Employer toolkits

Building more inclusive workplaces?

John van Kooy

2015

Brotherhood
of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is a non-government, community-based organisation concerned with social justice. Based in Melbourne, but with programs and services throughout Australia, the Brotherhood is working for a better deal for disadvantaged people. It undertakes research, service development and delivery, and advocacy, with the objective of addressing unmet needs and translating learning into new policies, programs and practices for implementation by government and others. For more information visit <www.bsl.org.au>.

John van Kooy is a Senior Research Officer in the Work & Economic Security team in the Brotherhood's Research and Policy Centre.

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Acknowledgements

Summary

Some jobseeker groups experience difficulty in securing employment due to perceived gaps in their employable skills, qualifications or experience. Others are effectively 'screened out' during recruitment processes on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity, language, age or disability. Labour market participation for these groups is affected by the human resource practices of employers, as well as the nature of support they may receive to address perceived 'employability' gaps.

In contrast, 'inclusive employment' can be defined as all efforts that promote fair and equitable access to decent employment, ensuring satisfactory pay and conditions, career prospects and opportunities for social integration.[1]

In this study we investigate the advantages and limitations of 'toolkits' for influencing more inclusive employment practices.

Using employer toolkits to advance inclusive employment

Employer toolkits are designed to assist in removing employment barriers for particular groups in the labour market. They are compendia of resources such as guidelines, step-by-step instructions, recommendations, tips, checklists, templates and other practical materials. They may be used by employers or by labour market intermediaries (LMIs) that seek to address barriers such as restrictive recruitment practices, or negative stereotypes of some jobseekers.

There is limited literature available on the uptake of toolkits by employers, or evidence of their impact on employment outcomes for disadvantaged groups. Nevertheless, toolkits continue to be published by a variety of organisations and institutions,

Figure S1 Some employer toolkits

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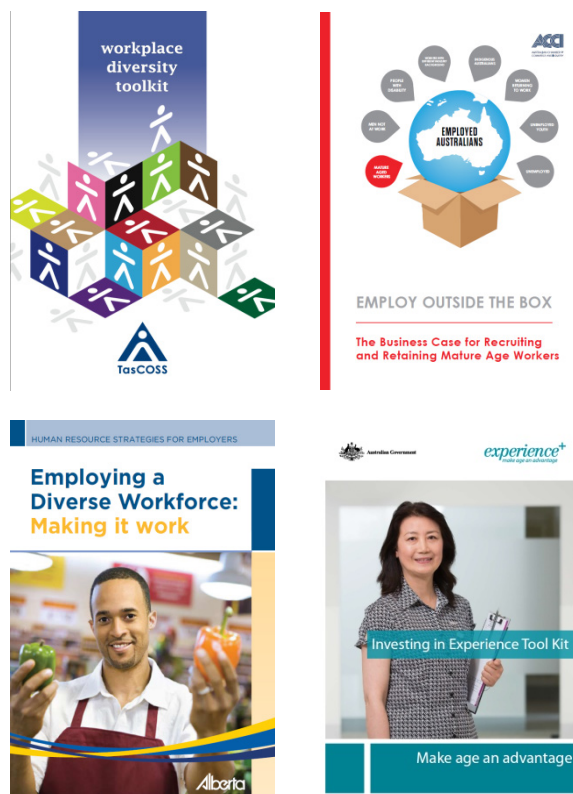
[1] For concepts that contributed to our definition of 'inclusive employment', see ILO (2015), Majid (2001), Scarpetta (2014) and Smyth & Buchanan (2013).

including employer and professional associations, government departments; peak bodies or lobby groups, research organisations, statutory bodies and community organisations.

This paper presents a review of 20 toolkits from Australian and international sources.[2] We identify what the toolkits offer to employers and how they address employment issues for three jobseeker groups:

- young people

- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups

- mature-age jobseekers.

We also examine general 'diversity' toolkits that cover multiple groups.

We report on the toolkits' engagement strategies and messages about specific jobseeker groups, and the key themes in general guidance offered to employers. Finally, we assess the advantages and limitations of the toolkit approach for advancing 'inclusive employment' in Australia.

Key findings

Employer action is justified in social or economic terms

The toolkits in our study explained the need for employer action in either economic or social terms:

- **a business case rationale:** Labour demand and economic conditions (such as skills shortages or recruitment/retention challenges) which mean that employers need to consider alternative sources of labour.

- **a corporate social responsibility (CSR) or social challenges rationale:** Labour market exclusion and marginalisation has negative social implications, and employers need to play their part in improving these conditions.

Unsurprisingly, toolkits authored by business associations, government departments and employer lobby groups were more likely to be rationalised in terms of labour demand or economic arguments. Not-for-profit and community groups were more likely to emphasise social rationales.

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[2] For details on how the toolkits were selected, please see 'This study' below.

Figure S2 plots the 20 toolkits reviewed in this study according to their relative emphasis on social or economic justifications, and direct or indirect benefits. Several observations can be made:

- The majority of toolkits (16 of the 20) present a proposition to employers that emphasises direct business benefits of employing from the target groups.

- All of the toolkits focusing on mature-age jobseekers are justified in terms of labour demand arguments (such as skills shortages), while those focusing on young people mostly have social rationales.

- Toolkits that focus on CALD groups are the most varied in terms of their underlying justifications and value propositions.

Figure S2 Employer toolkits' rationale and emphasis on benefits
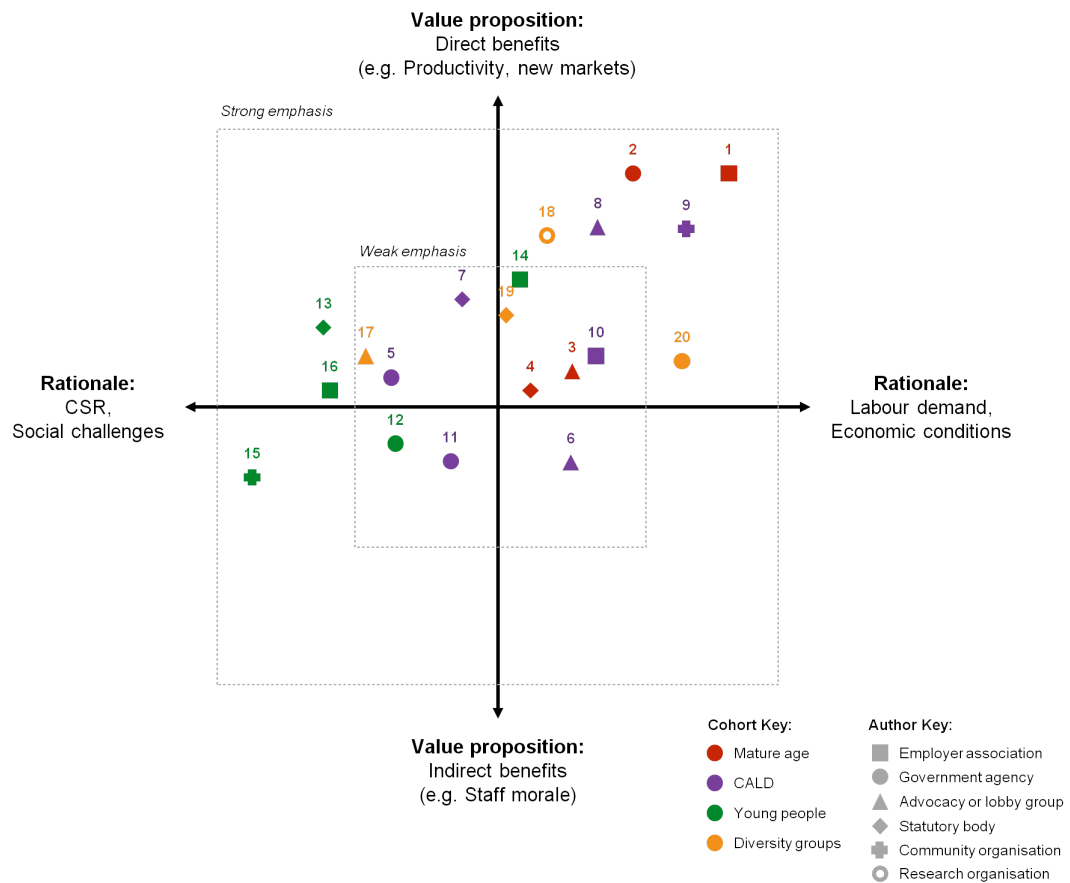
Note: Toolkit numbers match the list in Appendix B

Toolkits inform changes to practice while appealing to business interests

Toolkits attempt to influence employers using a combination of engagement strategies. These strategies constitute what we have termed in this report the 'toolkit approach':

- contributing to better employer understandings of labour market disadvantage and employment barriers for specific groups

- appealing to employers' interests in terms of direct business benefits and opportunities

- prompting employers to assess barriers that may exist in their workplace operations, strategies or culture

- providing practical tools and guidance to assist employers in adapting human resource policies and practices.

Toolkits offer a range of practical resources to employers

We classified the tools and supporting content in our sample toolkits using the ILO's Knowledge Strategy framework (2007). This distinguishes between three types of tools:

- **'how-to' tools,** such as manuals, guidelines and training materials

- **knowledge-based tools**, such as policy briefs, research, evaluation, knowledge networks and data

- **good practices** (ILO 2007).

