

***Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World***

**Final Evaluation Report**

**January 2012**





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**Please Note:** all photographs in this report are used with the permission of participants





"In other courses I have felt really worked up and anxious ... it felt as though other people in the room were taking my air and I found it hard to breath. I don't feel like that with this. I feel relaxed."

**Participant in the Maryborough 2011 'Getting Ahead' pilot program**





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## Acknowledgements

The Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal team would like to thank the following people and groups who helped make the running of this pilot program possible. In no particular order; DEEWR's Bendigo staff; Jane Collins and the team at Best Community Development; Triangle Consulting United Kingdom for the Outcomes Star; Neighbourhood Renewal Steering Committee for their support in sponsoring 2 residents into the program; Ruby Payne & Philip DeVol for the Framework for Understanding Poverty & 'Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World', that is used throughout the program; Central Goldfields Shire Council for administration and venue support – particularly the finance team; Patti and Kim Stanley who provided volunteer childcare when required; volunteers at the Community Hub; Marita Turner's unerring support; and finally, the participants of the 'Getting Ahead' program for their faith and hard work.



## Executive Summary

As far as we can tell, this was the first time that *'Getting Ahead'* has been delivered in Australia. Despite the American bias in the program details, facilitators managed to adapt the program to make it more relevant for Australian and local conditions. As a result, facilitators maximised the opportunity to better equip a group of disadvantaged Maryborough residents to function effectively in local educational and employment settings through the implementation of the *'Getting Ahead'* Program.

This evaluation document includes the detailed findings from outcome, impact and process evaluation. For the purposes of brevity and readability, the main findings in this evaluation report have been summarised as follows -

### What worked?

- Majority of participants reported and were observed to make substantial changes in their lives.
- The provision of food
- Opportunities for social interaction
- An informal, relaxed, learning environment
- Participant involvement with the development of relevant language, setting & clearing up, pairing up.
- A second facilitator or support person, especially for local content.
- Extra evaluation tools and resources other than those provided in the facilitator's handbook.
- Games, matching exercises and role plays.
- The extra time provided on budgeting, hidden rules, mediation and planning.
- Outdoor activities to break up sessions
- The philosophy behind *'Getting Ahead'* and the Framework for Understanding Poverty was excellent. It is a really useful way of having conversations about poverty and disadvantage.

### What didn't work?

- There was a lot of theory that had to be balanced against the need for participant-based learning.
- Changing venues destabilised participants.
- There were confidentiality and anonymity risks with children and volunteers in the same room as participants.
- Any extra people in the room were a distraction.
- Breaks during school holidays and staff annual leave interrupted program momentum
- One session a week meant that the program ran for 20 weeks. This was too long in terms of retaining some participants. Given the complexity of disadvantaged people's lives, many were not able to make a commitment to that length of time.
- Leaving participants without support to implement their action plans after the conclusion of the program.

Although having significantly different income, employment and learning outcomes compared with the American program, this pilot program has been a success across many domains. It seems reasonable to deduce that the difference in inclusion/exclusion criteria account for the differences between the programs. Given the participant profile, the Maryborough program has achieved its aim of better equipping a group of disadvantaged Maryborough residents to function effectively in local educational and employment settings. It is recommended that the program continue, incorporating the changes outlined in the recommendations section of this report.



## Recommendations

1. That the program is continued.
2. That facilitators administer the pre-program Outcomes Star in order to begin the important process of establishing rapport with participants.
3. For the purposes of relationship building, it would be advisable to hold a casual BBQ or afternoon tea following the information session so that registered participants can get to know the facilitators and each other prior to commencement of program.
4. Incorporate the principles and strategies of Circle Speak group work.
5. That a short version Quality of Life scale be administered pre and post program to determine the specific changes in participants' health and wellbeing over the duration of the program.
6. That the program is facilitated by more than one person to support participant engagement, share the workload and ensure accountability.
7. As recommended in the '*Getting Ahead*' guidelines, that a program graduate/s be recruited to contribute their learnings and assist future programs.
8. That a worthwhile incentive is offered to participants.
9. That two sessions per week for 10 weeks be scheduled to maintain momentum and lessen the length of participant commitment.
10. That participants are engaged in running the program, for example, involvement in a morning tea and clean up roster, taking photographs, peer support, collecting relevant information to present to the group on the topics in workbook etc.
11. That confidentiality within the program and participant anonymity is ensured (no observers etc) as required and/or requested.
12. That future programs incorporate the facilitators and participants' observations that are included in this evaluation as well as any changes documented throughout this pilot program.
13. That facilitators adapt the program resources to local conditions e.g. some language and case study examples.
14. That a Neighbourhood Renewal support network be established to share local resources between facilitators



## Background

### What's been done in the past re pre-employment preparation?

Neighbourhood Renewal sites use Employment Support Initiative funding to improve employment outcomes. Like many other Neighbourhood Renewal sites, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal employed a 'Link-up Worker' to achieve 9 employment outcomes in a 12 month period. Using process evaluation, Neighbourhood Renewal looked at the program activities to determine what changes needed to be made to ensure that the program aim of 9 employment outcomes was achieved.

After the evaluation Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal saw a need to engage people in a program that is linked to the "Understanding Poverty" learnings. The program Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal decided to use was titled 'Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World' and was written for people in poverty and provided a way for participants to examine the impact that poverty has on individuals, families and communities. The program shows participants how to use the hidden rules of class and how to build financial, emotional, social, and other resources. Understanding the hidden rules of middle class and wealth, and choosing to use them, can open doors to such resources as new relationships, new jobs and higher resources.

### Rationale for this program

One of the key factors determining the likely success of this program was the fact that it was an international model that crossed all cultural barriers and Neighbourhood Renewal staff did not have to 'reinvent the wheel'. 'Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World' has been proven (on average) to increase employment outcomes by 63%, increase participants' income by 84%, increase involvement in further education and training by 69% and increase participants' social support by 84%, all within 6 months of starting the program.

Importantly, the dominant culture in Maryborough is poverty. To make a difference to the circumstances of disadvantaged people Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal needed to do something different to what had been done in the past. The program was based on research drawing from a range of disciplines including learning, health promotion and community development. 'Getting Ahead' was working across the world in disadvantaged communities and Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal believed that their opportunity to offer an innovative way to engage people in employment and learning.

### What is the 'Getting Ahead' Program?

'Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World' is a life skills program written for people living in socio-economically disadvantaged circumstances. It provides a way for participants to investigate the impact that disadvantage has on them as individuals, families and communities. Based on the 'Framework for Understanding Poverty' by Dr Ruby Payne, the program helps participants to discover how to use the hidden rules of class to build eleven key resources: financial, emotional, mental, language, social support, physical, spiritual, integrity and trust, motivation and persistence, relationships/role models and hidden rules. Understanding the hidden rules of middle class and wealth, and choosing to use them, can build personal resources such as new relationships and new job prospects.

The aim of this initiative was to better equip a group of disadvantaged Maryborough residents to function more effectively in local educational and employment settings through the implementation of a 'Getting Ahead' Program.



## Program Content

- This was a 20 week program involving 16 unemployed Maryborough residents. There was one session per week of 2 ½ hours duration.
- There was a set curriculum.
- A trained facilitator assisted participants to work through 15 modules over the 20 week period.
- The program was held in a central location.
- Process, impact and outcome evaluation tools were used to assess the overall effectiveness of this pilot.
- Free food, transport and childcare were offered.
- Participants were paid \$20 per week to attend sessions and complete workbook exercises.
- Regular contact with participants was usually made between weekly sessions.
- Incentives such as door prizes were offered to maximise weekly attendance.
- Some of the theoretical presentations were converted to group games to better engage and entertain participants.
- For this pilot program, the Outcomes Star was used as an additional evaluation tool. (see appendix 1)

## Financial Details

- The federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) agreed to allow Job Service Australia (JSA) providers to fund participants' involvement in this pilot project.
- The estimated cost for each participant was \$428.00. This included a weekly payment of \$20 per participant over 20 weeks, a workbook at \$15 each and \$13 per participant over the 20 weeks for refreshments. Once we began the program it was realised that many participants were arriving without having eaten, therefore it was decided to spend extra money to provide nutritious food. (This decision was based on research evidence linking concentration and learning ability to nutritional status.)
- It is important to note that there was no direct cost for the facilitation of this program. A Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal staff member had previously been trained as a facilitator for two-hour sessions as part of her professional development, with a view to up-skilling partner organisations to understand disadvantage in our community. Her training included the ability to deliver 'Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World'. Facilitator costs would need to be added if any other site was planning on delivering this program. Alternatively, Neighbourhood Renewal program staff could be trained.
- There would be a need to plan for the extra cost imposed by the need for stationery, easel pads, textas, crayons etc. for class activities.
- There was extra cost involved in purchasing materials to entertain small children who were supervised by volunteers during school holidays or occasionally when a child was unable to attend school during term.
- Small gifts for volunteers and prizes for participant attendance also meant extra costs that were not anticipated prior to running this first program. Commensurate with Ruby Payne's beliefs in delivering Understanding Poverty programs, the need to factor in entertainment and fun as often as possible to maintain participant engagement was recognised.
- There were several BBQ's and an end-of-program lunch that had not been specifically factored into the program. These additional costs need to be factored in to budgeting for any future programs because in our experience across the wider community, they are a very important and successful component in engaging disadvantaged residents.
- JSA's paid the Central Goldfields Shire the \$428.00 per participant fee for service cost. This was then distributed to participants weekly, as an electronic transfer through council's finance department. Local government policy precluded the possibility of cash payments. The necessity to observe financial policy added to administrative tasks. If at all possible, it is recommended that cash payments be made.





