



'Empty Promises'

A Report on the Textile Clothing & Footwear Structural Adjustment Package (SAP) 1 July 2005 - 30 July 2006

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Index	page
Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	3
Overview	4
Summary.....	5
Section One: Background	
1. The TCF Structural Adjustment Package (SAP)	6
2. Special Needs Of TCF Workers.....	7
3. Commitments Made By DEWR In 2005	8
4. Promotion of the SAP	9
Section Two: Limitations Of The Current Model	
1. Introduction.....	11
2. Four key shortfalls	
- Dissemination of information to workers	11
- Clarification of eligibility criteria.....	12
- Provision of support.....	13
- Accountability of funds	15
Section Three: A Way Forward	
1. Introduction.....	17
2. The TCFUA pilot projects.....	17
3. A new model.....	18
4. Recommendations.....	18
Section Four: Three Case Studies	
Introduction	19
Case Study One.....	20
Case Study Two.....	24
Case Study Three	31
Section Five: Appendices.....	34

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

JNM	Job Network Member
TCF	Textile Clothing and Footwear
SAP	Structural Adjustment Package
SIP	Structural Investment Package
JSKA	Job Seeker Account
RIGS	Restructuring Initiatives Grant Scheme
DITR	Department of Industry Tourism and Resources
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
ICAS	Intensive Customised Assistance Support
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TCFUA	Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia

Overview

In 2003 the Federal Government initiated a Productivity Commission in relation to the future of the Textile Clothing and Footwear (TCF) industry. The eventual policy changes adopted by the Government involved tariff reductions, a \$740 million industry assistance package - the Strategic Investment Program (SIP), and \$50 million towards labour adjustment – the Structural Adjustment Package (SAP), to commence in July 2005.

In early 2005 the TCFUA perceived that logistical and quality issues would arise if SAP support was to be made available to retrenched workers through the Job Network system alone. Therefore the TCFUA raised concerns with the Department of Industry Tourism and Resources (DITR) and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

The TCFUA put forward a proposal suggesting the SAP provide retrenched TCF workers with resources for a more comprehensive program of support, including advocacy, training and support officers. The SAP officers would inform, advise, mentor, train and assist retrenched TCF workers, to ensure targeted employment and training outcomes. However, DEWR insisted that its priority of Labour Adjustment could be delivered through the Job Network system alone.

In Victoria, where half of Australia's TCF industry is located, the TCFUA has tracked over 700 retrenchments in the first year of the SAP operation. By dealing with over a dozen different Job Network offices across urban and regional Victoria, the TCFUA has collected a thorough body of data that presents a disturbing picture of an extremely ineffective system.

This report documents the findings of research conducted by the TCFUA between 1 July 2005 and 30 July 2006. The TCFUA conducted a random phone survey of TCF workers retrenched since the introduction of the SAP, and also documented two special post retrenchment support projects with TCF workers retrenched in the research period. The majority of workers subject to the research indicated they had received little or no support under the Government program.

The mechanisms and procedures employed by DEWR have completely failed to deliver the SAP objectives. Through two TCF Retrenched Workers projects based in Victoria, however, the TCFUA has developed a reliable method of support that has delivered results in increasing retrenched worker participation in the labour market.

The TCFUA research and hands-on experience has produced a series of recommendations that it proposes the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, Ian Macfarlane, should implement for the remaining nine years of the SAP operation.

Summary

Thousands of TCF retrenched workers are being denied access to the post-retrenchment support promised to them by the Federal Government in 2005.

Despite the promises of the \$50 million Structural Adjustment Package (SAP):

- retrenched TCF workers have no way of finding out about the TCF SAP unless the Union tells them before they leave the workplace;
- Job Network staff responsible for delivering the package have remained unaware of the package or the details of its implementation unless the Union has notified them;
- retrenched TCF workers who sign up for SAP assistance through the Job Networks, experience a disappointingly low level of support. They largely access no training or reimbursement funds, very little case management and no active assistance in looking for a job.

The TCFUA experience with retrenched TCF workers shows that:

- keeping workers together as a group before and after retrenchment for support and training results in the best outcomes, in terms of confidence, training uptake and long term employment outcomes;
- providing sustained group and individual counselling, training and employment support for a period of twelve months after retrenchment is essential to good employment outcomes;
- workers from the TCF industry often require long term skill development in English language, literacy and computer education as well as certificate based courses to maximise their chances of re entering the workforce at a competitive level.

The TCFUA recommends that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources introduce a new model of implementing the SAP.

This model, already piloted by the TCFUA, involves funding an independent, community based TCF SAP project team. This team would facilitate information flows, advocate for retrenched TCF workers and ensure that appropriate counselling, training and employment support is provided to all TCF workers immediately after their retrenchment and for a sustained period.

Section One: Background

1. The TCF Structural Adjustment Package (SAP)

The Federal Government's 2003 Productivity Commission reviewing the future of the TCF industry found that restructuring and retrenchment would have a serious impact on individual TCF workers and on whole communities reliant on the industry.

The Productivity Commission received submissions in relation to the long-term negative impact of retrenchment on TCF workers and concluded that "*in considering assistance for the TCF sector the Commission has given primacy to the need to minimise the potential for disruptive adjustment*".

The Federal Government's TCF Structural Investment Package (SIP) makes \$747 million available in grants to TCF employers for either capital investment or research and development activities including the acquisition or upgrading of equipment, buildings, structures or computers and software. The Government also decided to launch a 'labour adjustment' package to address the impact of restructuring, and announced that the \$50 million TCF Structural Adjustment Package (SAP) would commence in July 2005.

Whilst created primarily to minimise the impact of restructuring on individual workers and their communities, the SAP is available to three different kinds of applicants over a ten year period - communities, workers and firms.

The Department of Industry TCF SAP overview stated that the SAP would cover three elements in order to promote and support both industry consolidation and labour market adjustment.

The three elements are:

- **Support to retrenched workers:** The support available to retrenched TCF workers through the package administered by DEWR is a commitment to provide them with immediate access to Job Network's *Intensive Customised Assistance Support (ICAS)*. This support consists of a nominal \$1,350 amount available to retrenched TCF workers through the Job Networks' *Job Seeker Account (JSKA)*, to be spent on training or other support deemed necessary to assist them to find work. Like all Job Network clients receiving Customised Assistance, retrenched TCF workers are also entitled to basic employment advice and 'employment marketing' support through a Case Manager and specialist staff.
- **Support to communities:** The Regional Partnerships Program is administered by the Department of Transport and Regional Development and Restructuring. The projects must include partnerships between the TCF employers, community organisations, and retrenched TCF workers.

- **Firms:** Restructuring Initiatives Grants Scheme (RIGS) for employers is another **discretionary grants scheme**, approved directly through the Minister of Department of Industry Tourism and Resources, which is designed to assist companies to merge and restructure.

This report focuses primarily on the element of the SAP that addresses the needs of retrenched workers through Job Network support.

2. Specialised needs of TCF workers

Intensive, immediate and customised post-retrenchment support has proven to be critical in preparing retrenched TCF workers for re-entering the labour market.

Most workers in the industry have little experience in using the internet, or word processor packages and other electronic methods of communication, which are routine aspects of job seeking in this era. Few with very long term histories in the industry have experience with formal interviews, written skills tests, new technologies, registration with employment agencies or other contemporary aspects of employment. Many have survived very well with language and literacy skills limited to the particular work cultures and work environments where they have spent their working lives.

The majority of TCF workers have either English language needs or literacy and numeracy needs. Limited English language, literacy, numeracy, IT and job-seeking skills are a major barrier to finding new employment, as are physical ill-health, age and gender discrimination in the labour market, loss of self-confidence, loss of working community, isolation and depression.

Outworkers, who are significantly affected by the impact of industry restructuring, are at an even greater disadvantage than factory-based workers, as their loss of work opportunities goes largely unrecognised and their isolation in the labour market makes them extremely vulnerable.

3. Commitments made by DEWR in 2005

The TCFUA raised its concerns with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) regarding implementation of the TCF SAP in early 2005. In those discussions, the TCFUA put forward a comprehensive proposal outlining logistical and quality issues that were likely to arise if SAP support were made available to retrenched workers through the Job Network system alone.

The TCFUA proposed that the SAP provide retrenched TCF workers with resources for a more comprehensive program of support, including advocacy, training and designated support officers who would inform, advise, mentor, train and assist retrenched TCF workers through a process from the moment

of retrenchment for a period of twelve months to ensure targeted employment and training outcomes. The TCFUA argued that the Job Networks would not be able to provide the level and type of support required.