The toolkits we looked at offer a broad range of practical tools for use by employers, such as self-assessment tools, checklists, HR guidance, policy templates, and case studies and examples. Most toolkit guidance is about informing process changes (rather than strategic choices) within employing organisations, with supporting content to assess and plan for these changes.

Different messages for specific jobseeker groups

Employment barriers for the three target groups are represented differently in the toolkits. The issue of young people without access to work is presented as primarily a social (rather than an economic) problem, requiring targeted programs and interventions: many of these—such as work experience—may not involve actual employment opportunities. In contrast, the ageing workforce and underemployed CALD groups are more often framed as underutilised workers that can produce direct business benefits if employers can make necessary adaptations.

Table S1 summarises the key toolkit messages to employers about the three specific jobseeker groups that are the focus of this study.

Table S1 Toolkit messages to employers about specific cohorts

Type	Young people	CALD groups	Mature-age adults
Barriers	Lack of quality career pathways, leading to disengagement	CALD workers are under-leveraged and undervalued	Age discrimination in the workplace
Opportunities	Take advantage of new skills and fresh ideas Long-term investment Grow your own talent Staff professional development opportunity	Enthusiastic, motivated and hardworking Value of increased cultural diversity Loyalty	Skilled and experienced workers High productivity Loyalty Intergenerational knowledge transfer
Actions	Provide non-employment options: emphasis on work experience, mentoring, work tasters Offer apprenticeships & training	Provide support in the workplace, e.g. buddies/mentors Ensure use of plain English Build cultural competence into HR processes Break down racial stereotypes	Review organisational culture for ageist barriers Consider alternative job design and flexible conditions (incl. job rotation or redeployment) Volunteering option

General guidance emphasises human resource adaptations and 'champions'

While providing specific messages for different jobseeker groups, toolkit guidance tends not to distinguish between different employer types—in terms of size or sector. General guidance emphasises changes to human resource policies and practices to remove employment barriers, particularly during recruitment.

Some toolkits recommend special intake programs, while others recommend more root and branch review of human resource practices. Sometimes targeted programs for particular groups may be appropriate (this is usually a recommendation in youth-focused toolkits, for example); but overall the guidance suggests that employers consider the human resource process from a 'systemic' or 'holistic' perspective.

The role of 'champions' is also emphasised in several toolkits as an implementation strategy. Demonstrating the personal commitment of leaders or managers to 'inclusion' can lead to more inclusive practices being adopted throughout organisations.

Advantages and limitations of toolkits

Our analysis reveals some advantages but several limitations of the toolkit approach.

Toolkits can assist employers to understand disadvantage and diversity

Toolkits have the potential to enhance employers' understanding of barriers within their own workplaces, and add to the currency of terms such as workforce 'diversity' or 'inclusion'. The diversity of author types suggests there is interest in multiple sectors to build this type of understanding. The contributions of business groups such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the Australian Industry Group (AIG) and the Diversity Council of Australia (DCA), and public institutions such as the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman increase the potential influence of toolkits among employers.

However, an associated risk of toolkits is that they can also have the effect of reinforcing stereotypes about unemployment or labour market disadvantage, rather than challenging conventional assumptions. Toolkits that reproduce stereotypes or assumptions are less likely to influence the 'inclusiveness' of mainstream recruitment practices.

Impact is limited by requiring 'willing' employers and 'job-ready' candidates

For toolkits to be used successfully, employers already have to be notionally committed to concepts like diversity recruitment or inclusive employment. An assumption underpinning toolkits is therefore that businesses are either inspired by CSR motivations or are in fact experiencing labour or skills shortages, and are willing to consider recruiting from underrepresented groups. The argument that 'jobs are available if only employers can be persuaded to offer them to unemployed people' (Ingold & Stuart 2014) does not hold for all employer types or sectors of the economy. In addition, the toolkit approach depends on employers being willing to make significant changes to their practices.

A related assumption behind the toolkit approach is that jobseekers are fully prepared to take up jobs when they become available, and have developed the 'human capital' expected by employers—work history, local experience, skills and qualifications. However, disadvantaged jobseekers are likely to have different levels of employment 'readiness', and therefore will require different degrees of support to make the transition to mainstream workplaces.

Role of LMIs and supply-side interventions is unclear

Few of the reviewed toolkits refer to the role of LMIs, employment agencies or other organisations in supporting disadvantaged jobseekers. Instead, toolkits are almost exclusively focused on 'demand-side' barriers and the actions of employers. A combination of demand and supply-side interventions may be required in any given situation to create sustainable workforce engagement for disadvantaged groups.

Voices and needs of different jobseeker groups are not prominent

Few toolkits present the 'voices' of people who face employment barriers, or discuss employment issues from their perspective. This means that the toolkits do not offer much insight into how and why people experience labour market disadvantage. The lack of jobseeker voices is also a missed opportunity to address employer bias.

Toolkits may not effect change at a scale to advance 'inclusive employment'

We conclude that toolkits can play a role in promoting more equitable employment opportunities, by using different strategies and value propositions to engage employers. However, broader tasks of changing the design of jobs and the functioning of the labour market, while promoting social integration, need to be driven by larger-scale efforts involving more than just willing employers.

Few of the reviewed employer toolkits include discussion of the social or economic implications of unemployment, underemployment or labour market inequity. The majority are resources designed for use by individual employers. Australian toolkits, in particular, also lack reference to possible industry and multi-sector employment initiatives.

Any change at the micro level as a result of toolkits is incremental and entirely voluntary on the part of employers. This means that toolkits and other 'off-the-shelf' resources play only a small part in responding to labour market disadvantage. Toolkits are not a substitute for job creation, or for macroeconomic policy reform that fosters more inclusion in Australia's workplaces.

1 Why study employer toolkits?

Inclusive employment

The concept of inclusive employment is useful in critically evaluating the social, economic and political challenges of the contemporary Australian labour market. For the purposes of this paper, we define 'inclusive employment' as all efforts that promote fair and equitable access to decent employment, ensuring satisfactory pay and conditions, career prospects and opportunities for social integration.[3]

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) provides labour market programs such as Work and Learning Centres and Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers, which deliver services and support to different jobseekers, aided by tools to build partnerships with employers. This study will assist the BSL, other labour market intermediaries and employers to understand the benefits and limitations of employer toolkits, as well as identifying gaps where additional tools could be useful.

Labour market disadvantage and employer recruitment practices

The changing Australian labour market has left some workers excluded or marginalised from employment opportunities that offer stability and career prospects. Jobs in Australia, like many other Western economies, are shifting from manufacturing and industrial sectors towards service-based 'knowledge work' (requiring higher skills and qualifications) (McQuaid & Lindsay 2005, p. 203). A reduced supply of low-skilled or entry-level jobs that provide 'family supporting wages' has been observed (Pinto-Duschinsky 2001), while job conditions have become increasingly precarious (Wilkins & Wooden 2014).

There is extensive research regarding employers' 'statistical discrimination' or screening of candidates based on perceived risks (Hasluck 2011). Experimenting by sending résumés with different dates of birth (but equal qualifications) to large US firms and employment agencies, Bendick and colleagues (1997) found that older workers were discriminated against during recruitment. In their research with refugees looking for work in Australia, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) found that some only had success after disguising their ethnicity in written applications, and some were rejected by employers on 'sighting' the applicant. Referrals from employment service providers catering for disadvantaged jobseekers have influenced negative employer perceptions (Bonoli & Hinrichs 2010). Individual histories of long-term unemployment have also resulted in employers making assumptions about candidates' motivation and effectiveness (Lindsay, McCracken & McQuaid 2003).

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[3] For concepts that contribute to our definition of 'inclusive employment', see ILO (2015), Majid (2001), Scarpetta (2014) and Smyth & Buchanan (2013).

Employer human resources practices create barriers for disadvantaged workers, particularly those applying for low skill or entry-level positions. These include screening techniques, informal recruitment methods and non-standard employment conditions. Employers use application forms, assessment processes and interview techniques to 'sift' candidates who are unable to demonstrate that they are already in work and/or have past experience of the job or sector (Devins & Hogarth 2005, p. 251). They may also source candidates through 'word of mouth', disadvantaging applicants who lack relevant social networks (Devins & Hogarth 2005; Shury et al. 2012). Further, Spoonley (2008) argues that non-standard employment (part-time, temporary, casual, fixed-term contract, agency employment) is also increasingly used to manage low-skilled labour. He suggests that non-standard work makes it possible for employers to screen candidates without incurring significant employment liabilities. Temporary employment through agencies enables recruitment costs and risks to be externalised, while contract and casual positions can be used to expand and contract the workforce according to fluctuations in demand (Spoonley 2008).

Public employment assistance for disadvantaged jobseekers has been dominated by direct support to jobseekers only. However, there is a need for increased focus on employers' responsibilities in creating more inclusive workforces.

Labour market intermediaries and 'employer engagement'

A focus on employers recognises that adaptation is required at the source of jobs and vacancies to reduce barriers for particular jobseekers.

