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Wraparound Service Co-Design:

Supporting Sustainable Employment of Ethnically & Culturally Diverse Communities

March 2023
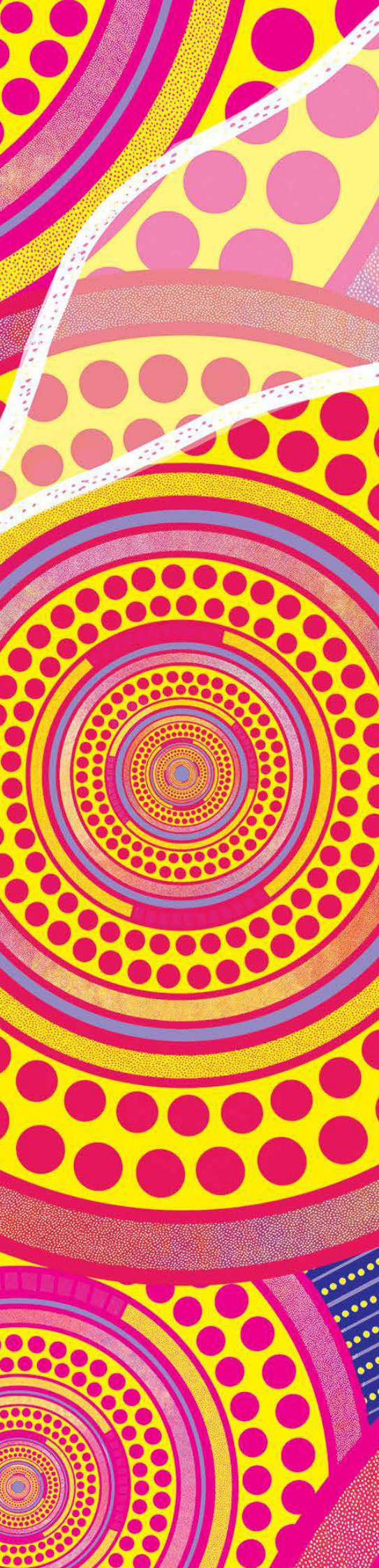
Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woiwurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

Artwork: Luwaytini by Mark Cleaver, a proud Palawa person and RMIT Master of Human Resource Management student.

Research Team

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Key Partners

In collaboration with:

Acknowledgements

Abur

Abur is 22 years old and lives in Springvale. He has a son and is an active member of his community.

He volunteers at a local community organisation. Volunteer work gives him a sense of achievement and makes him happy and fulfilled as he is contributing to society.

He would like to engage in paid work but is worried about how he will get to work on time as he wants to be reliable. Abur has a medical condition which prevents him from driving, and public transport is too far and unreliable in the area where he lives. A 15-minute trip in a car can take an hour using public transport and due to his medical condition, he does not feel safe on public transport.

Abur's father is his carer and drives him to the community organisation where Abur volunteers his time assisting other newly arrived migrants. But often, Abur is late to his volunteer work as he relies on his father for transportation.

For Abur to find and stay at work, he needs a workplace that understands his health needs and a transport solution.

A co-created, designed around the person and placed-based solution is needed to remove the barriers to Abur's employment and enable him to find and stay in work.

An effective solution requires the collaboration of a variety of stakeholders including, employer(s), local council, individuals and community groups.

Contents

Executive Summary

The aim of this research was to identify a framework for wraparound services to support youth and their families from ethnically and culturally diverse communities in the Dandenong area to find and retain employment. The project was funded by Ability Works (through the Westpac Foundation Community Grant) and Jobsbank. The project was inspired by collectivist relational philosophies common to many culturally and linguistically diverse communities living in the Greater Dandenong area such as African, Afghani and Indian communities. Ubuntu philosophy exemplifies these principles such as recognition, inclusion, participation, relationships, and collective wellbeing and success. The Ubuntu philosophy was used alongside co-design principles as a methodological approach in framing the project's activities.

This project emerged from a three-month pilot program carried out by Ability Works and Afri-Aus Care in 2021 for African women experiencing long-term unemployment. The outcomes of the pilot evidenced the potential role of wraparound services in enabling participation in employment by people that have experienced long-term unemployment due to a range of barriers. Philpart & Rose suggest wraparound services can cover "a range of issues, such as educational, technical and vocational skills training... and job placement that support target groups to overcome personal and systemic barriers to employment" (2015, p.2).

The co-design process consisted of seven focus groups involving over 60 people in total, including women, men and young people experiencing significant barriers to employment in the City of Greater Dandenong. The findings revealed a strong desire and need for work to meet basic needs as well as to develop a sense of achievement and belonging, reflecting Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Navy, 2020).

The findings highlighted that barriers to employment are multi-causal and intersectional, produced by the complex interactions of structural, systemic, and individual challenges and barriers which need to be addressed by taking a multi-pronged approach. As such, solutions also need to be multi-dimensional. This requires attention to the intersections across micro (individual and family), meso (group, organisational, community), and macro (social structures, institutions, systems) dimensions of change and strategic collaboration between government, business, and communities. The research highlights the conditions and supports required to enable employment, and underlines the importance of strong partnerships amongst stakeholders in co-creating solutions and strategies.

While some of the barriers identified (for example, inaccessible childcare and transport) are problems experienced by many in the broader society, intersectional disadvantage compounds these problems and presents greater barriers for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The lack of social capital experienced by those who are newly arrived migrants and refugees underscores the greater need to co-design and co-create wraparound supports.

This report explores the key findings from the research and presents a way forward through a proposed framework for wraparound services. The framework is built on a set of overarching principles which should guide further work to promote employment access and opportunity. These principles will ensure that strategy and service development is centred around the lived experience of individuals and community, co-creating and tailoring solutions with the workforce and around the person, whilst also addressing structural change.

This must be central to all action to create meaningful and sustainable change.

A Way Forward: A Proposed Framework for Wraparound Services

This section provides a summary of the proposed framework for wraparound services. It also sets out the collaborative approach that will need to be taken in order to develop this work further, building on what we have learnt about the wraparound supports and services that would promote access to sustainable employment for youth and families from culturally and ethnically diverse communities.

A Proposed Framework for Wraparound Services:

1. **Key principles**
2. **Dimensions and recommendations**
3. **Implementation: Co-creation in practice**

More detail is provided in section 3.3.

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1. Key Principles

Our focus groups with different community groups, together with a review of the academic and grey literature, identified four key overarching principles which should guide further development of the wraparound employment support framework we share in this report. These principles reflect values consistent with collaboration, partnership, and inclusion. If embedded in further development work, it will ensure innovative, tailored, flexible, and place based solutions that acknowledge the needs and priorities of diverse stakeholders and build on the strengths of local communities.

Co-creation: Co-creation is the process of ongoing collaboration between diverse stakeholders with the aim of developing in-context strategies for addressing complex and intersectional challenges or problems.

Designed around the person: This guiding principle acknowledges that people have different abilities and requirements and that these need to be understood and responded to, in order to enable participation and optimise resources.

Culturally respectful and responsive: Respect for diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds is critical in all parts of society, including the workplace, and should be reflected in values, behaviour, practices and policies.

Place based: Place based approaches reflect the values of the above guiding principles in that they prioritise collaboration with local communities 'in place' to develop services and resources that both address contextual issues and needs whilst also building on local capabilities and assets.

— 2. Recommendations

The recommendations are divided into two dimensions: operational and relational.

1. Operational

1.1 Childcare

Employers collaborate with other businesses and with government to consider more innovative approaches to childcare which are informed by employee and community needs. Childcare needs to be more accessible, affordable, flexible, and located closer to the workplace. Current services often fail to meet the needs of ethnically and culturally diverse services and thus significantly limit capacity to find and maintain employment, despite strong motivation to work. This is a barrier experienced most significantly by women and exacerbated for larger families.

1.2 Flexible hours

Employers co-design approaches to flexible working hours in response to the needs of employees, mostly women, in terms of caring responsibilities including school drop off and pick up times. The need for flexible hours also stems from parents' (and particularly women's) parental and caring duties, as highlighted by participants in this study.

1.3 Transport

Industry, government, community, and relevant community services collaborate to co-create innovative responses to transport problems to enable workers to get to work on time. Alongside improved and increased access to public transport, other models of innovative transport solutions could include shared employer work van or minibus pick up or meeting point.

1.4 Workplace socialization and education.

Employers offer accessible information about Australian workplace conditions and worker rights, remuneration and taxation, and other information that employees may need to understand, in order to trust their working environment. This needs to occur in the first few weeks of employment with regular refresher training available. Delivery of this information needs to be designed and delivered with employee and/or community representatives. The mode and point of delivery would depend on context and needs. For example, the training could be delivered by a combination of vocational education providers, employer groups, and community organisations potentially with government input.

1.5 Visa reform and advocacy

Work and study restrictions imposed by bridging visas and community detention is a major problem for some jobseekers. While this may seem out of scope in terms of wraparound services, employers can play an advocacy role with the aim of removing one of the major barriers to employment, thus addressing serious recruitment issues and the labor shortage.

1.6 English language and literacy supports

Employers work with communities and government to create workplace opportunities for employees to develop and practice English specifically related to their occupation. More support for language acquisition is required via public-private and community collaboration.

2. Relational

2.1 Cultural safety, trust, and respect

Employers collaborate closely with employee representatives to identify priorities for different cultural groups and co-develop strategies to ensure a culturally safe, trusting, and inclusive workplace. Cultural safety and trust can be developed by acknowledging diversity and creating an inclusive work environment that promotes equity and addresses discrimination.

2.2 Establish a Cultural Liaison Officer/ Community Engagement Officer role

Employers work with employees and community representatives to explore models for cultural liaison and community engagement officers. This role would facilitate communication between different community groups and employers to promote sustainable employment and proactively address culturally sensitive issues.

2.3 Ensure workers are represented in decision making processes

Employers ensure employees are represented in key decision-making processes and are properly supported to participate in these forums. This may mean, for example, ensuring relevant meetings are at family friendly times. Employers should also be encouraged to co-design change strategies with employees for optimal outcomes.

2.4 Promoting development

Employers provide supportive work environments which are physically (safe to work in), and which also offer opportunities for skill development and employment progress in order to retain staff. Employers should be transparent and provide feedback to employees about their performance, facilitating opportunities for development and progress through training and communication. This could be supported by the Cultural Liaison Officer.

3. Implementation: Co-creation in practice

Implementing the recommendations from this research will require an ongoing commitment to co-creation, involving communities at the heart of the study as well as a range of other players. It will be important to forge ahead in the spirit (and the practice) of co-creation, keeping the principles outlined previously front and centre and creating conditions for collaboration, ongoing learning and shared accountability.

To progress this agenda, a key opportunity exists for Government and or philanthropy to support the development of a place-based employment-focused social enterprise initiative in the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD). This initiative would bring industry, community, and government together to develop the framework further and 'prototype' it in its real world context, following the co-creation approach outlined in this report.

There are a number of elements that we think will be important in taking this work forward and making this work with communities in Dandenong. These are captured in our visual framework, and are:

- Whole system and locality-based collaboration
- Support and resource for prototyping and ongoing learning with communities
- System leadership and convening
- Shared accountability

Whole system and locality-based collaboration

Locality-based collaboration will be a powerful component of this work going forward. There are considerable strengths and assets in the Greater Dandenong area that can be part of a solution. There is also an appetite from local governments and others to adopt more joined-up and networked ways of working on complex challenges such as this. A strong way forward will involve ongoing collaboration with community groups and a range of local players, building on the strengths of their current offers and potentially extending and diversifying what they do into new, relevant domains.

Support and resource for prototyping and ongoing learning with communities

We recommend that the design process be followed into a new phase of prototyping, so that the wraparound support framework might be further developed with communities in Greater Dandenong. This will require some new investment and design facilitation. The 'prototype' would create a scaffold and support for a deeper inquiry into what is needed for the model to work for the communities. It would be anchored by the principles and values articulated in the framework from its inception, through implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

System leadership and convening

In taking a project such as this forward, 'systems leadership' will be critical. There is an important role for leadership in this work to 'convene the system'; to engage all the necessary players and help them to work, learn and build capability for this model together.

Shared accountability

As this work develops, it will be important to develop mechanisms for shared accountability. Ability Works is a key partner playing a leading role, but other services and sectors will need to be collaborating to ensure outcomes in a number of domains. One of the questions a 'prototyping' phase could explore is what a model and mechanism for shared accountability looks like.

Immediate next steps

- Share the key findings and recommendations with government, the community and locality to engage them in the opportunity
- Scope a 'prototyping' phase in more detail and develop a project proposal for further investment
- Prepare government, community and key partners for a further phase of prototyping work.

Wraparound Support Framework

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KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Co-created
2. Designed around the person
3. Culturally respectful and responsive
4. Place-based

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BRINGING THIS TO LIFE WILL NEED...

- Whole system and locality-based collaboration
- System leadership and convening
- Support and resource for prototyping and ongoing learning with communities
- Shared accountability

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GOVERNMENTS

INDUSTRY

Workplace socialisation and education

Childcare and flexible working

Inclusive, healthy and supportive work environment

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

COMMUNITY

Reliable transport

OUTCOMES

COMMUNITY	BUSINESS	GOVERNMENT
More people gaining and sustaining employment	Local economic growth and new business opportunities	Reduced welfare/support payments
More people with a greater sense of self worth and social connection to communities	Greater respect for and understanding of economic potential of migrant workforce	Reduced strain on community and health services

With thanks to the Noun Project contributors for images used in this diagram: Eucalyp, SBTS, afian roc, Flatart and Reza Mostmand.

Diagram 1

Rawia

Rawia is a 24-year-old confident woman who came to Australia as a refugee. She was forced to flee her country, so she was not killed because of her ethnic identity. She is happy and proud to be alive and in Australia. She wants to work but her visa status prevents many employers from hiring her. And in the cases where she does finds work, referees do not respond in a timely manner which means she misses key work opportunities.

Rawia is doing everything she can to be independent and self-sufficient. The barriers that prevent her from gaining employment are all beyond her control. Although she is disheartened and feels like giving up, she continues to try finding work.

Work and study restrictions imposed by bridging visas and community detention prevents many people from entering the workforce. While this may seem outside the scope of wraparound services, employers can play an advocacy role in removing one of the key barriers to work, this addressing recruitment issues and labour shortages creating a win-win situation for employers and job seekers.

1. Introduction and Background

Ability Works, Jobsbank, Afri-Aus Care and RMIT University collaborated to explore the enabling role of wraparound services in the sustainability of employment amongst ethnically and culturally diverse young people and their families in Greater Dandenong area of Victoria. The project was funded by Ability Works (through the Westpac Foundation Community Grant) and Jobsbank. To have greater representation and diversity, the study also included the Bakhtar Community Organisation and the Friends of Refugees. (Please see Appendix A for more information about these organisations).

This foundational study explored key stakeholders' views about their employment aspirations and needs, the types of jobs young people and their families are interested in, and the enablers of meaningful participation in work (including the type of supports that might constitute wraparound services to enhance workforce and sustain participation). Specifically, the research identified key stakeholders and informants, established a reference group, and engaged ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the Greater Dandenong area to explore the wraparound services that might be required for sustainable employment.

The methodological approach is inspired by co-design principles and collectivist philosophies shared by cultural and ethnic groups in the Greater Dandenong region. These relational philosophies, or ways of being, such as Ubuntu are common to many communities with refugee backgrounds. Seven focus groups were held with over 60 people in total, including women, men and young people experiencing significant barriers to employment in the City of Greater Dandenong. The findings revealed a strong desire and need for work to meet basic needs, and to develop a sense of achievement and belonging, reflecting Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Navy, 2020).

This report begins with an overview of the context, key demographics, and research background, then unpacks the methodology and research approach, and concludes with a description of key findings, including a proposed framework for wraparound services.

This research builds a foundation for Ability Works to set up a new employment avenue in Dandenong, creating new employment opportunities for ethnically and culturally diverse young people and their families, and demonstrating the efficacious role of wraparound services in sustainable employment. The report highlights the importance of collaboration amongst key stakeholders and the need to continue to co-create wraparound services, informed by the research findings and recommendations.

