorts 1 (early intervention) and 2 (long term) although major differences were not identified. MSVS report that it was usually not possible to monitor post-program outcomes, particularly given not all participants attend refresher days. Therefore, final evaluation forms are not available for many participants.

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TABLE 5: MSVS 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	9	5	56%	4	80%
	P2	8	6	75%	3	50%
Apr-Jun 2011	P3	9	9	100%	9	100%
	P4	10	6	60%	4	67%
	P5	9	7	78%	4	57%
	P6	9	6	67%	4	67%
	Refresher 3	9	6	67%		
	Refresher 4	8	2	25%		
	Jul-Sep 2011	P7	10	8	80%	6
	P8	11	6	55%	6	100%
	P9	5	3		Programs deferred to Oct	
	P10	4	3			
	Refresher 5	11	4	36%		
	Refresher 6	9	3	33%		
	Refresher 7	26	8	31%		
	Refresher 8	26	3	12%		
Oct-Dec 2011	P9	9	8	89%	18	67%
	P10	9	7	78%		
	P11	10	5	50%		
	P12	8	7	87%		
	Refresher	42	14	33%		
Total*		120	86	72%	58	67%

* Refresher course not included in total.

Programs 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 were for early intervention clients. Programs 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 were for long term clients.

MSVS PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

Most participants recognised the impact of their thought processes on their mental health at Week 1 (scoring 6.9 out of 10). Three quarters of those completing the evaluation at week 4 (n=44) indicated they had a better understanding about how their thinking can improve their recovery.

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

Around 70% of participants reported implementing thinking strategies taught in the group into their life plans.

Of the 44 participants completing the evaluation at Week 4 -

- 19 (43%) were engaging more actively with their rehabilitation provider.
- 24 (55%) had commenced further training.
- 29 (66%) said they were feeling better overall.

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

Measures of psychological coping including depression, anxiety, fear, optimism and isolation (as determined by a self-report questionnaire) improved over the four week course for both cohorts. Most notably there was a reduction in feelings of depression for both early intervention and long term participants.

Of the 35 participants responding to the question about their depression level at both Week 1 and Week 4, there was a significant reduction in depression from a score of 4.5 at week 1 to 7.4 at week 4 (with 10 indicating less depression).

PI-4: Increased levels of happiness

Participants completing the program reported increased happiness levels from around 5 to more than 7 (on a 10 point scale).

PI-5: Demonstrated reduction of RTW barriers

Thirty-two participants of those completing the course reported they had identified how to 're-invent' their lives. By this time, a number of participants also 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. Thirty-seven participants had identified what was needed to move on, and 33 had learnt skills they could use to improve their return to work.

PI-6: Demonstrated ability to identify individual barriers

Participants improved in their ability to identify and understand their own barriers as they progressed through the course. At week four, participants felt better able to handle their situation and had developed new skills to assist their recovery.

PI-7: Demonstrated ability to develop solutions for RTW

Most participants were willing to implement strategies learnt through the course and felt better skilled to deal with RTW barriers by the time they completed the course. There were no differences between those from the early intervention and long term cohorts.

PI-8: Demonstrated higher levels of motivation of RTW

Early intervention participants increased slightly (from 7.1 to 7.6 out of 10) in their belief that they would return to work within 12 months. However, long term participants were less likely to believe in returning to work and did not change in perspective from week 1 of the course to week 4.

PI-9: Demonstrated ability to engage training options

Workers reported greater confidence in liaising with others in the system, with 27 reporting they were considering training options.

PI-10: Demonstrated ability to seek options for self

Many participants (n=19) had reengaged with their rehabilitation consultant since commencing the course.

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

Eight participants were identified and engaged in subsequent programs as peer supporters or mentors.

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

The course facilitator or peer mentor attempted to contact all participants prior to the program commencing. Text messages were introduced as reminders about the commencement of the course or the refresher sessions, with these believed to be successful.

PI-13: Context and content of calls

Attempts were made to call and/or text each participant prior to the program commencing to encourage participation and work through any concerns/anxiety that participants had about attending the course. No noteworthy concerns or questions were raised.

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

Minor increases were reported in participants' belief in their ability to RTW.

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

Participants reported a marked increase in their RTW activities at completion of the program. However, as contact is not maintained after program completion it is not possible to accurately account for the number of clients who have RTW or engaged in other job seeking activities. MSVS also suggest that participants who have engaged in training or been employed since commencement with the Project are less likely to be able to attend the refresher program. If this is the case, these positive outcomes have not been included in the results.

MSVS CRITICAL LEARNING

MSVS report that clients have indicated a preference that the program be held earlier in the claim. It is noted by the evaluators that the initial design of the Project, included early intervention clients with claims of less than six month duration. Previous research was cited¹⁶ indicating an improvement of around 14 percentage points could be achieved through educational intervention prior to 6 months. The 'early intervention' claim duration criteria was subsequently changed to 18 months with the endorsement of WorkCover.

The success of the program was also attributed to Sue Watchman the course facilitator, who has appropriate qualifications, but has also has the personal experience of having been an injured worker. Participants therefore responded to Sue as a 'fellow injured worker'. Similarly the use of a peer support program was seen as integral to the program assisting in breaking down the barriers.

Although considerable effort was made to recruit clients directly through rehabilitation providers, this method proved difficult to sustain and EML became the primary source of recruitment halfway through the Project. MSVS also improved the method of client contact and reminders using text messages, this streamlined the reminder system which had previously been sent to clients via rehabilitation consultants.

Based on course learning MSVS recommend -

1. Newly injured workers are better supported to understand the WorkCoverSA system – including their own rights and responsibilities.
2. A health professional presents to participants of the program on pain and drug management.
3. An occupational therapist (or similar) educate participants on suitable exercise options, the benefits of exercise, and how it positively affects brain pathways.
4. An industry professional present on the benefits of pro-active job seeking.
5. Participants engage in a career mapping exercise to enhance their understanding of the steps required to reach their return to work goal.
6. Links between the program facilitator and the rehabilitation consultant or case managers may be useful.
7. The services of an image or personal presentation consultant during the program, may encourage participants to focus more on how they are presenting themselves to the world, and further benefit self-esteem and confidence.

¹⁶ Hagan, Erikson & Ursin, 2000.

3.3.2 EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS – BACK ON TRACK PROJECT

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED OCTOBER 2011.

Employment Accelerators (owned and operated by Peter Chapman) was contracted by WorkCoverSA on 13 January 2011 to provide the *Back on Track* Project for the RTW Fund. This Project was designed to be a group and case management program for injured workers who are ready to return to work. The Project aimed to improve the injured worker's self-belief and their motivation to seek work, assist 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 was due for completion in November 2011.

BOX 12: EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS – SUMMARY TO END OF SEPTEMBER 2011

EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 13 JANUARY 2011

At the end of September 2011 -

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 12 participants commenced the program (of 18 attending information session).
- 67% were male.
- 58% were born in Australia (with 25% not speaking English well).
- 58% have education below year 12.
- 83% had a musculoskeletal injury.
- 92% still have medical restrictions.

OUTCOMES

- Professional targeted resumes were developed for 11 participants.
- 4 participants had returned to work
- 1 client withdrew after 10 days with the project.

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 subsequently withdrew due to an employment opportunity). This was viewed as a very positive start that was assisted by input from WorkCoverSA and EML. WorkCoverSA agreed to increase funding for the Project to include all 14 interested participants (an increase on the 10 workers originally 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 sent two weeks prior to start date to further engage participants.

EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

An evaluation plan was approved by WISeR and submitted to WorkCoverSA 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 –

- were male;
- 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 in this period. 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 *WISeR (2012)*

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 about their ability to gain employment. On completion of the four day workshop, ongoing meetings and mentoring were found to be essential to sustaining their motivation, together with evidence of real job opportunities.

EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATORS 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

Employment Accelerators continued efforts to secure employment for the nine injured workers unemployed at July 2011 (noting that two were employed in the previous quarter). They reported two successful placements during this period. One newly employed worker was reported to be extremely negative and depressed, but had become more optimistic and reengaged with his social circle. Another worker was supported to overcome the trauma of her injury and look forward (rather than back), she was employed during this quarter and was very satisfied with the Project's help.

Noting that the group dynamic provided positive reinforcement and motivation to individuals, Employment Accelerators convened the group one day a week for 10 weeks, to ensure the group support was not lost. In addition, Employment Accelerators reported good support from EML with regard to approving retraining applications.

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. 9 injured workers demonstrated a positive shift in their physiology; and
- B. 9 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 seven participants received two resumes, and the remaining four 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. The pipeline also records follow-up calls, positions sourced and interviews gained.

- A. An average of seven businesses in the pipeline per injured worker.
- B. An average of 180 approaches by phone and 40 approaches by letter and email
- C. An average of 40 'in person' canvasses per worker; and
- D. An average of 5 interviews per worker.

PI-7: Injured Worker successfully returning to work

To date, four participants were reported to have returned to work and the remaining seven were still seeking employment. None had currently been in work for three or more months.

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 22
- B. Number of interviews generated from marketing letters, emails and calls – Average 4
- C. Number of follow ups to employer after 1 month – Average 16
- D. Number of follow ups to employer after 3 months – Average 12.

3.3.3 MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY: MOVING MINDFULLY TOWARDS HEALTH

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED 30 JUNE 2012.

Mindful Movement Physiotherapy (MMP) was contracted by the RTW Fund 1 June 2011 to deliver the *Moving Mindfully Towards Health* Project. Through this Project up to twenty injured workers participated in one of two mindfulness based courses. These courses designed by MBSR at the University of Massachusetts aimed to create positive physical and psychological change. The program aimed to improve the return to work outcome for injured workers by:

- Providing a multifactor approach using mindfulness delivered in different learning formats to address both physical and psychological issues.
- Providing a referral source for early intervention where factors would be identified that may pose as barriers for return to work (yellow flags).
- Improving psychological wellbeing.
- Creating positive change in relation to pain.
- Creating positive change in perception of physical activities.

The two rounds of eight week courses and a full Saturday (each totalling 30 hours of instruction) were conducted by Georgina Davidson. Content of the courses include short discussions on pain and stress physiology, meditation, mindful movement yoga, group discussions and personal self-reflection exercises. Recruitment of participants was expected to be via multiple paths including GPs and health care practitioners associated with the Adelaide Hills Division of General Practice (AHDGP) and GP Partners Networks. Injured workers were to attend courses with individuals from the general community in order to provide a more expansive view of pain and injury. The main Project exclusion criteria involve excessive pain medication and/ or psychological counter indications. These exclusions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

BOX 13: MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY – SUMMARY TO END OF JUNE 2012**MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY – SUMMARY**

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 1 JUNE 2011

As of the end of June 2012 -

- Course material was developed, and the evaluation framework and exit strategy approved by October 2011.
- The first course commenced 21 October 2011.
- The second course commenced 8 February 2012.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 20 participants were recruited (of 28 invited)
- Half the participants were aged from 50 to 59 years, 55% were male. All spoke English well.
- Most had musculoskeletal injuries, although four had psychological stress claims (two of these were the primary injury).
- The time from injury to Project participation was between 6 months and three years.
- One participant had returned to work, one had remained at work. During the course two participants were engaged in a TAFE course and three in short work training courses.

OUTCOMES

- Eleven participants (55%) completed at least 6 of the 9 sessions, rising to fourteen completing 5 of 9 sessions.
- Participants reported -
 - Reduced anxiety and reduced pain (and pain catastrophising),
 - Increased their resilience and confidence, and
 - Expressed a desire to return to work and/or participate in work-based education.
- Two participants have returned to work since commencing the course (with one unable to complete the course due to work commitments).

MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

The first quarter saw formal commencement of the Project and involved preparation of information packages, promotional material, and course material (manual, CD and questionnaires). Mindful Movement Physiotherapy worked with WISeR to develop their evaluation framework with this accepted on 12 September 2011. In addition, the participant exit strategy protocol was approved by EML.

Recruitment also began during this quarter with the following activities –

- ⇒ Provision of project promotional material to GPs and health care professionals in the Adelaide hills and Central Adelaide region, including –
 - Advertisement and article in GP Matters - GP Partners Newsletter distributed to 400 GPs and 100 practices.
 - Mail out to AHDGP to 110 GPs and 24 practices.
 - Hand delivered 60 promotional packages with follow up phone calls to interested practitioners.
 - Email to all APA (Australian Physiotherapy Association) physiotherapists.
 - Personal communication with GPs.

Mindful Movement Physiotherapy recognised the value of personal contact with GPs and physiotherapists, which enhanced interest in the Project did not result in referrals. Whilst recruitment of injured workers under the case management of EML was included in the Project plan,¹⁷ this resulted in unanticipated difficulties in sourcing clients in this region with large self-insurer employers such as Country Health SA and the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) being generally excluded.

¹⁷ Only two injured workers on self-injured schemes were permitted.

With only one confirmed participant six weeks before the commencement of Course 1, additional recruitment methods were employed including –

- ⇒ Targeted recruitment to the aged care and health employment sectors
 - Preliminary phone and email contact to ten aged care facilities and a private hospital with follow up phone calls to interested parties.
 - Meeting with an interested aged care facility with prior experience of the MBSR course.
- ⇒ EML agreed to source five participants for Course 1 focusing on injured workers with a secondary stress claim working in the aged care and health employment sectors.

The first course was due to commence 21 October 2011. It was agreed with WorkCoverSA to aim for five participants for the October program with the remainder participating in the sessions commencing in February.

MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

During the second quarter Mindful Movement Physiotherapy commenced and completed Course 1 as planned. They reported that despite personal contact with GPs, no referral resulted from these contacts. A total of eight participants were recruited of the 12 invited to attend –

- One participant was recruited independently by Mindful Movement Physiotherapy.
- Seven of eleven EML referrals agreed to participate, of the four declining involvement,
 - One found out too late and had committed to another program.
 - One had advised the case manager they were not interested.
 - One was engaged with a TAFE program and wished to focus on this and RTW.
 - One declined through lack of interest.

