

Doing things differently: A strategy for the Gippsland region

Prepared by:

Dr Amanda Coles

Professor Peter Fairbrother

Dr Natalie Jovanovski

Dr Fiona Macdonald

Ms Val Prokopiv

Mr Dominik Safari

Ms Helen Scott

Professor Karel Williams

Acknowledgements

The report arises from the 'Transition and Transformation Working Conference, held on the 29th November 2016 at Federation University, Gippsland. Around 55 people attended, drawn from all major sectors in the region, state representatives and officials, as well as guests: Professor Karel Williams, University of Manchester, Professor Wayne Lewchuk, McMaster University, Mr Paul Ford, Chair Gippsland Agribusiness), Ms Denise Richardson (Australian Paper). Mr Todd Williams, CEO, Hunter Regional Development Australia and Professor Bruce Wilson, RMIT University.

The conference and the preparation of the report were funded by Regional Development Victoria.

The authors would like to thank the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, for permission to reproduce the report *Supporting Laid off Workers in Hamilton: The Value of Employment Training at the Hamilton Jobs Actions Centre: Final Report* (Appendix Two).

Citation:

CPOW (2017) *Doing things Differently: A Strategy for the Gippsland Region*, Centre for People, Organisation and Work, RMIT University.

Source: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/research/research-institutes-centres-and-groups/research-centres/centre-for-people-organisation-and-work/projects>

January 2017

Executive Summary

1. The report provides a strategy for immediate transition and long-term transformation in the Gippsland region, with particular attention on the Latrobe Valley sub-region. It is informed by an event titled 'Transition and Transformation Working Conference', held at Federation campus (Gippsland on 29th November 2016). This report is based on the conference discussion, which for many was also informed by the Regional Assembly Gippsland, 17 November 2016.
2. This strategy document can only be implemented by those within the region. It aims to:
 - a. Identify the key assets that define the Gippsland economy
 - b. Examine how these assets can be leveraged to benefit the Gippsland society
 - c. Suggest selected examples for development that can be achieved in a practical way over specified time periods
3. The report will inform the Regional Partnership submission to the government for action in Gippsland and it will inform Gippsland end users who will be responsible for and involved in leveraging assets (natural and social), with a range of others, including state agencies, educational and research establishments, associations and active groups within the area.
4. The challenge is to develop a series of inter-linked steps in relation to both immediate transition and long-term transformation.
5. **Definition:**
 - a. **Transition** refers to the immediate current and rapidly developing situation of mass closure to a circumstance where all involved, workers, households, retailers, related businesses and others, have their futures addressed in achievable ways
 - b. **Transformation** refers to robust and sustainable long-term change and development.

6. Governance: What we must do differently

Challenge: Many organisations and layers of government operate in Gippsland, each promoting their often sectional interests and with no appetite for more layers of governance.

Action – capacity building: Promote ways of setting up community conversations to see how positions could be aligned and where they could begin to work. This could take place over a year in the first instance, with an agreed process and objective after twelve months. The follow up task would be to put these processes into practice over a period of time, keeping in mind the advantage of having the four year presence of the Latrobe Valley Authority, which brings together a series of department staff under one roof.

7. Immediate Challenge of Transition

Place-based Services

Challenge: Currently, the provision of services for displaced workers and their households is fragmented, often with limited peer involvement.

Action: International evidence indicates that the response should be to lay the foundation for a 'one stop shop' with multiple points and places of entry, in its developed form a Workers' Action Centre supported by state services.

Workers' Action Centre

Challenge: Create a service that meets the immediate complex needs of displaced and vulnerable workers and their households so that it complements existing related services.

Action: Establish a Workers Action Centre to provide targeted, on-going support, assistance and engagement for workers and their households in the region.

8. Processes of Transformation

Challenge: Single sector responses to transition are limited and increasingly short-term; a multi-sector approach offers a way forward.

Action: Stimulate sectoral development in integrated and inclusive ways, involving a range of actors, in particular small to medium enterprises (SME's), which are key drivers in local economies.

9. Procedure: Next steps

The report ends with a recommendation that key decision-makers within the region develop and implement a procedural framework for immediate (transition) and long-term (transformation) change. This procedure must be engaged, inclusive and reflexive; ways of proceeding in an interactive and on-going way are suggested. The final decisions are for those in the region, with support from others.

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REPORT

Doing things differently: A strategy for the Gippsland region

Introduction

The proposed strategy is for the Gippsland region as a whole (Bass Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City, South Gippsland Shire, and Wellington Shire). Of necessity, particular attention is given to the Latrobe Valley sub-region, comprising three local government areas: Baw Baw Shire, Latrobe City and Wellington Shire. Key industries in the sub-region are currently identified as energy and mining, timber and paper, and agriculture. There is considerable interest in the future of the sub-region, as the transition from carbon-intensive forms of energy production to environmentally-sustainable alternatives signals a loss of jobs, and a range of potentially adverse economic effects to other key industries in the whole region. As such, this strategy document focuses on the shift from transition to transformation in the Gippsland region.

This report aims to:

1. Identify an approach to governance in relation to transition and transformation
2. Present a strategy to address transition
3. Present a strategy for transformation that will:
 - a. Identify the key assets that define the Gippsland economy
 - b. Examine how these assets can be leveraged to benefit the Gippsland society
 - c. Suggest selected examples for development that can be achieved in a practical way over specified time periods

The report provides a strategy to leverage assets in both the foundational (embedded) and the competitive sections of the economy for the benefit of Gippsland as a whole. It is informed by the event titled 'Transition and Transformation Working Conference', held at Federation campus (Gippsland) on 29th November 2016 (for program and attendance, see Appendix One). Each part is underpinned by the conference discussion, which for many was informed by the Regional Assembly Gippsland consultative meeting, 17 November 2016.

The report is not:

1. A policy statement with identified infrastructure and related investment recommendations
2. A comprehensive road map or plan for the region
3. A complete statement on identifying and leveraging Gippsland assets and opportunities

Such themes have been addressed elsewhere, often in multiple ways and versions (see Appendix Five). The report is a strategy statement, which can be put into practice only by those within Gippsland, supported where appropriate by others. This step will require a careful consideration of both procedure and focus. The suggested transition strategy is informed by national and international experience (Appendix Two and Three). It identifies what works. The examples of possible development for a long-term transformation are suggestions, selected either because of current capacity or immediate potential (Appendix Three). Discussion and debate will identify other possibilities, for example advanced processing (food and fibre) and retail.

The report is for:

1. All who have an interest in and concern with social and economic development in the Gippsland region
2. Gippsland stakeholders and end-users who will be responsible for and involved in leveraging assets, with a range of others, including state agencies, educational and research establishments, associations and active groups within the area

The Report comprises three parts and an endnote.

Part A: Governance: What we must do differently

Challenge: Many organisations and layers of government operate in Gippsland, each promoting their often sectional interests with no appetite for more layers of governance.

Action – capacity building: Promote ways of setting up community conversations to see how positions could be aligned and where they could begin to work. This could take place over a year in the first instance, with an agreed process and objective after twelve months. The follow up task would be to put these processes into practice over a period of time, keeping in mind the advantage of having the four year presence of the Latrobe Valley Authority, which brings together a series of department staff under one roof.

Gippsland has many organisations pressing their own and other sectoral interests, and no desire for more layers of governance. Numerous government entities, interest groups, coalitions and sectors exist in the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland more broadly, each with a particular agenda, geographical and sectoral focus. Pockets of cooperation have existed for some time; however there are also contentious areas of overlap and divergence.

The designation Latrobe Valley sub-region arises from referencing by the State of Victoria and Commonwealth of Australia has become significant although not obviously for any sound territorial or relational reason (see State Government of Victoria, 2012; Commonwealth Government, 2012a and 2012b). There is no formal institutional arrangement between the three councils, although informal relationships operate. Nonetheless, the six Gippsland councils cooperate formally through the Gippsland Local Government Network (GLGN). A seventh, Cardinia Shire, which sits in the SE corridor of the Greater Melbourne region, was formerly part of the Gippsland region, and is still sometimes considered so.

Overlaying these local government areas are the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth of Australia (including departments and related administrative and support services). While State and Commonwealth governments have acknowledged a degree of responsibility for regional development outcomes, the emphasis has been on fostering empowered local-level institutions. Several local institutions have thus emerged in Gippsland over the years, representing different voices in the region. No single entity, however, appears to have the support, legitimacy or authority to represent Gippsland, and to be the single voice for the economic and social development in the region.

Governance was discussed throughout the conference. It was seen by most as the single one challenge facing the region. Moreover, the presentation by Todd Williams (CEO, Hunter Regional Development, Australia) eloquently spoke to the barriers faced in the Hunter region when he first began, whereby a myriad of submissions were made by different interest groups, including separate councils. The outcome was limited success because they did not produce cohesive, integrated and inter-linked proposals. These matters have been kept in mind in relation to governance as well as the transition-transformation parts.

What is clear is that while there is the desire to speak with one voice and to work together, this is not occurring. Obstacles to this include:

- *Limited capacity and power of local government.* This level of government has a limited ability to influence and finance the scale of facilitation and transformation needed in the broader region, either within the Latrobe Valley or Gippsland as a whole. Traditionally, local governments must be seen to be working for the citizens within their boundary, which can limit true collaboration across boundaries. While the broad remit of local government should help to bring different perspectives to the table, the experience, skills and resources to do this

are not always available. It is challenging for the three core Latrobe Valley councils to address this current high-pressure and high-stakes environment.

- *Multiple interests.* Across Gippsland, multiple interests are evident, sectorally-based, well-organised and significant in size. This reinforces disparate voices, rather than forming a unified, single voice.
- *Coordination.* Pockets of coordination have existed for some time between interest groups; however there are also contentious areas of overlap and divergence.
- *Finance.* The large sum of money on the table for the region in light of the impending closure of a major employer heightens the sectoral lobbying and interest.
- *Elections.* Short electoral cycles contribute to a lack of decision-making on key issues, and the politicising of issues.

Conference participants were very clear on several key points relating to the governance or management of change in the region, yet there is a need for guidance on 'how' they can work together better. The linked processes of managing the immediate transition, and future transformation needs to be carefully designed – not a knee-jerk, *ad hoc* approach. It needs to be participatory, respectful and locally owned. Establishing such a process takes time and commitment, and needs to be managed objectively and professionally.

- Conference attendees were very supportive of developing a single voice, and unified approach. However, this was recognised as a long-held desire, and no vehicle or mechanism has yet been achieved.
- Most felt that establishing another layer of bureaucracy was not warranted, and that drawing existing organisations together to work collaboratively was the best approach.
- However, there was some dissent – recognising that “working collaboratively” has not necessarily occurred in the past, nor provided the single voice that is needed.
- Although the announced closure of Hazelwood Mine and Power Station has created a new imperative to work together, *how* the different industry, community and government groups can work together is not yet recognised nor understood.

Next steps

- Establish principles for regional decision-making that are inclusive, participatory, accountable and unified.
- Determine a single, coordinating entity that is an authoritative body speaking for Gippsland. This needs to be in place within 12 months. It will contribute to the creation of a unified voice and direction for the Valley and the broader Gippsland region, where authority needs to be vested in either one of the existing organisations, or in a coalition of these bodies.
- Establish a code of practice for the collaborative group and develop short-term, tangible, fundable projects to demonstrate action, and provide motivation.

One possibility. Promote a coalition of interests, supported by state agencies, with delegated responsibility to develop social and economic development strategies. It could comprise Committee for Gippsland, Gippsland Local Government Network, Gippsland Trades and Labour Council, supported by Latrobe Valley Authority, Regional Development Victoria, Gippsland and Regional Development Australia, Gippsland. Consideration could be given to the active involvement of specific councils, when directly impacted by mass closure (or like events), such as Latrobe City, Baw Baw, Wellington and South Gippsland in relation to the Hazelwood generator and mine closure. Provision should be made for input by particular interest groups, such as 'Voices of the Valley', 'Gippsland Climate Change Network', 'Agribusiness Gippsland' and 'Gippsland Employment Skills Training and so forth. The task is to draw on current capacities in inclusive and participative ways, supported by appropriate State and Commonwealth agencies.

Part B: The Immediate Challenge of Transition

The Latrobe Valley region faces a set of immediate challenges. Those in the region must prepare for further displacement, closure and economic reorganisation. The region's coal-fired power generation industry is closing. Other announcements on the power industry are expected as is likely to be the case with other industries, such as timber. All will be caught up in this process: workers, managers, direct and indirect workers, other industries, suppliers, distributors, utilities, retailers, real estate, households and so on.

Workers are being, and will be, affected both directly and indirectly by these closures. Many at the conference expressed concern about social costs in relation to seeking employment outside of the Valley or interstate. These concerns are warranted. Further, as noted, there are currently no obvious transfers to comparable employment for most in the sub-region of the Latrobe Valley or the broader Gippsland region. Assisting displaced workers and boosting regional economic development in socially humane, environmentally-friendly ways will, thus, be needed through a variety of job creation interventions, social mitigation, and skills and development training initiatives.

The following sub-sections address some of the most important initiatives:

- Place-based Latrobe Valley Services
- A Workers' Action Centre

1. Place-based Services

Challenge: Currently, the provision of services for displaced workers and their households is fragmented, often with limited peer involvement.

Action: International evidence indicates that the response should be to lay the foundation for a 'one stop shop' with multiple points and places of entry, in its developed form a Workers Action Centre supported by state services.

Source: International and national experience dealing with mass closure. See 'Jobs and Skills Transition for the Latrobe Valley Phase 1: Benchmark occupations and skill sets', January 2012, pp. 121 – 126. <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/2okf7hdwowk51.pdf>

A process of addressing the travails of the Latrobe Valley sub-region is underway. The Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) has been set up by the State government as the key service provider, which will link to key local organisations providing multiple entry points to a range of linked services to cater for the wide range of people affected by transition, for example, workers, families, local businesses and so on in a wide range of locations. The provision of multiple entry points to a range of linked services will allow for an extension of the reach of these services into other areas and sectors, should the need arise.

An initial step that was evolving at the time of the conference is a partnership between local worker organisations, GTLC and Power Industry Unions and the LVA. This was recognised by a partnership between the LVA and GTLC, signed on 14 December 2016. The purpose is for the GTLC to deliver a set of key services to displaced workers and their households. These steps could lead to the development and establishment of a fully-fledged Workers' Action Centre.

The primary steps in process to develop a comprehensive, accountable and engaged service delivery are:

Partnership-Based Service Provision

Action	Descriptions
Following announcements of mass closure the GTLC, as the voice of the workforce, together with and supported by the LVA develop materials and procedures to support the impacted workforce and their households	The signed agreement between the GTLC and the LVA lays the foundation for partnership work. The GTLC to identify appropriate peer support to register, advise and if necessary counsel courses of action.
Appoint and train peer advisers	Advisers to come either with suitable qualifications and experience or will trained in appropriate and sensitive methods of providing advice and guidance
Inform workers and their households of the service	Peer contact and invitation is critical so that workers and their households find guidance readily available, accessible and comfortable. The peer advisers to advise on the appropriate mix of guidance, case by case.
Work with relevant agencies, and in particular the LVA to provide suitable guidance and training provision for workers and their households	The establishment of the LVA for a four year period and the involvement in service provision of relevant agencies creates the capacity for integrated, relevant and supportive advice.
Review and assess procedures and outcomes at quarterly intervals	An agreed external team to evaluate, assess and advise on procedures and content. The parties to the service level agreement will benefit from on-going advice.

Such a sequence of steps will provide the first level of support for displaced workers and their households.

2. Workers Action Centre

Challenge: Create a service that meets the immediate complex needs of displaced and vulnerable workers and their households so that it complements existing related services.

Action: Establish a Workers Action Centre to provide targeted, on-going support, assistance and engagement for workers and their households in the region.

Source: Professor Wayne Lewchuk provided conference attendees with examples of such success internationally (see Appendix Two).

To address both the structural and economic problems arising from the closure of power plants, and facilitate a humane process of transition for employees, and on-going support for workers and their households. As presented at the conference by Professor Wayne Lewchuk, a Workers Action Centre should be established (Appendix Two). It will provide a locally-based and focused resource for counselling and training. Such a place-based centre is necessary in the long -term, given that many workers recognise that finding transferable occupations at a similar rate or pay are difficult in the short-term, and that the possibility of seeking employment outside of the Gippsland region or interstate is problematic in terms of social costs.

The objective is for displaced workers (and adult members of their households) to transition into meaningful, long-term work. International evidence suggests that a partnership based centre that builds on the current collaborative arrangements will engender a sense of local ownership and support among workers and, importantly offer peer support (Appendix Two). Specifically, there is evidence to suggest that centres focusing on helping workers and their families during times of transition play a positive role in facilitating and enabling transition to take place. Centres that promote re-training schemes for displaced workers can create the necessary skills and attributes for

meaningful, long-term employment (Appendix Two). A centre established for the Latrobe Valley could address the career aspirations and expectations of workers, and be sensitive to individual differences. It could have the remit of supporting both the displaced workers, and adult members of their households, providing counselling, up-skilling and job search support. For re-training schemes to work, eligibility for re-training, up-skilling and job search support should be extended to other adult members of the household (See Appendix Two).

A Workers Action Centre should also be able to advise displaced workers about job preparation, especially to those who find it difficult applying and being interviewed for advertised positions. The centre would also be useful to provide workers with professional assistance in resume writing, job applications and interviewing skills. A one-stop-shop Workers' Action Centre that provides expert advice and assistance to displaced workers would provide such support. Such a centre should use peer advisors. International evidence shows that a centre that is staffed only with professionals may not be as effective in attracting people, keeping them engaged and helping them through what will be a difficult time socially (Appendix Two).

The establishment of a Workers Action Centre is a step-by-step process, building on collaborative processes that involve peer activists and service providers. Good practice identifies the specific arrangements that should be taken to set up such centre.

Steps in establishing a Workers Action Centre

Actions	Descriptions
Establish committee, provide training for committee members and assign roles such as Secretary and Treasurer	The Workers Action Centre is formally established, including assignment of positions. Committee members receive training necessary to carry out the functions of the committee and action centre.
Inform workers of adjustment	Workers may be informed at the workplace if layoffs are known to be coming in the near future. When layoffs are not announced in advance informing workers of adjustment opportunities is more difficult.
Selection process for chairperson	The chairperson coordinates and facilitates committee meetings.
Selection process for co-ordinator position	The Coordinator acts as a resource to the committee and manages the employee action centre (see below).
Selection process for peer helpers	Peer helpers are drawn from employees in the company that is laying off employees.
Set up an action centre	An action centre is the physical location where employment supports are provided to laid off workers.
Determines worker needs either through surveys or formal needs assessments	To determine the most appropriate mix of programs and services to support workers.
Identifies appropriate service providers	Identify and contract with local employment services to provide relevant programs and services.
Conducts outreach and follow-up	Ongoing contact with workers to connect workers with adjustment activities.
Manages the adjustment process	Oversees the adjustment process, makes decisions and monitors outcomes.

Source: Adapted from Klassen, C. and Fraser, M. (2011) *Supporting Laid Off Workers in Hamilton – Final Report 10*, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton – May 2011, p. 10 [Reproduced in Appendix Two]

Next Steps

- Further embed and develop the relationships between the GTLC, the LVA, other agencies and services.
- To establish a place based Workers Action Centre in Gippsland that has the capacity to be expanded to respond to expected and unexpected future needs across a broad geographical region. Once a model is established it should be subject to on-going review and evaluation.

Part C: Processes of Transformation

Challenge: Single sector solutions to transition are limited and increasingly short-term; a multi-sector approach offers a way forward.

Action: Stimulate sectoral development in integrated and inclusive ways, involving a range of actors, in particular small to medium enterprises (SME's) which are key drivers in local economies.

Source: The focus on 'transformation' is informed by Professor Karel Williams (Manchester University). He introduced the conference attendees to a way of focusing on the regional economy that will lead to an informed and coherent way of proceeding and over time enabling the processes of transformation to take effect (see Appendix Three).

The Immediate Challenge

Coal is a contestable commodity. It is now well-documented that the process of burning coal to produce energy contributes to high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, important questions are being asked about how coal from the Latrobe Valley region will be utilised once coal-generated power companies close down. Currently, there are three possibilities for utilising coal:

- Leaving coal in the ground unused, rehabilitating the mined areas with varied degrees of sterilisation from future use (e.g., flooding all mines).
- Leaving the coal resource unused as coal generators are closed, but in a state that future use as a natural resource could be brought into place. This possibility would rely on a synergy between technology and the economy to reach a position that government and broader society can support, and lastly;
- Continuing to use coal with radically upgraded power stations or new technologically sophisticated plants, which become lower level pollutant plants.

None of these choices are easy, and impose some impact on the local community, and the world more generally. While most agree that the steps and direction of closures should be done in an orderly and phased way, governments must communicate with generator companies to plan, consult, and stagger closure.

It is equally important to focus on the natural and social resources on offer in Gippsland regarding the future of the region. Although coal is the main natural resource, another hugely neglected resource is the social base of household demand in the mundane economy; in other words, the demand for essential "foundational" goods and services (Appendix Three). Gippsland's existing immobile resource base is prefigured in the list of key industries discussed by KPMG (2016), which outline 7 sectors. These sectors are major employers, as they are currently utilising local physical resources like grassland or meeting social demands for education or construction. Although relationships between key industries are an important source of structural and economic stability, there is a tendency for some local sectors to press their own demands without drawing on other key sectors and their contributions. As household demand for health, care and education is guaranteed and fairly stable across time (i.e., depending on the population base of Gippsland), focusing on foundational goods and services should be important to discussions about re-structuring Gippsland.

Hence, the immediate challenge is to:

- Encourage the promotion of a phased closure of brown-coal mines and generators with the involvement of all levels of government the local community
- Recognise the significance of other natural and social resources in the Gippsland region.

The Approach

There are two possible visions for the future of Gippsland, which are not mutually exclusive. First, within a competitive frame, Gippsland could attract mobile resources (through inward investment and in-migration). Second, within a foundational frame Gippsland could learn to utilise relatively immobile resources (that is, making the most of what is). This focus requires extra human and financial capital. Each vision involves the use of resources, physical (grass, timber, water) and social (human capacities). And, there is a mutually beneficial relationship between such resources, constituting the richness and complexity of socio-economic life in Gippsland.

Gippsland does have some capacity to attract mobile resources. A green and pleasant rural region with cheap housing has the potential to attract diverse immigrants. It is a region where established energy and mining industries have created a relatively large and skilled workforce, with the capacity to transfer jobs, depending on the inward investment. There will be further possibilities with a university-based technological park. Without major incentives, the mobile investment in IT, bio tech and finance which comes to Australia, however, is unlikely to come to Gippsland in quantities which would generate volume employment.

A strategy based on utilising Gippsland's existing immobile resource base is altogether more credible. And, this is partly prefigured in lists of key industries, as in the KPMG (2015) list, which includes 7 sectors. Many of these major employers are currently utilising local physical resources like grassland or meeting social demands for education or construction.

This key industry approach has two major weaknesses:

- (1) If it becomes the basis for prioritisation and grant application, then a host of industries see the advantage of obtaining key sector status, and the list of key sectors grows ever longer.
- (2) The local practice of pressing own sector demands means that it is difficult to get any preliminary collective agreement on what gets onto the list. To illustrate, in the working conference 'Transition and Transformation', most spoke for their own sector. When prompted there was a reluctance to identify and prioritise key sectors.

It makes more sense, therefore, to regress back to regional resources, the base on which key sectors are built. This resource-based approach encounters one immediate problem. Brown coal, by any physical measure the largest local resource, is controversial because it is a resource where there is sharp disagreement on its exploitation. It is also a physical resource that is intertwined and reliant on extensive social resources, skilled workers, health facilities, transport arrangements, housing, education and retail, as well as a range of SMEs dependent upon and connected with the coal generating companies.

If coal is bracketed, what are the local resources? The physical resources are the remaining natural resources of grass, timber, and water; the social resource is the household demand which sustains everything from construction to health and care. The question then is what can be built on these resources. While recognising that pressures on prices and margins make basic commodity production (as in paper and pulp) inherently precarious, the general aim should be to build a higher value added ecosystem on top of the resource. This step would sustain more processing and manufacturing, which in turn will enhance an infrastructure of services in construction and maintenance, including new technology, education and health care, and transport.

It is difficult to say where and how the value can be added without a detailed knowledge of local specifics about available technologies and costings. But, in general Gippsland needs to move up the value chain or capture processing advantage (eg., in dairy - dried milk powder) and be more mid-market (eg., dairy - cheese and in timber - new kinds of processing and engineering). This is likely to

require attention to building SMEs as capable firms, rather than relying on the good efforts of new giant firms. Achieving this goal will require cross sectoral work.

Generating Place-based Knowledge

Challenge: At present, the challenge facing decision-making is the lack of detailed knowledge about the inter-sectoral and related segments of the region. For example, there is a general but not a specific understanding of the skills profile and the labour market that makes up the power industry and the broader local economy.

Action: Hence, steps must be taken to generate that knowledge

The overall task is to set up a procedure for generating the detailed knowledge of multi-sectoral developments, which at present is absent. Hence:

Engaged and participative knowledge generation

Action	Descriptions
Work out how to shift from transition to transformation, to long-term solutions for the region; the complexity requires a detailed knowledge of the sectors, including their multi-sector relationships	Key local stakeholders and others, supported by state agencies, including local government, to clarify a series of transition-transformation multi-sectoral resources in the region. Investigate and generate a rich evidence base for policy development and implementation.
Develop projects of investigation and create embedded teams, supported by experts	Locally grounded 'research' teams to investigate selected and agreed inter-sector themes.
Undertake knowledge generation of specific problems and solutions	Teams to conduct structured, milestone determined information gathering, analysis and proposals.
Ensure feedback and community discussion, informed by the findings on each problem	Via locality-based fora stimulate feedback, comment and advice.
Evaluate outcomes and decide next steps	Incrementally each major inter-sectoral analysis to be reviewed, assessed, preferably by others (experts in the field of enquiry), with recommendations of next steps. This is a looping and incremental feedback process.

Next Steps

- Encourage the promotion of a phased closure of the brown-coal mines and generators with the involvement of the workforces, the community and all levels of government
- Recognise the significance of other natural and social resources in the Gippsland region

Possibilities

In relation to available regional resources, there are a number of possible areas of strategic development. These possibilities have been explored by Councils (eg., Latrobe City, Engineering Capital of Australia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGoZZXWgmjE>) and by corporations (paper and timber). While a number of examples could be provided, only two detailed ones are presented here, 'food and fibre' and 'industrial arts and heritage'. The first possibility is one where there has been much preparation and the second, where there has not been such preparation. They are chosen for no other reason than as exemplary cases to indicate how to proceed. Other possibilities also need

elaboration and some indication is also given of some possible projects. These examples and others were addressed at the conference and elaborated with advice subsequently.

