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ParentsNext  
Local Jobs Program  
Jobs Victoria Advocates

# Newsletter



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Our offices will be closed from Friday, 24 December 2021  
and will re-open on Tuesday, 4 January 2022.

# Connecting More Victorians To A Better Future

*“Thank you, your help changed my life”*

Julie\* was an unemployed single mother of two kids. She came to Australia as a refugee and was a participant of Djerriwarrh’s ParentsNext Program. When Julie joined our ParentsNext program, she was not just unemployed, but was also struggling financially and was in a difficult family situation. Julie also had no prior support to overcome her challenging situation and barriers. Our ParentsNext coach referred her to our Job Victoria Advocates (JVA) program for urgent help and additional support.

The JVA program is a gateway to various support and services and is designed to assist anyone who needs help and guidance with vocational or non-vocational support including domestic violence, homelessness and mental health. Like many people who contact the JVA program, Julie was not sure what to expect but what she received was valuable resources and support that helped her change her and her family’s life.

Asad, our Jobs Victoria Advocate, connected Julie to multiple support services including Beyond Blue and White Ribbon Foundation for immediate mental health support. Utilising his network of support services, Asad also connected Julie to a partner organisation to find her a place to live. Asad listened to Julie’s individual needs and used his community resources, knowledge and networks to connect her to the right services with the aim of improving her situation.

Asad also assisted Julie in applying for government support in the form of "Relief Rental and Utility Relief Schemes". This eased some of her immediate burden that was impacting her and her children, mentally and financially. Julie told us:

**"If it wasn't for your support I would still be where I didn't want to be"**

Asad also put her in contact with her local church for food parcels during her most difficult times. These extra resources and support from our network of connections helped Julie and her children while she focused on finding a job to be able to support her family in the long run.

To help Julie find a job, Asad then connected her to a local employment service provider whom we work with to help our jobseekers and participants find a job. The employment consultant helped Julie create a resume, a cover letter and prepared her for job interviews.

As a result of this support, Julie secured a job in a warehouse distribution centre where she now works full-time. She is now working towards being self-reliant and financially stable to be able to support her children but most importantly, she has been able to resolve her difficult family situation.

\*Not her real name

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## Djerriwarrh's ParentsNext site locations:

**Melton  
Sunshine  
Werribee  
Laverton  
St Albans  
Footscray  
Deer Park  
Melton South  
Bacchus Marsh  
Taylors Hill/Hillside  
Watergardens \*outreach**

**We are available for face-to-face appointments**

With patience, understanding, knowledge and a commitment to supporting people, our Jobs Victoria Advocate helped Julie find the right mental health support, a safe place to live and meaningful employment. Most importantly, the JVA program has enabled Julie to move towards a better life, a better future by providing her the support, options and choices that she didn't know existed before.

On a follow up call with Julie, she told Asad:

**“Thank you, your help changed my life”**

Julie was so satisfied with the support from our Advocate and the program that she referred both her sisters and a nephew to our JVA program to help them overcome their barrier of finding employment. Asad has now put them in contact with our partner employment service provider and their employment consultant has been working with them to find them their preferred jobs. As of writing this story, Julie's sister is about to secure a job in a warehouse and her nephew is about to get a job working in the automotive sector.

Julie has worked hard and shown real courage and determination in the face of adversity. Stories like Julie's inspire us every day and fuel our commitment to connect more Victorians to a better future.

## Meet Our Jobs Victoria Advocate

Meet Asad Taqvi; our newest Jobs Victoria Advocate. Asad started with us at the end of August 2021 and brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience working in the community to support disadvantaged Victorians.

While Victoria was in a lockdown, Asad was working hard to counter the effects of the pandemic on as many Victorians as he could by remotely reaching out to people through his network of community contacts. He also assisted our existing Djerriwarrh participants to offer them support, guidance and mentoring and referring them to service providers for specialised support to address their individual needs.

Asad's passion for helping people, his determination, local community knowledge, empathy towards struggling families and a positive attitude has already seen him assist many hundreds of local people connect to essential services in the short time he has been working as a JVA.

We sat down with Asad for a one-on-one interview and asked him some interesting questions about what drives and motivates him, his passions and his big plans for the JVA program in 2022.



## **These are some of the most challenging times, what drives you to go out of your way to help people?**

As a migrant myself, I understand the challenges and struggles people face in different phases of their lives. I often see my past experiences reflected in their stories and this is what drives me to help people and if I have to go above and beyond my job responsibilities to help them, I do. I want to see people succeed and take advantage of every opportunity they can to be the better version of themselves.

## **What made you take up a role as a JVA?**

I'm passionate about helping the community and improving peoples' lives especially post-COVID. COVID-19 has affected everyone, but not everyone has the support or drive they need to overcome the challenges of COVID-19 and the recent lockdowns. The JVA program is designed to help people who have been affected by COVID-19 and my own personal goal of helping the most disadvantaged aligns with the purpose of this program and that is one of the biggest reasons I took up this role.