Two of eight participants were exited from the program – one due to health issues and the other a timing conflict with a training program for work. All six participants who completed Course 1 were formally exited from the Project in accordance with the approved WorkCoverSA exit strategy.

Preparation was underway for Course 2 with two potential clients identified by the end of December 2011.

MINDFUL MOVEMENT PHYSIOTHERAPY 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

During this quarter the second and final course commenced and was completed. In total, 11 of 20 participants met the Project criteria to complete 6 of 9 sessions, although those attending fewer than 6 sessions still reported value from attendance. Participants reported reduced anxiety and reduced pain (and pain catastrophising). They increased their resilience and confidence, expressed a desire to return to work and/or participate in work-based education.

MMP PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Provision of an 8 week program based on the mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) program, using mindfulness delivered in different learning formats to injured workers

PI-1.1: Preparation of course manual and CDs

Course manual and CDs prepared by 30 September 2011

PI-1.2: Prescreening interviews

Prescreening consisted of a 20-30 minute phone interview conducted by the course facilitator prior to the course commencing. During this phonecall the course content and requirements were outlined and questions answered, the participant was screened to determine suitability for the course.

PI-1.3: Provide two 8 week courses

The course consisted of 30 hours of instruction delivered across 8 weekly sessions and one full day. Course content included theory and research on pain and stress physiology, practices such as meditation and mindful movement yoga, group discussions and personal self-reflective exercise. Participants were provided with course materials including manuals and CDs to encourage and promote daily home practice.

Courses 1 and 2 commenced in two locations (Lobethal and Malvern) on 21 and 26 October 2011.

Courses 3 and 4 commenced 8 and 10 February 2012.

PI-1.4: 20 injured workers commence program

Twenty-eight injured workers were referred to the course with twenty commencing, a 71% participation rate.

PI-1.5: 75% of those commencing the program complete a minimum of 6 of the 9 program sessions

Eleven injured workers completed a minimum of 6 or the 9 program sessions (55%). Fourteen participants (70%) completed at least 5 of the 9 sessions. Six participants attended three or fewer sessions, reasons for this were –

- Illness
- Family crisis
- Work placement
- Psychological unreadiness

PI-2: To measure participant outcomes (factors relevant to the project and identified as barriers to and enhancers for RTW)**PI-2.1: Questionnaires prepared to evaluate the effects of the program**

Questionnaire for evaluation the impact of the Program prepared by 30 September 2011. Participants were invited to complete pre- and post-course questionnaires and mid- and post-course feedback. Questionnaires included:

- Pain Analogue Scale
- Pain Catastrophising Scale
- 5 Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

PI-2.2: 15 Injured workers complete pre- and post- program questionnaires

Fourteen participants (70%) completed most sessions with 11 (55%) completing both pre- and post-course questionnaires.

PI-2.3: Positive change in relationship to pain**PI-2.4: Increase in psychological wellbeing****PI-2.5: Increase in mindfulness****PI-2.6: Participant satisfaction with program**

MMP reported a positive trend in all but one measure. The findings should be interpreted with caution due to the small numbers of participants, however the results are encouraging. Close association (or more engagement) with the facilitator resulted in higher scores (ie a greater improvement).

Eleven participants provided feedback that they learnt useful tools and would recommend the course to others. Participants learnt how to better manage pain and gained confidence about facing challenges.

MMP report feedback from one participant 10 weeks after the course finished –

I have finally landed a full time job I still practice the mindfulness meditation whenever I can. For a sceptic, I have found it very relaxing and refreshing. Thank you for opening my mind to the practice.

PI-2.7: Positive change in perceived physical abilities

The participants completing the program reported that the program was valuable and that they would recommend it to others. Specific details of participant feedback is outlined in the reports provided to case managers.

PI-3: To provide a referral source to GPs and health care providers for injured workers

PI-3.1: Preparation of promotional material

Promotional material prepared for the course by 30 September 2011.

PI-3.2: Disseminate promotional material to Divisions of General Practice and physiotherapists

Project promotional material provided to GPs and health care professionals in the Adelaide hills and Central Adelaide region, including –

- Advertisement and article in GP Matters - GP Partners Newsletter distributed to 400 GPs and 100 practices.
- Mail out to AHDGP to 110 GPs and 24 practices.
- Hand delivered 60 promotional packages with follow up phone calls to interested practitioners.
- Email to all APA (Australian Physiotherapy Association) physiotherapists.
- Personal communication with GPs.

There is ongoing follow-up with interested parties.

PI-3.3: Presentation to GPs about the course

This commenced and continued as required.

PI-3.4: Number of injured workers referred to program from GPs

Despite considerable effort to promote the Program to GPs and other health providers, no injured workers were referred from these sources for Course 1 or 2. Participants were referred from the following sources –

- 23 participants referred by 11 EML case managers (resulting in 17 participants)
- 3 participants sourced by MMP
- 1 participant referred by a rehabilitation provider

Of the EML referrals the following reasons were given for decisions not to participate

- Found out too late and had committed to another course
- Had told the case manager they were not interested
- Wanted to focus on the TAFE course they had committed to
- Decided not to be involved after learning more about the course
- MMP unable to contact the person despite multiple attempts

PI-3.5: Number of GPs and health care providers referring patients

See PI-3.4: Although GPs did not directly refer patients to the Project, 18 GPs gave consent for patient participation once contacted by case managers.

PI-3.6: GPs and health care professionals understand the purpose and refer appropriate patients

This performance indicator was not achieved despite sustained attempts by MMP to engage with, and receive referrals from health professional.

PI-3.7: Provide feedback to GPs and health care providers about patient participation

Recommendations were provided to the participant's case managers halfway through the project (at week 4) and on completion of Course 1. Also on completion of each Course, MMP provided EML with letters to be sent to the doctors of participating injured workers.

MMP CRITICAL LEARNING

MMP were pleased with the success of the courses. Fifty-five percent of those commencing completed the program (reaching the criteria of completing 6 of 9 sessions) and feedback was very positive. MMP suggest that as participants completing 5 sessions also reported value in the course it would be appropriate to reduce the course criteria to 5 of 9 sessions.

The injured workers were seamlessly integrated into a wider group of people struggling with issues including cancer or other stressful life circumstances. This is seen as a beneficial approach as the challenges faced by injured workers are normalised.

The proposed recruitment method (via GPs and other health care providers) proved unsuccessful, despite extensive efforts. However, MMP reported that personal contact with health professionals did increase their interest in the course. An alternate recruitment method, with EML case managers sourcing clients was initiated 6 weeks prior to the commencement of the first course and proved successful. In total, 11 case managers referred clients to the Project.

Travel to the course locations proved difficult for some. MMP suggest offering taxi transport from Malvern to Lobethal for the full day session could be an option. It is also suggested that participant home address could be an exclusion criteria if they would require travel of more than 30 minutes.

Regular contact has been maintained via email, phone and meetings principally between MMP and EML, which proved successful. MMP report that clients who continued to attend after the first couple of sessions remained committed to the course to the end. MMP also found that communicating with the client between sessions encouraged them to address any challenges and continue with the course. In some cases participants wished the course was longer, given prolonged periods of pain some 'pain behaviour' has become entrenched and may take longer to change.

MMP believe it is important that participants should receive increased post-program support from case managers to ensure the new skills and motivation for returning to work are not lost. In addition, they suggest an attitudinal shift is required within the compensations scheme regarding injured workers and how they are treated. Project participants have been inspirational in demonstrating change and in learning to view themselves as injured people – not as 'injured workers' with the baggage that entails.

3.3.4 MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION: ACHIEVING CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The Master Builders Association of South Australia, Inc was contracted by the RTW Fund 1 June 2011 to deliver the *Achieving Cultural Change in the Construction Industry* Project. The Project was designed to better understand the facilitators and barriers to return to work in the construction industry. Trade contractors are often small employers, who may have insufficient knowledge about how to assist return to work, limited capacity to support injured workers and *WISeR (2012)*

can view injury as 'someone else's problem'. Other onsite attitudes can also contribute to the belief that injured workers are malingerers.

The Project aims to address these issues from a number of angles –

1. Conduct focus groups to identify barriers preventing RTW.
2. Prepare job summaries for medical practitioners outline key duties for construction related activities.
3. Educate site-safety supervisors and co-workers of injured workers about their role in RTW.
4. Conduct focus groups to determine the effectiveness of training and job summaries.

BOX 14: MASTER BUILDERS – SUMMARY TO END OF JUNE 2012

MASTER BUILDERS – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 1 JUNE 2011

As of the end of June 2012 -

- 2 focus groups had been conducted with employer representatives from the construction industry, one each for large and small commercial enterprises.
 - Employer representatives believed the barriers to successful RTW included –
 - Limited availability of light duties in the industry.
 - Lack of flexibility of subcontractors to provide other duties.
 - Current industry downturn.
 - Reluctance of head contractors to allow partially fit workers on site.
- 7 face-to-face interviews had been conducted with a sample of injured workers from the construction industry.
 - Employers were identified as supportive by injured workers when –
 - They acted immediately to take the injured worker to a medical clinic;
 - They assisted with completion of the workers' compensation paperwork; and
 - They stayed in touch with the injured worker regularly in the post injury period.
- All job summaries are complete, with feedback received from WorkCover and the industry.
- 18 site safety supervisors from one construction company attended the pilot training program.

MASTER BUILDERS 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

This quarter saw the formal commencement of the Project. Master Builders worked with WISeR to develop their evaluation framework, with this accepted 13 September 2011. There were some unanticipated delays in the development of the job summary forms. This was, in part, the result of the industry slowdown.

Construction worksites typically feature multiple contractors (employers) operating under a head contractor. The head contractor employs a small workforce which is supplemented by employees performing discrete tasks who are engaged by subcontractors. Injuries tend to occur in the subcontractor workforce. The subcontractors are therefore rarely in the position of having a range of jobs suitable for injured workers returning to work. However, the head contractor has access to a broad range of jobs, and is able to better support RTW plans and placements.

During this period, focus groups were conducted by People Vision in order to better understand the factors that influence RTW within the construction industry and to identify the attitudinal barriers that can compromise a successful RTW. Two facilitated workshops were held with employer representatives, one session was with large commercial employers and the other for smaller commercial employers. Employers were sourced from the MBA Group RTW Scheme with the addition of other members from the MBA. Attendance at the focus groups was voluntary and information identifying individuals was confidential.

MASTER BUILDERS 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

Limited progress has been made in this quarter. Master Builders indicate that 95% of their job summaries are now complete, and they will be trialling the injury accommodation forms with injured workers and employers over the early part of the 3rd quarter.

MASTER BUILDERS 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

During this period Master Builders negotiated with WorkCoverSA to vary the timelines agreed in their Contract. This variation included the road testing of a few of the job summaries forms. If required these will be modified and retested. Master Builders have also identified the need for an additional 'recovery duties' form. In order to progress this, they will be submitting a proposal to WorkCoverSA for consideration in the near future.

Testing for the injury accommodation forms is expected to commence over the next few weeks – noting that Master Builders report that since the development of the forms there have been no injuries within the grouping scheme that would warrant their use.

Master Builders report positive feedback from members, and expect further support and interest to coincide with the introduction of the experience rating system.

Master Builders have also developed a brand and logo (see below) for the Project and lodged an application with IR Australia to trademark this. The workMATE label and logo refers to the key message of helping a mate to recover.



MASTER BUILDERS 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

During this period, Master Builders completed the job summary forms. They received positive feedback from road testing the forms, with plans to provide formal feedback to WorkCoverSA in the future. Recognising the difficulty of finding a convenient time for all members to participate at one information session, Master Builders have scheduled multiple sessions to improve the take-up rate. They are also exploring ways to educate medical professionals to get 'buy-in' for the project.

MASTER BUILDERS PROGRESS AGAINST INDICATORS

PI-1: Conduct focus groups to identify barriers preventing RTW

Input	Output	Outcome	Progress
1.1. Arrange for 12 site safety supervisors and employers to attend focus groups 1.2. Arrange for 8 injured workers to attend focus groups	1.3. Report prepared identifying barriers preventing, and drivers to, return to work	1.4. Better understanding on drivers and barriers to return to work to assist in developing training materials and program.	Objective complete

Face-to-face interviews were held with a sample of injured workers from the construction industry. Workers were chosen with a variety of injury durations and injury characteristics. Seven of ten workers selected from those engaged with the Master Builder's Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator participated in the interviews (two chose not to participate and one was unavailable on the day). The interviews confirmed that the best RTW outcomes were achieved through a combination of a supportive employer and a motivated employee.

- Employers were identified as being supportive when –
 - they acted immediately to take the injured worker to a medical clinic;
 - they assisted with completion of the workers' compensation paperwork; and
 - they stayed in touch with the injured worker regularly in the post injury period.
- Employers were identified as unsupportive when -
 - they failed to discuss the injury or possible assistance with recovery with the worker;
 - they focused on lack of employment opportunities (rather than accommodations);
 - they required workers to be “fully cleared” before they would allow them back on site; and
 - they required multiple independent assessments of incapacity, making the injured worker feel they were not believed.

A total of eight employer representatives (all engaged in safety roles) participated in the two focus groups. This group agreed that employee motivation was critical to successful RTW but believed that ‘injury’ was utilised as an opportunity for time off, with the worker only prepared to RTW “on their terms”. Smaller employers stressed the importance of the principal contractor accepting the injured worker back on site, even if the worker was only partially fit. Whereas larger employers were concerned that small employers support an early RTW to avoid a lost time injury.

- Employer representatives believed the barriers to successful RTW included –
 - Limited availability of light duties in the industry.
 - Lack of flexibility of subcontractors to provide other duties.
 - Current industry downturn.
 - Reluctance of head contractors to allow partially fit workers on site.
 - Frustration with the workers' compensation process (complexity, lack of responsiveness & delays).

Recommendations for short term strategies include –

- ⇒ The MBA offers ‘White Card’ refresher training.
- ⇒ The injured worker is involved in conducting the incident investigation.
- ⇒ Head contractors agree to accommodate injured workers (with reduced capacity) on site.