Example One: Food and Fibre

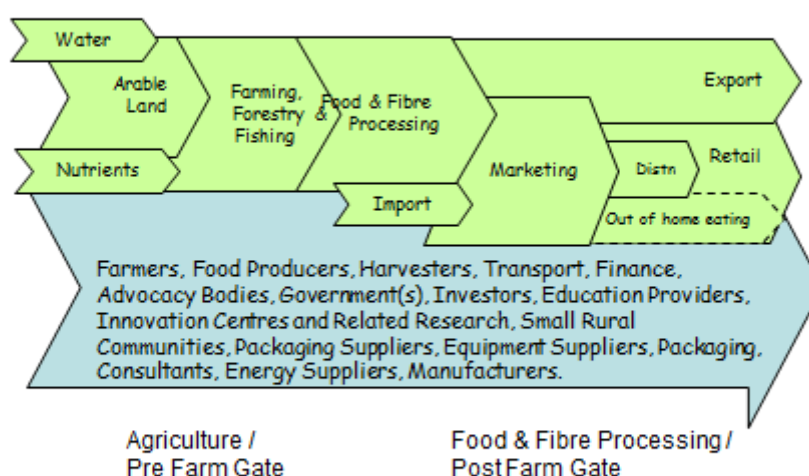
Challenge: Promote and develop the whole industry as coherent, linked and ready for deep development

Action: Develop informed and specific programs of action, which taken together seek to develop the industry as integrated and embedded

Source: Agribusiness Gippsland, Committee for Gippsland and the related reports

The food and fibre sector is an established exemplar. It is a foundation of the social and economic strength in Gippsland. Currently, the industry contributes \$7 billion of Gippsland's \$15 billion economic output. The food fibre sector is a complex supply and value chain, comprising over 2500 SME agribusinesses and 6500 farming families. Food and fibre is in a strong position to become a core economic driver in relation to tradeable goods, driving the future prosperity and vitality of Gippsland.

Food and Fibre as a whole of chain business.....



There are five key opportunities to develop and embed the food and fibre sector in relation to Gippsland's long term future.

First, a deeper integration of the "before farm gate" and "after farm gate" relationships within the supply chain (i.e. between food production, food retail, and food hospitality) could fast-track economic development and promote investment both locally and internationally.

Second, the future of the food and fibre sector requires a thriving workforce and SME sector. This entails clearly defined and heavily promoted career pathways and recruitment, underpinned by robust, engaged relationships between education and industry, especially so for agriculture and farming, which have experienced a decline in university enrolments over the last decade (KPMG, 2016). The food and fibre sector could become the means to attract,

retain and develop people, as farm workers, producers, suppliers, distributors, providers and consumers.

Third, research capacity in the sector will drive both innovation and sectoral growth, as well as serve as a foundation for the education/career pathway recruitment strategy. Paradoxically, farming practice is heavily informed by specific research practices (agri-bio), while other aspects, such as business modelling or people organisation and capacity-building is underdeveloped. This step could involve the agri-research units in Gippsland, at Ellinbank (National Centre for Dairy Research and Development) as well as Federation University.

Fourth, building on the above capacities, the industry is likely to generate new investment. Such steps could be reinforced with the support of the educational sector, in relation to business training (developing current outreach programs) and research expertise. SMEs within the food and fibre sector would benefit from these measures.

Fifth, and central to these opportunities, is the need for a carefully designed and well-resourced campaign to bolster the food and fibre sector of the region, and inspire future careers and opportunities in farming and agriculture. A Gippsland Provenance Story, for example, would bring together current food hubs, branding campaigns, relatively invisible pre-farm gate activity, and food retail and hospitality. Working alongside the 'Inspire Gippsland' tourism campaign, the food sector would be able to capitalise on its strengths by creating a distinctive Provenance Story, which in turn will stimulate investment across the food production and distribution supply chain.

Through such engagement, rural communities will be strengthened socially, culturally and economically.

The dairy industry is an exemplar of the food and fibre industry, contributing to \$3 billion in economic output for the region. The strength of this sector could be utilised by promoting a dairy processing 'cluster'. The cluster concept is based on the East Gippsland Food Cluster, which is considered to demonstrate the way forward for the agriculture sector in Gippsland. This cluster has been successful in attracting and retaining food processors in the East Gippsland region, and in improving the connection between local farmers and these processors. The success is largely attributed to its collaborative approach and organisational structure. There is potential for a similar cluster in dairy or food production, given the proximity and concentration of primary producers across Gippsland.

Challenges to development include:

1. Water access and usage: Water is critical for the extension and 'intensification' of agriculture. It sets a limit to growth in primary production, in broad acre and dairy farming as well as in horticulture and cropping. At present, agriculture in the Latrobe Valley region is essentially at capacity in terms of what can be produced from the water available. The entire food and fibre sector requires sufficient water resources to prosper and grow.
2. Labour shortages: Agriculture faces on-going labour shortages in a range of areas including relief work, seasonal work and specialist technical staff. Low wages and casualization create a further challenge in the industry
3. Entry into the sector, particularly in relation to dairy and broad acre farming, is becoming more difficult due to increased capital costs (including land), declining profit margins and negative perceptions about farming as a career path.
4. Transport infrastructure: At present, food processors in the region are reliant on roads to transport their products for domestic consumption and export, with a major destination for companies being the Port of Melbourne. There appears to be a very mixed, overlapping and

inefficient set of arrangements in relation to supply and exit of products into and out of as well as across the region, particularly in dairy processing but also in other areas.

The task thus is to develop a cohesive and region-wide approach. The aim is to secure the active engagement of producers, processors and consumers in shaping the supply and value chain.

This aim will be addressed as follows:

1. Draw up a detailed map of the food and fibre industry, presenting the detail on pre-farm gate in alignment with post farm gate activity. This step would provide the data basis to develop integrated and cohesive activity in relation to the sector.
 - a. Initially commission an integrated review and development of all food and fibre plans to date (with regional end-user involvement).
 - b. Commission research to provide a social and economic demographic analysis of the industry (pre- and post-gate) to include ownership patterns, size, composition, distribution, connection with other sectors etc. Without such data, policy and practice is ill-informed.
2. Promote facilitated round tables to establish an active on-going network, comprising end-users and appropriate research and specialist experts. The task is to identify the challenges, opportunities and barriers. It could be done by:
 - a. A sequence of roundtables with administrative and analytic support which develops steps to implement proposals.
 - b. The network should be part of, and used to advise, the Gippsland Regional Partnership and the Latrobe Valley Authority.
3. Develop focused integrated programs for agricultural SMEs with the view of reinforcing and supporting SMEs in an on-going way. Attention should also be given to incorporate independents. Draw on the capacities of local educational institutions, including the Gippsland Technical School.
4. With specialist bodies, such as Tourism and Cultural groups, develop education and awareness programs to inform and profile the industry.
5. Facilitate discussion groups with financial and related industry specialists to provide an on-going and structured engagement with the industry.

Note: much of this work requires a skilled and industry-aware facilitator. Such a person should be accountable to industry network that will oversee the activity.

Sectoral policy development and implementation of this kind will be a long, hard slog. Indeed, it will need to be planned over years. Even so, the benefit will be the construction of a distinctive and attractive tradeable economic sector resting on the resource base of water and grass.

Example Two: Industrial Arts and Heritage in Gippsland

A different example of an inter-sectoral strategy is in relation to industrial arts and heritage. It is undeveloped and fragmented.

Challenge: A fragmented, non-regionally defined and limited multi-sectoral connections

Action: Layout and promote a plan to develop the industry in an integrated regional way

Source: Listed materials (Appendix Four)

Gippsland has a rich and multi-layered industrial history and heritage that can be foregrounded in anchoring the arts and cultural sector as a strategic arm of the region's foundational economy. It draws on a range of sectors, including mining and energy, arts and entertainment, agriculture and forestry, heritage, tourism and accommodation.

First, link the industrial arts and heritage activity across the region leveraging current facilities. These facilities begin with the Krowathunkooloong Cultural Museum in Bairnsdale (the official culture, history and heritage museum of the Gunaikurnai nation) and Bunurong (marking the local Aboriginal group that have lived in this area for thousands of years and have used the coast extensively for food gathering). They are complemented by the colonial and post-colonial centres of Walhalla (the gold mine and environs), Coal Creek at Korumburra, the State Coal Mine Heritage Area at Wonthaggi, as well as Gippsland Heritage Park, Moe and the Old Brown Coal Mine Museum in Yallourn North. Together these currently disaggregated and seemingly isolated centres could be structured to emphasise the cultural and natural history of the region for future generations.

Such a strategy could be put together and promoted relatively quickly. It would bring together a series of disparate regional development proposals and focus them in an integrated and focus way. It should be presented as moving from the immediate to the long-term, leveraging the closure announcement(s) as a step towards recovering and remembering the heritage of the region. The advantage of this strategy is that funding is available, and with appropriate business cases it should be possible to secure and establish the steps towards a long-term development in the region.

Second, formulate and focus on an heritage and development strategy that will capitalise on the current political interest in and support for regional arts and culture, reflected in large part through Creative State, Victoria's first creative industries strategy announced in 2016. Action item 24 of Creative State specifically references the development of the Latrobe Creative Precinct, which will include the redevelopment of the Traralgon Performing Arts Centre, a training facility and capacity for outdoor festivals and events with the goal to 'increase access to, and participation in, creative activity for local communities and build career pathways into the creative industries for the next generations of residents.'

Leveraging the region's industrial heritage and creative/artistic assets offers significant potential to foreground the ongoing contributions of various sites of industrial activity (food and fibre; energy; care, etc) to the ongoing social, cultural and community life. This strategy would also provide the region with a unique, place-based marketing and promotional framework from which to focus local and professional artistic activity, as well as develop new, distinctive arts and cultural programming. A regional industrial arts and heritage suite of programming would include the active participation of professional artists and cultural workers, industrial workforces and unions, employers, education and training organisations, school groups, community service organisations and leading arts institutions. Regional stories could be told via a rich matrix of arts and cultural activities, including live and performing arts, music, visual arts and crafts, and heritage preservation. In so doing, the focus of the arts and heritage development remains anchored in the region.

Opportunities include:

1. Map industrial arts and heritage, by artists and cultural workers, artefacts and resources, suppliers, galleries and related centres, and financial arrangements.
2. Develop a business plan for the development of industrial arts and heritage in and across the region.
3. Round table series: Involve key industrial, workforce, artistic, and community partners in the strategic planning and development of a step-by-step approach to an Industrial Arts and Heritage Strategy for Gippsland. Identify key facilities and places as sites of important stories that are key to the region's history and future. This is a foundational growth area for the region and also stimulates inward investment and tourism.
4. Explore via tertiary educational institutions pathway development courses to underwrite such activity, particularly in relation to curating exhibitions, entrepreneurship and event management.'

5. Establish Industrial Arts and Heritage workshops, facilitated by an experienced industrial arts and heritage practitioner, to develop, promote and brand Gippsland's industrial arts and heritage sector.

Potential areas for development:

1. NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee). While a region (and Australia wide) event in the second week of July each year, it could be promoted as regional linked activity. At present different sub-regions promote NAIDOC, such as the Bairnsdale NAIDOC Week Committee presenting key events to celebrate NAIDOC Week each year. The aim would be to capture the regional-wide dimension of indigenous history and activity.

2. PowerWorks: - Legacies for the future

PowerWorks is an existing industrial cultural heritage site focusing on energy history, with a rich collection of artefacts, educational programmes, often in close collaboration with community groups and educational bodies. PowerWorks is currently run by volunteers but it lacks organisational capacity. Reinventing PowerWorks as key site for development under the Industrial Arts and Heritage strategy would foster a distinctive cultural institution in Australia and contribute economic, cultural and social benefits to the region.

3. Steampunk Festival – tourism and artistic innovation

Currently, festivals and events in the Latrobe City generate an estimated attendance of 50,000 people every year (Latrobe City, 2016), and serve as a driving force behind transformational change in other regional areas, such as Wangaratta and Tamworth (Gibson and Davidson, 2004; Curtis, 2011; Clare, 1999). Building on the local history, natural environment and arts scene, as well as the locally sourced gourmet produce, would contribute to the growing creative sector in the region. Additionally, capitalising on the unique heritage that differentiates the region from other areas in Victoria, the Valley could introduce a Steampunk Festival, which plays with industrial heritage themes and has, thus far, contributed to a growth of the cultural industries with the establishment of Steampunk Melbourne and the Adelaide Steampunk festival.

Other Possibilities

A further feature of the regional economy is the **social** base of household demand in the mundane economy for essential 'foundational' goods and services. It is thus important to note that the demand linkages from big business and the damaging effects of major closures are disruptive and traumatic, much of the household demand (e.g., for health and education) is fairly stable, as long as Gippsland retains its population base. Thus, attention should be given in the foundational economy to care, culture and university provision as explicit objects of policy and intervention.

(1) Health, Aged Care and Community Services

- a. The industry is complex. Health, aged care and community services are not integrated, although they complement each other. Of note, with an ageing adult population there is a need for such integration so that chronic conditions are managed appropriately and services are effective. Demand in this sector is guaranteed, so it is a question of organising experiments and finding a cadre of providers prepared to innovate. Together these sub-sectors employ around 6% of the workforce. The following, however, is not clear: patterns of

facility ownership across the sector, the size and composition of facilities, and the implications for these arrangements with changes in service delivery and provision.

- b. Changes in service delivery (settings and ways of delivering services). This sector is changing, with shifts towards person-centred models (for example NDIS) and increasing focus on primary and preventive health, in a community setting. Both clients and carers have limited awareness of the possible impacts of these changes.
- c. Wages and work conditions: Issues such as low wages and difficult working conditions tend to show up frequently in the social services sector.

Note: The NDIS will become available in the Inner Gippsland area from 1 October 2017 although provision has been made for an earlier involvement. The Inner Gippsland area covers the local government areas of Bass Coast; Baw Baw; Latrobe; and South Gippsland.

Opportunities include:

- a. Pathways to accreditation: Educational institutions should develop the business plans to extend provision of allied health training and accreditation and improvements to the quality and efficiency of VET-qualified workers.
- b. Shortages: Via workshops develop a co-ordinated approach between industry stakeholders to come up with a strategy for attracting, training and retaining workers. Worker shortages could compromise the goals of policies such as the NDIS, which seeks to address unmet need.
- c. Service and delivery needs: Via facilitated workshops between providers and clients develop good practice models.

(2) Higher Education

The University (Federation University, formerly Monash University Gippsland) has a significant presence in Gippsland, particularly in relation to pathway development, and teaching provision. Nonetheless, the university has not been developed as a regional centre covering teaching and learning on the one hand and research on the other. The acquisition of Monash University Gippsland by Federation University has strengthened this capacity and, subject to resources, it can be expected that these capacities will be strengthened in the coming years. There is still the possibility of developing it as regional hub (a) for Gippsland students and (b) for research and technical services relevant to agriculture and timber. It will be important that pathways and mutual support is developed over time between Federation University and federation training, as well as appropriate other Registered Training Organisations and educational bodies. With this foundation, the University will be attractive domestic and foreign students. It is also likely to attract research investment, as the University is seen as a regional educational hub. Indeed, the University is already playing an active role within the region, in relation to the establishment of the Technical School, the announcement of the Hi-Tech Precinct in the region, as well as supportive steps in relation to SME mentoring and the exploration of major corporate developmental proposals (e.g., from Australian Paper and others).

Opportunities include:

- a. Forging a regional development strategy for the University with key regional end-users and the State/Commonwealth governments. Such a step will involve investment and financial considerations, from major corporations in the region.
- b. Developing a tailored pathway and mentoring relations for students (post-school and mature) in conjunction with regional end-users and other educational providers.

- c. Focusing research initiatives in targeted ways, on agriculture (with the State supported research units); energy (with University expertise from Monash); social and economic development strategies (with other universities); and cultural activities and learning (in conjunction with regional galleries).

The challenge is to further enhance Federation University, Gippsland as a regional university (as in other regions and countries) with the necessary support to achieve these objectives.

Final Comment

When considering the transformation of a region such as Gippsland it is necessary to take into account the specific features of the economy, and identify the major clusters of resources. Presenting the resource sectors in relation to the 'competitive' and the 'foundational' enables a more detailed investigation of the opportunities and challenges specific to each sector. On this basis, it will be possible to develop targeted and detailed analyses of inter-sector change and development.

INITIAL STEPS FOR A FUTURE

The report is presented on the basis of two distinctions, (a) the immediate (transition) and the long-term (transformation) and (b) the competitive and foundational bases to the economy. These paired distinctions are not mutually exclusive, both within and between the pairs. They inform the strategy presented by drawing attention to the sunk assets within the region and thereby provide the foundation for a dynamic and developing economy. The challenge is to keep them at the forefront when working up strategies for change.

Procedure

To proceed with the tasks of developing and implementing a programme of change, the following procedural framework (Logical Framework Approach) is suggested.

1. Stakeholder analysis: Identify the issue; identify who has an interest;
2. Problem analysis: identify the causes and effects;
3. Solution analysis
4. Strategy analysis
5. Mid-way review and reflection: Is the experimentation working?
6. Activity scheduling
7. Resource scheduling
8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Keep following this procedure for each set of solutions to make the activity live and developmental.

See:

European Commission (2004) Aid Delivery Methods, Volume 1 Project Cycle Management Guideline. http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint/publications/europeaid/49a_en.htm

Jensen, G (2012) The logical framework approach- How To guide. http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/The_logical_framework_approach_How_To_guide_January_2012.pdf

Governance

A condition for success is that some arrangement is made whereby regional decision-making.

Next steps are:

- To establish principles for regional decision-making that are inclusive, participatory, accountable and unified.
- To determine a single, coordinating entity that is an authoritative body speaking for Gippsland. This needs to be in place in 12 months' time. This will contribute to the creation of a unified voice and direction for the Valley and the broader Gippsland region, where authority needs to be vested in either one of the existing organisations, or in a coalition of these bodies.
- To establish a code of practice for the collaborative group and develop short-term, tangible, fundable projects to demonstrate action, and provide motivation.

This provides the basis for an on-going strategy that will be short-term and long-term as well as address the complexity of the economy.

Immediate (transition)

The focus on the immediate sets the scene for a range of challenges. Recent closures and lay-offs and current announcements set a troubling scene for the future of the Latrobe Valley. The impacts are widespread involving direct workers, indirect works, suppliers, services, retailers and many across the community. It is a Gippsland concern.

Steps will be taken to address these developments but they must be both immediate and long-term.

Next steps are:

- To establish a Workers Action Centre in Gippsland.
- To encourage the promotion of a phased closure of brown-coal mines.
- To recognise the significance of other natural and social resources in the Gippsland region.

Long-term (Transformational)

The future of Gippsland rests two visions: attracting inward investment and in-migration or exploiting relatively immobile resources (making the most of what is). While not mutually exclusive it is important to draw up achievable steps to the long term goals and aspirations of the region.

Of critical importance is the focus on possible areas of strategic development. There are many prospects, identified in past reports and involving current employers in industries such as paper, aero and defence. However, to date these are not the result of widespread community engagement and involvement. The task is to ensure such engagement in the development of regional development strategies, otherwise development rests on the beneficence of externally based corporations or state policy. Hence, the task is to promote a procedure with actively engaged and experienced stakeholders, who have the courage to experiment and try plausible actions, and are prepared to fail and rectify.

Next Steps

- Focus on 'food and fibre' and 'arts and industrial heritage' immediately as inter-sectoral possibilities that are in place and ready to develop in a step by step way.
- Develop the detailed analysis that will allow the other two areas of activity to be addressed. Follow through with developmental plans.
- Identify in a rigorous focused way, other inter-sectoral initiatives for investigation and planned development.

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Appendix One: Conference Program and Attendees

Transition and Transformation Working Conference

29th November 2016, Board Room (5N 158), Federation University

9.20 - 10.00 am	Registration and coffee/tea	
10.00 – 10.15	Introduction and welcome	Steve Dodd (Secretary, GTLC) Harriet Shing MP (MLC Eastern Victoria)
10.15 – 11.15	International perspectives and lessons	Professor Karel Williams (University of Manchester, UK) Professor Wayne Lewchuk, McMaster University, Canada)
11.15 – 11.45 Tea/coffee break		
11.45 – 12.45	Gippsland perspectives	Mary Aldred, C4G Paul Ford, Gipps Agribusiness Val Prokopiv, GTLC Harry Ballis, Head, Federation Gippsland Campus
12.45 – 1.30 Lunch		
1.30 – 2.30	An Example	Professor Bruce Wilson, Director RMIT EU Centre, RMIT University Mr Todd Williams, CEO Hunter Regional Development Australia
2.30 – 3.00 Coffee/tea		
3.00 – 4.00	Next steps: Gippsland Perspectives Plus	Professor Karel Williams (University of Manchester, UK)
<p>Wednesday – Friday:</p> <p>For the next three days, a team will craft a strategy of application and implementation for the region. It will seek to give content to the implementation of plans and related items. This strategy document will be forwarded to the Regional Partnership to inform their deliberations and advice to the 'Regional and Rural subcommittee of the Cabinet'.</p> <p>Please sign up if you are happy that we call on you during these three days. This will take place at Federation University. Contact: 0419 395 665</p>		
Name	Contact	Availability

1. **International perspectives and lessons:**

Speakers: brief presentations on developments and lessons, 15 mins each

Consider:

- a. What do these perspectives mean for Gippsland?
- b. What is the one lesson to draw from these presentations?

Write down and report one lesson (there will time to review in the final session)

2. **Gippsland Perspectives**

Speakers: brief presentations on developments and lessons, 5 mins each

Group discussion:

- a. Identify one area of activity to focus transition for Gippsland?
- b. How should transition be managed and by whom? Discussion

Report back

3. **An Example:**

Presenters: Professor Bruce Wilson, Director RMIT EU Centre, RMIT University and Mr Todd Williams, CEO Hunter Regional Development Australia

Group discussion:

- a. What does the Hunter experience mean for Gippsland (refer back to the international lessons)?
- b. What is the one lesson to draw from the Hunter experience?

Write down and report one lesson (there will time to review in the final session)

4. **Next steps:** (led by Professor Karel Williams)

- a. 30 mins: Identify the key themes to develop as a strategy for Gippsland, thereby identifying the key elements of the Gippsland transition strategy
- b. 30 mins: Draw themes together so that writing committee have clear guidance.

Attendees	Position	Organisation
Adam Wookey	Business Partnerships Consultant	Federation Training
Alan Scarlett	Student Support and Services	Federation University Gippsland
Amanda Cahill	Director	Centre for Social Change, Brisbane
Amanda Coles	Lecturer	Faculty of Business and Law, Deakin University
Bruce Lougheed	Delegate	Gippsland Trades and Labour Council Inc
Bruce Wilson	Director, RMIT European Union Centre	RMIT University
DrDamian Morgan	Senior Lecturer, Management	Federation University, Business School, Gippsland
Dan Musil	Secretary	Earthworker Cooperative, Melbourne
Dale Brown	Executive Assistant Ward 1	City of Hamilton, Canada
Dale Harriman	Councilor	Latrobe City Council
Danny Blay	Senior Project Manager	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Victorian State Government
David Burt	Human Resources Manager	Energy Australia
David Spree	Government and External Affairs Manager	AGL
Denise Richardson	Corporate Communications and Business Development	Australian Paper Ltd, Maryvale
Dominik Safari	Researcher / PhD Student	University of Melbourne
Graeme Middlemiss	Deputy Mayor	Latrobe City Council
Hannah Coffey	Community Relations Manager	AGL Loy Yang
Harriet Shing	Upper House Member for Eastern Victoria	State Government of Victoria

Harry Ballis	Head of Campus	Federation University Gippsland
Helen Anstis	CEO	Baw Baw Shire Council
Helen Scott	Researcher / PhD Student	College of Design and Social Context, RMIT University
Jackson Long	Manager, Skills and Jobs Centre Project	Federation Training
Jo Wilkinson	Regional Administration Manager	Anglicare Gippsland
Joe Gauci	Mayor	Baw Baw Shire Council
Karel Williams	Professor, Manchester Business School	University of Manchester
Kristie Morgan	Latrobe Valley Investment and Trade	RDV Gippsland
Kylie White	Interim CEO	Latrobe Valley Authority
Lauren Rickards	Director, Regional Futures Network	RMIT University
Lisa Price	Partnership Broker	Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN
Mark Themann	Director	Latrobe Regional Gallery
Mary Aldred	CEO	Committee 4 Gippsland
Michael Rafferty	Associate Professor, Centre for People, Organisation and Work	RMIT University
Michael Murphy	CEO	Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN
Nicala Oakley	Manager Regional Planning and Coordination Gippsland	RDV Gippsland
Nicole Griffin	General Manager, Business Development	Gippsland Water
Paul Evans	Partnerships and Commerce	Federation Training
Paul Ford	Chair	Agribusiness Gippsland
Peter Fairbrother	Professor, Deputy Director, Centre for People, Organisation and Work	RMIT University

Phil Stone	General Manager, City Development	Latrobe City Council
Ray Burgess	Manager	Morwell Newsagency
Richard Elkington	Chair	Regional Development Australia Gippsland
Rob Ashworth	Latrobe Valley Investment and Trade	RDV Gippsland
Ron Camier	Manager	Mountain Top Experience, Gippsland
Ross Barry	Head of Research and Origination	First State Super, Wollongong, NSW
Shirley Jackson	Politics and Research	Victorian Trades Hall Council, Melbourne
Soma Pilay	Senior Lecturer, Management	Federation University Gippsland
Stephen Parkinson	Technical Business Development Manager	Australian Paper
Steve Dodd	Secretary	Gippsland Trades and Labour Council Inc
Steven Wilcox	Professor, Faculty of Science and Technology	Federation University Gippsland
Sue Wells	Regional Manger Industry Engagement Gippsland	Department of Education and Training, State Government Victoria
Tim Wills	Regional Manager	AusIndustry
Todd Williams	CEO	Regional Development Australia, Hunter
Val Prokopiv	President (Past) Research	Gippsland Trades and Labour Council Inc RMIT University
Wayne Lewchuk	Professor, School of Labour Studies	McMaster University, Canada

Appendix Two: Workers Action Centre

- a. Report on Workers Action Centre example
- b. Learning Brochure

**SUPPORTING LAID OFF WORKERS IN HAMILTON:
THE VALUE OF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AT THE HAMILTON JOBS ACTION CENTRE
FINAL REPORT**

May 2011

Prepared by:
Carla Klassen, M.Sc.Pl., Research Assistant
&
Mark Fraser, M.S.W., Senior Social Planner



© The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
162 King William Street, Suite 103, Hamilton, ON L8R 3N9
Phone: 905.522.1148 Fax: 905.522.9124 E-mail: sprc@sprc.hamilton.on.ca
Website: sprc.hamilton.on.ca



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The SPRC would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for the financial support that made this research possible.