## Who Attended?

Program participants were recruited through Job Service Australia (JSA) providers. With staff who had worked with a Neighbourhood Renewal project elsewhere, BEST Community Development was especially enthusiastic about the proposed program. They recruited 75% of participants and maintained contact with their clients throughout the program.

The participants of the program were a diverse cohort of 16 unemployed residents from Maryborough and surrounds. The profile of the group included:

- 3 people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) heritage.
- 4 single parents with dependants.
- 10 people identified with an emotional or mental health issue.
- An age range between 17 and 52 years
- Slightly more women than men
- Many participants attended the sessions lacking sleep, hungry, under the influence of alcohol and/or high caffeine drinks and sometimes in a traumatised state because of family crises.

## Who Facilitated?

**Main Facilitator** – qualified Community Development worker employed by Neighbourhood Renewal and trained to deliver a selection of the Understanding Poverty suite of programs.

**Assistant Facilitator** – Neighbourhood Renewal Employment & Learning Coordinator who is qualified in Training & Assessment and Project Management.

**Participant Support Worker** – qualified Health Promotion worker who was responsible for administering the Outcomes Star. This role was funded by the Employment Support Initiative.



## Method

Because this pilot program was the first time that ‘Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin’ by World’ has been delivered in Australia, it was important to identify what worked and what didn’t, and develop recommendations for the delivery of any future programs. As far as possible the program was implemented as outlined in the facilitator’s guidelines written by Philip DeVol and based on Ruby Payne’s *Framework for Understanding Poverty*.

Participants in this evaluation comprised four groups – participants in the ‘Getting Ahead’ Program, program facilitators, the Manager of a local Job Service Provider branch whose organisation had referred the greatest number of JSA clients to the program, and the Employment Support Initiative worker who conducted the Outcomes Star approach to monitoring outcomes.

The aim, objectives and strategies of the ‘Getting Ahead’ Program are outlined in the following table -

**Aim:** to better equip a group of disadvantaged Maryborough residents to function effectively in local educational and employment settings through the implementation of a ‘Getting Ahead’ Program.

### Objectives

1. Form partnerships with DEEWR and local employment providers for the purpose of funding this pilot project
2. Identify suitable participants through local Job Service Australia providers
3. Develop program details and adapt for Australian/local conditions
4. Create a supportive learning environment for participants

### Strategies

- Develop project brief for prospective partner organisations
- Use ELAG (Employment & Learning Action Group) and employment providers meetings to promote program
- Establish administrative procedures and protocols for payment of participants
- Develop information flyer
- Promote program to JSA’s
- Hold information sessions for prospective participants
- Enrol selected participants
- Engage qualified facilitator
- Source workbooks and trainers guides
- Develop Power Point presentation slides for weeks 1-20
- Determine and book suitable venue
- Provide opportunity for participants to meet and establish rapport with facilitator/s before start of program
- Provide refreshments at each session
- Provide free transport and/or childcare as required
- Provide weekly text reminders via global SMS system
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement to participants for the duration of the program and for 3 months after through weekly welfare checks and contact phone calls

**Table 1 – Aim, Objectives & Strategies for the Maryborough ‘Getting Ahead’ Program**

The evaluation of the ‘Getting Ahead’ program comprised process, impact and outcome evaluation. Data for the different types of evaluation was collected using the following methods –



## Type of evaluation

### Outcome Evaluation (Aim)

*Measures the long term effects of the program i.e. whether it meets its aim/s by determining what changes if any have occurred in health status and quality of life.*

### Impact Evaluation (Objectives)

*Measures the immediate effects of the program i.e. whether it meets its objectives by assessing what changes if any have occurred in the predisposing, reinforcing and enabling factors, targeted behaviors and the environment.*

### Process Evaluation (Strategies)

*Provides information about program improvements by establishing whether the implementation is proceeding as planned i.e.:*

- *Is the program reaching all parts of the target group?*
- *Are the planned activities of the program being implemented?*
- *Are all participants satisfied with the program?*

## Data collected

- Maryborough's overall results compared with USA program
- Numbers of participants who were successful in achieving education and employment objectives
- Attendance and number of participants who completed the program
- Outcome Star data to establish baseline data for participant outcomes
- Measurements of each participant's financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, social support, relationship, hidden rules, language and motivation resources at intake and completion.
- Qualitative data on participants' experiences as a result of completing the program
- Whether appropriate partners were engaged for funding purposes
- Identification of suitable participants
- Extent that program details were adapted for Australian/local conditions
- Participation in sessions
- Whether a supportive learning environment was created
- Case-studies to ascertain the impact of the program on participants' life choices.
- Referrals from participants to other residents for subsequent programs
- Participants experiences with monetary payments
- Did the program reach the intended target group?
- Weekly participant feedback forms
- Qualitative data on participants' satisfaction within the program
- Referrals from participants to other residents for subsequent programs
- Participants' experiences within the program
- Facilitator feedback from group recording forms
- Job Services Australia feedback
- Participant support worker feedback

**Table 2 – Evaluation Plan for the Maryborough 'Getting Ahead' Program**

## Data Collection Tools

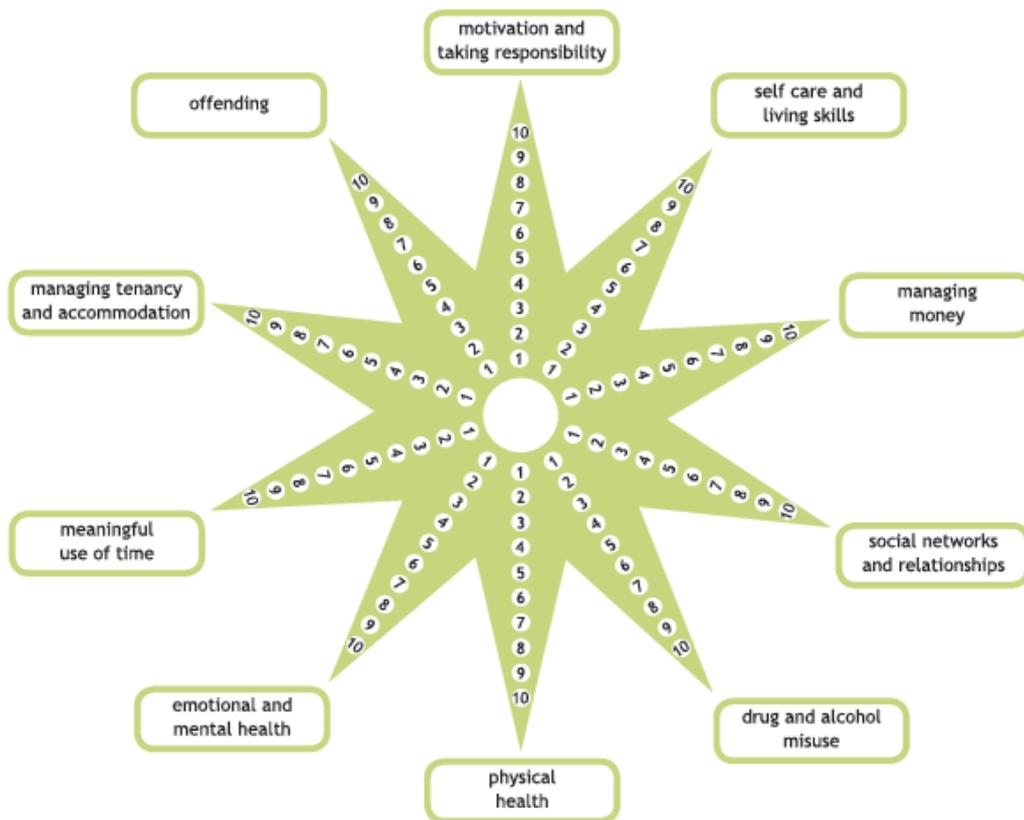
### 1. The Outcomes Star

The Outcomes Star is a UK based tool which is used to measure change when working with vulnerable people. It is an outcomes tool, enabling any organisation to measure and review change across 10 different areas of an individual's life. It supports the user directly as it is represented visually, enabling them to see the change happen and pin-point clearly the areas that need to be worked on. It is carried out with both a worker and the individual.

