

JobQuest

Connecting People and Skills

Penrith Skills for Jobs Ltd

ABN 80 082 730 210

Annual Report 2017-2018



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JobQuest Mission

Through a client focused and community oriented approach,

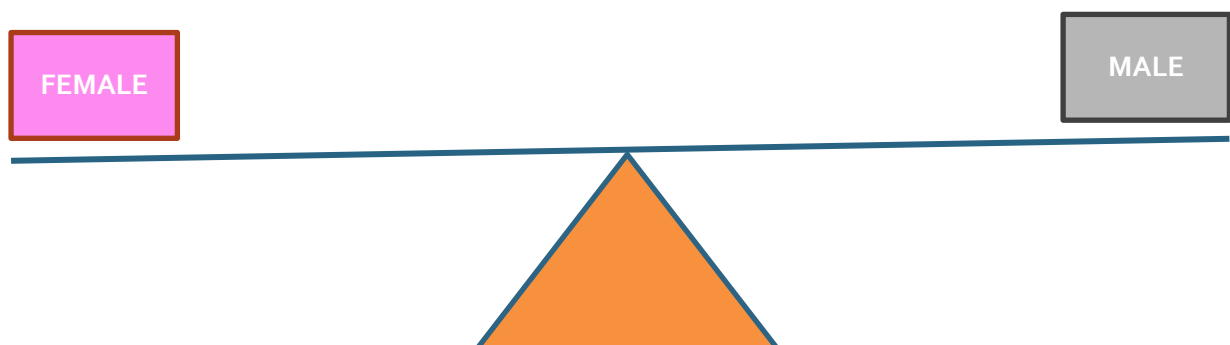
JobQuest supports our clients to:

- Develop skills in a safe and healthy working environment
- Connect with each other
- Engage with the community
- Build strong networks
- Recognise and realise opportunities
- Develop their sense of belonging

Employee Gender Balance

JobQuest has an excellent gender balance with only slightly more female employees than male.

Youth Programs are dominated by females and Employment Services are dominated by males.



How we Achieve our Mission

Employment Services

JobQuest runs property maintenance and cleaning units designed to provide transitional employment opportunities to enable people to gain skills to move on to more permanent work or operate their own small business. These operate in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains out of our Girraween office and in the Hunter out of our Newcastle office.

These services are offered to a range of customers including:

General public – fee for service

NDIS participants

- House cleaning and other household activities
- House and/or yard maintenance

Aged Care clients

- CHSP [Commonwealth Home Support Program] – Western Sydney only
- Home Care Packages
- Department of Veteran’s Affairs clients

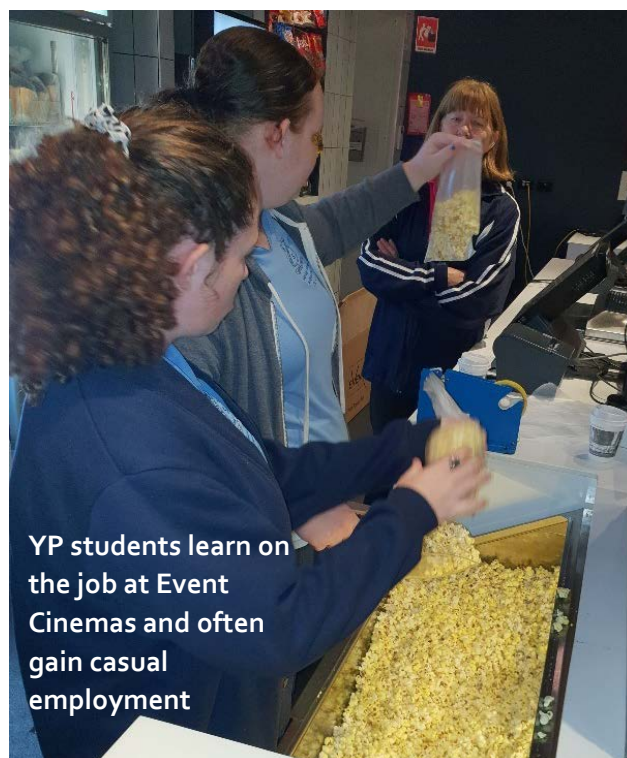
Commercial contracts

Youth Programs

JobQuest Youth Programs are designed to provide alternative learning models for young people who are not engaged well or coping well in mainstream education.