Thank you also to the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton for your continuing commitment to improving the lives of people in our community.

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions of current and past members of the HJAC Labour Adjustment Committee: Bill Thompson, Nadia Fleming, Donna Muir, John Schaeffer, Bob Sutton, Don Jaffray, Mark Fraser, Judy Travis, Gary Howe, Craig Gratton, Monica Quinlan, Bassam Elsaadi, Carl Chopp, Jim Douglas, Doreen McPartlin, and Kathie Anderson.

Special thanks go to Donna Muir, coordinator at the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre, for her role as primary contact in this research, helping us with time, equipment, office space, contacts, knowledge, and enthusiasm.

Thank you to Louise Schmerega for research assistance in conducting client surveys, and to all of the peer helpers at HJAC for their expertise, insight, and good cheer.

Thank you to our colleagues at the SPRC for ongoing support and advice, especially Don Jaffray, Sara Mayo, and Renee Wetselaar. Thanks to Sara Mayo for producing several charts for this report. Thanks to Christina Walters for support in preparing this report.

Finally, we would like to thank all of the clients, staff, employers, and service providers who contributed their time, experiences, and valuable opinions in the course of this research. Your insights were crucial in developing our understanding of the challenges faced by workers in a changing labour market, and in identifying strategies to improve the relevance and effectiveness of services available to dislocated workers in Hamilton.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing the need to respond to the quickly growing numbers of unemployed workers in Hamilton, the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton partnered to create the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre (HJAC) in 2009. Aimed at supporting smaller groups of laid off workers from the area as a complement to the existing system of employment services, HJAC opened its doors in Fall 2009.

The purposes of this research are to: determine the value of short-term employment related workshops accessed by dislocated workers at HJAC; explore options for maximizing these benefits to laid off workers and to the wider unemployed/underemployed population; and explore the best venues for providing this type of training. The recent economic downturn put many people out of work, driving Hamilton's Employment Insurance claims dramatically upward in early 2009. With a slow economic recovery across Canada likely to be slower still in Hamilton, the need for supports for often invisible small groups of dislocated workers in this community is not likely to decline in the near future. Assessing the value of short-term employment related workshops in helping workers reconnect with the labour market offers a fuller understanding of how best to support groups of dislocated workers. The evaluation of this form of training in Hamilton focuses on the HJAC as a site in which to explore this important issue. Data for this research was collected through a review of literature, 154 client surveys, 15 client interviews, 5 staff interviews, 3 employer interviews, and a focus group with local employment service providers. Key findings from each primary research method are summarized below.

Key Findings from Client Surveys

- There is diversity in the client population in terms of different levels of education. Half of clients are 'older workers' (45 years of age or more). This suggests a need for diversity of employment service approaches.
- Most clients (84%) took a maximum of 4 courses. This suggests that free training encourages people to engage in employment related activities.
- Of the 652 clients who came to HJAC for support, only 270 – or 41% - took training courses. This suggests that clients completed training to suit their employment goals, rather than simply taking advantage of free training.
- Completing more workshops was associated with better employment outcomes. Half (50%) of the 652 clients who have come to HJAC for support have found work since coming to the centre, while 61% of surveyed clients who completed training have found work. Further, most clients rated workshops as helpful in finding work both in terms of numbered scores and open-ended questions. This suggests that the short-term employment related workshops offered at HJAC improve client employment outcomes.
- One of HJAC's greatest strengths is its peer helper staff members, who were seen as helpful, supportive and motivating. This suggests that employment services and supports offered by people who are not necessarily from the same former workplace but have shared experiences of a layoff or shutdown provides a unique benefit to clients.

Key Findings from Client Interviews

- Respondents use a variety of sources to job search including the HJAC job board, Service Canada's job bank, newspapers, on-line employment related websites, personal networks and word-of-mouth.
- While most respondents described an abundance of jobs to apply for, many were not getting called for interviews. Respondents cited limited qualifications, experience and age (for many older workers) as possible reasons for not getting interviews.
- Overall, temporary positions seemed to be more common in the job market.
- Temporary work was valued by some respondents because of the flexibility it offers to workers and employers.

- Most respondents felt some degree of resentment about temporary work because of low pay, no benefits, and no job security. Temporary work also seen as impacting respondents' quality of life, feelings of fairness, health, and difficulties transitioning to full-time work.
- Most respondents felt that they had either learned new skills or recertified existing skills through workshops they completed at HJAC. Obtaining official certification of skills gained through work experience was viewed as important for gaining employment.
- Respondents with diverse training felt that it qualified them for a wider range of jobs and would help them find work.
- Respondents generally felt that the qualifications earned through HJAC either helped them secure their current job or that the qualifications would help them secure work in the future.
- All respondents appreciated the welcoming and relaxed nature of HJAC. Although many clients said they did not use the centre as a social support, an overwhelming majority of respondents valued the peer support model highly. Primarily, they felt that they could relate well to the peer helpers at the centre because "they know what you are going through."

Key Findings from Staff Interviews

- HJAC staff members see the four main challenges faced by their clients as being a lack of computer skills, age, education, and transportation. Computer skills in particular are likely to be increasingly important for workers in the job market as workplaces rely more and more on technology.
- HJAC should support clients in obtaining their high school equivalency credentials in order to improve employment outcomes.
- Bus tickets could be made available to support clients in job searching in order to overcome some barriers to transportation.
- Job opportunities posted at HJAC over the past year commonly involved forklift, manufacturing, general labour, and cleaning.
- Temporary and contract jobs seem to be growing. Contract work may develop into full-time employment if the employer is willing to commit.
- Most employment opportunities at HJAC are of poor quality in terms of wages and benefits.
- Some clients take a small number of courses in order to fill specific job requirements, while others take a diverse range of courses. Staff noted that this makes clients more marketable and widens their scope of opportunities.
- Many clients tell staff that they want the centre to connect them with employers. This essentially amounts to the role of a temp agency, except that the centre would not be the employer or receive payment from employers.

Key Findings from Employer Interviews

- The recent recession led to a slowdown in hiring, and recovery was characterized by an increase in temporary work.
- While there is a mix of positions available locally, temporary work seems to dominate the job market.
- One respondent felt that workers were "happy" and "grateful" to have temporary work, while others felt that temp workers faced feelings of isolation and unfair treatment.
- Wages and lack of benefits were further sources of frustration for workers, particularly in contrast with previous working conditions.
- Workers' progress from temporary work to full-time, permanent employment often takes between 6 months and 2 years, and is fairly rare.
- Most employers require employees to have a high school diploma either for initial hiring or to transition to full-time positions.
- Workers require a balance of credentials and experience.
- Clients' completion of high school equivalency should be supported in the community in order to improve employment outcomes.
- Services in the community should work with clients to identify current skills, employment goals, gaps between the two and support actions to fill those gaps.

- Organizations working with the unemployed/underemployed population, including employment services and action centres, should develop relationships directly with employers or strengthen relationships with each other in order to better connect clients to employers.

Key Findings from Service Provider Focus Group

- Because of their short-term nature and specific skills focus, workshops offered at HJAC were seen as particularly valuable.
- Training should be targeted to each individual's work related goals.
- The Skills Development Flagship could better mobilize as a network in order to be more responsive to the diverse employment support needs in the community.
- Confusion and changing eligibility requirements to receive training at HJAC lead to frustration for clients and service providers referring clients to HJAC.
- Some service provider participants felt that funding for training could be distributed to established employment service providers to allow them to provide some of the workshops currently offered through HJAC.
- HJAC has the potential to fill the gap of serving dislocated workers in groups too small to have their own action centre. The culture of the centre offers an environment that some clients find more comfortable. In this way HJAC was seen as being able to augment what is offered in the community from the six major employment service providers.
- Peer helpers offer valuable emotional support after job loss, although HJAC's peer helpers are not always from the same companies as clients.
- Much of what employment counsellors do is motivating and helping clients through personal issues. Accordingly, peer support is not the only way to support dislocated workers through emotional challenges.

Based on these findings, the report makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1. These short-term employment related workshops should be available in the community.
2. Employment services in Hamilton should include opportunities for peer support.
3. Employment services for smaller groups of dislocated workers should be made available in the community. The employment service community, including community agencies and government, should strengthen networks to identify and outreach to smaller groups of laid off workers.
4. All levels of government should consider the impacts of temp work in general - and temp agencies in specific - on workers in Hamilton. Governments should consider looking to other models of casual or labour force coordination, such as that used in the former Canada Manpower Office.
5. A diverse range of employment services should be available in the community in order to effectively reach groups with different needs and preferences.
6. Local agencies and the community more broadly should support adults seeking employment in obtaining their high school diplomas or equivalency certificates.
7. Action centres and employment service agencies should work more closely together to connect clients with employers, possibly through job developers. This could involve developing better referral mechanisms for clients in order to tap into existing relationships between employment service providers and employers.
8. Community partners, possibly including the Hamilton Street Railway, the City of Hamilton, and other agencies, should collaborate to improve access to affordable transportation for job seekers. This could entail increased funding for bus tickets or changes to eligibility requirements for the Affordable Transit Pass.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In June 2009, a partnership between the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU), and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) launched the creation of the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre (HJAC). Aimed at supporting smaller groups of laid off workers (less than 50) from the area as a complement to the existing system of employment services, HJAC opened its doors in Fall 2009.

HJAC uses a labour adjustment or action centre¹ model, which aims to assist laid off workers as a result of closure or downsizing by their employer. Action centres are often established in situations where a workplace has experienced a layoff or shutdown affecting 50 or more workers. An action centre's three main objectives for helping workers are to: provide workers with the skills and knowledge to gain re-employment; enable workers to learn about new vocational or training directions that may lead to employment opportunities; and ensure that workers and their families receive the necessary support required to cope during their period of unemployment.

In the traditional adjustment centre model, when 50 or more workers from one workplace are laid off, an advisor from the Adjustment Advisor Program (AAP) from MTCU works with labour and, if possible, management to establish a centre specific to that workplace. AAP meets with company management and representatives of the employees to explain the labour adjustment process and the terms of an agreement to set up a Labour Adjustment Committee. The government and the company reps negotiate the terms of the committee agreement. A budget is set based on the number of workers affected and the kind of services anticipated. The main costs include committee members' and Chairperson's remuneration, fees for professional services depending on need, and operating costs for an Action Centre.

Dislocated workers from that place of work are hired as peer helpers, and workers support one another in adjusting to unemployment, possibly through re-entry in the labour market or early retirement. The cornerstone of the employee adjustment model is the use of 'peer helpers' who have also experienced a layoff or shutdown at the same company as clients. Peer helpers are trained to support clients in job search activities, but also provide a level of emotional support as they have similar lived experience. Action centres also typically connect clients to training as appropriate. This model begins with the total number of dislocated workers and gradually works until the majority of workers are adjusted. In this way, action centres are typically a temporary measure to address an urgent issue based in a single workplace at a time.

When fewer than 50 workers are laid off from a single workplace at one time, workers can access mainstream employment services in the community on an individual basis. Since HJAC's opening, the MTCU has reorganized how employment services are delivered in Hamilton – the new Employment Ontario Network – and now fund 6 agencies to deliver the same suite of employment services across the city. These agencies are: VPI, Mohawk College, Employment Hamilton, YMCA, Goodwill-Amity, and Wesley Urban Ministries.

While using the adjustment model, HJAC is not a workplace-specific action centre, but instead is a community action centre that serves smaller groups of dislocated workers from a number of workplaces throughout the community who would not qualify to start their own action centre with MTCU. Those involved with HJAC's creation saw that locally Hamilton had effective action centres for steelworkers and autoworkers, and saw a need for this kind of service for smaller groups of dislocated workers. According to the initial agreement that formalized HJAC's creation, the centre was to "serve laid-off work groups numbering under 100 affected workers who are not served by other Labour Adjustment services".

Part of the HJAC committee's original strategy for connecting with these smaller groups of dislocated workers was to accept individual clients and work with them to identify and connect with former co-workers. Just prior to opening, the committee was directed by MTCU not to accept individual clients. This

¹ The 'adjustment model' operates through 'action centres,' and these terms are used interchangeably throughout this report.

made connecting with smaller groups of workers more difficult because HJAC could neither advertise nor connect with groups through individual clients.

Finding these groups is also difficult for other reasons. Companies will sometimes lay off just under 50 workers in a four week period, which means they are not required to report the layoffs to the Ministry of Labour. This kind of situation is not widely reported and groups of workers are often not organized, which makes both finding out about and connecting with such groups difficult. In HJAC's early efforts to connect with these groups, two members of the Labour Adjustment Committee approached several companies to offer their workers information about the HJAC and were often told either that groups of workers had been recently laid off (and so were hard to reach) or that no layoffs were imminent, though layoffs often took place after employers made these claims. After some of these fruitless encounters with employers, MTCU's representative on the HJAC committee allowed the centre to advertise in order to better connect with groups of dislocated workers.

Despite these challenges, groups of workers have come to HJAC from companies such as Canadian Linen, Dover Cone, Voith, Maple Leaf, Burlington Technologies, US Steel, Lakeport, Frost Fencing, Hood Packaging, and Karma Candy. Half of these companies have not had their own action centre. In total, 652 clients have come to HJAC for support. Of these, 326 people – or 50% - have found jobs since first coming to the centre.

Like in the traditional adjustment model, HJAC provides short-term employment related workshops that provide recertification and qualification. Twelve (12) short-term employment related workshops are offered through HJAC, ranging from job search to specific marketable skills required for certain jobs (e.g. forklift operator, transportation of dangerous goods, etc.). To date, 270 clients of HJAC have participated in short-term employment related courses, ranging from 1 to 8 courses per client. The total number of clients who have taken each course is shown in Table 1 below.

Table1: Number of HJAC Clients Who Completed Each Training Course

Course Name	Number of Clients Who Completed Course
Forklift	227
First Aid	233
WHMIS	140
Safe Food Handling	180
Smart Serve	67
Transportation of Dangerous Goods	100
Overhead Crane	86
Fall Protection	96
Confined Spaces	16
Job Workshop	40
Interviewing Skills	18
Computer	30

Over the course of HJAC's brief existence, requirements for who was eligible to receive training and/or be an official HJAC client have changed a number of times, and this has led to some confusion and frustration for clients and other local employment service providers. HJAC's agreement with MTCU ends June 30, 2011, and no new clients are being accepted at this time.

Often one or two workers from a given workplace would come in to HJAC and let staff know that more people from that workplace had been laid off. From there, HJAC would work backwards to try to reach out to these workers through their former colleagues, which is a time consuming process.

As in the original agreement that initiated the centre, HJAC is partially staffed by "peer helpers recruited from the ranks of the affected workers." This is similar to the traditional adjustment model, but 'peers' are defined more broadly than in the traditional model. The traditional definition only includes peers from one

shared former workplace, whereas HJAC peer helpers are peers in that they have also experienced a layoff or shut down in greater Hamilton, though not necessarily from the same workplace.

The purpose of this research is to determine the value of training accessed by dislocated workers at HJAC. The goals of this research are to:

- Determine the benefits of completing short-term employment related workshops through the HJAC
- Explore options for maximizing these benefits to laid off workers and to the wider unemployed/underemployed population, and
- Explore the best venues and approaches to providing this type of training

The following chapters of this report outline the methods used in the research, and findings from each method. The final chapter offers conclusions and recommendations to improving access to skills training and employment supports to the unemployed/underemployed population in Hamilton based on these findings.

Key conclusions emerging from this study are:

- Short-term employment related courses are useful.
- Peer support is a key component of what is valuable at HJAC.
- Connecting small groups to employment services is challenging.
- Temp work is growing and impacts workers' wellbeing.
- HJAC serves an under-serviced group, particularly older workers who may be uncomfortable with mainstream employment services.
- Education is a key credential for gaining employment or moving from temporary to permanent positions.
- Clients want direct links with employers through support agencies.
- Transportation is a barrier to accessing employment.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study used a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to determine the benefits of completing skills development courses through the HJAC, and to explore options for maximizing these benefits to laid off workers and to the wider unemployed/underemployed population. This included exploring the best venues and approaches to providing this type of training.

The current research evolved from an earlier project exploring the experiences of dislocated workers who were enrolled in longer-term employment related education or training programs such as Second Career. This earlier research aimed to build on a report by the Hamilton Training and Advisory Board (HTAB), which found that lack of awareness of available training programs was a significant barrier to potential beneficiaries' access to those programs. SPRC staff launched a survey of dislocated workers who were enrolled in further education or retraining (Ontario's Second Career or HRSDC's Skills Development). Respondents were referred to the researcher through five local employment agencies: Amity-Goodwill, Mohawk Job Connect, Employment Hamilton, VPI, and the John Howard Society. In total, 40 respondents completed the original survey (Appendix A). This represented a low response rate and so the research was redesigned with a slightly different focus, now looking at shorter-term training for displaced workers, and greater opportunity to access respondents directly through the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre (HJAC). Findings from the original survey have been incorporated into the analysis of the current phase of research (see Chapter 5).

Secondary research included a review relevant literature (including academic articles, government and other professional reports) on the following topics: retraining for dislocated workers, older workers, the adjustment centre model, precarious employment and peer support. A labour market profile was also generated from the most recent Statistics Canada data available (up to November, 2010) to highlight recent employment trends in Hamilton.

Primary research consisted of three phases: a broad-based telephone survey with HJAC clients who completed training; key informant interviews with HJAC clients, staff, and local employers; and a focus group with local employment services providers.

2.1 Broad-based Survey

Of the 652 clients who came to HJAC for support, only 270 – or 41% - took training courses. Clients who came to HJAC for support but did not complete training (382 clients) were not included in this research project. Clients who completed at least one training course at HJAC were surveyed by telephone between October and December, 2010 about whether and what types of employment they had found since first coming to HJAC, which courses they felt were or would be most useful in terms of finding work, and what other types of training could be beneficial (Appendix B). Clients' phone numbers were accessed from client files at HJAC, which were given voluntarily by clients. Prior to clients being called, client information sheets were completed using client files at HJAC, and resumes in particular, to collect basic information such as gender, level of education, and length of unemployment.

Surveys were conducted by the Research Assistant from SPRC and a peer helper trained by the Research Assistant. Participation was voluntary. Surveys took between 5 and 30 minutes, with most surveys taking 10 minutes to complete. In total, 154 telephone surveys out of a possible 242 were completed, representing a 63.6% response rate². Clients were called from the HJAC office during days, evenings, and weekends. Two messages (voice mail or in-person) per client were left where possible. When clients were not available, surveyors asked when a convenient time would be to reach the client. Clients were telephoned at numbers they had previously provided to HJAC at various times of the week and day in order to attempt to accommodate clients with different schedules. To the extent possible, clients were called back at times suggested by them or those with whom messages were left.

² As of October 27, 2010, 270 clients had received training at HJAC. Of these, 28 files were removed from the sample for personal reasons as it was determined by the research team in consultation with HJAC staff that contacting those clients for the survey would have been an unnecessary disruption. Thus a total possible sample size of clients who had received training was 242.

2.1 Key informant interviews

Key issues raised in the survey phase were explored further in key informant interviews with 15 clients (Appendix C), 5 HJAC staff members (Appendix D), and 3 employers (Appendix E), for a total of 23 interviews. In the interests of time, rather than conducting separate interviews, a focus group was held with the four peer helpers. Because the coordinator interview and peer helper focus group used the same interview guide (Appendix D), and to maintain confidentiality, findings from these phases of research are discussed together (see Chapter 8). Most interviews were conducted by phone, while staff interviews/focus group were in person at HJAC. Interviews were conducted between November 2010 and January 2011, and lasted between 5 and 40 minutes, with most interviews taking roughly 20 minutes to complete. Interviews focused on challenges that HJAC clients commonly face, the value of different kinds of credentials and experience, experiences and impacts of precarious work, HJAC services and how they could be improved, and possible benefits of the peer support model. Client interviewees were selected from clients who participated in the survey who gave more detailed responses than average and that together roughly matched the client profiles of the survey population (see Chapter 5.0 Survey findings). Interviews were designed to add depth to our understanding of findings from the survey phase of the research.

2.2 Service Provider Focus Group

A focus group was held in with local employment service providers in January 2011 in order to consider key challenges found in earlier phases of the research and begin to generate possible responses to these challenges. The purpose of this focus group was to reflect on preliminary findings and discuss the best venues and approaches to providing this type of training in order to maximize the benefits to laid off workers and to the wider unemployed/underemployed population (Appendix F).

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the report summarizes academic literature, as well as government and other research reports, to review relevant findings, which gives some context to the conclusions of this report.

3.1 Dislocated workers and adjustment model

'Dislocated' or 'displaced' workers are terms used to describe individuals who have lost their jobs not because of their own job performance or cyclical changes in employment, but as a result of structural economic changes (Schore and Atkin, 1992; HRDC, 1997). Dislocated workers often require support including training, job searching support and counselling to help them adjust to unemployment and possibly re-enter the workforce (HRDC 1997).

The effects of corporate restructuring, globalization, outsourcing, privatization, deregulation and the advancement of technology have had major impacts on national, provincial and local labour markets³. As governments and the private sector adapt to these changes, workers are often left to negotiate an ever-changing labour market. This can be particularly challenging for laid off workers attempting to re-enter the labour market after a company downsize or shutdown.

In an effort to address these issues, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) provides an Adjustment Advisory Program (AAP). While the program offers support to employers and communities adjusting to change, there is a specific focus on ensuring a smooth transition for workers re-entering the labour market after a company shutdown or downsize. This work is done through employee adjustment committees, which are sometimes established when companies announce a downsize or shutdown affecting more than fifty employees.

In 1963, Canada began the Industrial Adjustment Service (IAS) as a way of solving human resource adjustment problems resulting from technological and market changes (MTCU, 2004). The goals of the IAS were to ensure job enrichment, job re-design, and quality of work life, contributing to improved productivity and the general economy.

By 1980, Ontario was in a recession and many plant closures and downsizing led the Ontario government to become involved in labour adjustment services. Currently the employee adjustment services are provided provincially by the MTCU and are referred to as the Adjustment Advisory Program (AAP).

The mandate of the AAP includes providing adjustment services that help communities to anticipate, respond to, and manage changes in the local labour market, and to assist displaced workers in dealing with their job loss through employee adjustment programs. The province employs adjustment advisors across Ontario to support workers involved in mass layoffs to reconnect with the labour force. A mass layoff is defined in the Employment Standards Act, 2000 as a layoff of 50 or more workers over a four-week period.

Once a layoff is reported to the Ministry of Labour, MTCU is contacted and an Adjustment Advisor contacts the company and union (if there is one) to determine if there is interest in adjustment. If the parties are interested in adjustment, a Labour Adjustment Committee is formed. The committee must be a joint committee of those individuals who are affected by the change and those who have expertise in managing that change. This would include workers, employers where possible, government, and service providers as well as other community partners who might be identified as stakeholders in a particular situation. Once a Labour Adjustment Committee has been struck with the support of MTCU, the committee generally takes the actions described in Table 2 below (though the process may vary slightly depending on when AAP gets involved).

³ The remainder of section 3.1 is a modified excerpt from a report entitled "An Assessment of Employee Adjustment in Hamilton," prepared by Mark Fraser and Deirdre Pike of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton for the Hamilton Training Advisory Board (SPRC, 2005).

Table 2: Actions in Establishing an Action Centre

Actions:	Descriptions:
Establish committee, provide training for committee members and assign roles such as Secretary and Treasurer	The Labour Adjustment Committee is formally established, including assignment of positions. Committee members receive training necessary to carry out the functions of the committee and Action Centre.
Inform workers of adjustment	Workers may be informed at the workplace if layoffs are known to be coming in the near future. When layoffs are not announced in advance informing workers of adjustment opportunities is more difficult.
Selection process for chairperson	The chairperson coordinates and facilitates committee meetings.
Selection process for co-ordinator position	The Coordinator acts as a resource to the committee and manages the employee action centre (see below).
Selection process for peer helpers	Peer helpers are drawn from employees in the company that is laying off.
Sets up an action centre	An action centre is the physical location where employment supports are provided to laid off workers.
Determines worker needs either through surveys or formal needs assessments	To determine the most appropriate mix of programs and services to support workers.
Identifies appropriate service providers	Identify and contract with local employment services to provide relevant programs and services.
Conducts outreach and follow-up	Ongoing contact with workers to connect workers with adjustment activities.
Manages the adjustment process	Oversees the adjustment process, makes decisions, and monitors outcomes.

3.2 Older workers face unique challenges

In periods where many workers had distinct transitions between work and retirement, retirement benefits were often adequate to support older displaced workers. Today many older displaced workers do not have access to such security, and instead require more active supports to help them re-enter the workforce. When older workers are displaced they generally endure longer periods of unemployment than their younger counterparts, and also earn an average of 55-65% (from all sources) of their earnings before layoffs (HRDC, 1997). Even when displaced manufacturing workers do regain employment, one study found that wages and benefits are on average \$10,000 per year less than in their previous employment (Foster and Schore, 1989).

Older displaced workers often face a number of barriers to re-entry into the labour market, including lack of job search skills, lack of skills in growing industries, relatively low educational attainment, less willingness to relocate, preconceived notions about older workers (i.e. discrimination), fewer opportunities for retraining, and training programs that are not designed to meet needs of older learners (HRDC, 1997; Tikkanen et al., 2002). In fact, no Canadian legislation currently protects against discrimination in employment practices relating to older workers. For these and other reasons, it is not surprising that older displaced workers have lower levels of reintegration into the labour market after being displaced (HRDC, 1997).

These challenges are not faced evenly by all older workers, however. Older workers in service industries are often seen as offering employers advantages such as higher retention rates, loyalty, dependability, better customer service skills, and the ability to relate to older clients (Pillay et al., 2006; Imel, 1991). Still, in the words of a report from the Office of Technology Assessment in Washington D.C., "the attitudes of management are the greatest hurdle older workers face" (1990, p. 252).

3.3 Retraining can help older workers find employment

In times of economic recession and with fewer jobs available, workers often seek further training and education in order to appear more competitive in the labour market (Shamash and Sims, 2009). Workers anticipating changing industries after being dislocated are particularly likely to undertake training as a strategy to offset significant income declines from the transition (Jacobson, LaLonde and Sullivan, 2005a; Neal, 1995).

Older workers in particular have been shown benefit from training in terms of employment outcomes or wages (Jacobson et al., 2005a; HRDC, 1997). Discerning which kinds of training yield the most benefits to workers – for example, community college versus shorter vocational courses - is difficult, however, because most studies do not make such distinctions (Thomson et al., 2005; Jacobson et al., 2005a) and researchers emphasize the importance of separating out which kinds of training lead to better employment outcomes (Rocha and McCant, 1999). Still, there is evidence to suggest that technical or vocational courses can boost earnings by as much as 14-29% (Jacobson et al., 2003; 2005b).

