



BoysTown



# Project Job Ready

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## Context and Research Background

### BoysTown Mission and Values

BoysTown's mission is "to enable young people, especially those who are marginalised and without voice, to improve their quality of life". The organisation provides innovative, practical services for children, young people and their families experiencing social and economic social disadvantage. In delivering this Mission, BoysTown is committed to the following core values:

- Being a Brother and Sister to all
- Professionalism
- Innovation and Resourcefulness
- Perseverance in Service
- Faith and Zeal

BoysTown is a national child safe organisation that adheres to the principles contained in the National Framework for Child-Safe Organisations.

### Background to the Program

Project Job Ready began in July 2011 is a joint initiative of Education Queensland Metropolitan Region, the Department of Education, Training and Employment and BoysTown. The aim of the 2011/12 pilot program was to target 50 Year 12 students identified by school staff at four State High Schools in the Brisbane South region. Students were selected on the basis of being at high risk of not making a successful transition from school to work in 2012. A BoysTown Youth Worker, Taua Su'a Matiseni and school support staff were jointly responsible for managing the implementation of the program to ensure that project outcomes were achieved.

The Project Job Ready model is based on evidence-based research that suggests that unless young people have vocational pathways in place prior to leaving school, they tend to drift between unemployment and casual or part-time work for extended periods of time, and are at significant risk of long-term unemployment.

Findings from the pilot program indicated that Program Job Ready (PJR) 2011/12 was effective in assisting some young people to make the transition to full time engagement with 40% of pilot participants reporting engaging in either full time education or training more than six months after they finished formal schooling. The final evaluation report for the 2011/12 pilot delivered a series of findings and recommendations for future programs. At the conclusion of the pilot program, a steering committee involving representatives from all relevant stakeholder decided to continue the program for 2012/13. Three of the four schools agreed to participate in the 2012/13 Program Job Ready, with Bayside State High School withdrawing.

Several recommendations from the 2011/12 pilot program evaluation were implemented, including the following:

- BoysTown implemented a private group Facebook page for BoysTown staff and young people signed up to the program in 2012/13. During the 12 month program, 48 young people (91%) in the program were signed up to the BoysTown PJR Facebook page. The Facebook page was used to: keep in contact with young people using a



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free medium; to notify them of updates; appointments; and events such as workshops.

- A BoysTown Employment Transitions Officer was employed for a short term intensive period to engage, re-engage and assist young people, particularly those that remained unemployed after school. This support was provided by an experienced BoysTown staff member and focused on assisting young people to search for work, providing personal support to address barriers to work, conduct personalised reverse marketing, interview skills and and 'on the ground' job canvassing.
- The BoysTown Employment Transitions Officer and Youth Worker held an intensive five day workshop for PJR participants that were unemployed held between 15-19 April 2013. The workshop focussed on developing the young peoples' communication skills, involved team work activities, resume writing, interview skills, reverse marketing, organising Centrelink and Job Services Australia appointments, and also included a shopping trip to purchase interview and work clothes.

The 2012/13 program recruited 53 young people from three schools: Sunnybank State High School; Wynnum State High School and Nyanda State High School.

This evaluation report is the final report of the 2012/13 program and follows two previous interim reports delivered to the Project Job Ready Governance Group before the 30 December 2012 and 30 March 2013.



## Review of Literature

The Next Step Survey collects data concerning the post-school destinations of Queensland students approximately six months after they complete Year 12<sup>1</sup>. Data from the 2012 survey revealed that across Queensland, approximately 27% of young people were not pursuing further training or education and were either looking for work; working part-time; or not looking for work. Among the three schools selected to participate in Project Job Ready 2012/13, approximately 35% of young people were identified in this category of not studying and not working full-time following the completion of Grade 12.

There may exist a number of reasons why some young people do not go onto further study or full time work following high school graduation. Some of the reasons behind young people not moving into post-school study or full time work include: relationship and family difficulties; financial difficulties; mental health concerns; disability; homelessness; drug and alcohol misuse; pregnancy; needing a break following school; assessing their career options; or simply not being sure of what they want to do<sup>2</sup>. Young people exiting school on an employment pathway face a highly casualised labour market, characterised by a significant demand for highly skilled labour and continuing shrinkage in the availability of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs for entry-level workers. An examination of Australia's labour force by Campbell (2004) found that rates of casual labour are unusually high compared to rates of casualisation in other OECD countries<sup>3</sup>.

However, the issue of young people not entering into post-school study or full time employment after school is not only found in Queensland, but is also common internationally. A study by Nishida (2002) found that the number of Japanese young people who entered a cycle of part-time jobs or unemployment rose by 500,000 between 1997 and 2002<sup>4</sup>.

In order to address the increase in at-risk and disengaged youth, government agencies began creating policies that "provided individualized support. These policies will be followed in assessing aptitudes; counseling; employment guidance; providing formation; and developing labour demand" (Nishida, 2002: 4).

Project Job Ready (PJR) grew out of this research as one example of a holistic policy approach that sought to provide assistance and education to at-risk young people. While the type of support varied for each individual, the focus of this project was to encourage young people to overcome their own personal barriers to fully engaging in work or study after they left school. For some, this required motivation and encouragement, while others required more intensive emotional, mental and physical support.