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1.1 Demographics and context

This section provides a brief overview of the demographic and other statistical factors that have informed this study in its purpose, focus and approach. The aim of this research is to better understand what type of wraparound services can support youth and their families from ethnically and culturally diverse communities to find and retain employment in the Greater Dandenong area. Central to this is the broader social issue of long-term unemployment, disengagement, and structural barriers to employment across numerous intersections including gender, age, ability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Research has shown that this is a considerable issue in Victoria and across Australia but is of particular relevance to the City of Dandenong and surrounding areas. Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse municipality in Australia, with residents from 167 different birthplaces and 187 different ancestries (SBS census explorer, 2021). Over half (64%) of its population is born overseas, and 61% from nations where English is not the main spoken language. It is also an area of high socio-economic disadvantage, ranked as the second most disadvantaged Victorian municipality on the 2016 SEIFA index (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) (Greater Dandenong statistics, 2021).
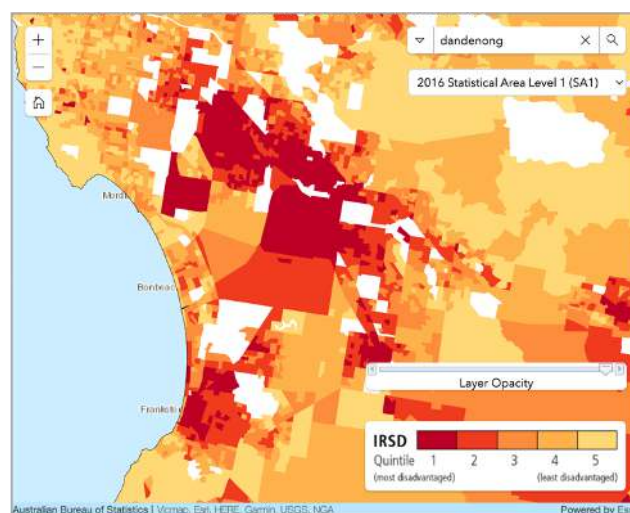
Diagram 2: ABS 2016 SEIFA index for Dandenong
https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa

Dandenong also has a significant number of refugees with many residents who have migrated to the area with origins in parts of the world with recent histories of conflict, violence and displacement. In addition to humanitarian and other settlers, 1,077 asylum seekers (bridging visa E holders) resided in Greater Dandenong in late 2020, the highest number in any Victorian municipality and representing 21% of asylum seekers in the state.

The unemployment rate in Greater Dandenong in June 2022 was 8.5%, which was significantly higher than the national rate of 3.5% during the same period. The unemployment rate peaked in June 2020 at 10.4%. (Remplan 2021).

Diagram 3: Greater Dandenong Unemployment by Quarter (https://djpr.vic.gov.au/)
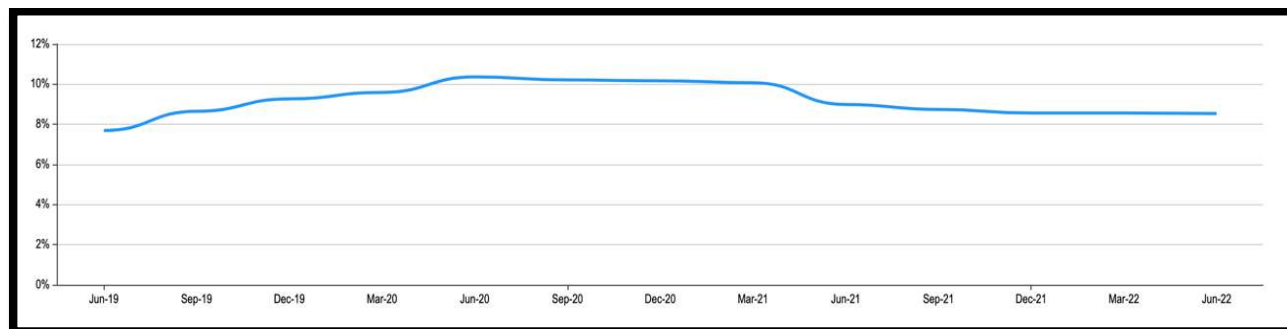
Youth Disengagement (ABS 2021 Data)

The term "youth disengagement" is generally used to identify young people (aged 15 – 24) who are not in paid work or enrolled in education. 2021 data has identified the City of Dandenong as having the third highest rate of youth disengagement in the state (39.7%), with the City of Monash (41.7%) and Boroondara (41%) being first and second (ABS 2021). https://dbr.abs.gov.au/ .

Diagram 4: Chart - ABS 2021 Census Data - Comparison of Disengagement Rates
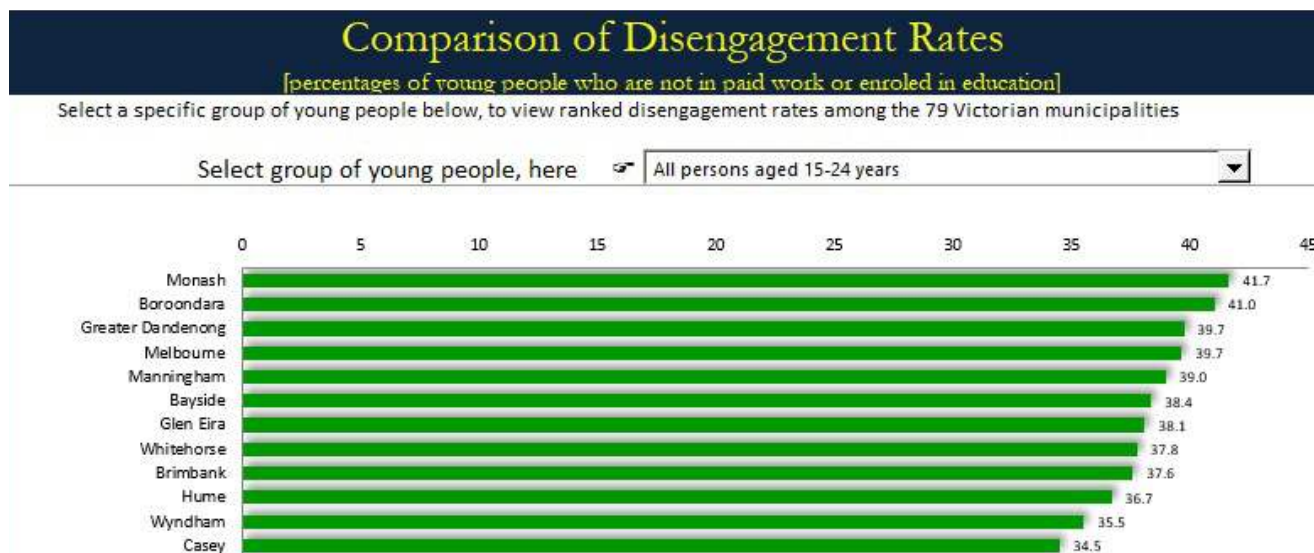
Youth Disengagement Rates by Birthplace (ABS 2021 Data)

The rate of youth disengagement by birthplace ABS data in Greater Dandenong is divided into two groups (aged 15-19 years, and 20-24 years). For people aged 15-19, those born in South Sudan, Sudan and Lebanon have the highest rates of disengagement. For the 20-24 age group, it was Lebanon, Iraq and Syria (see Charts below).

The data is similar across genders with Sudan having the highest rate of disengagement by birthplace for Males and Females aged 15-19, and some differences with the 20-24 age group, with the highest rates being Males born in Iraq and Lebanon, and Females born in Lebanon and Pakistan (ABS 2021 Data).

Diagram 5: Chart - ABS 2021 Census Data - Disengagement Rates by Birthplace 15-19
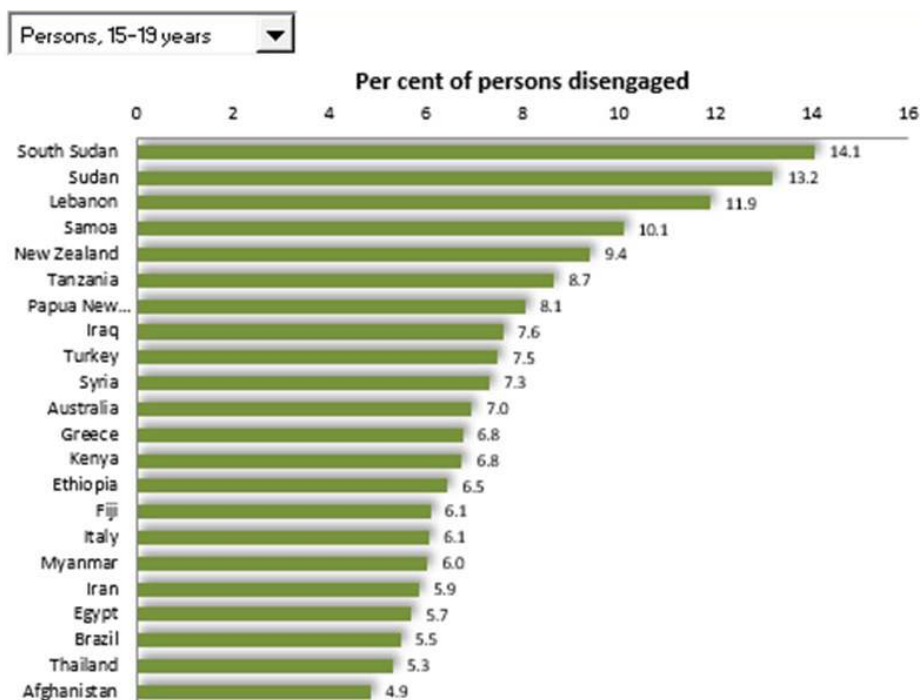
Diagram 6: Chart - ABS 2021 Census Data - Disengagement Rates by Birthplace 20-24
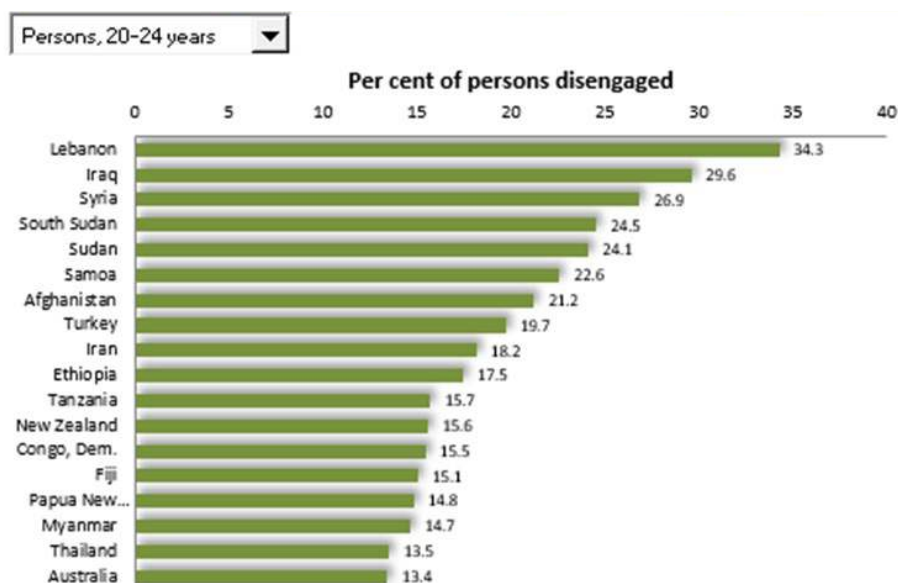
These figures demonstrate the need for this study given the long-standing issues of unemployment and disengagement in the region. For further information we recommend the following sources:

ABS Greater Dandenong 2021 Census All persons QuickStats
https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA22670

City of Dandenong Social Statistics
https://www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/about-us/statistics-and-data

Refugee population in Dandenong

The Dandenong area has a substantial population of refugee background communities, and the African and Afghan communities are some of the relatively new communities that experience high rates of unemployment. People from refugee backgrounds make up a sizeable percentage of the population in Victoria. Their refugee experience along with re-settlement challenges have a significant impact on their ability to participate fully in Australian society (Mooren et al., 2020).

Research shows that although resettlement has provided opportunities for re-building their lives, factors such as language and communication barriers, emergence of many single-parent homes due to family conflict, and divorce, remain formidable barriers to workforce participation and wellbeing (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & McMichael, 2015; Kuyini & Kivunja, 2021; Settlement Services International [SSI] 2020). Young people from refugee backgrounds are particularly at risk of disengaging from school or experience unemployment, and adults experience high rates of unemployment or limited workforce participation (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012; ABS, 2017/2018; ABS, 2020/2021; Bunde-Birouste, 2013; Correa-Velez et al., 2015; Dowling, et al., 2019; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2014; Mooren et al., 2020). Among adults, men fare better than women whose access to employment only improves marginally in their first five years of resettlement (Baker, et al. 2021). According to the Federal Department of Social Services and Australian Institute of Family Studies' Building Better Life in Australia Longitudinal Survey, women's employment outcomes increased from 1 % in the first year of resettlement to 45.5 % after five years (cited in Baker, et al., 2021)

The 2020-21 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed that nationally, barriers to workforce participation include caring for children, studying, long term illness or disability, and short-term illness/injury. Caring for children was the number one reason women were not available to start a job or work more (24%). And long-term sickness or disability was the number one male were not available to start a job (35%) (ABS 2021).

Among refugee background populations, these figures are considerably higher, and limited workforce participation is attributable to similar and other factors including English language and communication difficulties, prejudice and discrimination (Abur & Spaaij, 2016) In the Greater Dandenong area, which has a large population of African people with a refugee background and high rates of unemployment, these factors severely impact workforce participation of young people and their families. It is worth noting that a decade ago, the same structural barriers for Newly Emerging African Communities in Australia were identified through a systematic literature review as this current research has identified in multiple communities. That is because the identified structural barriers continue to be ignored and individuals are made responsible for barriers that they cannot address. Abdulkerim and Grace (2011, p.6) reflect the same barriers identified in this study such as lack of English proficiency, discrimination, lack of knowledge of the local employment context and local work experience and inadequate transport. For women, familial responsibility and lack of access to childcare were barriers to employment.

1.2 Wraparound services

Settlement Services International (SSI, 2020) maintains that refugee communities need a local approach that is tailored for their individual circumstances and alternative employment approaches, including support for individuals to navigate, enter and remain in the workforce long term, job readiness support, and post-employment support. Affirming this approach, researchers (Philpart & Rose, 2015) suggest that the use of ".... wraparound services can enable sustainable workforce participation for people who experience long-term unemployment or are vulnerable" (p.2).

Wraparound services have been used in many countries to support better workforce participation and, in Australia, have been tried in healthcare and employment settings. For example, the NSW Government's Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP). While outcomes are mixed, the evidence suggests that collaboration with communities and key stakeholders is essential in providing tailored wraparound services that would support sustainable employment through strengths and needs based approaches (Wali et al,2017).

The researchers first engaged with the broad spectrum of the African community including those who participated in the earlier Ability Works pilot. Participants were also drawn from the Myanmar Rohingya, Sri Lankan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan communities. In so doing, the project demonstrated justice in participant recruitment, foregrounding respect for the views of those with lived experience in the design of wraparound services. Since workplaces are social environments, relationships between people are central to the success of employees and employment agencies. Therefore, in designing wraparound services, a relational philosophy which reflects cultural beliefs of refugee background populations was considered important to combine with the principles of co-design. As a result, Ubuntu philosophy (an indigenous African relational philosophy, which is akin to the collectivist relational philosophies common to refugee background communities) was chosen as a key feature of this project. As Murove (2012) explains, Ubuntu philosophy '...is based on a world-view of relationality, its main insight is consequently based on the idea that as human beings we depend on other human beings to attain ultimate wellbeing' (p. 36). Ubuntu supports inclusion, participation, respect and belonging. Through the collaborative, inclusive and participatory approach, based on Ubuntu philosophy and co-design, the project upheld the role of community and lived experience in generating relevant data about the enablers and barriers to sustainable employment.

A key benefit of participating in this project was the affirmation of participants' lived experience and the opportunity to share their experiences and contribute to the design of wraparound services that address previous employment challenges. Furthermore, the research yielded population and context-specific information about enablers and barriers to workforce participation among the diverse participant groups. Such authentic information is highly relevant to the design of wraparound services and will support allocative efficiency of resources for potential wraparound services, that would sustain participation in employment.

1.3 Social and policy context – employment programs and supports

The City of Greater Dandenong has been taking a proactive and enabling approach to address the barriers that impede communities from accessing employment due to structural barriers through GameChange – Shaping a Local Employment Strategy, Making the Match project and Priority Action Groups (City of Greater Dandenong, 2021). The barriers to employment are multidimensional and therefore the solutions also require a multi-pronged approach. Through a collaborative approach and genuine co-design, this research provides insights into how these barriers can be overcome. Using the sociological imagination, we can understand the lived experiences in relation to structural barriers. This enabled the research team to approach problem solving from a critical reflexive position and at macro, meso and micro levels. That is categorising the barriers and solutions as resolvable at macro levels (government), meso (business or organisations) and micro (individuals and communities). For example, a single mother faces significant barriers to entering the workforce. There are intersectional factors that compound this such as not having access to childcare subsidy due to barriers imposed by visa restrictions. While this may be seen as an individual (micro) problem, the solution (macro and meso) would be to revise the visa restrictions (macro – that is governmental responsibility) and provide access to childcare (which can be supported through business or organisational innovation). Sasser et al (2021) and Gitlin et al (2022) highlight strategies and examples of best practice taken by business leaders and governments to overcome these barriers. For example, workplaces can provide on-site childcare, provide flexible work hours or financially (partially or completely) cover the cost of childcare.