Labour market intermediaries (LMIs) broker the relationship between employers and jobseekers (Benner 2003). LMIs, particularly not-for-profit and community-based organisations, are important in helping jobseekers who are disadvantaged by their race, education or experience (Hilton & Lambert 2015). Employers may also seek out the support of LMIs as a strategy to reduce recruitment costs or increase employee retention (Hilton & Lambert 2015).

Employer engagement describes the efforts of LMIs to engage with employers to facilitate job outcomes for excluded or disadvantaged groups. Employer engagement approaches are often based on an underlying assumption that 'jobs are available if only employers can be persuaded to offer them to unemployed people' (Ingold & Stuart 2014).

Green and Hasluck (2009) suggest that key benefits for jobseekers of employer engagement programs include improved access to vacancies, job-relevant training; the brokering of recruitment, post-employment support for successful applicants and the ability to influence recruitment and retention policies. Some employer-oriented programs may also address demand-side 'problems' such as restrictive recruitment practices and negative perceptions of jobseekers (Spoonley 2008).

This study

One strategy commonly used for influencing more inclusive employment practices is to provide employers with guidance and information for adapting human resource practices. 'Toolkits' for employers are developed to directly influence the demand side of the labour market.

The toolkits are often designed to assist employers to consider the practical and business implications of recruiting from non-mainstream groups. Toolkits can provide 'off-the-shelf assistance that can be implemented directly by employers. LMIs may also use the toolkits to inform their interactions with employers.

'Toolkits' refers to compendia of 'tools' and guidance for employers, which can include guidelines, step-by-step instructions, recommendations, tips, checklists, templates, and other practical materials.

Employer toolkits vary in their content type, theoretical or empirical basis, and the method taken to develop the resource itself. Toolkits are developed by a range of organisations, including employer and professional associations, government departments, not-for-profit and community organisations, research institutes, statutory bodies, peak advocacy bodies and lobby groups.

Aims

This study aims to:

- identify and critically evaluate what toolkits offer to employers and how they frame barriers for specific disadvantaged jobseeker groups
- synthesise key themes from the guidance being offered to employers
- assess the extent to which employer toolkits can be used to advance inclusive employment in Australia.

Sample

We focus on employer toolkits for specific jobseeker groups supported by the BSL: young people, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, and mature-age jobseekers. We also examine 'diversity' toolkits that cover multiple groups.

To develop an initial shortlist of employer toolkits for review, we applied a search method adapted from VicHealth's review of audit and assessment tools to prevent race-based discrimination and support diversity (VicHealth 2010).

This involved:

- an internet search to identify publicly available employer toolkits

- a scan of the employment websites of prominent Australian business groups, as well as peak bodies, social service agencies and community sector organisations.[4]

Internet searches were conducted using combinations of keywords, including:

- toolkit, tool, guidance, guidelines, manual, handbook

- youth, young people, mature age, older workers, CALD, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers

- employer, employment, labour market, disadvantage, recruitment, human resources, diversity, inclusion.

Internet searches were conducted until an appropriate saturation of sources was reached (either the same results began to recur, or search terms no longer produced relevant results).

Inclusion criteria

A list of 61 resources was compiled from the initial web searches. To narrow the sample, five inclusion criteria were applied:

1 Contents publicly available from the internet, rather than requiring user payment or subscription (e.g. through journals or academic databases)
2 Aimed at employer audiences (including recruitment or hiring managers)
3 Addresses employment barriers for at least one of the following cohorts
   a. Young people
   b. CALD groups (including migrant workers, refugees, ethnic groups, multi-faith groups)
   c. Mature-age jobseekers
   d. 'Diversity' groups
4 Contains tools from at least one of the following categories:
   a. 'How-to' tools
   b. Knowledge-based tools
   c. Good practices
5 Meets at least one of the following quality measures:
   a. Appears to be grounded in theoretical or empirical research, or there is evidence of stakeholder consultation
   b. Contains appropriate references and citations.

A balanced sample to compare Australian and international toolkits was also required. Based on these criteria, the sample was narrowed to 20 (comprising 11 Australian and 9 international toolkits).

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[4] For a full list of websites consulted please see Appendix A.

Analysis

A qualitative analysis of the selected toolkits was undertaken to identify key themes and approaches. Critical questions were used to guide the analysis, including:

- Who produces toolkits and what is their rationale?
- What strategies are adopted for engaging and convincing employers to act?
- What guidance and practical resources do toolkits offer to employers?
- What are the advantages and limitations of the toolkit approach for advancing an inclusive employment agenda?

We also considered employer toolkits for their general applicability to the Australian labour market, and compared Australian toolkits with similar products developed overseas. However, we excluded international toolkits that were designed for specific national labour market conditions, and those designed only for certain organisational contexts (e.g. public sector only).

Limitations

The study is not a comprehensive review of all employer toolkits. Only toolkits in printed form, freely available on the web (as opposed to those available for a price or through membership-based organisations) and published in English were included. Video or other forms of multimedia resources were also not included (although web-based tools were). Nevertheless the study provides insights into the value of the toolkit approach in working with employers to increase workplace diversity.

A further key limitation of this study is that it focused only on the *content* of toolkit publications, and did not include employers' views on how they are actually used. Further research with employers is needed to understand the strategies and tools employers use to engage with jobseekers that face disadvantages in the labour market.

2 Findings: What do the toolkits offer?

Here we summarise what employers and LMIs can expect from toolkits, including engagement strategies, rationales, benefits associated with employing diverse jobseekers, and different types of supporting content (tools). See Appendix B for detailed information about the toolkits and a brief appraisal of the strengths and limitations of each toolkit.

Who produces toolkits?

The reviewed toolkits were produced primarily by employer and professional associations, government departments, and peak bodies and lobby groups. Table 2.1 below summarises the producers of toolkits in our sample by type.

Table 2.1   Producers of employer toolkits in this study

Producer type	Count
Government department or agency	5
Employer and professional associations	4
Peak advocacy bodies and lobby groups	4
Statutory bodies	4
Community organisations	2
Research organisations	1

Strategies for engaging employers

Each toolkit adopts approaches to engaging employers and communicating key messages, which may include:

- raising employers' awareness about specific forms of labour market disadvantage by providing information, stories, case studies and statistics about the cohort

- making a 'business case' or compelling argument for increased workforce diversity and inclusion, by describing the potential benefits to employers

- highlighting common barriers for jobseeker groups that may exist in workplace culture, management styles, or human resource policies and practice

- suggesting specific adaptations to business and human resource practices, with accompanying tools such as tips, guidance, templates, and checklists

- proposing 'special' and separate (i.e. non-mainstream) recruitment intakes or targeted employment programs for specific jobseekers.

Most employer toolkits combine several of these approaches.

Rationales for employer action

The toolkits typically begin with a discussion of labour market disadvantage for target groups and the possible business concerns of employers. How the rationale is presented provides insights into the authors' interests.

A previous study on employer engagement programs for disadvantaged jobseekers (van Kooy, Bowman & Bodsworth 2014) developed a continuum to highlight the varying drivers and motivations of employers (see Figure 2.1). At one end of the continuum, employers are driven by corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives or social agendas. At the other end of the continuum, an interest in alternative sources of labour to satisfy recruitment and skills demands is a business driver.

Figure 2.1   Continuum of individual employer-oriented programs
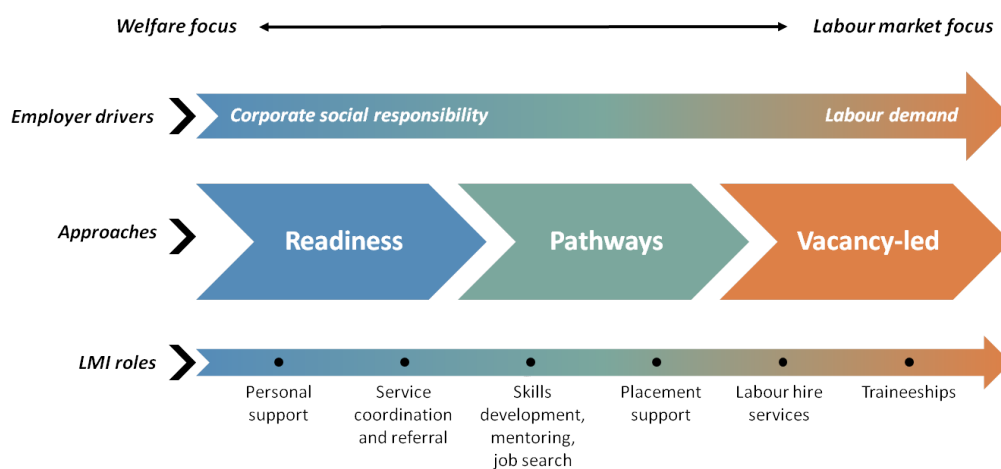
In this study we find that the authors of employer toolkits appeal to a similar range employer interests. We identify two key rationales in our sample of employer toolkits:

- **a business case rationale**: Labour demand and economic conditions (such as skills shortages or recruitment/retention challenges) necessitate consideration by employers of alternative sources of labour.