This evaluation report will reflect upon the 2011/12 PJR pilot and the 2012/13 Program in order to make informed recommendations for future programs involving school leavers.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Education and Training (2010). Next Step Survey: A report on the destinations of Year 12 completers from 2011 in Queensland.  
[http://education.qld.gov.au/nextstep/pdfs/2012pdfs/2012\\_next\\_step\\_report\\_web.pdf](http://education.qld.gov.au/nextstep/pdfs/2012pdfs/2012_next_step_report_web.pdf) Retrieved 13 September 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Brader, A., and McGinty, S. (2005). Educational disengagement: A review of international, Australian and State Policy Responses. In: Pandian, A., Kabilan, M., and Kaur, S. (Eds) Teachers Practices and Supportive Cultures. University Putra Malaysia Press, Serdang.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, I. (2004). Casual Work and Casualisation: How does Australia compare? Paper presented to conference on "Work interrupted: Casual and insecure Employment in Australia", University of Melbourne, August 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Nishida, K. (2002). Youth Employment Measures in Japan. International Labour Organisation Conference, Bangkok. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_bk\\_pb\\_107\\_en.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_bk_pb_107_en.pdf) Retrieved 15 December 2011.



## Methodology

This final evaluation utilised data and information obtained from all 53 young people involved in Project Job Ready over the 12 month duration of the program. The Researcher, Amy Tyrrell, from BoysTown’s Strategy and Research division, collected data from young people at three points in time: Baseline data was collected in person from 48<sup>5</sup> young people between the 20-31 August 2012; Follow-up data was collected both in-person and over the phone from 44 of these young people between 30 October and 15 November 2012; and exit data was collected over the phone or via Facebook private messaging from 20 young people during the period 1-30 June 2013.

At the conclusion of the 2012/13 PJR program on 30 June 2013: one young person had expressed that they wished to be removed from the program; and an additional 33 young people could not be contacted directly by the BoysTown Researcher. Overall, 20 young people were involved in the final phase of the evaluation representing a 37.7% response rate.

The Researcher and Youth Worker both made several attempts to contact all young people by phone for the final phase of data collection. In addition, the Researcher attempted to contact these 33 young people by SMS or through social media for those young people that were members of the private PJR Facebook group page.

Table 1 below outlines the number of young people from the three schools that participated in the PJR Evaluation, over three points in time.

**Table 1: PJR Evaluation contacts, by school: 2012/13.**

| School       | Survey time-point |           |           |           |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|              | Baseline          | Mid-point | Exit      | Total n = |
| Nyanda       | 14                | 14        | 7         | 16        |
| Sunnybank    | 15                | 16        | 7         | 18        |
| Wynnum       | 19                | 14        | 6         | 19        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>48</b>         | <b>44</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>53</b> |

The data collected during the evaluation interviews included a range of quantitative well-being measures that have been tested and validated. These include the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* which has been widely used to measure an individual’s perception of their self-esteem, worth and value and the *General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)*, which is a validated measure of various aspects of emotional wellbeing. In addition, the young people were also asked about the following: changes to job status; living situation; financial situation; as well as qualitative questions about the young person’s level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the program, and the level of assistance provided by BoysTown staff.

Throughout the 2012/13 program the BoysTown Youth Worker provided the Researcher with additional information and case note summaries regarding the training undertaken by PJR participants, as well as employment and educational outcomes for young people in Project Job Ready.

<sup>5</sup> Five young people were not interviewed at Baseline due to their absence from school on the day the Researcher visited, or due to their late enrolment in PJR for 2012/13.





## Demographics

One of the stated aims of Project Job Ready was to target a diverse range of students for inclusion in this project. In particular, it was hoped that there would be significant diversity in terms of the selected participant's cultural and ethnic identities.

Table 2 below outlines the demographic characteristics for the 53 PJR participants for 2012/13.

**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of PJR Cohort, 2012-13**

| Demographics                 |                                    | School    |           |           | Total     | %           |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
|                              |                                    | Nyanda    | Sunnybank | Wynnum    |           |             |
| Age                          | 16 years                           | 2         | 1         | 5         | 8         | 15.1%       |
|                              | 17 years                           | 12        | 12        | 12        | 36        | 67.9%       |
|                              | 18 years                           | 2         | 4         | 2         | 8         | 15.1%       |
|                              | 19 years                           | 0         | 1         | 0         | 1         | 1.9%        |
| Gender                       | Female                             | 3         | 11        | 7         | 21        | 39.6%       |
|                              | Male                               | 13        | 7         | 12        | 32        | 60.4%       |
| Cultural and Ethnic Identity | Aboriginal Australian              | 1         | 1         | 3         | 5         | 9.4%        |
|                              | Not Indigenous or CALD             | 8         | 5         | 7         | 20        | 37.7%       |
|                              | Other CALD background <sup>^</sup> | 1         | 6         | 1         | 8         | 15.1%       |
|                              | Pacific Islander                   | 6         | 6         | 8         | 20        | 37.7%       |
| <b>Total</b>                 |                                    | <b>16</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>100%</b> |

<sup>^</sup> Includes students who identify with cultures and ethnic groups including Somalian, Burundi, South African, Sudanese, Congolese, Sierra Leone and Filipino.

It is evident from this information that over 60% of the students identified with a diverse cultural and ethnic identity, including Aboriginal (9.4%), Pacific Islander (37.7%), and Other CALD Backgrounds (15.1%) of which 87.5% identified with a culture from Africa.

In terms of the gender of PJR participants, when the entire cohort was examined, 60.4% of participants were male, while 39.6% were female. The school with the most varied distribution of gender was Nyanda State High School where only 18.7% of PJR participants were female. In contrast, the PJR group from Sunnybank State high School included a majority of female participants (61.1%).



## Findings

### Project Job Ready and QCE Status

Of the 53 young people that participated in Project Job Ready during 2012/13, 41 (77.4%) attained their *Queensland Certificate of Education* (QCE). Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) data from 2012 indicates that 85.6% of Year 12 Queensland students from 2012 achieved their QCE<sup>6</sup>. The QCE attainment of this year's PJR participants was therefore much higher than the QCE attainment of young people in the 2011/12 PJR cohort when only 58% of participants achieved their QCE.