There are many studies that address the issues of unemployment generally and provide important and practicable steps and recommendations as a way forward. Many of these recommendations are left unactioned due to the lack of leadership, collaboration and innovation with the issues remaining as everyone's and therefore no-one's area of responsibility. Communities are left to bear the brunt and suffer the consequences for their disadvantage rather than addressing the macro/meso and micro barriers that prevent them from gaining access to employment. A paradigm shift is required for there to be meaningful and sustainable change with new and innovative approaches to ensure social cohesion.

The City of Greater Dandenong has taken notable steps and undertaken research to address the barriers to sustainable employment for their communities. For example, 'Making the Match' (2021) was a key study aimed at addressing the barriers that prevent access to employment supports and employment. The study identified that there were over 60 providers supporting job seekers. The study noted that the Community Revitalisation team and Southeast Business Network (SEBN) implemented target solutions 'to bridge the gap in the market'. They found trust was a key issue and could be achieved through relationship building across key stakeholders.

'Changing Perceptions in employment' led by the City of Casey (2022) provides an effective approach to building that relationship and trust between employers and employees. The project targeted jobseekers under 25 years old and over 45 years old from CALD communities. The target industries include manufacturing, Allied Health and Community Services and Hospitality and Tourism. The key objectives of this project were to upskill 200 job seekers and secure 50 employment outcomes for jobseekers. Employing a person-centred wraparound approach, the projects connected jobseekers to jobs by 'building genuine relationships with employers' by cultivating connections, offering holistic referrals to jobseekers, facilitating industry information sessions' providing access to training to upskill job seekers. Significantly, the project outcomes exceeded the project aims by engaging with 317 job seekers, of which 109 completed training to upskill for target industries and 53 employment outcomes for job seekers were secured (City of Casey, 2022. p.24)

In addition to person-centred approaches, place-based approaches are an important and effective strategy for creating sustainable change. The study 'What works for place-based approaches in Victoria' (2022) prepared by Jesuit Social Services' Centre for Just Places, RMIT University and Centre for Community Child Health (MCRI) for the Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions emphasises 'the need for new innovating funding and program planning approaches that work across government silos and value the expertise of community partners' (2022, p.3). For example, one of the case-studies is Flemington Works, a community revitalisation site in Melbourne which focused on the causes of unemployment and took a place-based approach to support women and young people who reside in the Flemington Housing Estate to access employment opportunities. The key narratives related to this case-study include, 'strengths-based practice at a neighbourhood scale; power-sharing (co-design; partnerships across state and local government); community empowered to respond to needs (listening to lived experience: Covid-19 response; shifting towards systemic change approach' (2022 p, 6).

There have been positive steps made towards understanding what diversity and inclusion means in the workplace. The 'Wyndham Inclusive Industries Toolkit' (2022) prepared by the City of Wyndham provides an excellent and practical step towards engaging with one's own unconscious bias as well as providing the steps for creative culturally safe workplaces which are both diverse and inclusive. This is very important considering that Victoria, and in particular the City of Greater Dandenong is characterised by superdiversity. Vertovec (2007) coined the term super-diversity to describe the 'dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants...'2007, p. 1024). Thus, with the complexities of super-diversity, wraparound supports need to provide intersectional solutions for intersectional barriers. Considering that barriers and solutions have been identified and re-identified in both the scholarly and grey literature over many years (e.g., Abdulkerim and Grace, 2011), this report highlights the steps that need to be taken to address the issues by clearly arguing and highlighting the opportunity for public and private collaboration through co-design processes. It also argues the need for realistic timeframes and understanding that slow and steady progress is better than reactive, siloed, short term and unsustainable approaches to employment.

Maz

Maz is a 25-year-old single mother of 3 children. Two of her children attend primary school and her youngest attends day-care. Maz wants to work as she wants to be a good role model for her children. She wants to earn an income to provide for herself and her family. She is currently renting and wants to save money and purchase her own home. This will provide her with a sense of security and growth. Staying at home makes her feel lonely and depressed. Working will also provide her with an opportunity to meet and interact with other people. She was particularly interested in the packing work offered by Ability Works as this work will not only bring her a secure income, but she will also have the opportunity to socialise with her colleagues. Maz's friend suggested Maz could work at her workplace. Maz was delighted and took this opportunity and has secured employment as they offered flexible hours / shifts enabling her to work between school pick up and drop off.

Maz woke her young children at 5am to get them ready to attend school and day-care. She had to catch two modes of public transport to get her children to school and then drop her youngest at day-care to be able to get to work on time. While Maz was successful in finding employment, the conditions to get to and from work coupled with the distance she has to travel to take her youngest to day-care, were not sustainable for her and her family and she was unable to continue working there.

A co-created, designed around the person and placed-based solution is needed to remove the barriers to Maz's employments and enable her to find and stay in work. An effective solution requires the collaboration of a variety of stakeholders including, employer(s), local council, individuals and community groups. Both transport solutions and accessible childcare is needed for Maz to stay at work.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

The project was inspired by collectivist relational philosophies common to many culturally and linguistically diverse communities living in the Greater Dandenong area such as African, Afghani and Indian communities. Ubuntu philosophy exemplifies these principles such as recognition, inclusion, participation, relationships, and collective wellbeing and success. Ubuntu is an indigenous African relational philosophy that has similarity with relational thinking among other collectivists cultures (e.g., Afghani and Indian) from which our study participants were drawn. It was therefore deemed appropriate to use as a framework for the study. The Ubuntu philosophy was used alongside co-design principles as a methodological approach in framing the project's activities. In this regard, the integration of the inclusivity and participatory principles of Ubuntu with co-design enabled the views and lived experiences of the broad spectrum of stakeholders to be canvassed throughout the study.

This research used co-design methodology in an effort to engage with the lived experience of young people and their families seeking employment in the Greater Dandenong area. Whilst previous related research has drawn from co-design principles, this study considered human relationships to be important in workplaces and wraparound services and combined co-design with Ubuntu, an African relational philosophy to enable culturally sensitive data collection and to build suitable wraparound services.

The following page sets out what we mean by 'co-design' in greater detail.

The research project, co-designed with key stakeholders, identified key strategies for addressing barriers to employment. The research used qualitative, participatory research and co-design to generate data about work participation and views about wraparound services that would help people gain and sustain employment. Similar approaches have been used with marginalised communities and other sensitive settings in research by Goff (2021), Heenop et al (2019) and Hussain and Sanders (2012).

The importance of lived experience is now widely acknowledged in both academic and policy circles. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services has adopted a 'Mental health lived experience engagement framework' (2021). As explained by Hercus, Director of the Mental Health Branch in the DHHS:

> Hercus
> Director of the Mental Health Branch in the DHHS
>
> ... we must engage effectively with consumers and carers, our workforce, and the broader community. To do this, we recognise that our engagement activities require a paradigm shift from traditional 'deliver and inform' methods to 'involve and collaborate' through co-design and co-production approaches.
>
> ... People have the right to participate individually and collectively in all areas of decision making that affect their mental health and wellbeing and to be offered genuine and meaningful choices about their care, treatment and circumstances. This extends to developing and improving the services they use (2021, p.4)..

What is co-design?

Co-design is a shorthand term for collaborative design. It refers to creative, deliberative and participatory processes for bringing different stakeholders together to **design and co-create** new services, policies and solutions.

Co-design sets up opportunities to explore problems and solutions collaboratively, often involving people with lived experience of the issue or opportunity in focus. Projects might connect citizen wisdom and experience to that of other actors and perspectives in a locality or system, such as frontline workers, service managers, system leaders and government (as well bringing in research evidence). In this way, a co-design process might ground solutions in a deep understanding of community needs and strengths, as well as resource and other constraints. Done well, it will also build new aspirations, goals, strengths, and capabilities into the new solution as the process unfolds and new conditions are created.

Though design informed by research and collaboration with citizens, 'users' and 'consumers' has a lengthy history, many link its recent origins to participatory design movements in Scandinavian countries in the 1960s and 70s. For some, co-design has a political dimension linked to community empowerment and democratisation. For others, it is simply a route to finding a better (more suitable, desirable, and appropriate) policy and service solution.

Co-design is run in a huge variety of ways, depending on the context and purpose. It can involve a comprehensive design process (see below one popular representation of the design process), where communities of actors work together through all stages of design towards a fully tested and validated solution. Early stages of the work might involve a deep dive into current realities and experiences leading to a greater understanding and a clearer framing of the problem or opportunity to be addressed. This leads to creative development and testing of solutions to the problem, which could include prototyping new solutions in live community or service contexts (and learning, iterating and improving the solution through this process).

The term 'co-design' might be used to describe this entire design process, or elements of this more comprehensive process. For example, the goal might be simply to understand the problem, need and opportunity ahead of greater investment in developing the right kind of solution.

Skilled facilitation is usually a key feature of co-design: someone holds and runs the process into which a diversity of people contributes. Though projects take many forms, genuine co-design is distinguished by conditions that enable:

- **Active participation:** People should be enabled to participate freely, share their views and ideas, and work actively with others through the process.
- **Mutual trust and respect:** Everyone is respectful of one another, and their unique contribution and perspective. Those who hold the space recognise the importance of building trust and relationships as a precondition for genuine learning and collaborative work.
- **Relative safety:** Those who hold the space have given thought to how to create conditions of relative safety and support, including what to do if people are distressed by issues and feelings that arise through the co-design process.
- **Building capability:** Facilitators understand the diversity of perspective and capability that will be part of the process and set up activities into which everyone can contribute. Everyone learns how to work with one another well through the process.

Co-design principles adapted from KA McKercher (2020), Beyond Sticky Notes. http://www.beyondstickynotes.com.

Facilitators often work hard to tune into power dynamics in co-design (including being mindful of the power they hold as facilitators), setting up activities and establishing conditions that make it possible for everyone to contribute (for example, through activities that enable collective deliberation and mutual agreement on strong ways forward). Co-design strives to be the antithesis of tightly managed contributions, tick box consultation or top-down solutions drawn up by policymakers without a real understanding of the issues and lived realities. It aims to foster conditions that enable people who may need or benefit from a solution to deeply inform and contribute to the nature of its design.
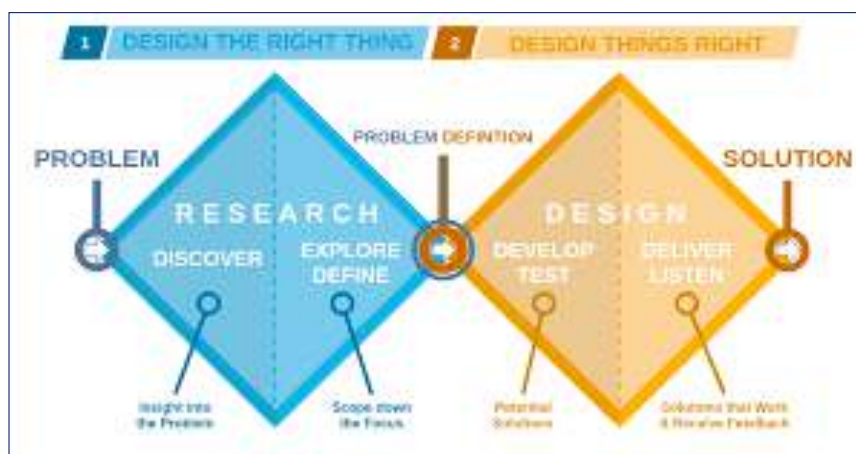

Diagram 7: Double Diamond Design Process, British Design Council, 2005

2.2 Project Stages and Approaches

The participants in this research were Afri-Aus Care staff and participants as well as others recruited with assistance from the Bakhtar Community Organisation and the Friends of Refugees. Two co-design workshops with key reference group stakeholders and seven focus groups (including more than 60 young people and their families) were conducted over the course of the project.

There were five stages in the research using the co-design principles outlined below: identifying the key stakeholders; recruiting, consulting and engaging stakeholders; focus groups with reference group stakeholders; data collection and co-design workshops.

Stage 1: Identify key stakeholders as an initial step of a co-design process

In stage one, we developed an advisory group to identify the relevant stakeholder groups for interview
■ The advisory group comprised key knowledge holders including Ability Works, Afri-Aus Care, Jobsbank and RMIT University. The research team recruited via purposive and snowball sampling through Ability Works and Afri-Aus Care to engage the different stakeholders for interviews. Snowball sampling is a qualitative research technique which provides greater access to marginalised communities. Woodley and Lockard (2016) explain, how snowball sampling harnesses "the power of social networking and personal connections, which allows for the more thorough analysis of individuals and groups that may otherwise remain inaccessible" (p.322).

Stage 2: Recruit, stakeholders for a reference group to decide on best approach, and explore the development of appropriate tools for conducting situation and needs analysis, gathering views about employment, and identifying impact measure domains.
■ Human-centred design tools were created for use in data collection to ensure cultural responsivity. These enabled us to elicit insights and inspiration for stage three and identify key needs and impact measures from various stakeholder perspectives.
■ We employed primarily purposive, but also a snowball and convenience sampling to increase diversity of responses /information in participant selection. It was important to include young people, mothers' and women's groups. Purposive and snowball sampling enabled us to gather information from people with specialised knowledge or lived experience relating to (for example), the use of wraparound services. We used convenience sampling to explore community situation/ needs analysis and types of employment.

Stage 3: A reference group was established, based on suggestions from the advisory group to co-design the tools for data collection with communities. The reference group included: Ability Works, Afri-Aus Care, Indian Care, Jobsbank, and the City of Greater Dandenong:
■ This stage involved co-developing data collection tools with the reference group prior to the commencement of data collection to ensure cultural responsivity for stage four and identify key needs and impact measures from various stakeholder perspectives. This approach drew on the evidence generated through stage two and enabled us to gather broad perspectives. This process adds weight to models that are developed by the community, ensuring that they are more likely to be accepted by the community and successfully implemented. This stage is still part of the discovery stage in which the reference group participants were afforded opportunity to review and re-design the interview schedules for individual interviews and focus groups.

Stage 4: Data Collection - Focus groups. Suggest, Refine/Design service delivery concepts, models, process, linkages
■ Data were collected from the target communities in relation to situation and employment needs/ preferences, and perceptions of relevant services that might constitute wraparound services for sustainable employment.
■ Seven focus groups were facilitated with young people, women and men from target population groups who are underrepresented in the workforce Recruitment of participants occurred via Afri-Aus Care, Bakhtar Community Organisation and the Friends of Refugees. Representatives from employment agencies and Greater Dandenong City Council and Jobs Victoria took part in a focus group about their services and how they could be utilised as a cluster of wraparound services. The aim of the focus groups was to explore situation and needs analysis, views about employment, needs and perspectives about wrapround services and supports.

Stage 5: Reference group Co-design Workshop 2.
■ All reference group participants attended the second co-design workshop which focused on sharing and validating the research findings on identified needs and co-designed wraparound services and consolidated ideas for wraparound services, including models and process (as per the focus groups, individual interviews, and the first co-design workshop) and considered refining recommended service models from the report.

This research report is a foundation for furthering the work of Ability Works with respect to setting up an employment avenue (e.g., manufacturing plant) and services including Wire and Metal Fabrication, Records Management, Pack and Rework, Inclusive Design in Dandenong, employing African and other ethnically and culturally diverse young people and their families, and demonstrating the efficacious role of wraparound services in sustainable employment.