Although older workers stand to benefit significantly from training, many employers are reluctant to invest in retraining older workers because of concerns that workers will not work long enough to make the investment worthwhile (OTA, 1990). Perceptions that older workers may possess less ability to be trained, though unfounded, are also common (OTA, 1990). In fact, one review of studies in the U.S. found no reliable evidence that workers under 70 years of age have diminished cognitive capacity that would inhibit training (Simpson 2005; Ferrier et al., 2008).

Outcomes from training older workers are also consistently better when learning environments and tactics are tailored specifically to older learners (Ferrier et al., 2008; Dunn, 2005; Thomson et al., 2005; HRDC, 1997). Specific techniques include making sure workers are comfortable with any technology being used, recognizing and building on life experiences, using peer mentoring and allowing for frequent social interaction (Ferrier et al., 2008). Employing peer instructors can also contribute to making retraining environments more comfortable as peers can often relate more easily to learners' life experiences (Schweke, 2004).

3.4 Many of the jobs available now are forms of precarious work

The reality that many dislocated workers of all ages face today is the growing proportion of precarious work. 'Precarious work' is defined as employment with some combination of little security, low wages, and few if any benefits (D'Amours, 2009; Vosko, 2006). Another aspect of precarious work is that it generally offers few opportunities for skills development or promotion (Jackson, 2003)

While precarious work is growing in general, women and youth are more likely to be working in precarious jobs than other groups (Young, 2010; Vosko, 2006, 2000; Mills, 2004). Not surprisingly, the fact that women are more likely to work in precarious jobs contributes to their lower average wages than men (Young, 2010). A study on youth working irregular shifts noted that most do so "against their own will" (Mills 2004 p.132).

Precarious work can negatively impact workers' health. While health outcomes for different groups of precarious workers (through temporary agencies, on short-term contracts, or self-employed) vary, one study found "workers employed through temporary agencies reported the poorest health" of these groups and workers with full-time employment (Lewchuk et al., 2008, p.394). The study's authors call for stronger legislation to protect workers in such precarious employment situations and avoid preventable population health crises (Lewchuk et al., 2008).

3.5 The difference that peer support makes

Amid these challenges, peer support, which is a key feature of the adjustment centre model, can help dislocated workers with both employment outcomes and emotional support. Peer counsellors (sometimes referred to as peer support specialists) in most adjustment centres are dislocated from the same workplace as adjustment centre clients (Schweke, 2004). Peer counsellors provide clients with information about available services, support job search and/or retraining activities, maintain records of clients and their efforts at the centre, and other activities (Schweke, 2004).

Using peer counsellors in service provision to help dislocated workers adjust to unemployment can help reduce stigma associated with accessing support services. Peer support can also build trust, normalize support, and make programs more effective (Schore and Atkin, 1992). This is partly because of a more informal and relaxed environment at action centres, but also because of familiarity and shared experience between staff and clients. Further, services are more likely to be used by displaced workers when they are located where clients would go for another reason, integrated with other services, and counseling is destigmatized (Schore and Atkin 1992, p.90).

Models of employment services that use peer counselling, such as job finding clubs, have produced promising employment outcomes – as high as 70% client placement, 80% of whom were employed in full-time positions- while a comparable government-run program that did not use peer counselors had only 40% of clients find employment (HRDC, 1997, p.35). While employment services adapt to changing circumstances over time and each program is slightly different, literature on employment services shows that mainstream programs are often “not well suited for the unemployed older workers” (HRDC, 1997, p.35). In such cases, the unique value of peer support in employment services increases.

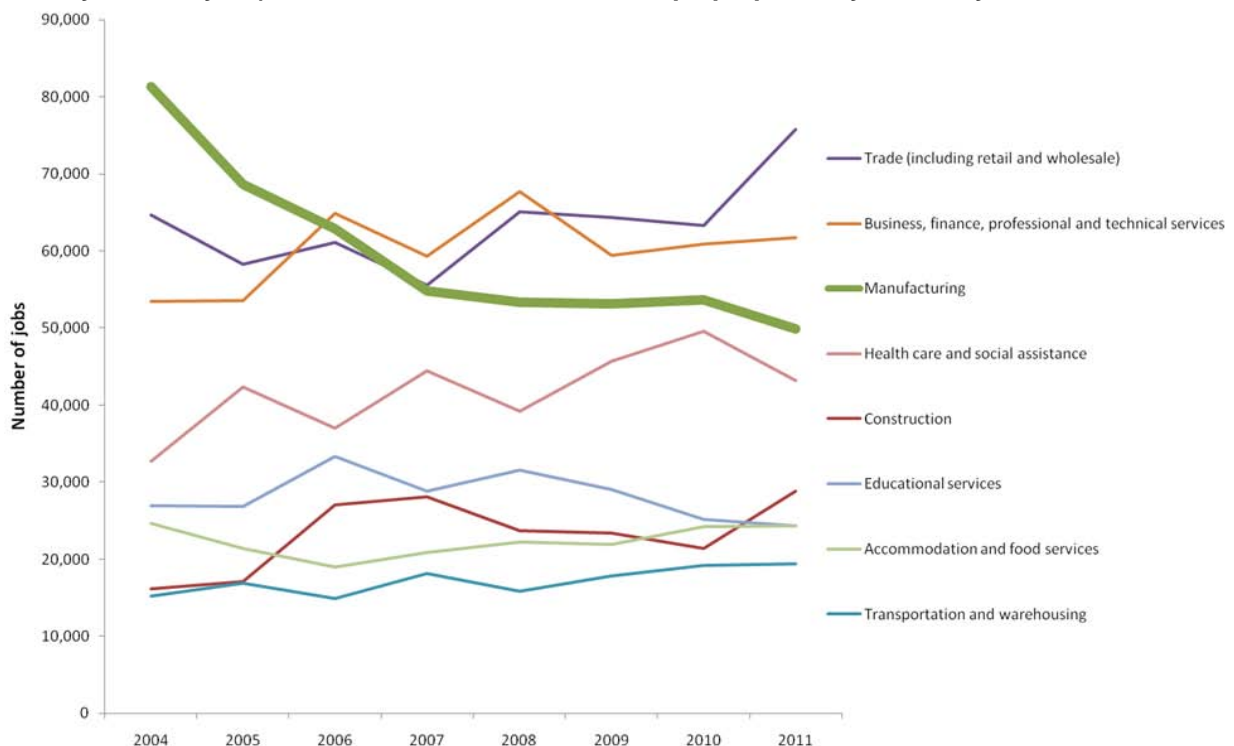
4.0 LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

In order to better understand the context in which HJAC clients are adjusting to unemployment, SPRC staff developed this labour market profile highlight recent employment trends. Looking at changes in employment levels in different industries in Hamilton over time shows which industries are declining, which are growing, and when these trends begin and change. Examining employment insurance benefits recipient and Ontario Works caseloads offers a partial picture of how some workers who are dealing with job loss in terms of government financial support. Each of these elements of the labour market profile are graphed and discussed below.

4.1 Employment by Industry

Figure 1 below shows the number of jobs for various industries in Hamilton from 2004 to 2011. Because this chart begins several years before the recession began, it is possible to see how industries were affected differently by the recession.

Figure 1: Estimated employment by industry (selected industries), Hamilton CMA, 2004-2011 (January of each year), Source: Statistics Canada. Graph prepared by Sara Mayo, SPRC, 2011.



If we take 2008 to be the height of the recession, we can see that the business, finance, and technical services sector experienced a sharp decline in employment levels. At the same time, health care and social assistance experienced employment growth. In contrast, the graph also shows that the manufacturing sector had been experiencing a significant decline since 2004, and in fact experienced only a slight decline from 2008 to 2009.

4.2 Employment Insurance and Ontario Works

In the same time period, Employment Insurance (EI) claims varied in fairly regular cycles until December 2008, when they had a striking increase for males and females (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Employment Insurance recipients (excluding special benefits such as parental and sick leave), by sex, City of Hamilton, 2004-2010. Source: Statistics Canada. Graph prepared by Sara Mayo, SPRC, 2011.

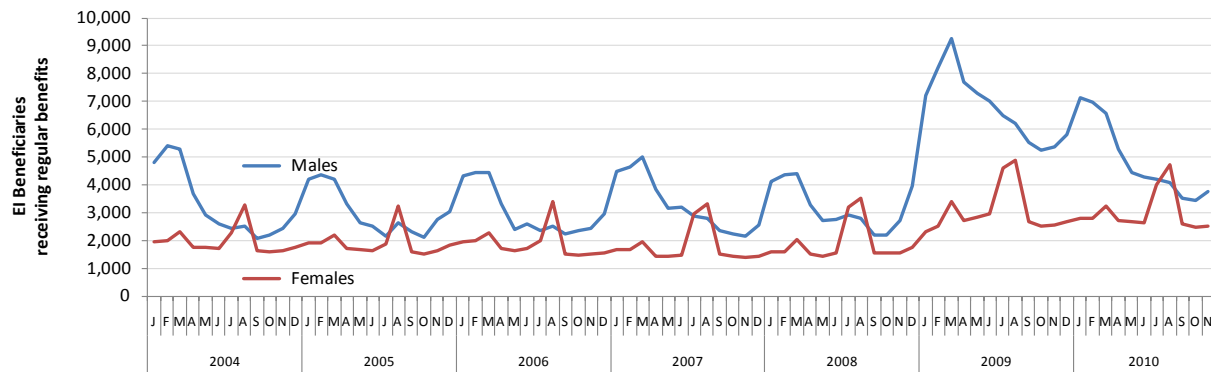
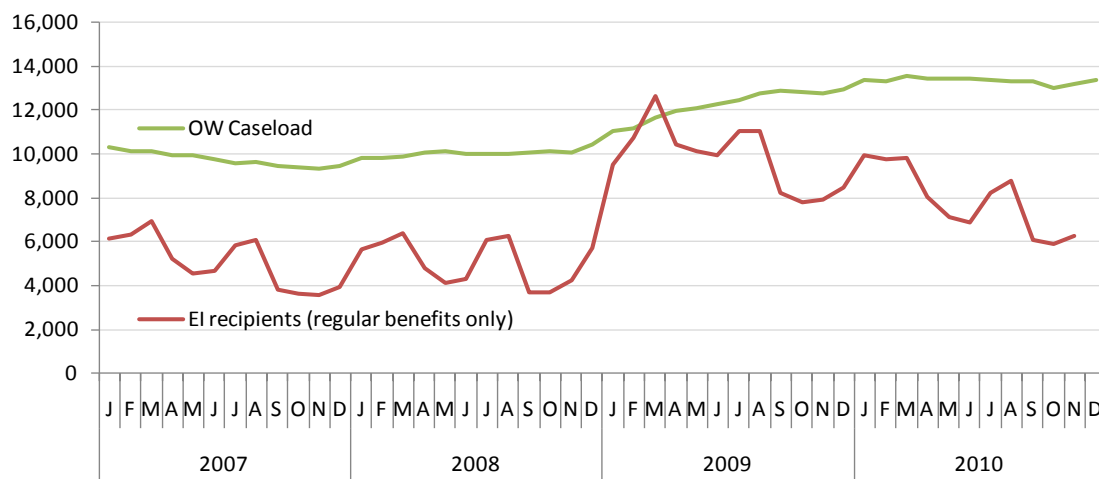


Figure 3: Ontario Works caseload and Employment Insurance beneficiaries, Hamilton, 2007-2010. Sources: Statistics Canada and City of Hamilton. Graph prepared by Sara Mayo, SPRC, 2011.



Comparing EI recipients with the Ontario Works (OW) caseload for Hamilton over the last four years (2007-2010), we see that the number of total EI recipients nearly doubled between December 2008 and March 2009 to 16,908, while OW caseloads have grown more gradually (Figure 3 above). While the decrease in EI recipients in 2010 seems promising, this may indicate that some recipients are exhausting the maximum period of benefits, have not yet found work, and are not yet eligible to apply for Ontario Works. Persons may not apply for Ontario Works after exhausting EI benefits until they also deplete any savings they may have.

Accordingly, there may be many people who are not currently receiving government financial assistance and are gradually using up their savings as they search for employment.

4.3 Employment Services in Hamilton

Another aspect of the context around HJAC is the employment services system. Over the last several months, the employment services system in Hamilton has been reorganized to form the Employment Ontario network. The network in Hamilton originally consisted of seven (7) main employment service providers: VPI, Mohawk College, Employment Hamilton, YMCA, Goodwill-Amity, Wesley Urban

Ministries, and Settlement and Integration Services Ontario (SISO). Because of recent legal and financial difficulties, SISO has closed its doors, laying off roughly 150 workers, and leaving the Employment Ontario network in Hamilton with six (6) main employment service providers. At each of the remaining six employment service provider agencies, clients can now receive the same full suite of client-focused employment services. Other agencies also offer employment services, though not the full suite, to particular communities. These agencies include ACFO, PATH, the Hamilton Public Library (5 locations), and the City of Hamilton Career Development.

4.4 Action Centres in Hamilton

In addition to these mainstream employment services, Hamilton has had a number of action centres over several years. As discussed earlier, action centres are launched in response to significant layoffs of 50 workers or more from a given workplace at one time where there is an interest to participate in the adjustment process. Since January 2010, Hamilton has had at least six action centres active. They are as follows:

- 1) Hamilton Area Steelworkers Action Centre: serving laid off steelworkers from several work sites including National Steel Car, U.S. Steel, Amcan, Associated Springs, Hamilton Speciality Bar, and many others.
- 2) Voith Action Centre: serving Voith Manufacturing.
- 3) Dover Industries Burlington: serving Dover Cone workers from Hamilton.
- 4) Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 504: serving workers from a number of CAW 504 worksites such as Samuel, Selkirk, Wabco, Camco & Wescan.
- 5) Hamilton Job Action Centre: serving smaller layoffs in Hamilton.
- 6) Maple Leaf: serving Maple Leaf foods workers.

With the closure of some of these action centres such as Voith and Dover Cone, and the new employment service network not yet established, remaining unadjusted workers were referred to HJAC for services if desired. Active action centres in the area are encouraged to work together and provide assistance to each other as needed.

5.0 ORIGINAL SURVEY FINDINGS

This chapter of the report outlines findings from the original survey of individuals who were enrolled in longer-term employment related education or training programs. SPRC staff launched a survey of dislocated workers who were enrolled in further education or retraining (such as Ontario's Second Career or HRSDC's Skills Development). The survey looked at workers' experience in full-time educational settings and various challenges they faced. In total, 40 respondents completed the original survey (Appendix A). Based on findings from this survey, the rest of this chapter discusses the profiles of respondents, types of training, and experiences of these training programs in separate sections.

5.1 Profile of Respondents

Respondents were asked to identify the age group of which they were a part. Table 3 illustrates the percentages represented in each age group. Respondents fell roughly evenly into each age group between 25 and 64, with each age range capturing between 21 and 29% of all respondents. Slightly over half of respondents (56%) were 44 years of age or less, while 45% of respondents were age 45 or older.

Table 3: Age Range of Respondents of Original Survey

Age Range (years)	Percentage of Respondents
18-24	3%
25-34	24%
35-44	29%
45-54	24%
55-64	21%
65+	0%

Nearly two thirds of respondents were female (63%), while 37% were male. In terms of highest level of education completed, fully 70% of respondents had completed at least some college or university training (see Table 4 below). Of these, 38% had graduated college or university prior to beginning retraining. Of the eight percent (8%) of respondents who listed 'Other' under highest level of education, most were certificates acquired through community or career colleges.

Table 4: Highest Levels of Education of Respondents of Original Survey

Highest Level of Education	Percentage of Survey Respondents
No secondary school diploma	3%
Secondary school diploma	19%
Some college or university	32%
Graduated college or university	38%
Other	8%

Clients also identified how long they had been unemployed before they began their retraining program. Percentages of respondents in each length of unemployment period are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Percentage of Respondents by Length of Unemployment

Length of Unemployment	Percent of Respondents
0-3 Months	8%
3-6 Months	31%
6-12 Months	36%
1-2 Years	18%
2-3 Years	5%
3+ Years	3%

Respondents came from a range of backgrounds including manufacturing, transportation, finance, and administration. Of all respondents, 85% were laid off from their last employment position, while 13% were not.

5.2 Types of Training

The specific types of training taken by respondents were as diverse as their former careers, and included massage therapy, funeral services, police foundations, accounting, and biotechnology. Most respondents received government financial assistance through Ontario's Second Career Program (80%), while 13% of respondents received support through HRSDC's Skills Development Program. (The remaining 7% received support from other programs.)

Training programs were provided through a community college for 45% of respondents, through a career college for 40% of respondents, and through a training school for 13% of respondents. Almost three quarters of respondents (72%) were pursuing training as part of a new career path, while 28% were taking training related to their previous work experience. Among those starting a new career path, some individuals were pursuing completely new paths, and others were building on skills they carried from their previous profession. For example, one respondent explained that her program in medical terminology will build on her skills in office administration and allow her to access administration jobs in the medical field.

5.3 Experiences of Training Programs

Respondents were then asked a series of questions about their experiences with retraining. When asked to rate the level of difficulty of the program in terms of academic requirements, on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being "Very Easy" and 4 being "Very Difficult," most respondents rated it at a 3 or 4 level of difficulty (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Percentage of Respondents by Level of Difficulty of Longer Term Retraining Programs

Level of Difficulty	Percentage of Respondents
1 "Very Easy"	3%
2 "Somewhat Easy"	30%
3 "Somewhat Difficult"	53%
4 "Very Difficult"	15%

The survey then asked what the most challenging part of the program was for respondents. While individuals often identified academic challenges specific to their course of study, memorization or the challenge of memorizing large amounts of information was a common theme that emerged from responses. Respondents also often cited the challenge of finding time to study while balancing school and family responsibilities.

When asked how their lives had changed since enrolling in their training program, respondents identified both positive life changes and negative ones. In terms of positives, respondents described having a renewed sense of confidence and hope as a result of their studies. Some respondents explained that they felt that they had matured as a result of the learning process; felt more focused, and had goals for the future. On the negative side, a number of respondents recounted struggling with a change in routine and with finding time to study. Many described stressful circumstances, including stress on families. Respondents were then asked about challenges in general and in specific they faced since beginning their training program. While respondents described a range of challenges, the primary themes that emerged from responses involved the stress around balancing school and family responsibilities and time management in general.

5.3.1 Financial Challenges

In terms of specific challenges, 53% of respondents reported that they had faced financial challenges of some kind. Respondents described circumstances related to living on significantly reduced incomes. Some individuals found themselves in circumstances where they had to make difficult decisions like remortgaging their house in order to pay the bills. Respondents also noted that many of the costs associated with their education were not covered through their training program, such as registration fees, exam fees and transportation.

Respondents were also asked what would have helped them, and what could be improved to better support them in these challenges. While respondents were grateful for the funding provided and the opportunity to return to school, many felt that the living allowance needed to better reflect the actual cost of living. Many respondents also felt that support programs should be extended to cover additional costs such as transportation and other education related fees. Respondents also felt that medical and dental benefits should be provided as part of the program.

5.3.2 Childcare Challenges

Ten percent (10%) of respondents reported facing challenges related to childcare. Respondents described a range of difficult childcare arrangements resulting in day-to-day stresses. One woman described having to leave school at noon every day to transport her two children from one childcare provider to another before returning to school for the afternoon. In terms of solutions or supports, the majority of responses called for better access to child care in their community.

5.3.3 Social, Recreation, and Leisure Challenges

Most respondents (53%) reported experiencing challenges related to social activities, recreation, or leisure. Almost all responses to this question revolved around constrained time and money. In many cases individuals simply did not have the time for social or recreational activities given their heavy course loads. Where time was not the main factor, respondents explained that they had no money available for recreation or leisure activities.

In terms of addressing time constraints, respondents suggested limiting workloads or extending the program to spread the work out over a longer period. While participants were generally grateful for the funding they were receiving, many recommended an increase in the living allowance portion of the funding. Most people did expect a drastic change in lifestyle.

5.3.4 Family Challenges

Nearly 40 percent of respondents (38%) reported experiencing family challenges as a result of undertaking their training program. While some respondents described their personal circumstances, the main themes related to family challenges were 1) having very little time to spend with family, and 2) the financial stress that comes with a reduced household income.

In terms of strategies to address family challenges, respondents most often suggested more manageable (less concentrated) school schedules.

5.3.5 Health Challenges

A significant portion of respondents (44%) had faced health challenges. Individuals described a wide range of acute and chronic health issues. In several cases, these health challenges interfered with respondents' ability to focus on or complete coursework.

In terms of addressing health challenges, respondents most often suggested providing health and dental benefits to participants of training programs.

5.4 Confidence in Finding Employment

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of confidence that the training they were undertaking would result in full-time employment on a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “No Confidence” and 4 being “Very Confident.” The percentage of respondents with each level of confidence is shown in Table 7 below. More than two thirds of respondents (69%) reported a 3 or 4 level of confidence. Including the level 2 scores, which indicate at least some confidence, 90% of respondent reported having some confidence that the training they were engaged in would lead to full-time employment. This suggests that, from the perspective of those enrolled in these programs, longer term employment focused training is valuable.

Table 7: Levels of confidence that training will result in full-time employment

Level of Confidence	Percentage of Respondents
1	10%
2	21%
3	28%
4	41%

The survey also asked respondents to explain why they chose a particular confidence rating. For those at the lower end of the confidence scale, reasons most often related to their age (in the cases of older workers), or their perception that the economy has not yet recovered.

On the positive end of the scale, many respondents explained that they had gained increased confidence in themselves as a result of their enrolment in training. Again, this suggests that completing this training is valuable in terms of boosting confidence that can in turn improve employment outcomes. Many also felt that they had done significant research prior to enrolling in their training program and that there were many opportunities available in their chosen field.

6.0 BROAD-BASED SURVEY FINDINGS

Surveys were conducted with HJAC clients who had completed between 1 and 8 training courses. This section gives a summary of findings from the survey phase of research.

6.1 Profile of Respondents

Telephone surveys were conducted with 154 HJAC clients. To get a better sense of who accesses HJAC's services and supports, a basic profile of respondents was generated from a combination of information collected from resumes and client files, as well as questions asked directly of clients in surveys.

Nearly 70% of respondents were male (69%), while 31% of respondents were female. Clients were asked if they would identify the age group of which they were a part. Table 8 illustrates the percentages represented in each age group. The vast majority of clients are at least 35 years of age or more (78%). Further, half of clients surveyed are 45 years of age or more, and are considered 'older workers' according to the literature (See Chapter 3).

Table 8: Percentage of Respondents by Age Range

Age Range (years)	Percentage of Respondents
18-24	5%
25-34	17%
35-44	29%
45-54	35%
55-64	14%
65+	1%

Table 9 shows the distribution of the highest level of education achieved by respondents. In terms of education, the largest group represented is clients with a high school diploma (36%). Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) do not have a high school diploma and nearly another quarter (23%) completed some college or university. One out of ten respondents (10%) graduated college or university, and just 8% of respondents completed trade school.

Table 9: Percentage of Client Survey Respondents by Highest Level of Education Achieved

Highest Level of Education	Percentage of Survey Respondents
No secondary school diploma	23%
Secondary school diploma	36%
Some college or university	23%
Graduated college or university	10%
Trade school	8%

Combining these two dimensions (age and education), it is possible to see how different age groups are distributed across levels of education. Table 10 below shows the number of survey respondents in each age group and level of education. The age groups that make up the greatest portion of each level of education are indicated in bold, with the percentage of the total number of respondents with that level of education represented by that age group in brackets.

Table 10: Respondents' Age by Education level (largest proportion of one age group in each level of education in bold)

Level of education	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55=64	65+
No secondary	3	2	8	16	5	1
Secondary	3	10	14	20	5	0
Some college or university	0	9	10	9	6	0
Graduated college or university	1	3	4	5	2	0
Trade school	0	1	7	2	2	0

The length of time that clients had been unemployed before coming to HJAC was calculated from the date of last employment on a client's resume and the date of first contact with HJAC as noted in client files. Half of respondents had been unemployed for three months or less as of November, 2010, as seen in Table 11 below. The majority of respondents had been unemployed for one year or less (79%). Still, another 15% of respondents had been unemployed for between 1 and 2 years, and the remaining 6% had been unemployed for 2 years or more.

Table 11: Length of Unemployment before Contact with HJAC

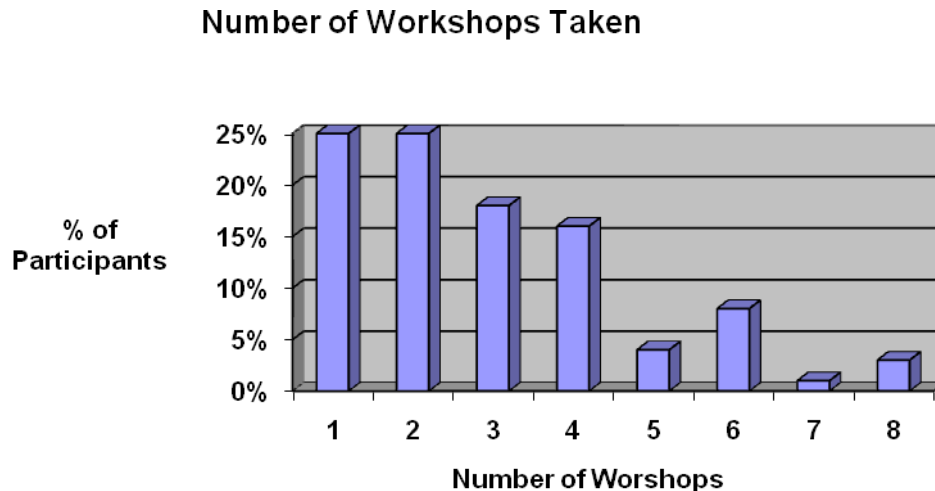
Length of Unemployment	Percent of Respondents
0-3 Months	50%
3-6 Months	9%
6-12 Months	20%
1-2 Years	15%
2-3 Years	3%
3+ Years	3%

Because the target client group of HJAC includes those who have experienced a recent layoff or shutdown within the agreement period, it appears that some of those surveyed may not have been eligible to receive supports from HJAC. This suggests that HJAC clients can benefit from an open door policy, where individuals who are not eligible are referred to other local agencies.

6.2 Workshops and Employment Outcomes

Of the 652 clients who came to HJAC for support, only 270 – or 41% - took training courses. The fact that 59% of those who came to HJAC for employment help did not take training suggests that clients completed training to suit their employment goals, rather than simply taking advantage of free training. Because one purpose of this research was to assess the value of training for dislocated workers, this section describes the amount and types of training taken by clients and how these are correlated with clients' employment outcomes. Figure 4 below shows the proportion of clients who took each number of workshops.

Figure 4: Number of workshops taken by percentage of respondents



Grouping respondents into those who took between 1 and 4 workshops and between 5 and 8 workshops, we see that 84% of respondents took only 1-4 workshops. This suggests that free training encourages people to engage in employment related activities.