Table 3 below provides a breakdown of the numbers of young people from PJR at each school that attained their QCE. The school with the highest proportion of students in PJR achieving their QCE was Wynnum State High School (78.9%), while 77.8% of Sunnybank State High students in PJR achieved the QCE. At Nyanda, 75.0% of young people in PJR achieved their QCE this year, compared to only 17% in the 2011/12 PJR group.

**Table 3: QCE Status by school, Project Job Ready 2012/13.**

| School attended | Did attain QCE | % With QCE   | Did not attain QCE | Did not attain QCE and did not finish year | Total     |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Nyanda          | 12             | 75.0%        | 4                  | 0                                          | 16        |
| Sunnybank       | 14             | 77.8%        | 3                  | 1                                          | 18        |
| Wynnum          | 15             | 78.9%        | 2                  | 2                                          | 19        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>41</b>      | <b>77.4%</b> | <b>9</b>           | <b>3</b>                                   | <b>53</b> |

While this years results are a marked improvement on last years, it is still evident that this group of young people achieved lower rates of QCE attainment, compared to the average Queensland student.

While this highlights the disadvantage these young people may face following school as they complete in a competitive job market, it is a positive finding that these young people were identified correctly as being a cohort of young people who were at risk of falling into an unemployment- casual work cycle post-school. It is therefore encouraging to review the post-school employment and training outcomes of these young people in the next section.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/publications/qa\\_stats\\_yr12\\_enrol\\_cert\\_2012.pdf](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/publications/qa_stats_yr12_enrol_cert_2012.pdf) Page 3





## Employment and Training Outcomes

The Project Job Ready project plan included a number of deliverables and identified success criteria for which to measure the outcomes for young people in the Project. There were a number of these *Key Performance Indicators* (KPIs) that were relevant to measuring whether PJR was successful at assisting young people to achieve an employment or training outcome.

Each of these KPIs will now be reported against using data collected from PJR participants and BoysTown staff during the 12-month contract period.

### KPI#1: Report on the proportion of participants who have commenced full time accredited training or mainstream employment by June 2013.

The following section includes data from multiple sources. Due to the difficulty experienced by the BoysTown Researcher in contacting young people in June 2013, alternative data sources were included in order to provide as much detail as possible.

Table 4 below includes two different columns regarding outcome data for June 2013. The column titled, "Outcomes January-June 2013", includes data gathered from three sources: direct information from client to the Researcher, Employment data from the Job Services Australia (JSA) Employment Services System (ESS), and case note information from Taua Su'a Matiseni from the last point of contact established between the Youth Worker and young person. The other column, titled "Outcomes June 2013 only", includes only that data collected directly from client to the Researcher and JSA ESS data. The second column therefore, represents a more conservative estimate of the client employment and training outcomes.

**Table 4: Project Job Ready Final Outcome Data 2012/13.**

| Project Job Ready Final Outcomes      | Project Job Ready          |              |                         |              |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
|                                       | Outcomes January-June 2013 | %            | Outcomes June 2013 only | %            |
| <b>Full time outcomes</b>             | <b>31</b>                  | <b>59.6%</b> | <b>13</b>               | <b>25.0%</b> |
| Full time training or apprenticeship  | 16                         | 30.8%        | 7                       | 13.5%        |
| Full time training and Casual work    | 2                          | 3.8%         | 2                       | 3.8%         |
| Full time work                        | 12                         | 23.1%        | 3                       | 5.8%         |
| Part time Work and Part time Study    | 1                          | 1.9%         | 1                       | 1.9%         |
| <b>Other Outcomes</b>                 | <b>4</b>                   | <b>7.7%</b>  | <b>2</b>                | <b>3.8%</b>  |
| Part time work                        | 3                          | 5.8%         | 1                       | 1.9%         |
| Casual work                           | 1                          | 1.9%         | 1                       | 1.9%         |
| <b>Unemployed or outcomes unknown</b> | <b>17</b>                  | <b>32.7%</b> | <b>37</b>               | <b>71.2%</b> |
| Change of personal Circumstances      | 1                          | 1.9%         | 0                       | 0.0%         |
| Unemployed and engaged with JSA       | 4                          | 7.7%         | 4                       | 7.7%         |
| Unemployed <sup>7</sup>               | 7                          | 13.5%        | 2                       | 3.8%         |
| No contact with young person          | 5                          | 9.6%         | 31                      | 59.6%        |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>52</b>                  | <b>100%</b>  | <b>52</b>               | <b>100%</b>  |

<sup>7</sup> Two young people that were unemployed in June 2013 have since secured employment post 30 June 2013.



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The following analysis is based on the cohort of 52<sup>8</sup> young people as shown in column "Outcomes January-June 2013".

As shown in Table 4, of the 52 young people involved with Project Job Ready during the final phase of 2012/13, 59.6% were known to be engaged in full time accredited training or employment between January-June 2013. Of this group, 18 were undertaking full time training or an apprenticeship, 12 were employed in full time work, and one participant was combining part time work and part time study. One young person from this cohort accepted an offer to study a Bachelor of Information Technology, full time at university.

At the final evaluation stage of the 2011/12 pilot program, approximately 40% of participants were known to be in full time work or study in June 2012. This finding indicates that the employment and training outcomes of this year's cohort were considerably higher than the 2011/12 Pilot cohort. This finding however, must be interpreted with caution, due to the inclusion of Youth Worker case note data used in this year's outcome data.

It is also evident in this data that some young people in Project Job Ready have not been able to secure full time work or training one year after signing up to PJR. Of this group, three young people were known to be employed on a part-time basis between January and June 2013, with another young person having obtained casual work.

