

30 April 2015

Dr Richard Chadwick
General Manager, Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
By email: adjudication@accc.gov.au

Re: A91493 & A91494 – Job Futures Limited - Submission

I am writing on behalf of IMPACT Community Services in support of Job Futures applications for Authorisation and Interim Authorisation.

IMPACT Community Services has been a member of Job Futures since 2002.

Bundaberg Skills Centre Inc t/a IMPACT Community Services is a community-owned not-for-profit organisation which has been in operation for 37 years delivering employment, social support, training and commercial enterprise activities within the Wide Bay-Burnett. As a charitable organization, we support people who may be experiencing disadvantage, poverty or exclusion from community, social and employment networks. We help individuals and families build resilience and reconnect with the community in a positive way to realise an improved quality of life. Each year approximately 4500 people access our services looking for help to make positive life changes. Our services help people build strong personal networks, increase confidence and self-esteem, strengthen relationships and develop friendship groups.

The market for government funded employment services is extremely competitive. With each new contract round the market has become tighter making it harder for small-medium size organisations to enter and retain a place in the market. Yet these organisations play an important role in ensuring that services for disadvantaged people meet the specific needs of local communities.

Through Job Futures collaborative tendering arrangements, IMPACT Community Services gained Job Services Australia business in 2009 in the Bundaberg ESA delivering through to 2012 and was again successful in gaining business for the 2012-15 JSA contract. This has enabled us to provide consistent quality services and support to job seekers and employers in what is a challenging labour market.

The contractual and performance management arrangements that operate in the sector are complex and challenging. The Job Futures model enables member providers to access performance and compliance support along with a range of resources, in particular custom-built online reports and benchmarking information which would be out of the reach of a lone provider. Due to the value of this

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To lead the community in pioneering improved life opportunities

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support and the growing competition in the market, in 2011 IMPACT made the decision to novate its Disability Employment Services contract (held for many years in its own right) to Job Futures and then tendered successfully through the collaborative tendering arrangements for the 2012 DES contract. As with the JSA contract, novating our DES contract meant IMPACT Community Services could concentrate on improving social inclusion and helping people make positive life changes at a community level whilst utilizing the collective power of a model that harnesses a national vision and promotes excellent contract management.

For the recently announced Jobactive Contract the number of providers has decreased again and the profile changed significantly with more business going to larger organisations. Had IMPACT Community Services been tendering as a stand-alone organisation, we would not have been able to provide coverage for the large employment services regions introduced for this contract and may well have lost the business. By tendering through Job Futures we were able to partner with two other members to achieve the required coverage and were successful in gaining business. This means we can continue to provide services tailored to the needs of disadvantaged job seekers in the Bundaberg area.

In addition to business delivered through Job Futures, IMPACT Community Services' diverse service offerings generate opportunities for consumers to access wrap-around holistic care, reflecting their personal needs and goals and supporting community wellbeing. Delivered in a welcoming supportive environment, clients accessing our employment services are encouraged to take advantage of our specialist support and skilling opportunities:

Social Support:

- Personal Helpers & Mentors Program (Bundaberg; Burnett-delivered as Lead partner in collaboration with 2 Burnett based community agencies); PHaMs Employment Specialist contract (Bundaberg)
- Partners in Recovery (hosting a Support Facilitator as a member of Wide Bay Medicare Local Consortium)
- Mental Health Carers Support Service (supporting adults, young people and children living in households with mental illness)
- Home & Community Care (respite)
- Community Visitors Scheme (volunteer visitors in aged care facilities and in-home)
- Disability Services (supported employment and community access services)
- Positive Start Parenting (support for young/ pregnant mums)
- Accommodation model supporting short, medium and long-term accommodation needs for vulnerable and low-income groups
- In-house qualified social and mental health workers
- Supported Employment-Australian Disability Enterprise (Recycling)

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Training:

- Registered Training Organisation
- Vocational training (aged care/HACC/disability; hospitality; business administration; construction)
- Language Literacy and Numeracy

Commercial Enterprises:

- Manufacturing; car detailing; cleaning; laundry

While we are able to deliver a diverse range of services, we work closely within the broader community context, leveraging additional support and specialist services to support client goal achievement. This strategy has meant development of extensive collegiate working relationships across employment networks, social services, school community, mental health and disability services, training providers, local community organisations and employers.

Impact Community Services acknowledges that the strength of the model is underpinned by the cooperative approach of the members to achieve a common goal. We support the principle that in order to gain the benefit of the co-operative, from time to time the individual organisation may need to forgo some freedom for the greater good, as per the non-compete clauses contained in Job Futures relevant documents.

Job Futures unique collaborative arrangement enables organisations like IMPACT Community Services to deliver quality employment services while retaining their local focus and identity and bringing benefit to their community through its wide range of services.

IMPACT Community Services supports this application for authorisation (and interim authorisation) and believes that the continued operation of the Job Futures model contributes to a more diverse market for government funded employment services at the same time providing benefit to our local communities.

Yours sincerely



Tanya O'Shea
Chief Executive