The survey also asked clients about their experiences with employment since first coming to HJAC. This data was then connected to the number of workshops taken by clients, as shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Employment Outcomes by Number of Workshops Taken

Number of Workshops	Employment since first contact	No employment since first contact	Positive employment outcome
1	19	19	50%
2	20	18	53%
3	20	8	71%
4	17	7	71%
5	3	3	50%
6	7	5	54%
7	2	0	100%
8	4	0	100%
TOTAL	92	60	61%

When clients are grouped by number of workshops taken, we see 50% positive employment outcomes for clients who took 1 workshop, 63% positive employment outcomes for clients who took 2 to 4 workshops, and 67% positive employment outcomes for clients who took 5 to 8 workshops. Overall, 92 clients surveyed (61%) had positive employment outcomes.

There is a general trend that clients who took more workshops tended to have better employment outcomes. It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that taking more workshops caused better employment outcomes. The impact of workshops on employment outcomes is explored further below.

In order to flesh out and explore further the relationship between training and employment outcomes, clients were asked the following question: "Do you feel that completing the workshop on ___ was/will be helpful in finding work? Why/why not?"

While this question was asked in relation to specific workshops, responses were quite similar regardless of the workshop focus. As the main theme, respondents valued having recent training on their resume. While this clearly helped to build the confidence of HJAC clients, they also felt it was valued by potential employers as it demonstrated current activity in the labour market during a period of unemployment. In the words of one client, “Having a certificate helps because the employer sees you took the time to educate yourself on that.” In this way, completing these courses is valuable in securing employment because recent credentials convey to employers that a candidate is active in the labour market, and may be more likely to be an active worker.

Two workshops in particular were valued as useful skills in any workplace: First Aid and WHMIS. Because health and safety concerns can arise in all workplaces, these workshops were seen as being transferable to various jobs, and offering clients an advantage in the job market by being able to demonstrate these skills. As one client put it, “I am working night shift; the company likes knowing that they have someone with First Aid on that shift.” These workshops then are valuable in a range of employment situations and can improve candidates’ chances of securing jobs in various sectors.

Workshops focusing on a specific skill set were seen as valuable upgrades or as providing opportunities to compete for positions in a new field. For one client, “Because I have a certificate for forklift I can start applying for forklift jobs.” In some cases clients took training in order to re-certify for skills or experiences they already had. Most clients felt it was valuable to have certificates for these skills as a way to represent them to potential employers or validate previous experience that may have been undocumented. Several clients also valued specific skill set certificates as making them eligible for promotions to other positions in the future.

Positive employment outcomes are defined as clients having had some paid employment since first coming to HJAC. Not all clients were employed at the time of survey, however. Overall, 61% of respondents have had some paid employment since first coming to HJAC, while 39% have had no paid employment in that time (see Table 12, previous page). At the time of completing the survey, 41% of clients were currently employed, while 59% were not currently employed. While clients’ current employment situations change constantly, we can still compare the fact that 50% of all HJAC clients over time have found work to the 61% of survey respondents who have had work since coming to the centre. While these populations are different, these figures suggest that completing training courses contributes to positive employment outcomes. Further research would be needed to determine this for certain.

Clients reported having had a wide range in the types of jobs (full-time, part-time, temporary, casual, or contract). Jobs were considered ‘precarious’ if they were temporary⁴, contract, or casual because in general these types of work tend to offer less stability in terms of length of employment, unpredictable hours, lack of benefits, and/or lower wages. The percentages of different types of work arrangements are shown in Table 13 below. Fortunately, just over 30% of employment attained by clients was full time, while 18% was part time work. Of greater concern is that over half (53%) of all employment clients engaged in was precarious.

Table 13: Type of employment by percentage of total jobs held by respondents

Type of Position	Number of Jobs	Percentage of Jobs
Full time	32	31%
Part time	18	18%
Precarious	53	53%
Total Jobs: 103		

For each workshop, clients were asked to rate whether they thought the workshop “was or will be helpful in finding work” from 1 to 4, with 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”. Table 14 below

⁴ Temporary jobs are often called ‘temp’ jobs, and temporary employment agencies are commonly called ‘temp agencies.’ Both ‘temp’ and ‘temporary’ are used interchangeably throughout this report.

shows the percentage of respondents that rated each workshop as 3 or 4 on this scale. Each course had been taken by between 15 and 87 respondents. The percentage of respondents who thought the workshop was or will be valuable ranged from 73% (Job Workshop) and 100% (Computer). The five workshops that over 90% of respondents ranked as helpful or very helpful were: Computer (100%), First Aid (98%), Forklift (96%), W.H.M.I.S. (95%), and Safe food handling (93%). As in the original survey, these findings suggest that the vast majority of clients who completed training value the training because they feel it has improved or will improve their ability to find work.

Table 14: Client-Perceived Value of Employment Related Workshops

Workshop	# of Participants Surveyed	Value of Workshop in Finding Work – “Helpful” or “Very Helpful”
First Aid	87	98%
Interview Skills	10	89%
Job Workshop	15	73%
Forklift	78	96%
Fall Protection	20	84%
Smart Serve	20	83%
Overhead Crane	22	81%
Transportation of Dangerous Goods	50	85%
W.H.M.I.S.	75	95%
Safe food handling	34	93%
Computer	19	100%

6.3 Other Benefits, Services and Programs

Several other questions focused on what besides employment related workshops clients found useful about HJAC, what could be done to improve services and workshops at HJAC, and about client experiences (if any) with Second Career. Findings from these questions are described below. Clients were asked, “Other than employment related workshops, what did you find useful about HJAC in terms of helping people find work?”

The majority of responses related to the quality of staffing at the centre. Specifically, respondents described staff as being “friendly”, “caring”, “flexible”, “easy to talk to” and “motivating”. Staff was perceived as having created a welcoming environment where the employment needs of clients were top priority.

Beyond the staff and general culture of the organization, respondents identified the value of some of the instrumental supports provided through the centre, including the job board, access to email, fax and computers. Respondents also valued the one-on-one support in creating and updating their resumes in preparation for job search highly.

Respondents were also asked what other types of employment workshops would be helpful in finding work. The most common responses to this survey question included more advanced or specialized computer courses, courses related to the operation of various types of heavy equipment, as well as specialized drivers licenses. Persons with an Ontario Class DZ license for example, are licensed to drive vehicles such as transport trucks, dump trucks, cement trucks, garbage trucks and rescue and fire trucks with airbrakes.

Clearly, any recommendations related the addition of new training programs would need to consider a review of the current labour market demands and required skill sets.

Clients were asked about what could be done to improve the services and supports offered at HJAC, focusing specifically on helping clients find employment. An overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the centre provided all the supports that they needed and required no improvements.

One common theme or recommendation emerging from responses from HJAC clients related to the idea of building stronger connections between the HJAC and local employers. These connections could involve outreach activities, like a job finding club where staff proactively seek out employment opportunities based on the skill sets and interests of clients. Alternatively, as one respondent suggested, the centre could operate like a temp agency where employers approach the centre directly with their HR needs. Several clients saw this possibility as being able to benefit clients differently than temporary employment. As one respondent said, in this model HJAC could “set up interviews with HR people, kind of like what temp agencies do now but would be more beneficial to people than agencies.”

In terms of the Second Career program, only 32% of respondents had applied, while 68% had not. Among those who did apply to Second Career, a range of scenarios were experienced. A small number of respondents had successfully completed the application process and were waiting to begin training in their chosen field, while a small group of others had gone through the application process and were waiting for a final decision. The majority of respondents however either applied but did not qualify for one reason or another, or did not complete their application due to frustration with the process and wait times. Among those who did not apply for Second Career, the main reasons were that they were simply not aware of the program or they knew before applying that they did not qualify. Others pointed to a daunting application process or that the program was “not for them,” citing issues of age or uncertain career path.

6.4 Key Findings from Client Surveys

The following points reflect the key findings from the survey phase of the research process. In this phase 154 HJAC clients were surveyed by telephone.

- There is diversity in the client population in terms of different levels of education. Half of clients are ‘older workers’ (45 years of age or more). This suggests a need for diversity of employment service approaches.
- Most clients (84%) took a maximum of 4 courses. This suggests that free training encourages people to engage in employment related activities.
- Of the 652 clients who came to HJAC for support, only 270 (41%) took training courses. This suggests that clients completed training to suit their employment goals, rather than simply taking advantage of free training.
- Completing more workshops was associated with better employment outcomes. Also, most clients rated workshops as helpful in finding work both in terms of numbered scores and open-ended questions. This suggests that the short-term employment related workshops offered at HJAC are valuable to clients in terms of improving their employment outcomes.
- One of HJAC’s greatest strengths is its peer helper staff members, who were seen as helpful, supportive and motivating. This suggests that employment services and supports offered by people who are not necessarily from the same former workplace but have shared experiences of a layoff or shutdown provides a unique benefit to clients.

7.0 CLIENT INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Client interviews focused on three aspects of the client's experience, including experience with job search, their perceived value of the qualifications gained through completing employment related workshops through HJAC and their general experience with and value of the HJAC. In total, 15 clients were interviewed.

7.1 General experience with job search

Respondents reflected on job search experiences lasting from 3 months to 4 years. Respondents identified a number of sources of job leads, including the HJAC job board, Service Canada's job bank, newspapers, on-line employment related websites, personal networks and word-of-mouth. Temporary employment (temp) agencies were also identified as a significant source of job leads; however some respondents felt that agencies were not always honest about job opportunities. One client felt that "they [temp agencies] just want to get you in there to fill out your resume and all that crap and there is usually never jobs for you anyway." Because temp agencies charge fees in order for clients to be eligible for jobs through the agency, this respondent felt that clients were being exploited and that the possible benefit from registering with a temp agency was not worth it.

"They just want to get you in there to fill out your resume and all that crap and there is usually never jobs for you anyway"

-HJAC Client

While most respondents described an abundance of jobs to apply for, many were not getting called for interviews. Respondents cited limited qualifications, experience and age (for many older workers) as possible reasons for not getting interviews. In terms of available jobs, respondents identified a range including full-time, part-time, contract, and temporary positions. Overall, temporary positions seemed to be more common in the job market.

7.2 Perspectives on Temporary Work

While a small number of respondents saw some value in temporary (temp) work, the majority of respondents felt some degree of resentment about this labour market trend. The benefits and drawbacks of temp work in the views of respondents are discussed below.

7.2.1 Benefits of Temporary Work

One benefit of temp work for employers is that it allows an employer to evaluate whether or not a worker is a "good employee" before hiring on a more permanent basis. One respondent saw the availability of more temporary work as an indicator of more full time work as well, saying "I just honestly believe that when there's more temp work, there's more work out there." Temporary work can also be a good fit for people not looking for full-time employment for reasons such as family commitments or school attendance, for example. Finally, one respondent felt that temporary work can give an individual the chance to "test out" a particular job before committing to it. This view seems to assume that moving from temporary work to a full-time position is a real option; while such a move does happen, the experiences shared with the researchers by respondents suggest that it is extremely rare, discussed further below.

"I just honestly believe that when there's more temp work, there's more work out there"

-HJAC Client

7.2.2 Drawbacks of Temporary Work

While some respondents saw advantages in temp work, most had negative experiences and views of this form of employment. Respondents echoed the common concerns around temp work and precarious employment generally – low pay, no benefits, and no job security. Respondents also talked about the impacts of temporary work on their quality of life, feelings of fairness, health, and difficulties transitioning to full-time work.

Temporary work employees are often called in for work with little notice, which can impact employees' quality of life. One respondent resented having to wait by the phone all evening to hear if s/he would have work, saying "I don't want to be called at 11pm at night and say oh, you have to be there at 7am."

Several respondents also raised feelings of frustration from the unfairness of doing temporary work alongside permanent workers with different working conditions. In the words of one respondent, "You get the one guy beside you making \$18 an hour and you're getting \$11...and they're getting benefits and you're not for the exact same work". Related to differences in status among workers on a site, a number of respondents recounted feeling 'looked down upon' in their workplaces, and of feeling that they had no rights.

"You get the one guy beside you making \$18 an hour and you're getting \$11...and they're getting benefits and you're not for the exact same work".

-HJAC Client

As a form of precarious work, temporary work has been associated with worse health outcomes than for workers with more stable employment arrangements (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). This issue was raised by one participant who spoke about temp work and his health, citing serious dental concerns that, with no benefits and inadequate income, he has not been able to address.

In contrast with the respondent quoted above, some respondents had experienced what they felt were deliberate blocks to getting full-time employment from a temporary position. Two participants spoke of temp agencies using loopholes to undermine their ability to secure full-time employment. As one respondent put it,

[I was told] I had to work 6 months to get full time employment. Well, 5 months and 2 weeks [into it], before my probationary period was done with the company they had transferred me down to Mac to work one week down there with their plant manager's office, just general maintenance there, and they transferred me back to ED Smith [the first site] the week afterwards and I had to start all over again from Day 1.

Overall, several respondents voiced serious criticisms of temp agencies, arguing that temp agencies exploit workers, make getting full-time jobs more difficult, and should be eliminated. The following three quotations illustrate these sentiments:

"You know what? These temp agencies have to go – that's why we can't get full time jobs."

"They're hurting the economy because they're breaking jobs down is what they're doing."

"They're a way to exploit people when they need money and work, and they [temp agencies] can give them [workers] bare minimum."

"You know what? These temp agencies have to go – that's why we can't get full time jobs."

-HJAC Client

7.3 The Value of Credentials Earned Through HJAC

Client respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the value of credentials earned through HJAC. The majority of respondents felt that they had either learned new skills or updated/recertified existing skills. For example, two respondents each had more than 20 years of experience driving forklift, but no certificate or license. Training through HJAC helped to validate their experience; as one respondent described it, "I've driven fork lift all my life but I never had a piece of paper that said that – but now I do."

Updating commonly required certificates like First Aid was also seen as a valuable addition to clients' resumes. As one client said, "Mostly [I] updated and recertified for stuff I had already, but I didn't have the certificates and it was really important to have those." Although clients like this are certifying skills they already have rather than gaining skills, there was still the perception that obtaining these certificates was valuable in terms of helping them to find work.

"Mostly [I] updated and recertified for stuff I had already, but I didn't have the certificates and it was really important to have those."

-HJAC Client

7.3.1. The Value of a Diversity of Training

Some clients completed courses in a variety of skills, from Smart Serve to Forklift. All of the HJAC clients interviewed felt that their training qualified them for a wider range of jobs. One respondent who was looking for work in security recounted "The company I've been talking to I told them

"It gives you training that the employer doesn't have to spend time on."

-HJAC Client

[about all the certificates I have] forklift, etc., and asked if it could be useful and she said 'a lot of our sites are on industrial places – you never know.' It's better to have it than not to have it". There was a general perception from some respondents that the more 'tickets' or qualifications that you have the more marketable you are. In this view, having a greater number of credentials would increase a client's ability to find work, and this finding is supported by the broad-based survey findings (See Chapter 6). This suggests that people are changing the ways that they adjust to the changing labour market: as many jobs become less stable and precarious work grows, many workers are adapting by becoming qualified for jobs in a number of fields.

7.3.2 The Value of Certificates Earned Through HJAC

Clients were asked if they felt the certificates they earned through HJAC were valued by employers. Respondents were generally positive about having completed training courses and valued them as relevant and important qualifications to have.

For some respondents, HJAC training represented the bulk of their resume entries because, as one respondent related "without them as far as stuff that employers are looking for my resume was empty." While some respondents were not sure how the qualifications gained through HJAC were viewed by employers, most felt that they were valued. Some respondents pointed to the fact that they were getting interviews based on their resumes, while others had direct feedback from employers. For one respondent, the training completed at HJAC was a credential required for the job s/he currently holds: "I took the safe food handling course and when I applied for the job ... one of the first questions they asked me was do I have my safe food handling and I said that I did have it."

"Without them as far as stuff that employers are looking for my resume was empty."

-HJAC Client

Many respondents felt that even if specific courses were not relevant to the job in question, employers valued the fact that they had taken the initiative to learn a new skill and were willing and able to learn. Respondents also felt that employers valued recent qualifications especially because they demonstrated current activity in the labour market even if an individual was in a period of unemployment. The majority of respondents either felt that the qualifications earned through HJAC either helped them secure their current job or were confident that the qualifications would help them secure work in the future. Clients completing training before securing a position was seen as an advantage for employers because, as one respondent explained, "it gives you training that the employer doesn't have to spend time on." Additionally, many respondents directly use skills gained through HJAC training in their current work. Reflecting on the courses taken, one respondent said "I actually use [the training], where I am working now my First Aid is on record and basically my Forklift license is used there".

7.4 Perceived Value of HJAC

Respondents were asked how and how often they used the centre. Some respondents indicated that they had not returned to HJAC since securing employment. In these cases, respondents described how and how often they used the centre when they were looking for work.

The frequency at which respondents used the centre ranged from 2-3 times per week to one every couple of weeks. Clients most often cited the job board and access to computers for job search as their main reason for regular visits, as well as access to a copier and fax machine. Participation in training courses was another motivation to visit the centre, as was support in developing and updating a resume. One respondent described his/her use of HJAC in this way: "You guys redid my resume. [I was] checking your board almost every other day, emailing applications, searching on-line too. I was coming in about every other day."

While all of the clients we spoke with seemed to value the culture or 'feel' of the centre, most felt that they did not use it as a social support (although see 'Value of the Peer Support Model' below.)

7.4.1 Experience with Other Employment Services

Overall, this client group had limited experience with other local employment services. Those who did however showed an appreciation for the welcoming and relaxed nature of the centre. As one respondent explained, "it's a relaxed atmosphere and you don't feel like you're centered out, or you don't feel like, 'oh, my god, this guy's smarter than I am.' Or 'this guy's gonna put me down if I say a wrong answer' or stuff like that". Some clients felt that staff at local employment agencies did not make clients feel comfortable, saying "Like when you go to a lot of those other government agencies...if they've never been laid off and all they see are people that are laid off, they don't treat you the same. I get the feeling that they think we're failures or something but it's not our fault that the economy went to crap".

"Like when you go to a lot of those other government agencies... if they've never been laid off and all they see are people that are laid off, they don't treat you the same. I get the feeling that they think we're failures or something but it's not our fault that the economy went to crap."

-HJAC Client

7.4.2 Value of the Peer Support Model

Although many of the clients interviewed said they did not use the centre as a social support, an overwhelming majority of respondents valued the peer support model highly. Primarily, they felt that they could relate well to the peer helpers at the centre because "they know what you are going through." Many of the comments from respondents suggest that they actually did derive some social support from their interaction with the HJAC. For example, one respondent said "just to have somebody to listen and you know, might have shared the same experience and might be able to give you advice or input, yeah that's a total benefit." Another respondent described the experience with HJAC this way, "I was out of work. Actually, I didn't think I would be out of work that long. But I did go down and speak with a few people there to get some support and that." Speaking with a peer helper was more comfortable for some respondents than speaking with professional employment counsellors. As one respondent put it, "I like it [speaking with peer helpers] better because it's not like a counsellor who's been taught, you know? This is somebody – 'hey, I know what you're going through.'" No respondents brought up any diminished benefit in working with peer helpers who had not previously worked in the same workplace as the respondent.

7.5 Key Findings from Client Interviews

- Respondents use a variety of sources to job search including the HJAC job board, Service Canada's job bank, newspapers, on-line employment related websites, personal networks and word-of-mouth.
- While most respondents described an abundance of jobs to apply for, many were not getting called for interviews.
- Overall, temporary positions seemed to be more common in the job market.
- Temporary work was valued by some respondents because of the flexibility it offers to workers and employers.
- Most respondents felt some degree of resentment about temporary work because of low pay, no benefits, and no job security. Temporary work also seen as impacting respondents' quality of life, feelings of fairness, health, and difficulties transitioning to full-time work.
- Most respondents felt that they had either learned new skills or recertified existing skills through workshops they completed at HJAC. Obtaining official certification of skills gained through work experience was viewed as important for gaining employment.
- Respondents with diverse training felt that it qualified them for a wider range of jobs and would help them find work.
- Respondents generally felt that the qualifications earned through HJAC either helped them secure their current job or that the qualifications would help them secure work in the future.
- All respondents appreciated the welcoming and relaxed nature of HJAC. Although many clients said they did not use the centre as a social support, an overwhelming majority of respondents valued the peer support model highly. Primarily, they felt that they could relate well to the peer helpers at the centre because "they know what you are going through."

8.0 STAFF INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Interviews were also conducted with HJAC staff, including the coordinator and peer helpers. Peer helpers were interviewed together in a focus group format. Findings from the focus group and coordinator interview have been combined here because of their similar points of view, and also to improve/ensure confidentiality⁵. In total, five (5) staff members were interviewed in person. These interviews focused on common challenges faced by clients, how these challenges could be overcome, temporary work, credentials, and how HJAC could better prepare and connect clients to employment. Together with findings from the client and employer interviews, these findings help to give a fuller picture of the changing nature of employment in Hamilton. The subsections below describe findings from staff interviews.

8.1 Main challenges facing clients

Staff members were asked about the main challenges that HJAC clients face in terms of finding employment. HJAC staff members see the four main challenges faced by their clients as being a lack of computer skills, age, education, and transportation.

One of the most important challenges that clients face discussed by staff members was a lack of computer skills. As one staff member put it, “[for] a lot of jobs you have to rely on computers - and finding jobs online too.” This quotation points out how low levels of computer skills can disadvantage clients not only in terms of job requirements, but also in the range of job search tools they can access. A lack of computer skills is likely to be an increasingly significant barrier for job seekers as most workplaces rely more and more heavily on technology.

“[For] a lot of jobs you have to rely on computers – and finding jobs online too.”

-HJAC Staff

Staff felt that many older clients, who make up roughly half of the total client population, face age-based discrimination because of employers’ assumptions, such as about lack of physical ability. Although most resumes do not include an applicant’s age, as one staff member put it, “with the dates [on your resume] they’ll figure out how old you are. Most people know that if you’re in your 50s and you’ve been in manufacturing for 25 years, your knees, your elbows, your back – something’s going to be out.” Despite the fact that discrimination against job applicants based on age is illegal, these interviews suggest that such discrimination may be fairly common.

Another familiar challenge faced by HJAC clients, according to staff, is low levels of education. While lacking a high school diploma was often not a barrier to finding manufacturing or general labour employment thirty years ago, now with more applicants for each position, competition between applicants changes the value of educational credentials. In the words of one staff member, “They [employers] can be picky, so if you don’t have your high school, your resume is going in that dumpster.”

“[Employers] can be picky, so if you don’t have your high school, your resume is going in that dumpster.”

-HJAC Staff

Transportation is a fourth challenge that many HJAC clients encounter in their efforts to re-enter the labour market. If clients do not have access to a vehicle, they must rely on public transportation to do job searches and get to interviews, and this can be an unaffordable expense for some. In the experience of one staff member, “Clients [are] saying, ‘Well, do you have bus tickets? ‘Cause I can’t get out there. I don’t have the money for bus tickets today and the [social assistance] cheque doesn’t come in until 2-3 days from now.’” In this way, transportation costs can directly constrain clients’ ability to undertake successful job searches.

⁵ For reasons of simplicity and confidentiality, this chapter uses “interviews” to refer to the coordinator interview and peer helper focus group together.

8.2 How to overcome challenges

Responding to such challenges, staff had two main suggestions related to education and transportation. In terms of education, staff felt that HJAC should provide support for clients in getting their high school equivalency diploma. One staff member saw it this way, “I think if some of them got their high school it might really help them. In some cases I’m not so sure. But not having your high school is a barrier for a lot of people.”

Staff also suggested that having bus tickets available for clients’ job search activities would help to remove the barrier of transportation costs.

8.3 Most common types of jobs over the past year

Staff members were asked about common job opportunities posted at HJAC over the past year, and also about the quality of those jobs in terms of wages, benefits, and security. The most common types of job opportunities posted at HJAC over the past year involved forklift, manufacturing, general labour, and cleaning. Overall, there seem to be more temporary jobs available. Staff also noted a rise in contract work, which could develop into full-time employment if the employer is willing to commit. According to one staff member, “I’m not seeing a lot of full time because everything is usually for three months. It’s contract and if you last, great, if you don’t...” This may suggest that contract work could have slightly better chances of leading to full-time employment than temporary work.

8.3.1 Quality of employment

Staff commented that the quality of employment opportunities they see at HJAC were generally poor in terms of wages and benefits. As one staff member put it, “very few of them are really good, safe, reliable jobs, but when you have no money to buy groceries, you will take them.” This quotation highlights the fact that many clients have few other options but to take these poor quality jobs. Wages for most jobs posted at HJAC are very low, mostly at or slightly above minimum wage, and do not offer benefits. Echoing the comments above, another staff member noted that “most people take it because they have to, hoping that it’s gonna be full time and benefits will come, but they need it.”

“Very few of them are really good, safe, reliable jobs, but when you have no money to buy groceries, you will take them.”

-HJAC Staff

8.4 How employers view HJAC certificates

When asked if employers value training that clients receive through the centre, staff members agreed that HJAC certificates were valued by employers. In the words of one staff member, the training offers employers an advantage: “[employers] can hire them already trained so they do feel that that’s important and they do look for certifications – up to date ones.” Again, the fact that these certificates are recent is of particular value.

Because some clients take a small number of courses geared to a specific industry and others take multiple courses in multiple industries, staff members were asked what some client motivations might be for taking these different approaches. For some clients, completing a training course represents a direct link to employment. A fairly common experience was recounted in this way, “they come in and say, ‘I need this. I can get this job, but I need this.’ And they get it and they get the job”.

“[Employers] can hire them already trained so they do feel that that’s important and they do look for certifications – up to date ones.”

-HJAC Staff

There is also value in having multiple credentials, staff explained, saying “You wouldn’t want to put it all on the same resume because it’s too confusing. But we do have clients who have a manufacturing resume, and maybe a sales resume, and maybe a hospitality resume, and they would keep some information off of each resume”. This makes clients more marketable and widens their scope of opportunities.

“We do have clients who have a manufacturing resume, and maybe a sales resume, and maybe a hospitality resume, and they would keep some information off of each resume”.

-HJAC Staff

8.5 How HJAC could better prepare and connect people to employment

When asked how HJAC could better prepare and connect clients to employment, staff members echoed what clients have been saying to them (as reflected in client interviews). Many clients say that they want the centre to connect them with employers. This suggestion essentially amounts to the role of a temp agency, except that the centre would not be the employer or receive payment from employers. This suggestion does seem to fill a gap that exists in the experience of both clients and staff. Employment service providers often have established connections with employers as well, and so strengthening referral relationships with other agencies may be another way to connect people to employers.