Table 1: Focus Group Structure

(See Appendix B for Focus Group Tools)

Activity	Description	Time
1. Welcome and Introduction	Welcome and acknowledgement PICF – consent and confidentiality Outline of the day Group norms Ice breaker- Discuss: ■ Things I care about ■ Things I dream about ■ Things I'm good at ■ Things I've achieved	15-20 mins
First focused question	Large group discussion: What does work mean to you?	15-20 mins
Second focused questions	Balloon Activity – Using the cards provided (identifying enablers and barriers to employment) place them on the hot air balloon in relation to what helps (lifts you up) and what doesn't (brings you down). (See next page for examples).	15-20 mins
Third focused question	Given what we have discussed what kind of employment at Ability Works would you be interested in and would 'wraparound' supports look like. Complete "Great support for work looks like…" handout, see appendix.	20-40 mins
Check-in and close	End of the focus group/interview. Review the session, decisions that were made by the group. Ask participant to add any extra information that they think hasn't already been covered.	10 mins
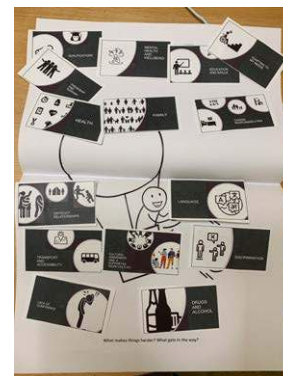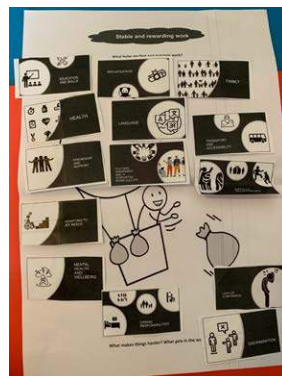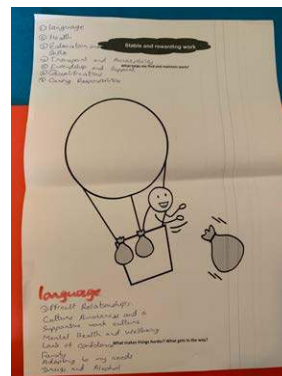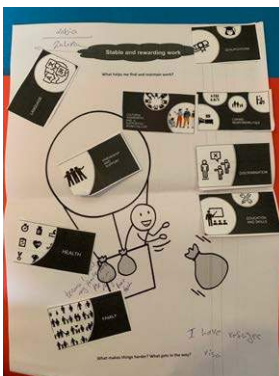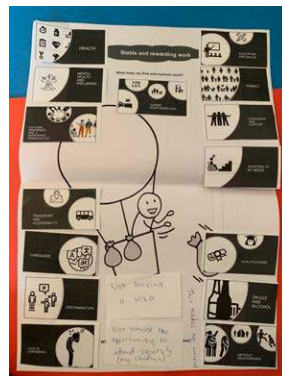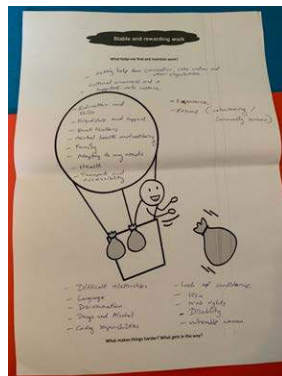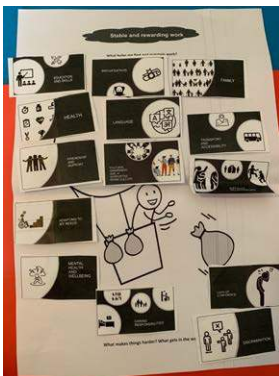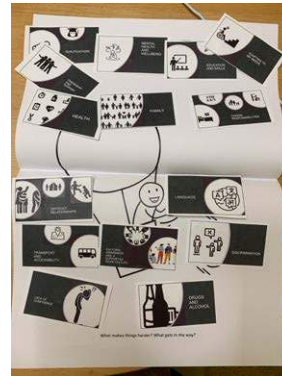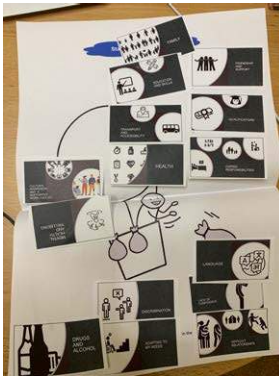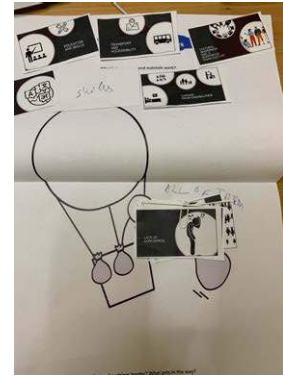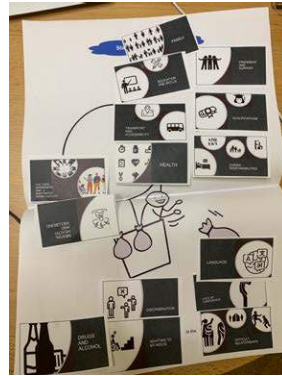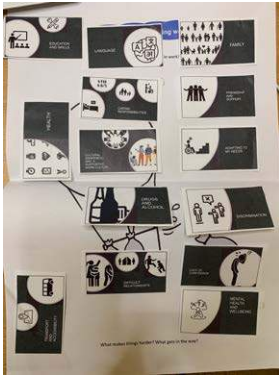
Balloon Activity – Focus Group Tools

2.3 Data Analysis

The focus groups were facilitated by two to three RMIT researchers. This enabled the researchers to cross-check and validate the interpretations of the data. The researchers collected written reflections from participants, documented impressions and key points raised by the groups, and shared these with the rest of the research team to engage in a rigorous peer review process. The thematic analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach and used key questions to guide the analysis. These questions were 'what does work mean to you'; 'what are the barriers and enablers to obtain and maintain work'; and questions focusing on what wraparound supports are needed (which were phrased as 'What do I need before I start… ', 'While I'm working… ' and 'As I progress, what will keep me motivated to stay here… '). The findings were presented to the reference group for further validation.

2.4 Participants

The following outlines information about the seven focus groups and participants' demographic data. All identifying data has been removed to protect participants' privacy.

Afri-Auscare – Springvale (26 participants)
- Focus groups with women, mamas (and sisters) – Thursday 10th of November 2022 (18 participants)
- Focus group with young people Thursday 24th of November 2022 (8 participants) **Bakhtar Community Organisation - Hallam (16 participants – 2 in1 workshop)**
- Focus group with women - Sunday 20th of November 2022 (7 women)
- Focus group with men - Sunday 20th of November 2022 (9 men)

Friends of Refugees – Springvale (26 participants)
- Focus groups with women – Wednesday 23rd of November (18 participants)
- Focus group with men - Wednesday 23rd of November (8 participants)

City of Greater Dandenong – online (4 participants)
- Focus group with participants who works in areas of Community Revitalisation, Anti-Poverty, Community Development, Community Advocacy Officer, Department of Jobs and Precincts, Employment & Inclusion

Participants came from diverse backgrounds, migration and settlement experiences:

- Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Myanmar (Burma) Rohingya, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan
- Women, men and young people
- Diverse age group from **18 to 65** with most participants between **25 to 44 years of age**
- Mostly currently unemployed and seeking employment

The section below provides focus group participants' demographic data. Not all participants completed the demographic data sheet or provided only partial responses. Reasons for these included concerns about systematic discrimination and visa restrictions, such as community detention which prevents individuals from working and accessing welfare as well as other human rights abuses and trauma, they had experienced in the country from which they had fled.

Afri-Aus Care | Participant Group 1: Women
Table 2

Demographic Data – Focus Group Afri-Auscare Mama's Group – Springvale Thursday 10 November 2022, 5.30pm - 7.30pm								
GENDER:	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
AGE:								
18-24								
25-34								
35-44		X	X			X		
45-54							X	
55-64	X				X			
65-74								
Ethnic background	Chinese	Somali	Somali	Somali	Somali	Sudan	Sudan	Somali
Languages spoken at home	Mandarin	Somali	Somali	Somali	Somali	Dinka	Nwer	Somali
Nationality		Somali	Somali	Somali	Somali	Sudanese	Sudanese	Somali
Citizenship		NZ	Yes	Australia	NZ	Australia	Australia	Australian
Education	BA	Certified III in support work	Year 8	Year 8	N/A	Cert 3 in English	-	Early Childhood edu
Profession/ Qualification			Year 8	Yes	N/A	N/A	-	Educator
Current employment		Support worker	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	No job	Youth Coordinator
Previous employment	Support worker	N/A	Yes	-	N/A	N/A	-	
Marital Status	Divorced	Married	Married	-	Widow	Single	Single	Single
Number of children	1	9 Mashallah	None	5	4	None	7	2

Table 3

Demographic Data – Focus Group Afri-Auscare Mama's Group – Springvale Thursday 10 November 2022, 5.30pm - 7.30pm					
GENDER:	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
AGE:					
18-24					
25-34					
35-44					
45-54	X	X			
55-64			X	X	X
65-74					
Ethnic background	Sudanese	Sudanese	African	Somali	Dinka
Languages spoken at home	Nuen(?) and Arabic	Dinka	Somali	Somali	Dinka and Arabic
Nationality	Sudanese	Sudanese	Somalia	Somalia	Sudanese
Citizenship	Yes	No	Australian	Australian	Australian
Education	Year 12	No	Finished high school	Finished high school	Year 12
Profession/ Qualification	Diploma of Disabilities	No	Diploma of Childcare	Diploma of Childcare	IV Ageing Sport
Current employment		No	Volunteering	Dandenong family daycare	Support worker
Previous employment	Employ	No	Dandenong family daycare	-	Support worker
Marital Status	Single	Single/Widow	Married	-	Single
Number of children	4	5	13	-	7

Afri-Aus Care | Participant Group 2: Young People
Table 4

Demographic Data – Focus Group Afri-Auscare Young People's Group – Springvale Thursday 24 November 2022, 5.30pm - 7.30pm							
GENDER:	**Male**	**Male**	**Male**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Male**
AGE:							
18-24			X		X		X
25-34	X	X		X		X	
35-44							
45-54							
55-64							
65-74							
Ethnic background	African	South Sudanese	Sudanese	African	African	African	Sudanese
Languages spoken at home	English, Yoruba Hausa	Dika, English, Swahili	Dinka	English	English	English	English
Nationality	Nigeria	Sudanese	Sudan	Sudanese	Malawian	Zimbabwean	Sudanese
Citizenship	Australia	Australian	Australian	Australian	Malawian	Australian	Australian
Education	MSC	Mental Health	Year 12, cert 1 and 2 personal training	Media	Fashion Designer	Mechanical Engineering	VCE
Profession/ Qualification	Community (ineligible)	Student		Diploma	Employments mentor/Fashion designer	Machine programmer	
Current employment	Jobs Victoria	Coles online worker	Creative directing/fashion model	Media job	Employments mentor/Fashion designer	Machine programmer	Forklift driver
Previous employment	Youth (ineligible)	Support worker		Sound tech	Hairdresser (African)	KFC	Pick and packer
Marital Status	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
Number of children		0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A

Bakhtar Community Organisation | Participant Group 3: Combined
Table 5

Demographic Data – Focus Group Bakhtar Community Organisation – Hallam Sunday 20 November 2022, 10am - 12pm								
GENDER:	**Male**	**Male**	**Male**	**Male**	**Female**	**Female**	**Female**	**Female**
AGE:						X		
18-24			X					
25-34								
35-44	X	X			X		X	
45-54								X
55-64								
65-74				X				
Ethnic background	Afghan		Photographer	Afghan	Afghan	Afghan	Afghan	Afghan
Languages spoken at home	English, Farsi	Dari	Persian	Dari	Dari, English	Dari	English, Dari	English, Dari
Nationality	Australian	Afghan	Afghanistan	Australian	Afghan	Afghan	Afghan	Afghanistan
Citizenship	Australian	Afghan	No	Citizen	Australian	Afghanistan	Aus	Australian
Education	Diploma	Bachelor	11 grad	Law		Allied Health		Bachelor
Profession/ Qualification	Finance Manager	Engineer				Student	Teacher	Secretary
Current employment	Paragon Finance Group	Don't have work till now	No			Student	Volunteer	Community work
Previous employment	Paragon Finance Group	Head of Engineering department in Afghanistan	No				Teacher	Office
Marital Status	Married	Married				Single	Single	Married
Number of children	2	0	No	4			5	5

Friends of Refugees | Participant Group 4: Men
Table 6

Demographic Data – Focus Group Friends of Refugees – Men's Group – Springvale Wednesday 23 November 2022, 11.30am - 1.30pm								
GENDER:	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
AGE:								
18-24				X				
25-34	X	X			X	X		
35-44			X					
45-54								
55-64								
65-74								
Ethnic background		Pashtun	Tamil	Afghan	Afghan		Hazara	Hazara
Languages spoken at home	Rohingya	Pashto	Tamil	Farsi	Farsi		Hazaragi like Farsi	Hazaragi
Nationality	Burma	Afghan	Sri Lankan	Afghan	Afghanistan		Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Citizenship	Yes	Afghanistan	Sri Lankan	None - 785 TPV	Written in Farsi		Yes	Yes
Education	High school	Bachelor degree	o/s Sri Lanka	Year 12 finished	Until grade 8 in Iran	No education	Year 7	Year 6
Profession/ Qualification	Work	Accountant/ Admin	-		Tailor		A little	A little
Current employment		jobless	-	Football coach	Unemployed	No job	No	No
Previous employment		Admin and Finance Officer / Afghanistan	Farming	Football referee	Tailor		Long ago farmer	Tailor leather
Marital Status		Married	Married	Single	Single		Disabled (?)	Back and knee problem
Number of children		3	2	none	none		4	5

Friends of Refugees | Participant Group 5: Women
Table 7

Demographic Data – Focus Group Friends of Refugees – Women's Focus Group – Springvale Wednesday 23 November 2022, 11.30am - 1.30pm								
GENDER:	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
AGE:								
18-24	X							
25-34				X				
35-44			X			X	X	
45-54								X
55-64								
65-74								
Ethnic background	Afghanistan	Burma	Afghanistan	Burma	Burma	Burma	Burma	Burma
Languages spoken at home	English, Dari	Rohingya, English	English	Rohingya	Rohingya	English, Burmese	Rohingya, Hindi	Malay
Nationality		Burma	Afghanistan	Burma	Burmese	Burmese	Burma	Burmese
Citizenship	B.V.E	SHEV	T.P.V	SHEV	B.V.E	B.V.E	Temporary Protection (785)	3 years visa
Education	High School	-	Diploma of childcare	-	-	-	-	-
Profession/ Qualification		-		-	-	-	-	-
Current employment	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Previous employment	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Marital Status	Single	Single mum	Married	Single mum	Single mum	Married	Married	Married
Number of children	No	3	4	5	3	2	3	2

3. Findings

The key findings in this study underscore the **motivation and need to work** across all the participant groups. While employment was noted as important for survival, participants also discussed the importance of working as means to contributing to their families and communities and to society as a whole. Many of the women noted their desire to work in order to be a role model for the children and to be independent. Young people spoke of work as an opportunity to socialise and develop a sense of belonging. However, despite their will to work, participants spoke of the numerous barriers they face preventing them from securing and maintaining employment.

The major barriers identified in terms of preference are childcare, inadequate transport, workplace socialisation and discrimination.

It is unsurprising then, that the wraparound supports and services needed are in essence the solutions to these challenges and barriers to employment. For example, if inadequate childcare is the barrier, then accessible childcare is the solution - this means wraparound supports providing accessible childcare is required. Similarly, if inadequate transport is stopping people from finding and keeping a job, then the wraparound supports need to include accessible public transport (macro) and other innovative responses such as carpooling or minibus pick-ups organised by the employer (meso).

The barriers identified are long-standing and entrenched and whilst attempts have been made to address these, progress has been minimal. It is suggested that addressing these challenges requires authentic collaboration amongst all key stakeholders, including the workforce and their communities. The barriers and solutions can be categorised and considered at macro, meso and micro levels and this identifies who needs to lead and participate in the change process.

Moreover, the recommendations are further categorised as **operational and relational**, thus providing clear strategies for creating access to work - **operational** by addressing issues, for example, related to childcare and transport at macro and meso levels. And **relational** – that is creating a culture of trust, respect and safety at the workplace by providing culturally appropriate support at meso and micro level.

The following sections explore the motivations to work, including work preferences, as well as the enablers and barriers to work. It also describes the Proposed Framework for Wraparound Services needed to find and maintain employment.

3.1 Motivations: What does work mean to you?

All participants identified that being motivated to work met basic human needs such as physiological and safety needs reflecting Maslow's hierarchy of needs as illustrated by the pyramid representation of Maslow's theory of human motivation (Navy, 2020, p.19). Additionally, for the mothers, being a role model for their children was a key motivator. Moreover, the opportunity to meet and interact with people through work, having a routine creating physical and mental health and well-being benefits of working was consistently highlighted across all the focus groups. Table 8 below illustrates the motivation to work.