DEWR responded to some of the TCFUA concerns by arguing that labour adjustment is a government priority and that the following would take place through Job Networks:

- *identifying retrenched workers* - TCF companies with over 15 retrenched workers would automatically contact Centrelink, which would trigger a Centrelink and Job Network response immediately;
- *reaching retrenched outworkers and factory workers no longer on site* - Job Networks could learn from 'other parties' how to reach TCF workers;
- *support and advice* - The Job Network would provide immediate and qualified intensive counselling, training and employment support assistance, and make \$1,350 available to each retrenched worker for a range of supports;
- *language and literacy barriers* - The Job Network Intensive Assistance process would automatically involve an immediate language literacy and numeracy assessment and support;
- *reaching workers who come from a number of different communities* - Job Network members could pool resources and work together, as well as with other organisations;
- *ongoing mentoring, training and support in a casualised labour market* - clients would receive a full six months of ongoing support after placement.

However, during the first thirteen months of the TCF SAP's operation, the TCFUA has documented clear evidence showing that these commitments have not been met by the program.

4. Promotion of the SAP

On 30 June 2005, the Federal Government announced the introduction of the TCF Structural Adjustment Package (TCF SAP) on the DITR website. The promotional material from DEWR advertises the SAP package in the following ways:

"...The Australian Government's package for TCF workers will allow the Job Network member to spend money from a fund called the Job Seeker Account on anything that will help you find work. This can include things like:

- *wage subsidies to encourage another employer to employ you;*
- *training to increase your skills;*
- *purchase of equipment; or*
- *transport assistance to help you to attend job interviews.*

Extra money has been put into the Job Seeker Account from the Government's package specifically for you on registering with a Job Network member...."

On a second sheet from DEWR and the Job Network, it is explained that:

"Intensive Support Customised Assistance services will be tailored to your needs and circumstances. First, your Job Network member will assess your vocational and personal circumstances and work out what employment opportunities fit best with your capabilities. They will also work with you to identify any personal obstacles to finding employment. Next, your Job Network member will come up with a range of activities and services which will be included in a Job Search Plan for both you and your Job Network member to work from.

The sorts of things that might be included in a Job Search Plan include:

- *training in job search skills, including resume preparation, job applications, networking, interview and presentation skills;*
- *access to job search facilities including touch-screen kiosks (at Centrelink and Job Network members);*
- *career advice and counselling;*
- *vocational or other training;*
- *help with getting licences, certificates or other training to overcome identified obstacles; or*
- *work experience.*

Intensive Support Customised Assistance involves regular face to face contact between you and your Job Network member, and regular reviews of your Job Search Plan and activities.

Other assistance can also be provided through the Job Seeker Account. This could include wage subsidies, work place modifications, mentoring and training."

As demonstrated below, the promise of assisting retrenched TCF workers as outlined in the Federal Government's promotional material has not been fulfilled.

Section Two: Limitations of the current model

1. Introduction

In Victoria, where half of Australia's TCF industry is located, the TCFUA has tracked over 700 retrenchments between 1 July 2005 and 30 July 2006, and dealing with over a dozen different Job Network offices across urban and regional Victoria, has collected a thorough body of data that presents a disturbing picture of an extremely ineffective system.

Despite DEWR and DITR assurances in March 2005, the Job Network has been unable to provide the level of information, support, or quality services necessary for the majority of retrenched TCF workers to access re-skilling and stable ongoing work back in manufacturing or in other industries.

Since the introduction of the SAP, the TCFUA has been supporting retrenched factory workers from TCF companies all over Victoria to access post retrenchment support and training in relation to re-skilling for work. This role has not been funded by any Federal Government department, and has not been built into the costs of the present TCF SAP.

The TCFUA in Victoria has found that retrenched TCF workers seeking to access support and training through the TCF SAP rarely access any of the services and support from the Job Network system listed in the DEWR paperwork. Only in a few cases, and where there has been intensive intervention and ongoing advocacy on the part of the TCFUA, have retrenched TCF workers been able to access some of the support outlined in the DEWR paperwork over the past twelve months.

2. Four key shortfalls

The TCFUA documentation of Intensive Customised Assistance Support (ICAS) to retrenched TCF workers over the first twelve months of operation of the federal TCF SAP has revealed the Job Network System has grave limitations in relation to SAP in the following four areas:

- Dissemination of information to workers
- Clarification of eligibility criteria
- Provision of support for registered retrenched TCF workers
- Accountability of funds

(i) Dissemination of information to workers

Except in the case of a major retrenchment at Yakka Wodonga in June 2006, no outreach program has been made available from Job Network to ensure that retrenched TCF workers know about the TCF SAP before they leave the workplace. Centrelink and Job Network staff are

generally unaware of retrenchments in TCF companies until they receive notification from the TCFUA. The TCFUA has provided the only systematic information about SAP and other post-retrenchment support to retrenched TCF workers in Victoria before they leave the workplace.

After retrenchment, the TCF SAP information is not easily accessible to retrenched workers either. Retrenched workers are usually reluctant to approach Centrelink, Job Network or training providers independently. When they receive clear and accurate information, mentoring and guidance from TCFUA officers they are far more likely to do so early.

Many TCF retrenched workers are not eligible for Centrelink benefits and so do not ever enter the Centrelink system where they could be referred to the Job Networks. When they do approach these agencies independently, Centrelink and Job Network Staff rarely know about the TCF SAP package unless the TCFUA has told them.

Job Network staff do not inform retrenched TCF workers of the SAP package unless the TCFUA has provided individual Job Networks with advance warning of the retrenchment and the details of the SAP package. The TCFUA has been the main vehicle through which retrenched TCF workers and government-funded agencies have been made aware of the TCF SAP in Victoria.

(ii) Clarification of eligibility criteria

There are inequities in the ways in which retrenched TCF workers are able to qualify for SAP assistance. There have been several instances where Textile workers have been denied access to the SAP funding on grounds linked to the employer's previous application for SIP being refused by DITR.

In the case of AUNDE in Stawell, Victoria, for example, thirty three textile workers were denied access to the SAP. Previously the company's application for SIP was rejected by DITR on the grounds that AUNDE was classified as part of the automotive industry. The TCFUA contacted DEWR and argued that, separate from the company's SIP eligibility, the AUNDE workers do qualify for SAP, as they are making material car seat covers, and their principle occupation is sewing a textile product. As these workers are covered under a TCF industry award, the TCFUA argued that they should be eligible for SAP assistance.

Vulnerable TCF workers such as these should not be excluded from receiving post retrenchment support which is designed to offset the negative impact of retrenchment of TCF workers, particularly on rural towns. The SAP criteria needs to specify that all workers covered by a TCF Award are eligible for post retrenchment support.

(iii) Provision of support for registered retrenched TCF workers

Even equipped with clear information, retrenched TCF workers have usually not been able to access Customised Assistance when they individually approach their Centrelink or Job Network about it without support from the TCFUA. Even in cases where retrenched workers have independently taken the DEWR paperwork with them to the Job Network, they are almost always told by front desk staff and case managers they are not eligible for JNM support until they have been on benefits for three months or a year. This is because most job seekers only gain access to JNM Intensive Customised Assistance Support (ICAS) after twelve months on unemployment benefits. Although information given by JNM staff to retrenched TCF workers is often inaccurate, it can be almost impossible for retrenched workers to succeed in accessing SAP without intervention from an advocate.

It is especially difficult for retrenched workers from Non English Speaking Backgrounds. English language barriers lead to misunderstandings for retrenched TCF workers trying to access SAP, and it can be difficult for them to explain their backgrounds and their needs to JNM staff without interpreters. Translation services are rarely if ever made available through JNMs.

The TCFUA has found that keeping retrenched TCF workers together as a group before and after retrenchment for basic advice, guidance, training and support, usually results in a dramatic increase in numbers of retrenched workers undergoing re-skilling and subsequently re-entering the workforce in satisfying positions. This form of group support has been difficult to broker with Job Networks.

Retrenched TCF workers require an independent and available source of training funding, as well as career and course advice, in order to consider taking up relevant training opportunities in the first twelve months following retrenchment. This is not provided by JNM case managers, who arbitrarily restrict retrenched TCF workers' access to a range of training courses and other reimbursements available through the JSKA.

Although a system has been devised for Job Network staff to identify retrenched TCF workers as a special category eligible for ICAS, Job Network staff in Victoria have often told TCFUA staff that they are confused by the details of administering the program. For instance, most JNM 'clients' must be recipients of Centrelink benefits in order to access JNM support. As voluntary clients of the JNM system, however, retrenched TCF workers do not need to receive Centrelink payments to be eligible for ICAS support, which includes case

management and access to the Job Seeker Account. This creates great confusion about a range of administrative matters, and JNM staff interpret the broad rules relating to ICAS clients in widely varying ways in the absence of clear guidelines about how to treat TCF workers as a special group.

