



Uniting Vic.Tas

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Legislative Assembly, Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Parliament House, Spring Street
East Melbourne, VIC 3002

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Inquiry into Sustainable Employment for Disadvantaged Jobseekers

Uniting Vic.Tas welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into Sustainable Employment for Disadvantaged Jobseekers.

Uniting is a not-for-profit, community services organisation that has worked alongside local communities across Victoria and Tasmania for over 100 years. We deliver a broad range of services in the areas of disability, mental health, crisis and homelessness, financial well-being, early learning and employment. This submission reflects Uniting's service experience in providing employment services, and more recently, our participation in a values-based model of recruitment.

Uniting is a provider of a number of employment and pre-employment services, such as Jobactive, Disability Employment Services and ParentsNext. Many of these programs address issues of disadvantage such as physical disability, experience of family violence, mental health challenges etc. Given that the committee is likely to receive a number of submissions related to the delivery of these programs, we have limited our contribution to a recent pilot delivered by Uniting. This pilot models an alternative delivery mechanism for bringing vulnerable people into sustainable employment.

We recently completed a pilot phase of the Launch into Work initiative in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business' and UnitingCare Australia, the peak body for community services organisations of the Uniting Church. Launch into Work is a new model of employment that engages in values-based recruitment in areas where there are shortages in workforce supply.

Jobs in caring professions such as health, disability and aged are predicted to rise significantly in the coming years. As a provider of these services, we already feel the shortage. Values-based recruitment allowed us to select workers based on their personal attributes, commitment, and values. Soft skills and aptitude are prioritised over qualifications. It is about focusing on who people are and their potential instead of what training they have undergone.

The impact of this pilot program was immediate – all fifteen participants are successfully moving into employment. Commitment and compassion are fundamental to providing quality services to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Once employers are selected, Launch into Work funding can then be used to provide the necessary pre-employment and ongoing training required for the jobs.

Based on this experience, Uniting Vic.Tas is proposing that the committee explores schemes that use a strengths-based approach to sustainable employment for people facing disadvantage in the job market. We know that when done right, this model works for human service and care-related work. We believe it's worth exploring the potential for it to be expanded to other sectors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to this inquiry. We would be pleased to provide further information on any of the areas covered in this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Linossier
Chief Executive Officer