Additionally, it is recommended that access to retraining should be available from EML in a consistent way and not dependent on the perspective of individual case managers. It is the MBA’s experience that some case managers will not provide access to retraining while a worker remains attached.

Recommendations for longer term strategies -

- ⇒ Development of a database of industry jobs suitable for work hardening placements.
- ⇒ More information and education for employers and employees about workers' compensation and RTW.

PI-2: Prepare job summaries for medical practitioners outlining key duties for construction related activities

Input	Output	Outcome	Progress
2.1. Preparation of job summaries	2.2. 16 job summaries prepared	2.3. Medical professionals use job summaries when determining capacity for RTW 2.4. Reduced lost time for injury with Injured workers returning to suitable duties as soon as possible	Job summaries 95% complete Summaries being trialled by MBA's RRTWC

The initial job summary forms were completed on 30 January 2012. Some gaps were identified during this process and WorkCoverSA agreed to Master Builders modifying the forms and/or the development of new forms based on road testing. It has also been agreed that a 'recovery duties' form be developed. Feedback will be aggregated and presented to WorkCover at the conclusion of training. To date all feedback has been informal.

The summaries have been provided to David Worth from ROSH who values them as a resource and encourages employers to use the forms. David Worth has also presented a seminar at Master Builders on *Effective management of Worker's Compensation in the building and construction industry*.

Master Builders is hoping to work with the Corporate Health Group (CHG) medical practitioners, with the aim that the forms be used in assessing injured workers.

PI-3: Educate site-safety supervisors and co-workers of injured workers about their role in RTW

Input	Output	Outcome	Progress
3. 3.1. Preparation of training materials 3.2. Preparation of training program 3.3. Identify suitable sites	3.4. Training materials prepared 3.5. Promotional materials prepared 3.6. Training delivered to site-safety supervisors 3.7. Toolbox talks delivered on-site	3.8. A better understanding of the important of staying at, or returning to work early, in the injury management process 3.9. Greater cooperation between employers, site safety supervisors and co-workers in the return to work process	Training materials prepared.

One pilot training program has been held to date which was attended by 18 site safety supervisors from one construction company. Further training has been scheduled for another company. In addition, four sessions are scheduled for early August to be attended by members of Master Builders Association. Subcontractors are expected to attend these sessions.

PI-4: Conduct focus groups to determine the effectiveness of training and job summaries

Input	Output	Outcome	Progress
4. 4.1. Arrange for 12 site safety supervisors and employers to attend focus groups 4.2. Arrange for 8 injured workers to attend focus groups	4.3. Report prepared evaluating the success of the project	4.4. A better understanding of the cultural drivers regarding return to work in the building and construction industry	Objective not yet commenced

MASTER BUILDERS CRITICAL LEARNING

Master Builders acknowledged that their original proposal was overly optimistic in that it assumed the development of one set of forms would be sufficient for the Project and that no refinement would be necessary. They therefore submitted a contract variation to include revision of the forms after assessment by key stakeholders including WorkCover.

Master Builders recognise the challenges ahead to ensure the message about this work is spread across the broader membership. However, whilst identifying the issue they have not yet posed a solution.

3.3.5 SA UNIONS II - RETRAINING INJURED WORKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT II

SA Unions completed the original *Retraining Injured Workers for Employment* Project in July 2011 (see Section 3.2.1 for a summary of Project activity). Project II, contracted on 12 July 2011, continued support for injured workers who received training and support from SA Unions under the previous Project I. In addition, through an extension of Project funding for 12 months, SA Unions provided support and training to a further 20 participants. The Project also continued to broker and secure suitable employment opportunities for participating workers. The Project scope was extended to include an additional industry – hospitality – and a minimum of 30% of new participants were to be aged 30 years or younger, detached from their pre-injury employer and on the scheme for less than 12 months.

The Project aimed to assist agents, workers, employers and rehabilitation providers to better understand and use training as an effective part of the return to work process. It was also designed to provide links between parties building on goodwill and a sense of common endeavour. It was to –

1. Increase skills in a group of **injured workers** (a pilot cohort of 50 individuals) enabling them to be employed in suitable duties with new employers.
2. Monitor differences in younger cohort and early intervention (early detachment) in comparison to mostly older cohort with late referral from Project 1.
3. Increase understanding by **case managers** of, and coordination with, the training system, with improved embedding of training activities as part of 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 within the rehabilitation process.
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.

Box 15: SA UNIONS II – SUMMARY TO END OF JUNE 2012

SA UNIONS II – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 12 JULY 2011

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 29 participants were transitioned from the original SA Unions I Project.
- 20 new clients have been recruited
- Clients had an average age of around 44 years
- Around half were male and a third were born overseas.
- Almost all spoke English very well, with around 40% educated at year 12 level or below.
- Back and musculoskeletal injuries were the most common injuries.
- Participants had an average of 5.6 years with their pre-injury employer.
- Workers had been injured an average of 576 days prior to commencement with the Project (ranging from 268 to 1050 days).

OUTCOMES TO DATE

- Training was provided for 47 clients.
- 2 Career Development Workshops were held for a total of 14 participants.
- 1 Interview Workshop was held (9 participants attended the first session).
- Work: Nine participants have returned to work (4 fulltime, 2 part-time, 2 casual, 1 seasonal contract).
- One participant has enrolled in a degree course.

SA UNIONS II 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

During this period EML transitioned 29 participants from the SA Unions Project I into the SA Unions Project II. Recruitment of new participants was either via EML, a Union representative or

self-referral. Four new participants were recruited and six possible clients awaited clearance from their GP. There were no successful referrals from EML for participants under the age of 30 or from hospitality during this quarter. Just over half the clients were female, with an average age of 44 years. Two-thirds were born in Australia.

SA Unions report that the referral process was slower than expected, and that EML had difficulties identifying participants to meet the new criteria. All participants were engaged in a skills assessment and career development process. Of the four new clients, one had retraining included in their RTW Plan, the RTW Plan of another participant was being prepared, and SA Unions had not met with the rehabilitation consultants for the remaining two clients.

Seven participants had been enrolled in the Certificate IV Community Services through TAFESA, and SA Unions recognised the benefits of training in a classroom setting for these clients. TAFESA Regional was flexible in allowing this group additional time to complete the course and SA Unions provided additional support by organising a study group. SA Unions also reported on successful negotiations and enhanced outcomes with other training providers who were also willing to be flexible with the students engaged under the SA Unions Project.

The SA Unions Project II was able to benefit from the learning of the original Project and continued to benefit from the insight and support of management and reference groups. Project staff understood the need to engage with rehabilitation consultants early and were aware of the benefits of open communication. They also appreciated the need to use “small training steps” to build client skills.

SA UNIONS II 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

The Project successfully recruited ten participants this quarter. Around half the total participants in this Project are male and around two-thirds were born in Australia. Clients had been injured an average of approximately 500 days prior to commencement with the Project.

Project staff were also engaged during this quarter in running study groups and provided assistance to five women completing Certificate IV through TAFE. A ‘celebration’ was subsequently held for these women on completion of their training. This provided the opportunity to recognise their accomplishments and thank those who had supported them (including TAFE, EML, SA Unions staff, and reference group members). Two of these five women have gained employment.

A survey was administered to eight clients (from the SA Unions I Project) who had returned to work, with four responses received. These clients were satisfied with their employment, were continuing to learn and grow in confidence.

A Career Development Workshop was convened to help participants take more control of their future, gain confidence and discover new strengths. Eight clients attended each of the three morning workshops. Clients were satisfied with the workshops and appreciated the opportunity to meet and share experiences with people in similar circumstances. The workshop helped SA Unions to identify areas of further assistance required for each client. Two-thirds indicated they required assistance with preparing a resume and a number were interested in help identifying skills or possible training options.

New training was organised for ten clients, six of whom received some training in computer use and applications. Approval for seven training programs were pending at this time. The quarter saw a change in the EML Case Manager working with the Project, this created some initial delays which were subsequently overcome.

The Project continued to collaborate with rehabilitation consultants and invited three to attend meetings with training providers (two attended). The Project expressed concern about the narrow range of information included in vocational and suitable employment assessments. The content in these assessments are sometimes inconsistent and compromise acceptance of training requests. In addition, Project staff reported issues with the engagement of some rehabilitation consultants which was perceived to be negative and/or superficial. In some cases conflicting information was provided suggesting the skills assessment provided by SA Unions was inadequate or the area of employment too competitive.

SA UNIONS II 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

An additional six clients were successfully recruited into the SA Unions Project during this quarter, bringing the total number of new recruits to twenty. During this period four participants gained employment –

- One casual (from a placement)
- One part-time
- Two full-time (one from a trial)

A second Career Development workshop was run during this period with six participants. SA Unions also provided individual career development assistance for participants who were finding it difficult to secure employment.

Four participants were exited from the Project after consultation with their EML case manager and their rehabilitation consultant. These participants were not suitable for further engagement with the Project, one was exited due to legislative requirements (a Section 35(b) Work Capacity Review decision) and the remaining three were unable to participate in training due to pain or other health problems.

On 6 March 2012, SA Unions launched the Final Report from the SA Unions I Project in front of around 50 invited guests. The report was presented by members of the SA Unions Project team and launched by WorkCoverSA CEO Rob Thomson.

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF SA UNIONS II CLIENTS RECRUITED PER QUARTER

End of quarter	Number invited to participate (a)	Number starting program during period (b)	Response rate % (b/a*100)
Transitioned		29	
Jul - Sep 2011	13 potential referrals	4	30.7%
Sept - Dec 2011	17 potential referrals (1 self referral)	10	62.5%
Jan - Mar 2012	3 potential referrals	6 (cross over from last quarter)	
Apr - June 2012			
Total (new clients)	33	20	60.6%

SA UNIONS II 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

During this period, SA Unions continued their engagement with and support for injured workers to finalise courses and gain suitable employment. In May 2012, they ran a series of Interview Workshops (3 sessions of 2 hours each). These workshops were designed to ensure participants were 'interview ready', developed skills to help them think like an employer, help them identify and feel confident talking about their job skills, and be prepared for awkward interview questions. Nine injured workers attended the first session.

SA UNIONS II PROGRESS AGAINST EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PI-1: Increase skills in a group of injured workers enabling them to be employed in suitable duties with new employers

Nine Project II participants have returned to work (4 fulltime, 2 part-time, 2 casual, 1 seasonal contract) and another has enrolled in a degree. This follows the nine participants returning to work after Project I – a 26% RTW rate. SA Unions anticipate a further 12 participants, who have increased their skills, qualifications and confidence, will return to work in the near future. A survey of employed participants (using SMS Global and email) received ten responses. One was now retired, but the nine other respondents were still employed.

In addition, some participants have been proactive in identifying courses and driving their own learning. In addition, some participants have requested more suitable rehabilitation and others

have felt more confident engaging with and expressing their training needs to their case manager.

In addition, 14 injured workers participated in Career Development Workshops. These sessions were designed to help participants take more control of their future; gain confidence and motivation as a student or job seeker; discover new strengths; and learn new job search and interview skills and prepare job applications.

PI-2: Increase understanding by case managers of, and coordination with, the training system, with improved embedding of training activities as part of the rehabilitation and return to work process

During the second quarter the case manager working with the Project changed. This resulted in initial delays as new case manager had a different style of working and needed to familiarise themselves with the Project. However, SA Unions communicated their concern about the time taken to turnaround training proposals and it improved rapidly. SA Unions arranged to meet with the new case manager regularly to ensure there was a better understanding of the potential training outcomes. Although needing to work through a number of issues, SA Unions report they have formed productive and collaborative working relationships with their designated case manager and most of the rehabilitation consultants they have worked with.

SA Unions raised concerns about the payment for training. This was an issue for some Project participants. For example, one participant had not been able to access the TAFE library because her course fees had not been paid, while another participant waited 12 weeks for his security license only to find that training fees had not been paid. The method for third party payments of training institutions should be addressed by both EML and rehabilitation consultants to ensure approved training is paid for in a timely fashion to avoid participant embarrassment.

PI-3: Improve understanding within the rehabilitation industry of, and coordination with, the training system, and the subsequent incorporation of more effective training opportunities within the rehabilitation process

SA Unions report that the Project was well accepted by rehabilitation consultants. All five rehabilitation consultants working with the women who completed Certificate IV in the regional TAFE were supportive of the Project and assisted with securing appropriate field placements for participants. In addition, three rehabilitation consultants were invited to meeting with training providers – with two attending.

SA Unions expressed concern that the Vocational Assessments and Suitable Employment Assessments were too narrow and not representative of the participant's potential, skills and competencies. This resulted in vocational assessments that were deemed inconsistent with the participant's profile, in some circumstances, or training requests that were rejected due to inadequate information. SA Unions suggest there is a need to improve labour market material and to embed the use of resource materials as a 'starting' rather than 'end' point in the search for appropriate jobs. Prescriptive use of commercial online jobs tools is limiting and inappropriate while in reality requirements for specific physical abilities and skills are variable within occupations and jobs.

External or online training is not recommended by SA Unions. They found that WorkCoverSA participants value the peer support and networking available through regular class structure and guidance, which helps build confidence in study. Further, clients have failed to complete online training.

PI-4: 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

The SA Unions Project team have made strong connections with training organisations and with a number of lecturers. TAFE Regional were very supportive of the five woman tailored group who completed Certificate IV Community Services. TAFE lecturers have also been flexible with

enrolments and RPL requirements. In addition, SA Unions has developed a strong working relationship with SA Careers Consultants who have also been flexible around scheduling and location of training. In some cases, SA Unions negotiated to ensure a Disability Access Plan was in place where needed. While setting this up and maintaining this level of support is time-consuming, it is critical for some injured workers, particularly those with numeracy and literacy issues.

PI-5: To address known barriers to RTW and implement innovative strategies to embed retraining for injured workers

Some issues with rehabilitation consultants have arisen or become apparent. In some cases the consultant has discounted the SA Unions skills assessment and discouraged the participant from seeking employment in a particular field. SA Unions also identified poor RTW Plans, incorrect job functional analysis and the sending of a poor resume to potential employer (without discussion with the client).

