



# Training for work

Insights from students and trainees at the Brotherhood of St Laurence

Dina Bowman and Nicole Souery

2010



Brotherhood  
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

Published by

Brotherhood of St Laurence  
67 Brunswick Street  
Fitzroy Vic. 3065  
ABN 24 603 467 024

Tel: (03) 9483 1183

[www.bsl.org.au](http://www.bsl.org.au)

ISBN 978-1-921623-14-1

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## Acknowledgements

This study was made possible through the contribution of many people who generously provided their time and expertise to the project, including:

- the interviewees who shared their insights about their experiences of training
- Maree Bovell, Manager Employment and Vocational Training, for her cooperation and support and enthusiasm for the initial idea
- Jo McErvale, Strategic Development Officer, Community and Employment Development, for her diligence in accessing data and responding to requests for information
- Chantelle Ilustre, Quality Officer, for her support and cooperation in accessing data and in providing us with the survey material
- John Heanue, Senior Manager Community Employment Development, and Michael Horn, Senior Manager In and Out of Work, for their support of the project and critical comment.

Importantly, the volunteer contribution of Nicole Souery must be recognised. Nicole worked tirelessly to assist in making sense of the surveys, develop the interview schedule, recruit the interviewees, conduct the interviews and draft the report. Without her outstanding contribution we would not have been able to complete this research. More importantly, perhaps, her sensitivity and diligence ensured that the data on which this report is based is both rich and rigorous. Thank you, Nicole.

Dina Bowman

June 2010

## Abbreviations

ATTP	Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training Program
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
BSL	Brotherhood of St Laurence
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CWLY	Centre for Work and Learning Yarra
FDC	Family day care
GTO	Group Training Organisation
OHS	Occupational health and safety
RTO	Registered Training Organisation

## Summary

This study had two main aims. The first relatively modest aim was to analyse the characteristics of the students and trainees involved in programs run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The second aim was to examine the experience of vocational training from the trainees' perspective, and gain insight into their motivations for doing training. We wanted to know what worked well and not so well. We also wanted to identify the factors that helped or hindered the successful completion of training and the successful transition from training to paid employment.

We chose to focus on the perspective of trainees and students because understanding their motivations, aspirations and experiences is fundamental to the development of effective programs that meet their needs. Future research should examine the experience of trainers and employers to assess the effectiveness of training and vocational education from different perspectives.

Our analysis of enrolment data for 190 individuals suggests that the bulk of BSL students and trainees are over 25 years of age, are women, were not born in Australia, and speak a language other than English—although over half also speak English. Most live in Frankston or surrounding areas, the Fitzroy and Collingwood area or Craigieburn, but students also come from other suburbs across metropolitan Melbourne.

The main reasons interviewees gave for undertaking training were to gain credentials or to upgrade qualifications and to find employment. Overall, trainees spoke very positively about their training experiences. Interviewees highlighted the combination of committed teachers, support and a tailored approach as aiding the successful completion of training.

We found that students were almost unanimous in their praise for BSL's supportive, responsive, and flexible approach. They appreciated the high level of organisation and commitment of the trainers at BSL. Of course, this praise may be overstated, as interviewees and trainees completing feedback sheets may feel compromised and unable to articulate complaints for fear of negative consequences. Nevertheless, the high level of support, flexibility, commitment and organisation was consistently noted. The few negative comments related to the desire for more desks, difficulties in managing homework, and the personal interaction and communication styles of some trainers. These specific comments highlight the importance of not only seeking feedback but acting on it.

In terms of the factors that helped or hindered completion of training and the successful transition to paid employment, the diversity of the trainee and student population meant that different factors affected different groups. Some students and trainees were already quite highly skilled and educated: a third of those who provided details had qualifications at a diploma or higher level, including eighteen people who had bachelor or higher degrees. These trainees, however, might require specific English language support, and mentoring in the cultural processes of getting and keeping a job in Australia. Importantly, some were studying at a much lower level than their previous qualifications, and studying something outside their preferred field, because of limited choice.

Other students already possessed experience and specific expertise and just required upgrading and formal recognition of those skills. For example, the family day carers needed to gain credentials due to a change in regulations. For some of these women, training opened up the path to further learning. For them, key elements were the supportive, responsive nature of the training, the lack of fees and the fact that they could continue to work and earn an income.

The interviews suggest that some students and trainees need more preliminary support to ensure that the training is right for them—literacy and language assessment is important here, not only for those of non-English speaking backgrounds. It is also essential that trainees and students understand any prerequisites, such as a driver’s licence, before undertaking training. This may require information to be provided in several formats, and to be repeated. With the tightening of eligibility criteria for publicly funded places in accredited training courses, matching training with individual preferences and aspirations is especially important, to avoid locking students into fields of study that do not match their skills or aspirations.

A key finding of this research is the need for support before, during and after training. Our analysis suggests that where individuals had strong social networks and resources, training and formal credentials assisted them to secure employment. However, for many other students training is only part of the solution. Without support and mentoring, a certificate or qualification is not sufficient to enable them to get and keep a job.

## Recommendations

Our recommendations can be grouped into those relating to training and teaching practice, broader policy issues and suggested further research.

### Teaching and training

The needs of people who are literate and educated in languages other than English should be distinguished from the needs of people who have little education and low levels of literacy and numeracy. This latter group may or may not have good English language skills. Tailored support for these different groups is needed while training.

Pre-training advice and information is imperative, especially given the tightening of eligibility for funded places. A key recommendation is to introduce an information and advice service at centres such as the Centre for Work and Learning in the first instance to assist people to make informed decisions about their training options. This is especially important given the new Victorian Training Guarantee funding arrangements.

Planning for what happens after training, and post-training support, are important. A key recommendation from the trainees is ‘more help with getting a job’.

The learner feedback forms are a useful tool in understanding the experience of training from the trainees’ perspective. It is important that processes are formalised to not only evaluate training quality but also act on specific concerns.

### Policy

Appropriate support and information before, during and after training is especially important for disadvantaged students and trainees. Adequate funding is required to ensure that responsive, flexible support can be provided for such students.

Funding for students who experience disadvantage should be weighted according to the identified level of need. This could build on the principles of the Joint Group Training Program, an arrangement between Commonwealth and state governments to fund GTOs, which include different rates of payment to reflect the level of priority of the outcomes. A similar needs-based allocation of funds could be trialled for all training, be it attached to a traineeship or not.

## Future research

If further research is to be undertaken, it is important that any training or employment feedback form seeks specific consent for data to be used for research purposes and includes the option to opt out.

A close analysis of BSL's enrolment data was outside the scope of this project. Further analysis of the enrolment data to better understand the effectiveness of BSL's training services is recommended.

The AQTF dataset is a rich source of information which could yield interesting insights about the trainee experience.

An analysis of different diversity categories under the new Victorian Training Guarantee could inform the consideration of weighted payments to students with additional training and support requirements.

## Isaac

Isaac was born in Southern Sudan in the early 1970s, to a family of nomads and cultivators. At the age of twelve, he went to live in Khartoum in Northern Sudan to escape the civil war in the South. After completing secondary school, his employment opportunities were limited, because the Sudanese government was conscripting all young men to fight in the South. If found working without military service completion papers, a young man would be dismissed and taken to the army. Isaac did not want to join the army. He responded to a newspaper advertisement for a hotel cleaner and was accepted. He began as a trainee and soon obtained permanent work. Isaac held this position for two years before leaving for Egypt, where he also worked as a hotel cleaner.

Volunteering is something of a passion for Isaac. As he puts it, 'it become in my blood that if I didn't do something that helped, I cannot be comfortable'. He began volunteering in Sudan, 'organising' his own community. In Egypt, he volunteered in the Sudanese refugee community as a team leader and assistant coordinator of a church-run program:

We distributed blankets, clothes, food and we have to train people for work there before they go and we can issue for him a card showing that he's a member in case we need to protect him, and if we send him to the job he can be respected as a member of ours in the church. Also yes, and I was responsible for the people who used to pray in the church also, just the numbers who is present or who is new again ... I was responsible for Sunday prayers twice a day, morning and evening, and Friday prayers. I was a leader for my own community, so I was doing different kinds of community jobs there in Egypt until I left. When I come here, I do the same.

Now Isaac also has a significant role in helping to look after his five children:

Yes my caring is it to look after each member in my family. For example for my kids about their schools. I have to buy them their daily supplies, and I have also to monitor their activities, their homework, and reading their books. Also some maths, so I do assist them during the night. I tell them to take a little bit break when they come from school, or to go and play in the park, and then after that, come back from there I do assist them one by one yes, every day I do that.

Isaac completed a Certificate III in Community Services (traineeship) with the BSL, motivated by his considerable experience in volunteering for his local community. The one-year traineeship was an opportunity to gain formal knowledge, skills and work experience, and a qualification. This was his first paid employment in Australia.

When interviewed, Isaac was unemployed. He was using a 'job search club' service to look for employment in either community services or cleaning. Isaac made several recommendations to better assist trainees in their search for a job on completion of training. He suggested an increase in employment services for ex-trainees; more help from the training organisation in looking for work; and the maintenance of strong links with ex-trainees so that vacancies can be passed on and referrals made. The training organisation would thus continue as a resource.

Isaac was contemplating future studies in human resources, but for this he would need a part-time job. Isaac's future work and study prospects remain undecided.



# 1 Introduction

The *Training for work* report is a contribution towards identifying what distinguishes the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) approach to vocational training and education. This study had two main aims. The first, relatively modest aim was to document the characteristics of the students and trainees<sup>1</sup> involved in training programs run by BSL. The second aim was to examine the trainees' perspective on vocational training, specifically, their motivations for doing training and their experience of training. We wanted to know what worked well and not so well. We also wanted to identify the factors that helped or hindered the completion of training and the successful transition from training to paid employment.

We chose to focus on the perspective of trainees and students because understanding their motivations, aspirations and experiences is fundamental to the development of effective programs that meet their needs. In the future, we aim to examine the experience of trainers and employers to assess the effectiveness of training and vocational education from different perspectives.

The report is organised as follows. First we provide some background information about the vocational training, with specific reference to the services that BSL offers. We then describe our methodology, and discuss our findings, before making some recommendations for future research and practice innovation. We also make some policy recommendations.

