



Work for the Dole 2014-15 Evaluation Key Facts

The Evaluation Report on Work for the Dole 2014-15 has been released on the Department's website. Work for the Dole 2014-15 was conducted in 18 selected areas located within Priority Employment Areas. The independent evaluation was commissioned by the Department and completed by The Social Research Centre and the Australian National University. Evaluation findings were used to inform the design of Work for the Dole in jobactive.

A variety of mechanisms were used to gather evidence to inform the evaluation including in-depth interviews with job seekers, host organisations, Work for the Dole coordinators, employment services providers and programme managers in the Department of Employment's national and state offices. In addition, a telephone survey of 700 eligible job seekers was undertaken (representing a response rate of 86 per cent).

Overall, the evaluation found that participation in work experience activities, including Work for the Dole activities, increased significantly for job seekers aged 18 to 29 years and that there was a significant decrease in welfare dependency.

In general, job seekers who participated in Work for the Dole reported positive experiences. The most commonly mentioned positive outcomes related to "soft" skills such as confidence, self-esteem, ability to work with a team, communication and workplace behaviour.

The Evaluation found evidence to support the premise that the better the match between job seeker and host organisation activity, the better the outcome for both participant and host, including fewer drop-outs, more productivity for hosts and greater enhancement of participant skills and abilities.

Specific evaluation findings include:

- Skills and experience gained
 - 83 per cent agreed that Work for the Dole is an opportunity to give back to the community
 - 78 per cent said their Host Organisation was willing to teach them new skills
 - 72 per cent said they were given a choice of tasks to do
 - 67 per cent said they were interested in the things they were doing
- Management of placement
 - 79 per cent agreed that the routine was good for them
 - 74 per cent said their placement was well organised

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- 41 per cent said they were easily able to manage their paid work and their WfD placement
- 36 per cent said they were easily able to manage their study and their WfD placement
- Employment prospects
 - 52 per cent said they had learned new skills in their WfD placement
 - 54 per cent said they thought WfD participation had improved their chances of getting a job a little or a lot (24 per cent and 30 per cent respectively)
- Job Seeker satisfaction
 - 81 per cent said they were treated like a valuable member of staff
 - 81 per cent said they were satisfied with the amount of responsibility they were given
 - 76 per cent said they were satisfied with the amount of work
 - 74 per cent said they were satisfied with the variety of tasks
 - 68 per cent agreed that their placement was a valuable experience
- Host Organisations' experiences
 - Most host organisations had previous experience with volunteers.
 - Host organisations demonstrated a commitment to providing opportunities to WfD participants.
 - Host organisations saw WfD as an opportunity to undertake activities and complete tasks they would otherwise not have resources to do.
 - Some host organisations found that participation in the programme helped to provide them with financial stability and a raised profile in the community.
- Provider perspectives
 - The rapid introduction of the programme meant that access to supporting documentation and guidelines was delayed and there were some resulting initial difficulties.
 - Shifting the way day to day operations are performed takes time and with the short lead in to the introduction of the programme it was not possible to have the programme operating as intended from the day of its introduction.
 - Providers valued regular discussions with State Offices.
 - Many providers felt that the name of the programme, "Work for the Dole", did not emphasise the value of work experience to job seekers and could be a hindrance to engaging them with the programme.