SA Unions continue to exhort the value of “a person centred, holistic, self-management approach that incorporates career development principles and practices”. This approach is more time and labour intensive, however, SA Unions believes it leads to greater skill development and personal engagement with training and the return to work process.

SA UNIONS II CRITICAL LEARNING

For the extension of their Project, SA Unions were keen to recruit a younger cohort (ie clients aged less than 30 years) who had been on the system for less than 12 months. However, this project criteria presented challenges and suitable clients could not be identified by the Agent. Therefore, to meet Project numbers, SA Unions was obliged to accept clients outside their Project specifications. There was also a perception that some referrals did not have the capacity or interest to develop skills or undertake retraining.

SA Unions report that gaining approval from medical professionals for client participation in the Project often took considerable time. On some occasions the client spoke directly to the doctor in order to gain the required approval.

SA Unions report that injured workers they are not well suited to external or online training, as they benefit greatly from networking and peer support available in a class environment. They have raised this issue with both case managers and rehabilitation providers. To date TAFE have been the most accommodating training provider as they provide a classroom environment and have been flexible with timelines.

SA Unions again called for a clear policy for training approvals and payments to avoid the confusion, unnecessary delay and undue stress on injured workers. This includes the ability to access multiple training opportunities per client, if this is deemed relevant. SA Unions report this ‘building block’ approach builds confidence along with skills.

Table 7 shows data for all 48 clients who received training and support through the SA Unions II Project (noting that 27 of these were transitioned from Project I). These clients had participated in up to six training courses. Training costs per clients ranged from \$266 to \$6,080 with an average of \$2,789 per client. Not surprisingly costs were higher for Certificate level courses, which tended to be of longer duration. Where more than one course was provided for clients, there is a logic demonstrated in the selection and flow of courses to build a required skill set leading to RTW outcomes in selected jobs and industries. For example, one client completed an introduction to computers flowing into courses in word processing and databases followed by a course leading to a TAFE diploma in quality management, with the express aim of a job in the food processing or primary industries.

47 injured workers were supported by the SA Unions II Project to commence training and 9 had returned to work

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF CLIENTS AND TRAINING COSTS FOR THE SA UNIONS PROJECT

Number of courses	Number receiving support	Cost per client	Average cost per client	Total Cost
1 course	14	\$266 to \$4,030	\$1,930	\$27,017.50
2 courses	14	\$300 to \$5,559	\$2,301	\$32,209.00
3 courses	5	\$1,729 to \$5,011	\$2,829	\$14,142.50
4 courses	5	\$2,106 to \$5,386	\$3,289	\$16,445.50
5 courses	5	\$2,640 to \$6,080	\$3,543	\$17,715.80
6 courses	2	\$1,430 to \$4,845	\$3,137	\$6,274.50
Total	48	\$266 to \$6,080	\$2,789	\$113,804.80

Note, a small amount of data about the cost of individual courses is missing. Also note data includes training provided under the original SA Unions I Project as well as SA Unions II. Three clients did not have training approved.

Table 8 shows the number of applications for training that were approved and declined. Ninety-one percent (n=111) of the 122 applications for training were successful. However, success was slightly more likely for less expensive training. On average, approved training cost \$1,025 per course, whereas unapproved training was, on average, costed at \$1,790 per course.

TABLE 8: APPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING FUNDING

	Total applied for		Approved		Declined		% of \$ approved
	\$	Number	\$	Number	\$	Number	
1st application	\$ 65,375.75	41	\$ 56,103.25	5	\$ 9,267.50		85.8%
2nd application	\$ 27,913.55	30	\$ 25,162.55	3	\$ 2,748.00		90.1%
3rd application	\$ 15,094.00	17	\$ 9,220.00	2	\$ 5,872.00		61.1%
4th application	\$ 16,792.00	13	\$ 16,792.00	-			100.0%
5th application	\$ 4,271.00	6	\$ 2,468.00	1	\$ 1,802.00		57.8%
6th application	\$ 4,059.00	4	\$ 4,059.00	-			100.0%
Total	\$ 133,505.30	111	\$ 113,804.80	11	\$ 19,689.50		85.2%

3.3.6 INTERWORK II – REVISED PATHWAYS TO WORK PROJECT

THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED JULY 2012.

Interwork completed the original *Pathways to Work* project in June 2011 (see Section 3.1.4 for a summary of Project activity). The key features of the Interwork Pathways to Work Project which distinguished it from traditional Workplace Rehabilitation Services include:

- The use of the hybrid Workplace Rehabilitation and Employment Services Model, which provided for a skilled Employment Consultant to provide clients with job-seeking support to clients.
- A demonstrated commitment to working with clients to identify and address ALL barriers to employment – not just compensable barriers.
- A funding model based on the achievement of RTW outcomes rather than hourly service fees.
- Provision of Post Placement Support (PPS) for 26 weeks following the commencement of employment to facilitate the durability of the employment outcome.

The learning from this first project highlighted opportunities for further initiatives to be trialled. A proposal was therefore submitted to WorkCoverSA to utilise the balance of funding from the initial Pathways to Work Project. This *Revised Pathways to Work* Project will support a further 15 clients over a twelve month period and was approved 1 August 2011. It will provide a revised model of service which also includes:

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- **Health Literacy Workshop.** A half day training program to support clients to increase their confidence and desire to take control of their own health, their ability to seek out information and support and to take responsibility for their health.
- **Durability Assurance Assessment (DAA).** Interwork's original Project included Post Placement Support (PPS) and attached funding to achieving 13 and 26 week outcomes. Based on the DEEWR National Panel of Assessors model, the DAA was conceived to assess the support needs of the worker and employer and develop a 6 month PPS plan. This approach is designed to shift the focus away from reacting to issues and to being more proactive in planning for RTW.

Box 16: INTERWORK II – SUMMARY TO END OF JUNE 2012

INTERWORK II – SUMMARY

PROJECT CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 1 AUGUST 2011

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- 15 of 15 participants had commenced the Project.
 - 6 of these participants had transitioned from the original Interwork I Project
- Clients had an average age of 47 years
- 60% were male, while three were born overseas.
- Almost all spoke English very well, with 71% educated at year 12 level or below.
- Back and musculoskeletal injuries and psychological disorders were the most common complaints.
- Participants had an average of 3.5 years with their pre-injury employer.
- Workers had been injured an average of 535 days prior to commencement with the Project (ranging from 261 to 950 days).

OUTCOMES TO DATE

- **Work:** Fourteen (93%) of fifteen participants have returned to work
 - 4 had commenced permanent employment
 - 10 were now engaged in casual employment
- 9 durability assurance assessments (DAAs) have been completed.
- 6 clients have exited the project following 26 weeks of post placement support.

INTERWORK II 1ST QUARTER ACTIVITY

EML transitioned six participants from the Interwork I Project into the Interwork II Revised Pathways to Work Project. In addition, eight new clients were referred bringing to fourteen the total clients engaged with the Project at the end of September 2011. Inclusion criteria for the Project were that the injured worker –

- must be detached from their pre-injury employer,
- have capacity for 15 hours work per week,
- is willing to participate, and
- medical approval from the worker's treating GP is obtained.

More than half the injured workers in the Project were male (57%), with most aged 45 to 49 years (average 47 years). All but one client had been on WorkCoverSA for over a year, with the average duration from injury to Project referral almost two years (632 days). Thirteen of the 14 injured workers have RTW Plans in place (one has not been completed). Six injured workers have commenced new employment (noting that this included four participants transitioned from the original Interwork I Project). The positions for two injured workers were permanent – the remaining four were casual positions. PPS had commenced for all six employed clients.

Interwork reports that the injured workers referred to them were not only long-term rehabilitation participants, but had poor levels of motivation. They consider their engagement to date to be successful, having achieved six RTW outcomes. Interwork also notes the challenge of working with an EML case manager who is new to the Project. Whilst recognising the experience of the case manager, there have been some challenges in the different approaches used in

delivering services to clients by EML and Interwork. However, they report the working relationships have been extremely productive. Communication with EML has been open and concerns addressed easily.

The tool has been developed for the Durability Assurance Assessment. Assessments will be completed when the assessor is available.

INTERWORK II 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

The addition of one new client during this period brought the total number of participants to fifteen. The nine clients new to this Project since August 2011 were usually selected by EML at the time they were transferred to the detached team. This minimised the impact to the clients as they had not already been assigned to a workplace rehabilitation provider.

Interwork completed initial assessments for all fifteen participants. These assessments were designed to identify existing skills and experience, suitable employment options, obstacles to employment and strategies to overcome the obstacles. Return to work plans were in place for all clients.

Content for the Health Literacy Program was complete, with accompanying documentation currently under development. Interwork acknowledged some delay to the development of this program due to leave commitments and the Christmas closure. It was anticipated that the program would be delivered in the next quarter of activity.

Post placement support (PPS) was underway for the 8 clients who had commenced new employment. The Durability Assurance Assessment (DAA) had been developed and will be administered to all clients commencing employment. In summary, the DAA assesses whether:

- Clients were aware of key terms of their employment and that they had been inducted into the organisation.
- Clients felt supported and welcomed into the workplace, and the need for additional support.
- Employers were aware of Interwork's involvement and the possibility of post placement support for the client.
- Any action that is required for the client.

Whilst the revised Project has progressed well, Interwork reported they had been assigned an EML case manager who was new to the Project (although experienced as a case manager). This change of staff highlighted the different methods used by EML and Interwork for servicing clients. The delineation of responsibility and clear channels of communication that had been developed between the previous case manager and the Interwork team needed to be renegotiated to meet very different expectations and work styles.

INTERWORK II 3RD QUARTER ACTIVITY

Interwork report that twelve of their fifteen clients have been employed (three in permanent positions). This exceeds the Project goal of 50% of clients to achieve a RTW outcome. It should be noted that this has been achieved with long term injured workers who have expressed poor motivation and low skill levels.

Nine of the twelve employed injured workers had their durability assurance assessments completed. Six clients had been exited from the Project following the finalisation of 26 weeks of post placement support. One of these exited clients had not maintained their employment after his compensation entitlements ceased, he has not received any further rehabilitation or compensation support. Three clients continue to receive ongoing support to achieve a RTW.

The development of the health literacy training program was completed. The training module was scheduled to occur in early May 2012. All current Project participants will be requested to attend, prior clients and other employment services clients will be invited (dependent on numbers).

Despite a productive relationship, Interwork report that EML did not always recognise the difference between the client of an innovative RTW Fund Project and client of a traditional vocational rehabilitation client. This has proved challenging to the Project.

WISeR (2012)

INTERWORK II 4TH QUARTER ACTIVITY

Interwork report that fourteen of their fifteen clients (93%) have now returned to work in some capacity.

The Health Literacy Workshop was conducted during this period, the content included:

- What is health literacy?
- Applying health literacy knowledge
- Effective condition management
- Strategies to manage stress
- Being involved in your health care
- Accessing information

Feedback after the session indicated clients had found the session informative, but believed it would have been more useful in the first six months of the claim.

INTERWORK II CRITICAL LEARNING

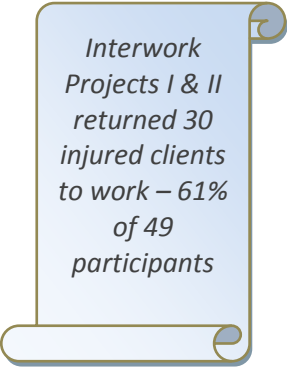
Interwork attribute the success of their Project to the following factors:

- The clear **role distinction** between the employment consultant and the workplace rehabilitation consultant. The employment consultant focused on the goal of gaining employment. Whereas the workplace rehabilitation consultant dealt with issues related to the workers' compensation scheme including compliance, reporting and development of RTW plans.
- A focus on **current capacity** (ie what the client can do) rather than on a single goal. This meant the client was open to a range of employment options that fit their existing skills and knowledge.
- A focus on the potential of a **career pathway**, the new job being viewed as the starting point for developing skills and experience, rather than the final destination.
- An **integrated and holistic approach** exploring all barriers to employment (not just the compensable ones).
- The provision of **post placement support** meant clients felt comfortable taking on employment options they may otherwise have been reluctant to pursue.

Interwork continue to emphasize the importance of building trust with clients. Communication processes need to be clearly articulated and understood between all parties. Therefore, Interwork have ensured that meeting summaries, action lists and responsibilities are provided to all parties after each meeting. Whilst acknowledging the importance of building support and rapport, Interwork stress that the relationship must also be professional in order to move forward.

Clients often begin the return to work process with low confidence, as well as fear and anxiety about returning to work. Interwork believe that supporting clients to build an appropriate dialogue for interviews is a critical element in supporting these clients. In addition, Interwork reported that many clients found previous employment through personal contacts. They have very limited experience of job searching using online resources or having to respond to specific job specification criteria. Assumptions that these job search skills are in place given previous employment histories can be quite wrong!

Interwork believe the success of their Project with difficult and long term injured workers demonstrates that better RTW outcomes can be achieved for a broader cross section of injured workers.



*Interwork
Projects I & II
returned 30
injured clients
to work – 61%
of 49
participants*

3.3.7 ADELAIDE COMEDY SCHOOL – STAND UP WITH CONFIDENCE PROGRAMS I AND II

The Adelaide Comedy School (ACS) was first contracted by the RTW Fund 20 January 2012 to deliver the *Stand Up with Confidence* Project. The contract was for the delivery of one course for approximately 20 injured workers to be conducted over a two week period commencing 14 February and culminating with a performance on graduation on 24 February 2012. A subsequent contract provided for the delivery of a second course commencing on 5 June 2012.

The Stand Up with Confidence Program was designed by the ACS to help injured workers gain confidence, develop their communication skills, and assist them to find long term sustainable employment. The program aimed to build these skills and knowledge through teaching the skills required to perform stand up comedy.

