



Workforce Coalition Network September 2023

Meeting Notes

Approximately 100 stakeholders from aged care, disability, social services and education and care (childcare) met in Launceston on 28 September 2023 to discuss and explore the themes of retention and collaboration.

Claudia Butler, the Workforce Coordination Project Manager, emceed the day, which included a range of informative and interactive sessions. As well as presentations from organisations showcasing organisational retention approaches, participants unlocking collaboration potential through focused working groups and gathering important feedback. Attendees were also witness to two major launches – the Work with Purpose initiative (www.workwithpurpose.au) and the Workforce Review Tool (<https://reviewyourworkforce.com.au>). The Work with Purpose initiative was also used on the day to thank all those who registered and attended for their support via a personalised postcard.

Once again, thank you to those who were able to attend and to those who have registered to receive updates on the progress of the Workforce Coordination Project. We will be in contact to keep you updated on key project milestones and to continue discussing your workforce needs.

We have compiled the following snapshot from the day and agreed on collective actions moving forward to address our workforce shortage and retention challenges.

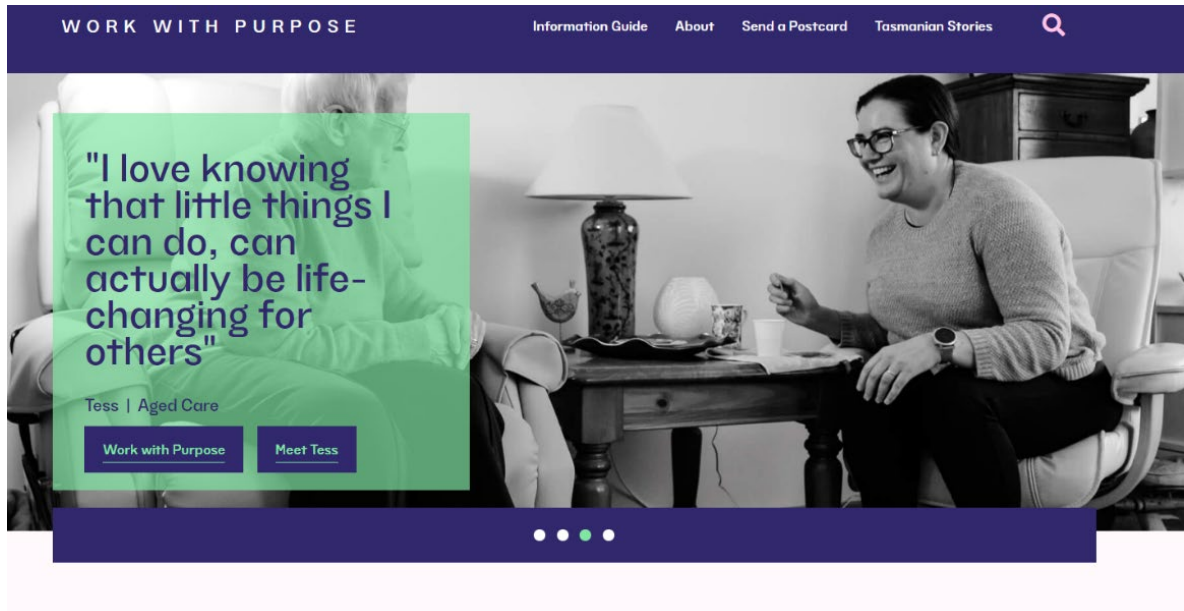
Feedback from the day:

- **Highlights:** We scored 4.1 out of 5 for how attendees found the meeting overall. People liked the networking and the opportunity to meet new people, the presentations, the collaboration, sharing and the working groups.
- Suggestions for improvement referred to catering, timekeeping, plus more working groups and sector specific sessions.



Work with Purpose

Senior Officer Amanda Bergmann presented the official launch of the [Work with Purpose](#) initiative, which aims to attract people to work in the four sectors by highlighting the purpose-led, meaningful work that the sectors have to offer.