8.6 Key Findings from Staff Interviews

This chapter summarizes findings from an interview with the HJAC coordinator and a focus group with four peer helpers (five staff members in total). Staff members were asked about common challenges faced by clients, how these challenges could be overcome, temporary work, credentials, and how HJAC could better prepare and connect clients to employment. Key findings from staff member interviews are as follows:

- HJAC staff members see the four main challenges faced by their clients as being a lack of computer skills, age, education, and transportation. Computer skills in particular are likely to be increasingly important for workers in the job market as workplaces rely more and more on technology.
- HJAC should support clients in obtaining their high school equivalency credentials in order to improve employment outcomes.
- Bus tickets could be made available to support clients in job searching in order to overcome some barriers to transportation.
- Job opportunities posted at HJAC over the past year commonly involved forklift, manufacturing, general labour, and cleaning.
- Temporary and contract jobs seem to be growing. Contract work may develop into full-time employment if the employer is willing to commit.
- Most employment opportunities at HJAC are of poor quality in terms of wages and benefits.
- Some clients take a small number of courses in order to fill specific job requirements, while others take a diverse range of courses. Staff noted that this makes clients more marketable and widens their scope of opportunities.
- Many clients tell staff that they want the centre to connect them with employers. This essentially amounts to the role of a temp agency, except that the centre would not be the employer or receive payment from employers.

9.0 EMPLOYER INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Building on findings from the survey and literature review phases, interviews were conducted with employers in Hamilton. In total, three representatives from temporary agencies and private companies in Hamilton were interviewed by telephone. From a research perspective, these interviews allow us to gain a better understanding of how changes in the labour market and the economy more broadly are viewed by employers. These interviews focused on the types of employment offered in the last year, impacts of temporary work, credentials and experience, and how HJAC could better prepare clients for employment. This allows us to compare findings with those from the survey and interviews with clients to create a fuller picture of the changing nature of employment in Hamilton. The subsections below describe findings from these interviews.

9.1 The Current Job Market

Respondents in this group were asked about the nature of positions they had hired for in the past year. According to the employers interviewed, after a slow down in hiring caused by the recession, recovery was characterized by an increase in temporary work. While there is a mix of positions available locally, temporary work seems to dominate the job market. One employer described a “casual to hire” process used in their company, where all new employees start as casual workers with the hope of becoming full-time employees of the company. This period of casual work can last from 6 months to 2 years.

9.2 Impact of Temporary Work

Employers were also asked how they saw temporary work impacting workers. There was a range of perspectives on temporary work, though most of the impacts of temporary work discussed were negative. While one respondent felt that workers were “happy” and “grateful” to have temp work, others felt that temp workers faced feelings of isolation and unfair treatment. Workers’ sense of isolation and unfair treatment came up in all interviews. As one respondent explained, “Quite often they don’t feel they’re part of a company because they’re through a temporary agency, so there’s a sense of ‘well, I’m not with that company, yet I’m working there’”. Discussing changes over time in the nature of the employment relationship, one employer articulated concerns about unfair treatment this way, “There’s definitely a change. In the old days you would make a commitment to your employees-to-be a lot earlier than now. What we’re doing to these young kids, we’re dangling a job in front of them for up to 2 years, no benefits, no vacation and this is acceptable.”

“There’s definitely a change. In the old days you would make a commitment to your employees-to-be a lot earlier than now. What we’re doing to these young kids, we’re dangling a job in front of them for up to 2 years, no benefits, no vacation and this is acceptable.”

-Employer

Employers reported that wages were another important aspect of the impacts of temporary work. According to employers, workers often express frustration and dissatisfaction with pay rates, which often start at \$10.25 per hour, and without benefits. This rate is much lower than what many clients were making in their previous jobs, especially for older workers coming from the manufacturing industry. One employer viewed these changes simply as part of the reality of the current labour market, saying “Unfortunately a lot of these people need to start at the bottom to get back to where they are. That’s unfortunate, but most of the jobs that we’re seeing opening up are just minimum wage jobs”.

“Unfortunately a lot of these people need to start at the bottom to get back to where they are. That’s unfortunate, but most of the jobs that we’re seeing opening up are just minimum wage jobs”.

-Employer

9.3 Credentials and Experience

Respondents were asked about the importance of credentials and experience, both as stand-alone qualities and relative to one another. As one might expect, required qualifications vary by job, with specific qualifications required for more technical positions and fewer qualifications for general labourers. All respondents agreed that a high school diploma is a basic qualification required by most employers.

There are some exceptions for older workers with extensive experience but by no means is this a guarantee. In the experience of one employer, a high school diploma was a key factor in whether workers moved from temporary to permanent positions. As s/he explained, “[in order] to go permanent they have to have their high school and we have a lot of applicants that don’t. They could have all the requirements, all these certificates under the sun, but if they don’t have that they don’t qualify for permanent.” Overall, workers require a mix or balance of credentials and experience. In the case of forklift training for example, an individual may have a certificate or license, but without the years of experience required by the employer the license may not be valued. This also works in reverse, where an individual may have 20 years of forklift experience but was never licensed.

“[In order] to go permanent they have to have their high school and we have a lot of applicants that don’t. They could have all the requirements, all these certificates under the sun, but if they don’t have that they don’t qualify for permanent.”

9.4 HJAC Role

Interviews with employers concluded by discussing how HJAC could better prepare and connect its clients to employment. As mentioned above, high school credentials were valued highly by employers. In order to strengthen clients’ ability to secure full-time permanent employment, HJAC needs to ensure that clients are supported in completing their high school equivalency.

Another way suggested by employers that HJAC could improve support to clients was to work with clients to identify current skills, employment goals, gaps between the two and support actions to fill those gaps. With older clients coming from manufacturing, employers recommended that HJAC work with clients to help them understand the skills they have and the new skills required to re-enter the industry. It was also suggested that the HJAC focus on helping clients to better align their aspirations with their actual skills. Employers pointed to standardized tests as a way of achieving this. In the words of one employer, after such a test is done, “then it’s a matter of saying – if that’s what you really want to be, we’ve tested you and here’s where you are, here’s the gaps you need to close even to be eligible.”

A third and final theme of recommendations from employers to HJAC was around developing relationships directly between employers and the centre. One employer suggested that their company should develop partnerships with agencies like HJAC as a means to filling positions. Contrasting the current hiring process with this proposed arrangement, the employer explained “We throw a posting out and hopefully the right person applies to fill the need, as opposed to maybe building a partnership with this type of agency and quickly saying, ‘Look, here’s what we’re looking for. What do you have?’” This recommendation echoes responses from the client survey phase (see Chapter 6) suggesting that HJAC build stronger connections with employers.

It is worth noting that this model recommended by clients and employers is similar to the Canada Manpower model, which was discontinued nearly two decades ago. Under Canada Manpower, federally funded agencies connected unemployed individuals with jobs in the community at the request of local employers. The critical difference between this defunct program and present-day temporary agencies is that Canada Manpower did not take a portion of the wages paid by the employer as temporary agencies do.

9.5 Key Findings from Employer Interviews

In order to get a fuller picture of the changing labour market and how it impacts workers, three local employers were interviewed by telephone. The key findings from these interviews are as follows:

- The recent recession led to a slowdown in hiring, and recovery was characterized by an increase in temporary work.
- While there is a mix of positions available locally, temporary work seems to dominate the job market.
- One respondent felt that workers were “happy” and “grateful” to have temporary work, while others felt that temp workers faced feelings of isolation and unfair treatment.
- Wages and lack of benefits were further sources of frustration for workers, particularly in contrast with previous working conditions.
- Workers’ progress from temporary work to full-time, permanent employment often takes between 6 months and 2 years, and is fairly rare.
- Most employers require employees to have a high school diploma either for initial hiring or to transition to full-time positions.
- Workers require a balance of credentials and experience.
- Clients’ completion of high school equivalency should be supported in the community in order to improve employment outcomes.
- Services in the community should work with clients to identify current skills, employment goals, gaps between the two and support actions to fill those gaps.
- Organizations working with the unemployed/underemployed population, including employment services and action centres, should develop relationships directly with employers or strengthen relationships with each other in order to better connect clients to employers.

10.0 SERVICE PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Bringing together findings and insights from the earlier phases of research, the final phase brought several employment service providers and government representatives at all levels together at a meeting of the Skills Development Flagship. The focus group, which took place on January 27, 2011, explored the value of the type of training offered at HJAC, the best way to offer this training, and the potential role of HJAC, including whether or not it fills a gap in the community. The focus group portion of the meeting lasted just over an hour.

10.1 The Value of Training Offered at HJAC

Service providers were first asked if the type of short-term, specific training courses offered at HJAC are valuable, and in particular if this is the best way to get clients re-engaged with the labour market. There was consensus that the types of training offered at HJAC were valuable in reconnecting clients with the labour market. Some service providers emphasized that this training was of value as long as it is appropriate for the individual client. From this perspective, training should be targeted to each individual's work related goals.

The short-term nature of the workshops offered (2 days or less) was seen as especially beneficial by service providers. Half-day courses and courses at different times, including evenings or weekends, were also suggested as ways to make courses more easily accessible.

Training in specific, targeted skills was also valued highly, as this kind of training can add an easily understandable and applied skill to a client's resume. Computer skills and software and First Aid in particular were highlighted as being in high demand by clients.

10.2 The Best Ways to Offer Training

Participants were then asked how this training could best be offered in the community. While there were no suggestions on how to specifically offer the types of training courses offered at HJAC, there was a discussion about how the various service providers at the table could work together more effectively to reach clients who could benefit from this kind of training.

Several service providers suggested that the Skills Development Flagship could better mobilize as a network and coordinate their efforts. Improving communication, facilitating support, and holding networking sessions were all suggested as ways for the Flagship to be more responsive to the diverse employment support needs in the community. Specifically, networking and improved communication were seen as ways that service providers could share information about layoffs of 2-49 workers from one workplace and work with clients to reach dislocated workers who may not be aware of services available to them.

Another suggestion for how training could be organized more effectively was that Action Centres (such as HJAC) could work with the neighbourhood hubs. For example, if a company lays off workers who live in multiple hubs, having Action Centre or employment service representation at those tables could allow for training to be delivered where clients live. This was seen as another way to improve access to supports needed by potential clients.

10.3 Criticisms and Constraints

Throughout the discussion some criticisms of HJAC's service were raised. Two related concerns were confusion around who was eligible to access HJAC's services, and also what HJAC's relationship was to other employment agencies in the community.

As the community became aware of the workshops offered by HJAC, clients were referred from various agencies for the employment related workshops and would then return to their respective service

providers for continuing assistance. This resulted in increased client applications to take part in workshops, which represented a large demand on the centre and its resources. This indicated a shifting perception amongst clients that HJAC was a helpful resource as a training centre, which conflicts with the action centre model of providing a range of adjustment services, not only training.

MTCU expressed two related concerns about this situation: first, that HJAC was developing into a training centre and not a true action centre, and second, that clients accessing services at HJAC and local employment agencies were being counted by multiple organizations, all of which are funded by MTCU. MTCU then asserted the need to make clear distinctions between clients who were attributed to HJAC and clients who were attributed to other agencies. Clients who accessed services primarily at an employment service agency were then considered to be the clients of that agency, and were no longer eligible to receive training through HJAC unless that agency could provide payment. Although this created confusion around eligibility requirements for training from the various agencies, and frustrated some clients, it clarified who was considered an HJAC client and adjustment services for those clients. Most referrals to HJAC from other agencies then stopped, resulting in some frustration for clients and service providers although one community agency was still able to provide these workshops on a fee for service basis.

Some employment service providers at the focus group were concerned that at one point individuals could sign up to receive training without having that training connected to a specific employment plan. Because HJAC offers a wider range of short-term employment related workshops than many of the employment service providers, some participants in the service provider focus group felt that the funding for training could be allocated to established employment service providers in the community.

Participants in the focus group also voiced the concern that training clients for positions that are not widely available in the community may be setting clients up to fail if they hold unrealistic expectations. Beyond concerns related directly to training, some participants felt that client skills and attitudes also impact employment outcomes. One service provider described the experience of clients having received training but not always being able to recall the courses they have completed, especially if courses were taken several years earlier. While an on-line resource for laid off workers (www.lostmyjob.ca) was suggested as an additional tool, some service providers were concerned that older workers from the manufacturing industry may not have sufficient computer skills or knowledge to seek on-line support. With these challenges and constraints, participants emphasized the benefit of having support available to groups of dislocated workers, not only on an individual basis. A representative from the Provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities noted that dislocated workers were free to go as a group to regular employment services.

10.4 The Potential Role of HJAC

Participants were then asked about the potential role of HJAC within the community, and whether or not the centre offers services that fill a gap.

10.4.1 The Value of HJAC

One participant described an experience where students were contacting employers in the community over the course of four days, and in the course of these calls students were told that four different employers were closing their businesses. From these four closures roughly 50 people were being dislocated in that short period of time, but because they did not all come from one employer, none of these groups of workers would be eligible for their own Action Centre. Using this example, the participant argued that these dislocated workers could have accessed services and supports at HJAC had they known about it. Further, the participant stated, "I would have to assume that that [layoffs in smaller numbers] is still going on in the community but not being captured." This echoes the experience of the researchers as well, having found it difficult to find groups of less than 50 laid off workers primarily because in many cases companies lay off 48 or 49 workers, which does not have to be reported to MTCU. Another participant reported encountering a client laid off with 20 other workers just before

Christmas who was looking for an action centre. HJAC staff does some outreach to try to connect with these smaller groups, but reaching eligible clients remains a challenge.

In this way, some participants viewed HJAC as having the potential to fill the important gap of dislocated workers in groups too small to have their own Action Centre. While Action Centres are typically viewed as a temporary measure to an urgent and short-term situation, in the words of one participant, “We keep having urgent needs... In terms of that being a temporary thing- the reality is that that is an ongoing situation, not a temporary situation in this community. We’re always going to have those layoffs of those quantities of people.”

Some participants felt that HJAC could play a role in offering employment services and supports in Hamilton. Because of the unique model it uses, HJAC was seen as having the ability to augment what is offered in the community from the 6 major employment service providers. One participant put it this way: “We’ve never had adjustment services for under 50 [workers].”

Another contribution that HJAC’s model may be able to contribute to the landscape of employment services is the element of reaching and offering services to clients in groups, whether from the same former employer or industry in general. Most employment services are accessed on an individual basis; HJAC’s outreach efforts are aimed at building connections with clients from the same workplace. For one participant,

“There’s something to be said for group interaction where they come in together and deal with the group issue. They motivate each other, their esteem goes up. I know you can say when they go to the service providers that they can go to a group workshop, but they’re still there as an individual, not as a cohesive group working together... [there is] not a lot of group stuff- that’s a gap.”

10.4.2 Emotional and Peer Support

Related to workers accessing employment services as a group, another part of what makes HJAC unique is its use of the peer support model. Emotional support after job loss from peers was seen by many participants as especially valuable. Learning about what options and supports might be available in a peer support environment was also seen by some participants as valuable.

The researchers stressed that the peer helpers at HJAC were not necessarily from the same specific companies as clients (though certainly some are). This is a difference from the traditional peer support model. The model at HJAC is generic in the sense that peer helpers have experienced a layoff or shutdown, but maybe not from a specific company where clients formerly worked. Still, HJAC’s peer helpers do share the experience of having worked for one employer for an extended period of time and also having been dislocated. In this way, peer helpers at HJAC create a culture of peer support more than a narrowly defined service.

Other ways to provide dislocated workers with employment supports and services were suggested as well. The website mentioned above (www.lostmyjob.ca) offers information and addresses some of the emotional aspects of job loss.⁶ It is a local resource where people can learn where to go for counselling, housing, or other kinds of help.

Another participant pointed out that a lot of what employment counsellors do is motivating and helping clients through personal issues. This service provider’s agency makes referrals in the community to other agencies or family doctors.

⁶ This website is being rolled out across southwestern Ontario through June 2011.

10.5 Key Findings from Service Provider Focus Group

- Because of their short-term nature and specific skills focus, workshops offered at HJAC were seen as particularly valuable.
- Training should be targeted to each individual's work related goals.
- The Skills Development Flagship could better mobilize as a network in order to be more responsive to the diverse employment support needs in the community.
- Confusion and changing eligibility requirements to receive training at HJAC lead to frustration for clients and service providers referring clients to HJAC.
- Some service provider participants felt that funding for training could be distributed to established employment service providers to allow them to provide some of the workshops currently offered through HJAC.
- HJAC has the potential to fill the gap of serving dislocated workers in groups too small to have their own action centre. The culture of the centre offers an environment that some clients find more comfortable. In this way HJAC was seen as being able to augment what is offered in the community from the six major employment service providers.
- Peer helpers offer valuable emotional support after job loss, although HJAC's peer helpers are not always from the same companies as clients.
- Much of what employment counsellors do is motivating and helping clients through personal issues. Accordingly, peer support is not the only way to support dislocated workers through emotional challenges.

11.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on findings from the various research methods outlined in earlier chapters, this chapter highlights conclusions related to employment services for dislocated workers in Hamilton and makes recommendations to improve their relevance and effectiveness. For these recommendations, we draw primarily on the input gathered through the focus group with employment service providers in Hamilton.

11.1 Short-term employment related courses are useful

Conclusion

- The short-term employment related courses offered at HJAC are useful mostly because they enhance clients' confidence in their ability to find work. This research suggests that they contribute to improved employment outcomes. Still, training alone is not sufficient to get jobs. Training and credentials must be complemented by experience.

Recommendation

- These short-term employment related workshops should be available in the community.

Support

- *Completing more workshops was associated with better employment outcomes. Also, most clients rated workshops as helpful in finding work. This suggests that the employment related workshops offered at HJAC are valuable to clients in terms of improving their employment outcomes.*
- *Most respondents felt that they had either learned new skills or recertified existing skills. Obtaining official certification of skills gained through work experience was viewed as important for gaining employment.*
- *Because of their short-term nature and specific skills focus, workshops offered at HJAC were seen as particularly valuable, as they do not interfere greatly with job search or temporary employment activities.*
- *Training should be targeted to each individual's work related goals.*
- *Some clients take a small number of courses in order to fill specific job requirements, while others take a diverse range of courses. Staff noted that this makes clients more marketable and widens their scope of opportunities.*
- *Respondents with diverse training felt that it qualified them for a wider range of jobs and would help them find work.*
- *Respondents felt that the qualifications earned through HJAC either helped them secure their current job or that the qualifications would help them secure work in the future.*
- *Workers require a balance of credentials and experience.*

11.2 Peer support is key

Conclusion

- The peer support model is a key component of what is valuable at HJAC.

Recommendation

- Employment services in Hamilton should include opportunities for peer support.

Support

- *One of HJAC's greatest strengths is its peer helper staff members, who were seen as helpful, supportive and motivating. This suggests that supports offered by people who are not necessarily from the same former workplace but have shared experiences of a layoff or shutdown provides a unique benefit to clients.*
- *All respondents appreciated the welcoming and relaxed nature of HJAC. Although many clients said they did not use the centre as a social support, an overwhelming majority of respondents*

valued the peer support model highly. Primarily, they felt that they could relate well to the peer helpers at the centre because “they know what you are going through.”

11.3 Connecting small groups to employment services is challenging

Conclusion

- Finding groups of 2-49 of laid off workers has proven difficult for HJAC. Part of this difficulty is due to a culture among some employers of not wanting to disclose information about upcoming layoffs. This eliminates an opportunity to inform workers about supports available to them as a group while they are relatively easy to contact because of being at one location (i.e. the workplace). At the same time, there are few places where groups of unemployed/underemployed workers can get services and/or support each other as a group.

Recommendation

- Employment services for smaller groups of dislocated workers should be made available in the community. The employment service community, including community agencies and government, should strengthen networks to identify and outreach to smaller groups of laid off workers. The Skills Development Flagship is a possible place to coordinate such collaboration. With or without this coordination, connecting with individuals laid off from a workplace and then connecting with their former co-workers can be an important method of reaching these groups.

Support:

- *The Skills Development Flagship could better mobilize as a network in order to be more responsive to the diverse employment support needs in the community.*
- *Finding groups of less under 50 workers laid off from one workplace has proved difficult. No official channels exist for connecting such groups to employment services as a group.*

11.4 Temp work is growing and impacts workers' wellbeing

Conclusion

- Temp work is increasingly common, and impacts many (though not all) workers negatively in terms of wages, benefits, stability, and health.

Recommendation

- All levels of government should consider the impacts of temp work in general - and temp agencies in specific - on workers in Hamilton. Governments should consider looking to other models of casual or labour force coordination, such as that used in the former Canada Manpower Office.

Support

- *The recent recession led to a slowdown in hiring, and recovery was characterized by an increase in temporary work.*
- *Most employment opportunities at HJAC are of poor quality in terms of wages and benefits.*
- *Temporary and contract jobs seem to be growing. Contract work may develop into full-time employment if the employer is willing to commit.*
- *Temp work impacts workers' standard of living and health, which contribute to higher health and social service costs, making this a public policy issue.*
- *Most respondents felt some degree of resentment about temporary work because of low pay, no benefits, and no job security. Temporary work also seen as impacting respondents' quality of life, feelings of fairness, health, and difficulties transitioning to full-time work.*
- *Wages and lack of benefits in particular were sources of frustration for workers, especially in contrast with previous working conditions.*

- *Workers' progress from temporary work to full-time, permanent employment often takes between 6 months and 2 years, and is fairly rare.*
- *Temporary work was valued by some respondents because of the flexibility it offers to workers and employers.*
- *One respondent felt that workers were "happy" and "grateful" to have temporary work, while others felt that temp workers caused feelings of isolation and unfair treatment.*

11.5 HJAC serves an under-serviced group

Conclusion

- HJAC provides services to an under-serviced group, in particular older workers who may be uncomfortable with mainstream employment services.

Support

- *There is diversity in the client population in terms of different levels of education. Half of clients are 'older workers' (45 years of age or more). Some reported feeling uncomfortable with other employment services. This suggests a need for diversity of employment service approaches.*

Recommendation

A diverse range of employment services should be available in the community in order to effectively reach groups with different needs and preferences.

Support

- *From its original purpose, HJAC has the potential to fill the gap of serving dislocated workers in groups too small to have their own action centre. The culture of the centre offers an environment that some clients find more comfortable. In this way HJAC was seen as being able to augment what is offered in the community from the six major employment service providers.*

11.6 Education is a key credential

Conclusion

- Basic education is an important factor in employability. Nearly one quarter (23%) of HJAC clients do not have a high school diploma.

Recommendation

- Local agencies and the community more broadly should support adults seeking employment in obtaining their high school diplomas or equivalency certificates.

Support

- *Most employers require employees to have a high school diploma either for initial hiring or to transition to full-time positions.*
- *HJAC staff members see the four main challenges faced by their clients as being computer skills, age, education, and transportation.*

11.7 Clients want direct links with employers

Conclusion

- Many clients tell staff that they want the centre to connect them with employers. This essentially amounts to the role of a temp agency, except that the centre would not be the employer or receive payment from employers.

Recommendation

- Action centres and employment service agencies should work more closely together to connect clients with employers, possibly through job developers. This could involve developing better referral mechanisms for clients in order to tap into existing relationships between employment service providers and employers.

Support

- *Several client, employer, and staff interviews suggested that HJAC could better support clients in finding employment by establishing connections directly between workers and employers.*

11.8 Transportation is a barrier to accessing employment

Conclusion

- The cost of transportation is a barrier to clients in job searching activities, which limits their success in finding employment.

Recommendation

- Community partners, possibly including the Hamilton Street Railway, the City of Hamilton, and other agencies, should collaborate to improve access to affordable transportation for job seekers. This could entail increased funding for bus tickets or changes to eligibility requirements for the Affordable Transit Pass.

Support

- *HJAC staff members see the four main challenges faced by their clients as being age, education, transportation, and computer skills.*
- *Bus tickets could be available to support clients in job searching in order to overcome some barriers to transportation.*

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APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL SURVEY



162 King William Street, Suite 103, Hamilton, ON L8R 3N9
Phone: 905.522.1148 Fax: 905.522.9124 E-mail: sprc@sprc.hamilton.on.ca
Website: sprc.hamilton.on.ca



Experience of Skills Development:

Participant Survey

We are working with local employment support service agencies to conduct a survey of people who are enrolled in retraining programs. We want to find out about your experiences going back to school or taking other types of training.

The survey should take about 10-15 minutes, and your answers will be kept completely confidential. Your name will not be connected to any of your comments. The survey is voluntary and you can skip questions or stop the survey at any time.

The goal of this study is to help educate the community around what works and what does not work so well in terms of skills development programs.

Instructions:

1. Complete the survey electronically.
2. Save the completed survey to your hard drive.
3. Attach the survey to an email addressed to:
mfraser@sprc.hamilton.on.ca

Print the survey, complete it by hand and mail it to:

Mark Fraser

Or

162 King William St.

Suite 103

Hamilton, ON

L8R 3N9

Please return the survey as soon as possible.

If you have any questions about the survey or about the research in general, please contact Mark Fraser, Senior Social Planner, by phone at 905-522-1148 extension 318 or by email at mfraser@sprc.hamilton.on.ca.

1. What type of training program are you enrolled in? What is the focus of the training? (e.g., medical office administration)

2. What government program is assisting you with funding the cost of the training? (e.g. Second Career)

3. Is your program provided through a community college, a career college, or a training school?

☐ Community College

☐ Career College

☐ Training School

4. What is the name of the school?

5. Is your training program related to the type of work you were doing before or are you pursuing a new career path? (Please explain)

6. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “Very Easy” and 4 being “Very Difficult”, how would you rate the level of difficulty of the program in terms of the academic requirements?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

7. What is the most challenging part of the course/program? (e.g., statistics, memorizing new information)

8. How has your life changed since you enrolled in your training program?

9. What, if any, challenges have you faced since beginning your training program?

9b. Have you faced any financial challenges?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If “Yes”, please explain:

What would have helped you? What could be improved to better support you?

9c. Have you faced any childcare challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, please explain:

What would have helped you? What could be improved to better support you?

9d. Have you faced any social/recreation/leisure challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, please explain:

What would have helped you? What could be improved to better support you?

9e. Have you faced any family challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, please explain:

What would have helped you? What could be improved to better support you?

9f. Have you faced any health challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, please explain:

What would have helped you? What could be improved to better support you?

9g. Have you faced any other challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, please explain:

What would have helped you? What could be improved to better support you?

10. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “No Confidence” and 4 being “Very Confident”, how confident are you that this training will result in full-time employment?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

10b. Why? Please explain your confidence rating:

Now we have a couple of questions about you.

11. What age are you?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 |

12. Are you male or female?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

13. What was the highest level of education you completed prior to retraining?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No secondary school diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduated college or university |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college or university | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

14. How long were you unemployed before you began your retraining program?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 to 3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> Between 1 and 2 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between 3 and 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> Between 2 and 3 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between 6 months and 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 years |

15. Were you laid-off from your last employment position?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

16. Please list your last three employers and how long you were employed with each of them (we are interested in which sectors you were working in):

17. Do you have any other comments about your experience with retraining, or recommendations on how to make things work better?