The program recognised the power of laughter and how this is often built out of personal trials and tribulations. In addition, jokes and humour are used to help people cope, become more self aware and to see the detail of a problem. Along with enhancing confidence and self awareness through public speaking and performance, the project aimed to teach participants to handle criticism and rejection. Participants were required to attend the program punctually, work with others, and to set and achieve the goal of performing on stage at graduation. Week one of the program is dedicated to teaching and week two to review, assessment and preparation for graduation.

Program participants were selected by EML according to criteria agreed between the ACS, EML and WorkCover. Principally, participants were required to be willing and fit enough to attend the course. Participants are supported to develop a three minute routine during the course and given the opportunity to perform this in front of approximately 50 invited guests at the graduation. The graduation has also been an opportunity for networking with employers.

Box 17: ADELAIDE COMEDY SCHOOL COURSE I & II – SUMMARY TO END OF JUNE 2012

ADELAIDE COMEDY SCHOOL COURSE I & II – SUMMARY

PROJECT FIRST CONTRACTED TO WORKCOVERSA 20 JANUARY 2012

Two Stand Up with Confidence courses have been conducted in 2012.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

	Course 1	Course II
Date course commenced	14-Feb	5-Jun-12
Started program (n)	19	↑ 24
Attended 7 or more days (%)	↑ 94.7%	70.8%
Age - average (yrs)	43.2	46.1
Age - range (yrs)	22 to 62	31 to 59
Male (%)	52.6%	↑ 66.7%
Employed with pre-injury employer (yrs)	5.7	↑ 8.7
Time since injury (approx days)	719	↑ 918
Medical restriction (%)	5.3%	↑ 33.3%
Reported return to work (n)	3	0

- Course II participants were more likely to be male, had been employed longer by their pre-injury employer, been injured for a longer period and were more likely to have a medical restriction.

RESULTS

- Participants rated their *confidence, verbal communication, self-esteem, personal presentation, interaction* and *ability to return to work* through a pre- and post course survey. In almost all cases participant ratings of how they felt as a group improved significantly over the duration of the course. Of note –

Item	Course I		Course II	
	Precourse rating	Precourse rating	Precourse rating	Post course rating
I have control over my life	2.4	4.2	2.0	3.7
I am usually happy	2.9	4.1	2.2	4.4
I am optimistic about getting a job	2.7	4.3	2.3	3.9
I believe I will return to work in the next 3 months	2.5	3.8	2.1	3.6

- Participants highly rated the course, the ACS team and the guest speakers. Of particular note participants from both courses rated “I would recommend this course to other injured workers” at 4.9 (out of a possible 5). This is an extremely strong endorsement for the course.
- In comparison to participant ratings, ACS assessment of how participants felt tended to be much more negative at the pre-course level and considerably more favourable post course. Whilst capturing the mood of improvement, this suggests they should not be used as an independent assessment of participant progress and outcome.

ACS PROGRAM EVALUATION

WISeR developed the evaluation methodology and surveys for the Stand Up with Confidence program in consultation with the ACS, EML and WorkCover. WISeR was also responsible for collating survey responses, analysing the data and preparing an evaluation report.

Participants were required to complete –

- A pre-course survey (Part A at the preliminary interview & Part B one the second day of the course)
- A post course survey (immediately following the completion of the course)

WISeR (2012)

- A post course survey (3 months after completion of the course)

The ACS was required to complete a contractor's assessment form at the completion of the course.

WISeR has produced the evaluation reports. The report on Course I was provided to WorkCoverSA on 16 March 2012, this included analysis of the pre- and post course participant and contractor data. The report on Course II was provided to WorkCoverSA on 13 July 2012.

ACS PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTENDANCE

COURSE I: Twenty-one participants agreed to participate in Course I with nineteen commencing. Medical reasons were given for two who failed to attend sessions. Another participant stopped the course after five days due to family health problems (he subsequently expressed a desire to participate in a future course). All other participants (n=18) completed the course attending between 7 and 9 days. Ten males and nine females commenced the course with the female cohort (aged 40.7 years) slightly younger than the males (aged 45.4 years). Two thirds were married or in a de facto relationship. Participants had been employed with their pre-injury employer an average of 5.7 years (ranging from three months to 20 years). Not all participants could provide the date they sustained their injury. However, twelve reported their injuries occurred either in 2010 or 2011. Six others reported injuries dated between September 2007 and November 2009. Seven participants cited psychological injuries with most reporting musculoskeletal injuries. Only one reported a current medical restriction.

COURSE II: Twenty-four participants commenced Course II, with 17 completing seven or more days of the course. Two-thirds of commencing participants were male. Females (44.3 years) were slightly younger than males (47.1 years). Half the participants were married or in de-facto relationships, with one-quarter never married. Not all participants could provide the date they sustained their injury¹⁸. Based on approximate injury dates, participants had been injured between 156 and 2197 days, an average of around 917 days (or two and a half years). Participants had been with their pre-injury employers an average of 8.7 years with three-quarters having been in permanent positions. While there was some overlapping symptoms two-thirds reported a musculoskeletal injury and around one quarter reported a psychological disorder. One-third of participants reported having a current medical restriction.

ACS PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE OF THE COURSE

The ACS anticipated the Stand Up with Confidence program would impact on injured worker's *confidence, verbal communication, self-esteem, personal presentation* and *interaction*. WorkCoverSA was also interested in identifying change in factors affecting *return to work* outcomes. Therefore, participants were asked to provide a rating of how they usually felt on a total of twenty items addressing these elements both pre- and post course.¹⁹

Results from Course I and II are shown in Figure 20 through Figure 25. There was an improvement for each item in how participants as a group felt at graduation (post course) compared with the pre course rating, and in most cases differences were statistically significant.²⁰ It should be noted that while the group scores improved there was individual variation and not all participants changed their responses from the pre- to post course assessments. It should also be noted that there was some variation between results for Course I and II. Of note, in comparison with Course I participants, Course II participants:

- ↓ Rated their control over their life lower (see Figure 20)
- ↑ Were more likely to know what to say to people (see Figure 21)
- ↑ Rated they were happier with how they looked (see Figure 23)
- ↓ Were less optimistic about getting a job

¹⁸ When participants provided a year only, an approximate mid date (1 July) was used in calculations.

¹⁹ Possible ratings ranged from a low of 1 = strongly disagree through to 5 = strongly agree.

²⁰ A significant difference between pre- and post course ratings for each item (at p<.05 using a paired samples t-test) is indicated by an asterisk (*) in the figures.

FIGURE 20: INJURED WORKER RATING OF CONFIDENCE PRE- AND POST COURSE

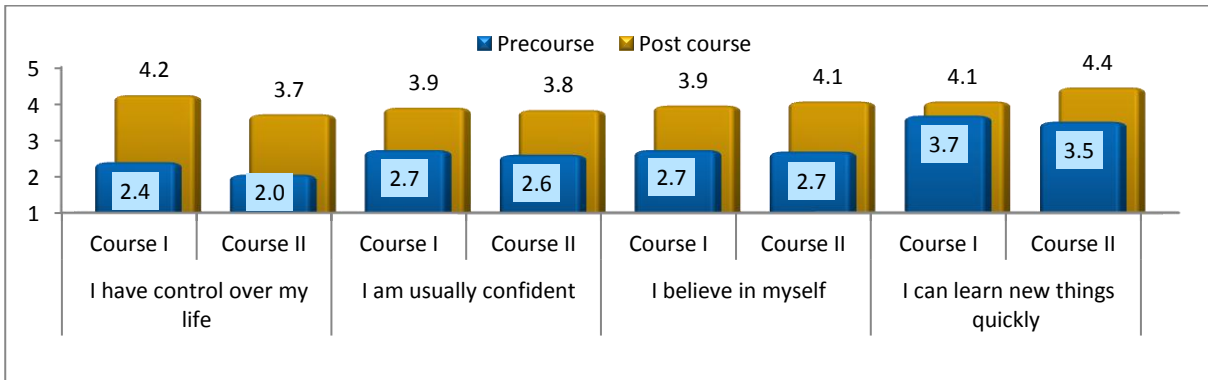


FIGURE 21: INJURED WORKER RATING OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION PRE- AND POST COURSE

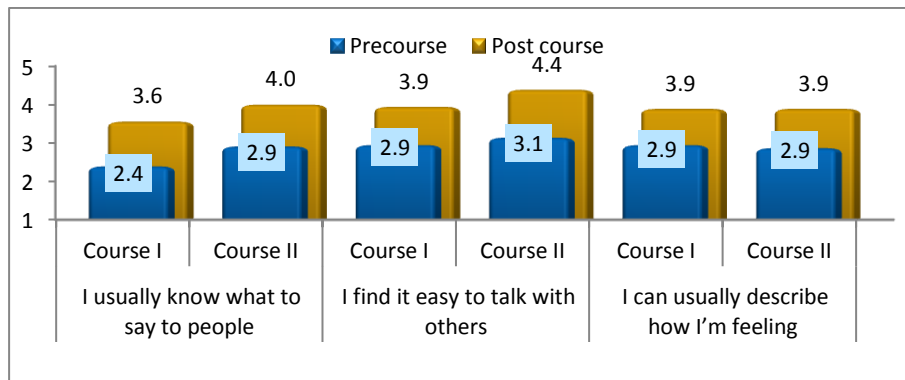


FIGURE 22: INJURED WORKER RATING OF SELF ESTEEM PRE- AND POST COURSE

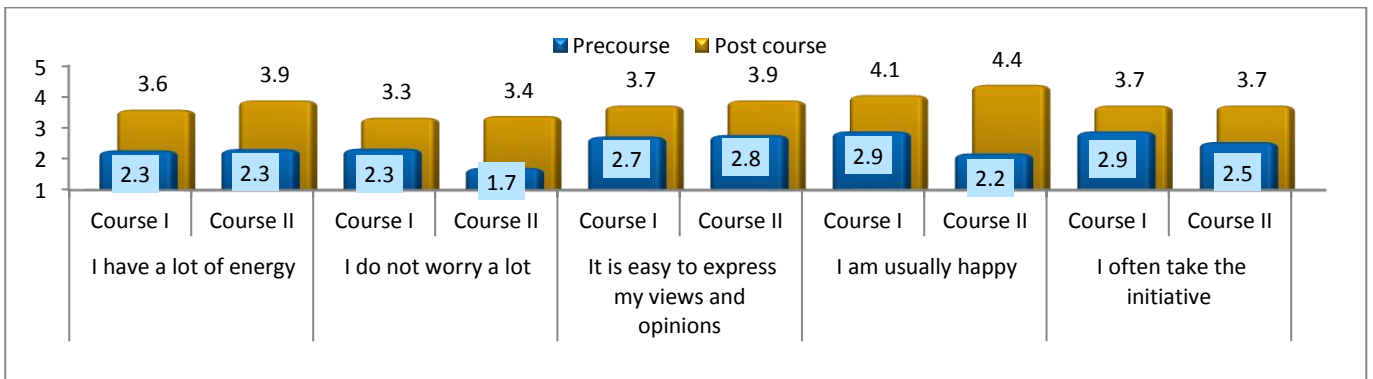


FIGURE 23: INJURED WORKER RATING OF PERSONAL PRESENTATION PRE- AND POST COURSE

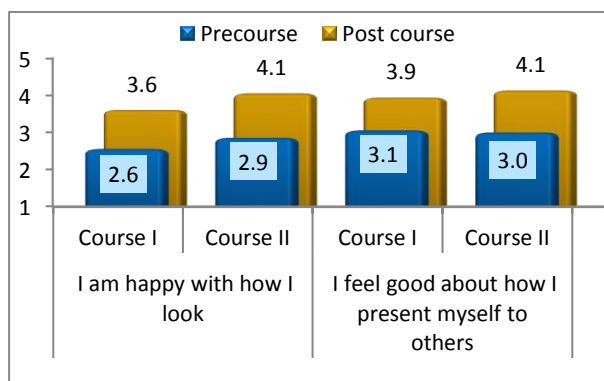


FIGURE 24: INJURED WORKER RATING OF INTERACTION PRE- AND POST COURSE

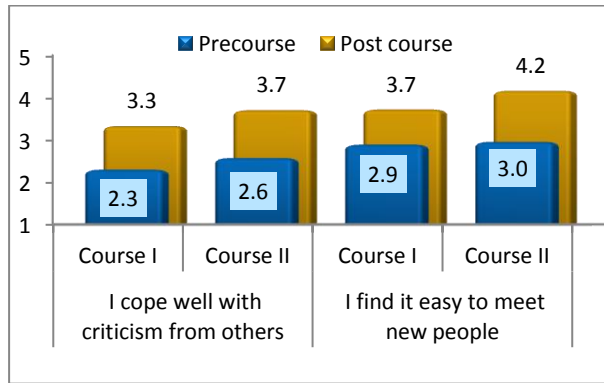
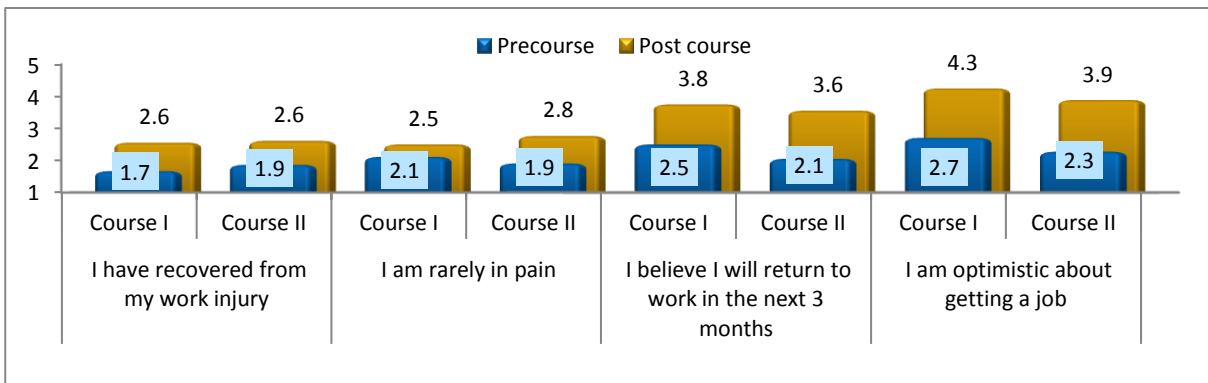