As a result, retrenched TCF workers are told an array of different and conflicting information by JNM staff about their access to the SAP. According to a recent phone survey of retrenched TCF workers, the following are just some of the inaccurate stories they have receive from JNM staff about SAP:

- they must sign up first with Centrelink before they are eligible;
- they are not eligible for SAP until three or twelve months after retrenchment;
- they are not eligible for more than \$100 for training;
- they have been reclassified in the Centrelink system and therefore cannot access ICAS support;
- they are not entitled to JSKA support at all;
- they have been cut off from JSKA access after 13 weeks in casual employment and cannot continue to receive SAP support from JNM after losing that short term position;
- they cannot do a training course funded by JNM until they can demonstrate to their Case Manager that the particular course will lead directly to their gaining employment with a particular employer;
- they cannot use JSKA account funds to do an accredited Red Card training course to enable them to work on a building site because the training provider is a Trade Union;
- they cannot access petrol reimbursement or travel assistance for job interviews, training travel, or travel costs incurred for jobs of less than 15 hours a week/for amounts more than \$25/ for longer than a one month period.

'Reverse marketing' is supposed to take place for 'job ready clients' in the JNM system. 'Reverse marketing' of retrenched TCF workers registered with a JNM would result in them being actively recommended by JNM staff to local employers looking for employees. Without intervention, however, this almost never happens. Reasons given can be as vague as 'they were not recommended as *Job Ready* by their Case Manager'.

The Wage Subsidy is theoretically available for retrenched TCF workers under SAP to offset the first few weeks of employment for the employer, and to encourage new employers to take on retrenched TCF workers. However, as Job Network staff explain, this is rarely possible to use as most jobs sourced by Job Networks, particularly in Manufacturing and Warehousing, come through Labour Hire companies, not direct employers. Other JNM staff have explained that

they do not promote the availability of the Wage Subsidy to employers as it 'turns employers off' when they are considering applicants.

For retrenched TCF workers who successfully sign up, the problems in accessing the SAP support listed above can be insurmountable without advocacy support.

(iv) Accountability of funds

Perhaps the most disturbing element of the current implementation of the Federal government TCF Structural Adjustment Package for retrenched workers is that there is no clear method for accounting for expenditure on the target group. Through the DEWR paperwork, retrenched TCF workers are told that funds from the \$50 million are set aside specifically for TCF retrenched workers:

'Extra money has been put into the Job Seeker Account from the Government's package specifically for you on registering with a Job Network member'.

However, over the past twelve months, JNM site managers have told the TCFUA that TCF 'clients' are not treated as a separate special needs group within Intensive Customised Assistance Support (ICAS). All JNM clients classified under ICAS are potentially subject to severe restrictions in relation to JKSA support for training and other expenses. The JNM site managers and staff are not generally aware of any 'additional funds' for TCF clients or any specific guidelines about how disadvantaged TCF clients on ICAS can easily access JSKA funds for training or other re-skilling needs.

At present, JNM staff and site managers generally take the view that JSKA-funded training, particularly for more expensive, multiple or longer term courses, is undesirable for TCF retrenched workers (along with all other clients) and indeed must be kept to a minimum.

TCFUA staff spoke to DEWR and DITR representatives throughout the year, to raise the issue that Victorian JNM clients from TCF were repeatedly being rejected by Job Network when they approached them for special support. TCFUA staff were told that the publicity and promotion through the Job Network had been thorough enough and consisted of two email circulars to Centrelink and Job Network staff. When frustrated Victorian TCF retrenched workers have called DEWR to complain that the Job Network system was not providing SAP support, they reported that DEWR complaints line staff were also unaware of the TCF SAP.

It remains very unclear how much of the \$50 million SAP is designated for retrenched TCF workers and how much has been spent on training and other reimbursement support across Australia in the first thirteen months. There appear to be no mechanisms for monitoring or

reporting on training and employment outcomes for TCF workers accessing SAP support through JNMs.

It is also unclear how DEWR claims reimbursement from DITR out of the \$50 million TCF SAP, and whether Job Networks can claim an amount for every registered TCF 'client', regardless of whether JSKA expenditure or targeted assistance was provided.

Whilst it has been reported that TCF employers in the 1 July 2005 – 30 July 2006 period have been able to successfully access commitments of millions of dollars through the RIGS scheme under SAP, retrenched workers have received negligible support through the program.

It is not clear how many retrenched TCF workers have accessed any SAP through JNMs across Australia. In Victoria our research strongly suggests that that only those retrenched TCF workers assisted by the TCFUA have succeeded in accessing any support. To our knowledge, no TCF outworkers in Victoria have independently accessed SAP support through Job Networks, regardless of their employment status.

As a result of the above four problem areas, very few retrenched TCF workers in Victoria have accessed any real training support or successful employment assistance through the JNM since the introduction of the package in July 05.

Section 3 – A way forward

1. Introduction

The TCF SAP has a further nine years of operation. It was primarily designed to offset the impact of restructuring on retrenched TCF workers. However, despite the proposals, submissions and phone conversations between the TCFUA and the government departments involved over the past three years, retrenched TCF workers have received almost no assistance through the current TCF SAP.

In the first financial year of the Package, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of TCF retrenched workers received no JNM assistance apart from that brokered and advocated for intensively by the TCFUA. Even in these cases, actual training and case management support for retrenched TCF workers through the JNM case management system has been very limited. JNM support has not been of a targeted or intensive nature over a six to twelve month period, has not focused on re-skilling retrenched workers and has not been internally evaluated.

2. The TCFUA pilot projects

Through two funded projects to assist groups of TCF Retrenched Workers in Victoria, the TCFUA has developed a reliable method of support that has proven results in increasing retrenched worker access to training and participation in the labour market.

TCFUA research documented in Section Three, reveal that successful post-retrenchment support can lead to many retrenched workers undertaking a range of certificates, licenses and other qualifications, which enable them to compete for jobs in manufacturing and other industries.

One group of 165 retrenched Textile workers from Feltex Carpets have been tracked by the TCFUA since 30 October 2005, and provided with intensive post retrenchment support and advice. In June 2006 the TCFUA also started supporting another retrenched group of 65 workers (from Yakka) in Albury/Wodonga. The main role of the TCFUA project officers in both of these projects is to ensure that the SAP information is made available to the workers and the JNM staff in the relevant regions, and to assist JNM staff to work with retrenched TCF workers to maximise the benefits of the SAP for them.

3. A new model

In response to the problems foreseen in the TCF SAP implementation, the TCFUA has implemented a model in Victoria where project workers carefully co-ordinate SAP information sessions, as well as follow up and support for TCF workers in the period before, during and after retrenchment. Since July 2005, the TCFUA has developed a strategy for working with retrenched factory workers prior to their departure from the site. Where funding has been made available by companies in two pilot cases, has also been able to run effective post retrenchment advocacy and support. This support has directly assisted workers to enter targeted private RTO and TAFE run training in certificates and essential skills, leading to re-employment in manufacturing and other industries.

Under this model, at the point of a TCF retrenchment taking place, TCFUA officers contact local JNM and Centrelink office staff to brief them on the TCF SAP. SAP presentations in companies are negotiated by the TCFUA with employers and retrenched workers prior to their last day at work. The TCFUA has found that, without this information prior to departure, workers remain unaware of the availability of the SAP through JNMs and do not ever find out about it.

Those Victorian workers who received sustained support after retrenchment fared far better in their training take up and in their redeployment opportunities than those who were left to independently navigate the Job Network system without intensive TCFUA support.

It is essential that effective labour adjustment support is provided for the thousands of Australian workers affected by changes in the TCF sector. The following recommendations, based on the TCFUA model piloted over 2005 and 2006, seek to redress the problems in the implementation of the TCF SAP to date.

4. Recommendations

A revised model of TCF SAP delivery should be implemented until 2015, and include the following elements:

1. Implementation of clear and accountable monitoring and public reporting systems by the Department of Industry Tourism and Resources including:

- regular public updates on expenditure of SAP funds on TCF workers
- Clear and accountable guidelines for retrenched TCF worker eligibility
- Appeal mechanism implemented for groups of TCF workers excluded from SAP

- Accessible and appropriate complaints procedures outside the DEWR system for TCF workers dissatisfied with the SAP implementation
- A formal evaluation process to assess the success of the TCF SAP for retrenched TCF workers in terms of reskilling and stable employment outcomes

2. Implementation of a new model of the TCF SAP should be carried out through the funding of TCF SAP Project officers based at the TCFUA or community based organisations. The independent TCF SAP project officers would facilitate the following:

- partnerships - collaborations and effective relationships between the union, community organisations, employers, Job Networks and RTOs. This includes provision of training and advice on SAP implementation from the SAP project officers to relevant parties;
- training - provision of direct, ongoing notification to the federal government of training needs and training funding requirements for retrenched TCF workers as needs arise. SAP funds should be allocated by the Department of Industry Tourism and Resources to state based RTOs, on submission of training requests from the Project officers. Approving SAP funded training for re skilling retrenched TCF workers should no longer be in the domain of Job Network staff;
- advice - independent provision of information, support, advice, counseling and targeted assistance for retrenched TCF workers, both factory based and outworkers, should be provided by independent TCF SAP Project officers outside the RTO and JNM systems as well as qualified, independent career and course counselors;
- job matching - the role of the Job Networks in the implementation of the TCF SAP should be solely to provide retrenched TCF workers with immediate, intensive and ongoing employment advice and opportunities for a twelve month period following retrenchment. The JNM performance in relation to TCF SAP should be recorded, monitored and funded separately from their work with other Intensive Assistance Job Seekers.