Due to the difficulty in contacting young people, the outcomes of five young people were unknown as the BoysTown Youth Worker or Researcher as of June 2013. During the last six months of the program, BoysTown staff attempted unsuccessfully to contact many young people via phone, SMS text message, home visits or private Facebook messages. It is possible that some of these young people are engaged in work, training or a combination or both.

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<sup>8</sup> Please note: Of the 53 participants, one young person asked to be removed from the program after the mid-point data collection phase (December 2012).



## Employment and Training Outcomes by School

Table 5 below outlines the employment and training outcomes of young people across the three Brisbane Metropolitan State High Schools participating in Project Job Ready (PJR) 2012/13.

The school with the highest proportion of students achieving full time outcomes was Wynnum State High School with 68.4% of participants known to be engaging in full time work or study between January and June 2013. This result was largely influenced by the high proportion of young people from Wynnum engaging in full time work after school.

In comparison, students from Nyanda State High School were most likely to be engaging in a full time education or training or program after school.

In every school, more than 50% of students participating in the program achieved a full time outcome.

**Table 5: Project Job Ready Final Outcome Data by school attended, 2012/13.**

| Project Job Ready Outcome data<br>January-June 2013 |                                    | School                         |                                   |                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
|                                                     |                                    | Nyanda<br>State High<br>School | Sunnybank<br>State High<br>School | Wynnum<br>State<br>High<br>School | Total        |
|                                                     |                                    | n=15                           | n=18                              | n=19                              | n=52         |
| <b>Full time outcome</b>                            |                                    | <b>53.3%</b>                   | <b>55.6%</b>                      | <b>68.4%</b>                      | <b>59.6%</b> |
| <b>Full time Employment</b>                         |                                    | <b>6.7%</b>                    | <b>16.7%</b>                      | <b>42.1%</b>                      | <b>23.1%</b> |
| <b>Full time Education</b>                          |                                    | <b>46.7%</b>                   | <b>38.9%</b>                      | <b>26.3%</b>                      | <b>36.5%</b> |
|                                                     | Full time training                 | 40.0%                          | 33.3%                             | 21.1%                             | 30.8%        |
|                                                     | Full time training and casual work | 6.7%                           | 5.6%                              | 0.0%                              | 3.8%         |
|                                                     | Part time work and part time study | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                              | 5.3%                              | 1.9%         |
| <b>Part time or Casual work</b>                     |                                    | <b>13.3%</b>                   | <b>5.6%</b>                       | <b>5.3%</b>                       | <b>7.7%</b>  |
|                                                     | Casual work                        | 6.7%                           | 0.0%                              | 0.0%                              | 1.9%         |
|                                                     | Part time work                     | 6.7%                           | 5.6%                              | 5.3%                              | 5.8%         |
| <b>Unemployed</b>                                   |                                    | <b>20.0%</b>                   | <b>22.2%</b>                      | <b>21.1%</b>                      | <b>21.2%</b> |
| <b>Other</b>                                        |                                    | <b>13.3%</b>                   | <b>16.7%</b>                      | <b>5.3%</b>                       | <b>11.5%</b> |
|                                                     | No contact                         | 13.3%                          | 11.1%                             | 5.3%                              | 9.6%         |
|                                                     | Change to personal circumstances   | 0.0%                           | 5.6%                              | 0.0%                              | 1.9%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                        |                                    | <b>100%</b>                    | <b>100%</b>                       | <b>100%</b>                       | <b>100%</b>  |



## Employment and Training Outcomes by Cultural Identity

Table 6 below reports on the outcomes for Project Job Ready clients, broken down by the cohorts diverse cultural and ethnic groups. It is evident from this data that those young people in PJR identifying with a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background were most likely to achieve a full time education or employment outcome (62.5%), compared to other cultural groups.

**Table 6: Project Job Ready Outcomes by Cultural Background, 30 June 2013.**

| Project Job Ready Outcome data<br>January-June 2013 |                                    | Cultural and Ethnic Background |                           |                     |                              |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------|
|                                                     |                                    | Aboriginal<br>Australian       | Other CALD<br>background* | Pacific<br>Islander | Not<br>Indigenous<br>or CALD | Total |
|                                                     |                                    | n=5                            | n=8                       | n=20                | n=19                         | n=52  |
| <b>Full time outcome</b>                            |                                    | 60.0%                          | 62.5%                     | 60.0%               | 57.9%                        | 59.6% |
| <b>Full time Employment</b>                         |                                    | 20.0%                          | 0.0%                      | 30.0%               | 26.3%                        | 23.1% |
| <b>Full time Education</b>                          |                                    | 40.0%                          | 62.5%                     | 30.0%               | 31.6%                        | 36.5% |
|                                                     | Full time training                 | 40.0%                          | 50.0%                     | 25.0%               | 26.3%                        | 30.8% |
|                                                     | Full time training and casual work | 0.0%                           | 12.5%                     | 5.0%                | 0.0%                         | 3.8%  |
|                                                     | Part time work and part time study | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                      | 0.0%                | 5.3%                         | 1.9%  |
| <b>Part time or Casual work</b>                     |                                    | 0.0%                           | 12.5%                     | 5.0%                | 10.5%                        | 7.7%  |
|                                                     | Casual work                        | 0.0%                           | 12.5%                     | 5.0%                | 0.0%                         | 3.8%  |
|                                                     | Part time work                     | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                      | 0.0%                | 10.5%                        | 3.8%  |
| <b>Unemployed</b>                                   |                                    | 40.0%                          | 25.0%                     | 25.0%               | 10.5%                        | 21.2% |
| <b>Other</b>                                        |                                    | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                      | 10.0%               | 21.1%                        | 11.5% |
|                                                     | No contact                         | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                      | 5.0%                | 21.1%                        | 9.6%  |
|                                                     | Change to personal circumstances   | 0.0%                           | 0.0%                      | 5.0%                | 0.0%                         | 1.9%  |
| <b>Total</b>                                        |                                    | 100%                           | 100%                      | 100%                | 100%                         | 100%  |

\* Includes students who identify with cultures and ethnic groups including Somalian, Burundi, South African, Sudanese, Congolese, Sierra Leone and Filipino.