- **a corporate social responsibility (CSR) or social challenges rationale**: Labour market exclusion and marginalisation has negative social implications – employers need to play their part in improving these conditions.

More than half (12 of the 20) of the toolkits in our sample focus on the first rationale, with an emphasis on market conditions for employers. These conditions are generally expressed in terms of skills, talent and labour shortages.

The *Investing in experience* toolkit argues that Australian businesses face increasing 'skills shortages' and the demographic challenges of an ageing population. Mature-age workers, it is suggested, are a 'source of new skills' (DEEWR 2012, p. 4). Similarly, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission argues:

> Businesses that don't utilise the experience and talents of mature-age workers will start to experience labour shortages (VEOHRC 2010b, p. 1).

Situating Australian employers in the economic context of the 'Asian century', Diversity Council Australia's *Cracking the cultural ceiling* toolkit suggests that cultural inclusion is 'now a strategic business and talent management issue' (Diversity Council Australia 2014). In Canada, the Government of Alberta's *Making it work* toolkit describes a 'booming' business environment, but with a serious shortage of qualified labour. The authors argue that 'inclusive strategies to recruit and retain employees from every demographic can help businesses respond to labour shortages' (Government of Alberta 2008, p. 4).

The second rationale aligns closely with the CSR agendas described in the employer engagement study. Fewer than half of the employer toolkits in our sample (8 of the 20) made arguments about the broader social imperatives of more inclusive employment practices, and only three strongly emphasised these points.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) *Harmony* fact sheets, for example, argue that cultural diversity in Australian workplaces is 'everyone's business and impacts us all', and that 'being culturally aware and adaptable is everyone's responsibility' (FECCA 2013, pp. 2,5). Gap Inc. (2012) also highlight the costs of youth unemployment in the United States in terms of lost tax revenue and the direct costs of supporting 'disconnected youth'.

Business benefits of inclusive employment practices

All of the toolkits in our sample present a set of propositions to employers about the direct and indirect benefits associated with recruiting from diverse jobseeker groups (summarised in Table 2.2). These propositions are framed as incentives to use the guidance in the toolkits. In most of the toolkits (16 of the 20) there is a strong emphasis on the direct business benefits of recruiting from the target jobseeker groups.

Table 2.2   Summary of direct and indirect business benefits of toolkits

Direct benefits	Indirect benefits
Productivity dividends	Improved staff morale
Staff loyalty and better retention	Job satisfaction
Better customer service	Staff benefit from cross-cultural interaction
Enhanced potential for innovation	Staff health and wellbeing
New networks and knowledge	
Competitive advantage and new markets	
Legal/policy compliance	

The Australian Centre for International Business (ACIB 2001, p. 8) advocates a 'productive diversity' approach, which involves adapting human resource strategies to maximise creativity and innovation from 'diverse' teams. Cultural diversity is presented by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship as a driver of increased productivity due to improved staff morale (DIAC 2013). The *Invest in experience* toolkit also urges Australian employers to consider the productivity dividends of mature-age jobseekers, arguing that they perform at their best for more of the day and are less likely to take days off or experience work-related injuries (DEEWR 2012).

Some toolkits present loyalty to the employer or brand as another positive outcome of engaging disadvantaged jobseeker groups—particularly young people and migrants. In one toolkit, an Australian employer is quoted as describing migrant workers as 'overwhelmingly engaged' with their company (DIAC 2013, p. 8). In the United States, Gap Inc. (2012, p. 10) argue that taking on 'opportunity youth' (defined as young people who grew up facing different forms of social disadvantage) can increase employee loyalty and engagement.

Other toolkits argue that the attributes of workers can support innovative product development or business processes. Migrant workers are highlighted by FECCA as 'beneficial in training Australian workers in skill sets where we have deficits' (FECCA 2013, p. 27), while young people in the United Kingdom are emphasised as contributing 'new skills and fresh ideas' (CIPD 2013, p. 1). One toolkit refers to research that suggests ethnically diverse groups can provide 'higher quality (more effective and feasible) ideas' than those produced by 'homogeneous groups' (VicHealth 2013, p. 1).

Another potential benefit presented in the toolkits is opening up access to new markets and customers. This is best exemplified by the *Connections* toolkit, which argues that migrants and refugees can help businesses 'enhance customer service, strengthen existing market share or expand into new markets, both in Australia and overseas' (DIAC 2013, p. 4).

Legal and policy compliance

Some of the reviewed toolkits emphasise the need for compliance with legal or normative frameworks for diversity and inclusion.

The *Right smart employers toolkits* are designed specifically to assist employers to comply with Victoria's *Equal Opportunity Act* (VEOHRC 2010c). The *Workplace diversity toolkit* also emphasises legislative compliance, by plainly stating:

> A key reason for embracing diversity in the workplace is that state and federal laws make it illegal not to (TasCOSS 2012, p. 1).

The FECCA fact sheets (FECCA 2013) also include a section on workplace discrimination and legal frameworks relating to CALD groups, while the *Diversity management* toolkit

includes a briefing note on compliance requirements in Australia about equal employment opportunity (ACIB 2001).

Indirect benefits in the workplace

A smaller group of toolkits refer to the indirect benefits of 'diversity' and 'inclusion' for the existing workforce.

According to ACIB (2001, p. 89), 'unmanaged' diversity in the workplace can create social 'out' and 'in' groups in the workplace, resulting in low job satisfaction, low organisational commitment and high 'withdrawal' (absenteeism and turnover). VicHealth (2013, p. 2) cites their own evidence review, which argues that race-based discrimination can lead to 'higher rates of ill health, especially mental health and problems such as anxiety, depression, stress'. A key example in the review is an epidemiological study which shows an association between self-reported racism and ill health for oppressed racial groups (Paradies 2006). VicHealth draw on this research to conclude that nurturing cultural diversity can reduce race-based discrimination and increase workforce participation (VicHealth 2013). Similarly, FECCA argues that existing staff can also benefit from 'cross-cultural interaction' (FECCA 2013, p. 23).

Figure 2.2 below plots the 20 toolkits reviewed in this study according to their relative emphasis on social or economic justifications, and direct or indirect benefits.

Several observations can be made:

- The majority of toolkits (16 of the 20) present a proposition to employers that emphasises direct business benefits.

- All of the toolkits focusing on mature-age jobseekers are justified in terms of labour demand arguments (such as skills shortages), while those focusing on young people mostly have social rationales.

- Toolkits that focus on CALD groups are the most varied in terms of their underlying justifications and value propositions.

Figure 2.2   Employer toolkits' rationales and emphasis on benefits
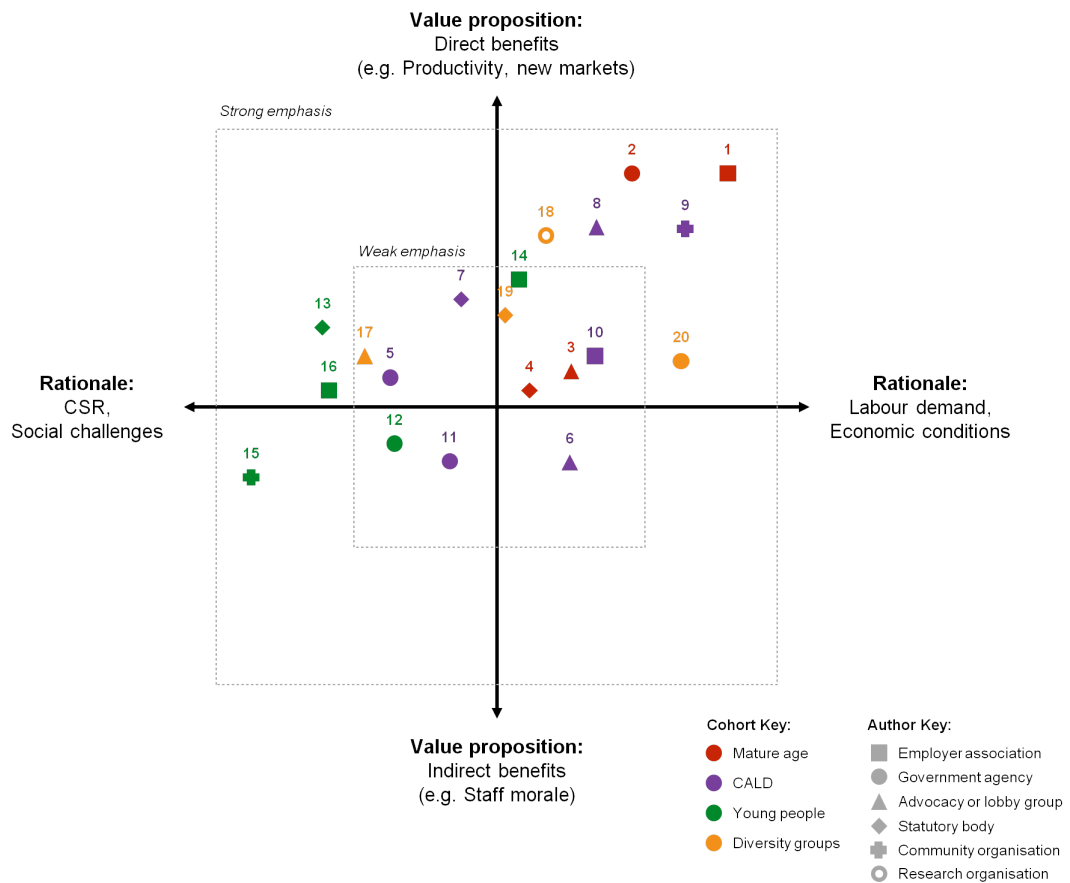
Note: Toolkit numbers match the list in Appendix B

Tools and supporting content

The ILO's (2007) framework for different tools distinguishes between practical tools, tools that aim to inform or educate, and examples from practice and experience.