3. Worker eligibility for SAP should be framed by the work undertaken by employees, not solely the company eligibility for SIP. Guidelines for SAP should explicitly provide that eligible employees either come from a TCF SIP eligible company, or have undertaken work covered by the Textile, Clothing or Footwear Awards.

Section 4: Three Case Studies

Introduction

The following section is divided into three different case studies, which together tell a story of how retrenched TCF workers have accessed the Structural Adjustment Package (SAP) from 1 July 2005 until 30 July 2006. The first Case Study tells about the results of a phone survey of 110 retrenched TCF workers from all over Victoria. This survey was conducted by the TCFUA in August 2006 and focused on asking retrenched workers about their experiences accessing the SAP support through the Job Networks since July 2005. These workers received no special post retrenchment advice or support from the TCFUA. Most had received basic information about SAP and the role of the Job Networks from the TCFUA prior to their leaving the workplace.

The second case study tells the story of a large group of 165, mainly migrant, TCF workers, retrenched from Feltex Carpets in Braybrook, Melbourne, in October 2005. These workers received sustained advocacy support and advice from the TCFUA for twelve months following their retrenchment in a project funded by Feltex. Six months after the support project started, the TCFUA gathered statistics in relation to training and employment outcomes for these retrenched workers. This case study documents workers' experiences in accessing SAP assistance as well as other forms of training funding after their retrenchment, through TCFUA support.

The third case study is about a group of 65, mainly Anglo-Australian, TCF workers retrenched in June 2006 from Yakka in Wodonga. These workers were provided with intensive support from the TCFUA following their retrenchment, through a support and advocacy program funded by Yakka for a period of six months. Six weeks after the TCFUA support started, information about training and employment opportunities, as well as experiences accessing SAP through Job Networks, were collected through a series of TCFUA interviews with the Yakka workers.

Together, these case studies indicate clearly, that without TCFUA pre-retrenchment information, workers would not know they could receive SAP support through a Job Network. They also show that, without intensive support after retrenchment, TCF workers registered at Job Networks have not successfully accessed job interviews and customised career advice, or funded training or job related reimbursements as promised in the SAP paperwork.

Case Study One: Random phone survey of 110 retrenched TCF workers

A phone survey was conducted in July 2006 with 110 retrenched workers from twelve Melbourne and rural Melbourne based companies. This sample group of 110 workers represented twenty four percent of the total group of retrenched workers not receiving any ongoing TCFUA assistance following retrenchment.

Ninety percent of the respondents were over the age of forty, and sixty four percent were female. Nearly half were from the Northern and Western suburbs of Melbourne. Thirty one percent were from a Vietnamese speaking background and twenty seven percent were from an English speaking background. The rest were from a variety of non English speaking backgrounds (*Appendices F and G*).

Experiences of retrenched TCF workers in accessing the TCF SAP through JNMs

Of the 110 retrenched workers interviewed by phone in July 2006, only twenty seven (twenty four percent) were receiving Centrelink payments.

Ninety nine said they were aware of the TCF Structural Adjustment Package. Of those who stated they were aware of the package, eighty five had only heard about it directly from the TCFUA and the remaining thirteen heard through TCFUA organised talks from Centrelink and JNM staff.

Fifty percent of respondents (fifty five retrenched TCF workers) said they had joined a Job Network and forty four said they had not (*Appendix H*). Of those who had joined, forty percent did not receive any services or support at all. Of those who did receive some support:

- no respondents received assistance through reimbursement of travel costs or employer wage subsidies;
- only two said they were helped to find a job;
- a further two said they were sent to an interview;
- seven were sent to some form of training, although the type of training was not specified;
- twenty five (less than half of those registered with a JNM) were given resumes but most complained that the quality of the resumes were very poor;
- only one was assisted through the help of an interpreter.

Thirty five respondents said Job Network was 'not useful at all' (twenty three) or only minimally useful (twelve). Sixteen respondents cited the following specific problems with Job Network services:

"I was given information about two jobs but they were too far away. I have no driver's licence and was not offered any help to get one."

"I was sent to a job interview which was too far away for too little money – the wage would hardly cover the costs of the petrol."

"The jobs recommended were too far away and I had no licence – no offer of lessons was given."

"They tried to push me straight away to take any casual job – I wanted to study a full time course first but was told my English not good enough."

"I was told at first that I could only get up to \$100 worth of training – I had to really push to get more."

"I felt they couldn't help me because my English not good enough."

"The network was hopeless I was better off on my own."

"The network was useless it did nothing to help me."

"I was told I could only use facilities then after 1 year I could receive individual help."

"I was told I could only get assistance after three months."

"I only got a job seeker number, that's all."

"I had difficulties with English... I got no help."

"I was told that there was no assistance with free training even though I had the paperwork."

"I was told that I had to pay for my own Security Licence – it was \$350 - as they said they had to save my allocated money to pay for my first 2 weeks wages if I got a job."

"I did not help with any training and was left to look for jobs by myself."

"I was just registered and told to use facilities."

Case Management Support

Meetings with Case managers were cited as happening rarely. Of the fifty five who registered with JNMs, only eleven had met with their case managers fortnightly. Thirty one had only occasionally met their case manager. Several reported being registered for two to five months without having had their first interview yet.

Case management is the main basic service that Job Network can provide to retrenched TCF workers. It is one of the most important elements in linking a vulnerable newly retrenched worker back into the labour market. Retrenched TCF workers looking for work often leave the industry eager, experienced and willing to take work.

The lack of case management support provided to retrenched TCF workers who were confident enough to register themselves for the advertised SAP support, demonstrates that career and course counselling, job seeker support and reverse marketing to employers simply does not take place at all for retrenched TCF workers through the JNM system where there is no external advocate, such as in the case of Feltex and Yakka.

Experiences in the Labour Market

Retrenched TCF workers who do return to the workforce with no training are often re-absorbed back into the manufacturing sector in insecure casual jobs. They enter a cycle of job insecurity and become less and less likely to undertake the short and long term training and re-skilling required to enter more stable work. It is critical this opportunity for training be encouraged and offered early after retrenchment to provide retrenched TCF workers with qualifications and skills which will enable them to apply for a range of jobs. The results of the phone survey indicate that retrenched TCF workers receive little or no support through SAP in accessing training or employment opportunities. This lack of training and support has a hugely negative impact on their subsequent work opportunities and conditions.

Of the 110 retrenched workers interviewed, eighty two said they had looked for work since they were retrenched. Of these, thirty nine were male and forty three were female. Of the twenty five who said they had not looked for work, nineteen were female. Women cited the need for rest, family demands, health, study and English language problems as reasons for not looking for work. Men cited small business and study reasons.

Most of the eighty two interviewees looking for work are looking in the shrinking manufacturing sector. Despite their many years of experience in the sector, only forty eight said they had had one or more job interviews. Thirty four others said they had not even had an interview. Language problems and perceived 'lack of experience' were cited as problems they experienced when in interviews. Most of those looking for work cited Factory work or Warehousing as their preferred employment (sixty two respondents). Other areas cited as possibilities were human services (eight), transport (seven), cleaning (five), semi professional (eight), trades (three), retail (four) and outdoor labouring (three). Eighteen respondents commented that they would take anything.

The respondents to the phone survey were overall highly motivated job seekers. All retrenched TCF workers seeking work were doing so through a range of methods, not just Job Networks. Forty one respondents said they had also looked through the internet, twenty six had looked through friends

and family, twenty used labour hire/agencies, and fifty two looked through the paper. Seventy one percent were primarily looking for full-time work. Seventy four percent of those looking for work were from a Non English Speaking Background.

Fifty one retrenched workers said they had found some work since being retrenched, although proportionally those who had English as their first language were better off. Fifty three percent of all English Speaking workers interviewed (sixteen respondents) had found work, whereas only forty four percent of all Non-English Speaking workers interviewed (thirty five respondents) had.

Most of the fifty one respondents who had found work since retrenchment had found casual and unstable jobs. The survey showed that:

- only five people had found secure positions;
- thirty six were not secure that their positions were ongoing;
- four were working only in an on call capacity;
- six had worked from a day or two to three months only;

Of the fifty one respondents who had found some work, more than half (twenty nine) had only a verbal agreement. Of the twenty two who received something in writing, two were issued with a letter only, seven had a casual contract with no conditions outlined and three had probationary contracts. Of the ten who did have contracts with conditions, four had a casual individual contract, five had a workplace agreement, and one was covered by an enterprise agreement.