Table 8: Motivation to work

Work as a means for meeting 'physiological' and 'safety needs'	Work as a means for 'love and belonging' and 'self-esteem'
Income is necessary for survival, and this was underscored by all the participant groups and was the greatest motivator. **Need it to live / survival** – working was critical for being able to provide food and shelter across all the participant groups. **Shelter**, providing shelter for oneself and family, paying for rent, and being able to access a home loan was an important motivating factor to work by all groups. **Security** – financial security was noted as key motivator for work. **Health**, the association of work with better health outcomes, was of particular importance to the women in Afri-Aus Care. Work was associated with good health as it allowed the women to be financially secure and allowed them to socialise. They noted work will help them to overcome their loneliness which makes them feel depressed.	**A sense of achievement** stems from being self-sufficient and being able to contribute to society through work. This was particularly important across all the participant groups. **Happiness** – work brings joy and happiness as it allows one to socialise and provides a sense of independence and a means to contribute to self, family, community and society. **Creating and ensuring a future for myself** - this was echoed across all the groups. **Empowerment** - work was seen as empowering as it allowed for financial freedom. This was especially important for women at Afri-Aus Care and the Friends of Refugees **Socialising** was particularly important for the women across the focus groups. Work would allow women to socialise and overcome loneliness. **Taking pride in work** was important across all the groups, however this was particularly important for women from Afri-Aus Care and the Bakhtar Community Organisation. **Being a role model for their children** was a key motivator for women at Afri-Aus Care **Belonging** – all participant groups talked about the importance of belonging through work, and this was especially the case for young people at Afri-Aus Care and the Bakhtar Community Organisation. Belonging was about working in an environment that acknowledged them for who they are, considered their cultural needs. The social aspects of working and interacting with other people and in an inclusive environment would create a sense of belonging.

Initial responses to the question, what does work mean to you? tended to focus on survival and the need to work to put food on the table, to buy medicine and for shelter. Responses then turned to more intangible reasons such as the opportunity to be a role model for children, a sense of achievement, and developing social networks. The motivation to work with the view of being a good role model for children was highlighted by the mamas in Afri-Aus Care and the Friends of Refugees in particular. Further, work would provide a platform to interact with other people and a means to overcome loneliness and depression from staying at home all day. Work would provide an opportunity to learn, a routine and an opportunity to socialise with other people. The opportunity to learn and contribute provides a sense of achievement. While the research did not specifically examine whether levels of education influenced motivations to work, there were no discernible differences in the responses.

Monica from Afri-Aus Care explained,

*"When the person is working, we are independent. And also, because he's not thinking a lot.
And also, when you work, and your kids, because you are the role model to show how you work
and you work hard… because she looked, if you stay home, you know doing nothing, because
it's not good role model for the kids. Because every time if you stay home, you become sick.
And when you go every morning, you wake up or you do something it's good health. I mean,
independent. Then you're not worried about the bills or things like that. So, it's good."*

In addition to needing work to survive, the sense of achievement that comes from contributing to one's community and society was also noted across the focus groups.

For me, I've changed jobs multiple times. So, the last job what I'm doing right now actually gives me a bit of a pleasure, it gives me an achievement every day when I go home. I feel like I have assisted someone that even a little form that's so easy for me to fill, it means a lot of headaches or a little bit of a pressure or stress or relieving that for one mama. So filling forms, I found how hard it can be I understand when they go through job search and all of these agencies that they are given the application form to feel but if a person does not feel supported or left with Afri-Aus Care, you have all the emotion and all the feeling home and all of that it's not like okay, I didn't say to the mama sit down, you have to do this for me and I sit down and watch I have recognise that part of their weakness. And I have taken that for to strengthen mine to upskill for myself and to use it to like sort of make me stronger. And we have a lot of students who come here from different places for work placements, and they have been really grateful to help us with everything we need. So, work for me means that I have stripped a lot of barriers for the mothers to get to that path to get to that job.

Young people noted that working also provides a sense of belonging and independence. For young people, work was a means of survival, and many have added responsibilities for caring for their families in Australia and overseas. The idea that work can mean you are able to provide for yourself and your family and contribute to community and society was key to participants in the Bakhtar Community Organisation. The responses reflect Maslow's hierarchy of needs from survival and safety to belonging, freedom and self-actualisation – and reflect the hierarchical nature of the pyramid.

For many of the participants who were newly arrived migrants, refugees and or young people with the added responsibility of providing for their extended families, not working is not an option. As one of the participants Hisham said, 'I think if I'm jobless, I think I'm useless. How are you going to afford life if you don't work?' The desire, motivation and willingness to work is profound. And while Maslow's hierarchy of needs reflects the motivation to work in our study, it is also relevant to what is needed for and at work. For instance, a physically and culturally safe work environment with good pay (being paid the award rate at the very least being paid on time), a place to belong with opportunity for learning and growth. These findings raise the question of why, given strong motivations to work, is there a problem with recruitment and employment sustainability? What are the barriers and enablers to employment for ethnically and culturally diverse communities who have experienced disadvantage and marginalisation?
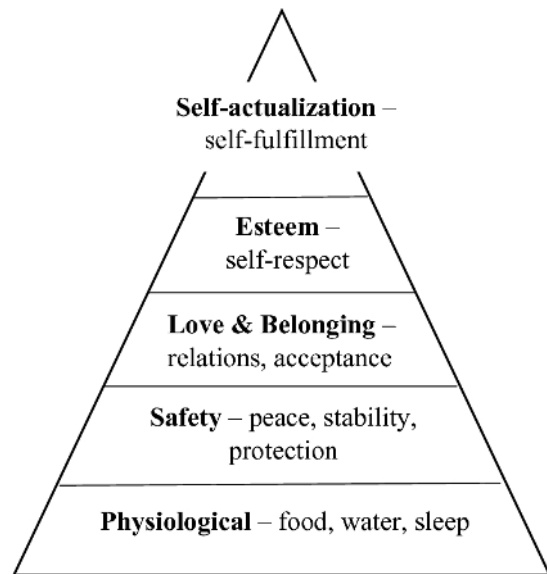

Diagram 8: The pyramid representation of Maslow's theory of human motivation (Navy, 2020, p.19)

Focus Group Tools: Work preferences

Work preferences

Participant groups were asked about the jobs that interested them. They were requested to choose between job offerings from Ability Works. This included welding, packing, office work and records management. Once participants made a selection, they were asked to talk about the reasons for their choice. Women from Afri-Aus Care explained that they chose packing because it only requires basic English and no experience. Moreover, they said packing would provide them with the opportunities to interact and socialise with other people. The majority of women from Friends of Refugees chose packing and office work. Like the women from Afri-Aus Care, they explained that packing required only basic English and no experience and provided them with an opportunity to socialise. Some women also chose office work because it did not require heavy lifting which they would be unable to manage because of their health conditions. Both men and women from the Bakhtar Community Organisation chose office work and some women also chose packing. They had the skills and confidence to do office work and similarly packing was the preferred choice for some women, as it did not require qualifications and experience. Interestingly, the young people from Afri-Aus Care and the men from the Friends of Refugees said that they would do any of the jobs and did not have a particular preference. See Table 9, Work preferences.

Table 9: Work preferences

Participant Group	Work Preference	Motivation for Work Preference
Afri-Aus Care Women's group	Packing	Basic English required Opportunity to interact with other people and socialise Flexibility shifts may be available to work around school pick up and drop off and childcare
Bakhtar Community Organisation	Office Work, Packing	Packing: ■ Basic English required ■ Opportunity to interact with other people and socialise ■ Flexibility shifts may be available to work around school pick up and drop off and childcare Office Work: ■ Have the confidence, skills or can obtain the qualifications required to do the job
Friends of Refugees - Women's group	Packing, office work	Packing: ■ Basic English required ■ Opportunity to interact with other people and socialise ■ Flexibility shifts may be available to work around school pick up and drop off and childcare Office work: ■ Does not require heavy lifting ■ Can work in accordance with their abilities
Friends of Refugees - Men's group	Any	Survival
Afri-Aus Care - Young People	Any	Survival

3.2 Enablers and barriers to finding and keeping work

In the focus groups, participants were asked to identify the barriers and enablers to entering the workforce and maintaining employment Table 10 below shows, in order of priority, the key barriers and enablers collated across all the focus groups. Also, some factors were listed in both sections due to different interpretations of the question.

Table 10: Enablers and Barriers to finding and keeping work

Barriers	Enablers
Macro and Meso barriers	**Meso and Micro enablers**
Childcare: The lack of accessible and affordable childcare was one of the greatest barriers for women with young children.	**Qualifications and skills:** Having the right qualifications and skills was identified as the key enabler to accessing work across all the participant groups.
Transport: Inaccessible transport, and long commutes, unaffordable cars and not having a driver's licence were the greatest barriers identified by all the participant groups.	**Family and friends:** Having these provide support and motivation. This was noted as an enabler across all the focus groups.
Discrimination: This was identified as a barrier across all the participant groups.	**Good health and access to good health care:** This was an important enabler across all the participant group. Having good health enables participants to fully engage with work, highlighting the importance of access to good health care.
Caring responsibilities: This was identified as a barrier by women and young people. Some young people take on care duties in the absence of a parent.	**Adapting to needs i.e., disability:** This was highlighted as a key issue by the Friends of Refugees. Some of the participants were injured because of war and conflict in their country of origin. They want to be able to work for social and financial reasons – to be self-sufficient, and to contribute to society and may not have access to the NDIS.
Australian workplace and taxation law: Not understanding the tax system was a significant barrier identified by the Bakhtar Community Organisation.	
Visa limitations for work and study: this was key for the Friends of Refugees	**Cultural awareness and respect:** These were noted an enabler across all the groups, especially by Afri-Aus Care.
Disability or bad health: this was a significant barrier for men from the Friends of Refugees.	**Macro and Meso enablers**
Micro barriers	**Discrimination**: Some felt discrimination leads to trying harder and suggested this was a motivator to work harder (noted by young people at Afri-Aus Care). They needed to work harder and gain more and higher qualifications due to an uneven playing field.
Lack of confidence: Not knowing what to do, where to start.	
Family expectations and responsibilities: Family expectations in relation to caring duties, responsibilities, and career path expectations were noted as a barrier by young people. There were expectations around taking responsibility and care of other members of the immediate and extended family (e.g., taking care of younger siblings, parents, or grandparents). Also, some young people were contending with family expectations that they needed to follow certain career paths in areas such as medicine or engineering - and not pursue career paths that will not bring good income or are not seen as prestigious.	
Drugs and alcohol: These were identified as a barrier by some participants, but it was not considered a major or widespread issue.	

The barriers and enablers identified by the participants are not new. These findings confirm what has been identified in previous scholarly and policy research. Wali et al's study also emphasises the '…structural barriers of language, non-recognition of educational qualification or prior work experience/lack of local work experience tend to make participants frustrated' (Wali, Georgeou and Ranzaho, 2018, p. 93, Making the Match 2021). The findings are consistent with the literature which, for over a decade, has encouraged the need to take action to remove the barriers to work.

Discrimination is still an issue for culturally and ethnically diverse communities. A young man and amputee from the Friends of Refugees explained he was refused work in many places due to disability, 'so I need to consider my disability needs'. Discrimination is a major barrier to employment. This was also highlighted by the Afri-Aus Care mama's group. Aliya explained:

> …because all the women in Africa when they go other places, looking for work, they never give it you a job, when they see you in your dress. Like when you go to the other employment, the unemployment the places where you go, you are looking for the work, they never give it to you. Even if you have experience, when they see you, next time, come, next time come. This is good, we have Africa [Aus Care] here, because yeah, it is really nice. All the women of Africa, they have hope now. They have jobs. If they don't have jobs, they are waiting for the job, this is good. Also, this one, we are coming together, it is good because it's healthy. Every week when we come together, we talk to each other, it's good, counselling.

Serina, from the Friends of Refugees, also noted the mental and physical health benefits associated with working: 'when you're working, work can make you busy, keep you busy in a good way, in a good way and you learn new things, different things.' However, some have given up hope as no one wants to employ a person on a **bridging visa**, 'That's why I give up looking for the job … I don't know how many ways because of this reason'. Another significant barrier preventing participants from securing or staying employed is the issue of **childcare**. Sara, explained, 'You will find that women have to care for the family and other children. So, it's very hard to have 100%. So, being a woman it's hard for us to go to work every day because child's not well'.

Culture of respect

Some women for religious and/or cultural reasons do not wear pants and/or they wear long scarves. One participant mentioned a workplace provides women with the opportunity to work in their cultural and religious clothing and does not assign jobs to them which for occupational health and safety reasons would require wearing tight clothes or pants. However, due to occupational health and safety reasons, not all jobs can offer to this flexibility as explained by Nia:

> …. Like, for example, there are some of the ladies there from the Somali background. So, they usually wear the [religious/cultural] clothing. And we did find them employment at [a company] But they couldn't wear the uniform because they need to do wear pants, you know, the high vis clothing and all that stuff. So, it's not just like, oh, you need to be ready. But you also need to understand that because they don't like No, no, no, we can do this, we're going to do this. I'm like, no, for safety reasons. They will not allow you to actually work here. Because of their skirts. They're too long, especially going up and down up and down those stairs. They could easily trip, and it was not because they didn't want to hire them. But it was because it was just not safe for them. And then obviously with the culture they could not wear the pants.

It is important to note that the idea of not wearing pants is not interpreted in the same way by all women and individual choices would impact how this would be negotiated at the workplace.

Trust

Trust is an important issue that was raised in the 'Making the Match' (2021) study which explored the wraparound needs of communities in the City of Greater Dandenong. When asked about what trust meant to them and how it could be achieved, our participants interpreted this question as what they thought they needed to do to be trusted by the employer rather than what the employer needed to do to gain their trust. They said they would need to work hard, be reliable, come on time to be trusted by the employer. It is only when prompted about what the employer needs to do build trust that they noted the importance of respect - respect for colour, religion and gender. This may be because there was possibly a sense of trust established by this group with the researchers. However, the initial response from the Bakhtar community organisation participants as seen below was concerning and highlights the reasons why some community members cannot stay employed - if they feel they need to completely disregard their culture and identity and believe they do not have right to suggest anything. Below are some of the responses to the question about what they felt they needed the employer to provide:

> I think for me it doesn't matter because as everyone think that Australia's multicultural culture is not important for me because we accept this Australian culture to live here.

> Every work environment has their own rules and regulations. And we respect and follow that we don't think that we have the right to suggest for anything

> I'd like to work. And as I accepted Australia when I migrated here, so I will accept everything. I just don't mind with any culture or anything. I'll agree with everything

The initial interpretation of being totally responsible for 'being trusted' as an employee may stem from systemic political and media discourse that presents migrants and refugees as untrustworthy and a threat. Or the years of sustained representation of African communities as gang members and refugees as terrorist coming in leaky boats (Halilovich et al 2022). It may also stem from the hierarchies that exist in their country of origin or the advice that is provided through these organisations that support their communities to gain employment.

Table 11, Trusting and being trusted by the employer, highlights what participants expect of the employer and what is expected of employees in relation to building trust at the workplace.

Table 11: Trusting and being trusted by the employer

Employer	Employee
Security Security was a key factor in building trust across all the groups. Security encompasses both the physical safety aspects as well as workplace health and safety, being provided with the necessary safety training for the jobs and not being placed at risk. Having stable, secure employment, that is ongoing or full-time work was important for building trust. Security was also defined by participants as not being discriminated against which is a critical aspect of trust. **Accountability and transparency** Receiving the right payment was another critical aspect of building trust and was an important aspect of not being exploited. Transparency around pay and employer's decisions such as the termination of employment was important across all the groups and in particular by Afri-Aus Care Women's group and young people, and the Bakhtar Community Organisation. **Open communication** Open communication was a key factor in building trust across all groups. This meant there is an open approach to communicating, understanding and addressing any potential problems that may arise without simply blaming the employee. Hence, the community liaison officer would play a critical role in communicating and clarifying issues between the employer and employee. **Belonging** Being trusted by the employer was another key aspect of building trust and trust would in turn create a sense of belonging at the workplace. **Growth** The opportunity for growth and development was important across all groups and this was especially significant for the young people from Afri-Aus Care and the Bakhtar Community Organisation. A supportive and enabling environment with opportunities for learning, growth and progress were noted as important for building trust.	**Reliable** Being reliable was related to being punctual. Turning up to work on time was noted as one of the most important ways an employee can gain the trust of the employer by all the participant groups. **Communication** Communicating with the employer around issues such as running late or not being able to go to work were mentioned across all the participant groups. **Being honest** The importance of being honest was also highlighted as an important was to gain the trust of the employer across all the participant groups. Be consistent with the values of the company. **Working hard** Working hard, learning and learning fast were identified as way of gaining the trust of the employer and this was particularly emphasised by the young people from Afri-Aus Care.