This approach was chosen as it is client centred and focuses on a holistic approach of the individuals' lives. It encompasses many of the social determinants of health, which are attributed to the wider factors affecting an individual's health and well-being.

Results gathered from the Outcomes Star indicated positive improvements in participants' lives. The 10 areas of this client centred approach are labelled on the diagram below;





**Diagram 1 - The 10 domains of the Outcomes Star**

Participants, with the guidance of the Participant Support Worker, used a visual tool (above) to rate themselves out of 10 in each domain. A score out of 100 was used to give a numerical indication of where participants were located on their journey of change. These assessments were carried out at the beginning of the program to collect baseline data, then at the mid point and conclusion.

The process for consideration of change involved the use of the Outcomes Star Ladder of Change which can be seen on the following page;



## The Ladder of Change

Think of an area of your life where you have made changes.

What was it like before you had decided to change?

Do you remember thinking about change and then deciding you would do it?

What was the first thing that you did?

See if your experience fits with the Ladder of Change. The next page gives a more detailed description of each step of the journey.

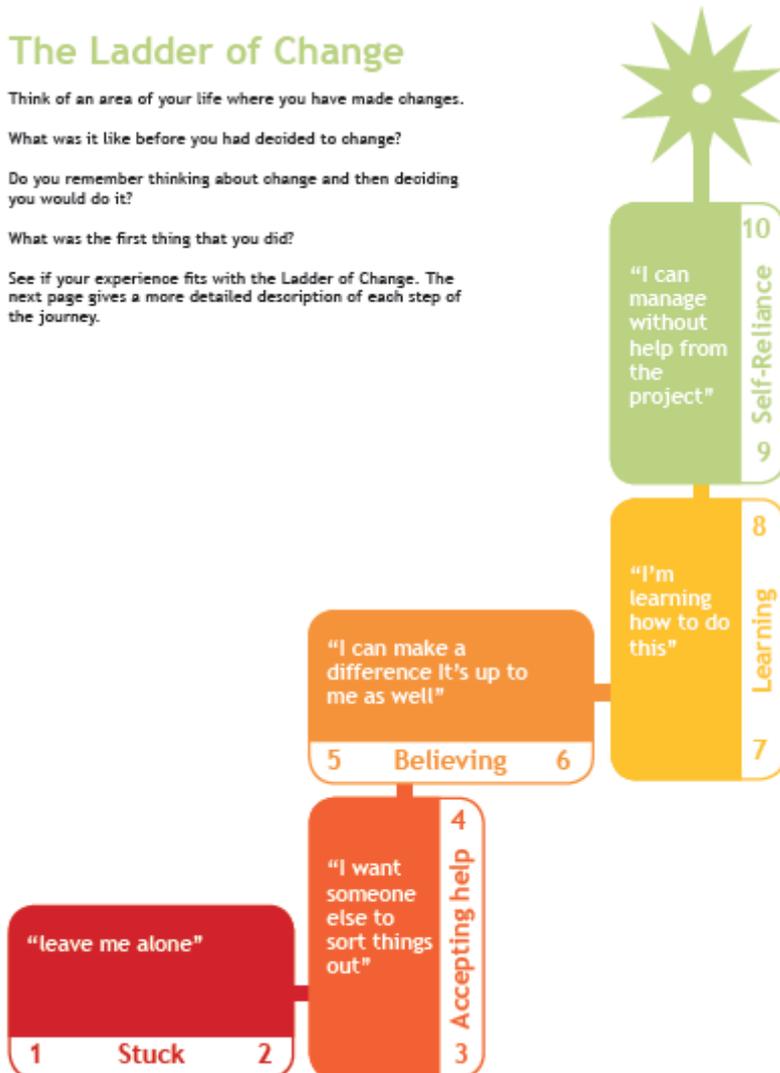


Diagram 2 - The Outcomes Star Ladder of Change

## 2. Group Recording Form

The Group Recording Form was used to record facilitators' feedback on each session immediately on completion. The recording was done during discussion between the 3 workers involved in the sessions. (See appendix 2)

## 3. Participant Feedback Form

The participant feedback form recorded participants' feedback anonymously about what worked and what didn't within each session. The forms were completed weekly. (See appendix 3)

## 4. Post-Workbook Participant Evaluation and Stages of Change Assessment

This tool outlined a final evaluation that encompassed an overall experience of '*Getting Ahead*' from the four participants who completed the program. It covered three key areas including –



1. Attitude toward the facilitator(s)
2. Attitude toward the workbook(s)
3. Use of information.

The first area explored perceptions about the facilitators' approach and style, the quality of the experience and the respect that was demonstrated by the facilitators. The second area asked participants how much the workbook had changed their thinking, how useful it was and how believable the material was. The third section, on the use of information, asked about the likelihood of the participant using their plans in decision making, where the participant was located in the stages of change (pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance), as well as the most and least helpful elements of the work-book experience. (See appendix 4)

## Participant Feedback

Feedback from participants was collected using weekly evaluation forms and a focus group conducted after week 11. Telephone interviews to all of the 16 participants who started the program were also completed 3 months after the conclusion of the program. (See appendix 5)

The weekly feedback was divided into seven sections;

- Four questions were asked about the information that participants found most helpful, the least helpful things about the group, the most helpful things about the group and suggestions to improve the program.
- Three sections requested participants to rate the helpfulness of the information, how well facilitators presented the information and their overall satisfaction with the session.

Analysis of Qualitative Data;

- Focus group qualitative data was thematically analysed.
- Data from weekly feedback sheets was thematically analysed and quantitatively represented in graphs, charts and tables.
- Semi-structured interviews were completed by an independent person after completion of the program. Data from these surveys was analysed and presented in both qualitative and quantitative formats.

## Facilitator Feedback

Together facilitators completed weekly feedback forms called Group Recording Forms. In addition, facilitators met immediately after each weekly session to debrief about the day's work and discuss any changes that could be made to the program content or to create a more supportive learning environment for participants.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with facilitators and the participant support worker to elicit overall impressions and a global view.

## Job Service Australia (JSA) Provider Feedback

As mentioned elsewhere in this evaluation report, one particular JSA provider recruited 75% of the participants for the program. The JSA maintained regular contact with the clients they had referred and provided valuable information about client feedback. The JSA's observations were recorded for the purposes of evaluation and a telephone interview was conducted at the conclusion of the program.

## Participant Support Worker Feedback

The Participant Support Worker contributed to the weekly debriefs with facilitators, so some feedback has been recorded on the Group Recording Forms. A one-to-one interview was also conducted with the Participant Support Worker at the conclusion of the program to explore perceptions of the program from a worker whose role was one step removed from facilitation and who had a different type of interaction with program participants.



## Results

This section discusses the results of the evaluation under 3 main headings –

1. Outcome evaluation
2. Impact evaluation, and
3. Process evaluation

Each of these sections are discussed in relation to the strategies employed to achieve each of the program objectives.

Ruby Payne says that the research shows that in any learning situation, 10% of participants will run with new ideas, 70% will run with new ideas with extra support and 20% won't take new ideas on board at all. This research evidence is an important context for the following results.

### 1. Outcome evaluation

The 'Getting Ahead' program in Maryborough was initiated with 16 initial participants.

#### 1a. Maryborough's overall results compared with USA program

Whilst Philip E. DeVol (author of the 'Getting Ahead' program) recommends that "...if possible recruit people who aren't experiencing a current mental health and/or substance abuse episode ..." the decision was made to disregard this advice. Facilitators felt that given Maryborough's high incidence and prevalence of mental ill-health and high rate of disability support pension recipients, such exclusions would have rendered a significant proportion of the Neighbourhood Renewal target group ineligible. Importantly, facilitators were unaware of all participants' health status prior to the program and did not have the qualifications to make such an assessment anyway. The decision proved challenging at times because some participants *did* experience episodes of mental ill-health and substance abuse during the program. These episodes affected their participation as well as impacting on the rest of the group. Despite this, for any future programs the facilitators felt strongly that people with mild to moderate mental health conditions not be excluded in the interests of fairness and equity.

It is understood that the **exclusion** criteria for the American Program were:

- People with current drug and alcohol issues
- People with current mental health episodes
- People with low literacy and numeracy skills

It is possible that these criteria meant that the USA program included only those people who were more capable, highly motivated and generally higher functioning in terms of literacy and numeracy.

The **exclusion** criteria for the Maryborough program were:

- Non-attendance for 2 consecutive weeks or 50% of sessions
- People who lived outside the Maryborough township (because of funding requirements only)

Maryborough JSA's referred people who were unemployed and/or had disabilities and were keen to work or heard about the program from their contact with Neighbourhood Renewal and were prepared to 'give it a go'. Several of the people referred to the program had not been successful in employment or other learning environments.

So there were significant differences between the exclusion and inclusion criteria for the Maryborough program and USA programs. It can be argued that the American program/s had a much better chance of success given the narrow selection criteria that were employed. Maryborough, by contrast, included any person who was unemployed. Many of those recruited were in fact long-term unemployed and arguably unemployable.