Despite working on a casual basis, pay rates were low, especially for female respondents. Seventy eight percent (forty respondents) of all those with casual jobs were earning less than \$19 per hour and twenty four percent were on less than \$15 per hour. Sixty two percent of those on less than \$19 per hour were women.

Of those who were working, sixty seven percent (thirty four respondents) were in manufacturing of some kind, or Warehousing (thirteen respondents). The rest were doing cleaning, personal care, retail (ten respondents), or were working in transport, labouring or trade work. Two were in semi professional work.

Case Study Two: TCFUA post retrenchment support to Feltex workers

At the end of May 2006, the TCFUA gathered statistics from a group of 165 workers who were retrenched from Feltex in October 2005. Of these, seventy six were retiring, unable to look for work due to injuries or uncontactable. The remaining eighty nine retrenched workers received systematic post retrenchment support to find retraining and re employment. Every effort was made by the TCFUA to develop a relationship and work collaboratively with a key Job Network Member (JNM) involved in delivering the SAP package to this group retrenched TCF workers.

The TCFUA alerted local JNMs to the existence of the TCF SAP in October 2005 and worked intensively with JNM staff and management as well as the workers themselves to untangle problems arising in registration with Centrelink and JNMs. The project officers worked on a large number of issues, including developing quality resumes that reflected the actual skills experience and capacities of the retrenched workers. These issues included negotiating better client access to regular JNM case management, providing individual and group based relevant course and career guidance, advocating JNM staff to approve appropriate training and allocate expenditure of funds from the Job Seeker Accounts (JKSAs) for other purposes such as work related clothing and transport. The project officers intervened with JNM staff to ensure they kept clients on the system after they had worked in casual positions for twelve weeks, provided support throughout this period and directly marketed job ready clients to local employers looking for workers.

During the first six months of this project, many of the alarming structural problems and inefficiencies in the system of administering the TCF SAP were documented. Additionally, many anecdotes have been documented (*Appendix A*), which demonstrate that the disadvantages suffered by retrenched older TCF workers cannot be appropriately addressed through the JNM system. The rules of JNM as interpreted by many case managers and DEWR regional managers narrowly define JNM client eligibility to practical support through Job Seeker Accounts (JKSAs), and these rules are applied to TCF clients regardless of their SAP eligibility and their special needs in getting and maintaining ongoing employment.

Case managers and their senior management discourage job seekers from enrolling in any training that is not specifically linked to an employment outcome. They certainly do not consider expending on an expensive course or series of courses if these are pre vocational in nature. This is particularly disadvantageous to older women from a Non English Speaking Background (NESB), who are most likely to be receiving the lowest paid positions in the economy, in unsatisfactory and chronically short term manufacturing jobs. They are the ones most likely to be missing out on training and re skilling opportunities, due to low literacy, computer skills and familiarity with the labour market. Their skill gaps, which could be addressed through focussed

and intensive mentoring, group support, guidance, course advice and career planning, lead to them dropping out of the workforce despite their strong need for and desire to work.

The following are examples of problems in assisting retrenched TCF workers to get support:

Training and recruitment opportunities

May 2006 – a recruitment and training firm in the Western suburbs promised a group of fifteen retrenched Feltex workers (all women) at a seminar organised by the TCFUA, that their skills were valuable and they could get jobs in retail and hospitality. The women had been unemployed since October 2005 and were looking for work. The organisation later did not answer TCFUA or retrenched worker calls requesting training. The JNM did not assist them or offer to fund them to enter this training. Despite this group's strong interest in and repeated requests for assistance from the JNM to help them get training and recruitment opportunities through this firm or other training opportunities, none were offered a funded training course.

May 2006 - a company that does recruitment and training for Security companies, came to speak to a group of fifteen retrenched TCF Feltex workers at a seminar organised by the TCFUA, to talk about opportunities for middle aged NESB women in the Security industry. There were repeated efforts by TCFUA staff to get interested women into the training, interviews or meetings with Agency staff for two months after the presentation. Yet retrenched TCF workers were unable to access the training or the recruitment processes they heard about. The JNM did nothing to assist people to enter this training. Eventually (in July 2006), two of the women applied for training funds through the Feltex post retrenchment fund set aside for retrenched workers and paid through this for Security courses run by a private RTO. The courses cost approximately \$1000 each.

TCF Job Seeker access to Job search and Basic Computer Training

The Departmental paperwork on the SAP benefits through JNM lists access to immediate basic Job Search training. Efforts by the Feltex retrenched workers to get access to both Job Search training and basic computer training were largely unsuccessful. Reasons given by JNM staff for this were that retrenched TCF workers enter the JNM system under 'Customised Assistance' and are therefore technically ineligible for the basic Job Search training. After seven months on the system fewer than fifteen retrenched TCF clients had been offered basic Jobsearch or Computer training through the JNM and this was only after repeated requests from the TCFUA advocacy officer to JNM case managers and site managers. The computer courses that were run were run through the JNM's private RTO and charged at full price through the JSKA. The funds spent on this one training represented the most significant JSKA expenditure for retrenched Feltex women workers.

Ultimately, after many discussions about how the desired and necessary computer training could be run, it was agreed that both logistics and capacity within the JNMs made it impossible for targeted training to be run for the retrenched Feltex workers as a single group. In response, the TCFUA RTO then ran a twenty hour module for twenty retrenched Feltex workers, taken from the Certificate in General Education for Adults, and focussing on employment skills, job seeking and understanding the new labour market and work environment. This course ran from March to May 06 and was funded through the Feltex post retrenchment retraining fund made available by the company. As a follow on from this, the TCFUA then organised for fifteen women to sign up to do a fifty hour course to attain Certificate 1 in Computers and Vocation Skills with Victoria University (started June 06), also funded by Feltex. The only way to achieve this was to bypass the JNM system.

(There has only been one instance in Victoria in which retrenched TCF workers were given job search and basic computer training by a JNM immediately after registration, and as a group. This was done by a JNM in Epping with retrenched workers from Webco, in early 2006. This training was organised between TCFUA and a proactive senior staff member at the JNM.)

Employer Wage Subsidies

Employer wage subsidies were not provided by the JNM dealing with Feltex clients because, according to staff, most recruitment takes place through Labour Hire companies. JNM staff claimed that they cannot effectively offer the subsidy to a Labour Hire company.

(In Wodonga, a retrenched TCF client had been assisted by a proactive staff member at one of the local JNMs to apply for work two weeks after retrenchment with the help of a wage subsidy to a local employer in July 2006. This was the first case the TCFUA had heard of where the subsidy had been offered.)

English language and other training

Although several TCF SAP clients from Feltex were told by their JNM case managers that their English was not good enough to apply for particular jobs or do the relevant training, they were not referred to available local English classes. Staff at most of the JNMs are generally unaware of the availability of the range of local English classes and indeed any other specialist courses to assist in building on basic English language and employability skills. Training options were generally not raised or discussed with Feltex clients and in a number of cases, requests for training were refused on the grounds that the Case Manager did not feel the client would benefit from the training. One particular client repeatedly requested training in fridge mechanics, as he already had skills and experience but needed a certificate. He was denied on the basis that the case manager told him he would probably not get a job in the industry because of his English. He was not, however, referred to an English class, nor was he referred to jobs he was interested in, but which would require some training. These judgements were often subjective, and

were not based on the longer term re skilling objectives of the client, but rather the narrower objectives of the JNM to minimise spending in relation to job placement .

Use of translation services

Translators were almost never used to assist JNM's Feltex clients to understand processes or express their needs. Cross cultural skills of staff were lacking in many instances.

Employment Outcomes after 6 months of post retrenchment support

Six months after retrenchment, at the end of May 2006, a phone survey was done of the eighty nine retrenched Feltex workers who were available and looking for work between November 2005 and May 2006. Despite difficulties accessing support from the SAP, the employment results were much higher than those for other retrenched TCF workers not receiving post retrenchment support from the TCFUA. Ten were studying full time, fifteen were still totally unemployed and looking for work, and sixty four were in some form of (mainly casual) employment. Of the sixty four working, however, only twenty were women. Of the fifteen still unsuccessful in finding work, twelve were women. These were all receiving intensive training and support through the TCF RTO and the TCFUA project officers. Male retrenched Feltex workers often utilised certificates such as truck and forklift, taxi, and busdriver licenses to increase their work opportunities in an array of jobs. For women, stable job opportunities outside of manufacturing and cleaning were often less apparent, and training pathways to increase their options required several steps (*see Appendix B*).