FIGURE 25: INJURED WORKER RATING OF RETURNING TO WORK PRE- AND POST COURSE

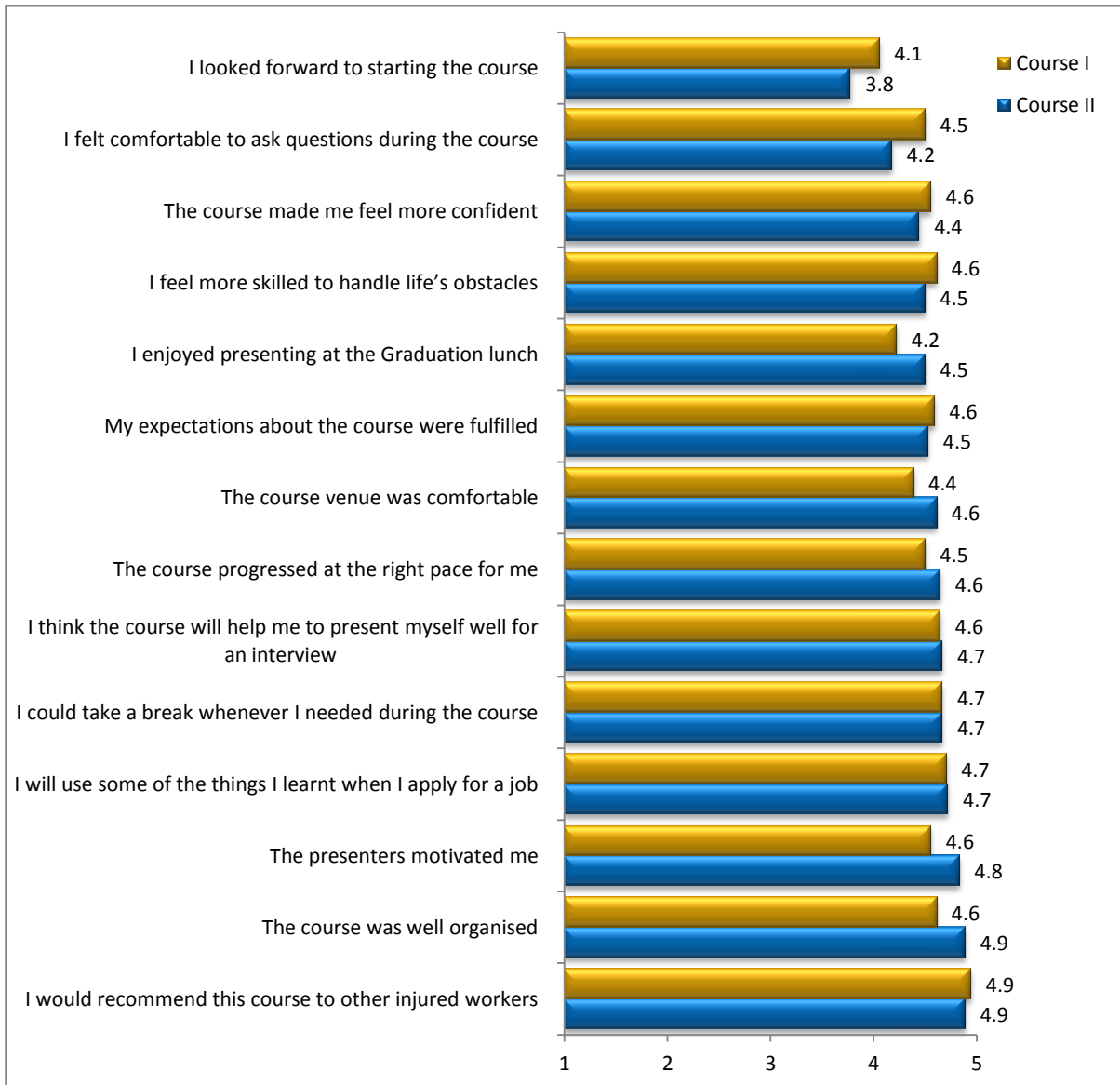


From the perspective of the participants both courses were highly successful. Although there were some minor variations in responses, participants rated the course and all aspects of its organisation very highly (see Figure 26). The lowest rating related to whether participants looked forward to starting the course, whilst three quarters endorsed this statement, the remainder either did not look forward to it or were uncertain. At the other end of the scale, 95% *strongly* agreed that they would recommend the course to other injured workers, with the remaining participant ‘agreeing’ they would recommend it.

Feedback from participants was also very positive, with one respondent stating:

This course saved me, so thank you Dave and Sue and to WorkCoverSA for opening up your mind to even consider this course.

FIGURE 26: PARTICIPANT RATINGS OF THE COURSE

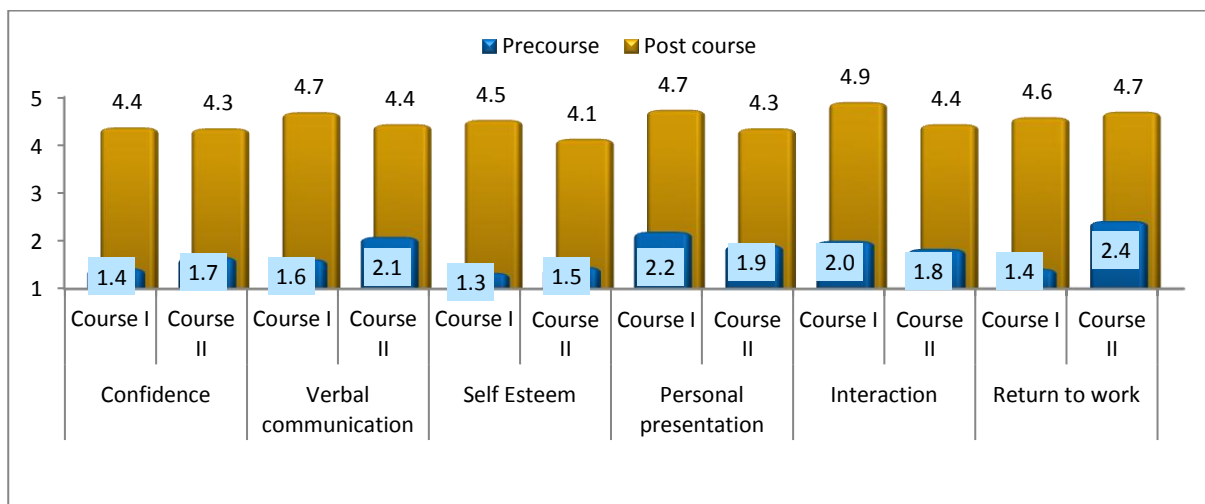


ACS ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The ACS were asked to provide a pre- and post course assessment of participants. Their ratings are shown in Figure 27. In comparison to participant self-report ratings of their confidence, verbal communication, self esteem, personal presentation, interaction and ability to return to work (shown above), the ACS was more negative at the pre course assessment (at the group level) and considerably more favourable in assessing participants on completion of the course.

At the individual level there was also considerable variation. For example, a number of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were usually confident at the pre-course assessment, however were not rated as confident by ACS. These differences indicate how difficult it is to assess other's feeling and experiences. It is fair to say that the ACS captured the mood of improvement, while the 'inflated' ratings may have reflected the positive feedback and endorsement ACS received from the course participants.

FIGURE 27: ACS ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS PRE- AND POST COURSE



ACS CRITICAL LEARNING

There was a significant shift in the way many participants felt about their confidence, verbal communication, self esteem, personal presentation, interaction and ability to return to work after completing the Stand Up with Confidence course. However, this was not the same for all participants and it should be noted that individual participant responses were less positive after completing the course in a couple of instances (when compared with before they commenced the course).

Participants of the SUWC Program increased in confidence and belief they could return to work

At the group level, and in comparison to injured worker ratings, the ACS assessment of participants tended to be much more negative at the pre-course level and considerably more favourable at the post course assessment. This assessment discrepancy had not improved for Course II. It is fair to say that the ACS captured the mood of improvement, and the 'inflated' ratings may well have reflected the positive feedback and endorsement the ACS received from the course participants. However, this finding suggests they should not be used as an independent assessment of participant progress and outcome.

Until the data is available it is too early to tell whether positive ratings result in good return to work outcomes for this cohort of long-term injured workers. Although four Course I participants reported at least a partial return to work outcome three months after the course was completed.

Subsequent to the completion of the Project, WorkCoverSA and ACS have agreed to provide additional support to participants by offering to run refresher sessions if it was deemed necessary and if there were sufficient numbers requiring that extra support. EML have also been asked to ensure adequate support services are in place, and to provide monthly updates to WorkCoverSA about the status of participants.

3.4 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.

3.4.1 SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2010

Some of the scheme related challenges reported by EML to December 2010 were noted in previous WISeR 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 struggled to accommodate the number of referrals for 'similar' clients (ie where the selection criteria were similar for 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, detailing the number of claims reviewed for suitability and claims referred to Projects (since the new computer system became available). 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 not 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 learning 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 was 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.

3.4.2 JANUARY TO MARCH 2011

EML reported continuing challenges in relation to operational impacts on claims management and support to Project participants. Although acknowledging that WorkCoverSA 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 drew 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 WorkCoverSA over the last few months, but compliance has been a concern for some Projects²¹. 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 WorkCoverSA scheme to clarify roles and expectations. EML further stressed the importance of clear referral processes being in place and agreed to by all parties prior to implementation.

EML have implemented strategies to support the RTW Fund including:

- 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.

3.4.3 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.

²¹ Monthly participant reports are a contractual requirement for Round 2 Projects.

New lessons highlighted by EML include:

- Liaising with WorkCoverSA to ensure that new Project Managers have a clear understanding of the roles of WorkCoverSA and Employers Mutual in relation to the operation of their Project.
- Liaising with WorkCoverSA 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.

3.4.4 JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2011

EML remain concerned about:

- The lack of promotion and communication about the RTW Fund to the rehabilitation community;
- Engagement of injured workers, when engagement in Projects is voluntary; and
- The complexities and difficulties for some inexperienced Projects when dealing with injured workers.

Recruitment issues remain a key operational challenge for EML. They report that some Projects lack understanding of the time and effort required to generate appropriate referrals. This is particularly difficult when Project eligibility criteria are 'restrictive'. In addition, EML report the ongoing provision of monthly reports to WorkCoverSA but are uncertain as to how the information is utilised.

EML report continued support of the RTW Fund and Projects during this period including establishing clear referral processes for all Projects commencing in 2011. EML report they have taken a key role in the referral of participants to MSVS, SA Unions II, Interwork II and Moving Mindfully. With regard to these Projects, EML report increased responsibility for the referrals to MSVS Project as referrals from the rehabilitation industry slowed. They also report concern about SA Unions II's eligibility criteria which limited the number of injured workers appropriate for referral.

Communication and relationship development continue to be cited as achievements for EML. Relationships within EML, and with RTW Fund management and Projects were reported by EML as continuing to improve, enhanced by regular meetings and open communication.

3.4.5 OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2011

EML expressed some concern at this time about how Project success and RTW outcome was being measured, particularly when ongoing service provision was being considered. They also continued to raise issues about –

- Client recruitment which is reported to be more difficult when Projects design targets particular subgroups of clients.
- Lack of Project marketing material, which could be useful to encourage client engagement with Projects

EML successes for the quarter are similar to those previously identified. Relationships with WorkCoverSA and external stakeholders continue to be developed, which is enhanced by regular meetings and open communication. EML are now recruiting almost all Project clients.

3.4.6 JANUARY TO MARCH 2012

EML report that the operational recruitment process for sourcing suitable participants for any one project involves extensive preparation and communication with a variety of stakeholder groups. This process is complex and requires a substantial amount of time. EML express concern that this process has sometimes been misinterpreted as simple by those not familiar with the steps required.

During this period it was established that requests relating to wage information for participants who have completed or been exited from a project should be directed to WorkCoverSA to prevent a breach by EML relating to the disclosure of such information.

EML have expressed concern with elements of some current Projects/processes:

- EML differed from SA Unions on the method for identification of labour market information.
- EML expressed concern about Interwork's:
 - Knowledge and understanding of required documentation for the case management process
 - Minimal emphasis on increasing capacity when partial RTW outcomes are achieved
 - Time spent on identifying suitable employment options.
 - Difficulties of recruitment for the MMP and ACS Projects with participants altering decisions to participate, or medical practitioners failing to provide consent.
 - EML report ACS reports of participant progress had not been received.²²

Despite these issues, EML recognise their achievements which include:

- Meeting recruitment numbers for the SA Unions, Interwork, MMP and ACS Projects during this period.
- Developing a *Monitoring Strategy* which provide support to ACS participants beyond the 9 day program so the momentum of the Project is sustained for participants.

3.4.7 APRIL TO JUNE 2012

During this period, most EML activity related to recruitment for the ACS Project. EML reported taking a key role in the recruitment of participants for the Stand Up with Confidence Program. Despite being frustrated by late notification of the start dates and a change to participant numbers, they were able to meet recruitment timelines.

4 SUMMARY OF WISER EVALUATION ACTIVITIES & SUPPORT FOR THE RTW FUND EVALUATION

4.1 WISER EVALUATION SUPPORT

The WISer 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 was designed to support the development and maintenance of close working relationships between the WISer 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.

²² Noting a spreadsheet with this information was provided by WorkCoverSA and acknowledged by EML on 20 March 2012.

4.2 WORKING WITH PROJECTS

WISeR 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 WISeR. The WISeR approach has been to support and guide the development of each Project's Evaluation Plan, tailored to the strengths and skills of the Project team. Projects have enthusiastically engaged with WISeR in the development of their Evaluation Plans and associated Performance Indicators.