Table 2.3 summarises the different types of tools found in the sample according to this framework, and shows how they intersect with the strategies for engaging employers described above.

Table 2.3   Summary of strategies, tool types and supporting content

Engagement strategy	'How-to' tools	Knowledge-based tools	Good practices
Contributing to better understanding	Self-assessment tools and checklists	Educational material e.g. data and statistics Glossary of terms Myth-busting/FAQs Fact sheets	Case studies and examples
Appealing to employers' interests		Results from existing programs Web links to programs, services and resources Testimonials	Case studies and examples
Assessing barriers in the workplace	Self-reflection questions Audit tools	Step-by-step instructions	
Providing practical tools and guidance	HR guidance Strategy suggestions Policy templates Step-by-step instructions Examples of plans		Best practice standards Case studies and examples

'How-to' tools

Most of the toolkits reviewed in this study include content presented in a practical format. This means the tools are designed to assist employers to take *action*: conduct assessments, design procedures or change operations so as to remove barriers for disadvantaged jobseekers. The main practical tools are described below.

Self-assessment tools

To help employers assess their current workplace situation and internal barriers, resources such as the Australian Government/AIG *Investing in experience toolkit* offer self-assessment tools (DEEWR 2012). These tools assist the employer to analyse job issues (such as absenteeism or staff turnover) by age bracket, reflect on existing policies and procedures, and prepare an 'action plan' with targets.

Audit tools

Other resources such as the Australian Human Rights Commission/DCA (2014) and DCA (2014) cultural diversity tools are presented as online, 'self-audit' processes. Completing the questionnaire leads to an assessment summary that can be used to measure progress and identify areas for further development (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3   Example of self-assessment summary
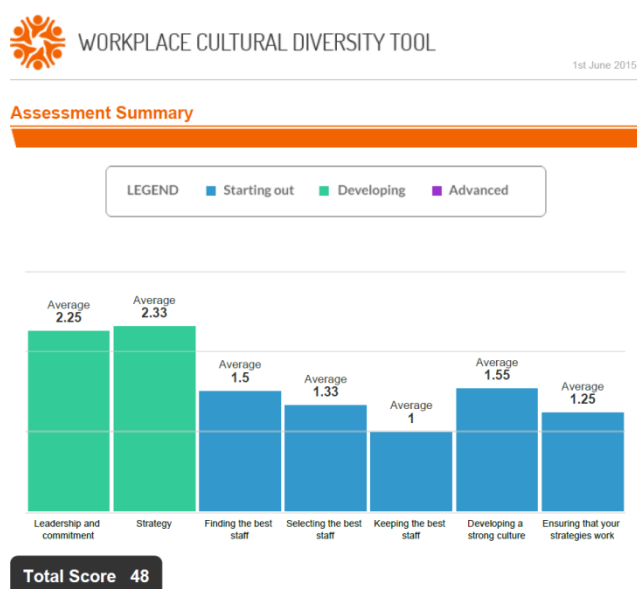
Source: Australian Human Rights Commission 2014

Instructions

To aid the design of new processes, several toolkits offer step-by-step instructions (made as generic as possible), checklists and guidance notes. Most of these tools are 'designed to be completed by a staff member with oversight and/or awareness of organisational planning, policies, recruitment and retention processes, such as a senior manager, human resources manager or diversity officer' (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014).

Checklists

'Checklists' are presented as lists of processes against which employers can compare their existing practice. Examples include the DIVERSEcity checklists for welcoming, orienting and retaining new immigrant workers (DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society and PEERs Employment and Education Resources 2011). The VEOHRC *Right*

smart toolkit (2010c) includes downloadable Microsoft Word policy templates, such as the 'Equal opportunity in practice' template. Employers can insert their business name into the document, and adapt sections as required.

Knowledge-based tools

Tools that aim to educate employers (thus enabling them to take informed action) are also a key component of many toolkits. The 'knowledge-based' content of employer toolkits is often presented to justify recommendations and encourage employer action.

Research findings

Knowledge-based tools include research data and findings on employment barriers for specific groups. The DCA *Cracking the cultural ceiling* online toolkit presents survey data and research which focuses on the views of Asian workers, forming the basis of a case for inclusion of people with Asian cultural backgrounds into the Australian economy (Diversity Council Australia 2014).

Fact sheets

The FECCA *Harmony in the workplace* fact sheets offer information for employers on how to acknowledge the cultural diversity in the workplace, recognising 'clothing and dress, religious practices, social values, customs, family obligations and non-verbal behaviour' (FECCA 2013, p. 6). Such information is educational rather than action-oriented.

Myth-busting

Question-and-answer formats and 'myth-busting' information are also used in some toolkits to educate employers about what they can expect when working with specific jobseeker groups. Both the ACCI and FECCA toolkits use this method to challenge preconceptions or biases. The authors of the ACCI toolkit argue that:

> [Employers] may need to reconsider beliefs and attitudes that may exclude participation by mature aged workers in [their] workplace. There are many myths and misconceptions about mature aged workers that are dispelled by real evidence from businesses already employing mature aged workers ... (ACCI & VECCI 2012, p. 6).

Glossaries

Finally, some toolkits provide glossaries of key terms that represent attempts to get stakeholders to use a common language when recruiting from disadvantaged groups. For example, the Gap Inc. youth toolkit includes definitions of terms such as 'opportunity youth', 'work-ready skills' and 'wraparound support' (Gap Inc. 2012, pp. 136–8).

Good practices

To illustrate how human resource policies and special recruitment programs may operate, a number of toolkits present examples of 'good practice' to guide employers.

Case studies

Strong examples of this approach can be found in the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2014) work experience toolkit, which includes an entire section with short case studies, including illustrative quotes. The case studies are used to 'convince' employer audiences that 'every business can do something, no matter how small, to inspire young people' (p. 12). An example of another case study of youth work placements is provided in Figure 2.4.

Quotes from employers are also used in the DIAC toolkit to demonstrate the benefits of hiring refugee workers. For example:

> Our refugee employees have shown great dedication and determination to their work and a surprising synergy with the region ... Based on our experience with Karen refugees and other migrants, we encourage any employer to embrace this opportunity and make a difference (DIAC 2013, p. 5).

As well as quotes, case studies often contain practice principles, advice from employers, links to model company policies, and descriptions of how employers made their employment practices more inclusive.

Figure 2.4   Example of a toolkit case study

Case study
Giving you a start

Marks & Spencer

Marks & Spencer offers 'Marks and Start' voluntary work placements for disadvantaged groups, including homeless, disabled, young people and lone parents. Candidates for the placements, which last between two and four weeks, are sourced by Marks & Spencer's charity partners: Gingerbread, the Prince's Trust, DisabledGo and Business in the Community. These organisations prepare candidates for their placements, helping them to recognise the skills that they already have and building self-confidence and motivation. Over the last six years almost 3,500 people have completed the programme. Of the volunteers placed at Marks & Spencer, 40 per cent go on to find work with the company or elsewhere within three months of completing the placement.

Participants are allocated a 'buddy' who will be their main point of contact. They also undertake induction training and a series of coaching cards during their placement. At the end of the placement participants receive an accredited certificate, and the partnership organisations continue to work with them on finding employment.

Claire Ford, Community Partnerships Manager at Marks & Spencer, explains:

"Even if the placement doesn't lead to a job, Marks and Start is a major step forward to help people get into work. Just to have this on their CV and the opportunity to do two weeks' work experience creates a huge boost in their confidence."

In addition, the programme creates development opportunities for existing staff, who can use the experience they gain from 'buddying' to become staff coaches. And as Ford points out:

"Buddies and coaches feel really motivated when someone they've taken under their wing and trained gets a job."

Some ex-participants go on to become buddies for new candidates and some buddies do further work with the charity partner.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that in stores where Marks and Start is run, staff perceptions about particular groups have changed. Managers at the Rotherham store found that employees were moved by stories of the participants involved in the scheme, and became much more reluctant to judge or label people.

Claire Ford goes on to explain the business benefits of the programme to the company:

"At M&S it's very important for us to have a cross-population appeal. A diverse workplace with staff from a range of backgrounds means that customers have someone they can relate to when they're in store. We work hard to try to make sure that happens across the country."

In addition, staff originally recruited through the Marks and Start programme have high retention and low absence rates.

Working in partnership on programmes like Marks and Start is also beneficial, as Ford describes: 'We simply couldn't have done it without our charity partners. They do so much of the preparation, selection and training – all the things that might make employers nervous of going into this area because of the resources that may be required. Through Marks and Start we've created good and long-lasting relationships with our charity partners – it's a win-win situation.'