Problems administering the TCF SAP for Feltex retrenched workers through the JNM

At the end of May 2006, fifty four Feltex clients were still registered on the books of one particular JNM in the West. Of these, only fifteen were receiving any post placement support in terms of occasional meetings and phone calls from Case Managers. In the case of this JNM, the TCFUA established ways of working aimed at improving client access to good resumes, proactive marketing, relevant training and expenditure on training and other items that would assist in their job search. At each point the following problems arose:

- poor quality resumes resulting from insufficient time spent with clients, lack of familiarity with employer expectations and the nature of manufacturing work and the low levels of skill and experience of JNM staff;
- lack of longer term or even short term basic training due to lack of JNM staff acknowledgement that serious re-training is an important interim measure to finding ongoing employment;

- 'reverse marketing' of TCF JNM clients to local employers looking for staff almost never happened and only happened for clients who already had excellent English and presentation skills;
- career and course counselling did not take place;
- wage subsidies are not provided due to the role of labour hire companies as employment brokers of most of the JNM available jobs;
- follow up and support of workers during their first six months of employment was patchy;
- clients who asked for expenditure on training or travel reimbursements were often treated as 'problem' clients who were too demanding

At a meeting of retrenched Feltex workers held in July 2006 the TCFUA met with approximately half of the group still looking for work or working casually eight months later (forty four people) and gathered statistics about their employment situation.

Whilst sixty percent of men were happy with their current job and their hours, only twenty four percent of women were. Since leaving Feltex, seventy percent of the men had worked for more than fourteen weeks whereas only twenty five percent of the women had. Sixty two percent of men were earning more than \$21 per hour whereas only four percent of women were. Women were clearly faring less well than men in the labour market.

Very low expenditure from Job Seeker Accounts for Feltex workers

In June 2006, the TCFUA calculated expenditure from JNM on Job Seeker support to fifty four JNM registered retrenched Feltex workers over a six month period. It was estimated that a total of \$13,535 (average of \$250 per head) was spent from JSKAs. Fifty percent of those registered, however, had received no support in terms of expenditure from the Job Seeker Account. Expenditure was limited to twenty out of the fifty four registered (fifteen women and five men). Of these, the five men averaged a far greater per capita expenditure (\$1223) than the fifteen women (\$495). As mentioned above, the expenditure that did occur for the women was largely a result of TCFUA advocacy for the JNM to set up and run basic computer and job search skills training through their private RTO.

This astoundingly low amount was expended from the Job Seeker Account despite constant advocacy and encouragement from the TCFUA for workers to request support and for Case Workers to make it known that the support was available. At most of the JNMs contacted by the TCFUA in the past year, there is a culture of keeping clients unaware of or unclear about JSKA financial support, and of making it almost impossible for them to claim any assistance in training or job seeking through it. Although the DEWR paperwork mentions a figure of \$1,350 JSKA support, we have been told by almost all the JNM staff we have spoken to that this figure is nominal only,

and that they are under great pressure not to advertise its availability or spend very much of it.

Feltex subsidised post retrenchment training

Luckily for the retrenched Feltex workers, there were other sources of post retrenchment training support aside from the SAP. By July 2006, Feltex itself had spent nearly \$40,000 on post retrenchment training for the retrenched group. This process was administered by a TCFUA project officer. \$17,000 of this total amount was spent on two courses set up, designed and run especially to assist the most disadvantaged group of women to develop general skills and knowledge and to develop sound basic internet and computer skills through two separate accredited courses.

In the first three months after retrenchment, Feltex funded twenty seven different courses for men and three courses for women. In the first three months after retrenchment, the men took immediate advantage of the opportunity to get expensive and useful licences and certificates (mainly in transport and earth removal). The women were not so clear on the relevant training options, and also felt their poor English language and basic skills would eliminate them from entering certificates such as the Certificate 111 in Aged Care or PSA and PCA. In the first six months after retrenchment, the women participated more in group courses and individual counselling organised by the TCFUA. After that they began to be more inclined to enrol in individual courses.

Other State government funding sources for training

A further \$15,000 was spent on the same group of workers in accessing training organised through Victoria University and funded by Victorian Department of Education (OTTE) on Skill Up for post retrenchment re training of manufacturing workers.

Altogether, through a combination of JNM, OTTE and Feltex training funds, approximately fifty Feltex workers have already spent close to \$70 000 between them in training in the first six months after retrenchment in their efforts to develop new skills to assist them to find ongoing work in other industries. Re-skilling is a long and slow process which, for many, will continue for another six months. This is particularly the case for the women, whose training options are less obvious and who face additional disadvantages in the labour market. The JNM system has covered only a tiny portion of the actual cost of the training needs of these retrenched TCF workers, despite the advertised availability of \$1,350 per head in the JSKAs under the Structural Adjustment Package.

\$1,500- \$3,000 per head for specially targeted, tailored, and professionally run individual and group training over a twelve month period is shown in this case study to make a significant difference to employment options and outcomes for retrenched TCF workers, especially the women. SAP funded training would be more effectively spent if it was channelled directly through

accredited training providers, and kept separate from the funding available through JSKA and the JNMs.

Case Study Three: TCFUA post retrenchment support to Yakka workers

In June 2006, sixty five Yakka workers were retrenched in Wodonga. They were long term employees who received a retrenchment package as well as a commitment from Yakka to assist in their retraining efforts after retrenchment for a period of twelve months. A TCFUA project officer was employed through Yakka project funds and was able to immediately establish relationships with staff from the local TAFE, Centrelink and Job Network offices in the area.

A combination of factors have so far worked to assist this group of workers to immediately take up post retrenchment training and find employment options.

TCFUA intervention

Firstly, the TCFUA was positioned at the moment of retrenchment to network with all the relevant local agencies, to ensure a good retrenchment package and to successfully argue that Yakka provide post retrenchment support to those retrenched workers. This included six months follow up from a TCFUA officer and also up to \$1,000 per head allocated from Yakka, to be spent on training and training related expenses for all the retrenched workers.

Support from Yakka

Secondly, the retrenchment received a lot of publicity, and the TCFUA held several pre retrenchment meetings with the workers, Centrelink, TAFE and Job Network to ensure that all the support available was made clear to workers before they left. Yakka HR actively supported this process.

Language and cultural issues

Thirdly, the retrenched workers are predominantly from an English speaking background. They immediately saw the benefits of retraining and English was not a barrier to their re entry (although literacy for some of them was a concern).

Staff at Wodonga TAFE

Staff at Wodonga TAFE have been committed to expending the maximum possible of the OTTE Skill Up funding on training (Victorian state funded retraining funds of up to \$800 per head), providing course and career counselling, covering costs of books and other fees where possible, encouraging workers into multiple courses and combinations of short and longer courses to maximise available profile funding for longer courses. The key TAFE staff member responsible for Skill Up is also proactive in setting up special packages of training for the workers immediately following retrenchment – courses currently being undergone include Warehousing, Forklift and OHS Certificates and Computer courses specifically tailored for

the Yakka workers. Workers who elected to do long term, more expensive courses such as Commercial Cookery 111 had over \$1,500 of training costs covered immediately through a combination of Yakka and Skill Up funds.

Staff at JNM

Experienced and proactive staff members in some of the Job Networks involved, worked closely with the Yakka workers to do high quality resumes and have discussed with TCFUA project staff the possibility that JSKA funds be used to potentially complement other training funds available. In a couple of cases, JSKA funding has already been made available for training, transport, uniforms and work subsidies. The TCFUA support officer has had preliminary discussions with JNM staff about the structural limitations involved in JNM staff accessing JSKA funds for the range of training and other support needs of the Yakka retrenched workers.

(One example of such problems is the case of X. X signed up with a JNM in June and was happy with the resume and support she was receiving through the case manager. When she became eligible for Centrelink benefits several weeks later, the NSW Centrelink staff insisted that she was not on the system and send her to another JNM. The staff were not aware of the SAP and said they did not know anything about it despite the fact that X produced the DEWR paperwork for them as evidence. Staff at the new JNM were also unaware of the SAP, and insisted that all they could do for her was a new resume. They would not accept her existing resume and did another very poor quality resume for her. She now has two Job Seeker ID numbers and is not happy with the dismissive response she has had from the JNM she was forced to join. The original JNM is now seeking to resolve the problem in consultation with the Centrelink staff, the TCFUA officer and the retrenched Yakka worker.)

Feedback from Yakka Phone Survey in July 2006

"I put in a lot of resumes and heard nothing back. The resume was done by the JNMs. The JNM staff are not doing anything to help me find work. I've never had a call from my case Manager, Y. I did aptitude tests for positions about 5 weeks ago but they said they were inundated and would notify me later...."

This Yakka worker was retrenched in a prior retrenchment which took place in February 2006, prior to the setting up of the TCFUA post retrenchment support project. She has not worked in the five months since her retrenchment. She has received no special assistance or follow up support since leaving Yakka in February.