With this in mind, the following table demonstrates the outcomes for both the Maryborough and USA programs within 6 months of starting the program. It is important to note that because the Maryborough program used the Outcomes Star as an evaluation tool, there is data documented in the table that is not available from the USA program.

Outcomes	% of Maryborough participants who reported this change within 6 months	% of USA participants reporting this change within 6 months
Increased employment	33%	67%
Increased involvement in education & training	33%	69%
Increase in income	33%	84%
Increase in volunteering	33%	Data not available
Increased engagement with services	147% (some participants referred to more than 1 agency)	Data not available
Increased social networks & civic participation	67%	84%
Improved communication	73%	Data not available
Improved relationships	40%	Data not available
Reduced alcohol & other drug intake	20%	Data not available
Positive behaviour change	87%	Data not available
Improved health and wellbeing	87%	Data not available
Willingness to provide peer mentoring for future programs	27%	Data not available

Table 3 - the difference in outcomes between the Maryborough and USA programs

Some specific examples of the changes people made during the program include;

- Two participants linked into a local Family Support Service following the session on community resources.
- The behaviour of one participant was observed to radically change during the session on hidden rules. Discussion ensued about how conflict arises from different sets of values. The use of metaphor stories appeared to enable this participant to understand the boundaries required between participants and the facilitator.
- Two women reported improved relationships at home as a result of improved communication skills learned in the program.
- Referrals to services supported a number of participants to make positive changes in their lives.
- One participant, whose lack of confidence had been debilitating, reported a significant increase in confidence as a direct result of the program. He was able to plan his future, move out of home and make commitments with a life partner. Significantly, this participant volunteered to speak to a large group of JSA's about the benefits of the program and would like to co-facilitate in the future.
- Following the session on gender behaviour, one participant commented quietly to a facilitator that she was concerned at the possible impact of her behaviour on her children. The program had made her think about what behaviour she was modelling for her children.

## 1b. Attendance

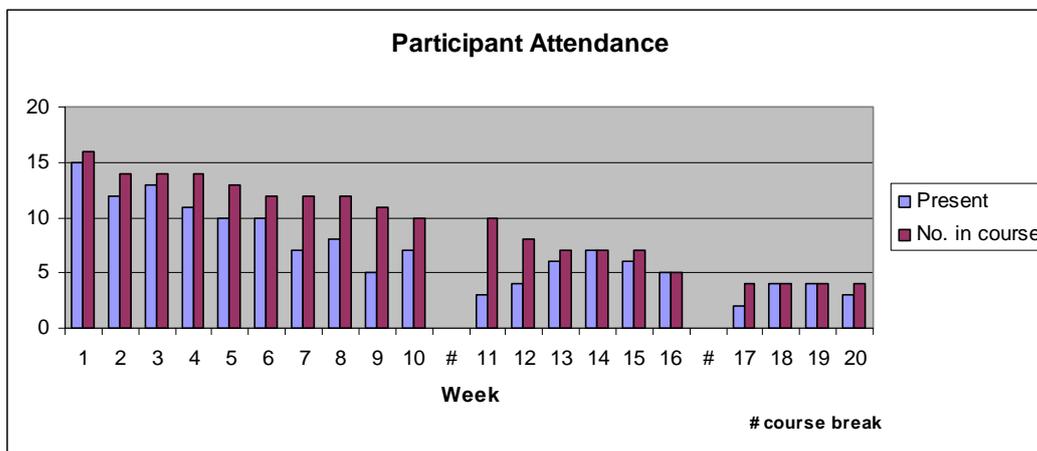
Due to the efforts made by staff, there was a high level of attendance from the start of the program with 94% of enrolled participants turning up in week 1. Over the duration of the program the number of participants reduced for the following reasons -

- One couple left after week 1 due to the premature birth of their child. The ongoing care required in Bendigo meant that it was no longer practical for them to continue.
- After Week 3 (on financial planning & budgeting), 3 participants decided that they needed to obtain work immediately to improve their financial circumstances. They left the program and did not return. These participants are still employed.
- Some participants left over the next 2-3 weeks due to work opportunities or urgent family health matters.



- Two participants left the program just before week 5. In both cases the participants had received an exemption from participating in unemployment services for jobseekers due to mental health issues. Neither of these participants returned to the program; however one has indicated that she would like to re-enrol in the next program.
- From week five on, there was an average of between one and three participants absent each week. Importantly, as part of the participants' agreement with facilitators, apologies were generally submitted when participants were unable to attend. These absences were usually due to work, study placement, illness and family crises.
- Initially some participants were keen to catch up on the work missed, but this declined after week five.
- In the final weeks of the program, the number of participants further decreased leaving 4 participants who completed the program. There was a level of friendly competition amongst the remaining participants regarding attendance statistics and striving for gifts/incentives.
- It was recognised that attendance levels dropped after the two scheduled breaks in the program at weeks 10 and 16.

Below is a graph of attendance for the program in its entirety.



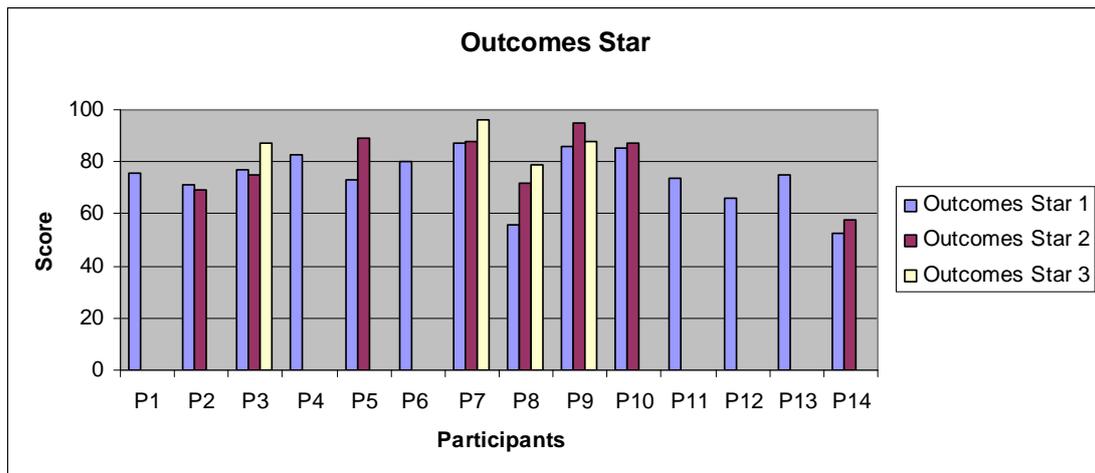
Graph 1 - Participant attendance throughout the 'Getting Ahead' program

### 1c. Outcomes Star

The Outcomes Star data suggested that there were positive changes in people's lives over the duration of the program. Two of the participants experienced significant changes in their lives within the first 11 weeks while others improved at a steadier rate. Two participants had a slightly lower score at the second reading, owing to the fact that they had identified and actively addressed issues rather than avoiding them. This may have provided an inaccurate measure on the first reading. The final readings appear to indicate significant advances for those who completed the program and worked to build their personal resources. The participant that ranked lower in their final reading than the second reading has had some significant changes in their life, with a death in the family and relationship problems with their partner.

Please Note: Results of all participants have been shown whether they completed the program or not.





Graph 2 - Outcome Star readings at beginning, mid-point and completion of the program

## 1d. Post-Workbook Participant Evaluation and Stages of Change Assessment:

### Attitude toward the facilitators:

The following questions were answered in response to this scale:

*Strongly disagree... 1...2...3...4...5...6...7 Strongly agree*

- Had a helpful approach and style: The responses were; 4, 7, 4, 6.
- Provided a high quality experience: The responses were; 4, 7, 4, 7.
- Treated people with respect: The responses were; 7, 7, 6, 7.

As has been shown, the remaining participants' attitudes toward the facilitators were predominantly positive. This can be attributed to the supportive environment and rapport that was built between the facilitators and participants. In the areas where the participants have rated their experiences lower, it may possibly be attributed to the nature of the work involved and the style in which the facilitators approached it.

### Attitude toward the workbook:

4. Did not change my thinking...1...2...3...4...5...6...7 Did change my thinking  
Responses were; 4, 6, 3, 6.

5. Not useful... 1...2...3...4...5...6...7 Very useful  
Responses were; 5, 6, 5, 7.

6. Not believable... 1...2...3...4...5...6...7 Very believable  
Responses were; 4, 6, 4, 7.

These results provide a mixed opinion and depended largely on the individuals' capacity to understand the material, how well they responded to the facilitators teaching method and how willing they were to embrace the information covered. As can be seen here and as is outlined elsewhere in the report, participants were at varied stages, even at the completion of the program.