Enjoying proper workplace conditions and rights, such as being paid properly and on time, not being exploited and overworked were noted as key to building trust. Further, the importance of both physical and cultural safety was highlighted across all the focus groups. One participant explained that in her previous workplace, health and safety were ignored. The workplace did not abide by safety measure around COVID safety. This was a great concern for her - not only for own safety but for her family. Cultural safety and awareness were also noted. Cultural safety refers to respecting and protecting the rights and values of all cultures and doing so proactively in ways which promote inclusion in all aspects of the workplace. Cultural safety requires all employees to reflect on their values and assumptions and understand how this influences their attitudes and behaviours in relation to culture. An example for the research is having a prayer room and time to pray. Such an addition will help to build trust demonstrating an attitude of respect allowing them to belong. Knowing where you stand, your limitations and achievements was of particular importance for young people. Knowledge and socialisation into the workplace were critical for participants. Knowledge of the Australian taxation system would help communities understand expectations around pay rates and deductions in order to avoid exploitation.

Community Liaison: Connection, affinity and trust.

Central to the idea of trust, is being trusted. It is not only about trusting the employer but being trusted by the employer. This involves being socialised into the workplace and having a community liaison officer or a similar role who would act as socio-cultural translator for both the employer and employee. Having a community liaison officer to turn to about what to expect or to communicate and address any issues was underscored by all the focus groups. This means communication including and beyond language. That is someone to turn to for workplace literacy and due to language proficiency as well as lack of socialisation in the workplace, for example, the rules and 'dos and don'ts' in a workplace. Significantly, the idea that employees would turn to this person for translation and as support should something go wrong, or they make a mistake was key. It indicated a lack of confidence and a fear that something could go wrong, and they would be blamed. It was further noted that they would have to trust that person and the person in the role would have no conflict of interest if they are employed there so they can fulfil their role. Further, they note that having a cultural liaison officer would give them a voice and will help communicate language, including social and cultural issues and help to build trust. For instance, language was not a key barrier for many of the young people at Afri-Aus Care, however the issue of not being trusted due to prejudice was noted as a problem.

Akpan explained:

So, in a situation where maybe you're meant to box 20 items and for some reason you got 18. And they've got the perception, 'Ah you Africans, that's how you guys manipulate things, and you want to be dodgy and things like that'. But that might actually not be the situation. So, you need a supportive environment, like "nah", maybe something actually did happen at that time.

Instead of reinventing the wheel, the existing systems that are functioning well need to be supported. For example, Afri-Aus Care's mentors play a critical role and act as community liaison officers. However, due to limited funding, they have limited capacity. Furthermore, as the role is grant-dependent, the support will end when the funding ends. The role and positive impact of bicultural workers employed by the City of Greater Dandenong during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic for public health messaging is also noteworthy. The bicultural workers are also important 'human resources.

The following section first presents the data that highlights the wraparound supports needed to create access to work (Table 12). The wraparound supports identified below the following table were induced from analysis of the focus group discussions and responses to the question: What do you need 'before you start work; what do you need when you are working' and what do you need to keep motivated to stay.

Table 12: Wraparound Needs and Capabilities

Before I start...	While I'm working...	As I progress, what will keep me motivated to stay here...
Flexibility / Childcare Flexible hours to work around school pick up and drop off Workplace to be adapted to disability (using prosthetics/mobility) needs An accurate job description Visa Network/ contacts Good health **Transport and Orientation** Know where and how to get there Transport Car Driver's licence **Material needs** Money *Money to top up my MYKI so I don't get a fine on public transport* Uniform The right work clothes / can't go in tracksuits **Qualifications** Training Qualification Certificate Skills training English Motivation	**Respect** Not being exploited Being treated like a human – not a number Working as a team **Safe environment** Physically safe environment – Occupational Health and Safety **Culturally safe** Prayer room Time for prayer	**Safety** Physically safe environment – Occupational Health and Safety Culturally safe Working with good people – safe environment Not being exploited Not being spoken down to Working in a team environment **Security** – not going to be kicked out for no reason Security – full time or ongoing contract Transparency Good Super **Belonging** Communication Socialising Being respected Working in a team environment Strong relationship with employees Being treated like a human – not a number Do frequent check on how I am doing financially, physically and mentally. Being happy Build a place for myself in society **Growth** Opportunities for growth Opportunities for promotion Learning Feedback and progress on individual performance Provide us with insight about what the future would look like in this job. Increase my salary and promotion.

3.3 A Way Forward: Recommendations and a Proposed Framework for Wraparound Services

The findings reflect and extend existing knowledge regarding the importance of work in people's lives and the multi-level barriers and enablers to workforce participation for ethnically and culturally diverse communities who have experienced marginalisation and intersectional disadvantage. These findings, based on co-design principles and the analysis of the seven focus groups, inform the Proposed Framework for Wraparound Services outlined below.

The Framework for wraparound services proposes a way forward and is divided into 3 areas:

1. **Key principles**

2. **Dimensions and recommendations**

3. **Implementation: Co-creation in practice**

Overarching principles in operationalising these recommendations are the need for co-creation as the guiding process, designed around the person, cultural inclusion, and a place-based approach. Operationalising these principles requires enabling and facilitative leadership, creating the conditions for authentic collaboration between government, businesses, and impacted communities through genuine co-creation processes and embedded forms of representation. This research suggests opportunities for businesses to lead innovation in addressing embedded structural and systemic barriers to employment for ethnically and culturally diverse groups and releasing the vast potential of these valuable community members.

The next section will explore in greater detail the three key areas of the proposed framework for wraparound services. .
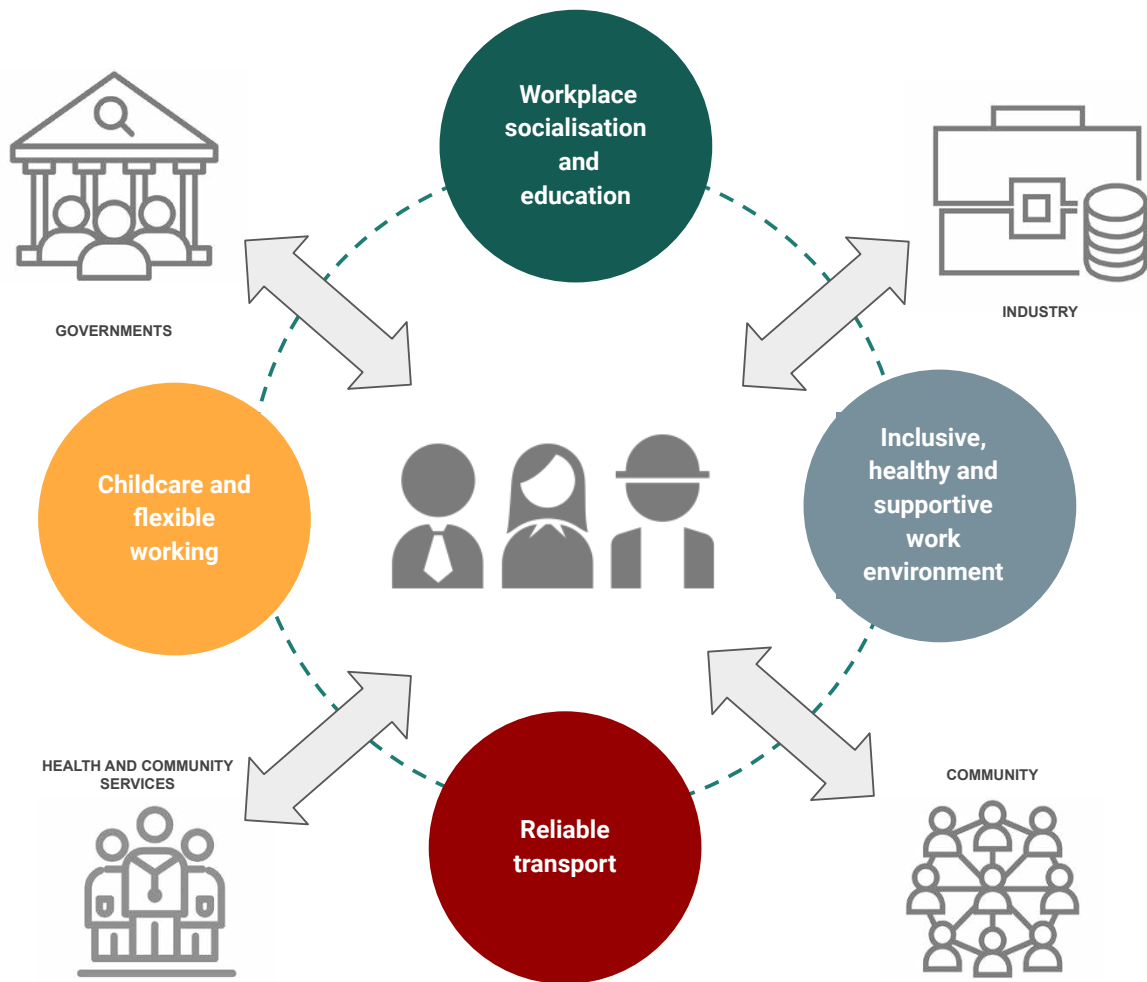
Wraparound Support Framework

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KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Co-created
2. Designed around the person
3. Culturally respectful and responsive
4. Place-based

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BRINGING THIS TO LIFE WILL NEED...

- Whole system and locality-based collaboration
- System leadership and convening
- Support and resource for prototyping and ongoing learning with communities
- Shared accountability

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GOVERNMENTS

Workplace socialisation and education

INDUSTRY

Childcare and flexible working

Inclusive, healthy and supportive work environment

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Reliable transport

COMMUNITY

OUTCOMES

COMMUNITY	BUSINESS	GOVERNMENT
More people gaining and sustaining employment	Local economic growth and new business opportunities	Reduced welfare/support payments
More people with a greater sense of self worth and social connection to communities	Greater respect for and understanding of economic potential of migrant workforce	Reduced strain on community and health services

With thanks to the Noun Project contributors for images used in this diagram: Eucalyp, SBTS, afian roc, Flatart and Reza Mostmand.

Diagram 1

1. Key principles

Focus groups with different community groups, together with a review of the academic and grey literature, identified four key overarching and operationalising principles which need to guide further design and development of the wraparound employment supports identified in this report.

These principles reflect values consistent with collaboration, partnership, and inclusion and, if embedded in further development work, will ensure tailored, flexible, contextualised, and innovative solutions which acknowledge the needs and priorities of diverse stakeholders and builds on the strengths of local communities.

Co-creation: Co-creation is the process of ongoing collaboration between diverse stakeholders with the aim of developing in context strategies for addressing complex and intersectional challenges or problems. Co-creation engages with stakeholders through all phases of developing strategies from clarifying problems to ideas development through to testing and evaluating strategies and/or resources.

Designed around the person: Person centred design and planning centres the diverse experiences, capabilities, and needs of those who will use and benefit from services and supports in their conceptualisation and development. This guiding principle acknowledges that people bring different abilities and requirements and that these need to be understood and responded to in order to enable participation, optimise resources, and ensure that the intention of the service or support is realised through the process of their design.

Culturally inclusive and responsive: Respect for diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds is critical in all parts of society, including the workplace. Being culturally inclusive requires a cultural humility and responsiveness which is reflected in values and behaviours as well as in practices and policies. This requires everyone to reflect on their own relationship toward diversity and difference and explore sometimes unconscious assumptions guiding behaviours. It is also important to not 'other' and homogenise the characteristics of different cultural and ethnic groups, to recognise the complexity of people's identities, and to explore points of connection and shared experiences.

Place based: Place based approaches reflect the values of the above guiding principles in that they prioritise collaboration with local communities 'in place' to develop services and resources that both address contextual issues and needs whilst also building on local capabilities and assets. Shared decision making is an important principle in place-based approaches however the boundaries and limits of this must be carefully considered and discussed at the beginning of the process.

2. Dimensions and recommendations

The framework identifies key dimensions and recommendations for wraparound services. They are categorised into 'operational' and 'relational' which link to the themes from the findings and highlight the services necessary to support people toward and maintain sustainable employment.

- **Operational** refers to more tangible and practical strategies and supports required to support access to employment in a safe and functional workplace and are generally the responsibility of employers, community services, and government e.g., transport and childcare.
- **Relational** refers to supports and strategies that build relationships, foster a culture of trust, respect, and reciprocity between employees and employers, and which reflect shared values e.g., employing a cultural liaison officer, ensuring worker representation in decision making processes, culturally appropriate supports.

Under these headings, the recommendations look at **Childcare, Transport, Workplace socialisation and education, and a healthy and supportive work environment** and under each there will be an overview of the main points, case scenarios, best practice examples, possible solutions and conclude with key recommendations.

OPERATIONAL

a) Childcare and flexibility

Childcare was identified by the mothers in the focus groups (Afri-Aus Care and Friends of Refugees in particular) as one of the key barriers to employment. Reflecting the current and previous ABS data, childcare is the biggest barrier for women seeking employment. As noted across all the focus groups, 'if you have a kid, you need childcare'. Childcare and transportation were also highlighted by the City of Greater Dandenong.

> Michelle, who works on community development, explained:
>
> ...in my conversations, you know, the childcare comes up all the time and it's just, you know, part it's partly it's the cost of childcare and also too because of the different visa pathways, people are on the eligibility for childcare and further additional support then transport in Springvale, for example, which is our main industrial area, the public transport out there is ridiculous. You know, you can't access it.

The issue of childcare as a barrier was repeated across the groups but it was a key issue for women. Transportation and flexible hours were highlighted as a key barrier across all the groups and is a barrier for young people, women and men. WGEA (2021) prepared a 'Workplace flexibility strategy toolkit' which demonstrates the social and economic benefits of workplace flexibility of which 'flexible hours of work' is noted as 'where you may vary your start and finish times' (WGEA 2021, p.8)

CASE SCENARIO
Childcare, Transport and (in)flexible work hours

Mary is a single mother. She has school aged children and a younger child. Her friend recommended she might find a job at her place of work, a workplace two hours away with public transport. While Mary is trying to stay employed, the lack of affordable and flexible childcare, lack of transport, and lack of family support due to having to flee her homeland and family three years ago make getting to and from work unsustainable. For many women in these circumstances, particularly those from refugee backgrounds, working is not an option without accessible and flexible childcare and transport.

Significantly 42% of the residents in the City of Greater Dandenong are classified as living in a childcare desert (Hurley, 2022). According to Hurley et al (2022) a childcare desert is defined as 'a populated area where there are less than 0.333 childcare places per child, or more than three children per one childcare place.'Hurley et al, (2022)' found a connection between lower levels of workplace participation among women with children under 5 in childcare deserts. And while women's lower levels of participation in the workforce may affect the demand for childcare, the report suggests it is in fact living in childcare deserts that impacts women's decision or rather inability to engage in work. The findings in this report on wraparound co-design confirms that inaccessible childcare prevents women from taking part in the work force as was emphasized by focus groups with women from Afri-Aus Care and the Friends of Refugees. Moreover, the findings in this report reinforce the fact new approaches are needed to create access to childcare which in turn will create access to work.

Employers can collaborate with other businesses and with government to consider more innovative approaches to childcare which are informed by employee and community needs. These can include public private enterprises, closer co-operation and communication between childcare centres and employers, childcare located on site, and/or provision of free transport between childcare centres and the workplace to maximise working hours. According to the Australian Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) some of the innovative ways employers can support women with young children is by providing 'onsite or subsidized childcare' (2017, p1.)

Example of best practice local and /or overseas	Top-down leadership by businesses and government in collaboration communities is required to solve this childcare issue.
	For example, council can consider ways to make childcare available by giving permits in areas in safe, yet close, proximity to manufacturing zones. According to the City of Greater Dandenong Priority Action Group, family day care may provide opportunities for childcare which are in closer proximity to the workplace.
	Multiple employer coalitions working together to develop shared childcare business case (Save the Children fund)
	Industry/Business and Government leadership and lateral thinking coupled with co-design is required to make change.
	Below are the steps suggested by Sasser et al (2021) to create accessible childcare:
	1. Create Support Structures for Women at Work
	2. Offer Flexible Work Schedules and Remote Work for All Parents
	3. Increase Childcare Subsidies as Employee Benefits
	4. Provide On-Site or Local Childcare Spaces and Supervision
	https://hbr.org/2021/04/childcare-is-a-business-issue
	Childcare Is a Business Issue, Alicia Sasser Modestino, Jamie J. Ladge, Addie Swartz, and Alisa Lincoln, April 29, 2021. Harvard Business Review
	https://hbr.org/2021/04/childcare-is-a-business-issue
	Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022, November 4). *Childcare still largest barrier to female participation*. ABS.
	https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/childcare-still-largest-barrier-female-participation.
Possible solutions	■ Organisational, childcare at or near the workplace, supported by state and federal government. This is a national issue and the solution will not only benefit marginalised communities, but mainstream society as a whole ■ Opportunity for private and public cooperation

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Childcare

Employers collaborate with other businesses and with government to consider more innovative approaches to childcare which are informed by employee and community needs. Childcare needs to be more accessible, affordable, flexible, and located closer to the workplace. Current services often fail to meet the needs of ethnically and culturally diverse services and thus significantly limit capacity to find and maintain employment, despite strong motivation to work. This is a barrier experienced most significantly by women and exacerbated for larger families.