These programs assist young people to overcome some of life’s hurdles and get on track to achieving their goals.

Some programs may be targeted to specific cohorts such as refugees or recent migrants and others to young jobseekers or young offenders.



YP students learn on the job at Event Cinemas and often gain casual employment

Training

Participation in training is an excellent way for people to engage with others and their community. The development of new skills continues to be the key to finding a job and retaining that job as technological and other changes impact on our working communities.

Our Youth Programs link with our Training arm with a focus on employment skills and literacy and numeracy support for young people. This integration of our training with our other operations provides a more substantial and structured impact on the people who engage with our services.



Other Community Programs

JobQuest provides a two-year, home-based, early learning and parenting program for families with young children.

It aims to provide a structured, education-focused early learning program at home to help prepare children for and participate in school; and is run at the Newcastle suburb of Windale.



Newcastle University SMART Team at Windale with families connecting!

Community Engagement

Community, heritage and connectedness are important to us at JobQuest. We deliver a range of programs to help build more cohesive and inclusive communities.

These programs are often found in areas with significant growth or with emerging or changing communities including new or expanding cultural groups.

Western and South Western Sydney and the Hunter are major areas targeted.

Many of our Youth Programs assist young students identified as being at risk of leaving school, usually due to having displayed anti-social behaviour. We also provide vocational skills programs in schools as an adjunct to academic learning.

Supporting these students to develop strong ties to each other and to the community at large has been one strategy for overcoming many of the obstacles faced by such students. In these programs the participants are encouraged to become involved in community outreach programs.

Some of examples of our community engagement strategies have been - organising a food drive for local homeless people, helping out at a women's crisis refuge, undertaking projects in aged care and child care facilities and undertaking work experience in charity organisations such as Ronald McDonald House and St Vincent de Paul stores.

These opportunities help participants to develop skills and confidence in themselves and create positive relationships with the people around them who come from many walks and stages of life, and often culturally diverse communities, especially in Western Sydney.

We work with migrant, refugee and other newly-arrived people in our regions who are also helped to develop employability skills that suit their new community environment.

Using interactive and fun activities JobQuest staff help participants develop their communication skills and engage in ongoing relationships with peers and others in order to build self-confidence and plan for a positive future.

Our school readiness program in Windale near Newcastle is another excellent example of community engagement as our program staff mentor the parents of young children in their homes, and at the centre, to assist their engagement and support of their child's early education.

Employment programs have always been a strong focus for JobQuest - hence the name. Our current strategy involves providing employment for disadvantaged people or those who have difficulty maintaining employment in our Social Enterprises. The employees can work providing cleaning or grounds maintenance services in our various communities. These services are provided to the aged under CHSP, Home Care Packages and Veterans Home Care and to people living with disability through the NDIS.



This part of our operation provides benefit to the employees and to the customers and clients of our services and is an important pillar of our community engagement strategies.

Our Training Services work with a wide range of people to develop skills for work. Our students may be people undertaking traineeships, school students, unemployed people wanting to enter the workforce or people in the community wanting to undertake any of our various programs to help them prepare for work, learn about technology, increase their skills or just connect with others.

Chairman's Report

Another year has passed and we have continued to thrive and continue our work in our communities making a difference in the lives of both those we serve and those who work in our programs and projects. Despite a changing environment for our services at the beginning of the year we have been able to continue to employ a similar number of people, well over 100, and hopefully increase that moving forward. Our financial situation has also remained stable giving us a sound footing for the future.



Many of the challenges facing organisations such as ours continue to exist. As in the past, the ever increasing impact of changes to government funding models and project tender processes has required us to continue to diversify in order to secure reliable sources of income for our organisation. The Board continues to monitor and adapt our policies and procedures to meet current regulatory requirements with such effect that the organisation remains viable and financially stable. Our capacity to negotiate these hurdles has been proven, with excellent results in our many and varied sectors, programs and projects over the past year.