The next part of our research will involve interviews with people enrolled in skills development programs, to help us to better understand some of the specific challenges they have faced.

18. Would you be willing to participate in a short interview in about a month from now?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes', please include your contact information below:

Name:

Telephone Number:

Thank you for your time! Your ideas and opinions are important to us.

APPENDIX B: BROAD-BASED CLIENT SURVEY

Outcomes of Skills Development: HJAC Client Survey

Hello _____, my name is _____ and I am calling from the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre. I am calling for two reasons: first to check in on your employment status since you participated in training courses through the Action Centre, and second to get your opinions on how we could improve our service.

We have a short survey to help us understand if we are providing the right types of short-term employment related workshops, what is working and what is not working, and how we might improve on the training we provide through the Action Centre.

The survey should take about 10 minutes, and your answers will be kept completely confidential. Your name will not be connected to any of your comments. The survey is voluntary and you can skip questions or stop the survey at any time.

As someone who has taken short-term employment related workshops through the Action Centre, your feedback is very important to us. Would you mind if I ask you a few questions?

If “no”, thank the client and wish them well in the future.

If “yes”, continue with the survey

1. Since your first visit to the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre in (month) of this year, have you had any paid employment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Instruction: if the client answers ‘Yes’ to this question (ie. They have had paid employment since visiting the HJAC), say ‘was helpful’ in questions a to h. If the client answers ‘No’, say ‘will be helpful’ in questions a to h.

2. Are you currently employed?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2a. Could you tell me a bit about the type of the paid employment you’ve had since (month) - so, whether it is/was part-time, temporary, contract, piece work – and also how long you have been/were working in that position?

Place of work	Type of work	Duration (# of months)

3. Our records show that you completed (#) employment related workshops through the Action Center, including (refer to checklist on Client Information Sheet).

Instruction: Questions a through h ask about specific workshops that the client has completed. Completed workshops are listed on the Client Information Sheet.

3a. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3b. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3c. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3d. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3e. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3f. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3g. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful” and 4 being “very helpful”, do feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

3h. On a scale from 1 to 4, 1 being “not helpful at all” and 4 being “very helpful”, do you feel that completing the workshop on _____ was/will be helpful in finding work?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Why/why not?

(If employed) Do you use the skills you gained through the workshop in your current job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes”, how?

Instruction: The following questions are for all clients, no matter how many workshops they have completed.

4. In your opinion, what other types of employment workshops would be helpful in finding work?

5. Other than employment related workshops, what did you find useful about the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre in terms of helping people to finding work?

6. In your opinion, what could be done to improve the services and supports provided through the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre in terms of helping people to find work?

7. At any point during your unemployment did you apply for the Second Career program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7a. If “Yes”, what happened?

7b. If “No”, why not?

8. Finally, can ask what age range you are in?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 + |

(note: the reason we are interested in age is so we can see if there are differences in the experiences and opinions of younger and older individuals)

9. As part of our ongoing research, would you be willing to participate in another short telephone interview in about a month from now?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. If “Yes”, include telephone number: _____

Client’s Name (*required*):

Instruction: When the survey has been completed, staple the Client Information Sheet to the front of the survey.

APPENDIX C: CLIENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Precarious Employment

What has been your general experience with job search? (prompts: how long have you been searching? Are you finding jobs to apply to? Are you getting interviews with employers?)

In your experience, what types of jobs are employers offering right now?

What are your thoughts on the general increase in temporary work? How does this affect workers?

Credentials

Do you feel that you have developed new skills through completing courses through the HJAC? (prompts: do you feel that you have the skills to do a wider range of jobs?)

In your experience with job search, how do you feel that employers viewed your qualifications and experience? Do you feel that they valued the certificates that you earned through the HJAC?

Do you feel that the courses you completed through HJAC helped/will help you to get work? Why?

The value of HJAC

How do/did you use the Action Centre? (ie. Frequency of visits; benefits of visits)
Do/did you use the centre as social support?

Have you visited other employment services during your unemployment? What was your experience?

Action Centres operate based on a peer support model, where staff members or Peer Helpers at the centre have also experienced a layoff or a shut down. In your opinion, is there any benefit to having Peer Helpers working in the centre? Why/Why not?

Was there anything else about your experience with job search, employment, or about the HJAC that you think we should talk about? Are there any other comments you would like to make?

APPENDIX D: STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE

Client Population

What do you see as the main challenges that HJAC clients face in terms of returning to work? (Possible probes: resumes, education, skills, Canadian experience, discrimination, other challenges?)

What types of services or supports are needed to help clients to overcome these challenges?

Precarious Employment

What are the most common types of jobs that HJAC has posted over the last year? Have you noticed a change in the number and 'quality' of jobs available? (Note – quality refers to wages, benefits and job security)

From your perspective, how does the quality of available jobs affect the well being of individuals and families?

Credentials

In your opinion, how do employers view the types of certificates that clients receive from HJAC training courses? (Prompt: Do you think the certificates HJAC offers are valued?)

What other types of qualifications would help an individual compete for the types of jobs you post at HJAC?

In your opinion, why do some HJAC clients sign up for multiple workshops? Are there any advantages or disadvantages of people having credentials in multiple fields?

Do you have any other thoughts or opinions about how HJAC could better prepare and connect people to employment?

APPENDIX E: EMPLOYER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Precarious Employment

What are the most common types of jobs that your organization has offered in the last year?

Have you noticed a change in the number and 'quality' of jobs available over the last few years? (Note – quality refers to wages, benefits and job security)

Have you seen an increase in the number of candidates applying for jobs or otherwise approaching you for hiring?

How do you see the general increase in temporary contract jobs affecting workers? (ie. No job security, low wages, lack of benefits)

Credentials

How do you view qualifications when considering candidates for hiring? How important are credentials? Are there specific kinds of credentials you look for?

Are there any advantages or disadvantage for candidates with credentials in multiple fields?

How do you view experience when considering candidates for hiring? How important is it to have related work experience?

The HJAC provides skills related workshops that provide participants with certificates in areas such as first aid, forklift, WHIMIS, Smart Serve, transportation of dangerous goods, etc. Does your company value these types of certificates? Why/ Why not?

What other types of qualifications would help an individual compete for the types of jobs you are offering?

Do you have any other thoughts or opinions around how the HJAC could better prepare and connect individuals to employment?

APPENDIX F: EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Introduction to the Hamilton Jobs Action Centre

The Hamilton Jobs Action Centre (HJAC) has been operating out of the No Frills Plaza on Main Street East for just over a year. The centre represents a partnership between the MTCU, the United Way of Hamilton/Burlington, and the SPRC as the administrator of the centre.

The centre applies an employee adjustment model of service delivery, which is generally used in situations where a workplace has experienced a layoff or shutdown affecting 50 or more workers. In this generic version of an employee adjustment centre, the target population includes workers (often older workers) who have been a part of smaller scale layoffs.

The cornerstone of the employee adjustment model is that the centre is staffed with 'Peer Helpers' who have also experienced a layoff or company shut down. Peer Helpers are trained to support clients in job search activities, but also provide a level of emotional support as they have similar lived experience.

Another function of the HJAC has been to provide skills development opportunities in the form of short-term employment related workshops that provide a certificate of qualification. Specific workshops focused on skills such as forklift operation, handling of dangerous goods, overhead crane and first aid among others.

Purpose of the Focus Group

1. To understand, from the perspective of local employment service providers, the benefits and drawbacks of providing short-term employment related workshops that provide a certificate of qualification.
2. To understand, from the perspective of local employment service providers, the most effective venue through which to provide these types of skills development programs.
3. To understand, from the perspective of local employment service providers, the value of the HJAC within the context of the current employment service system.

Program Details

Welcome to the CAW-McMaster University special ***Landing on Your Feet*** Certificate Program. This program, custom designed for members of Local 1520, consists of eight courses that have been developed to help you upgrade basic skills, enhance your understanding of labour markets, and provide you with the tools to manage the transition into training and re-employment.

Courses will be taught by qualified instructors in a small group learning environment that is respectful of workers prior experiences and is based on a commitment to meet your individual learning needs. Courses will be offered in your community and will be scheduled at various times during evenings and weekends to allow for the maximum number of workers to take advantage.

These courses are a part of the CAW-McMaster Labour Studies Program and can be used for credit toward the completion of the CAW-McMaster Labour Studies Certificate. **There is no direct cost to you. All tuition and course related text costs qualify under your current tuition assistance plan.**

Whether you are looking to sharpen your basic skills, preparing to enroll in a college or job training program, getting ready to search for a new career, or exploring strategies to manage the transition, we can help.



For more information please contact us at:

CAW-McMaster University Labour Studies
Telephone: 905-525-9140 ext. 24015, or visit
our website:

<http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/labourstudies/>



CAW-McMaster
University

Landing On Your Feet



Worker Friendly Education



Introduction to Computers

Would you like learn how to use a computer? This is an introductory course for beginners interested in learning computer basics. You will learn about computer operating systems, how to get onto and navigate the internet, sign up for an email account and send an email, find and download information and documents from the internet, and other important computer skills in this one day course.

Units: 2, Tuition \$430

Introduction to Word Processing

Knowing how to use a word processing program is key to creating professional looking documents such as cover letters and resumes, letters of application, and school assignments. This four session course will introduce you to the fundamentals of word processing. Topics covered include:

- Creating and saving documents
- Basic editing features including spell check
- Document formatting
- Working with images and graphics

Students will also be introduced to easily available and cost-free alternatives to commercial word processing and other application software.

Units: 4, Tuition \$725 plus text cost

Advanced Computer Skills

Ever wonder what a wiki, poke, and tweet have in common? These are terms associated with internet-based social networking technologies that are changing the way we communicate. This four session course allows you to explore how these technologies are utilized by unions and others. You will also have an opportunity to apply these technologies in a practical application. Students will be guided through the steps to build their own blog incorporating social networking technologies such as Bolgger, YouTube, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter and Skype. Course topics include:

- How unions and other organizations campaign online
- Possibilities and limitations of online campaigns

This course is suited to those students at an intermediate or advanced level of computer use.

Units: 4, Tuition \$725 plus text cost

Sharpening Your Writing Skills

Writing clearly is vital in today's society. Solid writing skills can help your job search efforts, enhance training success, and is often a necessary requirement in jobs. In order to develop better writing skills, you must understand the basics of grammar and sentence structure and how to translate your ideas onto paper. Learning how to write clearly takes practice and patience. This four session course will help you improve your writing skills through guided in-class and take home exercises that explain writing rules in easy-to-understand examples. This course will provide you with the skills to write more effective resumes, cover letters, application letters, and other written correspondence.

Units: 4, Tuition \$725 plus text cost

Tools for Further Study

Thinking of going back to school? If so, this four session course will provide you with an introduction to some of the basic academic skills required for success in Job Training, College or University programs. It will focus on how to improve your communication skills through written exercises and oral presentations, how to take notes from a talk or a reading, and how to research in libraries and online resources. Students will have an opportunity to learn and practice these skills through classroom and take home exercises structured around the completion and presentation of a written research project.

Units: 4, Tuition \$725 plus text cost

Introduction to Aptitude Testing

This four session course prepares you for the type of tests you are likely to face when applying for academic programs, apprenticeships or for many jobs.

The key areas of most tests are reviewed: reading comprehension/verbal reasoning; numeracy; spatial relations; mechanical comprehension; and logical reasoning. The course is designed to demonstrate that familiarity, practice, and preparation all improve people's abilities and test scores. Course participants get lots of practice and feedback, and will be able to track their personal improvement. There is a review of sample questions from each area, and then a sample test is done and taken up. Homework assignments provide opportunity for further practice and feedback.

Units: 4, Tuition \$725 plus text cost

Understanding Today's Labour Markets

You're more likely to succeed if you have a plan and a good part of planning is having the right information and knowing the right questions to ask. That is the starting point of this four session course which will;

- Review trends in the labour force
- Review issues and developments in the labour market, and
- Provide up to date briefings on government programs including EI and Training supports.

When it comes to the labour market it's useful to know which are the fastest growing occupations, what occupations are adding the most jobs, what's more important -- job replacements or new job openings, what's the link between job growth and education requirements, what do current labour force projections indicate. Just as important however, is sorting fact from fiction and that is why the course will take a critical look at occupational changes, demographic projections and skill requirements.

In the second part of the course participants will discuss EI rules and procedures and review existing programs and supports around training and skill development.

Units: 4, Tuition \$725 plus text cost

Landing on Your Feet

Losing a job is a significant life event. It can result in unexpected stress on yourself and on your family. The more aware you are of what is likely to happen the less likely it will cause serious disruptions and health issues.

This one day course will help you and your partner understand some of the stresses you may face and how to deal with them. It will focus on three areas: emotional issues, financial issues, and coping strategies. It will offer some tips on how to grieve the loss of a job, how to deal with conflict, how to respond to the feelings you are experiencing, where to look for help, and what you and your partner can do to work through this change in life.

This course was designed with the help of faculty from the School of Social Work at McMaster University and will be facilitated by an experienced social worker.

Units: 2, Tuition \$430 plus text cost

Appendix Three: Conference Presentation – Karel Williams

Must Gippsland be left behind?

Karel Williams

Alliance Manchester Business School

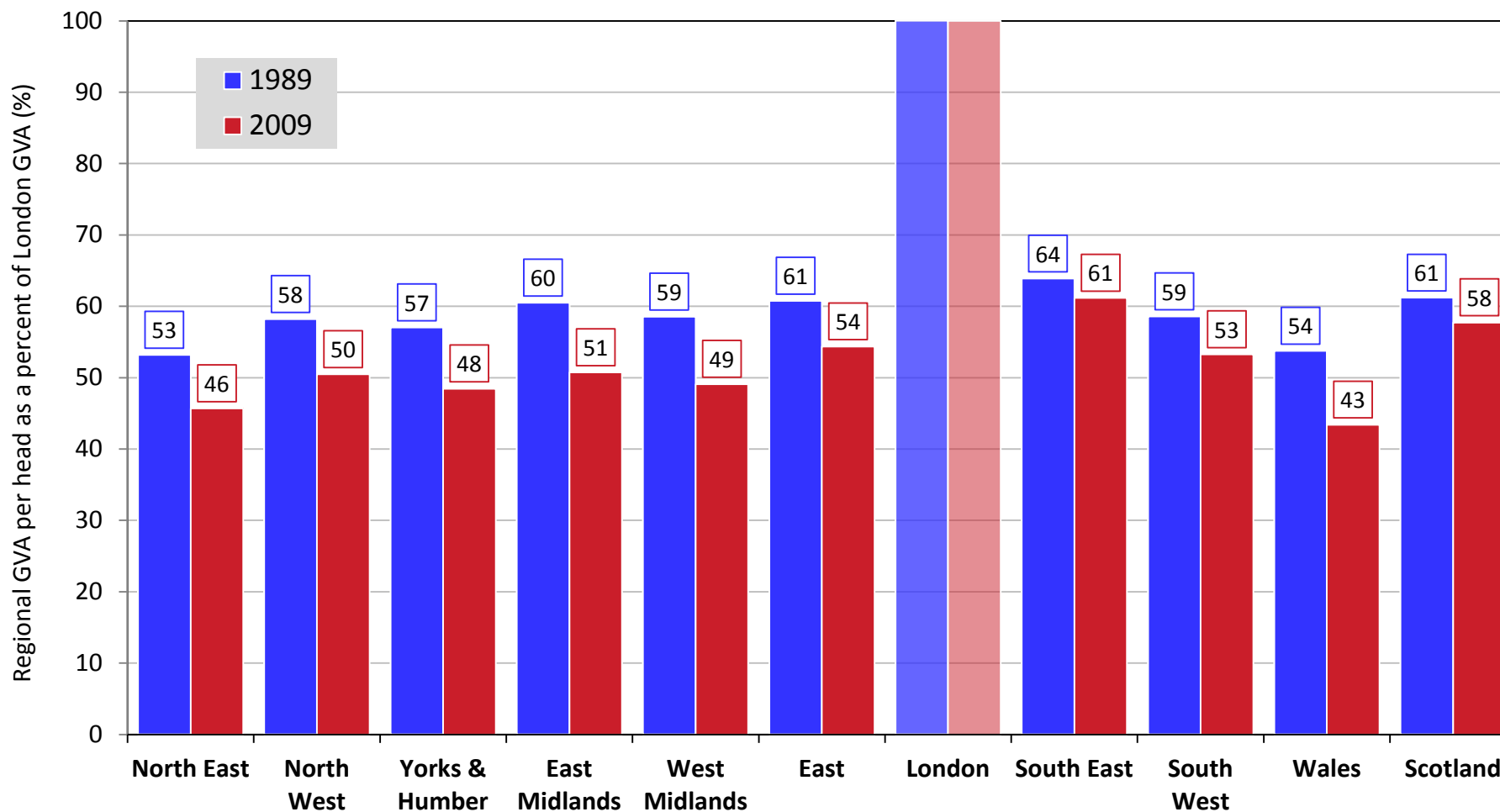
cresc.ac.uk

Must Gippsland be left behind when capitalism moves on?

- **Gippsland's problem:** the state electricity commission built on brown coal: now after Hazelwood all the mines and generators will go
- **Similar problems in many European regions:** resource base with no value + lost hinterland markets eg UK South Wales, French Pas de Calais,
- **All get the same fix = reports + generic policies:**
 - ✓ *many reports* eg in Gippsland, a Regional Growth Plan, KPMG on the workforce, the Committee report
 - ✓ *bits of investment in infrastructure + skills + show pieces* eg in Gippsland 174/266 \$ mill is for infrastructure
- **And in Europe, the output and income gaps do not close:** new narratives like *smart specialisation* cover the failure of old policy

Regional GVA per head compared to London in 1989 and 2009

(expressed as a percentage share of London's GVA per head) Source: ONS)



What to do vs where to look: not a policy fix but a policy agenda

- In economic policy, the policy agenda should be about 4 ways of engaging local specifics:
 - ✓ *Manage the mundane* (not hope for Hollywood endings)
 - ✓ *Analyse what's inside key sectors* (not just list sectors)
 - ✓ *Develop policies for small business* (not benign neglect)
 - ✓ *Raise the social ask of big business* (not supplicants)
- In politics, the really difficult bit is the challenge of working together:
 - ✓ *Put together a public interest coalition* (not the old divisions)

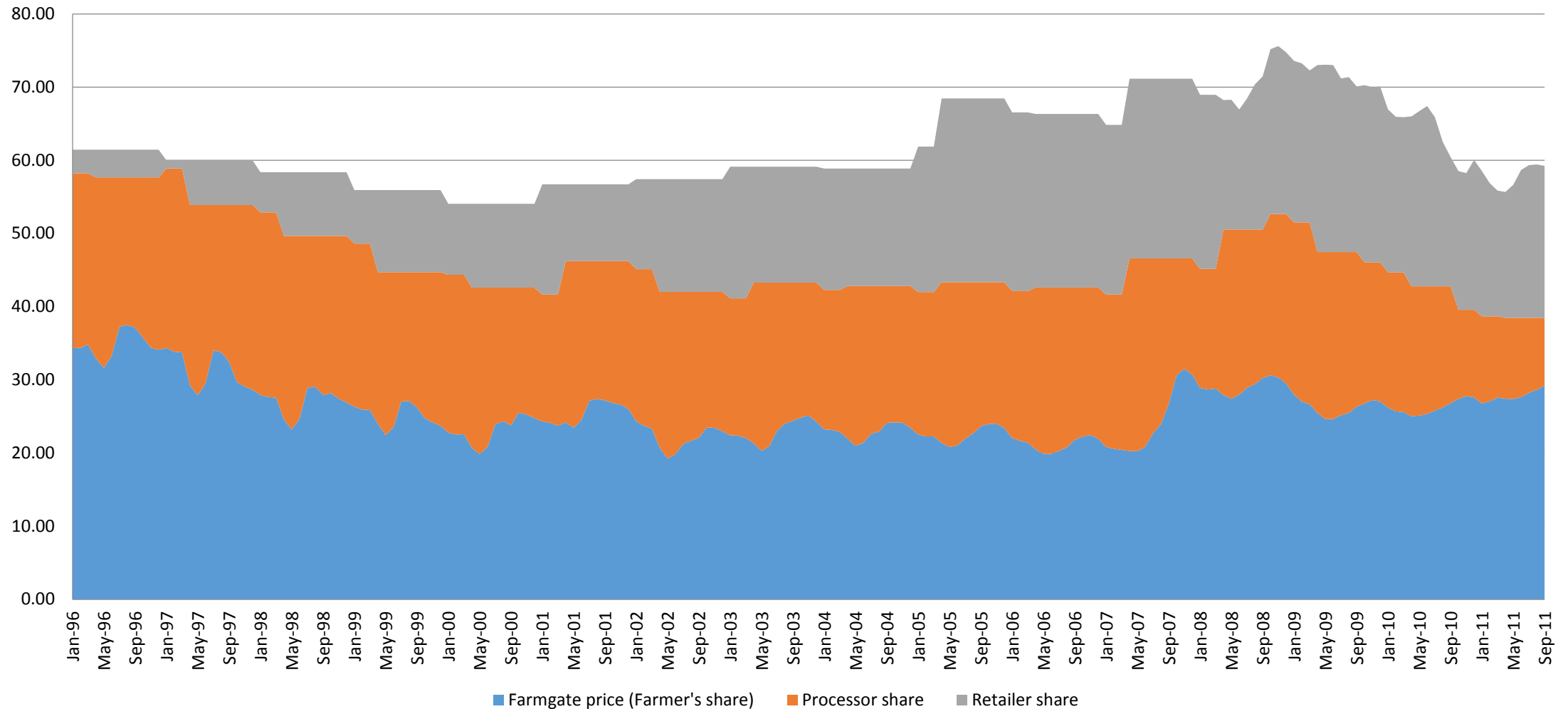
(1) Manage the mundane economy: stop wishing for a Hollywood ending

- **Will Gippsland's story end like a Hollywood film?** big inward investment, tech breakthrough re-values brown coal, knowledge intensive advanced manufacturing takes off
- **Probably not:** this is mainly long odds punting + most likely won't create volume employment
- **Why not start from the mundane economy you've got?** Remember your largest sectors by employment: 14% in construction, 13% in agriculture, 11% in care + health, 11% in retail
- **This is grounded + controllable, you can organise to do basic things better** eg with adult care: why not aim for excellent adult care delivered by local firms with a properly paid and trained workforce ?

(2) Analyse what's inside the sectors: its not enough to list key sectors

- Gippsland reports list key sectors like KPMG's "7 primary industries"
- But reports don't push the analysis down into the sectors eg in **dairying agriculture** the resource base is secure but we need to know more:
 - ✓ Supply side: the range in farm sizes and production scale; family ownership + age of farmers
 - ✓ Demand side: processors, markets, prices, division of margin between retailers, processors and farmers
- **Unless we've engaged these specifics about business models we won't know where and how to focus policy, don't know what to ask for**

Shares of UK retail milk price 1996-2011



Develop small business policy: don't ignore micro firms

- **Gippsland's crisis is about the contraction of big business** with Hazelwood closure; your Committee rightly emphasises many small firms depend on contracts and worker demand
- **Gippsland's peculiarity is the importance of micro + small firms** with 45% of your employment in firms employing less than 20 and a dumb bell analysis of firm size
- **Where's the analysis of the ecology of small and medium firms and what about micro firms**
 - ✓ **Why not more *mittelstand*, medium sized firms 20-200?** families selling out?
 - ✓ **What's the policy for micro firms?** Both the local tradie and the boutique wine maker; needs more than just workforce training

Table 1: WALES -employment and turnover by size of firm								
		Wales						
		No. of Enterprises	Employment	Turnover £m		Share of total employment	Share of total turnover	Share of total enterprises
		No.	No.	£m		%	%	%
2003	Micro (0 - 9)	158,985	285,400	12,694		31.1	18.1	93.8
	Small (10 - 49)	7,200	136,700	7,999		14.9	11.4	4.2
	Medium (50 - 249)	1,735	114,800	9,195		12.5	13.1	1.0
	Large (250 +)	1,615	381,600	40,192		41.5	57.4	1.0
	TOTAL	169,535	918,500	70,080		100.0	100.0	100.0
2013	Micro (0 - 9)	207,500	343,000	16,351		33.1	14.1	94.6
	Small (10 - 49)	8,300	155,800	11,879		15.0	10.3	3.8
	Medium (50 - 249)	2,015	130,400	13,638		12.6	11.8	0.9
	Large (250 +)	1,590	407,800	73,744		39.3	63.8	0.7
	TOTAL	219,405	1,037,000	115,611		100.0	100.0	100.0

Raise the social ask of big business: we are not supplicants

- **The current approach to big business: offer incentives so that they bring us investment and jobs;** be surprised and disappointed when they pull out
- **Raise the social ask because its our household demand that creates the profits** for multinational electricity generators or supermarket chains
- **Two practical demands:**
 - **Organised run down of brown coal;** so we don't have more pull outs without warning + panic about redeployment +\$266 million for new employment
 - **Responsible supply chain partners** eg what are Coles and Woolworths doing for Gippsland dairying (beyond putting up colour posters of farmers)

Now for the difficult bit: assembling a political coalition ?