In the report we present three case studies (Isaac, Andre and Tien) that provide additional insights into the complex challenges confronting students and trainees.

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<sup>1</sup> This report includes all who participate in training and learning provided by the BSL. Some of these are undertaking a formal 'traineeship', while others are completing courses for other vocational or personal reasons. The terms 'trainee' and 'student' are used generically, and should not be interpreted as referring to two distinct groups.

## 2 Context

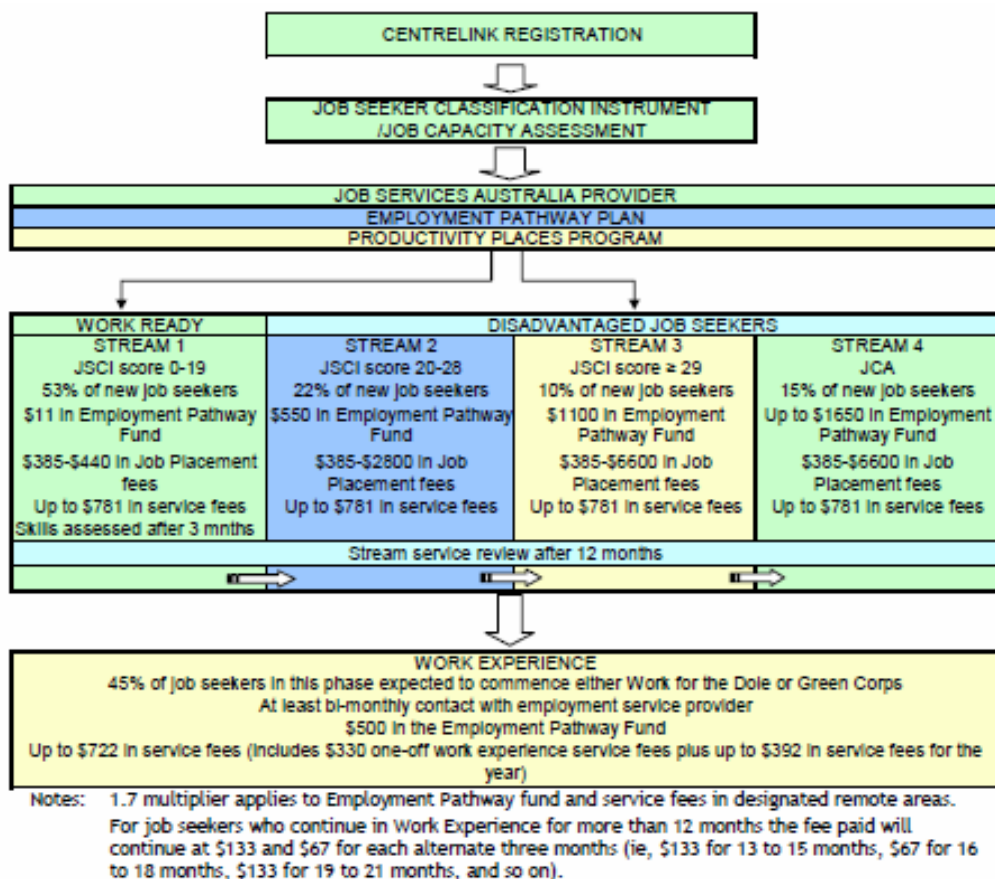
### Economic environment

Our research was conducted in late 2009, as Australia was emerging from the global financial crisis (GFC). While overall the Australian economy appears to have survived relatively unscathed, the effects of the downturn have been uneven. Unemployment and underemployment have increased for particular groups, such as young people (especially those who have not completed secondary schooling), older workers, refugees or asylum seekers, and those without formal qualifications (Horn 2009, p.62).

### Employment services

The new Job Services Australia (JSA) system was introduced in July 2009. Compared with the previous system of employment services, Job Network, it has a stronger focus on the long-term unemployed and disadvantaged job seekers. There are four service streams for job seekers under the JSA system: Stream 1 is for 'work ready' job seekers, while Streams 2 to 4 are for disadvantaged job seekers (see Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1 Job Services Australia 2009–2012**



Source: DEEWR 2009, *Evaluation strategy for Job Services Australia 2009 to 2012*, p.5

Training is a key element in the system. The Employment Pathway Fund (EPF) can be used for the costs of training, work-related clothing and safety equipment, short-term travel, relocation to commence in employment, and other personal support services. There is some flexibility in the use of EPF money, as it is not restricted to any one job seeker and can be used to assist groups or individuals. The amount available per job seeker varies from \$11 in Stream 1 to a maximum of \$6600 for Stream 4; and the payments to job services providers increase with the level of disadvantage, from \$385 for Stream 1 to \$781 maximum for Stream 4 (DEEWR 2009, p.6).

After 12 months (for job seekers in Stream 1, 2 or 3) or 18 months (for the more disadvantaged job seekers in Stream 4), individuals who have been unsuccessful in getting jobs move into a stream called 'work experience'. In this stream, 'job seekers aged between 18 and 49 will generally be required to participate in a work experience activity over a 26-week period for every 12 months in the phase' (DEEWR 2009, p.5). Work experience activities may include participation in programs such as Work for the Dole, Green Corps and Droughtforce, part-time study, or paid employment or voluntary work.

The federal government's Productivity Places Program (PPP) aims to 'raise the skill levels and employability of ... job seekers, by funding training in areas of skill shortages' (2009, p.4). The program commenced in 2008, and additional places were funded in 2009 as part of the government's response to the economic downturn. Individuals could enrol by applying through an Employment Services provider, Australian Apprenticeship Centre, Australian Apprenticeships Access provider or Community Development Employment Project or directly to a registered training provider. The funding was for training leading to nationally endorsed qualifications at Certificate II, Certificate III, Certificate IV and diploma level.

The NCVER report, *Australian education and training statistics: outcomes from the Productivity Places Program 2009*, is the first survey of PPP graduates. That report indicates that 23,692 students completed their training in 2008. Most completed certificate courses at level III (52.1%) and level II (44.5%). Training was concentrated in four key areas: community services (26.7%); transport and logistics (19.2%), property services (14.3%) and retail services (11.6%). Just over 45% of graduates intended to work in community and personal services. More than half (56.7%) undertook training to get a job, 16.5% to pursue a different career. However, after their training, less than half (46.6%) were employed, and 25.5% enrolled in further study (NCVER 2009).

The research by NCVER suggests that training in the Productivity Places Program did not necessarily lead to employment, even though over half of the trainees undertook training as a means of getting a job. Training for work in industries such as community services, transport and logistics, property services and retail may not result in sustainable work opportunities, as these industries tend to be characterised by low-paid, contract-based, and casual work, particularly for workers holding certificates at level II or III.

## Vocational training

Vocational training has received much attention from both federal and state policy makers. The range of policy initiatives reflects the importance of vocational training, but a closer examination of the details reveal some gaps and some disincentives that may impede the development of sustainable careers. For example, the first of a series of reforms to Victoria's Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector were implemented from 1 July 2009. These reforms are part of the Victorian Government's new skills policy, set out in *Securing Jobs for your future: skills for Victoria* (2008). The new system is underpinned by four goals:

- Increasing the number of people undertaking training in the areas and at the levels where skills are needed for Victoria's economic and social development;
- Developing a training system that engages more effectively with individuals and businesses and is easier to navigate;
- Ensuring our skills system is responsive to the changing needs of Victoria's industry and workforce; and
- Creating a culture of lifelong skills development. (Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development Victorian Government 2008, p.10)

The focus of this reform is to shift funding to individuals and business and to encourage individuals to 'deepen' training. The 2009 discussion paper *Skilling all Victorians?* (Cull 2009) provides a comprehensive critique of the reform and its implications—especially for Victorians who experience social and economic disadvantage. Cull identifies two related aspects of the reform which have potentially serious implications for people who already experience disadvantage. The first is the shift from funding training organisations to funding trainees directly or through their employers. The second is the tightening of eligibility criteria for publicly funded places in accredited training courses. As she explains:

The publicly funded learning entitlement, titled the *Victorian Training Guarantee*, is a guarantee that eligible individuals will receive a government subsidised place in any recognised training course, which can be accessed at any time and which will be available for training **at successively higher levels. Eligibility is determined by age and prior educational history, as well as current citizenship / residency requirements'** [emphasis added]. (p.6)

The bold text identifies areas of concern. All individuals up to 20 years of age are eligible for a government subsidised place in a training course at any level. However, for those aged over 20, government-funded places are only available for 'foundation skill level' courses where basic literacy, numeracy and language skills are taught or for courses where the qualification is at a higher level than existing vocational qualifications. For example, if an individual aged 30 has a Certificate III in Security, they would be unable to obtain a subsidised place for a Certificate III in Children's Services. Exemptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but only for people in special circumstances, for example redundancy, or where training relates to 'specified areas of critical skill shortage' (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development 2008, p.16).

These measures have been introduced progressively since 1 July 2009 and will be fully implemented by 2011. Where students are not eligible for a publicly funded place, full fees apply. The revised fee structure reflects the ranking of courses in a hierarchy from 'foundation', 'skill creation', 'skill building' through to 'skill deepening' courses, with fees rising for the higher level courses. The skills deepening courses carry a minimum fee of \$225 per year, with a yearly cap of \$1500 (Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development 2008, p.24).

As Cull points out, publicly funded places may not be available for older people who already hold qualifications but wish to undertake unrelated training, or for people who are not Australian citizens. Under the new arrangements, training providers can charge fees as they see fit. Some assistance may be available to students through a loan arrangement VET FEE-HELP, but as Cull observes such income-contingent schemes may act as a serious disincentive to further education for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Cull 2009, p.12 ).

It is in this policy environment that we conducted our research about the experience of students and trainees. In the following section, we describe the programs BSL offers and the characteristics of our students and trainees.

