

Helpful talking points for conversations with your local MP or media.



Background

With national employment services reform underway, this is a critical moment for the jobs-focused social enterprise sector.

Every year, the federal government invests more than \$3 Billion in employment services, supporting ~900,000 people looking for work. The system works for some, but not everyone.

Just 11.7% of people supported through Workforce Australia Services are in a job for more than six months. The government's target is just 15%. Disability Employment Services (now Inclusive Employment Australia) performs better at 37.3%. And jobs-focused social enterprise is sitting at 82%.

That's a gap we can't ignore - and it's one we believe we should be talking about a lot more.

Use your voice as WISE leader

If you are having conversations with your Local MP or you're engaging with media, you'll naturally be talking about the effectiveness of your jobs-focused social enterprise. We thought you may also like to include a clear ask to government in your messaging that **'social enterprises should be paid for the outcomes they create'**.

This is simple, straightforward and aligned to the National Social Enterprise Strategy's Access to Decent Work pillar.

Today jobs-focused social enterprises deliver incredible returns – socially and economically – and they do this without consistent or direct funding from the federal government. At White Box, alongside many of our peers, we're working hard to change this.

Following are some suggested talking points we've been using, that may be helpful to you. If you have any questions or feedback, don't hesitate to get in touch with our team.

Key talking points

Key message #1: The current national employment services system works for some, but not all. Social enterprises can help.

- Every year the federal government invests over \$3B in employment services.
- Approximately 900K people are supported through these services to find a job.
- Just 11.7% of people supported through Workforce Australia Services are in a job for more than six months. The government's target is just 15%.
- Disability Employment Services (now Inclusive Employment Australia) performs better at 37.3%.
- And jobs-focused social enterprise retention rates sit at 82% (*you can use your own six-month retention rate here if you prefer*).
- That's a gap we can't ignore - and it's one we should be talking about a lot more.

Key message #2: Jobs-focused social enterprises should be paid for the outcomes they create.

- Jobs-focused social enterprises exist to address the limitations of the national employment services system.
- Jobs-focused social enterprises are like any other commercial business – they sell products and services. However, they exist primarily to create jobs for people with complex barriers to work.
- They offer unique supports including onsite counsellors, increased training, flexible working arrangements, as well as health and housing support. These result in higher operating costs for the business – these are referred to as *impact costs*.
- Today, social enterprises have to cover these impact costs – and it's holding the sector back. Social enterprises exist to support people who need more than the current employment system can provide, yet they receive no direct payments or subsidies for delivering those outcomes.

Key Message #3: Jobs-focused social enterprises have a permanent role to play in our national employment services system.

- Through an existing federal government trial (the PBO Trial), it's been proven social enterprises are 2.5x more effective than existing government employment programs in getting people with complex barriers back into work.
- With employment services reform currently underway, now is the time to be looking more closely at the role jobs-focused social enterprises can play in employment system, more permanently.
- I recognise the federal government is investing in jobs-focused social enterprise through small, bespoke programs. To truly shift the dial on long term unemployment and entrenched disadvantage in Australia, social enterprise needs to be consistently paid for the outcomes they create and embedded in the employment system.