### Use of information:

7. How likely is it that you will use the plans you made in your decision making?

Unlikely... 1...2...3 Likely  
Responses were; 2, 3, 2, 3.

8. Where are you in the stages of change? Explain answer.



Participant one: *Contemplation stage* – “Thinking about making changes and know what changes these are.”

Participant two: *Action stage* – “Already acting on aspects of my plans and seeing benefits!”

Participant three: *Preparation* – “Know what I need to do, but just need to actually start doing it.”

Participant four: *Preparation / Action stage* – “Somewhere between the two.”

9. What was the most helpful thing about the workbook/’Getting Ahead’ experience?

Responses included;

*“Meeting new friends.”*

*“Being able to use as a reference for other modules.”*

*“It was life experience based and there were no ‘wrong’ answers.”*

*“Was all good.”*

*“Understanding hidden rules for life progression.”*

*“The cooperation of the group.”*

10. What was least helpful?

Responses included;

*“The words in the book were hard to understand.”*

*“Everything was helpful! It was a great experience with the best facilitators.”*

*“Nil.”*

*“Sometimes felt like I was being shut down and not listened to.”*

## 2. Impact Evaluation

### 2a. Partners

The Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations were a key partner in the delivery of the ‘Getting Ahead’ project. With their approval we were able to utilise funds made available through the Job Services Australia ‘Employment Pathway Fund’. This was essential in being able to fund the payment of participants each week, as well as the supply of workbooks and refreshments. BEST Community Development was another major partner in this project providing the majority of the participants in the program. Their ongoing participant support was a key element in the retention of participants in the early stages of the program. In particular, Jane Collins assisted us to recruit and promote the program extensively amongst jobseekers prior to the beginning of program. Her efforts were much appreciated.

### 2b. Suitability of Participants

Whilst most participants in this pilot would have been classified as unsuitable for the USA program, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal staff preferred to offer the opportunity to unemployed people who just wanted to get ahead in their lives.

Refer to section 1a in the outcome evaluation section.



## 2c. Program Details Adapted for Australian/Local Conditions

Initially the American terminology in the workbook presented a challenge for both the facilitators and participants. The prospect of rewriting the workbook and case studies (Hidden Rules) that were not meaningful for an Australian audience was daunting. Facilitators overcame the problem by letting participants know that some of the language and case studies were not relevant but that the participants could contribute to this program by spotting the American terminology and discussing Australian / Maryborough alternatives. This task was approached with relish - this may be a cultural attribute.

Local knowledge was combined with knowledge of American geography which helped facilitators to meet this challenge. A record was kept of alterations.

In addition, the session on Community Resources needed someone with local knowledge of the range of services and businesses to get the maximum learning for participants from the session. Combined participant knowledge was insufficient

It was crucial that facilitators had local and regional knowledge as well as the relevant training for the program.

## 2d. Participation in sessions

Participants were actively engaged in activities throughout the program. Most participants, although initially reserved, quickly began to engage in discussions and contributed more to the group. There were some participants who needed extra encouragement to contribute in sessions. Over time most reluctant participants became more involved. Other participants needed strong facilitation in order to redirect inappropriate contributions. Most participants worked well together in group discussions and in small group activities. One participant acknowledged that he was not comfortable sharing with the group but was willing to interact on a one-to-one basis with the facilitators.

According to Ruby Payne, the three most important things to people living in poverty are survival, relationships and entertainment. With this in mind, facilitators felt it was important to build in fun and games for adult learning. This proved to be a decision that assisted in creating a supportive learning environment as indicated in both the facilitator and participant feedback.

## 2e. Supportive Learning Environment

The facilitators were conscious of the Framework for Understanding Poverty framework and made efforts to create a supportive learning environment based on this, as many participants have not always been supported in their learning. Weekly feedback and telephone interviews suggest that the environment created was supportive and catered for specific needs.

## 2f. Case-Studies

Case study 1: A 40 year old male, single parent and father of three children under six years of age. The participant was initially very wary and had a strong distrust of government services. He was withdrawn, lacking sleep, anxious and depressed and spent most of his time at home caring for his children. He had outstanding debts and did not understand where he stood legally with regard to property, family and business matters.

The participant left the program prior to completion to take up full time employment and on-the-job training. The improvements in his life by this stage were significant. The man accessed childcare services, which he previously stated he did not trust, and obtained a subsidy. He also accessed financial and legal counselling to assist him to address his debts. He remains in full time work, he joined the Neighbourhood Renewal Steering Committee, attends regular Neighbourhood Renewal events and he and his children appear happier.



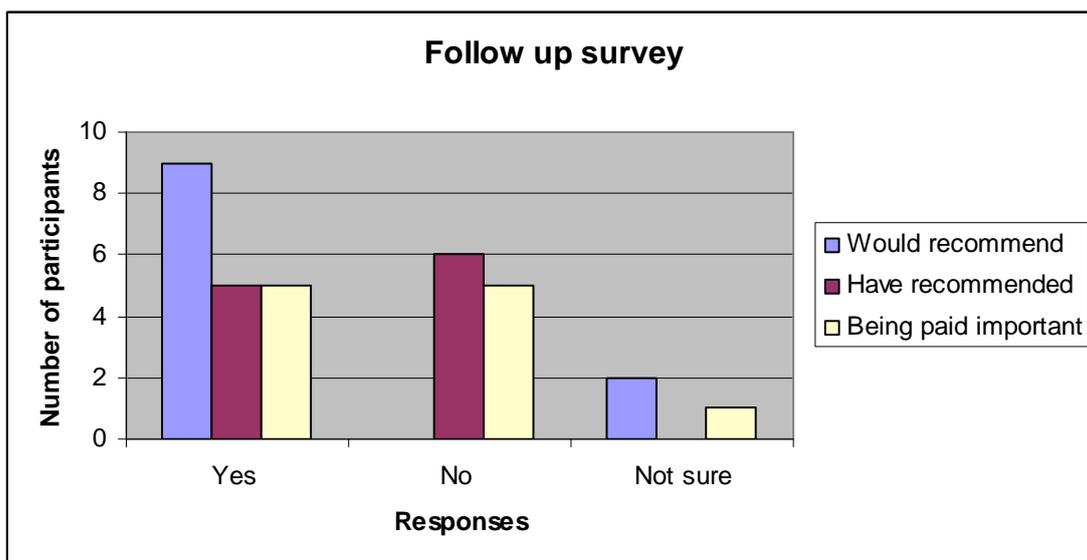
Case Study 2: A 45 year old female, single parent and mother of three dependant children from 10 – 18 years of age. The participant reported a history of abusive relationships. She and her children required counselling and ongoing support.

This woman had been engaged with Neighbourhood Renewal as a volunteer for approximately eight months prior to commencing the ‘Getting Ahead’ program. Prior to this, she reported being depressed and reluctant to engage in any social activities. Her relationship with her eldest child was confrontational and this affected the younger children and the home environment. During and after completing the ‘Getting Ahead’ program, the participant reported many improvements in her quality of life. These improvements have included the successful completion of the Certificate 2 in Community Services program and registering for Certificate 3, a more peaceful home environment and family relationships, accessed family counselling and continues to be a regular volunteer with Neighbourhood Renewal, the school and a community house. She recently joined the Steering Committee and makes regular contributions.

In addition, this participant undertook the role of buddy to another participant and both of them completed every session of the ‘Getting Ahead’ program.

## 2g. Follow up interviews

The following graph illustrates the results from the follow up survey, using telephone interviews -



Graph 3 – Follow up survey

Telephone interviews carried out with participants at the conclusion of the program indicate that of the 11 people we were able to contact, 82% (9) said they would recommend the program, with 45% (5) of the participants actually recommending it to other residents. In some cases participants have recommended the program to more than one person. These results are positive and confirm that the majority of participants valued the program with almost half having recommended it to someone else.

When asked whether they thought it was necessary to be paid to attend the program, the results were divided. Forty five percent (45%, 5) of participants said it was important to be paid to participate and a further 45% (5) said it was not important. Ten percent (1) of participants were not sure. Of the participants who said it was not important to be paid, three made comments including:

*“Not really, was a bit of a bonus though.”*

*“Not really, came in handy, wouldn’t always make it [if I wasn’t being paid.]”*

*“No, [was] motivation to do it though.”*



These responses suggest that although the participants said it wasn't necessary to be paid, they valued the payment. These results suggest that the payment arrangement for the program needs to be further examined, possibly by incorporating a different incentive as apposed to a monetary one. Bearing this in mind, responses that favoured being paid included;

*"Yeah, it's a good idea."*

*"Yeah, came in handy for coffee and a smoke before I came to the program."*

*"Yeah, I'm a single father, the money helped."*

*"Helped with paying for things."*

Being so closely divided, it is difficult to ascertain a 'correct' approach, though some compromise will need to be made for future programs.

### 3. Process Evaluation

#### 3a. Did the program reach the intended target group?

The demographic and socio-economic status of participants would suggest that the program did reach the intended target group.