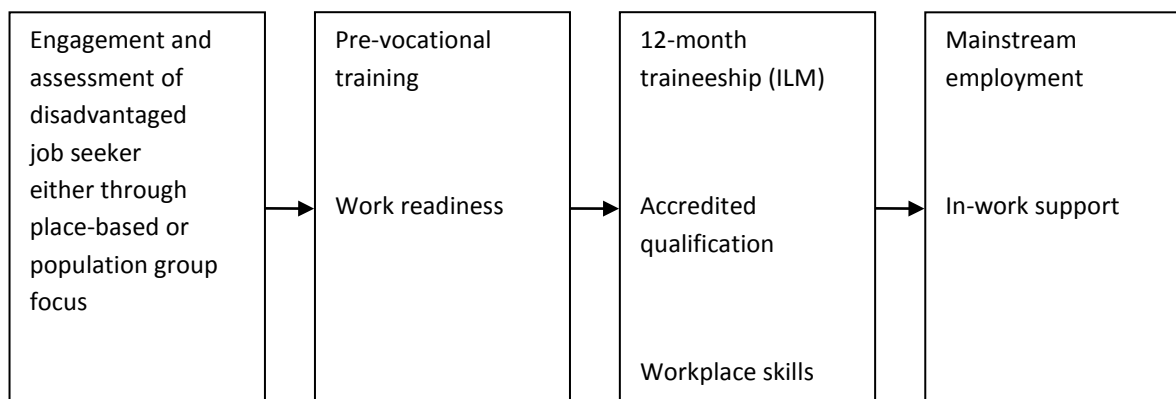
## The BSL and intermediate labour market approaches

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) has a long history of working with disadvantaged job seekers. We have concentrated our efforts on improving their job prospects through the provision of training and opportunities for paid work or work placement in supported environments.

Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programs seek to assist long-term unemployed people to get and keep jobs. British researchers Dan Finn and Dave Simmonds define ILM programs as ‘a diverse range of initiatives that typically provide temporary waged employment in a genuine work environment with continuous support to assist the transition to work’(2003, p.1). Finn and Simmonds suggest that effective ILM approaches are local, individualised and provide ongoing support.

The 2007 report *Investing in people: Intermediate labour markets as pathways to employment*, by Kemran Mestan and Rosanna Scutella, provides a good overview of ILM approaches in general and the BSL’s intermediate labour market programs in particular. They describe the BSL’s approach as seeking ‘to improve employment outcomes for participants by providing them with a bridge to the mainstream labour market’(2007, p.vi) (see Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2 Vocational pathways approach used by the BSL’s ILM programs**



Source: Mestan & Scutella 2007, p.vi

Training is a key part of the vocational pathways approach used by the BSL’s ILM programs. This research is a first step towards a larger examination of vocational education and training as part of the intermediate labour market approach that is advocated by the BSL.

## Training for work

Through our Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and Group Training Company (GTC), the BSL provides a range of classroom and workplace-based vocational training opportunities. Services to job seekers include:

- offering personalised assistance to those who are not yet ready for employment
- providing job search assistance and support in preparing job seekers for work
- providing a range of training opportunities, including short courses and traineeships
- placing trainees with host employers

- creating job opportunities through our social enterprises
- offering refugees mentored places in our Given the Chance program and supporting their employers with our Building Bridges program.

The BSL's approach is based on enabling job seekers to get formal, recognised qualifications, real work experience, and the skills and confidence they need to move into mainstream jobs.

### Registered Training Organisation

The BSL offers accredited training resulting in nationally recognised qualifications in hospitality, business, retail, children's services, asset maintenance, home and community care and community services work. At the time of the study (September–December 2009) the RTO was accredited to deliver training in 25 qualifications (see Appendix for details). Accredited training is offered to individuals who may or may not experience disadvantage.

The RTO offers a range of accredited training courses, including short courses and customised training, pre-vocational training, and traineeships. Training is tailored for work in various industries, such as food handling and responsible service of alcohol within hospitality training, frontline management and business administration, and family day care training as the Certificate III in Children's Services.

The RTO provides pre-vocational training in areas such as occupational health and safety, time management and Australian workplace culture, which helps job seekers prepare for work or work-based training. The BSL's pre-vocational training is most often run as an Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (AAAP) and offers tailored training, support and assistance to people experiencing barriers to skilled employment, to enable them to obtain and maintain an Australian Apprenticeship or Traineeship. It includes a thorough introduction to the industry the trainee would like to enter, a simulated work environment allowing the trainee to experience workplace culture, expectations and scenarios so as to better prepare for a transition into mainstream employment, and a mix of accredited and non-accredited training aligned to current job opportunities.

### Traineeships

The BSL Group Training Company (GTC) supports trainees and apprentices across greater Melbourne. Trainees and apprentices are employed through the Australian Apprenticeship scheme and hired out to 'host' organisations. The GTC is the legal employer, looking after superannuation, payroll, WorkCover, training and any other administration associated with the employment contract. GTC staff also provide a considerable level of personal support to these trainees and employees. Through the RTO, the Brotherhood conducts the training, sometimes in partnership with other RTOs. As well as supporting trainees, apprentices and other workers on the job, the GTC provides regular support to the host employers. This allows our trainees to get formal, recognised qualifications, real work experience and the confidence they need to move into mainstream jobs.

The focus of this research is on people who have used BSL training services.

### 3 Methodology

A mixed method was adopted. Administrative data provided demographic information about students and trainees enrolled with the BSL during 2009. This information was analysed quantitatively. In addition, qualitative and quantitative learner feedback surveys (2007–09) were analysed and ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. A qualitative dimension was particularly important because the project sought to gain insights about trainees' experiences and to listen to their stories.

#### Ethics

Ethics approval was sought and obtained through the BSL Ethics Committee. Informed consent was sought from interviewees, who were able to opt out of the study at any time. All data was provided on a confidential basis. Names and personal details have been changed to minimise possible identification of interviewees.

#### Consent

Consent and agreement forms are included in the RTO's three types of client enrolment forms. These include a general enrolment form, an ATTP (traineeship) enrolment form and a short course enrolment form, which must be signed by clients prior to training.

These three forms are largely the same when it comes to the consent and agreement section, with slight variations due to the different types of training. While these consent forms cover much of the consent and agreement required for sharing client information between BSL departments, it should be noted that they do not specifically mention that data could be used for research or advocacy purposes.

If further research is to be undertaken, it is important that the consent and agreement section of any training or employment feedback form seeks specific consent for data to be used for research purposes and that the option to opt out is provided.

The interviewees were identified from the details in the BSL learner feedback surveys, and were contacted by telephone and invited to participate in this research. Upon an expression of interest they were given more detailed information about the project. Verbal consent was sought for telephone interviews, with written confirmation of consent on receipt of payment. Written consent was sought before the commencement of face-to-face interviews. Interviewees received \$40 as reimbursement for costs involved in their participation in the research. Where detailed information is provided, as in the case studies, additional consent was sought to ensure that the interviewee was comfortable with the representation of his or her story.

#### Demographic data of current BSL trainees and students

Enrolment data provided an overview of the characteristics of people who undertook training with the BSL's RTO between 1 January and mid-November 2009. This data aided understanding of the trainee and student body (see section 4). However, a close analysis of the enrolment data was outside the scope of this project. Further analysis of this data is recommended.

## Surveys

Initially, we planned to analyse data collected as part of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Learner Questionnaires, which seek student views about their learning and training experiences (see sample in Appendix). These data are used as part of the quality assurance process of registered training organisations, and from 2009 are a requirement of registration: RTOs agree to provide ‘accurate and timely data relevant to measures of their performance’ (Australian Council for Educational Research 2007).

On review of the available AQTF surveys, it was decided to rely on BSL learner feedback forms, which had been developed by the RTO for the purpose of quality assurance. The completed forms provide insight into the experience of learners across a period of time and across a range of courses, along with rich qualitative information, whereas the AQTF surveys were narrower in scope and material (see ‘limitations’ below for more detail).

Fifty-nine completed BSL learner feedback forms, dating from 2007 to 2009, were analysed. They sought both qualitative and quantitative information from respondents (see Appendix for sample).

The forms were completed by participants in:

- Australian Apprenticeships Access Program
- CHC30402 – Certificate III Children’s Services
- CHC30802 – Certificate III Community Services Work
- Certificate II Furniture Making
- BSB10107 – Certificate I Business
- Food Handlers’ Certificate.

These courses represent the four types of training provided by the BSL: traineeships, short courses, general certificate courses and pre-vocational training/work preparation courses. Since almost all learner feedback forms were fully completed, the responses provided rich qualitative data. The data was entered into a relational database (Microsoft Access), to enable its analysis. The close examination of this data informed the development of the interview schedule for semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of trainees. Importantly, as many of the students who had completed forms had provided their names and contact details, potential interviewees could be identified.

## Interviews

### Sample

It was decided to conduct ten semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the motivations and aspirations of trainees. Approximately 20 respondents were initially identified as potential interviewees. Although it was not intended to make the sub-sample representative of the 59 surveys, there was an attempt to reflect the diversity of students by considering gender, ethnicity and types of training. As this research was conducted on an extremely limited budget, the residential location of interviewees also affected selection.

### Schedule

Our analysis of the learner feedback forms informed the development of the interview schedule, which comprised 25 questions based on the four research objectives. Interviewees were asked



about their personal background, opinions and experiences of their training. Additionally, interviewees were asked to discuss factors that assisted or impeded the successful completion of training as well as the transition from training to paid work. The interviews were semi-structured following the schedule framework, with ample room for interviewees to tell their own stories and share their insights.

## Recruitment

Ex-students were 'cold-called' and given an explanation of the research project and its aims. They were informed that they would be paid \$40 in appreciation of their time and as reimbursement for any costs associated with their participation, and asked if they would like to participate.

Interviewees were offered the option of face-to-face or telephone interviews. Apart from three people who chose the latter because they worked and lived a considerable distance away, all others preferred to come to the BSL head office in Fitzroy for interview. Interviews lasted approximately one hour; all were recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were de-identified to ensure confidentiality. De-identified transcripts were then read closely to identify key themes. Three interviewees consented to the presentation of their stories as case studies.

## Limitations

A relatively small sample of surveys was used to address the research objectives. It was originally intended that quantitative data from the new Australian Quality Training Framework learner questionnaires would be used; however there were technical and organisational difficulties accessing this data. We note that the AQTF dataset is a valuable source of information which could yield interesting results for future research.