"Even if the placement doesn't lead to a job, Marks and Start is a major step forward to help people get into work. Just to have this on their CV and the opportunity to do two weeks' work experience creates a huge boost in their confidence."

Claire Ford, Community Partnerships Manager

Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission 2010, pp. 41–2

However, an associated risk of toolkits is that they may also have the effect of reinforcing stereotypes about unemployment or labour market disadvantage, rather than challenging conventional assumptions. The case study in Figure 3.4 is an example of how the unemployment of young people may be represented as an individual failing (of low skills, self-confidence or motivation), while the intervention of a 'charitable' program creates an opportunity—'even if it doesn't lead to a job'. Toolkits that reproduce stereotypes or assumptions are less likely to influence the 'inclusiveness' of mainstream recruitment practices.

Within our sample, the international toolkits included more case studies and examples of actual implementation. The Australian toolkits appeared less empirically informed and showed less evidence of consultation and input from businesses, LMIs or jobseekers.

3 Key themes in guidance to employers

Our analysis identified three key themes of employer guidance in the reviewed toolkits:

- the importance of modifying human resources policies and practices. Restrictive recruitment processes are highlighted as creating employment barriers for disadvantaged jobseeker groups

- the need to consider the human resources process from a 'systemic' point of view, rather than focusing on targeted intake programs for particular groups

- the role of 'champions' in an implementation strategy.

Modifying recruitment practices in the open labour market

Almost all toolkits refer to the effects of standard employer recruitment practices on different jobseeker groups. This is described as a 'screening out' effect in the toolkit of the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC 2014, p. 20): recruitment approaches lead to a 'small talent pool from which to choose'. Recruitment practices in focus in the toolkits include:

- job advertisements

- position descriptions and selection criteria

- interviews

- candidate and job 'matching' processes.

The toolkits suggest that employment barriers are created by 'inadvertent' discrimination on the basis of age or cultural background, culturally or gender-specific recruitment 'events', narrow selection criteria, and risk management in human resources approaches.

Few authors suggest that employers intentionally discriminate during recruitment. However, the *Workplace diversity toolkit* argues that stereotypical and prejudiced views can exist about groups with 'visible difference', and its advice is for employers to challenge their own assumptions about cultural and organisational fit (TasCOSS 2012, p. 8). Discussing age discrimination, the VEOHRC claims that 'ageist stereotypes and discriminatory work practices still represent a significant barrier to meaningful participation in employment for older people' (VEOHRC 2010b, p. 1). The authors of the *Workplace cultural diversity tool* argue:

> Some organisations are not aware that they inadvertently discriminate against employees, and potential employees, from different cultural backgrounds (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014).

The ACIB toolkit (2001) defines three core objectives of human resource management (HRM): attracting qualified job candidates, retaining desirable employees, and motivating employees. The authors then advocate an approach that uses HRM to

broaden recruitment pools and remove discriminatory practices. The intended result is that the employer develops 'supply pipelines' from underrepresented jobseeker groups (ACIB 2001, p. 24).

FECCA contends that although recruitment processes may be designed to be 'fair and reasonable' on merit, these notions are not culture or gender neutral (FECCA 2013, p. 13). Job-related key selection criteria may be unknown to people of other countries and cultures. Their advice is to make use of more 'open' criteria: job descriptions should 'encourage a diverse pool of applicants and demonstrate commitment to cultural diversity and principles of access and equity' (p. 8).

Similarly, the Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) argues that job advertisements, position descriptions and selection criteria should be written in plain language and be easy for people from different cultural backgrounds to understand.

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) points out that job interviews are 'highly culturally specific events' that 'reflect the normative values and styles of the mainstream culture', and rely upon 'subjective, culturally influenced judgments of candidates' ways of presenting themselves' (TasCOSS 2012, p. 9). Without some modifications, non-mainstream applicants are unable to compete in standard recruitment events.

The VEOHRC also points out that, during recruitment, employers should 'focus solely on matching the skills and experience of the candidates against the requirements of the job' (VEOHRC 2010a, p. 2). This implies that other factors such as culture, race, or age should not determine the candidate and job 'matching' decision.

Some toolkits emphasise the unfortunate influence of risk management on recruitment. ACCI, for example, argues that while businesses may think mature-age workers are 'risky' hires, this is an 'incorrect perception' because the valuable skills and knowledge that this group possesses offsets any adjustments required (ACCI & VECCI 2012, pp. 3–6). Similarly, an employer quote included in the DIAC toolkit suggests that to 'maximise the effectiveness of the workplace,' employers should 'not highlight what employees don't have, but highlight what they do have' (DIAC 2013, p. 24).

Targeted programs or 'holistic' human resource strategies?

Some employer toolkits recommend designing targeted programs that respond to specific needs. Particularly for young people, special targeted programs such as apprenticeships, workplace training, and mentoring and buddy systems are recommended (e.g. Fair Work Ombudsman 2013). Young people are highlighted by the Fair Work Ombudsman as 'a vulnerable section of the workforce and deserve particular protection' (p. 1). A similar approach is to suggest for young people bridging or 'pipeline' strategies that do not necessarily include actual jobs—such as traineeships, scholarships and school-based programs (e.g. ACIB 2001). Gap Inc. (2012, p. 8) also argue that soft

skills training, 'work-ready' skills development programs, and 'learn and earn' programs such as apprenticeships are valuable for young jobseekers.

FECCA explains why targeted programs are sometimes needed:

> If all workers were treated the same, most workplaces would be supporting unequal opportunities and outcomes – for example, between men and women, immigrants and Australian-born, disabled and non-disabled, older and younger workers. Effective diversity strategies see difference as both a strength and a challenge needing planned responses for an optimal outcome. This must be explained to employees so they understand why targeted programs are used for some workers. Immigrants make up one quarter of the workforce, so they are a substantial minority group (FECCA 2013, p. 21).

Elsewhere, however, ACCI and VECCI argue (referring to mature-age workers) that specific policies might 'stigmatise the group', and highlights the need for a 'holistic human resource strategy' (ACCI & VECCI 2012, p. 8). The National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre also suggests that 'the best outcomes are achieved from an integrated, age diverse approach, rather than specific initiatives solely aimed at older workers' (NSPAC 2014, p. 42). These comments emphasise that targeted programs may exclude some candidates from mainstream employment by over-emphasising disadvantage.

The *Investing in experience* toolkit encourages HR managers to examine the 'whole' process from job design and recruitment through to training, development and retention (DEEWR 2012). Similarly, the AHRC web-based toolkit (2014) takes the employer through an end-to-end review process (with policy and procedural suggestions), with categories of:

- leadership and commitment
- strategy development
- recruitment and retention approaches
- building workplace 'culture'.

TasCOSS (2012, p. 5) also promotes a 'systemic approach to embedding diversity into the organisation's vision, goals, policies and strategic plans'.

The repeated emphasis on holistic HR approaches and systemic reviews throughout most of the toolkits suggests that the preference of authors of all types (including government, private and industry bodies) is for employers to restructure their mainstream work practices, rather than to design separate or 'special' programs to 'accommodate' disadvantaged jobseeker groups.

Role of 'champions' in implementation

The role of 'champions'—enthusiastic and committed leaders within the employing organisation—is emphasised strongly in four toolkits as an implementation strategy. Champions, it is argued, can 'lead, promote, and encourage' participation in diversity and inclusion initiatives (NSPAC 2014, p. 35). 'Committed business leaders are essential', argue ACCI & VECCI (2012, p. 7). Such individuals also play a role in active promotion of policy and programs, helping and encouraging staff, advocating, and monitoring compliance (FECCA 2013). Finally, champions of diversity initiatives can communicate the company vision, and 'avoid breeding cynicism by encouraging leaders to talk the talk and walk the walk' (Diversity Council Australia 2014).

4 Discussion

Practicality and business orientation of employer tools

The sample of toolkits in this study offers a broad range of practical tools to employers. As noted above, most tools are designed to assist employers to change their human resource policies and practices. Most emphasise systemic approaches to inclusive human resource management, while some toolkits acknowledge that it is sometimes appropriate to design special programs. Most toolkit guidance is structured around process changes (rather than strategic choices) changes to enable inclusive employment, with associated tools to assess and plan for these changes.

There is a widespread emphasis on self-assessment, audit and reflection by employers in order to identify and address possible demand-side employment barriers. Information is also presented to convince employers that the apparent disadvantages associated with young people, mature-age and CALD groups can be converted into business benefits.

Contributing to a better understanding of employment barriers

Although it is unclear to what extent toolkits are used by employers, the proliferation of these materials has the potential to improve understanding of employment barriers. The diversity of toolkit producers suggests there is interest in many sectors to build this understanding. The contributions of business groups, such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the Australian Industry Group (AIG), Diversity Council of Australia (DCA), and public institutions, such as the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman, increase the potential influence of toolkits among employers.