About half of the Yakka workers receiving TCFUA support were contacted in July 2006, after six weeks of support meetings and intensive advocacy from the TCFUA. Of thirty two female retrenched Yakka workers interviewed in

July 2006, one month after their retrenchment on 30 June, six were not looking for work for the following reasons:

<i>Retired</i>	2
<i>Holidays but will study and look for work later</i>	2
<i>Family responsibilities and will study later</i>	2

Twelve (thirty seven percent) were already studying full time with a view to moving straight into work of a more stable nature after they completed training, often in a different field. Most of these were also signed up with a Job Network, and sending their resumes around.

Of the remaining fourteen (forty four percent) who were mainly looking for work, most were studying and working casually or part time and all were signed up with a Job Network. Others hope to get around to study after their work situation settles. Most are taking any casual work they can find and combining it with part time study (*Appendix C*)

All but three of the thirty two interviewed were either doing training or intending to do training in the near future. These courses, some short, and some longer, were all related to the sort of work they hoped to get into (*Appendix D*)

Section 5: Appendices

Appendix A: *Case Study Two-Anecdotes about retrenched Feltex workers trying to access SAP support through Job Network Member (JNM)*

Barriers to access to the Job Seeker Account (JSKA)

1. TCFUA Project workers have been told by JNM staff that clients cannot have Red Card course costs covered out of the JNM JSKA because it is a Union run training course. The CFMEU runs a Red Card course through its Registered Training Organisation, for people wanting to work on a construction site.
2. TCF Job Seekers registered at JNMs have been told they cannot receive petrol reimbursement for travel to and from training or work trials.
3. TCF Job seekers have been told by JNM staff they cannot receive reimbursements for travel to and from work unless they have more than fifteen hours a week work.
5. TCFUA staff were told by JNM marketing staff that the Employer Wage Subsidy can almost never be offered to clients because most of the jobs people get are through Labour Hire companies and they will not pass on the subsidy information to the employer as it is against their interests.
6. TCFUA project staff were told by JNM staff that none of the Feltex clients were not given basic Job Search courses which are available for new clients because they had been fast tracked to Customised Assistance and had therefore 'bypassed' this free training phase. After intervention from the project team a group of about 20 signed up to do Job Search and computer training as a group but efforts to co ordinate times and training places were repeatedly mismanaged. As Feltex Clients were registered at four or five sites belonging to the one JNM, the TCFUA project staff were told they had to be broken into tiny groups for the training rather than kept as one coherent group. Confusion surrounding this resulted in very few of them doing the training, and those who did, started it after more than five months of unemployment. The JNM Registered Training Organisation ran the computer training course for a couple of clients at each of the sites and it was funded out of the client's JSKA funds.
7. One Feltex Job Seeker found her own employment after a month or so and then was laid off after twelve weeks casual work. During that time she never heard once from her JNM case manager. When she went back to the JNM for some support through the JSKA to do some training, she was told that, as she had been in thirteen weeks continuous employment, she was no longer entitled to access her JSKA. She was only entitled to access 'support' from a case manager. This ran counter to what we were told about the twenty six weeks of continued client support through Customised assistance and the JSKA. Another TCF retrenched worker, using a different JNM, was told that

she could definitely access the account until she was employed for the full 26 weeks.

Poor record keeping

8. Although seventy three retrenched Feltex workers signed up with the JNM, information is only available on half of that number. Files become 'inactive' and staff cannot find names or information about clients on the system. Centrelink can reclassify people on the Customised Assistance system even if these people are not receiving any Centrelink benefits.
9. TCFUA project staff have been told by JNM site managers that there is no way for JNMs to track JSKA expenditure against TCF retrenched workers and this data is impossible to consistently collate. There does not appear to be any specific accountability requirement from DEWR for JNMs to track expenditure from the \$50 million TCF SAP funds.
10. There is poor transfer of information about the TCF SAP program between staff within the one Job Network and most are not able to deal with the different rules that apply for a Customised Assistance client who is not receiving a Centrelink payment. A client not receiving a Centrelink payment, for example, is not under an obligation to go for a certain number of jobs per week in order to justify expenditure against the JKSA account.

Quality of support

11. Workers have been given resumes with poor spelling, inaccurate information, and simplistic and superficial descriptions of skills and experience. Workers have been told by potential employers that their resumes done by JNM staff were not good enough.
12. Case managers are often inexperienced and unable to advise clients on local or specialist courses. One retrenched TCF worker we know of was repeatedly refused training as a fridge mechanic by his JNM case manager, and was then told he would never be employed as a fridge mechanic because of his English problems. The man did not have an English language assessment recommended by his Case Manager nor was he referred to any English language training. He had contacts in his ethnic community where he was able to get work as a fridge mechanic but just needed a license, available through a short course. Similarly he wanted to apply for bus driver jobs, and had the licence but not the driving experience. The JNM was not able to assist him to build up his driving hours in order to find work. He was still unemployed six months after retrenchment despite his multiple skills and constant advocacy to the JNM from the TCFUA. He eventually got himself into casual, poorly paid very hard labouring work which he could not sustain due to his age.

13. JNM Case Managers often do not know how to offer career advice or career planing advice. There are often wrong assumptions made about retrenched manufacturing workers that the best redeployment available for them is back in the manufacturing sector. Our experience does not bear this up. There is little data available in Job Networks about labour market statistics or certificates required in different local industries. This is a large gap for those ostensibly advising the unemployed job seekers.
14. Career advice and good resumes are expensive to buy in if the Job Network staff do not have specialist knowledge or understanding. JSKAs do not cover this expense and so people who are not happy with their JNM resumes must personally fund better quality, professionally produced resumes.
15. Reverse marketing is supposed to be one of the services offered by Job Network staff to Customised Assistance Clients. In reality it often does not happen. It requires the Case Manager to recommend that a particular client is likely to get picked up immediately. In the case of Feltex, dozens of work ready, skilled and competent people were left for months with no active intervention from the reverse marketing staff until TCFUA project staff insisted the clients be marketed. Jobs were quickly found for some of the Feltex clients as soon as they were reverse marketed.

Appendix B: *Case Study Two- Types of jobs done by ex- Feltex workers six months after retrenchment*

Industries	Men	Women
Metals	7	-
Hospital	1	1
Trucking	4	-
Home Care	-	1
TCF	8	1
Hospitality	1	1
Storeman	2	-
Machine Op/manufacturing	2	5
Taxi/bus	5	-
Security	1	-
Automotive	3	1
Retail		1
Cleaning	2	4
Business	2	-
Maintenance	3	-
Australia Post	1	-
Food	2	2
Packing		3
SUB TOTAL (WORKING)	44	20
Looking for work	15	
Studying	10	
Injuries affecting ability to work	23	
Retired	23	
Uncontactable	30	
TOTAL RETRENCHED	165	

Appendix C: Case Study Three - Comments from Yakka retrenched workers in Wodonga about their SAP support through Job Networks (JNMs)

Those who landed ongoing stable jobs straight away had them lined up through friends and family before they left Yakka. Their training needs for getting a more secure job came second to their immediate work needs:

"I'm working in X - night shift - permanent part time - sorting at moment. I'm hoping after three month trial to negotiate with the employer about doing training. I've got a minimum of 32 hrs per week 12- 7pm Sunday to Thursday. I had the job lined up before I left Yakka- responded to an ad in local paper. I might do Aged Care or Hospitality or Admin later."

"I'm working at X as a hog farmer - the job lined was up for me through my brother whilst I was still at Yakka. It's casual leading into permanent I think, but there is no contract or any paperwork to sign at all.... I want to take up computers but I start work at 6 am and get home 4 30 pm. It's hard to fit it in."

Others are looking for work, and not studying because they fear it will clash with their job seeking activities, or their literacy skills are barriers to course entry:

"I'm registered with the Job Network and have applied for a few jobs cleaning and packing. I'm thinking of doing a computer course, but I'm unsure about starting training as it might get in the way of finding a job."

"I just did a First Aid Certificate – it was four days long- at the Education Centre but I failed the test due to my reading and writing. I'll try again through TAFE this time. I'd wanted to get a job with Home Care Agency but needed the First Aid Certificate first so I rushed myself."

Repeatedly the same individual JNM Case Manger's name came up as doing a good job to help those who were looking for work.

"I applied for a few jobs. Filled in aptitude test for Company X. I picked up an application for X Nursery. J from Job Network offered them the work subsidy."

"I haven't found work. Z from the Job Network rang yesterday to offer me a job interview- it's 15 hrs a week. I am also doing computer course at TAFE."

"I want a part-time job. I want to get a driver's licence through Wodonga TAFE. I work with Z....at the JNM and she has put me in for a job. I'm enrolled in the Warehousing course full time."

"I've done three aptitude tests and a test at X. I'm about to have a medical. I'm looking for factory work. I'd like to study Accounting and Business off

campus. Z... at the JNM is a very good case manager- she did me a resume and cover letter."