## **What motivates you?**

Seeing people succeed in particular my fellow Victorians is what really gets me going every day. To see them back on a path to achieving something meaningful and me being part of that achievement is very motivating for me. The satisfaction that comes from knowing I've helped someone get closer to their goals, alleviate struggles and connect them to useful resources and services is another reason why I'm here. There are so many services available but not a lot of people know about them, but I do, and I'm here to connect the dots to all these myriad of services and help improve people's quality of life.

## **What are your plans for 2022?**

In short, 2022 is going to be a year of success for Victorians and I'm going to be part of it. I'll be reaching out to even more service providers to get them on board with this amazing program. I will also be reaching out to as many communities as I can to provide the best support to them.

As a member of the advisory board for Northern Metropolitan Partnership, I work with state and local governments to address the needs of local communities and one of my plans for 2022 is to strengthen the relationship and connections between the Western and Northern regions. This stronger relationship between the regions will help deliver a better JVA service across regions.

## **What do you like about your role as a JVA?**

I am passionate about helping others. Networking and learning about the many different cultures in our local communities is what I really enjoy about my role as a JVA. This role has already taught me so much about how different cultures come together and support each other. At the end of the day, we all have the same basic human needs and it's my goal to provide people with the right information and tools to help them fulfill those needs and thrive in their lives.

## **How do you help people that come to you through the JVA program?**

As a Jobs Victoria Advocate my role is to direct people to the right resources and the most suitable services that are available to assist them. I ask them specific questions to identify their barriers and requirements and then I use my community resources and knowledge of local services to direct people to the right service. Most importantly, I listen, because everyone comes to me with a unique set of needs. I am flexible in my approach because no two people are the same. People come to me for help in finding a job or seeking career guidance for example, or for financial support or government assistance and I work with all of them to give them the best information and service connections I can. Every day as a JVA is different, exciting and rewarding and that's what makes this a very special job.

To contact Asad and our JVA team please email us at [jva@djerriwarrh.org](mailto:jva@djerriwarrh.org)

# Local Jobs Program (LJP)

Samara has been coordinating the Local Jobs Program for Djerriwarrh since April 2021 by delivering the 'WOW' (work opportunities west) activity. Even through multiple lockdowns, this program has had some very successful results. Samara has made connections throughout all of Melbourne's Western Suburbs to be the bridge between local jobactive, ParentsNext and Transition to Work providers and our local WOW partner employers.

Through the first 2 job seeker pre-employment intake rounds, job seekers undertook a 4 week industry introduction course within either the building & construction industry or the health services industry, then moved into a brief work placement before commencing paid employment with their prospective employers.

Two of our key WOW employer partners in this program are Workforce International (Building & Construction) and Western Health (Health Services). Job opportunities vary from food services, cleaning and direct care workers (health services) and also traffic management, general labouring, field operators, parks and garden maintenance, asphalt labourers (Building & Construction).

Through 2 rounds of pre-employment delivery and further referrals coming through the program, there have already been 51 job seekers who have completed the industry introduction courses, with 37 obtaining paid employment, and a further 8 expecting to start paid work before the end of 2021. There has also been 10 job seekers who have reached their 12 weeks of ongoing employment. These are remarkable results when you consider that the Local Jobs Program only kicked off in April and that we have been working through lockdown most of the time.

A final pre-employment intake round for the program is due to start on 17 January 2022 for the Health Services industry. Please continue to express your interest for this intake.

For the Building & Construction industry, we have decided to utilise a rolling intake which means that your job seekers can start at any time, so don't wait, refer now, start the course immediately and get ready to commence paid work in the building and construction industry.

Samara continues to work with all the job seekers after they have started paid employment to ensure a smooth transition into the workforce, and continues to work closely with the employment partners to provide regular post placement support to ensure ongoing employment.

From everyone in our WOW Local Jobs Program team, we would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to all our valued employment services providers and employer partners for working together to make a difference in job seekers lives.

**We wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.**

Samara Mabbott, LJP and WOW Activity Coordinator



Samara with Lincoln and Daniel from Workforce International

# Rollout Of myGovID

To continue to access the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) employment services system (ESS), DESE will be phasing a transition to myGovID.

In line with the whole of Government digital agenda, DESE is introducing myGovID for employment services providers (e.g. ParentsNext) initially from 1 February 2022. New ESS Users after 28 February will need a myGovID to access the system and then on 25 March the new system will go fully live.

With myGovID, we will be moving from the current multiple log-ins and authentication processes to access ESS applications to a single, secure sign-in via myGovID.

It is important that all DESE providers encourage their staff who access ESS Web to get a myGovID set up at the standard strength (and using your personal email) from now. Starting this process early will allow you and your staff to resolve any issues you might have with the identity verification process, such as mismatched personal documents.