Our focus on the provision of quality services has cemented many important relationships with those in our communities with whom we work to deliver our services. These relationships with Schools, NDIS Providers and Aged Care Providers, Rehabilitation, Job Active and Disability Employment Service Providers and many varied community organisations, are the key to our ongoing success. Working in tandem with our clients and their other networks ensures a holistic approach that results in better outcomes for everyone involved.

We continue to help our clients to build strong networks and achieve social connectedness. This is one of the core aims of our organisation especially as our fast-paced technology dependent lifestyles inhibit interactions and relationships within our communities.

Our work continues to be a challenge, particularly working in environments inhabited by some very disadvantaged and often unhappy and ill-disciplined people; but, on the other hand many of our clients are a pleasure to work with, particularly some of our elders and people with a disability who now can access our services through the NDIS.

I congratulate all of our dedicated and caring staff regardless of their type of work or the program or project in which they work. Everyone contributes to our organisation and the lives of our clients whatever the service being offered. On behalf of the Board of Directors I say thank you to everyone for your hard work, resilience, loyalty and commitment and your patience and acceptance of change which continues now and will continue into the future.

I love reading the stories of individuals or specific programs in each Annual Report and this one shows some of the innovative and resourceful ways that we work with students and clients to help them to achieve their goals.

I am pleased to share some of these achievements with you in this report. They are stories that embody JobQuest's mission of helping the disadvantaged in our community to develop life-changing skills and helping individuals regain capacity and control. We have proudly witnessed families grow in confidence, helped develop the employability skills of newly arrived refugee students and seen a socioeconomically disadvantaged community transform into a connected, engaging neighbourhood.

As a person of a certain age myself, I also appreciate the way that JobQuest has embraced the concepts of wellness and enablement so that services for our aged and disabled clients are delivered in a way that does not diminish their independence, ongoing skills, decision making and involvement in community. Our recent foray into the Get Health at Work program also shows that a wellness approach also extends to our workers.

I believe that JobQuest is steadily and effectively moving forward. I envision the new year will bring a further period of stabilization with the administration of current projects and the sourcing of new and innovative programs. I remain immensely proud to continue to be involved with JobQuest as Chairman. I believe that we meet our mission and do it with respect, empathy and innovation and to that end, make a difference with and for, those we serve and the communities in which we operate.

Sydney Carr

Chairman of the Board – Penrith Skills for Jobs Inc

JobQuest helps Steven reclaim his life

Living with chronic illness has been a difficult and constant battle for Steven*.

A debilitating heart condition that has worsened over time meant that completing even ordinary chores around his home and yard were becoming an exhausting hardship.

"I used to over exert myself trying to get it all done and that's when my heart went into atrial fibrillation," he said, describing the irregular heart beat characterised by his serious heart disease.

That's when Steven realised he needed to make changes in his life. He reached out to JobQuest for assistance and the support has been life changing, he said.

For the past two years, JobQuest has assisted Steven with everyday jobs that had become a challenge – tasks such as house cleaning, general property maintenance and mowing his large yard. "I help where I can because it gets me moving but now they do a lot of the heavy lifting," he said.

It has also meant Steven has been able to build his capacity for independence – a quality he feared he would lose.

By making small changes such as removing slippery moss from the outdoor pavers and repairing uneven steps, Steven said he felt more in control of his life, enabling him to be more actively involved in activities around his home.

"I loved to be out in the garden watering my plants but the hose I had wasn't safe and I tripped over it. The JobQuest workers hung it on the wall for me so that it retracts when I'm not using it," he said.

"They fixed the steps along my retaining wall and I suggested they install grab rails which they did. Now it's safer for me to get out there.

"That's really important to me because it gives me peace of mind and security to get outside and do the little things I can do without worrying about the risk of falling which would be disastrous."

Steven said being on the receiving end of such additional support has had the most remarkable effect on both his mental and physical health.

"I had 11 hospital admissions in the last 15 years but since they've been assisting me, I've had none in the last two years," he said. "I put it down to having that great support."

While his heart health requires constant monitoring, Steven said the turnaround in his wellbeing since receiving home support has been an unexpected but pleasing surprise.

"I am grateful and appreciative. Before, life was very lonely and isolated. I was doing a lot of the strenuous stuff. Having them around has improved my quality of life, from the social contact point of view as well as having the maintenance and cleaning jobs done that I was finding difficult to do.