Others were not getting the appropriate job seeker support from the Job Network

"I've signed up with the Job Network and ... they did me a resume but it was not good enough, and I had to improve it. Gave it to a nursing home looking for a cleaner but didn't hear back. I've had no help looking for work, and no Job Search training or computer training."

"I'm not going too well. Went to some of the Job Networks but got a resentful response from them both. No luck so far with job search."

"The Job Network did me a resume and I had to take it back because the girl who did it made so many mistakes. Z... fixed the mistakes in it."

Appendix D: Case Study Three - Training courses undertaken by Yakka workers through TCFUA support and Victorian government Skill Up funding at six weeks after retrenchment

Community Services Certificate 2/3	(2)
Aged Care Certificate	(3)
Food Handling	(1)
Retail	(1)
Commercial Cookery	(1)
Warehousing Certificate 3	(7)
First Aid	(2)
Forklift	(1)
Introduction to Computers	(7)
Beauty	(1)
Business/Accounting	(4)
Drivers licence	(1)
Light rigid licence	(1)
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>35 courses altogether</u>

Appendix E: *The Job Agencies cited in the Case Study One Phone survey were:*

Name	No. Retrenched Workers
IPA (Moonee Ponds)	1
IPA (Springvale)	3
AMES (Preston)	1
AMES (St Albans)	6
AMES (Footscray)	6
AMES (Werribee)	1
AMES (Springvale)	5
AMES (Dandenong)	1
AMES (Coburg)	1
Sarina Russo (Dandenong)	1
Sarina Russo (Ringwood)	1
Sarina Russo (Epping)	2
Employment Plus (Berwick)	1
Salvation Army (Sunshine)	1
Salvation Army (Epping)	1
Salvation Army (Moorabin)	1
Salvation Army (Frankston)	1
Salvation Army (Dandenong)	2
Salvation Army (Springvale)	2
MEGT (Ringwood)	2
Your Employment Solution (Dandenong)	2
WCIG (Werribee)	1
Interact (Taylors Lakes)	1
Interact (Preston)	1
WISE (Cranbourne)	1
MAETS (Kyneton)	2
CVGT (Kyneton)	2
Name not known	5

Appendix F: *Breakdown of Case Study One interviewees according to regions*

Regions	No. interviewed in total	% of total no. interviewed
Western	30	27
Northern	24	22
Eastern	9	8
South eastern	23	21
Southern	14	13
Rural	10	9
TOTAL	110	100%

Appendix G: Language Backgrounds of Case Study One phone survey respondents

Language	No total	% total
English speaking	30	27
Vietnamese	34	31
Chinese	9	8
Greek	6	5
Italian	8	7
Serbian	2	2
Macedonian	8	7
Croatian	1	1
Spanish	1	1
Timorese	2	2
Filipino (Tagalog)	3	3
Afghanistani (Dari)	1	1
Indian (Gujaropi)	1	1
Cambodian	1	1
Singhalese	1	1
Albanian	1	1
Pakistani (Urdu)	1	1

Appendix H: *The 44 people in the Case Study One phone survey who did not join the Job Network cited the following reasons for deciding not to join:*

1. Not looking for work at all (17)

- resting (4)
- staying home to care for family member (4)
- retiring (1)
- studying / training (7)
- depression (1)

2. Looking for work but not through JNM (12)

- wanted to look by themselves (4)
- felt their English wasn't good enough to access Job Network(2)
- thought an agency would be quicker/better(2)
- starting own business (3)
- not sure how to (1)

3. Found work already without JNM assistance (15)

Appendix I: *Phone Survey form for Case Study One*

Phone Survey Form(15 minutes)

Date of interview.....

Name.....

Company.....

Date of retrenchment.....

Hello I'm Janet from the Textile Clothing and Footwear Union.

The union is phoning people who were recently retrenched from the Textile Clothing and Footwear industry to see what experiences they have after retrenchment. We are hoping to find out as much as we can so we can improve the situation for retrenched workers from TCF.

If you are happy to, I'd like to talk to you about your experience since retrenchment. The information I collect today from you will be completely confidential and your name will never be used in relation to the information.

Do you have about 15 minutes to answer some questions? (if not make another time)
.....

I understand you were retrenched earlier this year/late last year from.....

I want to ask you about three things. The support you received from Job Network, your experience of training and your experience finding work.

Section A: Receiving support through a Job network

1. When left the company were you aware that you were entitled to immediate special support from Job Network as a retrenched TCF worker?
 - Yes
 - No

If No, explain that retrenched TCF workers are entitled to get special help to find work through the job Network system. Ask if they would like to receive information in the mail about it. If so, get address details:

.....
Then go to Section B.

If yes,

- a) How did you find out about it?
 - Union
 - Employer
 - Centrelink
 - Job Network
 - Other.....

2. Did you join a Job Network when you left the company?
 - Yes
 - No

If No, why not? (Go directly to Section B)

.....
.....
.....
..

If yes,

a) Which Job Network did you join?
(name of agency)

.....(suburb).....

3. Did you find the Job Network was useful?

- Yes
- No

If no, why not?

(Go directly to Section B)

.....
.....
.....

If Yes,

a) What did the Job Network do to help you? (Prompts) Tick the box

- Resume
- Computer skills training
- Job Search skills training
- Recommend and fund other forms of training
- Find you a job
- Send you to job interviews
- Call you into the office to discuss your options
- Wage subsidy to the employer
- Petrol money
- Covered costs of books, clothes, equipment for work
- Other.....

b) How often did you meet with someone from the Job Network?

- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Other.....

4. Do you receive Centrelink payments?

- Yes
- No

If no, why

not.....

*If yes, how have you found your dealings with
Centrelink?.....*

.....
.....

Section B: Training (Skill Up)

1. When you left, did you know that retrenched workers in Victoria are entitled to \$600-800 worth of free training?

- Yes
- No

If No, get address details and we will send information to you about the program. Then go to Section C.

.....

If Yes,

how did you find out about it?

- The Union organised a session at work with TAFE
- Friends told me about it
- Other.....

If relevant, how useful did you find the Union information and support provided to you ?.....

.....
.....
.....

2. Did you do any free training/courses?

- Yes
- No

Are you going to do any free training courses?

- Yes
- No

If no, answer the following question and then go directly to Section C

Did the TAFE call you or send you a letter encouraging you to do training?.....

If Yes,

a) What course/s did you do?.....

b) How many hours was the course?.....

c) Did you have/do you think you will have any problems getting into the course you want?.....

- Transport
- Language
- Childcare
- Casual work commitments
-
-

- d) If you did a training course, did it help you?/How do you think the training course will help you?
- Yes
 - No
- Explain.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Employment experiences since leaving.....

1. Have you looked for work since you were retrenched?

- Yes
- No

If no, answer the following questions

- a) Why are you not looking?.....
 - b) Are you happy with your situation at the moment?
- Can you explain.....

If yes,

- a) Have you had any job interviews and if so, tell me about them?.....
- b) What kind of jobs have you been looking for? (try to get them to specify- factory, cleaning, driving, outdoor, other)
.....
- c) How have you been looking? (internet, friends, family, door knocking, labour hire, Job Network, paper).....
- d) How many hours a week do you want to work? (full time, part time, afternoon, around childcare etc.).....

3. Have you found any work since you were retrenched?

- Yes
- No
-

If no, move to the next question

If yes,

- a) How many weeks or months did the job last?.....
 - One – two weeks
 - two – four weeks
 - one- three months
 - three- six months
- b) Did you get a contract for your job?
 - No just a letter
 - No just a verbal agreement
 - Yes but just a casual contract with no conditions specified
 - Yes a Workplace Agreement with conditions specified
 - Yes an Enterprise Agreement contract with conditions
- c) Are you happy with your pay and conditions?
 - No

- o Yes
- d) Are you happy with the number of hours you work? (If no, why?)
 - o No – not enough
 - o No – too much
 - o No – too irregular
 - o No- other.....
 - o Yes
- e) How would you describe your average rate of pay in the work you have done since leaving.....?
 - o \$10-\$15
 - o \$15-18
 - o \$19-22
 - o \$23-28
- f) What kind of work have you been doing?.....
- g) Do you think this kind of work is suitable for you?
 - o Yes
 - o No
 Explain.....

- h) Were you a union member with.....?
- i) Have you joined a Union since being retrenched?
 - o Yes
 - o No
 If yes, which one?.....
 If no, why not?.....

I am going to ask you a couple of personal questions now for our records.

SECTION D: Personal details

1. What is your age?.....
2. Male/ Female
3. What language do you speak at home?.....
4. What is your cultural background?.....

Thanks very much for your time.

Goodbye.

SECTION E- Issues to follow up

Issues arising for follow up throughout the discussion.....

For further information in relation to the 'Empty Promises' report, please contact:

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