The learner feedback forms which informed the interview schedule had been designed to gain feedback on specific training courses; nevertheless they provided useful insight into the perspectives of learners. It should be noted, however, that they do not fully represent the range of courses provided by the BSL.

Although the small number of interviews was not necessarily representative, they enabled the collection of rich qualitative data. Some trainees had recently completed their traineeships, but others had completed their courses up to two years earlier. While this may bring into question the reliability of information, the elapsed time since training enabled the trainees to reflect on their experience and consider the extent to which training had assisted them to fulfil their aspirations. Interestingly, the semi-structured interviews revealed very similar views about the experience of training to those found in the qualitative surveys.

## Andre

Andre was born in New Zealand in the late 1960s. He left secondary school before completing his final year. Since school Andre has undertaken a range of educational courses. He studied journalism for a time and then did two years of study in Early Childhood. He has also studied Maori cultural performing arts, aged care and community services.

Andre has held diverse jobs. For several years, he was a Community Support Worker, assisting intellectually disabled adults to assimilate into the community from an institutional setting. For around five years, he worked in the hospitality industry, in hotels, as well as in casinos in various capacities.

Andre is actively engaged in volunteering for his local community. He was volunteering at a job expo when a community development worker that he knew offered him the opportunity to apply for the Certificate III in Community Services traineeship.

Since completing the traineeship, Andre is now paid for some of the work that he used to do voluntarily at his housing estate, such as involvement in an arts project, facilitating a men's group, holding meetings and organising events. Moreover, for a time he was employed casually as a Community Contact Officer in the same position in which he did his traineeship.

I thoroughly enjoyed it, and still am enjoying the way that the BSL has helped me in working with the Community Contact Service ... it is a great training scheme that can actually open doors for whoever wants to be part of a wider work experience, or community involvement ... it's just been so empowering.

Andre explained that his main motivation in undertaking the Certificate III was 'to get paid', because he 'needed an income'. He is not entitled to Centrelink payments because he is not an Australian citizen. He was also attracted to the traineeship due to his voluntary community services work:

... but then realising that it was with community work, and it enhanced my ability [and] assisted me in understanding the services and how to get the right service for the right situation that you need, especially living in Housing Commission flats ... it is right up my alley, where I want to work.

Andre noted that he 'loved the theory' component of his training, because he 'learned so much'. He also remarked that the knowledge and experience he gained increased his confidence as a Community Contact Officer. He was inspired by the help that he was able to offer people:

Even if I can just help one person during that one day, just imagine how many other days I can do that. I've helped so many people for that whole year that I was in my training.

Andre wants to study a Diploma in Community Services; however, the cost of full fees is prohibitive for him and he cannot access subsidised fees since he is not an Australian citizen. He hopes to find a permanent full-time position in the community services sector. Although satisfied with his current casual work, he would prefer to work full-time.

## 4 Students and trainees

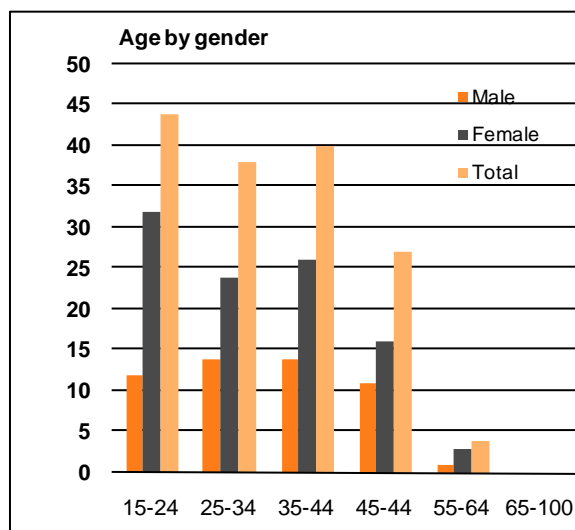
De-identified enrolment data for all of the RTO's training activities were examined for the period 1 January to 14 November 2009, when 190 people were enrolled in courses provided by the BSL. The bulk of BSL students were women, over 25 years of age, were not born in Australia, and spoke a language other than English—although over half also spoke English. Most lived in Frankston or Cranbourne, Fitzroy and Collingwood area or Craigieburn, but students also came from a wide number of suburbs across metropolitan Melbourne.

### Age and gender

One hundred and forty-five students provided details of their age (missing = 37), as shown in Figure 2.1. Most students or trainees were aged 25 or more. However, the 15–24 age group was the largest single group (44). This was closely followed by those aged 35–44 years (40), 25–34 years (38), and 45–54 years (27). The 55–64 year old age group was very small (4).

More than twice as many women as men were enrolled. The predominance of women occurred across the age ranges, with almost three times as many women as men enrolled in the 15–24 age range and nearly twice as many women as men in the 35–44 age range.

**Figure 4.1 Age by gender**



## Country of origin

The 190 people who undertook BSL training courses came from diverse cultural backgrounds. Twenty-seven countries of origin were nominated. Forty per cent of the students or trainees identified their country of origin as Australia—including one person who identified as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander—with most of the rest nominating parts of Africa and Asia. A very small number originated from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Central America. Just under one-third of participants did not state their country of birth (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Country of origin**

Country of origin	Number (132)	Percentage
Australia	53	40%
Somalia	14	11%
Sudan	11	8%
Ethiopia	9	7%
Liberia	6	5%
Philippines	5	4%
China	3	2%
Eritrea	3	2%
New Zealand	3	2%
Sierra Leone	3	2%
Sri Lanka	3	2%
United Kingdom	3	2%
Papua New Guinea	2	2%
Vietnam	2	2%
Afghanistan	1	1%
Bangladesh	1	1%
Burma (Myanmar)	1	1%
Cameroon	1	1%
El Salvador	1	1%
Ghana	1	1%
India	1	1%
Iran	1	1%
Saudi Arabia	1	1%
Senegal	1	1%
Thailand	1	1%
Zimbabwe	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding

## Language

Some 23 languages were named by the 127 persons for whom this information was available (see Table 4.2). Of these, over half were native English speakers (58%), followed by Somali (9%), Arabic (7%), and Amharic (5%), with small numbers speaking each other language.

**Table 4.2 Preferred language**

Preferred language	Number (127)	Percentage
English	74	58%
Somali	11	9%
Arabic (including Lebanese)	9	7%
Amharic	6	5%
Dinka	3	2%
Other African languages	2	2%
French	2	2%
Kriol	2	2%
Sinhalese	2	2%
Tagalog (Filipino)	2	2%
Vietnamese	2	2%
Bengali	1	1%
Burmese	1	1%
Cantonese	1	1%
Hindi	1	1%
Mandarin	1	1%
Papuan languages	1	1%
Persian	1	1%
Spanish	1	1%
Swahili	1	1%
Thai	1	1%
Tigrinya	1	1%
Tigre	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding

## Secondary education

School level completion varied among the 117 individuals who provided this information (see Table 4.3). Over half (54%) of these people had completed Year 12, but 19% had only Year 9 or less.

**Table 4.3 Highest level of schooling**

Highest level of schooling completed	Number (117)	Percentage*
Completed year 12	63	54%
Completed year 11	9	8%
Completed year 10	23	20%
Completed Year 9	14	12%
Completed Year 8 or below	8	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding

## Post-secondary education or training

Not surprisingly, over half of the students and trainees who provided details had Certificate III or less. However, over a third had qualifications at a diploma or higher level, including eighteen people who had bachelor or higher degrees, which may or may not have been completed in Australia (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4 Post-secondary education or training**

Post-school qualification	Number (107)	Percentage
Bachelor or higher degrees	18	17%
Advanced diploma and associate degree	5	5%
Diploma	17	16%
Certificate IV	12	11%
Certificate III	18	17%
Certificate II	21	20%
Certificate I	12	11%
Other	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding

## Employment

Most students or trainees were employed or seeking employment. Of those who provided information (122), almost half were unemployed but seeking full or part-time work (see Table 4.5). Forty-seven were employed (32 part-time and 15 full-time). Seven were self-employed. Twelve were not employed or seeking employment.

**Table 4.5 Employment status**

Employment status	Number (122)	Percentage
Full-time employee	15	12%
Part-time employee	32	26%
Self-employed, not employing others	7	6%
Unemployed, seeking full-time work	38	31%
Unemployed, seeking part-time work	18	15%
Not employed, not seeking employment	12	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Disability or impairment

Only 25 students or trainees provided information about their disability or impairment (see Table 4.6). Of these, nine (36%) stated that they had an intellectual disability, while four (16%) had vision impairment. Three students identified in each of the categories of mental illness, learning disability, hearing impairment and ‘other’.

**Table 4.6 Disability or impairment**

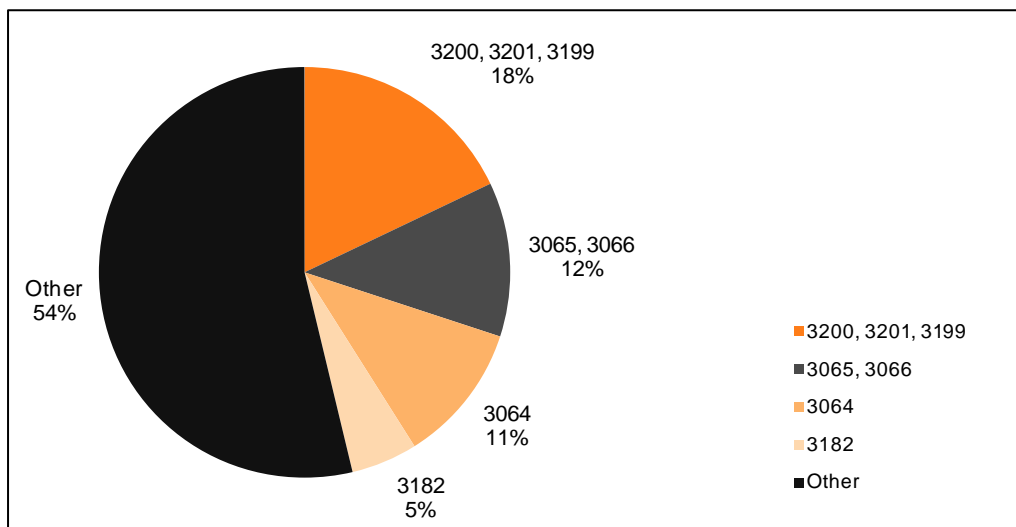
Nature of disability	Number (25)	Percentage
Intellectual	9	36%
Vision	4	16%
Hearing impaired / deafness	3	12%
Learning	3	12%
Mental illness	3	12%
Other	3	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Residential location

The bulk of the 173 trainees who provided their residential postcodes came from four areas of Melbourne (see Figure 4.2). The largest group came from Frankston and surrounding areas, with 10% providing the postcodes 3200 (Frankston North and Pines Forest) and 3201 (Carrum Downs) and a further 8% from postcode 3199 (Frankston, Frankston East and Frankston Heights, Frankston South, Karingal and Karingal Centre).