#### 3b. Results of Weekly Participant Feedback Forms

Results of feedback forms suggest that the program was being implemented as intended. Feedback from participants was collected using weekly evaluation forms and a focus group conducted at week 12. Telephone interviews to all of the 16 participants who started the program were also completed 3 months after program completion.

The weekly feedback was divided into seven sections:

Four questions were asked about the information that participants found most helpful, the least helpful things about the group, the most helpful things about the group and suggestions to improve the program.

Three sections requested participants to rate the helpfulness of the information, how well facilitators presented the information and their overall satisfaction with the session.

The weekly feedback was divided into four sections: the information that participants found most helpful, suggestions to improve the program, the least helpful things about the group, the most helpful things about the group and suggestions to improve the program

**The following is a summary of responses to each question recorded as written by participants:**

#### ***What information did you find most helpful?***

*"The pie chart on poverty (personal mental model) helped me to understand where I am (economically)."*

*"(The Poverty Triangle) put poverty into a perspective I could totally understand."*

*"Financial breakdown and relationship to (the level of) wages per hour needed to become better (off) financially."*

*"The housing talk was really enlightfull. The income ratio thing"*

*"Learning about the public housing list."*

*"How much money I spend and the cost of living."*

*"The amount of agencies that are available to assist in most areas of our lives."*

*"The Centrelink information was good."*

*"Consumer Affairs information was very helpfull. The predators (door to door sales, loan sharks etc) presentation was very helpful."*



*"I found out things I didn't know (... about the rich/poor gap)".*

*"(Some...) CEO's are greedy and should learn to share."*

*"The four areas of Poverty Reserch and different predators of society."*

*"How complex our daily lives really are and how many companies prey on low income families."*

*"The going over of the Hidden Rules from last session. Easier to understand now."*

*"The way people live in poverty, middle and wealth class."*

*"Family Structure and Penance/ forgiveness cycle."*

*"The eleven resources info at test and the newspaper module."*

*"Enjoyed the social capital mental model."*

*"Mediation Exercise and the Language Register."*

*"Child, adult, parent voices."*

*"Case study analysis on resources identification."*

*"Defining areas of Community Strengths and Weaknesses."*

*"SMART goals."*

*"Identifying key areas to develop personal plan."*

*"I liked the drawing (of) and talking... (about personal path and community prosperity)."*

**What did you find most helpful about the group?**

*"People listening to what you say."*

*"Everything" "All of it"*

*"The chat and talks we have"*

*"Great to hear other points of view. Try understanding others and their opinion."*

*"That there are people with similar aspects and thoughts like myself."*

*"Information was clear and easy to understand."*

*"Debating with others about everything. Seeing different views."*

*"Support/help."*

*"The feedback from other participants."*

*"Discussion and handouts."*

*"Nice, clear, bright overhead displays."*

*"Explanations of this program were very easy to understand."*

*"Communication between facilitators and participants."*

*"The mix of visual and verbal information."*

*"Understanding about my own and others issues."*

*"Meeting people and talking about different things."*

*"Pie Chart makes you relize what issues I have and others may have when it is written in front of you."*

*"(It) was good to hear other peoples issues or drama's and disscuss any of my own drama's."*

*"Co-operation."*

*"Despite different lives, we are facing similar circumstances."*



*"Personal experiences that we can identify with- helps to increase confidence."*

*"(By session 3) I (felt comfortable to) talk and put my hand up."*

*"Laughing and smiling and sharing a good laugh together."*

*"Information sharing."*

*"Small group activities/sessions are amazing."*

*"Others listening."*

*"Doing role plays together."*

*"Thinking of how to word Mediation."*

*"People's different opinions."*

*"Group participation and discussions."*

*"That the group is thinking alike on the modules."*

*"They are listening better."*

*"Having a facilitator as part of the small group."*

*"Review of previous modules."*

*"Brainstorming together."*

*"Working in small groups and communicating."*

**What did you find least helpful about the group?**

*"Nothing really just didn't like the move in the morning."*

*"Nothing."*

*"Not much."*

*"None."*

*"N/A."*

*"Learning."*

*"Being told the programs is some where else."*

*"Different food."*

*"Overheads-(some font/background colours were) hard to read."*

*"Some participants' sharing/over sharing."*

*"Too many people talking at one time – found it hard to keep track."*

*"Having to relocate the sessions when room double booked."*

*"Uncomfortable room / too hot and crowded when relocated."*

*"Found it difficult to put examples into my own situations."*

*"Hidden rules hard to understand."*

*"Not enough of the group in attendance some weeks."*

*"Talking out of turn."*

**Are there any suggestions you have to improve the program?**

*"More activities."*

*"Different snacks/drinks or more of."*

*"Change slide colours."*



*“Take out blank slides during presentation.”*

*“Share the load between all facilitators.”*

*“Speak about how people with a disability are impacted by poverty.”*

*“Explain things more easily.”*

*“Make it shorter and more lively.”*

*“More outdoor sessions.”*

*“Get more people to the program.”*

*“More group discussion/debates.”*

*“Information around dental care and access to services.”*

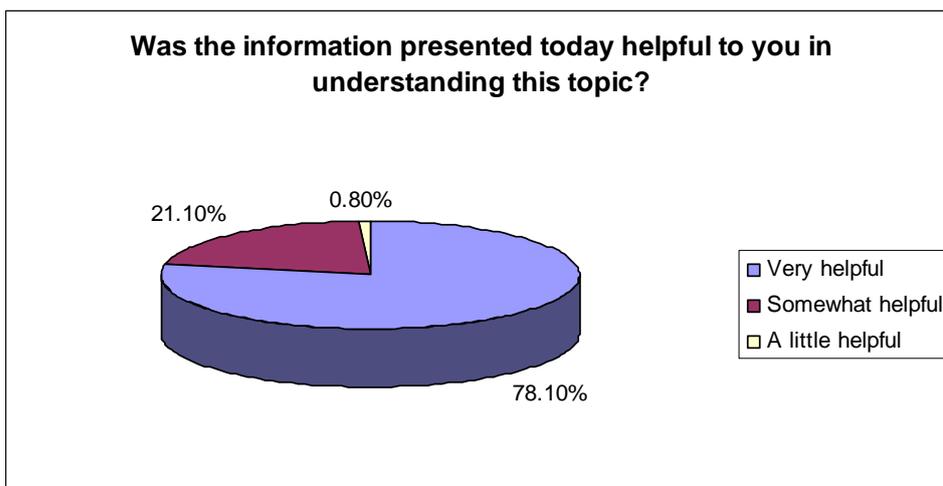
**The participants’ responses to the three questions they were asked to rate were:**

*‘Was the information presented today helpful to you in understanding this topic?’*

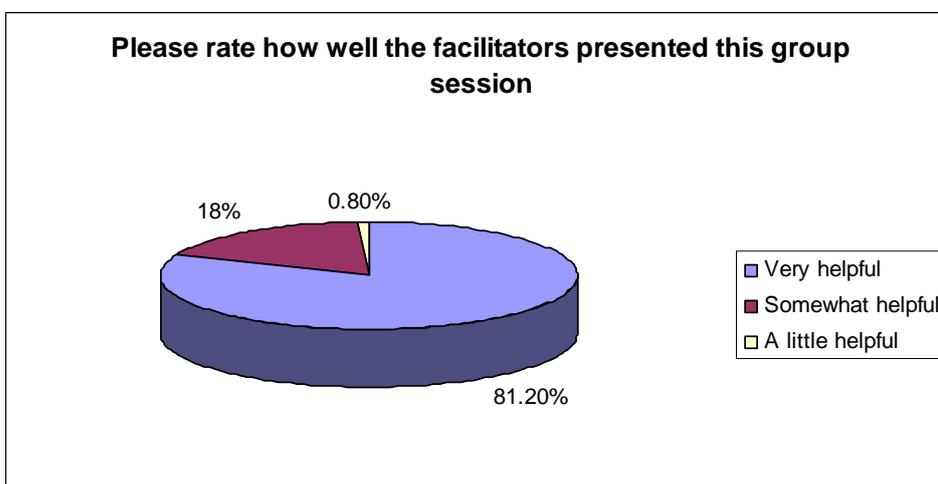
*‘How well the facilitators presented this group session’*

*‘Your overall satisfaction with today’s group meeting’*

The figures below show the collated responses over the 20 weeks as pie charts with percentages represented.