If you have any questions regarding the transition to myGovID, please contact your DESE program Contract Manager for further assistance and/or John Dardo, Senior Responsible Officer, New Employment Services Model (DESE) on [Future-Employment-Services@dese.gov.au](mailto:Future-Employment-Services@dese.gov.au).

## Right Fit for Risk (RFFR)

Djerriwarrh's Information Security Management System (ISMS) Steering Committee, chaired by our Compliance Manager, Maree Morgan, has been meeting regularly to inform our response to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) Requirements for Information Security Management Systems (ISMS) Certification for contracted employment service providers e.g. ParentsNext.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) ISMS Scheme is specifically targeted for the providers of contracted private employment services, who DESE engage with to assist job seekers for preparing and securing jobs. This certification aims at ensuring the providers are compliant with DESE's contractual requirements (Statement of Applicability, SoA) under the Right Fit for Risk (RFFR) accreditation approach. RFFR is a component of DESE's External Systems Assurance Framework (ESAF) that ensures system files and confidential data is secured, stored and managed responsibly in non-departmental ICT environments.

To distinguish the DESE ISMS Scheme from other ISMS, the term "RFFR ISMS" is used.

We are pleased to report that after much planning and hard work, Djerriwarrh will soon submit the final required RFFR ISMS documents to DESE for RFFR accreditation; these include:

- Information Security Management Policy
- Statement of Applicability (SoA)
- Improvement/Treatment Plan
- Self-assessment against RFFR.

# Message From Our Manager

Dear Colleagues,

With the end of the year fast approaching, it gives me pleasure in writing our final Newsletter for 2021 and wishing our community and business partners, our Djerriwarrh team members and valued program participants a very happy and safe festive season and best wishes for 2022.

Victoria has now reached Phase D of the National Plan to transition Australia's COVID-19 response with over 90 percent of Victorians over 12 fully vaccinated. In accordance with the Victorian Chief Health Officer Directions and Department of Education, Skills and Employment Directions on face-to-face appointments, our ParentsNext, Local Jobs Program and Jobs Victoria Advocates services have re-commenced face-to-face and in-person servicing of our program participants where it is safe and reasonable to do so. We welcome the easing of restrictions and encourage all our program participants where they are able to, to come and see us in-person as we believe that in-person interactions are invaluable in building rapport and maximising program benefits for everyone. Importantly, if you cannot meet with us in-person due to your personal circumstances, please let us know and we will be happy to continue to provide you with the full program services remotely until you are ready to meet with us in-person.

Since July 2021, our ParentsNext team has been very busy managing and servicing (mainly during lockdown) the rapidly growing caseload numbers whilst transitioning to the new program changes which now includes participants' having access to the participation fund and employers having access to wage subsidies. I'm pleased to report that our caseload numbers are now the highest they have ever been since we commenced the program in July 2018. This means we are supporting more and more disadvantaged parents with young children to achieve their education, training and employment goals and thereby impacting the cycle of intergenerational welfare dependency. In response to this growth in business levels, we have recently recruited two new ParentsNext team members to ensure we continue to provide the best levels of service and customer experience to our participants. We thank the Department of Education, Skills and Employment at both a national and state level for their support in working with all ParentsNext providers to successfully roll-out the new program changes and for their help in increasing caseload numbers across the country.

As mentioned by our Local Jobs Program (LJP) Coordinator, Samara Mabbott, in her report; our LJP 'Work Opportunities West' activity has also continued its great work right through the extended lockdown by working with local jobactive, Transition to Work, ParentsNext providers and employers to assist local people into paid employment opportunities in the Health Services and Building & Construction industries. Continuing to get local people into local jobs during the lockdown has been a real game changer for many job seekers and employers impacted by the pandemic.

Also, our partnership with Jobs Victoria to deliver the new Jobs Victoria Advocates (JVA) initiative has resulted in hundreds of local people interacting with our JVA's on a monthly basis to get connected to careers advisors, education providers, employment services specialists and also to critical non-vocational supports, such as domestic and family violence services, food relief, utility and rental relief schemes and homelessness services. After only a few months, this new program is already proving very useful in connecting Victorians to a better future. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and the ramping up of more in-person community engagement events, we are expecting even bigger things from our JVA's in 2022.

After what has been another tough, challenging and busy year, all our ParentsNext, Local Jobs Program and Jobs Victoria Advocates team along with all their Djerriwarrh colleagues, are looking forward to a well-earned rest and celebration with family and friends over the festive season. We are equally looking forward to continuing our impact on the lives of local people in Melbourne's west when we re-open all eleven ParentsNext sites along with new program enrolments for LJP and more in-person JVA community activities in early January 2022.

Yours sincerely,  
Gengiz Soyturk