Twelve per cent of trainees or students provided the postcodes 3065 (Fitzroy) or 3066 (Collingwood). Eleven per cent were from Craigieburn and surrounding areas, as represented by the postcode 3064 (Craigieburn, Donnybrook, Kalkallo, Mickleham and Roxburgh Park); and 5% provided the postcode 3182 (St Kilda, St Kilda West and St Kilda South). Over half of the students came from a wide range of other suburbs across Melbourne.

**Figure 4.2 Residential location by postcode**



## 5 The interviewees

Six women and four men were interviewed. Four interviewees were born in Australia and one interviewee came from each of the following: Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Sudan, New Zealand, Afghanistan and Nepal. They ranged in age from 23 to 61 years.

Three interviewees had completed the Certificate III in Community Services and three the Certificate III in Children's Services. Two people had completed Certificate I in Business (one also completed Certificate III in Asset Maintenance). Lastly, two people had completed the Food Handlers Certificate. The interviewees are identified by pseudonyms.

ANDRE is in his early forties. He completed a Certificate III in Community Services. At the time of the interview he was working casually as a community worker. Andre aims to find permanent work and also has plans to do further study in the community services sector. He shares a flat in a public housing estate.

ANNETTE is in her early sixties. She has operated both her own tearoom and a 'bed and breakfast' and had held a variety of other positions as a cook. Currently, Annette works part-time and lives in her own home. She completed a short course run by the BSL.

CARMEN is in her early sixties. She works in child care. Carmen completed Certificate II and III in Children's Services and is now undertaking a Diploma in Children's Services. Carmen migrated to Australia in 2004. She lives with her adult daughter and two school-aged grandchildren.

HAKIM is in his mid-forties. He completed an AAAP course as work preparation, undertaking training in units from the Certificate I in Business and Certificate III in Asset Maintenance. While completing the traineeship, he also studied to gain Australian qualifications for in engineering. At the time of the interview he was looking for work as a cleaner and as an engineer; he was finding the transition to paid work difficult. Hakim migrated to Australia in 2001 and lives with his family of six in public housing.

ISAAC is in his thirties. He completed a Certificate III in Community Services traineeship. At the time of the interview he was looking for employment in community services or as a cleaner. In the meantime, Isaac is very active within his community as a volunteer. Isaac has some plans to do further study in human resources. He lives with his wife and five children in public housing.

JIM is in his early forties. He completed Certificate I in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations). Over the years Jim has held jobs as a cleaner and as a cook in restaurants. Jim has a history of substance use and has been unemployed for long periods over the last ten years. He has aspirations to teach English as a Second Language. At the time of the interview, Jim was unemployed.

MELANIE is in her forties. She lives with her husband and three children. Melanie completed the Certificate III in Children's Services, and is currently undertaking a Diploma in Children's Services. Melanie has worked in a bank and call centre; and she now works in child care.

NORA is in her thirties. She completed a Certificate III in Children's Services. Her previous employment includes customer service and secretarial work. She works in child care. Nora lives with her husband and their preschool child.

SUHASINI is in her early twenties. She completed a Certificate in Food Hygiene. A qualified nurse in her home country, she is in Australia on an international student visa to further her credentials. She has completed a range of courses during her stay and currently works part-time in an aged care facility.

TIEN is in her thirties. She completed a Certificate III in Community Services traineeship. She works on a casual basis in child care. Tien lives with her family of four in rented accommodation.



## 6 Findings

A main objective of the research was to examine the experience of vocational training from the perspective of students and trainees. Five key areas were investigated:

- motivations for undertaking training
- factors that assisted the successful completion of training
- suggestions about how the how training could be improved
- factors that assisted the transition from training to paid work
- factors that hindered this transition.

### Summary of findings

The main reasons interviewees gave for undertaking training were to gain credentials or to upgrade qualifications and to find employment. Overall, trainees spoke very positively about their training experiences. A combination of training quality, teacher support and tailoring training to the participants aided the successful completion of training.

Our analysis suggests that where individuals had strong social networks and resources, training and formal credentials assisted them to secure employment. However, for those trainees who had not found work at the time of their interview, training alone had been inadequate to overcome the barriers created by discrimination and lack of what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1985) calls ‘social capital’—the networks and contacts that can provide support and information—and ‘cultural capital’—the ‘know-how’ or ‘commonsense’ understanding about, in this case, how to successfully get and keep a job. Without ongoing support and mentoring, **training alone did not make the difference** for these interviewees. Importantly, the interviewees made recommendations about how to improve outcomes for those finding the transition to employment difficult.

The findings under the five key areas investigated are elaborated below.

### Motivations for undertaking training

Why the interviewees had embarked on training varied according to their circumstances and employment status. Training was undertaken to either enhance existing credentials or to gain employment in a desired sector. Most interviewees had previous or current experience, either paid or voluntary, within their area of training, and this featured strongly in their choice of course. Of those already employed, most were required to undertake further training due to changing industry regulations. Others had been very active as volunteers and wanted to formalise their knowledge, skills and qualification. Finding a job was a major motivation for those not employed.

Several of the interviewees who undertook traineeships were motivated by the on-the-job nature of their training and importantly, by the fact that they were paid for the duration. One trainee was obligated to undertake training to meet Centrelink requirements. Another interviewee had taken a short course as part of her role as a volunteer with a community organisation, and viewed the training as useful for a variety of employment areas. The reasons why these men and women took on training were interrelated: they included a drive from within and a desire to learn and develop skills, as well as a push from the increasing demand for credentials, even for very low-paid work.

## Upgrading skills to meet job requirements and broaden employment options

Changing regulations within the childcare industry mean that childcare workers, including family day care workers, require at least a Certificate III in Children's Services. The women who worked in childcare were aware of the need to upgrade their qualifications:

Nora: You need more than just a First Aid Certificate and a police check to be a Family Day Carer. You must have this certificate course.

These women were an inspired group of students: two of the three had gone on to study a Diploma of Children's Services following their Certificate III, and the third was contemplating further study in early childhood learning. Apart from the impending qualification requirement, these women viewed the certificate as broadening their employment options, enabling them to also work in childcare centres. Since family day carers work alone with children in their homes, the training also provided an opportunity to gather with others in the same situation, compare day care practices, share ideas and learn new skills.

Changing regulations also required Annette to have a current Food Handlers Certificate.

When we first opened it, we didn't need any training and then you needed your food safety courses ... but, like I said, it's not that easy to get a job—at 60—so I was with Centrelink for a while and they said, 'You have to do a course. You have to do something'. So the Brotherhood course came up and I thought: 'Oh yeah, that'll be fine'. And actually it's good because it just refreshed everything for the food safety.

Annette has worked in the hospitality industry for approximately fifteen years. She has operated both her own tearoom and a 'bed and breakfast' and had held a variety of other positions as a cook. Due to relocation, she had to find new part-time work in hospitality and consequently had to upgrade her food handling knowledge and gain the necessary certificate for employment.

Suhasini, a young woman with a nursing qualification from her home country, came to Australia on an international student visa to upgrade her nursing credentials. However, her plans did not eventuate and she needed to find work.

At the first time when I came here I was looking for the job and wherever I go the people are asking me, 'Do you have any experience in Australia?' So I didn't get any jobs around me at that time. And I started volunteering ...

It was through the volunteer work in a restaurant that Suhasini was offered the opportunity to do the Food Handling Certificate. She was motivated to increase her employability and to further herself and her skills generally. In her job search she learned that knowledge of food hygiene was required by several sectors, including aged care and child care as well as hospitality:

And most of the places, if I need to go to the hospitality jobs ... even in the aged care facilities, and the childcare facilities, they are all looking for the food handling certificate ... and it's a more important thing ... not only for the job, in my daily life too, how I can do my best to be healthy, and to maintain my foods.

Hakim, a qualified electrical engineer in his home country, had a similar experience when trying to find part-time cleaning work here:

They ask me, 'Do you have any paper or certificate with that? Or do you have some knowledge of occupational health and safety (OHS) regulations?' And then I encountered a very big problem.

At the time of the interview, Hakim was looking for part-time work to fit in with his full-time engineering study. He had trained as engineer in his home country, but as a refugee could not prove his qualifications. He decided to train as a cleaner because he could not obtain work as an electrical engineer without recent local work experience or his diploma; but Hakim also found barriers to cleaning jobs because he did not have relevant certificates, knowledge of OHS or experience. He completed Certificate I in Business and went on to complete the Certificate III in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations) with a view to expanding his employment options, in case he could not find future work in his original, preferred vocation.

### Getting paid

Several of the interviewees were very active in their local or ethnic communities as volunteers and were motivated to undertake their training to enable them to work professionally in the areas in which they volunteered.

Andre has considerable experience in community services, including previous work in intellectual disabilities, childcare and aged care. He is an active member of the housing estate in which he lives and has undertaken a great deal of voluntary work for his local community in a community development capacity. Notwithstanding his dedication to volunteering, Andre stated that his main motivation for taking up the traineeship was to get paid, because he needed an income. Since completing the certificate, he has been able to acquire some paid work.