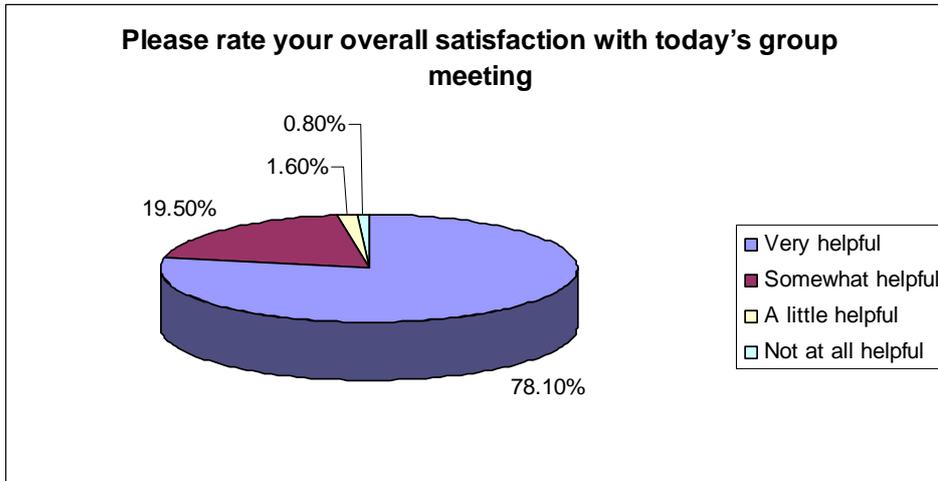


**Graph 4 - Overall understanding of topics presented**



**Graph 5 - Ratings of facilitator presentations**





Graph 6 - Overall satisfaction with sessions

### Mid point focus group

The focus group that followed week 11 provided more feedback. There were only four people in attendance at this session which was scheduled during a planned break and does not equate to a representative sample.

From this focus group interview, some key themes emerged. The first was that more time needed to be spent around the hidden rules, money management and budgeting especially the rent-to-income ratio given the low literacy and numeracy levels amongst this cohort.

Participants enjoyed the small group work sessions and activities. They found these engaging and interesting, saying that it made the overall content clearer when they could work together in small groups.

Participants also valued the opportunity to socialise at a BBQ that was held one week. Participants would like to see more of these, commenting that it was good fun. Participants who had previously engaged with Neighbourhood Renewal appeared to feel more comfortable in the program because they knew the facilitators.

Many participants valued the opportunity to meet with the facilitator to catch up on work they might have missed, saying this didn't happen in other programs they had been involved in through their job services provider.

They concluded by saying that for a pilot program they thought '*Getting Ahead*' was very good, each stating they had gained a lot from the program to date.

### 3c. Number of Referrals

As mentioned in section 2g, 82% of participants stated they would recommend the program to others and 45% of participants had actually recommended the program to other residents. For further information please refer back to section 2g.



### 3d. Participants' Experiences

The following quotes by participants are included verbatim apart from the words in brackets which have been inserted to assist in understanding the context of the quote or to protect someone's identity.

*"I've never done a program which has enabled me to see where I sit with the world, the pressures on me...but also give me a way to work myself out of that, to make changes."*

*"Poverty is a lack of respect for those who are in it."*

*"In other programs I have felt really worked up and anxious ... it felt as though other people in the room were taking my air and I found it hard to breath. I don't feel like that with this, I feel relaxed."*

*"Explanations of this program were very easy to understand."*

*"(It was most helpful...) knowing the avenues to go to, taking positive steps in the right direction."*

*"Friendly, informative, made me feel comfortable to speak, had someone to watch (child's name omitted)".*

*"All facilitators are very friendly and very fair and also respect the backgrounds that we all came from. Well done."*

*"(It was most helpful...) to know I wasn't alone, sum was in the same condition."*

*"Hopefully (this is) the start of a more positive path in many lives."*

*"(It was most helpful...) that the stats are real and I find the perspective of unemployed very scary."*

*"I really enjoyed debating with others about everything and seeing different views."*

*"(It was most helpful...) to find out im not as bad as I thought I was...just to know I can arise from my problems and worries."*

*"(It was most helpful...) people lisining to what you say."*

*"I found out things I didn't know (... about the rich/poor gap)".*

*"The smaller group sessions are amazing. Very well facilitated and very enjoyable. Outside sessions was brilliant."*

*"The sharing of experiences and offering positive options to one another that could be used to change the situation to be more positive."*

*"Everything is going excellent and good and improved in us learning different skills and information."*

### 3e. Facilitator feedback

The facilitators found the program to be a very positive and successful experience. They saw people make some positive and noticeable changes to their lives and commented that it was exciting to see people appear happier and more in control of their lives. It is understood that this is just the beginning of participants' experiences of change.

Process evaluation from Group Recording Forms elicited 22 observations and suggestions from facilitators. In order to implement continuous improvement, changes were made as the 'Getting Ahead' program progressed. These changes are documented below -

- Some of the language was changed to suit an Australian audience. Whilst initially challenging, this could be addressed with participants in the development of local scenarios (e.g. substitute Detroit with Geelong).



- The word 'poverty' was controversial. Objections to the use of the term prompted discussion and brainstorming of a list of alternate words that participants felt more comfortable using.
- More structured lesson plans including timing of activities (as far as possible) worked more effectively. This was done weekly to debrief after a session and plan for the next.
- Co-facilitators shared the presentation of sections that required specialist and/or local knowledge.
- Participants struggled with some of the theoretical presentations of class, politics, government etc. Creative approaches including games were invented. It may be possible to utilise media such as YouTube or other web based media to help present this information. Humour worked well on many topics.
- Facilitators regularly reinforced the need for constructive criticism from participants for a pilot program.
- Each session began with the questions "where are you at this week" and "what would stop you concentrating today?" This enabled participants to unload/debrief and build empathy. Facilitators participated in this activity and it was fine for anyone to 'pass'.
- Facilitators provided a review of the previous week's feedback and what actions were done so that participants understood the importance of their input.
- The readability of Power Point slides was a problem so a new format was developed.
- The incorporation of extra role plays, matching games and mind-mapping greatly enhanced the learning environment.
- The \$20.00 didn't appear to be the incentive that was anticipated. It is worth trialling a \$10.00 payment that covers some costs.
- There needs to be a group rule over arriving on time for sessions. The participants could come up with a suitable consequence e.g. forfeit part of the incentive payment.
- Direct, regular contact with participants in between sessions by 'Getting Ahead' staff encouraged participation, communication and attendance.
- 20 weeks was too long and the program lost momentum several times due to breaks and commitments.
- Having children and volunteers present during program sessions was a challenge for confidentiality, anonymity and group dynamics.
- The maximum number of participants needs to be 10. There is a need to build trust quickly.
- An early opportunity for the facilitators and participants to meet each other less formally would assist the development of a safe learning environment.
- Facilitators felt it was important to provide some level of ongoing support at the completion of the program for the implementation of participants' action plans.
- Facilitators have considered the merit in conducting 6 month, 12 month, and 24 month evaluation into the long term impact of the program on participants' lives and comparing this with a similar cohort of residents who haven't been through the program.
- Consideration needs to be given to reinforcing the language and concepts from the program in community settings outside program sessions e.g. community houses.

### 3f. Job Services Australia (JSA) Feedback

BEST Community Development had 12 of their most disadvantaged jobseekers commence this pilot program in May 2011. Although the program was aimed mainly at employment placement, as a provider, BEST Community Development found additional positive outcomes resulting from their clients' participation in the program. The additional outcomes included:

- Reduction in drug & alcohol usage and jobseekers engaging with professional support services to address these issues.
- Increased work readiness.
- Increased motivation to gain employment, return to study or become involved in volunteering.
- Increased engagement with BEST Employment as their JSA provider.





- Increased engagement with other local services such as housing, counselling and neighbourhood house activities.
- Employment placement.

The site Manager of BEST Employment Maryborough offered the following comment on the 'Getting Ahead' program –

*"I can't believe how interested in the program our clients are! I've never had 100% attendance after two weeks of a program before."*

### **3g. Participant Support Worker feedback**

The Participant Support Worker's (PSW) feedback on the program has been incorporated into facilitator feedback. The PSW's views were gathered weekly through the group recording form and weekly debriefs. The PSW was asked to present in a few sessions in response to the interest of participants and the need to share the load of presentations. The PSW also assisted with some areas of research e.g. statistics. The most significant area of work in which the Support Worker's role diverged from the facilitators' was in relation to the administration of the Outcomes Star. The following comments were taken from the participant support worker in relation to the Outcomes Star:

- It was easy to administer and document the information collected.
- The holistic approach was evident.
- It provided a breadth of information that other evaluation methods didn't address.
- Due to the in-depth nature of subjects covered in the Outcomes Star, sometimes the participants felt uncomfortable discussing these areas and participants may not have been honest. It also may have been the most difficult part for them to do.
- There is no need for qualifications in counselling or case management to administer the Outcomes Star, just an ability to facilitate conversation and suspend judgement
- There were noticeable improvements from the three readings over the duration of the program and participants could recognise that through the visual representations of the star chart.
- The Outcomes Star was worthwhile in being delivered.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

## Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Employment Support Initiative Project Brief

### What we've done so far

Neighbourhood Renewal sites use Employment Support Initiative funding to improve employment outcomes. Like many other Neighbourhood Renewal sites, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal employed a 'Link-up Worker' to achieve 9 employment outcomes in a 12 month period. Using process evaluation we looked at the program activities to determine what changes need to be made to ensure that the program aim of 9 employment outcomes was being achieved.