- **The economic analysis isn't too difficult** though it does take us into new policy areas with micro firms and big business
- **The crucial difficulty is getting it together politically** so you create the space to develop and push economic policy in new directions:
 - ✓ **The problem of bureaucratic and political resistance** when one well placed player can hold things up; multiplied by governance problems of competing authorities and several Federal levels
 - ✓ **The difficulty of organised business and labour working together**; have to put behind what divided them in the past and focus on their shared interest in the future; not easy for those with long memories

A laggard economic region is like a sinking ship

- **There aren't enough life jackets to go round;** nobody in labour or management, big business or small business has a reserved life jacket with their name on it
- **It would be much more sensible to get into the lifeboats and start rowing together in a new direction;** but rowing in synch is tricky and many can't or won't see the need to do it
- **Partly a generational thing when the old with long employment histories and assets often can't see the point** until they find their kids can't get jobs locally and the smart kids leave
- **So here's one piece of directive advice: If you don't want to co-operate, stand aside**

Appendix Four: Arts and Heritage Examples

Industrial Arts and Heritage examples:

1. Art and Industry Festival, Hobson's Bay, 2016

Key aim: To tell stories of this area both historical and current through the combination of art and industry. More information: <http://artandindustryfestival.com.au/what-are-the-aims-of-the-festival/>

2. Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, Hamilton, ON, Canada

Key aim: The Workers Arts and Heritage Centre aims to preserve, honour and promote the culture and history of all working people. But we also hope to learn from the past towards challenging the future – for future generations. More information: <http://wahc-museum.ca/>

3. Ironfest:

Ironfest is an arts festival that explores the relationship between humans, metal and identity. Held annually at the Lithgow Showground in the middle of April, it brings together artists, designer-makers, blacksmiths, performers of all kind, musicians, steampunkers, historical re-enactors, machine enthusiasts & hobbyists from all over Australia. Ironfest has had an immeasurable effect on Lithgow's post-industrial image transforming it from a dirty old coal mining town into a place where quality events take place; many of Ironfest's participants and acts are now involved in numerous Council run events and locals are proud to promote their town as somewhere worth visiting. More information: <http://ironfest.net/about/>

4. Oamaru, NZ.

A steampunk approach has been developed at Oamaru, New Zealand, initially by farmers and related community members. A place of 14,000 people, local farmers began turning up to the exhibition and then they 'went home and started tinkering in their sheds, creating steampunk inventions. This engagement stimulated others and as stated: 'now it is not uncommon to see people sauntering down the main street in full Victorian costume, nodding politely at gob-smacked tourists'. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/30/new-zealand-town-oamaru-steampunk-capital-of-the-world>

Appendix Five: Policy Background

Identification of opportunities to support Structural Adjustment in the Latrobe Valley Region, Gippsland

An Update (2016)

Prepared by
Dr Natalie Jovanovski

Background

The Latrobe Valley has a primarily resource-based economy, and is comprised of three local government areas (LGAs); Latrobe City, Baw Baw and Wellington. Key industries in the region are currently identified as energy, mining and agriculture. There is considerable interest in the future of the region, as the transition from carbon-intensive forms of energy production to environmentally-sustainable alternatives signals a loss of jobs, and a range of potentially adverse economic effects to other key industries in the region. Following our 2012 report on structural adjustment in the Latrobe Valley (Fairbrother et al, 2012), this update provides information and existing data from new reports, including information about the region that has remained unchanged. This information includes:

- The key priority industries in Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley region.
- The continued importance of economic diversification.

It also discusses the following suggestions that have been made in new key reports since our 2012 analysis, including:

- The growing importance of the link between higher education and industry.
- The lack of information on how the Latrobe Valley will transition from carbon-intensive to environmentally-sustainable sources of energy production, and what to do with existing brown coal mines.

Current Key Priority Industries

The *Gippsland Regional Workforce Plan* (KPMG, 2016) identifies seven priority industries in the greater Gippsland region. These include:

- Health, Aged Care and Community Services
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Retail
- Building and Construction
- Agribusiness, Timber and Forestry
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Energy and Mining

Only some of these industries are anticipated to grow in the next three decades, such as Health, Aged Care and Community Services, Retail, Hospitality and Tourism and Building and Construction. Despite experiencing declines in both training and employment, however, the industries that currently contribute most to economic output are manufacturing, construction, mining, agribusiness, forestry and fishing, and electricity, gas and water; industries that contribute significantly to the workforce and economic growth of the Latrobe Valley.

Economic Diversification

Reports focusing on structural changes in the Latrobe Valley continue to emphasise the importance of economic diversification. The push to transition from carbon-

intensive to environmentally-sustainable forms of energy increases focus of other key industries in the region, such as agriculture, manufacturing and the service sector. It also raises possibilities about diversifying the use of coal. The anticipated closure of all four, brown coal generated power stations in the Latrobe Valley over the next fifty years has prompted discussions about strengthening other areas of economic growth in the region, such as agribusiness and the service sectors. The Committee for Gippsland's report, 'Our Region, Our Future: Securing an Economic Future for Gippsland and Latrobe Valley' (2016), estimates that the closure of coal-generated power plants in the region will cost over 3000 jobs, with an extrapolated figure of over 7000 people potentially relocating out of the Latrobe Valley and into other parts of Victoria. Given that the coal-mining energy sector has been a key economic strength in the region for over a century, the closure of these plants is expected to adversely affect other key industries operating in Gippsland. Strengthening interrelated industries in the region is seen as vital (Committee for Gippsland, 2016).

Other Key Industries

The agricultural sector continues to be a key industry in the Latrobe Valley region. According to a 2016 report from the Committee for Gippsland, agribusiness in the greater Gippsland area is worth up to \$7 billion. The potential for growth in the dairy industries, and the integration of intensive grazing of beef and sheep in conjunction with strategic irrigated cropping, is presented as a strong area to expand upon. Developing agribusiness is also predicted to stabilise the economy in the region (Committee for Gippsland, 2016). The Latrobe Valley is particularly important in these discussions, as it has a rich agricultural history and has been largely resistant to adverse environmental patterns, such as drought. The agricultural sector in Baw Baw shire, for example, is known for its agricultural strengths, and its support of new industries, such as hydroponic food production (Baw Baw Shire Council, 20ND; Committee for Gippsland, 2016).

There is also evidence to suggest that the service-based sectors in Gippsland are growing. Specifically, over the last decade, there has been significant growth in the healthcare sector, which is considered one of the largest employers in the region (KPMG, 2016). Growth in the healthcare sector is expected to account for 30% of the regional industry output by 2031 (About Gippsland, 2015). The Committee for Gippsland (2016) recommends the development of a new hospital in Baw Baw shire, which will cater to the anticipated population growth in the Latrobe Valley region over the next 30 years. Education and training in areas such as agribusiness and healthcare are, thus, presented as key priorities in reports on economic growth in the region.

Links between Industry and Higher Education

To address some of the structural and economic challenges affecting the Latrobe Valley, recent reports have focused specifically on the importance of establishing closer relationships between industry and higher education (Committee for Gippsland, 2016; KPMG, 2016). Combatting the effects of an ageing workforce and catering to new generations of employees in the region is seen as a way to build on the Latrobe Valley's competitive advantages. Demographic data on the area suggests that it has a slightly higher number of younger and mature-aged (over 60) people in comparison to other parts of Victoria (KPMG, 2011). According to a 2016 report from the Committee for Gippsland, the percentage of high school leavers in Gippsland is higher than the

national average (61.4% and 46.1%, respectively), with only 26.4% of secondary school graduates opting for higher education. Deferral rates are also higher in Gippsland (17%) than the Victorian average (9.8%). Finding ways to attract more young people into higher education and specifically, into one of the key priority areas of the region, such as agribusiness and healthcare, is presented as an important challenge (KPMG, 2016).

There is some debate about how the relationship between industry and higher education will be formed, and which sectors are considered most relevant to invest resources in. In 2012, the Victorian Government's report, 'The Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap', emphasised that workforce challenges experienced in the Latrobe Valley are due, in part, to a narrowly skilled workforce that is heavily oriented around the energy generation sector. They argued that medium to long-term goals relating to education should capitalise on other key industries in the region, such as agribusiness. Other, more recent reports echo these suggestions. The Gippsland Regional Workforce Plan (KPMG, 2016) emphasises that the joint efforts of industry, the education sector and the government are important, and should be encouraged through a two-part action plan. Action 1 of their proposed plan includes extending the 'Broadening Horizons' program in Gippsland, which involves introducing secondary school students to key industries in the region. Action 2 of their plan focuses on expanding work placements, to assist students in developing practical skillsets during their studies. The Committee for Gippsland (2016) makes similar suggestions. They argue that the importance of forming connections with higher education institutions, such as Federation University, is important to develop skills and training in areas such as agribusiness. These suggestions are supported by statistics showing declines in higher education and vocational training courses in sectors such as agribusiness, timber and forestry (KPMG, 2016). One recent development in linking higher education to key industries is the \$17 million Latrobe Valley 'hi-tech precinct' announced by the Victorian State Government. Uniting Federation University and Federation Training, and including private tenants such as Fujitsu at the TAFE's Morwell campus, is one recent and practical imitative made by the Victorian State Government to bridge the gap between education and industry in the Latrobe Valley (Burrows, 2016).

While most reports emphasise the need to broaden educational pathways for future generations and focus on the importance of linking higher education to key industry areas such as agriculture and the service-based sector (Committee for Gippsland, 2016; KPMG, 2016), the Latrobe City Council (2016, p. 4) proposes that the region should capitalise on its history and strength in engineering, and work towards efforts to rebrand itself as "the Engineering Capital of Australia". Acknowledging that resources are limited and that economic diversification is key to rebuilding the future of the Latrobe Valley, the Council emphasise that the region should focus on providing training and opportunities to engineering students, supporting the transition from carbon-intensive to environmentally-friendly forms of energy production. This suggestion is at odds with reports stating that although there are no local institutions offering courses on energy or mining in Gippsland, that there are already 51 Gippsland residents enrolled in engineering-related courses (KPMG, 2016).

Transitioning from Carbon-Intensive to Environmentally-Sustainable Forms of Energy

There is agreement that carbon transitioning is inevitable and necessary to the state of the environment in the Latrobe Valley region, but little discussion about how this should materialise. Although the coal-mining sectors generally have fewer employees than other key industries in the region, such as agriculture and healthcare, coal-generated electricity continues to contribute significantly to the economy through regional economic output (8.8%). The mining and electricity sectors, thus, remain an important part of the local workforce and economy. The Committee for Gippsland (2016) argue that a more holistic plan is needed to deal with the “complex and sensitive issues” (p. 15) associated with job loss of this scale, and that any closures made to power plants in the region should be done in stages with appropriate education and training for those most affected. This suggestion is echoed in Fairbrother’s et al (2012) report, which emphasises the need for greater connections between local industries and universities/research institutions.

The Committee for Gippsland (2016) also suggest the continued use of coal for low-emission fertiliser, hydrogen, and a number of other products. This is discussed by researchers such as Weller, Sheehan and Tomaney (2012), who argue that the potential of using technologies that reduce the emissions arising from brown coal generated plants, and the commercialisation of brown coal for other uses, may offset some of the more negative consequences of clean energy initiatives to the local economy. While such suggestions are made, few reports indicate that the region has the educational facilities and interest in promoting these changes, and that this is, indeed, possible at this time.

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APPENDIX TO 2016 REPORT

Identification of opportunities to support Structural Adjustment in the Latrobe Valley

Briefing Report One (2012) – Assessing current knowledge

Prepared by

Dr Meagan Tyler
Professor Peter Fairbrother
Dr Darryn Snell
Dr Larissa Bamberry
Mr Sam Carroll-Bell
Ms Silvia Suraci

Introduction

In January 2012, the Commonwealth Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government commissioned the Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work (based out of RMIT University) to examine opportunities for investment and job growth in the Latrobe Valley. Utilising existing data from key reports and research, this briefing report provides a contextual overview for this study by answering the following questions:

- What has been said about economic diversification in the Latrobe Valley Region (Baw Baw, Latrobe City and Wellington)?
- Where are the job opportunities (current and projected) in the Latrobe Valley Region and wider Gippsland?
- What are the conditions for realising these opportunities? Seeks to identify the roles and the skills of workers in industries likely to be impacted by a transition to a low carbon economy. This Briefing Paper aims to answer the following questions with currently available data from key reports and research:

Key findings

1. There is a lack of consistency in available reports as to where growth areas are located.
2. There are different understandings about the generation of jobs in the region.
3. There are likely to be very different outcomes depending on whether there is active government intervention or not.
4. The choice of policy approach appears to be either one that is comprehensive and integrated or a series of *ad hoc* interventions; the outcomes are likely to be different.

Implications

1. Policy must be very clear about the approach that is advocated to generate jobs.
2. Decisions should be taken about the focus of intervention.
3. Consideration will need to be given to how the different levels of government and all relevant interest groups are involved in the process of transition.
4. Attention should be given to encouraging an agreed approach for the Latrobe Valley region, involving a range of social actors (e.g. employers, unions, local government, community organisations) across the three LGAs.

Background and Scope

For the purposes of this project the Latrobe Valley region is defined as the three local government areas (LGAs) of Latrobe City, Baw Baw and Wellington. The estimated population of this region in 2010 was 162,700 people (KPMG, 2011) up from 146,567 in 2006 (Fairbrother *et al.*, 2012).

The Latrobe Valley has a primarily resource-based economy, with key propulsive industries currently identified as energy, mining and construction, agriculture and forestry and manufacturing. These industries, along with oil and gas in East Gippsland, make significant contributions to Gippsland's employment, export earnings, and value adding activities. Some of the most skilled and best paying jobs in the region are also found among these industries. Changes in investment and/or economic activity in any of these sectors will have an impact on other sectors (e.g. retail, hospitality, health and community services) and the broader regional economy. In terms of employment, a growing service sector should also be noted.

There is considerable interest and concern surrounding the future of the Latrobe Valley. The region is thought to be especially exposed to changes resulting from climate change and policies addressing climate change, in particular, the carbon pricing associated with the Commonwealth government's *Clean Energy Future* package. Therefore, there are expectations that the region will undergo significant economic and social change in the near future.

Current growth areas

The *Gippsland Regional Plan* (2010) identifies the following areas as those which have experienced growth in the period 2006-2010:

- Construction
- Health and Community Services
- Government Administration and Defence
- Retail Trade
- Education

However, not all of these are applicable to the Latrobe Valley region. In the Valley specifically, there is evidence of growth in the health and community services, retail trade and education over this period, but there is some debate over the current strength of construction industry and its potential for growth going forward. The areas of growth are complemented by areas of decline, although the profile is not necessarily symbiotic. These areas are identified and discussed in a set of key reports. These reports inform the analysis presented below (see also Table 1).

Economic diversification

There has been some economic diversification in the Latrobe Valley over the last decade as a result of both demographic shifts and considerable economic restructuring. There has been a move away from the extreme dominance of the coal-based electricity sector, particularly in terms of employment. The most often noted trend of the last decade is the growing importance of the retail and services sectors (including health and aged care). Economic diversification and economic stability in the Latrobe Valley is expected to confront additional challenges with the further contraction of the coal-based electricity sector under carbon pricing and proposals to bring about the early closure of one or more the region's brown coal-fired generators. Identifying new opportunities for growth in other sectors and the appropriate means of transition for displaced workers, including appropriately targeted skills and training, should underpin economic diversification objectives.

Debates about Diversification

There is some debate about the genuine prospects for economic diversification within the Latrobe Valley. These differences hinge, somewhat, on whether or not the so-called "clean-coal" technologies are viable in the shift to a low carbon economy. The *Gippsland Regional Plan* (2010), for example, predicts that a shift to clean coal technologies could create growth and help offset employment losses in the coal-based electricity sector. As Table 1 shows, none of the other major reports emphasise this possibility (although "clean coal" technology is mentioned in the *Positioning Latrobe City for a Low Carbon Emission Future* report produced by the Latrobe City Council in 2010). There are also considerable differences between approaches in terms of amount and type of government intervention in the region, and understandings of the Valley's ability to achieve resilience and growth after the expected contraction of the electricity generation sector and associated job losses.

There are also considerable differences in terms of methodology and modelling. Reports based on standard economic modelling generally predict growth on the assumption that, aside from the introduction of carbon pricing, most other factors remain stable. So the areas of growth predicted by such reports are put forward on an "as is" basis. They do not predict, for example, the impact that active government intervention may have in stimulating other sectors of the economy. Weller and colleagues (2011) also claim that standard economic modelling is likely to be both simplistic and optimistic when dealing with situations of economic decline and, as a result, such predictions tend to suggest populations will be better placed to recover from significant economic restructuring than is actually the case in the real world. The last significant difference is between those reports which advocate a mid- to long-term, market-driven shift towards a service based economy (e.g. *Gippsland Regional Plan*, 2010; KPMG, 2011) and those which advocate more active government interventions to promote green manufacturing, construction, technology, investment, research and education (e.g. Climate Works, 2011; Weller *et al.*, 2011).

Projected challenges and opportunities

Table 1 outlines the basic predictions for areas of growth and decline in the Latrobe Valley Region over the next 20 years, according to five major reports dealing with the issue of economic diversification and the transition to a low carbon economy.

REPORT TITLE	GIPPSLAND REGIONAL PLAN	LOW CARBON GROWTH PLAN FOR GIPPSLAND	GIPPSLAND TERTIARY EDUCATION PLAN	LATROBE VALLEY INDUSTRY GROWTH PROJECTIONS	THE REGIONAL EFFECTS OF PRICING CARBON EMISSIONS
AUTHOR / YEAR	Gippsland Regional Plan Control Group (2010)	Climate Works (2011)	Dow et al. (2011)	KPMG (2011)	Weller et al. (2011)
PREDICTED AREAS OF GROWTH	Tertiary education Tourism Aged Care Possibly "clean coal" related industries	Construction (retro fitting and eco-construction)	Aged care and health Education and Training Construction Retail and Tourism (lesser)	Oil and Gas (capital only – not employment) Service sector Mining (for Wellington only) Manufacturing (capital only – not employment)	Green manufacturing (only with govt. intervention) Research and development (only with govt. intervention) Education and Training (only with govt. intervention) Gas-fired electricity production
PREDICTED AREAS OF DECLINE	Coal-based electricity generation	Coal-based electricity generation	Manufacturing Coal-based electricity generation	Mining and Electricity Agriculture (medium term before returning to modest growth long term) Brown coal related industries Education and training	Coal-based electricity generation

Table 1

Areas of agreement and contention

There is clearly widespread agreement about the decline in coal-based electricity generation and many of the reports take this as a starting point. There is also widespread agreement about predicted growth in demand for health and aged care services.¹ There is, however, significant disagreement, as the table shows, with regard to projected areas of growth and areas of decline outside of the coal-based electricity sector. While the *Gippsland Regional Plan* (Gippsland Regional Plan Control Group, 2010) and the *Gippsland Tertiary Education Plan* (Dow et al., 2011) suggest tourism as a potential growth sector, both the *Latrobe Valley Industry Growth Projections* (KPMG, 2011) and *The Regional Effects of Carbon Pricing* (Weller et al., 2011) report, caution against optimism with regard to the potential to significantly expand tourist operations. Construction too is an area of contention. The *Gippsland Regional Plan* and the *Low Carbon Growth Plan for Gippsland* (Climate Works, 2011) promote construction as a potential growth area, partly as a result of population growth and, in the case of the *Low Carbon Growth Plan*, partly as a result of the likely demand for retrofitting and eco-construction (e.g. installation of solar panels) in the future. The *Latrobe Valley Industry Growth Projections*, however, suggest that the population growth of the Latrobe Valley Region will still be less than the Victorian average and that any increase in construction will be unevenly spread across the Latrobe Valley.

Furthermore, some predictions are completely at odds. While the *Gippsland Tertiary Education Plan* and the *Gippsland Regional Plan*, for example, suggest education and training will be a growth area, the *Latrobe Valley Industry Growth Projections* report asserts that there will be a slowing of growth and even potential contraction of the education and training sector, particularly given the aging population. In addition, the *Gippsland Tertiary Education Plan* predicts a decline in manufacturing while *The Regional Effects of Carbon Pricing* report is optimistic about the potential for growth in green manufacturing relating to renewable energy.

Causes of contention

Many of these differences can be attributed to divergent understandings of government intervention. The *Gippsland Tertiary Education Plan* argues for significant government intervention to boost participation in post-secondary education. Such intervention is especially important in a region which has some of the lowest year 12 retention rates in Victoria. It is implied, therefore, that growth will follow *if* there is some kind of intervention to boost demand for and supply of tertiary education options. Under an “as is” model, however, demand for education and training generally could be expected to fall as, given the aging population, there will be less people of typical school and university age living and working in the region.

¹ The *Gippsland Regional Plan* does make mention of Defence and Aviation as a potential growth sector, but not in relation to the Latrobe Valley. None of the other reports mention defence and aviation as potential growth sectors.

Government intervention

As shown in Table 2, there are some points of general agreement between the reports on prospective *employment growth* in the Latrobe Valley Region in the next 10 to 20 years, depending on whether or not there is appropriate targeted government intervention in the region to assist the transition to renewable energies. Targeted government intervention is likely to shape the emerging economy in ways that are distinct from the situation without this form of intervention.

PREDICTED AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT GROWTH	WITH TARGETED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION	WITHOUT TARGETED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION
	Green manufacturing Research and development Education and Training Health and Aged Care Tourism (limited) Construction (limited)	Health and Aged Care Tourism (limited)

Table 2

The importance of government intervention is most prominent in *The Regional Effects of Carbon Pricing* report. The authors warn against the assumption that without any intervention the economy of the Latrobe Valley Region will, as a result of market forces, eventually become a service-based economy. Weller and colleagues (2011) argue that, while the Valley may be able to move towards a service based economy, the process is likely to cause significant hardship. Firstly, because in the main area of contraction – coal-based electricity and mining – there are limited transferable skills with the areas of tourism, retail, health and aged care. If it is even possible, it will certainly not be easy for displaced workers from heavy industry to simply transfer to the services sector. Secondly, the services industry is heavily feminised and relies on a considerable part-time workforce with wages which do not rival those currently offered in the masculinised areas of energy and mining sectors. *The Regional Effects of Carbon Pricing* report, therefore, contends that the only way forward to secure the Latrobe Valley's economic and social future is to implement plans which actively promote the region as a green manufacturing and renewable energy hub, a centre for green manufacturing, research and development, as well as education and training. A similar argument has been made by Bill and others (2008) with regard to the transition towards a renewable energy economy in the Latrobe and Hunter Valleys. While a carbon price will help limit demand for coal-based electricity, the growth of the renewable or green energy sector will need government help, and this should be directed to areas likely to experience economic disadvantage as a result of the decline in coal-based electricity.

Defining growth

The final differentiation is in terms of defining growth. Not all of the reports draw a distinction between a sector's growth of employment, growth in output, or growth in percentage of value added. The *Latrobe Valley Industry Growth Projections* report does make these distinctions in its predictions, however, and such an analysis shows that while there may be possibilities for growth in terms of value added and output in the manufacturing, and oil and gas sectors, these are likely to come from technological change and capital investment, and thus are unlikely to promote employment opportunities for those in the region. It is therefore important to be clear about what types of opportunities that growth in different sectors creates.

Conditions for capitalising on opportunities

The main condition for capitalising on potential employment opportunities in the Latrobe Valley Region is appropriate and active government intervention and support. Several reports (e.g. Bill *et al.*, 2008; Fairbrother *et al.*, 2012; Latrobe City, 2010; Weller *et al.*, 2011) have made recommendations about the nature that government intervention in the region should take in light of the transition towards a low carbon economy. Bill and colleagues (2008) argue for a "just transition" for workers and regions most affected by the shift to a low carbon economy, particularly those such as the Latrobe and Hunter Valleys with economies still heavily reliant on coal-based electricity generation. This approach is primarily about ensuring that the costs of environmental change are shared fairly through the population (Bill *et al.*, 2008). To this end, they argue for a variety of interventions including:

- Assistance for displaced workers *and* contractors
- Consultation with and full engagement of unions
- Support for innovation and partnerships for local industries
- Investment in research and development, and infrastructure
- Training for alternative employment
- Special targeted support for older, disabled and less educated workers
- Relocation assistance for displaced workers
- Income maintenance, redundancy entitlements and retraining allowances
- Subsidies for new industries and employers
- Compensation and equipment buy-outs for contractors
- Investment in training a "green workforce"
- A "Job Guarantee" for displaced workers

Many of these recommendations are echoed in reports by Fairbrother and colleagues (2012) and Weller and colleagues (2011) with the notable exception of the "job guarantee" which is not replicated elsewhere. This scheme is based on the concept of the state providing employment, at minimum wage, for workers displaced by closures and downsizing associated with the shift to a low carbon

economy. This would be a safety net which encouraged active employment rather than a potential shift to the welfare dependency that has often been associated with the regional-based closure of heavy industry in other industrialised nations (Bill *et al.*, 2008).

A holistic approach to renewal

International comparisons suggest that there has not yet been a wholly successful transition program put in place in industrialised economies to compensate regions experiencing downturns as a result of a dominant industry closure or sector decline. Many areas of the industrialised West that have experienced significant economic restructuring still struggle with higher than average unemployment as well as underemployment and associated negative social consequences. Weller and others (2011) contend that in such circumstances in Australia (e.g. automotive plant closures in South Australia, steel plant closures in New South Wales, privatisation of electricity and downsizing in Victoria) the outcomes remain fairly consistent. About a third of those workers directly affected (generally those who are younger, more skilled and socially connected) will find jobs fairly quickly. About a third of those directly affected will eventually find inferior employment (for example, part time, low paid and /or insecure work). The final third (mainly older workers who opt for early retirement or give up looking for work after a period of unemployment), will not work again. If these outcomes are to be improved, new approaches must be sought.

Fairbrother and others (2012) in addition to Weller and colleagues (2011) point to the renewal strategies put in place in the Ruhr region of Germany as creating one of the most successful transitions away from old energy and manufacturing sources to a new green technologies, research and training. This transition has involved significant state intervention, facilitated by all levels of government, as well as intense collaboration between employers, unions and education facilities. The process is therefore an active form of restructuring rather than a more passive, market-driven restructuring and it has been associated with more positive outcomes than comparable restructuring efforts in the UK and the US.

The approach taken in the Ruhr has been much more holistic than simply offering support to workers directly affected by the closure or decline of a particular industrial sector. It is a regionally based renewal program which aims to assist existing industries to “adapt to the new market conditions created by changes in regulatory mechanisms, such as the introduction of emissions trading schemes” (Weller *et al.*, 2011: 72) and to “regenerate the area in line with ecological and sustainability concerns” (Fairbrother *et al.*, 2011: 99). Like the Latrobe Valley, the Ruhr region has seen an increase in the service sector but, instructively, this has not fully offset the employment losses from heavy industry. While active government intervention has been seen to help improve the region's prospects, it has not been a cure-all and the area still suffers from higher than average unemployment. One of the improvements suggested by Fairbrother and colleagues (2011) is that government interventions should be made *prior to* significant economic restructuring rather than focusing only on amelioration strategies *after* the planned decline or closure of a particular industry.

Another important element of the Ruhr regeneration program has been the collaboration between all levels of government and across interest groups and sectors, including labour unions, industry groups and education and training providers. It is therefore a holistic strategy for change. At this stage a similar level of collaboration is not evident in Australia. There is not yet a coherent understanding and policy approach to generating jobs and support for industry in the Latrobe Valley region which incorporates federal, state and local government as well as training and education bodies, unions and employers. Indeed, one of the most notable absences at this stage in all the reports on the Latrobe Valley's economic future is the voice of unions.

There are also significant gaps in terms of LGA planning for the Valley. While Latrobe City has produced a more detailed plan of their aims for transition towards a low carbon economy, the shires of Wellington and Baw Baw lag significantly behind. Indeed, there is no mention of the transition to a low carbon economy in the *Wellington Council plan 2011-2015*. The *Baw Baw Council Plan 2011-2015* does mention the need to "assist the development of a future, strong, vibrant low carbon economy" but this comes under "valuing our environment" rather than the economic section on "managing growth". There is, however, some evidence of attempts to move towards a more integrated plan for the Valley's future, for example in the *Positioning Latrobe City for a Low Carbon Emission Future* report and the stated aims of the *Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap*. These efforts will need to be consolidated in the near future for the potential opportunities outlined here to be realised.

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