Cumulatively, toolkits can add to the currency and impact of terms such as workforce 'diversity' or 'inclusion'. In addition, a focus by employers on one category of disadvantaged jobseekers may open up opportunities for others. As TasCOSS argues:

> A workplace culture that supports diversity ensures that all people have the opportunity to compete for careers without being disadvantaged by difference ... An inclusive work environment allows employees to contribute to their full potential through recognising and supporting their diverse strengths and needs (TasCOSS 2012, p. 4).

That some employers will consider adapting HR practice to embrace inclusion and diversity is a positive step towards addressing disadvantage in the labour market.

However, an emphasis on 'difference' in workplace culture can itself become a disadvantage for some employees. It can have the effect of reproducing stereotypes or conventional assumptions, rather than making workplaces more 'inclusive' overall.

'One size fits all' guidance?

Although toolkits are sometimes designed with specific jobseeker groups in mind, none in our sample were targeted to specific types of employers – either in terms of size or sector. Employers are discussed in generic terms, presumably to appeal to the broadest possible cross-section of readers. As a result, toolkits tend to present 'one size fits all' employer guidance. Understanding how well generic guidance actually applies to different employer types would require additional evidence on usage or 'uptake' of toolkits (which is beyond the scope of this study).

Limitations of toolkits

Toolkits require 'willing' employers and 'job-ready' candidates

Each toolkit reviewed in this study is designed to be implemented directly by employers. An implicit assumption is that employers are experiencing the effects of labour or skills shortages, and are already willing to consider recruiting from disadvantaged or underemployed groups. For example, one toolkit argues:

> We know that employers' appetite to recruit more young people is increasing (CIPD 2013, p. 1).

However, the toolkits do not present *evidence* that employers are willing to consider alternative sources of labour, or have an 'appetite' to actively seek them out. In a tight labour market such as Australia's, employers may need to limit the pool of candidates for available jobs, rather than increase it. Such employers may have little interest in making recruitment processes more 'open' or 'inclusive'.

In advocating the inclusion of certain groups of jobseekers identified by their age or cultural background, toolkits also emphasise the need for different treatment of these groups from the 'mainstream'. An alternative approach would be to recognise that a broad range of candidates have the skills and attributes suited to available jobs, and that filtering or screening out on the basis of age or cultural background is unwise from a business perspective, and potentially discriminatory.

Another assumption behind most toolkits is that disadvantaged jobseekers are ready to take up the jobs that are available, and have adequate human capital—work history, local experience, skills and qualifications. In fact, individual jobseekers have different levels of 'readiness' for the job market, and therefore require different degrees of support. In addition, the possibility that young people, CALD and mature-age jobseekers may be experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage such as housing insecurity or ill health—placing them further from mainstream employment opportunities—is not discussed in the toolkits we reviewed.

The necessary conditions of a 'willing' employer and 'job-ready' candidate therefore limit the audiences and contexts to which the toolkits are relevant.

Role of LMIs is unclear

Few of the toolkits in this study make reference to the role of LMIs, employment agencies or other third parties in supporting employment efforts for disadvantaged jobseekers. Exceptions among Australian toolkits include the one produced by DIAC (2013, p. 11), which suggests that employers partner with organisations experienced in working with migrants to advise on how to 'introduce migrants into your business and help other employees connect with them'. ACIB (2001) also recommends that employers consider engaging specialised recruitment agencies, and recruiting from non-traditional sources such as community groups or migrant service agencies. The US-based Gap Inc. youth toolkit lists dozens of partner organisations for consideration by employers (Gap Inc. 2012).

While toolkits emphasise employers' responsibility for removing recruitment barriers, LMIs can support jobseekers into employment by addressing job readiness. A more holistic approach to inclusive employment would consider a combination of employer and LMI interventions to create sustainable workforce engagement, as well as the enabling conditions for workforce participation—such as housing, transport or childcare.

Toolkits support micro, not macro-level change

Few of the reviewed toolkits discuss the broader social or economic implications of unemployment and underemployment, or labour market inequity. This may be because most are designed for individual employers. Any change at the micro level is therefore incremental and voluntary.

Australian toolkits, in particular, also lack reference to broader employment initiatives or any evidence of industry and multi-sector partnerships. In contrast, there is evidence in the US and UK toolkits that government agencies and the community sector are supporting partnerships with employers to boost employment outcomes for different jobseeker groups.

Author assumptions and limited evidence of implementation

A challenge in assessing the usefulness of toolkits is to understand *how* the guidance and tools were developed, and the motivations of authoring organisations in doing so.

In some toolkits, for example, employers are asked to compare their organisational practices against 'best practices' or 'standards' (see Figure 4.1 overleaf). This suggests that a review of existing examples has been conducted to arrive at a reasonable standard. However, few toolkits articulate a methodology that suggests this kind of evidence has been reviewed. As a result, some of the guidance in toolkits is difficult to verify as evidence-based, or having been tested.

The rationale for developing employer toolkits often reflects the producers of the document and their organisational mission. Toolkits developed by employer associations emphasise business benefits and make less reference to social issues or compliance. For example, the rationale for 'cracking the cultural ceiling' is presented by DCA (a member-driven organisation representing employers) in terms of leadership potential, profit and performance, innovation, market access, brand and talent (Diversity Council Australia 2014). Toolkits developed by social organisations take a different approach and emphasise a commitment to broader concepts of diversity in the workforce and the community (e.g. TasCOSS 2012).

Voices of jobseekers are not prominent

Few of the reviewed toolkits present the 'voices' and perspectives of workers who face difficulties finding work. This means that toolkits do not offer employers insights into how people experience labour market disadvantage.

Figure 4.1   Example of a checklist
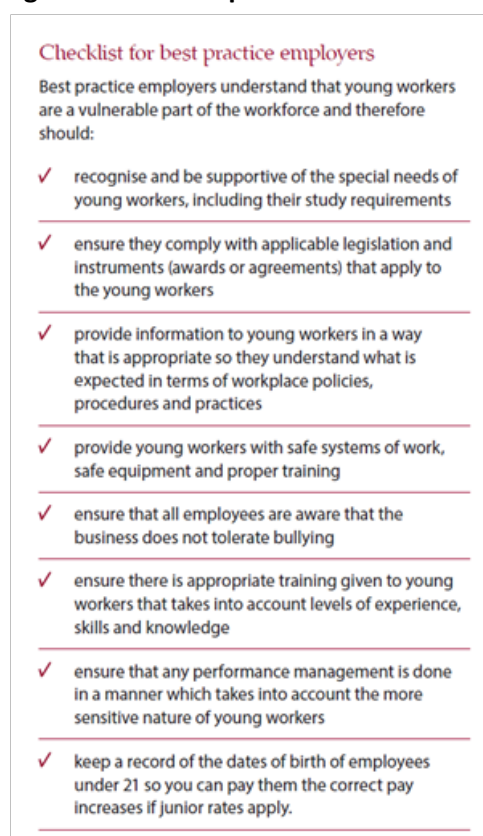
Source: Fair Work Ombudsman 2013, p. 6

There are some exceptions. For example, the DCA online toolkit is based on a survey of over 300 people with Asian cultural backgrounds, and provides a perspective on Asian workers in the Australian economy. They report experiencing cultural bias, Western leadership models and difficulties establishing 'relationship capital' (Diversity Council Australia 2014). The DIAC toolkit also includes several quotes from migrant jobseekers about their experiences engaging with Australian employers.

More often, however, the extent to which jobseeker groups have contributed to the content of toolkits is not clear, and examples of their input (direct quotes or general descriptions) are not included.

Conclusion: Advancing an inclusive employment agenda?

This study concludes that toolkits can play a role in promoting more equitable access to employment opportunities, by using different strategies and value propositions to engage employers. However, broader tasks of changing the design of jobs and the functioning of the labour market, while promoting social integration, need to be driven by larger-scale efforts that involve more than just willing employers.

Most of the reviewed employer toolkits do not include discussion of the social or economic implications of unemployment, underemployment or labour market inequity. They are resources designed for implementation by individual employers, and do not offer commentaries on macro-level challenges. Australian toolkits, in particular, also lack reference to possible industry and multi-sector employment initiatives.

The potential impact of the toolkit approach is also limited by the assumption that employer audiences are amenable to recruiting from non-mainstream jobseeker groups. The argument that 'jobs are available if only employers can be persuaded to offer them to unemployed people' (Ingold & Stuart 2014) does not hold for all employer types or sectors of the economy. This means that toolkits and other 'off-the-shelf' resources play only a small part in responding to labour market disadvantage.

While they are helpful for providing information about employment barriers and generic guidance for reducing them, toolkits still require contextualisation and 'activation' and by employers. Implementing the guidance requires commitment, negotiation, planning and preparation. No matter how comprehensive, toolkits alone cannot address labour market disadvantage without coordinated action between employers, policy-makers and LMIs.