WISeR has worked with contracted Projects to develop individual Evaluation Plans early in the Project. These plans are designed to be relevant to the objectives of each Project while addressing the over-arching evaluation framework and Fund objectives. Early in the evaluation, WISeR developed a number of resources to support Projects, including quarterly reporting templates in both word and excel. These templates ensure the core information required by WorkCoverSA and WISeR for the evaluation of the Projects is addressed in quarterly reports.

The **Word Reporting Template** was designed to ensure that each project reports on the key elements required by both *WorkCoverSA* 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 present an overview of their outcomes to date - this provides a summary of project participant employment and training status. In addition, all Projects provide monthly reports to EML detailing the progress and status of clients, and work with EML to ensure an appropriate exit strategy is in place for clients when they leave the Project. Neither these monthly reports nor details of client exits have been provided to WISeR.

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.

While both templates have been designed for generic use, WISeR has updated the templates with new information requested by Fund management, and works with Projects to ensure the spreadsheet meets individual Project requirements. This includes requests to assist in the management of individual Project data – which are collected to monitor progress of injured workers and/or their experience with the programs in which they participate.

4.3 WORKING WITH RTW FUND MANAGEMENT

WISeR works with the RTW Fund management in a number of ways to support the ongoing implementation and development of the RTW Fund. Both *WorkCoverSA* and WISeR recognise the importance of regular meetings and informal communication, and these have been ongoing since the inception of the evaluation. WISeR has been invited to attend selected sessions of the RTW Fund Coordination Group convened by *WorkCoverSA*. This usually has involved an update of Project progress and responding to questions from the group.

Two Projects, *Pathways to Work* (Interwork) and *Retraining Injured Workers for Employment* (SA Unions) were identified by both *WorkCoverSA* and WISeR as particularly successful having exceeded their targets for employment or training, yielded useful information about systemic

WISeR (2012)

impediments to effective RTW, and provided innovative approaches to enhancing RTW. These two organisations submitted successful applications for new Projects (approved mid 2011) drawing on their learning and experience from their first Projects. Both renewed Projects have recently been completed. They demonstrated refinements of their original methodology and improved outcomes.

To ensure Projects are providing accurate data on client numbers, WISeR is working with WorkCoverSA to ensure there is a clear and consistent understanding of what is counted and reported. Moreover, for completed Projects it is important to capture information about client progress. Methods to achieve this by collecting standardised data from EML or adding to the CÚRAM data collection are being explored.

4.4 REPORTING TO WORKCOVERSA

WISeR collect, analyse and report on all aspects (quantitative and qualitative) of the Projects' progress. In addition, WISeR are working closely with RTW Fund Management to ensure that higher level targets and goals are met, that *WorkCoverSA* 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 *WorkCoverSA*, 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. Projects report to WorkCoverSA and WISeR for all quarters in which they are active, using the template designed by WISeR to ensure consistency and comparability of reporting, and data from these reports are presented in quarterly reports from WISeR to *WorkCoverSA*. 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 2010²³, the second Annual Report was provided in August 2011²⁴.

4.5 BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE

WISeR 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.

WISeR developed a case study methodology to complement the evidence base presented in the RTW Discussion Paper (see Section 4.6). The methodology incorporates action research, case study investigation and reporting, and stakeholder engagement and capacity development. It contributes to an improved understanding of the issues faced by others working to support injured workers return to work. 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 *WorkCoverSA* in May 2010.

The mixed methods approach has been used with rehabilitation and return to work (RRTW) coordinators.

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

- ⇒ Key **challenges** to be addressed (these include system-based constraints, policy-based constraints, resource based constraints and so on).
- ⇒ **Strategies** developed to address these challenges generally, and specifically.

²³ Available at: www.workcover.com/public/download.aspx?id=4944

²⁴ Available at: <http://www.workcover.com/documents.ashx?id=2167&type=pdf>

- ⇒ **Outcomes** (both successful and otherwise) of the application of those strategies. This part of the case study explores ‘*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 also identifies gaps or needed inputs that could foster ongoing improvement in achieving effective RTW.

The survey and case studies for RRTW Coordinators are complete, and are summarised in Sections 4.7 and 4.8.

4.6 DISCUSSION PAPER

A discussion paper for *WorkCoverSA* and the RTW Fund was produced in 2010 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.

This version of the discussion paper was prepared to assist *WorkCoverSA* 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 review²⁵.

4.7 SURVEY OF RRTW COORDINATORS

The WISer conducted an online survey of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators (RRTWCs) to identify barriers to and strategies for successful RTW. The results of the survey provided 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 major ‘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*²⁶, was provided to *WorkCoverSA* in December 2010. Key findings relating to barriers to RTW and strategies to promote RTW are shown below.

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.

²⁵ Available at: <http://www.workcover.com/documents.ashx?id=1912&type=pdf>

²⁶ Available at: <http://main.workcover.com/public/download.aspx?id=5990>

- 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.

4.8 RRTW 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 in order to develop case studies. A report of these case studies, *Coordination Works – Understanding Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators in South Australia: A case study report*²⁷, was provided to WorkCoverSA in March 2011. An overview of the critical success factors in return to work identified by the case studies was provided in the previous Annual Report.

In brief, the employing organisation and the coordinator should –

- Seek flexible solutions
- Focus on strengths (not limitations)
- Take a prevention approach
- Develop relationships with others critical in the RTW process (including health care professionals).

4.9 PRESENTATION OF RRTW COORDINATOR FINDINGS

Survey findings were presented as part of the *WorkCoverSA 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 (as a group) and what they are doing.

Coordinators were also able to benefit from the learning environment fostered within the seminars 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)²⁸ (see Figure 28). Successful strategies to overcome barriers were also discussed. Feedback from workshop participants was very positive with participants reporting they learned from the presenters and other Coordinators.

4.10 EVALUATION WORKSHOP FOR WORKCOVERSA EMPLOYEES

In consultation with the RTW Fund Management and Human Resources, WISeR is developing three one hour evaluation workshops for WorkCoverSA staff. These workshops will help staff:

- Understand the meaning, definitions and purpose of evaluation.
- Recognise and use practical evaluation tools.
- Identify and measure realistic and achievable program goals, objectives and performance indicators.
- Interpret and understand the findings of evaluations.
- Use evaluation to inform change in policy and practice.
- Build the internal capacity of WorkCoverSA staff to recognise the opportunities for evaluation of WorkCoverSA programs.

²⁷ Available at: <http://main.workcover.com/public/download.aspx?id=5991>

²⁸ 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.

These workshops are expected to provide an optional component of the project management course.

4.11 REVIEW OF LEARNER SUPPORT IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VET SYSTEM

This section is summarised from an unpublished report prepared by WISeR for the Department of Further Education Employment Science and Technology (DFEEST) *Case management as a strategy to enhance learner outcomes: evidence from research and practice* (September 2011), with permission from DFEEST.

South Australia has been a laboratory for innovative approaches to supporting learners who require specific forms of assistance in order to achieve vocational and employment outcomes. DFEEST's *VET to Work (VTW) Disability* initiative trialled the application of 'learner case management' (so named to distinguish it from case management models in other sectors). This model was subsequently expanded to target not just students with disability but students with a range of needs. The broadened program, called *Learner Support Services (LSS)*, is still in pilot phase²⁹. It is currently being trialled in TAFE Institutes, with expansion to private RTOs in the second half of 2012. In looking at support systems for VET students it is important to distinguish between private and public registered training organisations (RTOs), because the latter have the history of providing support to assist disadvantaged learners, with student support services being a key feature of TAFE Institutes.

It should also be noted that the case management model is found in different sectors and systems. However, it is typically implemented as isolated programs rather than at a system level. The SA VET system is an exception to this trend. The following summary of support models applies to the public delivery of VET.

4.11.1 THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR VET LEARNER SUPPORT

NATIONAL VET POLICY DIRECTIONS

In the past few years there has been increasing awareness at policy level of the role that coordinated case managed services and supports can play in enhancing learning and other outcomes for people with significant and complex need. This changing landscape provides an environment that supports the use of case management by promoting service integration, partnerships and a *whole of life* focus. The evolving policy environment has brought a new language that includes terms like 'joined-up services', 'seamless services', 'wrap-around services', and 'integrated services'. These are sometimes used interchangeably and while there are differences between them, the shared intent is to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

The national *Social Inclusion Agenda* emphasises among other things, the importance of tailored services, joined-up services and whole of government solutions, all of which provide an enabling environment for effective case management³⁰. At the State and Territory level, there is increasing evidence of the application of this approach.

VET learner support has moved from its original access and equity purpose to embrace both a business case as well as a social imperative. National VET policy directions recognise that increased and successful participation in VET and employment by disengaged and/or disadvantaged groups provides a significant opportunity to address workforce and skills shortages in an increasingly skills based economy, while simultaneously addressing equity goals. These directions are evident in the National VET Advisory Council (NVEAC) Equity Blueprint.³¹

²⁹ In 2009, WISeR conducted the evaluation of the VTW Disability pilot which subsequently became an ongoing program and during 2011 was rolled into the LSS. WISeR is currently evaluating the LSS pilot and will report in September 2012. In addition, WISeR has undertaken for DFEEST a review of research on case management approaches and their effectiveness, including those in SA, with this information included in a report to COAG on the potential national applicability of the learner case management model in the Australian VET sector.

³⁰ Page 75, DPMC (2009) *A Stronger, Fairer Australia: National Statement on Social Inclusion*, Dept of Prime Minister & Cabinet: Canberra, http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/sites/www.socialinclusion.gov.au/files/publications/pdf/report_stronger_fairer_australia.pdf

³¹ *Creating Futures: Achieving Potential through VET* <http://www.equity101.info/content/Equity-Blueprint-Creating-Futures-Achieving-potential-through-VET-2011-2016>

This does not represent a new direction in national VET equity policy as the structures preceding NVEAC have identified the importance of cross sector collaboration and the critical role of the case management model in operationalising this. The national VET disability strategy *Bridging Pathways 2000-2005* and companion national VET Indigenous strategy *Partners in a Learning Culture 2000-2005* and their accompanying Blueprints, both promoted a whole of life model with case management as a key strategy for achieving more equitable outcomes in VET. More recently, the whole-of-life principle of support and intervention underpins the recently proposed *National Disability Insurance Scheme* and the *New Disability Framework for Australia*³²

South Australia is a leader nationally in the design of strategies which address the goals of the *Equity Blueprint*, and has played a critical role in their formulation, in particular in promoting the value of the case management model. The Access and Participation Principal Committee (APPC), which is chaired by South Australia, and reports to the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Standing Council on Tertiary Education Skills and Employment (SCOTESE), had recent responsibility under the draft *SCOTESE Work Plan* to identify innovative *wrap-around* service models for at-risk groups.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VET POLICY DIRECTIONS

DFEEST has lead responsibility for State strategic targets towards increasing employment participation (including with a specific focus on supporting young people, people with a disability and Aboriginal people) and for increasing labour productivity.

Skills for All is a South Australian government initiative that is providing an additional 100,000 training places from July 2010. The central policy driver of *Skills for All* is 'the critical need for South Australia to increase the proportion of the population that are attaining skills and qualifications and participating in the labour force to meet the skilled labour supply needs of a growing economy and address economic disadvantage in our community.' It provides South Australians with the opportunity to gain more qualifications, many at low or no cost, through the training provider of their choice, and eligible individuals have been able to access subsidised training from July 2012. Qualifications at Certificate I and II are fully subsidised while those at Certificate III and above partially government-subsidised.³³

Skills for All specifically targets cohorts facing barriers to participation in learning and work including people who left school prior to completion, those without a preliminary qualification, the long term unemployed, those returning to work after caring and those with language, literacy and numeracy issues. The package of reforms aims to improve equity and accessibility across all target groups and, where needed, provide additional support to improve the qualification completion rates for disadvantaged learners.

4.11.2 VET LEARNER SUPPORT MODELS

Learner support encompasses both preparatory programs as well as specific support services.

PREPARATORY SUPPORT

Learner support includes programs that address earlier gaps in education, for example, by addressing literacy and numeracy skills and programs that provide a supported pathway to Certificate III and above programs, that is, to recognised qualification levels needed in a skilled economy.

In SA, these programs are collectively known as *TAFEstart* and are designed to provide 'foundation skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to successfully undertake further vocational study or employment'. Nationally accredited, *TAFEstart* courses are offered from Certificate I through to Diploma level in areas including literacy and numeracy, vocational preparation, and English as a Second Language. These courses can also include workplace training and assessment during structured vocational placements and on-campus vocational studies in many areas.

³² http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/way_forward/Documents/exec.htm

³³ <http://www.skills.sa.gov.au/About-Skills-for-All>

Courses are very flexible and can be customised to meet individual needs, and are designed to meet the needs of a diverse group of students, including:

- ✓ people seeking a career change
- ✓ retrenched workers seeking to develop new skills
- ✓ employees seeking promotion
- ✓ women returning to the workforce
- ✓ young people at risk of disengaging from formal learning
- ✓ the long-term unemployed
- ✓ people with a disability or special needs
- ✓ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- ✓ people from non-English-speaking backgrounds.³⁴

SUPPORT SERVICES

TAFE Institutes employ support services staff who provide personal counselling, vocational guidance, disability support and linkages to learning support as well as a range of other services. These positions are separate from teaching positions but rely on good working relationships between lecturers and student support services officers. This has been a long standing feature of TAFESA provision.

In the past decade, however, the evolution of a case management approach has been increasingly evident in TAFESA. Student services staff work with a case management approach as do other SA VET programs, such as Tauondi College and the Aboriginal Access Centre. As discussed, the *VTW Disability* program provided the opportunity to formally trial the learner case management model, and it achieved completion rates far in excess of national VET completion rates for learners with disability. The lessons learned from this, shaping the design of the *Learner Support Services* pilot which was implemented in July 2011. The LSS is envisaged as being the central model for supporting all disadvantaged VET learners, including those with complex and significant need.