"I have got to know the staff and I regard them as my friends."

*Not his real name





From Refugees to Uni Students

Young refugees Rani and Jihad credit the assistance they received from JobQuest for giving them the confidence to reach goals they never imagined.

The Western Sydney high school students said JobQuest helped them prepare for the workforce by teaching them life-changing employability skills which were the driving force behind their new found confidence – and their acceptance into an engineering diploma at Western Sydney University.

The pair, who arrived in Australia three years ago from separate war-torn regions, are the first in their respective families to attend university.

Rani, 20, said JobQuest equipped him with fundamental job skills including communication, self-management and problem solving. However, he said the most profound change he noticed was in his confidence.

“At the beginning we started talking in a group and I was really shy and nervous, I wouldn’t really say much. But later on I picked up more confidence. JobQuest’s consultants really helped to build my language and my confidence,” he said.

Fellow student, Jihad, 20, recalled how he learnt to write a resume and the process of applying for a job.

“My language wasn’t that great but they helped me get a job,” he said of his successful application for a position at a retail store.

“But now that I have those skills I can apply for other jobs. It’s wonderful.”

Jihad said the mock interview sessions were among the most significant lessons.

“I was so stressed about how to answer the questions but it built my confidence. It was a great experience,” he said.

“I hoped to get accepted to uni and I did. I think I would have got there but it would have taken me a long, long time because there was no one to teach me this stuff.”

Rani and Jihad have their sights set on starting their own construction company after they graduate.

“All our friends have decided to do different trades,” Jihad said. “One is a plumber, electrician and an architect. We’re all planning to start our own company when we finish.”

Creating a strong and connected Community, One activity at a time

JobQuest's mission - to help turn around the lives of the disadvantaged by building connected communities - is alive and well in the much maligned suburb of Windale.

Located in the picturesque Lake Macquarie, Windale has lacked some of the charm and the resources of its coastal neighbours and has often received a bad rap for its high rates of unemployment, poor school completion rates, substance abuse and unfortunate stories of family violence.

And yet parents are turning to numerous JobQuest hosted activities, aimed at fostering parental involvement, in growing numbers in a show of determination to break the cycle.

In an underprivileged community defined by vulnerable people doing it tough, JobQuest is attempting to create opportunities through a variety of activities and programs that empower families, help them connect to the wider community and inspire a better way of life.

By bolstering family engagement, there are already signs of parent's confidence mounting and their values and behaviours changing as they work towards being the best advocates for their children.

Parents determined to break through the area's social disconnectedness attend early education programs and foundation skills programs to discover how to be self-reliant, skilled and caring individuals. Further to these programs, they have also been drawn to a number of capacity building initiatives that have left them feeling more confident and skilled. Wanting to share their new skills with others, offshoot activities have emerged that are seeing more and more families grow, learn and socialise as a group. It is regarded as the ripple effect that is buoying the local community.

As an example, one parent emerged from a parenting program feeling inspired to share her children's new found love of reading that the family created a "street library". The delicately home crafted and decorated cupboard containing preloved children's books has been placed outside the family's home, encouraging the next family to borrow a book to enjoy and replace it with a book in kind so another can share in the experience.

In a demonstration of overcoming adversity as a community, groups of children gathered at the local school during the term break to share in a holiday activity. At a time when typically boredom kicks in and families hunt for something affordable to do, a group of parents arranged an event that involved ball games and arts and crafts as a social outlet for the area's youth. And proving that some of the best fun can be had on a budget, children of all ages put their imagination to the test with their cardboard box creations.



Undoubtedly, family connectedness and showing interest enhances a child's success and that has been shown to be the case at Windale where parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's lives.



Participants of a school readiness program have reported feeling encouraged, inspired and better connected to their child and this bonding has been strengthened through supplementary events and workshops such as a damper making activity.

Well-attended, the day saw parents engrossed with their children, become more familiar with their child's school and an opportunity to development friendships with other parents.

While Windale remains a disadvantaged suburb despite attempts by government to regenerate the area, stalwarts of the community refuse to be defined by the criticisms the suburb attracts and are using the various enrichment activities to create a resourceful hub and burst through the social and economic challenges.