Canadian research<sup>9</sup> into the school to work transitions of Indigenous and culturally diverse students found that culture played a significant role in the motivation, choice of field, and ultimate attainment of employment. "Cultural factors play a significant role in all aspects of life and development, including work. Ethnic identity, family and gender are also cultural locations affecting life and work decisions. For adolescents and young adults getting ready to enter the workforce, these factors are particularly salient and can have far-reaching effects on their future work and life pathways" (Marshall et al, 2013: 185).

It is therefore interesting to view the attainment of full time outcomes by young people in PJR, with Aboriginal, Pacific Islander and CALD students attaining better employment and training outcomes than non-Indigenous students in the program. This is of particular significance given that rates of unemployment are higher among culturally diverse populations<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Marshall, E., Stewart, S., Popadiuk, N. and Lawrence, B. (2013). Walking in Multiple Worlds: Successful School-to-Work Transitions for Aboriginal and Cultural Minority Youth, in *Cultural and Social Diversity and the Transition from Education to Work Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*, Vol: 17: pp185-201.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) *Census of Population and Housing, Table I14. Cat: 2002.0*



## Comparison to Job Service Australia

For young people in Australia who are currently unemployed, *Job Services Australia (JSA)* and its providers are the Australian Governments employment service. Once they have discussed their individual situation with someone at Centrelink, unemployed young people are referred to a local JSA provider who will assist them to find a job or to commence a full time training/ education course. While JSA is a public service, the aim of Project Job Ready was to go beyond the type of support provided by JSA, to include personalised support and case management in order to gain better outcomes for young people in the Project Job Ready cohort. In order to determine the overall success of Project Job Ready, the outcomes of these young people will be compared with the outcomes for all JSA clients. JSA client outcome data refers to the outcomes of clients who “participated in employment assistance in the 12 months prior to September 2012”<sup>11</sup>.

In the 12-month period ending September 2012, 43.6% of Job Services Australia (JSA) job seekers aged 15-20 years achieved an *employment outcome*, in which this definition includes full-time, part-time or casual work. When these definitions were applied to the Project Job Ready Cohort, 46.8% of young people contacted by BoysTown between January and June 2013 were known to meet the JSA criteria of “employed”. In addition, Project Job Ready clients were more likely to achieve a full time employment outcome (31.9%), compared to JSA clients aged between 15 and 20 years from all Streams (20.6%).

At their first meeting with Centrelink or your Job Services Australia provider, each JSA client has their requirements assessed and they are placed into one of four streams of support. In streams 2, 3 and 4, clients receive more intensive services, in order to assist them to address their personal barriers to employment. Table 7 below, outlines a comparison of PJR outcomes compared to the outcomes of JSA clients aged 15-20 years from Streams 1-4. It is evident from the data in this comparison table that the proportion of young people from PJR with an Education and Training Outcome was higher than JSA clients from all Streams and that PJR participant employment outcomes were higher than those JSA clients from Streams 2, 3 and 4.

**Table 7: PJR Outcomes compared 15-20 year old JSA Outcomes, for All Streams.**

| Comparison Outcome Activity | Project Job Ready Outcomes January- June 2013 |       | Job Services Australia as of Sept 2012 |          |          |          |             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
|                             | n=46 ^                                        | % ~   | Stream 1                               | Stream 2 | Stream 3 | Stream 4 | All Streams |
| Education and Training*     | 19                                            | 40.4% | 35.1%                                  | 37.8%    | 29.6%    | 25.9%    | 33.9%       |
| Employment Outcome          | 22                                            | 46.8% | 57.6%                                  | 44.7%    | 32.3%    | 25.2%    | 43.6%       |
| Full time work              | 15                                            | 31.9% | 27.7%                                  | 20.5%    | 12.1%    | 15.2%    | 20.6%       |
| Part time work              | 7                                             | 14.9% | 29.9%                                  | 24.1%    | 20.2%    | 10.0%    | 23.0%       |
| Unemployed                  | 11                                            | 23.4% | 33.0%                                  | 40.9%    | 50.7%    | 39.3%    | 39.6%       |

\*The JSA definition of an education/training outcome is achieved when a job seeker indicates they are training or studying. The education/training outcome rate is the job seekers who are studying as a proportion of all job seekers. BoysTown has only reported an education or training outcome when a young person is undertaking a Full time accredited training course (Eg: Cert III in Hospitality).

^ Please note this table only provides the outcome data for the 46 PJR students who were still engaged with BoysTown between January- June 2013. Those young people who could not be contacted (n=5), asked to be removed from the program (n=1), and those young people that were not looking for work due to personal circumstances (n=1) were therefore removed from this analysis.

~ Column percentages provided in this table may add up to more than 100% as the outcomes of one young person may be counted more than once (E.g.: Working part-time and studying full time).

<sup>11</sup> Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2013). Labour Market Assistance Outcomes, September 2012. Available online: [http://foi.deewr.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/labour\\_market\\_assistance\\_outcomes\\_september\\_2012.pdf](http://foi.deewr.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/labour_market_assistance_outcomes_september_2012.pdf)



## Training options provided throughout the program

The following section provides information concerning training needs and training completion for young people involved in the 2012/13 PJR program. Table 8 below outlines the outcomes for the 21 young people that completed a BoysTown short training course during the 12 month program.