Learner Support Services is also intended to be a key element of *Skills for All*, enabling *Skills for All* VET providers to access additional support for students with complex support needs, with the ultimate goal of enhancing their participation and completion rates.

Definition of Terms

Wrap-around service provision entails individualised support addressing complex or multiple needs based on collaboration across different services or sectors.

Case management approaches acknowledge that some students have complex issues and needs that require tailored support, and support which works effectively across agencies and/or systems. A case manager coordinates and facilitates the partnering needed to provide this form of support, and does this within a holistic or whole of life framework (that is, acknowledging the range of needs people have and how these change over the life course, particularly in times of transition from one part of that journey to another). This model is eminently suited to enabling wrap-around service provision, although it is not the only possible approach.

In the VET context **Learner Case Management** applies principles from both the case management and the wrap-around models, providing a focal point for learners and service providers and supports, and coordinating these in a seamless way.

1. Features of the Learner Case Management model

Case management approaches acknowledge that some students have complex issues and needs that could prevent them achieving VET learning and employment outcomes, and that tailored support is needed to enable them to achieve those outcomes. Case management approaches acknowledge that students with multiple and complex needs will need assistance to be linked to

³⁴ <http://www.tafesa.edu.au/apply-enrol/how-to-apply/tafestart>
WISeR (2012)

services and supports outside of the VET system. The essential features of the Case Management model involve –

- ☑ Working in partnership within and across sectors,
- ☑ Coordinating different services and supports that are tailored according to individual need, and
- ☑ Adopting a *whole-of-life* focus that acknowledges the range of needs people have and how these change over the life course, particularly in times of transition from one part of that journey to another.
- ☑ The Case Manager is the single point of reference for those receiving support and those providing it.

The Case Manager works to overcome the challenges for students/service users in navigating complex systems, particularly when they must traverse the boundaries of system sectors, and for service providers in providing seamless and integrated services without duplicating the efforts of other providers. As such, case management is about both achieving efficiencies in the use of resources (a key feature involves leveraging resources through working partnerships and collaboration) while enhancing the effectiveness of services.

Partnerships at the policy or service delivery level are becoming increasingly recognised as a key strategy in addressing need in a more holistic way, occurring within or across sectors. As such, they support the application of case management processes, but do not necessarily involve this approach.

2. Wrap-around services

The *Wraparound* service model was developed in the USA during the 1980s and designed to maximise collaboration across different services while providing tailored support for service users. Used extensively in North America in the disability, mental health, juvenile justice, education and out of home care sectors, *wraparound* services are delivered by teams, and are differentiated from other team work approaches by their focus on building strengths in the individuals, families and communities with whom they work.

3. VET to Work Disability program

The former National VET Disability Advisory Taskforce (NVDAT) established a pilot project to test the efficacy and viability of building on DEEWR funded Disability Employment Services (DES) to improve transitions from VET into employment for students with disabilities. Jointly funded by DFEEST and DEEWR, the pilot also aimed to develop a model that would have national transferability.

Features of the model include providing a specified number of funded hours of individual case management support per participating student by DES providers during VET studies, as well as employment case management support during VET study-related work placement. When participating students complete their study, they are provided with direct transition to a DES provider in order to receive employment support for up to two years, as needed.

Findings from the external evaluation of the pilot were extremely positive with all key stakeholders (students, DES and VET providers) being supportive of the model, particularly its case management component. Positive VET completion and employment outcomes showed that over three years there was an average completion rate of 45% compared with a national average completion rate for the general student population of 28.4% (the latter including all students not only those with disability, using NCVET 2008 data for comparison).

4. The Learner Support Services pilot

Students are provided with a range of services, based on an agreed learning plan that is flexibly applied to address the individual and changing needs of the student throughout their study and into employment.

LSS services include initial assessment of support needs from which the learning plan is developed. Support provided to students can be grouped across three domains, as illustrated in Table 9.

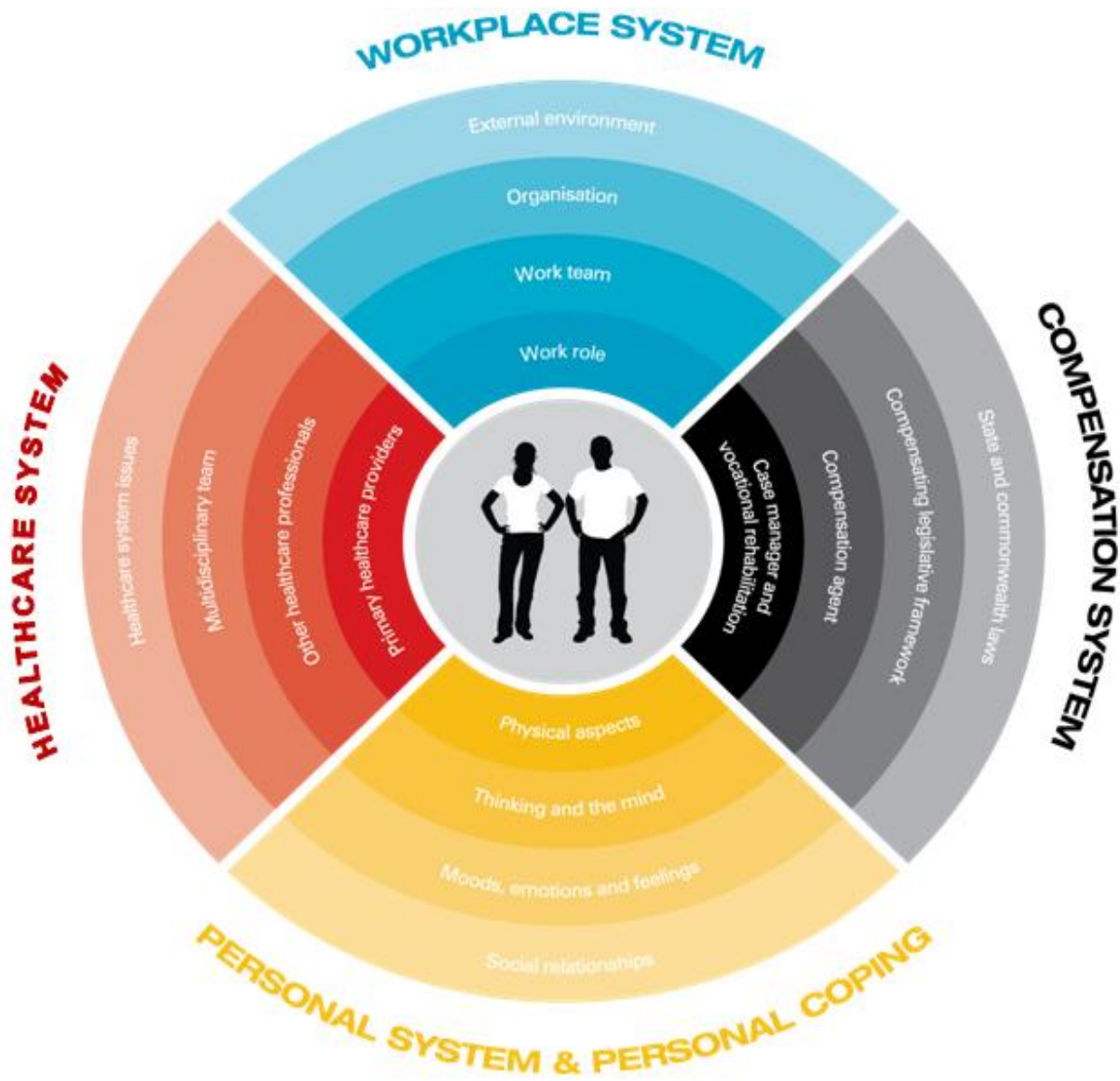
TABLE 9: NEEDS ADDRESSED X TYPE OF SUPPORT - LSS PROVISIONS

Living support	Learning support	Transitions support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal, social, emotional and family related support • Parenting/carer responsibilities • Health • Finance/income • Transport • Accommodation • Cultural expectations/influences • Legal • Referral and advocacy to address above needs if not within role of Student Services Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language, literacy and numeracy assessment and tuition • Study skills tuition • Course counselling • In class support & tuition • Liaison/advocacy with lecturers • Classroom/campus environment • Course expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study transition • Employment transition • JSA/DES (employment services) linkage • Employment, volunteering and vocational placement • Career counselling

4.11.3 RELEVANCE FOR WORKCOVERSA

The learner case management approach implemented through TAFESA provides an appropriate model to support workers whose return to work will be facilitated on a long term basis by retraining in another field. It supports partnering and cross sector work, in particular, between stakeholders in the workers' compensation system and VET, and it supports a whole of life approach to addressing multiple needs in order to ensure sustainable training and employment outcomes.

FIGURE 28: THE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO RETURN TO WORK.



Appendix A. RTW FUND KEY DATES

Date	Activity
December 2007	Clayton Review
2008-09	DFEEST pilot project
June 2008	RTW Fund implemented by WorkCoverSA
November 2008	Close of call for Expressions of Interest for Round 1 Projects
July 2009	WISeR contracted to provide evaluation services for RTW Fund
July 2009	Workshop convened by WorkCoverSA for Round 1 applicants
August 2009	WISeR deliver Evaluation Framework to WorkCoverSA
August 2009	WISeR deliver Evaluation Work Plan to WorkCoverSA
August 2009	Business Services Industry Skills Board (BSISB) contracted to deliver <i>Retraining Injured Workers Career Transition Project</i>
October 2009	First WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
October 2009	Jane Fielder Consulting (formerly ProActiv Life Solutions) contracted to deliver <i>Change your Mind ... Change your Life</i>
October 2009	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) contracted to deliver <i>The Next Step Training and Employment Program</i>
November 2009	Interwork contracted to deliver a Project for RTW Fund
January 2010	Second WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
February 2010	SA Unions contracted to deliver Retraining Injured Workers for Employment Project 1
February 2010	Business SA contracted to deliver The Small Business Project and The Work Hardening Project
March 2010	WISeR Discussion Paper "The Role of the Workplace in Return to Work"
April 2010	Third WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
June 2010	WISeR Workshop 1 for Projects
June 2010	Close of call for Expressions of Interest for Round 2 Projects
July 2010	WISeR survey of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators conducted, and Case Study process initiated
July 2010	First WISeR Annual Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
October 2010	Fourth WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
December 2010	Beckmann and Associates contracted to deliver <i>Families Working together to Work</i>
January 2011	Fifth WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
January 2011	MS Vocational Services contracted to deliver <i>Re-invent Yourself ... Life after Injury</i>
January 2011	Peter Chapman Employment Accelerators contracted to deliver <i>The Back on Track Project</i>
April 2011	Sixth WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
June 2011	Mindful Movement Physiotherapy contracted to deliver <i>Moving Mindfully Towards Health</i>
June 2011	Master Builders SA contracted to deliver Achieving Cultural Change in the Construction Industry
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
July 2011	Second WISeR Annual Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation

Date	Activity
July 2011	SA Unions I Project completed
July 2011	Interwork I Project completed
July 2011	SA Unions II Project contracted to deliver Retraining Injured Workers for Employment Project 2
July 2011	Interwork II Project contracted to deliver <i>Revised Pathways to Work Project</i>
Sept 2011	Beckmann and Associates suspended due to recruitment difficulties
October 2011	Seventh WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
October 2011	Employment Accelerators Project completed
December 2011	Business SA The Small Business Project and The Work Hardening Project completed
December 2011	MSVS Project completed
January 2012	Eighth WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
January 2012	Adelaide Comedy School Course I contracted to deliver <i>Stand Up with Confidence</i>
April 2012	Ninth WISeR Quarterly Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation
April 2012	Master Builders' Project deliverables updated and Project extended to December 2012
June 2012	Adelaide Comedy School Course II contracted to deliver <i>Stand Up with Confidence</i>
June 2012	Mindful Movement Physiotherapy Project completed
July 2012	Third WISeR Annual Report of the RTW Fund Evaluation

Appendix B. SUMMARY OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS TO DATE

TABLE 10: SUMMARY OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS TO DATE

		Business SA - small employers*	Business SA - work hardening	Beckmann	MSVS	Employment Accelerators	Mindful Movement Physiotherapy	Master Builders	SA Unions II	Interwork II	ACS I	ACS II
Number of workers	Approved in contract		n/a	20	144	12	20	n/a	50	15	20	24
	Completed the Project program to date		Unknown *	0	101	4	14	n/a	26	14	18	17**
	Total engaged in the Project program to date		unknown	0		7	14	n/a	49	15	20	24
	Have returned to full time work		3	n/a	10	4	2	n/a	4	7	3	n/a
	RTW with hours < full time work (from initial zero capacity)		3	n/a	5	2	n/a	n/a	5	7	n/a	n/a
	RTW with hours equivalent to pre-injury hours		3	n/a	9	4	2	n/a	2	5	n/a	n/a
	RTW with increased work capacity (above their pre-project participation capacity)		0	n/a		0	n/a	n/a	1	0	n/a	n/a
	Completed approved training (arranged through project)		0	n/a	1	2	n/a	n/a	23	2	n/a	n/a
	Achieved RPL (arranged through project)		0	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	4	0	n/a	n/a
	Not completing program (withdrawn, exited by contractor, non-participating after acceptance)		1	n/a	15	2	6	n/a	4	0	1	3
	Participant response to evaluation questionnaires on value of project		0	n/a		11	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	Very high	Very high
Number of employers	Approached by project	>500	>500	n/a	n/a	500+	n/a	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Participating in project	64	46	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Receiving one-on-one sessions	64	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Attending information sessions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Who found service of value	64	46	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Not interested in service	>500	>500	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Satisfied with service	64	46	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Implementing change due to service	n/a	46	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Number of Information sessions with participants	0	na	n/a	144	1	n/a	n/a	20	0	n/a	n/a

Whilst attempts are made to check data contained in tables, numbers will not be considered final until the project is complete.

*Business SA had 139 injured workers and 51 businesses registered on their database for work hardening placements.

**ACS completion is determined by attendance for 7 or more days of the course.