### What we've found

Our findings indicated that a number of issues prevented the program from being implemented as planned. Briefly, those issues were as follows -

1. Like other Neighbourhood Renewal sites, we employed a Public Housing resident in this role but the mentoring and training required to support a resident in this position outweighs the return.
2. We underestimated the community engagement component of this role. None of the tasks of the Link-Up worker position are achievable without the ability to engage residents, JSA's etc.
3. It is difficult to gauge a worker's capacity to undertake community engagement without evidence of formal training and/or work/volunteer experiences. This tends to preclude the possibility of employing a resident in the role unless they have a natural inclination towards community engagement.
4. Successful community engagement within the broader context of Neighbourhood Renewal has called for qualified staff, so our expectation that a resident could undertake this role successfully was unrealistic.

### So what do we want to do now?

Given the evaluation findings, we want to dispense with the Jobs Club and use the ESI worker role to engage people in a program that is linked to the "Understanding Poverty" learning's. The program is titled '*Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World*' and is written for people in poverty and provides a way for them to examine the impact that poverty has on individuals, families, and communities. The program shows participants how to use the hidden rules of class to build up financial, emotional, social, and other resources. Understanding the hidden rules of middle class and wealth, and choosing to use them, can open doors to such resources as new relationships, new jobs and higher resources. Therefore the aims of this initiative would be -

1. For individuals from generational poverty to be able to function effectively in middle class educational and employment settings.
2. For the community to provide the necessary support, employment and educational opportunities to participants in this program

### What's the nitty gritty of the program?

- This is a 15 – 20 week program involving 10-15 unemployed Maryborough residents. There would be one session per week of 2 ½ hours duration
- The peer lead curriculum helps individuals who grew up in generational poverty learn to understand and adopt successful life strategies and function effectively in the middle class environment of education and employment.





- With the aid of a trained facilitator (which Neighbourhood Renewal has), participants work through 15 modules over the 15-20 week period –

<b>Module 1</b> Getting Started	<b>Module 9</b> Building resources
<b>Module 2</b> What's it like now	<b>Module 10</b> Community Assessment
<b>Module 3</b> Theory of change	<b>Module 11</b> Your Plan for getting from poverty to prosperity
<b>Module 4</b> The rich/poor gap & how it works	<b>Module 12</b> Creating mental models for your path out of poverty and for community prosperity
<b>Module 5</b> Hidden rules of economic class	<b>Module 13</b> Closing and transition
<b>Module 6</b> Eleven resources	<b>Module 14</b> Where to go to build personal & community resources
<b>Module 7</b> Stages of change	<b>Module 15</b> Reading List
<b>Module 8</b> Self-assessment regarding resources	<b>NB</b> these modules can be delivered over 15-20 weeks

### What makes us think it would work?

One of the key factors in the likely success of this program is the fact that it is an international model that crosses all cultural barriers and we don't have to "reinvent the wheel." Getting by in a 'Just Getting by World' has proven (on average) to increase employment outcomes by 63%, increase participants' income by 84%, increase involvement in further education and training by 69% and increase participants' social support by 84%, all within 6 months of starting the program.

Importantly, the dominant culture in Maryborough is poverty. To make a difference to the plight of disadvantaged people we need to do something differently to what's been done in the past. This program is based on research drawing from a range of disciplines including learning, health promotion and community development. It's working across the world in disadvantaged communities and we believe that we have the opportunity to offer an innovative way to engage people in employment and learning.

### So who'd do what?

The program would be delivered by Neighbourhood Renewal's Community Development worker (who is qualified to deliver Understanding Poverty programs) with assistance from the Employment and Learning Coordinator and Employment Support Initiative worker. The ESI worker would be responsible for engagement of participants, organisation of the venue, workbooks etc, organisation of an information session for Job Service Australia providers and potential program participants, collection of baseline data, process and impact evaluation and follow-up with participants re employment support at the conclusion of the 'Getting Ahead' program.

### So what's the cost?

Research suggests that future training and education is a middle class concept. The security of a middle class income allows people to know that today's needs are met so they can afford to focus on the future and the abstract. People living in poverty can't see beyond the immediate need for day-to-day survival or as Paolo Freire refers to it as the 'tyranny of the moment'.

By paying people for their participation (not just attending but completing aspects of the program), we are providing an initial motivator to over-ride their immediate needs, but then the value of the program keeps people coming back.

We propose to pay participants for each session providing that they complete the work. We plan to pay each participant \$20.00 per session and provide the \$15.00 workbook for the program. Our program would run over 20 weeks so the cost would amount to \$415.00 per resident. With 15 participants this amounts to \$6,225.00. Allowing \$200.00 for refreshments, the total cost would therefore be \$6,425.00.





Our intention is to charge the Job Service Australia providers a fee of \$428.00 per participant which will be paid to the Central Goldfields Shire Council as a fee for service cost. Neighbourhood Renewal would then be responsible for reimbursing each participant for their participation.

### **What are the challenges?**

The biggest challenges at the community level include gaining the support of key agency, community, and business leaders in understanding their role in and actively implementing the program.

At the individual participant level, retention/ completion of the 20 sessions will be a challenge. We will address this challenge by providing worker support to participants and offering incentives to participants to increase the completion rate.

### **Expected Outcomes and Benefits**

- Individuals gaining insight and tools to leave poverty and succeed in education and employment.
- Social service agencies gaining knowledge to become more effective in their programs and services.
- Reorienting the practices of community and business leaders for more effective recruiting, training and retention of employees.
- Participants who can become community champions and advocate for the benefits of the program

### **How will we know it's worked?**

- The success of the program will be measured quantitatively by tracking numbers of participants who complete the program and who are successful in achieving education and employment objectives.
- Qualitative evaluation will be conducted to ascertain the impact of the use of Goal Attainment Reports (GAR).
- Measurement of each participant's financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, social support, relationship, hidden rules, language, integrity, and motivation resources at intake and completion.
- Referrals from participants to other residents for subsequent programs.
- Qualitative data on participants' experiences within the program will be documented.





## Appendix 2

### The Outcomes Star

Please see:

[The Outcomes Star: Home page](#)

[The Outcomes Star: User Guide](#)

[The Outcomes Star: Organisation Guide](#)

[The Outcomes Star: Star Chart and Action Plan](#)





### Appendix 3

## Group Recording Form

Group Name: .....	Beginning Date: .....
Worker's Name: .....	Termination date: .....
Session Number: .....	Date of Session: .....
Members Present: .....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
Members Absent: .....	
.....	
.....	
Purpose of the group: .....	
.....	
Goals for this meeting: .....	
.....	
.....	
Activities to meet these goals: .....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
Worker's analysis of the meeting: .....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
Plan for future meetings: .....	
.....	
.....	



**Appendix 4**

**‘Getting Ahead’ Participant Feedback Form**

Was the information presented today helpful to you in understanding this topic?

<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	A little helpful	Not at all helpful

What information did you find most helpful? .....

.....

.....

Please rate how well the facilitators presented this group session

<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	A little helpful	Not at all helpful

What did you find most helpful about the group during this session? .....

.....

.....

What did you find least helpful about the group? .....

.....

.....

Please rate your overall satisfaction with today’s group meeting?

<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	A little helpful	Not at all helpful

Is there anything else you would like to comment on? .....

.....

.....

.....





**Appendix 5**

***‘Getting Ahead’ in a Just-Getting’-By World***  
**Post-Workbook Participant Evaluation and Stages of Change Assessment**

**Facilitator** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Co-Facilitators** \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FACILITATOR(S)**

- 1. Had a helpful approach and style  
Strongly disagree .... 1....2....3....4....5....6....7 Strongly agree
- 2. Provided a high-quality experience  
Strongly disagree .... 1....2....3....4....5....6....7 Strongly agree
- 3. Treated people with respect  
Strongly disagree .... 1....2....3....4....5....6....7 Strongly agree

**ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORKBOOK**

- 4. Did not change my thinking .... 1....2....3....4....5....6....7 Did change my thinking
- 5. Not useful .....1....2....3....4....5....6....7 Very useful
- 6. Not believable .....1....2....3....4....5....6....7 Very believable

**USE OF INFORMATION**

- 7. How likely is it that you will use the plans you made in you decision making?  
Unlikely ....1....2....3 Likely
- 8. Where are you in the stages of change? (Circle one and explain you answer.)  
Pre-Contemplation Contemplation Preparation Action Maintenance
- 9. What was most helpful thing about the workbook experience?
- 10. What was least helpful?

Comments:





## Appendix 6

### 'Getting Ahead' follow up survey

1. Some participants had different thoughts on being paid for the program and the way this was done.

Was it important for you to be paid to participate?

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2. Would you recommend this program to someone else

YES

NO

3. If YES have you recommended this program?

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