**Table 8: Details of training undertaken by young people, June 2013.**

| Unique ID       | Employment or Training Outcome       | Hospitality Course | Learners Drivers License |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Young Person 1  | Full Time Work                       |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 2  | Full Time Work                       |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 3  | Full Time Work                       |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 4  | Full Time Work                       | RSA                |                          |
| Young Person 5  | Full time training or apprenticeship | RSG                |                          |
| Young Person 6  | Full time training or apprenticeship |                    | Learners- ID problems    |
| Young Person 7  | Full time training or apprenticeship |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 8  | Two part time jobs                   |                    | Learners- ID problems    |
| Young Person 9  | Part time Work                       | RSA                | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 10 | Part time Work                       | RSA                |                          |
| Young Person 11 | Part time Work and Part time Study   | RSA                |                          |
| Young Person 12 | Casual Work                          |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 13 | Unemployed and linked to JSA         |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 14 | Unemployed and linked to JSA         |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 15 | Unemployed                           | RSA                |                          |
| Young Person 16 | Unemployed                           | RSG                | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 17 | Unemployed                           |                    | Learners - Did not pass  |
| Young Person 18 | Personal Outcome                     |                    | Learners- passed         |
| Young Person 19 | Unknown                              |                    | Learners - Did not pass  |
| Young Person 20 | Unknown                              | RSA                | Learners - Did not pass  |
| Young Person 21 | No longer in program                 | RSA                |                          |

As shown above, 15 young people from PJR undertook a BoysTown Learner Drivers workshop, followed immediately by a Department of Transport and Roads Learners test. Of the 15 young people that participated in the workshop, 10 (66.7%) passed and were awarded their Learners permit.

In addition, nine young people completed either a Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) or Responsible Service of Gambling (RSG) qualification through BoysTown. Of the nine RSA or RSG participants, 100% of those that were known to be working were employed in the hospitality industry. This finding confirms that their undertaking the RSA or RSG through BoysTown was directly relevant to their employment.





## Support provided to unemployed PJR Participants

Table 9 below outlines the types of Youth Work, and employment preparation support provided to the 11 young people who were known to be unemployed as of June 2013, as well as details of any formal training courses they have completed with the assistance of the BoysTown Youth Worker. It is evident, that where contactable, each unemployed young person was provided with multiple instances of personal, tailored employment preparation support by BoysTown staff.

**Table 9: Training and support for PJR Unemployed participants, 30 June 2013**

| Unique Identifier | Employment Summary January- June 2013 | Assistance Provided by BoysTown Youth Worker                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Young Person A    | Unemployed and linked to JSA          | Centrelink Appointment, JSA Appointment, job searching, and 3 sessions of reverse marketing.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Young Person B    | Unemployed and linked to JSA          | Resume writing. Young person moved interstate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Young Person C    | Unemployed and linked to JSA          | Personal support, resume writing. Young person dealing with personal issues.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Young Person D    | Unemployed and linked to JSA          | Completed Certificate 3 course and now job searching. Centrelink Appointment, JSA Appointment, Job interview practice, reverse marketing, Learners license workshop (passed).                                                                                                         |
| Young Person E    | Unemployed                            | Resume writing, Workshop: Employability Skills. Young person was accepted to enter Navy, but had not yet commenced.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Young Person F    | Unemployed                            | Phone calls, SMS, Home visits- No contact with young person.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Young Person G    | Unemployed                            | 5 day workshop on Communication skills, team work activities, resume writing, interview skills, reverse marketing, Centrelink/JSA appointments, Work Clothes Shopping. Responsible Service of Gambling (RSG), Centrelink Appointment, JSA Appointment, and Learners license (passed). |
| Young Person H    | Unemployed                            | Workshop: Employability skills, Learners License (did not pass) Centrelink Appointment, JSA Appointment, Job searching, resume writing, reverse marketing resulting in a job - young person quit after one week.                                                                      |
| Young Person I    | Unemployed                            | Phone calls, SMS, Home visits- No contact with young person                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Young Person J    | Unemployed                            | Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), Accepted into JSA BoysTown 10 week Employment Program- Did not attend.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Young Person K    | Unemployed                            | Deferred University Placement until 2014, Personal support, resume writing, driving lessons.                                                                                                                                                                                          |



## Measures of Wellbeing

### Enhanced personal, social and general well being outcomes

A key deliverable of Project Job Ready was to measure whether the program achieved enhanced personal, social and general wellbeing in its participants. In order to assess a young persons overall level of wellbeing, BoysTown’s Strategy and Research team have designed a survey that can be implemented on a number of occasions throughout a young person’s involvement with BoysTown.

For those young people involved in PJR 2012/13, interviews were undertaken upon their entry into the program (August 2012), mid-point (November 2012) and at the end of the 12-month contract (June 2013). The following sections utilise the data obtained from these young people.

#### KPI #2: Proportion of participants who demonstrate improved self-esteem, wellbeing and future outlook by June 2013.

The following data contained below includes the responses of the young people interviewed at three different time points. The *General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)* has been validated as a measure of various aspects of emotional wellbeing such as losing sleep over anxiety, constant stress and feeling capable of facing problems. The questionnaire consists of 12 items, each assessing the severity of a mental problem over the past few weeks using a 4-point scale. Scores on each of the 12 items are used to generate a total score ranging from 0 to 36, with higher scores indicating worse conditions. Scores between 15 and 19 indicate distress, while GHQ12 scores above 20 suggest severe health problems and psychological distress.