Isaac began volunteering for his local community in his home country. This work continued in Egypt where as a refugee he had worked in a church community organising and coordinating welfare and cultural integration programs, staffing and job placements. In Australia, he is active in an ethnic community group:

... if I didn't do something that helped, I cannot be comfortable.

Isaac was motivated to do the traineeship to augment his skills in community services and to gain a qualification and employment.

### Factors that helped the successful completion of training

All the interviewees spoke in a very positive way about their training experience. They noted that the theory was delivered in a direct and comprehensible manner, sensitive to their educational level and particular needs. Interviewees also noted that individual support was always available, and further that they felt comfortable requesting extra assistance and clarification. Teachers gave extra support by being accessible to trainees out of class hours as well as after the completion of training. Interviewees commented on the congenial teaching and learning atmosphere, their growing confidence and feeling comfortable in all areas of participation. Four main features were identified as aiding successful completion.

### Training planned to accommodate trainee commitments

For the family day carers, a significant motivation for undertaking the Certificate III in Children's Services was that it was tailored to accommodate their particular needs: their daily work schedule as well as family commitments. As Nora explained:

We were actually very lucky because normally ... to do a certificate course I would have to go and do it at TAFE ... then I would have to have a placement, which puts us in an awkward position because if we don't work, we don't get paid. So that's something that

turned people off wanting to do a course ... because they would actually lose getting paid their wage for two weeks, as well as putting out the families that we look after ... So that was a major, major bonus for us family day carers, because otherwise we probably would not have done the course.

The trainees were assessed on what they did daily with the children in their care at home. The training was undertaken between two community health centres near where the trainees lived. Here the women had received all their initial information, training and support in setting up and conducting their family day care practices. Thus there was a strong familiarity with the training environment.

The three family day carers interviewed had considerable caring responsibilities at home in addition to their daily work responsibilities. One noted that another motivation was that the training was held in the evenings after work, and further that the study contact hours (once a fortnight) were less demanding than what was thought to be offered by TAFE. One interviewee commented that a more intensive course might have been too much to grasp given that she had not studied for such a long time. Lastly it was noted that the Certificate III was government-subsidised, and therefore had a reduced cost for trainees, which was seen as an advantage.

### Gearing teaching methods to the students and trainees

Melanie undertook a Certificate III in Children's Services. Consistent with her comments, most trainees remarked that the course theory was explained in a plain and straightforward way, enabling it to be understood easily:

It was explained at a level that you could understand. There were no large words and you didn't leave confused. It was delivered in a way that was down to earth and it was easily understood.

Around half of the interviewees came from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and four were recent newcomers to Australia. Suhasini, an international student who completed a short course in food handling, explained how teachers assisted her in understanding concepts and terminology:

They present difficult words in simple language ... very complete and concise. And she was trying to help us [in] different ways [such as with] signing, some pictures and some audiovisual aids.

Tien, also from a CALD background, undertook a Certificate III in Community Services. She noted how the teaching was presented:

It is very clear, short ... very focused on what the main point, because ... some got limited English, but we focus on what is the main thing. And it is very clear, I can say.

However, sometimes the tailored nature of courses could cause confusion. For example, Nora commented on how the differences in practice between workplaces caused some tension when trainees were told they were 'doing it wrong'.

We had coordination staff from [another centre] as well as from [this centre]. We did have a couple of instances where the [other centre's] girls, for example, would say, 'Oh, this is what we're doing in our work practice and this is what our policy says we should do', and we were told we were doing it wrong, which obviously we all took offence to that. If we're doing it to

our policy ... then how can it be wrong? So there was just a few instances like that, which generally you would probably have anywhere ...

### Training quality

In addition to the teaching methods tailored to the learner, the quality of training was another factor that appeared to assist trainees in successfully completing their courses. Most interviewees commented on the training quality and the manner in which the courses were conducted. They noted that individual attention was given when needed and that teachers spent time re-explaining material that students found difficult. When asked whether he had found learning difficult, Andre, who undertook Certificate III in Community Services, responded:

I love theory, so the trainer that I had actually laid out all the right key notes that were part of the units that we'd be doing ... as plain language and we were able to relate, and actually go through what the unit is ... for us to actually understand better. It was really well done.

Other students commented on the reliable and well-organised approach:

Nora: It was very well organised. It wasn't like you turned up going, oh, is anybody else going to be here, or anything like that. People were always there, it was always happening.

Tien: ... we had five, six classmates, small group and in a very light neat room and everything was organised very well by the coordinator, so everything was set so well for us to learn.

Carmen was inspired by her experience to continue training

She [coordinator of the Diploma course] said, 'I would like to know where you did your Certificate III ... your knowledge is really of a very high standard', and I said 'You contact [Lauren<sup>2</sup>] at the BSL ... she's the one who trained us'. And this lady did call her and congratulate her for having done that for us.

Across a range of courses, interviewees responded positively about their training experiences. Consistent with the 59 feedback forms, most did not identify any factors that might have prevented their completion of their training. However, some interviewees mentioned minor concerns. For example, one student commented on the teaching style of one trainer:

There was one particular trainer that talked down to you and made you feel like you were a bit stupid sometimes. Sometimes when he asked for your ... opinions ... he made you feel like you did that wrong, you shouldn't be doing it that way, you should be doing it our way ... It was a bit disappointing sometimes in those circumstances. Then the next time you have a group discussion, you sort of don't say anything because unless you say what he wants to hear, he's not going to like it.

### Gaining confidence

Most trainees noted that the knowledge and understanding that they gained boosted their confidence and therefore they felt more proficient in their work environment. Interviewees could see the relevance of the classroom-based component of the training to the practical, hands-on component, and they remarked that the teaching reinforced their work practice.

Isaac: The best thing about the traineeship is ... gaining confidence, yes and building a strong relationship with your colleague friends, and your team leader, supervisor, all the staff of the organisation also.

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<sup>2</sup> Pseudonym

Andre: ... the training enhanced the job, which I suppose was meant to happen anyway. I don't know, it's just the way it actually made myself more confident in what I was doing, and be able to put out there that I'm there as a community contact officer.

### Support and encouragement from trainers

Interviewees commented generally about the support offered by trainers. Trainees were able to ring trainers if they had any queries outside class hours and some trainers offered students ongoing support after the completion of their courses.

Andre: ...even our tutor gave his mobile phone number to us, so if we did have something you can't understand you'd ring him up and say 'Was that the way that ...?' And of course he'd help us out, and explain better ...

Hakim, who completed a Certificate III in Asset Maintenance, spoke about his trainer:

He was very helpful with everything ... He provided the opportunity and supported me and he cooperated in every way that I needed. I think it was a very good opportunity for me to understand, to get the experience [with] my cleaning operation.

Carmen described how teachers offered extra support to women from CALD backgrounds undertaking the Certificate III in Children's Services:

I know many incidents that were not during class hours, they have been called ... and they helped them ... I know these ladies know their stuff but it was the translation they were finding difficult.

The students and trainees also made a number of suggestions relating to the set-up of classrooms, teaching practice, pathways to further learning and better marketing of BSL's training programs. For example, several interviewees suggested that tables should be set up for them to write on. Other students and trainees referred to the difficulty of completing the home reading, even though teachers did not expect them to do it all and were happy to discuss it in class. One student commented that some explanations could have been clearer for the CALD students as she felt their responses showed that they did not fully understand. Andre suggested that traineeship be extended into a diploma, and Melanie suggested that the BSL's training courses be marketed broadly.

### Factors that helped a successful transition from training to paid work

Of the ten people interviewed, seven were employed at the time of their interview. Three were family day carers already working in the field prior to undertaking the Certificate III in Children's Services. For the other four interviewees, several factors had assisted their transition from training to paid work. These included previous work experience in their field, either paid or voluntary, newly acquired skills from their training and people networks/connections.

Andre was very active as a volunteer for his local community before he undertook the Certificate III in Community Services. He had developed connections with community services who knew about what was happening in the sector and other community events in which Andre could participate. One such contact was a community development worker who recommended the traineeship to Andre, and has continued to encourage and inspire him. On completing the certificate, Andre was employed casually in the same field. Since then, he has obtained additional periodic work and is hoping to find full-time work in the community sector. Thus Andre's transition into paid work was assisted by his voluntary work experience as well as his community services qualification:

It's been a progress in the making sort of thing, they've realised my abilities and have offered me to get paid for the certain things that I do now, which has helped especially with the training I got ... I'm more knowledgeable and I know our rights as housing tenants ... I am still quite close with my Community Development Worker for the estate that I live at. He's been my inspiration to actually do something, community development work-wise.

Initially, Suhasini could not find paid employment. She explained that whether she looked for work in hospitality or as a personal carer, employers repeatedly asked whether she had any Australian experience or qualifications, which she did not—though she had a nursing qualification from her home country. She was later linked to a case worker at a Neighbourhood Justice Centre who helped her find voluntary personal care work in an aged care facility, where she could gain local experience. Shortly after her volunteer work began, she was offered part-time employment. Suhasini's Food Handling Certificate was not directly related to this employment, but she found the course to be of general benefit due to the updated knowledge of hygiene procedures. Thus she was assisted in her transition to paid work partly through a support worker who connected her with voluntary work to build experience, and partly due to her previous experience as a nurse:

Suhasini: And she helped me to find the [organisation] where I can get an experience as a volunteer, so I can start my experience, and I can apply my skill and knowledge ... and to find opportunity. Then after that they offered me the job ... and I was happy to accept that offer.

Tien was a participant in the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), a home-based parenting and early childhood enrichment program targeting families with young children. It was the HIPPY coordinator who suggested to Tien that she apply for the Certificate III in Community Services traineeship, in order to learn how to become a tutor of parents herself:

I do the HIPPY program first and afterwards the HIPPY coordinator encouraged me to apply [to be a] HIPPY home tutor.

Following the traineeship, Tien was employed part-time by the organisation in which she trained. She explained that she is now more confident due to the knowledge and experience acquired. Tien continues to receive supervision and support as part of the home tutor program.