Work with Purpose uses a framework that gathers real life Tasmanian stories to highlight meaning, inspiration and the reality of the work people do in community services. Each story features Tasmanians who share their own career journeys and the meaning of their work both personally and professionally. With four stories live and more to come soon, it was a moment to honour the 12 sector champions who have so generously provided us with such wonderful stories.



The initiative can be shared by sending postcards via the website using a tool that allows people to either nudge someone they know may be a good fit for this work, or to thank someone who already makes an impact through their work.

For the career curious, the initiative also offers Information Guides for each sector which provide information on the sectors, the work they offer, how to access it and what a career path may look like. Accessing the guides also commences an automated email series that serves to provide more information and to gather feedback.

The launch acknowledged the important contribution made by those who helped turn this initiative into a reality. Thanks were extended to:

- Jen Murnaghan of Digital Dandy – Campaign Consultant
- Philip Bohle, Documentary Photographer – Campaign Images
- Chris Toselli, GlobalNet Academy – Digital Partner

A heartfelt thanks was also extended to our 12 sector champions, Jonathan, Christie, Tess, Savannah, Haiyan, Brady, Jamila, Libby, Jayden, Ron, Ryan and Maria, who so generously offered their time, their stories and without whom this campaign would not have been possible.

Attendees were also asked for their own contribution to promoting Work with Purpose. On the day, we sent each meeting registrant a message of thanks in the form of a postcard to highlight how the postcard tool works and we also provided printed postcards to send via mail. We asked that each person who received a postcard consider what reach they have to send either nudges or messages of thanks.

Work with Purpose has no social media channels of its own and instead we are asking that all organisations with an online presence to engage with the campaign and share it on their own channels. We encouraged people to reach out to us for a Social Media Toolkit and received 55 requests for kits to be sent out.

Please contact Amanda on hello@workwithpurpose to receive a media kit.



Retention strategy presentations

Sectors were invited to share what is working for them regarding recruitment and retention, and each sector provided two presentations from organisations highlighting the strategies they employ.

From social services we heard from **Ewan Higgs, Housing Services Program Manager at Hobart City Mission**, who talked about how adopting a trauma informed approach when engaging with staff has helped his organisation better engage and connect with each other and positively shape the employee experience.

We also heard from **Graham Marshall, Operations Manager at Youth Family and Community Connections** who spoke about their use of a staff survey in identifying the demographics and values of their employees, and a client survey to gain valuable feedback about what they seek in a worker. They have since used this information to create videos that communicate the values of the organisation to potential workers. They've also reached out to an agency to help them write more effective job ads. Graham is convinced these changes will also support staff retention.

Education and care introduced us to **Chris Symons, Operations Manager at Carlton Street Child Care Services**. Chris identified that workforce retention starts with identifying important yet simple factors, such as staff to child ratios and the ability to take breaks and then working these factors into a pre-employment program. He also highlighted a collaboration with employment specialists to build capacity of leaders to deliver on these commitments.

We then heard from **Christie Goss, Quality and Engagement Manager for Devonport Child Care Centres Inc** who shared an engaging video about what contributes to good leadership, making the point that it takes both a leader to innovate and brave followers to support innovation. Christie provided examples of how collaboration and support networks in a region can support leaders in managing workforce challenges.

Siena Norman, Community Services Manager for NOSS opened the conversation from the disability sector, focussing on rostering. She outlined how their decision to consult with staff and find out what they want, had the potential to open a Pandora's Box. Instead, in trusting the voice of their staff, it created a win-win situation with new approaches to rostering that allowed staff to strike a better work/life balance and led to higher levels of engagement and satisfaction.