1.2 Flexible hours

Employers co-design approaches to flexible working hours in response to the needs of employees, mostly women, in terms of caring responsibilities including school drop off and pick up times. The need for flexible hours also stems from parents' (and particularly women's) parental and caring duties, as highlighted by participants in this study.

b) Transport

The issue of **transportation** was identified as a problem across all the focus groups. One mama said, 'You're down for language and you know [not] driving' thus, highlighting the intersection between language and transport barriers. Speaking only basic English was identified as barrier for some participants as it not only prevented them from securing employment, but also made obtaining a driver's licence more difficult - as the tests are in English. The need for a car (and a driver's licence) was highlighted across all the focus groups as the public transport system in the area is inadequate. Another mama explained 'you need to get a car in order to start the work.

Adam, from the Bakhtar Community Organisation explained:

For me before I start, you know Australia as a continent. You need to have a personal transport to go somewhere, this is the most important thing because you're not able to attend your meeting all the time. And you know you're spending two hours going to office and coming back, and if you have a vehicle, you will spend 15 minutes doing that. So, at first, we need a private vehicle.

The City of Greater Dandenong focus group underscored the structural barriers presented by inadequate transportation options.

Jennifer, who works in the area of community advocacy said:

People just go well, I'm not going to go there because if I'm working a minimum wage job, a survival job and I'm spending a whole heap of money on that transport as well, it eats into my costs, and I can't afford to do it. I'm better off not doing it than doing it."

CASE SCENARIO
Transport

Afshaneh is a young woman wants to work. She engages in volunteering activities for her community when she can. However due to her health condition she relies on her parents to drive her. She was upset about being late to attend our focus group and feels she does not have the opportunity to work as she is dependent on others for transport. Living on the fringes of Melbourne means public transport is not easily accessible and she cannot obtain a drivers licence due to her health condition.

Transportation can be addressed at both macro (government) and meso (organisational) levels.

Example of best practice local and /or overseas	Below are examples of carpooling strategies that can be adopted/adapted by employees and supported by government. This strategy will not only benefit those seeking employment but are prevented due to transport issues. This will benefit the broader society by reducing traffic congestion and benefit the environment.
	Below are the strategies recommended by O'Brien (2021) from Liftango
	6 Strategies to Create a Successful Employee Carpool Program
	1. Find Your Champion
	2. Nail Communication
	3. Establish Your Uptake Triggers
	4. Gamify Your System
	5. Build Your Group of Advocates
	6. Find Your Balance through Analysis
	https://www.liftango.com/resources/strategies-to-create-a-successful-carpool-program
	See *Setting up carpooling at your workplace* for strategies to developing and incentivising carpooling at the workplace.
	https://www.yourmove.org.au/media/4024/setting-up-carpooling-at-your-workplace.pdf
Possible solutions	■ Carpooling or work van organised by workplace – points of pick up or from home? ■ Transport solutions - State and Federal government via policy support to encourage van/car pooling

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.3 Transport

Industry, government, community, and relevant community services collaborate to co-create innovative responses to transport problems to enable workers to get to work on time. Alongside improved and increased access to public transport, other models of innovative transport solutions could include shared employer work van or minibus pick up or meeting point.

c) Workplace socialisation and education

The importance of **knowledge of the Australian taxation system, socialisation to work and healthy work environment and trust** is highlighted in response to the Wraparound needs. A young man from the Bakhtar Community Organisation spoke of his own experiences and the experiences of his community in relation to maintaining employment noting the importance of workplace socialisation.

Isaac explained:

So, one of the reasons that you mentioned, get to work and then stay, there's a lot of them that they don't stay, they work after a few weeks, they quit. They go look for something else. Be honest, most of them or maybe I should say some of you don't even know what they're looking for. So, they just tried bits and pieces. That's one of the reasons they don't, [stay] because they have this view, I can probably find something better, so what are the conditions of work? What does it involve?

The sense of not having direction and being unsure of what one is looking for coupled with inadequate or inaccurate job descriptions highlights complex issues.

CASE SCENARIO

Adam has been working at a factory for one year. But he is often not sure about his pay and sometimes thinks he isn't getting the right amount. His friends feel the same but are worried about talking to the employer for fear of losing their jobs. They also don't know what their rights are, and this leads them to accept informal and insecure employment.

Some participants explained a sense of loss of self and identify upon migrating to Australia. This may stem from forced migration and is exacerbated by a loss of social identity and status. With qualifications not being recognised in Australia, some participants find it difficult to (re)establish themselves as they are unsure how and where to go. In addition, a lack of understanding and socialisation into the Australian workforce such as the taxation system compounds the problem.

Another participant from Bakhtar Community Organisation elucidated that:

... tax itself wasn't a big thing in Afghanistan or other countries, perhaps as well. So, when they come here to start working, they pay a portion of the salary for the tax, they feel bad. Because they're like, this is my money, why do I have to pay to the government. So, my input to that is there needs to be some kind of workshops or some kind of an educational session, where they are educated about where the tax goes, because the tax goes for very good reasons…so, it's important for any one responsible to make this vocal, or government agencies to educate and train people…

In partnership with community organisations, business and government, these educational sessions/workshops will help communities know, understand, and therefore trust and develop confidence in the Australian workforce. Additionally, being paid on time is critical to developing trust.

Martha from Afri-Aus Care explained one instance where there was a delay in payment which broke the women's trust in the workplace.

> ...some people, it's happened to some ladies in here, there was a job in the city, they took them there, they were working. And they didn't get the payment on time. All the time, they are highly tired, we're not going back again because he's working for free. But if that time, if they will get their payment, there will be a power, they will go back again.

Adam from the Bakhtar Community Organisation encapsulated many of the intersectional issues and needs and suggested need for workshop and information about work in Australia. He suggested the need for:

> ... some workshop and some information about the environment of work in Australia. You know, every country has their own law and regulation... I have a one-year experience of living in Australia, before that I was not able to understand what gross payment is, what is the net payment, what is the Superannuation, the general information about the office work and how much I will earn at the end of the day without tax... Also, good environments, like not environment like a boss and worker, friendly, a group work and teamwork inspired me to feel you are a person, a healthy work environment. "

Discussion about workplace supports extended to information and advocacy in relation to Visa's and working rights. Participants highlighted that government needs to address the costly problem of bridging visas and community detention.

CASE SCENARIO

Sarah has a degree in her home country and wants to work but no one employs her due her bridging visa of three months. Some people are unable to work due to community detention restrictions

While this may seem out of scope in terms of wraparound services, employers can play an advocacy role with the aim of removing one of the major barriers to employment, thus addressing serious recruitment issues and the labor shortage. While there are guides and supports available to employers on how to employ refugees, for example Deakin University's, 'Making it easier to employ refugees with a user-friendly guide for Australian employer', leadership is required on the part of business to advocate for those refugees on bridging visas as while they may have permission to work in some cases, employers do not wish to hire some who may have to depart the country in three months.

Linked to this broader issue was also English language and literacy supports for newly arrived migrants. Participants highlighted the needs for greater support for language acquisition. This could occur via public-private, government and community collaborations for workplace-based language supports. This will require further consultation with service providers and key stakeholders.

Example of best practice local and /or overseas	**Delivery of this information needs to be designed and delivered with employee and/or community representatives. Deloitte Insights' report 'A new home at work an employer's guidebook to fostering inclusion for refugee employees' provides suggestions and case-studies whereby various companies benefited from inclusive pre-boarding and on-boarding refugees' employees.** For example, A Canadian-based manufacturer focused on the importance of the first 90 days, developing a flagship inclusion program that aimed to provide refugees with the skill set needed to operate effectively at work. The program involved developing skills tailored to a new, Canadian work environment (for example, punctuality, business communication, and how to speak about skills), and job coaches to help build community and language skills. This 90-day window set expectations for refugee employees to get up to speed within this time frame, at which point expectations and responsibilities would mirror those of any other employee (p.12). A Danish employer provided key trainings—such as technical health, safety, and job skill topics—in the refugees' native languages, while they took Danish classes after work. The employer also focused on expanding its on-boarding program to focus more broadly on organizational culture, core values, and other important elements of Danish workplaces. The company also provided local mentors for refugee employees to help them navigate things such as public transit and immigration appointments (Deloitte 2019 p.12).
Possible solutions	■ Employers can offer accessible information about Australian workplace conditions and worker rights, remuneration and taxation, and other information that employees may need to understand and trust their working environment. ■ Macro – bridging visa restrictions to be revised in light of current worker shortage allowing people to access work and meet basic human rights and needs ■ Public/private initiative to pilot bridging visa employment programs in certain sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.4 Workplace socialisation and education

Employers offer accessible information about Australian workplace conditions and worker rights, remuneration and taxation, and other information that employees may need to understand, in order to trust their working environment. This needs to occur in the first few weeks of employment with regular refresher training available. Delivery of this information needs to be designed and delivered with employee and/or community representatives.

1.5 Visa reform and advocacy

Work and study restrictions imposed by bridging visas and community detention is a major problem for some jobseekers. While this may seem out of scope in terms of wraparound services, employers can play an advocacy role with the aim of removing one of the major barriers to employment, thus addressing serious recruitment issues and the labor shortage.

1.6 English language and literacy supports

Employers work with communities and government to create workplace opportunities for employees to develop and practice English specifically related to their occupation. More support for language acquisition is required via public-private and community collaboration.

RELATIONAL

a) Building an inclusive, healthy and supportive work environment

A healthy work environment promoting growth and development

The notion of an inclusive, healthy and supportive work environment was raised as an important issue across all the focus groups. A healthy environment was described by young people at Afri-Aus Care as one that places importance on physical safety, transparency, and is supportive, allows for growth and facilitates a sense of belonging.

> Mandla said:
>
> I was looking for the company that values safety. I would want regular training for the staff. I want to make sure that there is a training to educate people. I want to go to work, and I want to come home safely.

Feedback was also an important issue for young people as it provided opportunities for growth and transparency.

> Sipho noted:
>
> Feedback will help with you knowing exactly where you stand in terms of your performance, and the accountability, it's good for like the workplace culture, values' and this was further explained by Yoruba to keep track, on a weekly basis, you can see how you're performing, if you're in a grey area or in a green zone, you don't just get sacked out of nowhere, or because you haven't been performing, more transparency.

The data demonstrates how the barriers and needs can be addressed and the following section provides solutions to jobseekers securing and maintaining employment. Such solutions require leadership, innovation and collaboration to be implemented and sustained.

Possible solutions	Employers provide healthy and supportive work environments which are physically (safe to work in) and culturally safe (transparent and positive work environments). Employers be transparent and provide feedback to employees about their performance and facilitate opportunities for growth through training and communication.

Based on the feedback form the focus groups, researchers identified four key (and interrelated) dimensions of building a healthy and supportive work environment: **Cultural safety; trust, and respect**, the need for a **A Cultural Liaison Officer / Community Engagement Officer**; Ensuring **workers are represented in decision-making processes**; and promoting **growth and development.**

Cultural safety, trust, and respect

Cultural safety and trust can be developed by acknowledging diversity and creating an inclusive work environment that promotes equity and addresses discrimination. Employers should collaborate closely with employee representatives to identify priorities for different cultural groups and co-develop strategies to ensure a culturally safe, trusting, and inclusive workplace. This could include offering prayer rooms and time, ensuring work uniforms meet cultural and religious needs, and ensuring management and staff engage in cultural safety professional development which promotes understanding and respectful inter-cultural and cross-cultural communication. This extends to workplace attire. As mentioned previously, some women for religious and/or cultural reasons do not wear pants and/or they wear long scarves. One participant mentioned a workplace provides women with the opportunity to work in their cultural and religious clothing and does not assign jobs to them which for occupational health and safety reasons would require wearing tight clothes or pants. It is important to note that the idea of not wearing pants is not interpreted in the same way by all women and individual choices would impact how this would be negotiated at the workplace.

As 'Steps towards cultural safety at work' by SafeWork, New South Wales Government identifies:

Cultural respect can be defined as the recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of a particular culture.

At work, this means everyone, regardless of culture, need to be treated with respect, inclusion, and transparent management and health and safety policies. However, cultural safety is more than just being aware of other cultures and respecting all people. It is about creating a workplace where everyone can examine our own cultural identities and attitudes and be open-minded and flexible in our attitudes towards people from cultures other than our own.

It also requires everyone to understand that their own values or practices are not always or only the best way to solve workplace problems."

https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/safety-starts-here/our-aboriginal-program/culturally-safe-workplaces/what-is-cultural-safety

Establish a Cultural Liaison Officer / Community Engagement Officer

Employers should work with employees and community representatives to explore models for cultural liaison and community engagement officers. This role would facilitate communication between different community groups and employers to promote sustainable employment and address culturally sensitive issues. This role may require ongoing government funding for it to be sustainable.

An example of this model are the mentors at Afri-Aus Care who provide support and guidance to jobs seekers and employees. Another good model is the City of Dandenong's employment of bicultural workers to communicate public health messages during the peak of the Covid -19 pandemic.

Ensuring workers are represented in decision making processes

Employers should ensure employees are represented in key decision-making processes and are properly supported to participate in these forums. Employers should also be encouraged to co-design change strategies with employees for optimal outcomes. Diversity and inclusion need to go beyond mere tokenism and include diverse voice for there to be meaning inclusion.

USING BEST PRACTICE TO SUPPORT CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION IN THE WORKPLACE - THE FAIR WORK OMBUDSMAN

Some examples of communication methods include:

- **An 'open door' policy** – this means that owners or managers commit to being open and responsive to any work-related matters their employees want to bring to them

- **Meetings** – this could include team meetings, toolbox talks or 'town hall' meetings for the whole workforce. Large employers with staff in multiple locations might also organise senior managers to visit each location

- **Surveys** – employers might ask employees to participate in a survey to find out what they like (or don't like) in the workplace, what the employer is doing well and areas for improvement. Allowing employees to complete a survey anonymously is a good way to get honest feedback

- **Employee committees** – a consultative committee usually meets once every few months to discuss workplace issues and suggest actions. It's important that management is accountable for considering any of the committee's suggestions and responding in a timely way

- **Social media and other technology** – employers can also make good use of social media, electronic forums, video blogs and other technology to create new kinds of communication.

Promoting growth and development

Employers should provide healthy work environments which are both physically, emotionally and culturally safe (transparent and positive work environments). Employers should be transparent and provide feedback to employees about their performance and facilitate opportunities for growth through training and communication. This includes career pathways and explore aspirations.

The table below provides examples of best practice solutions to barriers and challenges identified in this research. These strategies suggest factors which can convert the latent potential of resources, such as people's skills and talents, community services, and social supports, into desired outcomes such as employment. Amartya Sen first developed the Capabilities Approach as a way of thinking about social justice and diversity and acknowledging that people translate available resources into meaningful outcomes in different ways (1987, 1999). Sen argued that society should aim to expand people's freedoms and provide the supports required to empower them to develop the lives they want and need.

A key element in the Capabilities Approach framework is the notion of conversion factors. These are those factors operating at the individual, socio cultural, and institutional and environment levels which shape people's lives and their capacity to convert available resources and opportunities into meaningful outcomes (Goerne, 2010). This framework is a useful way of thinking about the systems and processes at different levels required to support people's access and make the most of available resources and opportunities in their desire to work, as opposed to simply focusing on inputs or generic outcomes.

Example of best practice local and /or overseas	Principles of Good Work Design: A Work Health and Safety Handbook (Safe Work Australia) provides comprehensive strategies and principles and benefits of good work design.
	https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1702/good-work-design-handbook.pdf
	Good work design optimises work health and safety, human performance, job satisfaction, and business success (Safe Work Australia, n.d. p.3)

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Cultural safety, trust, and respect

Employers collaborate closely with employee representatives to identify priorities for different cultural groups and co-develop strategies to ensure a culturally safe, trusting, and inclusive workplace. Cultural safety and trust can be developed by acknowledging diversity and creating an inclusive work environment that promotes equity and addresses discrimination.