Building a Strong Family through a passion for Learning

When Jenny* took part in a school readiness program for her middle son, she wasn't quite prepared for the enormous change it made not just in his life but for how it transformed hers.

"He'd been through a hard time," the mum of five said of the impact a relationship breakdown had on her and her five young children.

Their struggles peaked when it was recommended her kindergarten son return to preschool.

But that all changed after she discovered an early childhood program that empowers parents to be their preschool aged child's first teacher.

Run in the family home, parents work through weekly activities with their child to boost their literacy and numeracy skills with the support of a mentor.

That is just what it did for Jenny's son – and more.

"He has thrived," Jenny said of her son, adding he had grown both socially and academically.

So too did Jenny. That is because as a parent, she too was supported with a pathway to employment.

"I decided that it was time for myself to re-enter the workforce after 10 years being a mum," the proud Indigenous mum said. Now a tutor, she has overcome personal challenges including public speaking and engaging with others.

"It gave me a level of confidence I didn't think I would ever have and it also made me chase my dream and use my voice."

Feeling more empowered than she ever had, Jenny said she had gained the self-assurance she had long lacked and has been so encouraged that she has joined several local community groups including a Parents & Citizens Association, an Aboriginal Consultative Group and a preschool committee as a parent advisor at the recommendation of the school principal.

As a tutor and a firm advocate of school readiness initiatives, Jenny is able to share her experience with other parents who share her journey.

"I have one child that has graduated from the program, one who is currently in the program and one who will be going through and what I love most about it is that it gives you that one-on-one time with your child which is particularly important in big families and also that it encourages you to feel you can do this, you can stand tall," she said.

"Numerous doors have opened that I did not think I would have previously tried to open."

*not her real name



Seniors help Students transition from school to Work

JobQuest has helped pave the way to employment for a group of students with additional support needs with the support of residents of a Sydney aged care facility.

Their teacher said the students, aged between 14 and 16, had gained valuable life skills and employability skills in the workplace.

“They struggled to engage in the curriculum so the interaction with the residents in the aged care facility gives them an insight into what it is like to experience the workforce and how to be employable,” he said.

“The biggest thing they gained was confidence.”

JobQuest’s youth consultants helped the students start conversations with the residents to improve the way they communicated and through interactive games they were able to hone their social skills.

The students also received valuable business insights when they set out to make a product to sell at the local markets.

As a group, the students decided on making cups and saucers and they created a business model that included how to price their products to achieve a profit. They also set up their stall and designed and produced posters to market their product.

Their teacher said the students would long reap the benefits of the core work skills they gained including how to present themselves in the workplace and how to work effectively as part of a team.

“They started out feeling apprehensive and even withdrawn. Some weren’t comfortable at all and struggled,” he said.

Before long, however, he observed a notable change.

“They had much more confidence to communicate with the residents,” he said. “The market stall experience really had an impact too. They were spruiking and adjusting their prices so they could sell quickly. They were really ingenious.”



Annual Compliance Report

JobQuest's operations are carried out within 4 quality frameworks which enable our customers to be assured that our services remain at the highest quality. In order to meet the required standards of operation, continuous improvement is embedded into everything we do. The 4 quality frameworks are:

- Work Health and Safety Management Systems AUS/NZ4801
- National Standards for Registered Training Organisations
- Aged Care Common Standards
- National Disability Services Standards

WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

A work health and safety surveillance audit was successfully completed on 9th August.

The result was excellent with only some minor observations recorded.

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY

Re-registration was attained in 2018. Current focus for the RTO is upgrading training and assessment materials and validation, upgrading of Trainer qualifications and student centred evidence of compliance in line with the journey of the student and the RTO.



AGED CARE QUALITY AGENCY

Accreditation to enable delivery of the Commonwealth Home Support Program CHSP was expected to be updated by audit this year. With the advent of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety established in October of this year this may have resulted in the AACQA – the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency focusing on more high risk providers such as residential care facilities. We still await news from ASCQA about when we will be audited.

Over the past year systems have been improved to support the quality of services offered to aged customers including the development of more resources to ensure that staff are properly trained in the elements or philosophies underpinning modern services provided to aged clients.