Julie Penney, Manager Employment & Skills Development (Tasmania) for Possibility discussed the key question being 'why'? What makes people stay engaged for 10 plus years? She went on to demonstrate that the answer to this isn't simple. Instead, it's a range of diverse factors and practices, and the solution is complex, rich and requires organisations to look



comprehensively at how they approach workforce to meet these dimensions.

From aged care we were joined online by **Jane Pappin, Clinical Nurse Coordinator for Pop-Up Health South Australia** who introduced the challenges of community aged care services. She outlined how her organisation leverages leaders such as nursing staff to act as connectors and create linkages for support teams, allowing them to work effectively across a range of diverse settings. Flexible rostering also ensures staff needs are considered to ensure balance across staff and service user needs.

Tanya Petterson, Manager HIA Stream for CareForward provided us with insights into how they've brought a creative approach to recruitment, having conversations with candidates to establish the right fit in lieu of the traditional interview process. Combining this with recruiting for right-fit to build workforce, instead of being vacancy-led has proved highly successful.



What are you taking home?

After the networking lunch we returned to the room to join in an exercise of consolidation. This was facilitated by Claudia Butler who reminded us that the concepts already shared, could be held and actioned by us all. Attendees were invited to intentionally consider what they were learning on the day and how this could be put into practice. Everyone moved about the room demonstrating what ideas they would use for taking big steps, medium steps and smaller steps.

Attendees were provided with a planning document to record their steps which they can now use in their workforce practices.

Reviewing your workforce practices

It was a day of launches, with another important project launched in the form of the online [Workforce Planning and Development Review Tool](https://reviewyourworkforce.com.au) (reviewyourworkforce.com.au).

The Tool was developed in response to the identified need for organisations to build capacity in workforce planning and development to assist in addressing workforce challenges. It provides opportunities for organisations to work through four key domains to ascertain where they sit in their workforce development capacity.

The Tool focuses on people and culture (HR) practices, systems and documentations across four domains:

- Strategic Planning
- Operational Planning
- Organisational Development; and the
- Employee Lifecycle.



Start your review

1. The Strategic Planning Domain

2. The Operational Planning Domain

3. The Organisational Development Domain

4. The Employee Lifecycle Domain

All users can generate a unique link to continue updating their questions provided as part of the review, without being identified. On completion, users receive a summary of results highlighting what needs attention or development and what are existing strengths. The deidentified data is also allowing the Workforce Ready Team to establish common themes and trends to inform future direction.

The Workforce Review Tool is publicly available and is suitable for organisations of all sizes and from all sectors.

Unlocking the collaboration potential – working groups session

Ten topics for discussion about collaborating were nominated by participants prior to the meeting. Each topic group were asked to answer two questions about the topic: opportunities for collaboration and constraints on collaboration.

Groups created posters and the participants identified the top three ideas they agreed. You can see the posters and summary findings from the group [work here](#).

Evaluation of project progress and success

We conducted a pulse check to gauge the impacts of the project 12 months into being operational. The results were as follows:



75.5% strongly agreed or agreed

That they feel supported to meet service demand and job growth projections.

76.5% states that the engagement with the project initiatives is leading to

- ✓ improved/refined/changed recruitment and retention strategies
- ✓ reduction of identified barriers to having a skilled and sustainable workforce

Claudia also announced that an external evaluation is taking place to inform a potential project beyond 2024.

Save the date: The next Workforce Coalition Network Meeting will be held on Thursday 11 April 2024 in the south. The topic for this meeting will be training, development and career pathways. The venue will be confirmed closer to the date.

The Workforce Coordination project is part of the Local People in Local Jobs initiative, supported by the Tasmanian Government through the Department of State Growth. The project is delivered in partnership with TasCOSS on behalf of the social services sector peak bodies and the Tasmanian peak bodies of ACCPA, NDS, ECA Tasmania Branch (contracted to Lady Gowrie Tasmania).



Further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Claudia Butler, Community Services Industry Workforce Coordination Project Manager, on (03) 6169 9513 or claudia@tascoss.org.au.