As shown in Table 10, the average wellbeing score for young people on entry to the PJR program was 18.1, which decreased to 15.3 at the exit point in June 2013. This finding indicates an overall improvement in the emotional health and wellbeing of PJR participants over the duration of the program, however it also shows that on average, participants in PJR remained within the range of being “distressed” during the 12 month period.

**Table 10: General Health Questionnaire (GHQ12), Project Job Ready 2012/13**

| General Health Questionnaire Mean | Baseline    | Mid-Point   | Exit        | Change      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Number of respondents</i>      | 47          | 43          | 15          | NA          |
| Anxiety                           | 7.0         | 6.7         | 5.4         | -1.6        |
| Social                            | 6.6         | 6.1         | 5.1         | -1.6        |
| Confidence                        | 4.5         | 4.9         | 4.9         | 0.4         |
| <b>Overall Wellbeing</b>          | <b>18.1</b> | <b>17.7</b> | <b>15.3</b> | <b>-2.8</b> |

In addition to asking clients about their health and wellbeing, young people that participated in the final June 2013 interview were also asked about their satisfaction with the support and guidance provided by the BoysTown Youth Worker, Taua Su’a Matiseni. Clients were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback.

*Client: “I was treated really good. (The Youth Worker) helped me a lot with finding some jobs and also helping me with my interactive skills towards others”.*



## Project Job Ready

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**Client:** *"She treated us well. She was awesome. She had a way of making me smile when I was down".*

**Client:** *"Really good. She treated us like family, not just people she worked with. She was easy going".*

**Client:** *"Taua was like a mate. It was if I knew her for a couple of years".*

Clients were also asked about their satisfaction with the overall program, and whether they thought that their participation in Project Job Ready had been helpful.

**Client:** *"Yeah it has- with my learners (license) and also prepping for the real world".*

**Client:** *"Yeah definitely. It's helped. The RSA and job searching was good".*

While a number of young people felt the program had been helpful, a small number of clients felt that their own level of engagement and consequent lack of participation had resulted in the program not being as helpful as it could've been.

**Client:** *"To tell the truth, I barely had anything to do with the program. When I signed up, I left school, then I moved away and I couldn't get to anything (meetings/workshops)".*

**Client:** *"It has helped, but I haven't really put myself in the program well. I could've done more".*

A very small number of young people expressed disappointment with the program and felt that it didn't offer them much additional value to existing supports provided through their school.

**Client:** *"I didn't really do anything with them (BoysTown). I saw Taua 3 or 4 times and that was okay. They had a Learners workshop, but I already had my L's".*

**Client:** *"It was a good thing when I was at school. But after school I haven't really heard from Taua at all".*

Future programs that build on this model of school to work transitional support, need to address the difficulty of providing a school-based service, to a cohort of young people, many of whom are severely disengaged from school. Student absenteeism, particularly in two of the three schools participating in PJR 2012/13, made the delivery of ongoing and regular support services by the BoysTown Youth Worker very difficult. Future programs targeting these at-risk young people may therefore need to consider engaging with young people in their homes if absenteeism is a significant barrier to their engagement with the program.



## Self esteem

In addition to the GHQ-12, the BoysTown wellbeing survey also implemented the *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*, which has been widely used to measure an individual's perception of their self-esteem, worth and value (Rosenberg, 1989). The scale includes a series of questions regarding whether young people are satisfied with themselves, feel worthy and proud, and take a positive approach to life. In addition, the scale also includes questions about whether young people feel useless, feel like a failure or want to have more respect for themselves. According to this scale, a score between 15 and 25 is considered in the normal or average range and scores below 15 are indicative of low self-esteem. Unlike the General Health Questionnaire, a higher score on the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale indicates an improvement in reported self-esteem.

For PJR participants, the average self-esteem score upon entry into the program was 18.5, while the average score by the programs cessation in June 2013 had increased slightly to 18.9. Overall, these scores indicate that young people, who participated in PJR 2012/13, reported a slight increase in their self-esteem over the 12 month period. It also shows that on average, participants in PJR 2012/13 scored within the normal range for self-esteem.

**Table 11: Rosenberg Self Esteem Score, Project Job Ready 2012/13**

| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale  | Baseline    | Mid-Point   | Exit        | Change      |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Number of respondents</i> | 44          | 40          | 15          | NA          |
| <b>Overall Self Esteem</b>   | <b>18.5</b> | <b>19.5</b> | <b>18.9</b> | <b>+0.4</b> |

This finding was consistent with the qualitative feedback obtained by PJR participants. In addition to the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, PJR participants were asked to describe their experience of being in the program, and if they had noticed any changes since they began.

**Client:** *"It was good to be supported".*

**Client:** *"When I need to ask something she is there to answer it. I do enjoy Taua in the program and I love the way she laughs. It makes me laugh also".*

**Client:** *"It's helped me achieve a lot. I got into a good training course and had good support. There were good people to talk to and they helped me get a job".*

The BoysTown Youth Worker also documented a number of instances in which her work focused on assisting a young person through a serious personal issue. In many cases, young people were unable to focus on engaging in work or study due to serious personal issues including: domestic violence; the death of a family member; pregnancy and episodes of anxiety or depression. In these cases, the Youth Workers intervention often involved engaging with the young person, family members and external stakeholders, in order to provide the young person with information or a referral. While some young people required only short term support, others required ongoing support throughout the duration of the 12 month program.



## Drug use, anti-social and offending behaviour

Young people in Project Job Ready were also asked about their use of drugs, alcohol and whether they engaged in anti-social or offending behaviours as part of broader measurements concerning their overall wellbeing.