DISABILITY SERVICES STANDARDS

JobQuest is a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme NDIS provider and has in place systems to meet the Disability Services Standards [DSS]. We met the requirements for the DSS Third Party Verification process in 2015 and continue to provide quality services to our NDIS funded clients.

The new Quality Assurance and Safeguards Framework and the NDIS Commission and we are currently working towards ongoing accreditation under this new framework and auditing system.



Community Partners

JobQuest would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the support of our partners who assist us every step of our way. For all the in kind support as well as funding and grants, we would like to thank:

365Care	GPT - Charlestown Square	NSW Department of Primary Industries
ABC Radio	Hawkesbury Skills Inc	NSW Police Force NSW State Debt Recovery Office
Ability Options	Housing NSW	Pacific Link Housing
ADRA - Cessnock	Hunter Health England Health –	Path2Change - Wallsend
Anglican Parish of Telarah - Rutherford	John Hunter Hospital NICU	Penrith City Council
Annecto	Belmont Hospital	Peppercorn Services Inc (Hawkesbury Leisure & Learning Centre)
APM [Advance Personnel Management]	Mater Hospital	Port Stephens Council Libraries - Tomaree Library
Avid Travel	Maitland Hospital	Regis Aged Care - Port Stephens
Baptist Care Services	International Child Care College - Newcastle	RFBI Masonic Villages - Cessnock and Kurri
Blacktown Pistol Club	Joblink Plus - Cessnock and Kurri	Ronald McDonald House - Newcastle
Break Thru People Solutions	Junaya Family Support Services - Blacktown	Safe Pathways
Broadspectrum	Juvenile Justice NSW	School Industry Partnership
Brotherhood of St Lawrence	Konekt – Maitland, Charlestown and Mount Druitt	Skilling and Employment – Jordan Springs and Ropes Crossing
Calvary Retirement Community - Cessnock	Lake Macquarie City Council	Sydwest Multicultural Services
Catholic Education Office	Living Care, Ashwood Residential Care and Green Hills Residential Care Services	The Hills Shire Council
City of Parramatta Council	Local Government Training Institute - Thornton	The Mount Druitt Hub, Blacktown City Council
Commonwealth Attorney General's Department	Milabah - Schools as Community Centre	The Parliament of New South Wales
Commonwealth Department of Defence	Mission Providence - Mt Druitt	The Place: Charlestown Community Centre
Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Protection	Museum of Contemporary Art [MCA]	Training Services NSW, NSW Department of Industry
Commonwealth Department of Social Services	Narla Village - Belmont	The Art Gallery of New South Wales
Commonwealth Department of Jobs and Small Business	Newcastle City Council	The Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre
Community Migrant Resource Centre	Newcastle City Council Libraries - Wallsend Library	Taronga Zoo
Corporate Partners	Newcastle Elderly Citizens Centre Inc.	Uniting Care Australia
EMPOWERability Inc	North West Disability Services, The Secret Garden & Nursery	WICA (Windale Interagency & Community Alliance)
ESG [Employment Services Group]	Northcott	WISE Employment
Event Cinemas Kotara and Glendale	NSW Department of Education	Workskil - Cessnock
Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre	NSW Department of Family and Community Services	
Forsythes Training – Newcastle	NSW Department of Health	
Fresh Hope Maitland		

Special thanks to all our partnering high schools and public schools. Your dedication and resourcefulness is an inspiration both to our participants and our staff.

JobQuest also acknowledges the assistance from our peak bodies including Jobs Australia, Community Colleges Australia, Waste Management Association of Australia, Aged and Community Services Australia and the Western Sydney Community Forum.

As member organisation, JobQuest continues to find their support invaluable.

Contacts

www.jobquest.org.au

GIRRAWEEEN - Head Office

Tel: 8677 8885

Address: Unit 7/79 Mandoon Rd, Girraween NSW 2145

PENRITH

Tel: 4731 4400

Address: Suite 101 Community Connections
114-116 Henry Street, Penrith NSW 2750

NEWCASTLE

Tel: 4960 9024

Address: 5 McMichael Street, Maryville NSW 2293

Postal address:

PO Box 58, Penrith 2751