## Factors that hindered a successful transition from training to paid work

For Hakim the news that his traineeship was coming to an end came as a shock. He had not prepared himself by beginning to look for another position, because he expected the traineeship to continue for several more years. There appears to have been a misunderstanding on his part. Nevertheless, the apparently abrupt end has made the transition to new work challenging. At the time of the interview, Hakim had been looking for work without success, finding that potential employers consistently ask for more cleaning experience than he has. Hakim identified this as the main barrier to finding work. At the completion of the traineeship, the training organisation recommended he join a job search club, which he attends regularly. He also visits another job search agency that he found independently.

Hakim: Just when I finished my cleaning apprenticeship for more than one and a half years, suddenly ... my supervisor came ... told me, 'Your job is finished. You have to hand your key to the next person that's coming next day' ... I hoped to continue the job at least for two or three years of, as a part-time job for payment position ... And I really didn't expect it these things because I didn't provide myself to look for another jobs ... But I didn't find any satisfactory job. There is a lot of job. But suddenly to find any good places to satisfy someone is difficult ... Last week I found the job, I have experience of one and a half years.

They ask two years. The person who was demanding as employer, I talked to him. He told me, 'Sorry, you have one and a half years. We need a person who has experience for three years'. Just they don't want to provide something really is another thing. Until now it is difficult for me to find a job for cleaning.

Another interviewee, Isaac, was also unemployed and attending a job search club to look for employment. If he can find a part-time job, he is contemplating returning to study part-time, in the human resources field. Isaac would like more job search support to be given to those who completed the traineeship (see recommendations below).

Isaac: I'm at present trying to find community services work to work as a social worker, community workers and also I'm looking also to work in a hotel ... in my previous occupation [cleaner in a hotel].

During his interview, Jim explained that he undertook the Certificate I in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations) because he was informed that street sweeping jobs were available at his local council, and further, that these jobs were reserved for housing estate residents. Jim believed that he would be employed on completing the certificate, but this did not eventuate. Not having a driver's licence is a major barrier in Jim's transition to paid work.

Jim: There was street sweeper job, but the council decided to change their mind and you had to have a licence, even though they wanted people from the housing commission and 90% of the people don't have licences, so they pulled out within two weeks.

Another factor that hinders his potential employment is that Jim does not want to work indoors. For this reason he declined a job cleaning offices. At the time of the interview, Jim was unemployed but considering further training.

## Trainee suggestions

The interviewees made suggestions based on their experience of training at BSL, as a student of a short course, a certificate level course or as trainee. Their suggestions related to:

- the need for more help with finding a job, including networking through the training organisation
- the effect of the traineeship wage on Centrelink and rental payments
- the duration of training and effective linking with further training courses.

## More help with finding a job

Isaac made several recommendations. He recommended that help should be given to trainees in finding employment—that is, more help than a job search club provides. Isaac believed that the training organisation ought to maintain strong links with ex-trainees so that they could be referred to future vacancies within the organisation and beyond:

Isaac: The one thing that I can suggest ... is about finding a job for trainees who have finished their training, and they didn't find a job. Also to increase the services for finding a job for them and have a strong link with them, because ... when you finish traineeship, maybe you will be forgotten. If they are still keeping connection with those members who were with them before, it can be helpful. Sometimes it can be helpful to them if they get a vacancy with them, they can also call them to employ them with them. The kind of support available is job search club ... So that is my suggestion ... it could be more than that, yes.



Even within the Brotherhood of St Laurence, they can also recommend the member who did the traineeship with them before, if there is vacancies ...

Isaac also commended and encouraged the present study of trainees' experiences, in order that the training program can be improved and the needs of trainees better met.

Hakim also noted his need for more assistance in finding employment post traineeship.

But please, they should ... provide another place to look for another job when they are finishing, not sitting at home for a long time. It is nearly one month I've finished these jobs [cleaning traineeship].

His comment highlights the often fragmented nature of support, which makes it very hard for students to make a smooth transition to work.

### Effect of the traineeship wage on Centrelink and rent payments

Hakim explained that his traineeship wage affected his Centrelink payments and rent payment. His rent was increased and his Centrelink payments decreased, due to his increased income from the traineeship wage; he estimated that overall he had 'worked for four dollars or five dollars an hour'. He recommended that Centrelink payments and rent should remain the same, notwithstanding the increase in income that trainees receive from their traineeship wage. It's unclear whether his comments related to the lump sum annual leave payment on completion of his traineeship or the effect of the trainee wage more generally; however, his concern about the financial disincentive echoes other research findings such as in the *Making work pay* report (Bodsworth 2010). It also highlights the importance of financial advice and information for trainees.

### Duration of training and articulation with further training courses.

Andre was not an Australian citizen, so further training was prohibitively expensive for him.

I don't think it's a weakness, I just think that it's not long enough; well I wish it could go on for at least two years, but it's the way that ... two years that you could a Certificate for in Community Services or develop it into a diploma ... I've been trying to do the Diploma in Community Services Work. I did have the opportunity this year, unfortunately I didn't have the finances because of my citizenship that I don't have.

The suggestions of trainees are based on their experience. They may not be fully aware of the different funding mechanisms, policies or administrative arrangements, but their comments provide valuable insight on what could support students and trainees to undertake and complete courses that will help them get and keep jobs. The new Centre for Work and Learning at Yarra provides opportunities to act on and develop some of their suggestions.

### Support before, during and after training

The people who undertake training with BSL are a diverse group. Many face multiple challenges, but most are motivated to learn, develop their skills and get and keep a job. The interviews illustrate the dilemmas confronting highly motivated individuals who work really hard to develop their careers but face formidable barriers. For example, Hakim is an engineer whose qualifications are not recognised in Australia. As a refugee from a war-torn country he is unable to provide evidence of his credentials:

They ask me, 'Do you have any paper or certificate with that? Or you have some knowledge of occupational health and safety regulations?' Because it's very important today ... and then I encountered a very big problem.

Undeterred, he has sought to complete engineering qualifications in Australia to re-qualify. At the same time, he has made the pragmatic decision to undertake training in cleaning operations so that he can earn an income.

Hakim completed a one and a half year traineeship, which comprised a Certificate III in Asset Maintenance together with paid part-time work cleaning offices, for five evenings a week. On the one hand, he was very grateful for the traineeship, which was an opportunity to begin a new career, to study free of charge and also earn a wage:

The best aspect was ... they provided this certificate to start my career ... suddenly you find an opportunity ... and without paying money. They are providing an opportunity for economic background and giving them the time to study and all that things ... I think the opportunity is really good.

Notwithstanding his appreciation of the opportunities, some ambivalence was apparent when Hakim was asked why he chose cleaning. He explains, 'I didn't want to become as a cleaner. Just I didn't have a choice.' After a series of knock-backs, he saw this as the only avenue open to him at the time:

...because everything has a responsibility. You have to have a ground for doing something. I am very willing to go to some office, sit down at a table and start my working career. But when you don't have a knowledge of ... doing things, it is a bit hard to understand and tell these things. The only easy thing for me was cleaning ... I am very realistic in my life. What I'm telling is true things—that I didn't have a choice to choose another job.

The pragmatic decision weighs on him:

Of course it's not satisfactory if you want to study for more than two or three years as an engineer and instead you go to training ... It is not bad things. It is very good. I'm proud of doing cleaning here because it's good ... What should you do if you don't have any choice but when you wish for something, it's not become your dream? And other things, they are disappointing.

At the time of the interview, Hakim was looking for work in cleaning as well as in engineering. Despite his best efforts and his Certificate III, he had not been unable to find employment. Hakim's situation illustrates the need for preparation of trainees for the completion of the traineeship and the transition into paid work, and ongoing support. It also illustrates the need to work with qualified refugees to assist them in developing English language skills and an awareness of Australian workplace culture; without these skills many are forced to work in lower skilled jobs rather than those matching their expertise.

Some students were motivated but confused or not well equipped to successfully navigate the path into training and then work. These students would benefit from pre-vocational training as well as support after training has been completed. This is particularly important given the changes to funding of vocational training (see pages 3–4). Students such as Hakim need information, advice and support to enable them to make informed decisions about training.

For some students the path into training was integrated with work. For example, for the family day care workers, training was offered in a flexible, supportive and tailored way. They were able to undertake training and work concurrently; in this way they could enhance their skills and, for some, access to training opened up opportunities for further learning and qualifications.

The diversity of the trainee and student body needs to be recognised. Some students and trainees just require training—and by all accounts they consider the training to be generally high quality, responsive and supportive. But other students need more support *before* training to ensure that the training is right for them. Ensuring that students have adequate English literacy and language skills is important prior to commencing training. This is relevant for all prospective students, not only for those of non-English speaking backgrounds.

Support is also needed *during* training, especially in relation to literacy and language skills, and to ensure that students and trainees fully understand the next steps in the learning and training pathway. Another key finding of this research is the need for support *after* training. For many students training alone is not enough. A certificate or qualification will not be sufficient to enable them to get and keep a job. These students need support and mentoring *after* training, as Hakim suggested.

### Case study: Tien

Tien was born in Vietnam in the early 1970s. Following her secondary education, she undertook a Chinese and English language studies course at a TAFE equivalent in Vietnam. She migrated to Australia sometime after completing her studies. Tien lives with her husband and two children in public housing. Before having children, Tien had worked as a shop assistant.

Tien completed a Certificate III in Community Services. In this traineeship program, Tien learned to be a home tutor in the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), a home-based parenting and early childhood enrichment program targeting families with young children. She had already participated as a parent, helping her child to develop literacy and numeracy skills. It was the program coordinator who encouraged Tien to apply for the traineeship. The certificate course comprised theory classes once a week for approximately three hours, and daytime home visits to parents participating in the HIPPY program.

The traineeship involved part-time work as a home tutor for one year. On completion, Tien was employed casually with the organisation with which she did her training. When interviewed, Tien was working 15 to 20 hours a week tutoring parents. Regular staff meetings and supervision are an ongoing part of her position.

Overall, Tien felt she had been stimulated by the knowledge and experience acquired during the traineeship. Tien found that the theory component assisted her greatly in dealing with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, who make up the HIPPY parent clientele.

Now when I start doing the HIPPY home tutor, so it has a couple of challenges for me ... So the course it really helped me through my job because when you go out like a home visit ... unexpected things happen, you never know. And the course so broadened my understanding ... and then we know how to do my job, do our job better, how to handle each situation. And have the understanding why such a thing can happen. Because the simple thing like the body language, we learn it is different in each culture.