Appendices

Appendix A. Organisational websites consulted

Organisation	URL	Toolkits?
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	http://www.acci.asn.au/Research-and-Publications/Publications/Employ-Outside-the-Box	Yes
Australian Council of Social Service	http://www.tascoss.org.au/Publications/Reports.aspx	Yes (via TasCOSS)
Australian Human Resources Institute	https://www.ahri.com.au/resources	No
Australian Human Rights Commission	https://www.humanrights.gov.au/employers/toolkits-guidelines-and-other-resources	Yes
Australian Industry Group	https://employment.gov.au/investing-experience-employment-charter-and-tool-kit-0	Yes (via DoE)
Business Council of Australia	http://www.bca.com.au/publications	No
Business Tasmania	http://www.business.tas.gov.au/tools-and-checklists	Yes (non-specific)
Business Victoria	http://www.business.vic.gov.au/hiring-and-managing-staff	Yes (non-specific)
Council of Small Business Australia	http://www.cosboa.org.au/	No
Department of Employment	https://employment.gov.au/investing-experience-employment-charter-and-tool-kit-0	Yes
Diversity Council of Australia	http://www.dca.org.au/dca-research/cracking-the-cultural-ceiling.html	Yes
Job Services Australia	https://employment.gov.au/job-services-australia-jsa?resource=	No
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)	http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/the-workplace	Yes

Appendix B. Summary of selected toolkits

Note: In the table below toolkits are arranged according to target group(s).

	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
#	Title (with link)	Author(s) & country	Date	Target group(s)	Format of tools	Strengths/limitations
1	*Employ outside the box: the business case for recruiting and retaining mature age workers*	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) & Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) (Australia)	2012	Mature-age workers	• Guidance on HR policies and practice • Steps to develop recruitment/retention strategies • Myth-busting	<u>Strengths</u> • Promotes assets of mature-age workers • Addresses myths/misconceptions • Links cohort to broader diversity management issues <u>Limitations</u> • No examples or case studies • No evidence of consultation or references
2	*Investing in experience tool kit: making age an advantage*	Australian Government/Australian Industry Group (AIG) (Australia)	2012	Mature-age workers	• Self-assessment tools and checklists • Step-by-step guidance • Links to government programs and services	<u>Strengths</u> • Presents OECD and ABS data on aspects of workforce ageing • Addresses holistic HR cycle <u>Limitations</u> • Does not address workplace culture • No examples or case studies

	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
#	Title (with link)	Author(s) & country	Date	Target group(s)	Format of tools	Strengths/limitations
3	*Age management toolkit for employers*	National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC) (Australia)	2014	Mature-age workers	• Step-by-step guidance ('from start to finish') • Suggestions for implementation strategy	Strengths • Based on strong research design and evidence • Aimed at wide range of employment stakeholders, including unions, training providers and LMIs Limitations • Breadth/detail may not be applicable for smaller employers • Resource demands of a highly-structured, strategic approach • No case studies or examples
4	*Right smart employers toolkits*	Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) (Australia)	2010	Mature-age workers (and others)	• Self-audit tool based on compliance with equal opportunity legislation • Checklists • FAQs • Policy templates	Strengths • Emphasis on designing and implementing equal opportunity policies Limitations • Simplistic yes/no questions in audit • No case studies or examples
5	*Connections: an employer's guide to working with migrants and refugees*	Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) (Australia)	2013	CALD (Refugees and migrants)	• Tips and suggestions • Links to government programs and services	Strengths • Quotes and testimonials from businesses • Voices of migrants represented Limitations • More high-level, less specific and practical guidance • Few direct strategies included

#	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
	Title (with link)	Author(s) & country	Date	Target group(s)	Format of tools	Strengths/limitations
6	*Harmony in the workplace: delivering the diversity dividend*	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) (Australia)	2013	CALD	• Recruitment, development and retention tips • Legal frameworks • Myth-busting	Strengths • Focus on discrimination-related employment barriers • More detailed analysis of Australian labour market context and opportunities Limitations • Guidance may not be realistic or applicable for smaller employers • Lack of direct, practical 'tools'
7	*Workplace cultural diversity tool*	Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) & Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) (Australia)	2014	CALD	• Web-based assessment tool • 'Best practice standards' • Case studies • Description of key terms e.g. 'barriers', 'pathways'	Strengths • Based on detailed literature review and research • Practical and easy to navigate • Emphasis on recruitment/selection 'bias' and inclusion Limitations • Emphasis on formal policies and strategies – may not be appropriate for small business • Case studies are mostly large employers

	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
#	**Title (with link)**	**Author(s) & country**	**Date**	**Target group(s)**	**Format of tools**	**Strengths/limitations**
8	*Cracking the cultural ceiling: future proofing your business in the Asian century*	Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) (Australia)	2014	CALD	• Web-based guidance and tips • 'Talent lock' and 'Talent key' (problem/solution) format	<u>Strengths</u> • Based on survey data and consultations with people from Asian cultural backgrounds • Clear, easy to navigate, compelling statistics for employers <u>Limitations</u> • Emphasis on existing workforce rather than access to labour market • Narrow focus on 'Asian talent'
9	*Orientation, retention and promotion: a guide for building welcoming and inclusive workplaces for new immigrant workers*	DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society (Canada)	2011	CALD	• Step-by-step guidance • Glossary of terms • Examples and case studies • Checklists	<u>Strengths</u> • Based on consultation and research with business and community organisations • Part of a broader set of employer resources targeting diversity groups <u>Limitations</u> • Emphasis on 'skilled' immigrants only
10	*Hiring and retaining skilled immigrants: a cultural competence toolkit*	British Columbia Human Resources Management Association (BC HRMA) (Canada)	2012	CALD	• HR process guidance • Tips • Cultural competency tools (e.g. ranking matrices)	<u>Strengths</u> • Includes quotes from employers <u>Limitations</u> • Focused on HR practitioners only • Emphasis on 'skilled' immigrants

	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
#	Title (with link)	Author(s) & country	Date	Target group(s)	Format of tools	Strengths/limitations
11	*Have you recruited staff from overseas? Is it working well?*	Settlement Services NZ (New Zealand)	2011	CALD	• Informative 'cards' • High-level tips • Checklists	Strengths • Perspectives of CALD employees represented • Clear and visual Limitations • Very limited guidance and more focused on awareness-raising
12	*Best practice guide: an employer's guide to employing young workers*	Fair Work Ombudsman (Australia)	2013	Young people	• Descriptive information • General guidance • Brief checklist	Strengths • Situated within a series of publications on 'work & family' Limitations • High-level guidance only • No case studies or examples • No recruitment guidance
13	*Not just making tea... reinventing work experience*	UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) (UK)	2014	Young people (Work experience)	• 'Myth-busting' • Quotes from employers • Links to forms of support/assistance and relevant organisations • Case studies	Strengths • Links to broader social challenges of youth disengagement and benefits of work experience • Draws on research/consultations with employers and young jobseekers Limitations • Limited practical guidance • No specific 'tools'

	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
#	**Title (with link)**	**Author(s) & country**	**Date**	**Target group(s)**	**Format of tools**	**Strengths/limitations**
14	*Recruiting young people: top tips for employers*	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (UK)	2013	Young people	• High-level recruitment guidance	<u>Strengths</u> • Part of a broader research program on the role of employers in reducing youth unemployment • Emphasis on making recruitment more inclusive for young people <u>Limitations</u> • Brief/limited detail
15	*Connecting youth and business: a toolkit for employers*	Gap Inc. (USA)	2012	Young people	• Step-by-step instructions for creating a youth-focused program	<u>Strengths</u> • Grounded in statistical and empirical evidence <u>Limitations</u> • Focused on program response, rather than core practice adaptations
16	*Work experience placements that work: a guide for employers*	CIPD (UK)	2012	Young people (work experience)	• High-level HR guidance • Case studies and 'best practice examples'	<u>Strengths</u> • Examples and quotes <u>Limitations</u> • Focused on a specific type of program (2–8 week placements) • No practical tools (general guidance)
17	*Workplace diversity toolkit*	Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) (Australia)	2012	Diversity groups (general)	• Good practices and recruitment tips • Examples of workforce diversity plans • Links to programs, services and resources	<u>Strengths</u> • Highlights multiple forms of disadvantage and barriers <u>Limitations</u> • Very high-level guidance (less practical)

	TOOL				APPRAISAL	
#	Title (with link)	Author(s) & country	Date	Target group(s)	Format of tools	Strengths/limitations
18	*Attract, retain and motive: a toolkit for diversity management*	DIMIA/Australian Centre for International Business (ACIB) (Australia)	2001	Diversity groups	• Series of questions for employers mapped to HRM processes • Case studies from Australian companies • Best practice recruitment and selection tips	Strengths • Strong theoretical and empirical evidence base • Detailed exploration of HRM process Limitations • Language is focused on procedure and policy and may be less practical for many employers
19	*An employer's guide to: creating an inclusive workplace*	Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK)	2010	Diversity groups	• Step-by-step guidance • Self-reflection questions • Case studies • Q&A • Links to resources	Strengths • Detail and variety of case studies • Addresses a variety of business types/sizes Limitations • Does not contain guidance for working with specific cohorts • Mainly focused on voices of employers/existing staff, rather than program participants themselves
20	*Employing a diverse workforce: making it work*	Alberta Employment and Immigration (Canada)	2008	Diversity groups	• Practical recruitment advice • Steps to building an 'inclusion plan' • Self-assessment checklist	Strengths • Addresses full HR cycle and broad base of business owners and recruiters Limitations • Voices of diversity groups not represented • Specifically situated within Alberta labour market

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