2.2 Establish a Cultural Liaison Officer/ Community Engagement Officer role

Employers work with employees and community representatives to explore models for cultural liaison and community engagement officers. This role would facilitate communication between different community groups and employers to promote sustainable employment and proactively address culturally sensitive issues.

2.3 Ensure workers are represented in decision-making processes

Employers ensure employees are represented in key decision-making processes and are properly supported to participate in these forums. This may mean, for example, ensuring relevant meetings are at family friendly times. Employers should also be encouraged to co-design change strategies with employees for optimal outcomes.

2.4 Promoting development

Employers provide supportive work environments which are physically (safe to work in), and which also offer opportunities for skill development and employment progress in order to retain staff. Employers should be transparent and provide feedback to employees about their performance, facilitating opportunities for development and progress through training and communication. This could be supported by the Cultural Liaison Officer.

Findings

3. Implementation: Co-creation in practice

Implementing the recommendations from this research will require an ongoing commitment to co-creation, involving communities at the heart of the study as well as a range of other players. It will be important to forge ahead in the spirit (and the practice) of co-creation, keeping the principles outlined previously front and centre and creating conditions for collaboration, ongoing learning and shared accountability.

To progress this agenda, a key opportunity exists for Government and/or philanthropy to support the development of a place-based employment-focused social enterprise initiative in the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD). This initiative would bring industry, community, and government together to develop the framework further and 'prototype' it in its real world context, following the co-creation approach outlined in this report.

The 'prototype' would create a scaffold and support for a deeper inquiry into what is needed for the model to work for the communities at the heart of things. It would be anchored by the principles and values articulated in the framework from its inception, through implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

There are a number of elements that we think will be important in taking this work forward and making this work with communities in Dandenong. These are captured in our visual framework, and we describe them in more detail here. They are:

- Whole system and locality-based collaboration
- Support and resource for prototyping and ongoing learning with communities
- System leadership and convening
- Shared accountability

Whole system and locality-based collaboration

Locality-based collaboration will be a powerful component of this work going forward. There are considerable strengths and assets in the Greater Dandenong area that can be part of a solution. There is also an appetite from local governments and others to adopt more joined-up and networked ways of working on complex challenges such as this. A strong way forward will involve ongoing collaboration with community groups and a range of local players, building on the strengths of their current offers and potentially extending and diversifying what they do into new, relevant domains.

Our research reveals the complex and interconnected nature of the issues that are preventing people from culturally diverse backgrounds from gaining and maintaining employment. Thinking about 'whole systems' and locality-based collaboration is important in our analysis and recommendations.

Thinking in 'whole systems' matters because the responsibility for addressing barriers to and enablers of employment cuts across (and falls between) different policy and service silos, and many of the potential solutions we might imagine go beyond what we might expect employers to typically consider.

In developing this model further, it will be critical to mobilise a diverse group of players from the locality and beyond who can help to imagine and provide solutions to components of the model. Different kinds of organisations will need to coordinate to deliver a solution that addresses the key barriers and enablers we identify (e.g. childcare, transport, cultural responsiveness, etc) in ways that work for communities in this locality.

Support and resource for prototyping and ongoing learning with communities

This project represents significant learning, insight-gathering and co-design of a framework for wraparound support services. This is not, however, a framework that can be dropped into place and expected to work; it needs to be developed and tested further in its locality and with the communities who have helped shape it so far.

We recommend that the design process be followed further so that the wraparound support framework might be tested and developed in a live prototype with community members and other players who might be part of developing and delivering a solution.

There are critical questions still to be determined that dig further into the detail of support that might be needed. For example:

- What kind of childcare or transport solutions would be practical and feasible for these groups in this locality?
- What is the best way of supporting workplace socialisation and education?
- Who is best placed to support this in ways that build trust and confidence?
- What new things will work to make the workplace supportive and healthy?
- How do we coordinate all these elements well around individual workers?
- What is the ongoing role for communities, employers and the government in making this work?

A 'prototype' would keep the principles and outcomes of the framework front and centre, and explore a deeper layer of practical questions further with a range of players in the context of real work. A 'prototype' would set up the conditions for learning through action and for folding learning back into the service/support model as it is being developed. Running prototypes and design processes in areas of complex social challenge demands an experienced design and prototyping partner who can create the necessary scaffolds and hold the ring on action and learning, bringing multiple partners into the mix. A well-designed prototype should develop the model and also demonstrate its potential so that greater investment can be unlocked, and the work implemented at scale.

System leadership and convening

In taking a project such as this forward, 'systems leadership' will be critical. 'Systems leadership' and 'adaptive leadership' have become important practices in efforts to respond to complex social challenges, where solutions to a problem are not easily determined and where multiple actors need to be part of the solution.

'System leaders' and 'adaptive leaders' are comfortable leading through their relational capability and influence, rather than hierarchical or positional power. They are able to engage, inspire and mobilise players across communities, organisations and sectors and support them to cohere around shared ambition. They are comfortable with uncertainty and complexity, and can hold a safe space for experimentation and learning.

There is an important role for leadership in this work to 'convene the system'; to engage all the necessary players and help them to work, learn and build capability for this model together.

Shared accountability

As this work develops, it will be important to develop mechanisms for shared accountability. Ability Works is a key partner playing a leading role, but other services and sectors will need to be collaborating to ensure outcomes in a number of domains. One of the questions a 'prototyping' phase could explore is what a model and mechanism for shared accountability looks like.

> **Immediate next steps**
>
> - Share the key findings and recommendations with government, the community and locality to engage them in the opportunity
> - Scope a 'prototyping' phase in more detail and develop a project proposal for further investment
> - Prepare government, community and key partners for a further phase of prototyping work.

4. Conclusion

Conclusion.

This research aimed to identify the wraparound supports and services required to enable and empower people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds living in the Greater Dandenong area to gain and maintain employment. The research was funded by Ability Works, Westpac Foundation and Jobsbank and conducted using co-design and Ubuntu principles in partnership with key community and local government stakeholders. The Greater Dandenong municipality is the most culturally diverse in Australia with high rates of long-term unemployment amongst certain ethnically and culturally diverse communities experiencing intersectional disadvantage. This is despite strong motivation to work, industry need, and collaborative efforts by local and state government, community groups, and employers to address this social and economic problem. This research has engaged with diverse communities to gain a more nuanced understanding of the lived experience of young people and their families and draws on this to offer a strengths-based framework for wraparound services designed to address key structural, socio cultural, and personal barriers to employment.

Focus groups with more than 60 participants from diverse communities identified motivations for work, job preferences, and operational and relational enablers required to empower and support employment. The research highlights a strong desire to work by communities but also builds on previous studies to highlight long standing, pervasive, and multi-level barriers to employment. This report draws on participants' lived experience, previous research and best practice examples to recommend key focus areas for collaborative action and change. These are: more flexible, accessible and affordable childcare; working hours and conditions that more flexibly respond to family and childcare commitments, particularly for women; more accessible transport options; culturally responsive workplace socialisation and education; and, the development and nurturing of inclusive and supportive work cultures characterised by trust, respect and opportunity. Best practice examples are offered to build on and inspire whilst acknowledging the importance of tailoring services to local context and need.

Empowering people to reach their full potential, reducing unemployment and marginalisation, and meeting industry's needs is everybody's business and therefore requires creative and strategic collaboration between business, government and community. Central to success is an authentic commitment to working in partnership with impacted communities, listening and learning from lived experience, and ensuring sustainable processes for employee representation and co-design in all decision-making processes. These conditions are important for all workplaces however this research reveals the additional barriers experienced by ethnically and culturally diverse communities who have experienced long-term unemployment and the need for leadership, innovation, and collaboration in addressing these. This report outlines an opportunity for a paradigm shift from deficit to strengths and asset-based thinking where investment in potential and wraparound supports will benefit all key stakeholders.

Conclusion

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information about community (partner) organisations

Appendix B: Focus group tools

Appendix C: Composite vignettes

App A | Information about community (partners) organisations

Afri-Aus Care

Afri-Aus Care Inc. provides Culturally Appropriate Mental Health assessment and a variety of support services to African Australian youth-at-risk, their families and those from other CALD backgrounds. We use UBUNTU guidelines and the Positive Change Model as the foundations of assisting people to live meaningful lives. Participants are then further referred to appropriate Health professionals and other Stakeholders for achievable outcomes. We use Culturally Appropriate programs in all our projects, as a result, our organisation has been able to reach out to community members at the grassroots level. We also work in collaboration with private and public Stakeholders, for example, various government bodies, Rotary clubs, and educational institutions to reach our strategic goals. We offer intensive biopsychosocial and wellbeing risk assessment such as counselling, legal/court/post-release community support, alternative education and employment pathways as well as further referrals to appropriate health care providers and other organisations. Afri-Aus Care provides placement opportunities for tertiary students from various educational institutions in Victoria, including RMIT, Monash University, Chisholm, Holmesglen, Swinburne University of Technology, Stott's College, Victoria University, etc. Afri-Aus Care also works with the University of Melbourne, the Swinburne University of Technology and Psyche Foundation on a number of research and evaluation projects.

Bakhtar Community Organisation

Bakhtar Community Organisation is a charitable, non-profit and first Afghan Australian secular organisation based in Victoria with a small team of staff supported by over fifty dedicated volunteers. We provide support, material aid and socially inclusive activities to a diverse range of community members many of whom are disadvantaged, isolated or marginalised due to family dysfunction, family violence, infirmity, disability, homelessness, mental illness or the long-term effects of drug or alcohol use.

Our main goal is to bridge the gap between the community and the government services, provide a point of connection aimed at reducing isolation, promoting inclusion, integration and fostering mutually beneficial relationships amongst those who attend and offering pathways to involvement with the wider community.

Friends of Refugees (FOR)

FOR's mission is to advocate, support, facilitate and promote the integration of asylum seekers and refugees living in Australia and to enable them to become part of an inclusive Australian society by:

Increasing the awareness of Australian people about the plight of the asylum seekers and refugee's situation in Australia and by helping to foster positive relationships with each other.

Supporting asylum seekers fleeing persecution and treating them with respect and dignity so that they receive the same care and access to opportunities as any other person in Australia.

Empowering asylum seekers and refugees to be self-sufficient so that they can be recognised as valuable contributors to the community and the economy.

Seeking to address the service gaps in support networks by quickly addressing unmet and emerging needs.

ACTIVITY 3

FINDING AND MAINTAINING WORK

WHAT HELPS?
WHAT DOESN'T?

Stable and rewarding work

What helps me find and maintain work?

What makes things harder? What gets in the way?

FAMILY

DIFFICULT
RELATIONSHIPS

CARING
RESPONSIBILITIES

DRUGS
AND
ALCOHOL

TRANSPORT
AND
ACCESSIBILITY

Appendices

FRIENDSHIP
AND
SUPPORT

ADAPTING TO
MY NEEDS

LANGUAGE

MENTAL
HEALTH
AND
WELLBEING

EDUCATION
AND SKILLS

CULTURAL
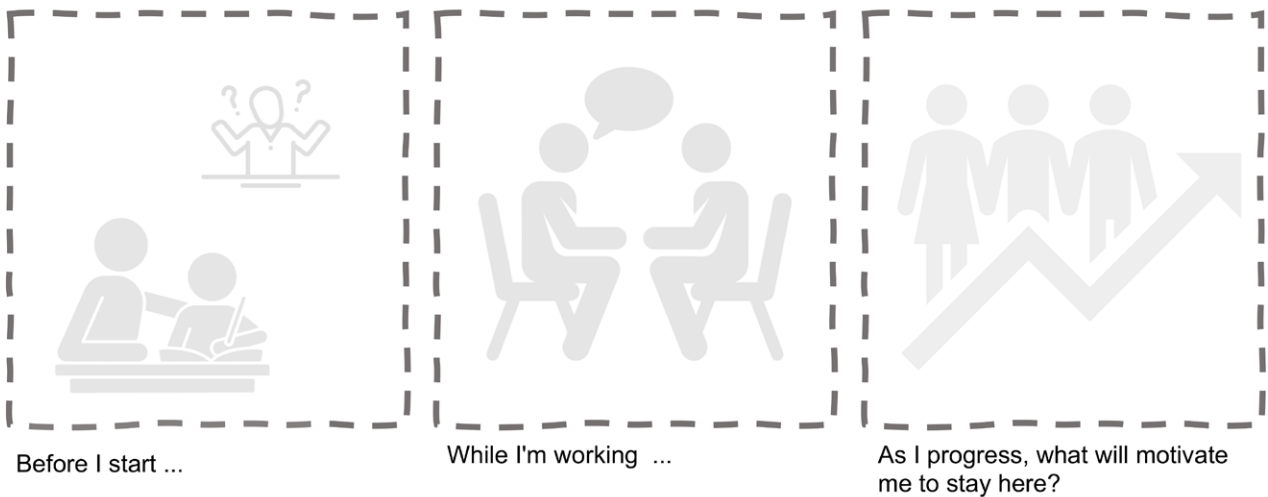AWARENESS
AND A
SUPPORTIVE
WORK CULTURE

QUALIFICATIONS

HEALTH

DISCRIMINATION

CONFIDENCE

ACTIVITY 4

WHAT WOULD GREAT
WRAP-AROUND
SUPPORT
LOOK LIKE?

Opportunities at
Ability Works

Great support for work looks like...

Before I start ...

While I'm working ...

As I progress, what will motivate
me to stay here?

App C | Composite Vignettes

These profiles are developed from across the stories we heard, and represent key experiences shared by participants. We use aliases and composite profiles to respect the privacy of participants.

—
Abur

Abur is 22 years old and lives in Springvale. He volunteers at a local community organisation. Volunteer work gives him a sense of achievement and makes him happy and fulfilled as he is contributing to society. He would like to engage in paid work but is worried about how he will get to work on time as he wants to be reliable. Abur has a medical condition which prevents him from driving, and public transport is too far and unreliable in the area where he lives. A 15-minute trip in a car can take an hour using public transport. And due to his medical condition, he does not feel safe on public transport. Abur's father is his carer and drives him to the community organisation where Abur volunteers his time assisting other newly arrived migrants. But often, Abur is late to his volunteer work as he relies on his father for transportation. For Abur to find and stay at work, he needs a workplace that understands his health needs and a transport solution.

A co-created, person-centred and placed-based solution is needed to remove the barriers to Abur's employment and enable him to find and stay in work. An effective solution requires the collaboration of a variety of stakeholders including, employer(s), local council, individuals and community groups.

—
Rawia

Rawia is a 24-year-old confident woman who came to Australia as a refugee. She was forced to flee her country, so she was not killed because of her ethnic identity. She is happy and proud to be alive and in Australia. She wants to work but her visa status prevents many employers from hiring her. And in the cases where she does finds work, referees do not respond in a timely manner which means she misses key work opportunities.

Rawia is doing everything she can to be independent and self-sufficient. The barriers that prevent her from gaining employment are all beyond her control. Although she is disheartened and feels like giving up, she continues to try and find work.

Work and study restrictions imposed by bridging visas and community detention prevents many people from entering the workforce. While this may seem outside the scope of wraparound services, employers can play an advocacy role in removing one of the key barriers to work, this addressing recruitment issues and labour shortages creating a win-win situation for employers and job seekers.

Maz

Maz is a 25-year-old single mother of 3 children. Two of her children attend primary school and her youngest attends day-care. Maz wants to work as she wants to be a good role model for her children. She wants to earn an income to provide for herself and her family. She is currently renting and wants to save money and purchase her own home. This will provide her with a sense of security and growth. Staying at home makes her feel lonely and depressed. Working will also provide her with an opportunity to meet and interact with other people. She was particularly interested in the packing work offered by Ability Works as this work will not only bring her a secure income, but she will also have the opportunity socialise with her colleagues. Maz's friend suggested Maz could work at her workplace. Maz was delighted and took this opportunity and has secured employment as they offered flexible hours / shifts enabling her to work between school pick up and drop off.

Maz woke her young children at 5am to get them ready to attend school and day-care. She had to catch two modes of public transport to get her children to school and then drop her youngest at day-care to be able to get to work on time. While Maz was successful in finding employment, the conditions to get to and from work coupled with the distance she has to travel to take her youngest to day-care, were not sustainable for her and her family and she was unable to continue working there.

A co-created, person-centred and placed-based solution is needed to remove the barriers to Maz's employments and enable her to find and stay in work. An effective solution requires the collaboration of a variety of stakeholders including, employer(s), local council, individuals and community groups. Both transport solutions and accessible childcare is needed for Maz to stay at work.

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