Tien also felt that her personal development had been enhanced. She gained skills in conflict management and organisation, as well as interpersonal skills and an understanding of professional behaviour:

... definitely to boost my confidence, because something like we had more knowledge, more understanding ... why the customer behaves like that or we learn about the culture difference ... And we learn how to manage the conflict, how to control, how to organise everything ... gives me something like more professional ... so we understand we can control ourselves with more confidence. During the course it helped me to do the job, but after finishing the course it makes me do the job better and I'm confident in doing my job, because I think I got more experience, more learning to do it.

Tien was looking into doing further study in the area of early childhood education. She observed that the course had broadened her mind and helped her to think about the different possibilities within community services, and how she might build on her Certificate III studies.

## 7 Conclusion

This research is a contribution towards identifying what distinguishes the BSL approach to vocational training and education. In undertaking this research we had four main aims. The first relatively modest aim was to document the characteristics of the students and trainees at the Brotherhood of St Laurence. We now have a better understanding of the people we serve. Our analysis suggests that the bulk of BSL students and trainees are over 25 years of age, are women, were not born in Australia, and speak a language other than English—although over half also speak English. Most live in Frankston or surrounding areas, the Fitzroy and Collingwood area or Craigieburn, but students come from a wide number of suburbs across metropolitan Melbourne.

The second aim was to examine the trainees' perspectives on vocational training—specifically, their motivations for doing training and their experience of training. The ten in-depth interviews provide insight into the complex motivations of students and trainees. People took up training offered by the BSL for three main reasons: to upgrade skills and gain credentials; to formalise their expertise so they could be employed in their chosen fields; and because training accommodated existing work and family commitments.

### What worked well and not so well

We wanted to know what worked well and not so well. We found that students were almost unanimous in their praise for BSL's supportive, responsive, and flexible approach. The students appreciated the high level of organisation and commitment of the trainers at BSL. Of course, this praise may be overstated, as interviewees and trainees completing feedback sheets may feel compromised and unable to articulate complaints for fear of negative consequences. Nevertheless, the high level of support, flexibility, commitment and organisation was consistently noted.

The few negative comments were specific and related to the desire for more desks, difficulties in managing homework, and the personal interaction and communication styles of some trainers. These specific comments highlight the importance of not only seeking feedback but also acting on it.

### Transitions from training to work

The final aim of this research was to identify the factors that helped or hindered the successful completion of training and the successful transition from training to paid employment.

The diversity of the trainee and student population means that different factors affect different groups. Some students and trainees are already quite highly skilled and educated, with a third of students who provided details having qualifications at a diploma or higher level, including eighteen people who had bachelor or higher degrees. These trainees may require specific English language support and mentoring in the cultural processes of getting and keeping a job in Australia. Importantly, some students may be studying at a much lower level than their previous qualifications, and, what is more may be studying something that they have not actively chosen. They do it because they have little choice, like Hakim: 'I didn't have a choice to choose another job'.

Other students already possess experience and specific expertise and just require upgrading and accrediting of those skills. For example, the family day carers needed to gain credentials due to the change in regulations. Training opened up for some of these women the path to further learning. A key element here is the supportive, responsive nature of the training; and importantly, it is available at no charge and participants can continue to earn an income.

The interviews suggest that some students and trainees need more support before undertaking training to ensure that the training is right for them—literacy and language assessment is important here, not only for those of non-English speaking backgrounds. It is also essential that trainees and students understand any prerequisites, such as a driver’s licence, before undertaking training. This may require information to be provided in several formats, and to be repeated. With tighter eligibility for publicly funded places in accredited training courses, matching training with individual preferences is especially important, to avoid locking students into fields of study that do not match their skills or aspirations.

For many students training and a certificate or qualification will not be sufficient to enable them to get and keep a job. A key finding of this research is the need for support and information before, during and after training. The reforms to the Victorian vocational training sector provide opportunities for the BSL to focus more clearly on those students who will be most disadvantaged in a competitive training environment. However, adequate funding is needed for supportive, responsive and flexible training. With support, even the most disadvantaged students are more likely to complete training and go on to get and keep a job. More importantly, perhaps, a successful experience may inspire students to pursue further training in their chosen fields.

In the following section we detail some recommendations.

## 8 Recommendations

### Teaching and training

The needs of people who are literate and educated in languages other than English should be distinguished from the needs of people who have little education and low levels of literacy and numeracy. This latter group may or may not have good English language skills. Tailored support for these different groups is needed while training.

Pre-training advice and information is imperative, especially given the tightening of eligibility for funded places under the Victorian Training Guarantee. A key recommendation is to introduce an information and advice service at centres such as the Centre for Work and Learning in the first instance to assist people to make informed decisions about their training options.

Planning for what happens after training, and post-training support, are important. A key recommendation from the trainees is 'more help with getting a job',

The learner feedback forms are a useful tool in understanding the experience of training from the trainees' perspective. It is important that processes are formalised to not only evaluate training quality but also act on specific concerns.

### Policy

Appropriate support and information before, during and after training is especially important for disadvantaged students and trainees. Adequate funding is required to ensure that responsive, flexible support can be provided for such students.

Funding for students who experience disadvantage should be weighted according to the identified level of need. This could build on the principles of the Joint Group Training Program, an arrangement between Commonwealth and state governments to fund GTOs, which include different rates of payment to reflect the level of priority of the outcomes. A similar needs-based allocation of funds could be trialled for all training, be it attached to a traineeship or not.

### Future research

If further research is to be undertaken, it is important that the consent of any training or employment feedback form seeks specific consent for data to be used for research purposes and that the option to opt out is provided.

A close analysis of BSL's enrolment data was outside the scope of this project. Further analysis of the enrolment data to better understand the effectiveness of BSL's training services is recommended.


The AQTF dataset is a rich source of information which could yield interesting insights about the trainee experience.

An analysis of different diversity categories under the new Victorian Training Guarantee could inform the consideration of weighted payments to students with additional training and support requirements.

# Appendices

## AGTF Learner Questionnaire

### Learner Questionnaire



**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

Please tell us about your training. Your feedback plays an important role in developing the quality of your education. In this questionnaire, the term 'training' refers to learning experiences with your training organisation. The term 'trainer' refers to trainers, teachers, lecturers or instructors from your training organisation. Provide one response to each item on the form. Complete using a black or blue pen. Print neatly in CAPITAL letters. Place a clear 'X' inside each box. Leave the box blank if the statement does not apply. If you want to change your answer, fill in the entire box and mark the correct box with an 'X'. Example:     or

**ABOUT YOUR TRAINING**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I developed the skills expected from this training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I identified ways to build on my current knowledge and skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training focused on relevant skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I developed the knowledge expected from this training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training prepared me well for work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I set high standards for myself in this training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training had a good mix of theory and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I looked for my own resources to help me learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I am satisfied with the training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend the training organisation to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training organisation staff respected my background and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I pushed myself to understand things I found confusing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainers had an excellent knowledge of the subject content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I received useful feedback on my assessments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The way I was assessed was a fair test of my skills and knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I learned to work with people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training was at the right level of difficulty for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The amount of work I had to do was reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessments were based on realistic activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was always easy to know the standards expected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training facilities and materials were in good condition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually had a clear idea of what was expected of me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainers explained things clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training organisation had a range of services to support learners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I learned to plan and manage my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training used up-to-date equipment, facilities and materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I approached trainers if I needed help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainers made the subject as interesting as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend the training to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training organisation gave appropriate recognition of existing knowledge and skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training resources were available when I needed them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was given enough material to keep up my interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The training was flexible enough to meet my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainers encouraged learners to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainers made it clear right from the start what they expected from me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research 2007, *Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007*, <[www.acer.edu.au/aqtf](http://www.acer.edu.au/aqtf)>.



## Brotherhood of St Laurence Evaluation Form



**Brotherhood of St Laurence**

Registered Training Organisation

### Training Evaluation Form

Thank you for participating in training by the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

At the Brotherhood of St Laurence we are committed to continuously reviewing and improving our training programs. Your input and feedback is very important to us in identifying where and how we can improve.

We would appreciate some feedback about your impressions of the training.

1. Name of training session/course:

2. Date completed:

3. Did this training program meet your expectations? Tick one...

Yes, completely     Mostly     Not at all

Please explain your comment:

4. Please rate the following by ticking the appropriate box:

	Excellent	Above average	Average	Below average	Poor
Trainers' presentation skills					
Presentation of information					
Format of the program					
Room set up					
Usefulness of information					
Interest in information					
Ability to use information					

5. Which aspects of the training did you find most useful?

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6. Would you like to suggest any changes or improvements?

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7. Can you identify two key ideas from the training that you will be able to use?  
What are they?

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8. Is there any other training that you would be interested in the future?

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## BSL RTO accredited qualifications

As at November 2009

1. BSB10107 Certificate I in Business
2. BSB20107 Certificate II in Business
3. BSB30107 Certificate III in Business
4. BSB30407 Certificate III in Business Administration
5. BSB40707 Certificate IV in Frontline Management
6. CHC20102 Certificate II in Community Services Support Work
7. CHC20202 Certificate II in Community Services Work
8. CHC30102 Certificate III in Aged Care Work
9. CHC30202 Certificate III in Home and Community Care
10. CHC30402 Certificate III in Children's Services
11. CHC30802 Certificate III in Community Services Work
12. PRM10104 Certificate I in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations)
13. PRM20104 Certificate II in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations)
14. PRM30104 Certificate III in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Operations)
15. PRM40104 Certificate IV in Asset Maintenance (Cleaning Management)
16. SIR10107 Certificate I in Retail Services
17. SIR20207 Certificate II in Retail
18. SIR30207 Certificate III in Retail
19. SIR40207 Certificate IV in Retail Management
20. SIT10207 Certificate I in Hospitality
21. SIT10307 Certificate I in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations)
22. SIT20207 Certificate II in Hospitality
23. SIT20307 Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations)
24. SIT30707 Certificate III in Hospitality
25. SIT30907 Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery)

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