Table 12 below outlines the frequency scores for students who reported engaging in substance use or anti-social behaviour, where a score of 1 equals "not using in the last month", a score of 2 equals "rarely" (once a month), 3 equals "sometimes" (every few weeks) and 4 refers to that particular activity occurring "often" (at least once a week), within the month prior to being interviewed.

It is important to interpret these findings with particular caution. While every attempt was made by the Researcher to create a comfortable, open environment where young people feel that they can be honest about their substance use and behaviour, the illegality of some of their actions may have resulted in an under-reporting of substance use.

**Table 12: Substance use and Anti-social behaviour, June 2013.**

| Mean score for all clients                               | Baseline | Mid-Point | Exit | Change |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------|--------|
| <i>Number of respondents</i>                             | 48       | 44        | 15   | NA     |
| Smoked cigarettes in the last 4 weeks                    | 1.8      | 1.7       | 1.4  | -0.4   |
| Drinking alcohol in the last 4 weeks                     | 2.2      | 2.0       | 2.3  | 0.1    |
| Taken drugs in the last 4 weeks                          | 1.3      | 1.2       | 1.0  | -0.3   |
| Getting into a physical fight in the last 4 weeks        | 1.3      | 1.2       | 1.1  | -0.2   |
| Getting into trouble with the police in the last 4 weeks | 1.1      | 1.1       | 1.0  | -0.1   |

According to the information presented in this table, the average scores for smoking cigarettes (-0.4), taking drugs (-0.3), getting into physical fights (-0.2) and getting into trouble with the police (-0.1), all decreased slightly over the duration of the PJR program.

The measure that is concerned with drinking alcohol recorded a very slight increase (+0.1) between the baseline and exit time points, however it is possible that some of the participants would have become of legal drinking age during this period.



# Project Job Ready

## Learnings for Future Program Implementation

Young people participating in the 2012/13 program were also asked if they had any ideas for how future Project Job Ready Programs could improve. The majority of participants reported that there was “*nothing to improve*” or that there was “*nothing I can think of*”. A small number of participants provided feedback on the method or frequency of communication between themselves and the BoysTown Youth Worker.

**Client:** “*Send job info by phone rather than email. My email doesn't really get checked*”.

**Client:** “*I didn't even know the gambling (RSG) and alcohol (RSA) courses were on. Maybe I missed it on Facebook, but it would've been good to know it was on*”.

**Client:** “*After school (finishes) check up with us a bit more- Every 2 weeks or so*”.

One young person also felt that the timing of the program could be changed to lengthen the available time to engage with the Youth Worker while at school. This recommendation was also made following the completion of the PJR Pilot Program in 2012.

**Client:** “*Probably do it from the beginning of the year*”.

**2011/12 Recommendation:**

*Future programs of Project Job Ready would benefit from beginning to work with young people at the beginning of Year 12, rather than half way through their last year of schooling. It is thought that this will increase the length of time that the students can work with the PJR Youth Worker, and that this will increase the amount of time the Youth Worker has to build rapport. This will also enable students to complete more work-specific training (e.g. RSA, RSG, White Card) prior to their leaving school.*





## Key findings

### Program Outcomes

- In the 2012/13 Project Job Ready program, 53 young people from three schools in the Brisbane South region participated. These students were selected as being at high-risk of not making a successful transition from school to full time work or training.
- Following their involvement in PJR, 31 young people (59.6% of participants) reported engaging in either full time education or training in the 6-12 months after they finished formal schooling.
- The remaining young people who were still engaged with BoysTown between January-June 2013, were either working part-time (n=3), in a casual job (n=1) or unemployed and being supported by Job Services Australia and/or the BoysTown Youth Worker (n=11).
- Project Job Ready clients were more likely to achieve a full time employment outcome (31.9%), compared to Job Services Australia clients aged between 15 and 20 years from all JSA Streams (20.6%).
- Participants in Project Job Ready 2012/13 recorded small improvements in their mental health and wellbeing, as well as improvements in their self-esteem over the 12 month duration of the program.
- Young people in PJR also recorded small decreases in their use of tobacco and other drugs, a reduction in participation in physical fights and in getting in trouble with police over the duration of the program.

### Learnings for Future School to Work Transitional Program Implementation

- Future programs of Project Job Ready would benefit from beginning to work with young people at the beginning of Year 12, rather than half way through their last year of schooling. It is thought that this will increase the length of time that the students can work with the PJR Youth Worker, and that this will increase the amount of time the Youth Worker has to build rapport. This will also enable students to complete more work-specific training (e.g. RSA, RSG, White Card) prior to their leaving school.
- Future programs that build on this model of school to work transitional support need to address the difficulty of providing a school-based service, to a cohort of young people, many of whom are severely disengaged from school. Student absenteeism, particularly in two of the three schools participating in PJR 2012/13, made the delivery of ongoing and regular support services by the BoysTown Youth Worker very difficult.
- Future programs targeting young people disengaged from schooling may therefore need to consider engaging with young people outside of school if absenteeism is a significant barrier to their engagement with the program. Future Job Ready programs could be delivered in two modalities:
  - a. **Group A** made up of young people that maintain regular school attendance. For this cohort, a Job Ready program would continue to be delivered in the school environment until their graduation.
  - b. **Group B**, or the second cohort would be made up of young people that do not regularly attend school and could be delivered at non-school locations. While school enrolment is maintained, young people in Group B, could attend school-approved external training and employment preparation programs.



## Conclusion

This final evaluation provides an overview of the outcomes of the 53 young people involved in the 2012/13 Project Job Ready pilot Program. This report outlined the employment and training outcomes for young people, as well as examining their levels of self esteem and general wellbeing throughout the 12 month program.

This evaluation report therefore meets BoysTown's contractual reporting requirements.