Workforce Development Project

Final Project Report to Skills Tasmania
March 2017
# Table of Contents

Background to NHT Workforce Development Project ...........................................2

Project Purpose ...........................................................................................................2

Project Objectives .......................................................................................................3

Governance ..................................................................................................................3

Project Outputs ............................................................................................................4

Project Outcomes .........................................................................................................6

Methodology ................................................................................................................11

Timeframes & Milestones .............................................................................................12

Project Evaluation Measures ......................................................................................13

Lessons Learnt & Observations ..................................................................................14

Recommended Actions ...............................................................................................15

Appendix 1 ..................................................................................................................17

Appendix 2 ..................................................................................................................18

Appendix 3 ..................................................................................................................19
Background to the NHT Workforce Development Project

The purpose of this Project was to implement actions identified in the Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (then TACH) Workforce Development and Training Plan developed in early 2014.

The initial Workforce Development Project, funded through Skills Tasmania, involved resourcing a Workforce Development Project Officer for 12 months (May 2013-May 2014) to map the (then) current training needs and experiences of Houses through the means of a sector survey, and develop a Workforce Development Plan. Documents from that initial Project were lodged with Skills Tasmania in 2014.

The sector survey also involved identifying the existing training and qualifications of staff; what the key gap areas of training were; what the training experience had been like in the past; what the recurring issues were; identifying barriers to training, and identifying ways to improve the training experience. The survey consolidated the anecdotal evidence that Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (NHT) had previously collected over many years by informal means.

The survey provided NHT with an evidence base of information which informed the development of the NHT Workforce Development and Training Plan.

NHT then sought funding from Skills Tasmania for a second phase of their Workforce Development Project to continue to implement the actions from the Workforce Development and Training Plan, and broaden the Project’s scope to provide an ongoing coordination role within NHT to support the network to better engage and interact with training opportunities and providers.

Project Purpose

The purpose of the Project was to build and extend on the learnings from the NHT 12 month Workforce Development Project that ran from May 2013 to May 2014, and to improve the capability of Houses to make training and skills development available to House workers, volunteers and community participants.

Scope

The scope of the Project covered the thirty-five Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania that are members of Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania. The Project was inclusive of the paid staff of Houses, the volunteers and the broader community membership of Houses.
Project Objectives:

The overall objective of the Project was to implement the actions identified in the Workforce and Development Training Plan developed in 2013/14.

Other objectives were:
- to develop a communication strategy to coordinate the gathering and delivery of information regarding workforce development, training opportunities and funding streams to, from and within the House network
- to identify, source, develop and disseminate resources to the network that supports their involvement in, and understanding of, workforce development
- to develop a strategy to resource and deliver governance training to House committees on a regular basis to ensure engaging new management committees members elected at AGMs
- to establish respectful working relationships with Registered Training Organisations by: researching their scope and qualifications; developing ongoing conversations about the training needs of the network and developing a ‘preferred provider’ list
- to identify training opportunities and pathways for the network
- to create a sustainable system of gathering and sharing workforce development information and needs within the network
- to meet all reporting requirements of the Project as outlined in the Project Plan

Governance

NHT Board acted as the steering committee for the Project.

Project Roles and Responsibilities

The NHT Executive Officer was responsible for:
- liaising with the NHT Board
- overseeing the work of the project worker
- overseeing funding expenditure

The Project Worker was responsible for:
- progressing the identified actions of the project
- reporting to the NHT EO as required
- reporting to the NHT Board as required
- production and provision of this Project Plan
- production and provision of the 4 project reports and final report, as identified in the funding agreement, within the required timeframes

The NHT Board representatives were responsible for:
- validating the Project Plan early in the project’s lifespan
- providing feedback to the project worker on each document prior to its submission to Department of State Growth
Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholders in the Workforce Development Project were:

- House coordinators
- Other paid staff
- Volunteers (general)
- Volunteers (Management Committees)
- House communities (see Appendix 1)
- NHT
- Department of State Growth - Skills Tasmania

Project Outputs

The Outputs delivered by the Project were:

1. A Project Plan (lodged with Skills Tas)
2. Progress Reports 1-4 (lodged with Skills Tas)
3. A separate Final Report (this document) provided to Department of State Growth that:
   a. describes the process and outcomes of the project
   b. addresses the evaluation measures in Schedule 1 point 13 of the Deed of Grant
   c. is validated by the steering committee
4. A communication strategy to coordinate the gathering and delivery of information regarding workforce development, training opportunities, funding streams to and from the network.

Over the course of the Workforce Development Project 2015-17 we put into practice the learnings from the 2013 project. These included relationship building between NHT, training providers and Houses, and raising the workforce development /training conversation within the network by creating an environment where workforce development is a part of the conversation about what Houses do. This project has enabled the breaking down of pre-existing negative responses to training, (largely based on bad experiences), and has set a strong foundation so that now Houses know that they can ‘get results’ from engaging with good training for their staff, volunteers and communities. Workforce development is gathering momentum within the network. Information regarding training opportunities was emailed to Houses as appropriate, included in newsletters and put on the website. The topic of workforce development became a standing item at regional meetings and network activities. Update reports regarding the Project were sent to Houses, as well as included in NHT Board reports.

5. A training calendar that identified funding streams, their criteria and application timelines.

A formal training calendar was not developed during this project. Initially this was due to the difficulty in locking down accurate information from various agencies that could be shared
with the network in a timely manner. In response, information regarding specific training opportunities was emailed to Houses as appropriate, included in newsletters and put on the website as they arose. This proved to be a more efficient means to share information as a calendar would have gone out of date, or lost accuracy too quickly.


This did not become a priority during the Project as Houses have mostly engaged with the RTO Avidity, with whom there is already an umbrella MOU with NHT and an understanding of working with Houses.

7. A preferred provider list of RTOs who have demonstrated an understanding of the network and are prepared to sign the NHT umbrella MOU.

Throughout the duration of the Project there remained only one RTO on the preferred provider list who demonstrated an understanding of the network and was prepared to sign an MOU with NHT which formalised our mutual understanding of what Houses wanted and expected from accredited training content and delivery in their communities. The content of the MOU was based on the NHT 2013 survey findings. That RTO was Avidity Training and Development. Other RTOs were approached and discussions held but none were prepared to sign the MOU. There was also the recurring issue of staff turnover at RTOs, so each time the conversation and establishing a relationship would have to start over...and over. More detail about negotiations that were held with TasTAFE is included later in this report, under Project Outcomes.

8. A strategy to resource and deliver consistent governance training to House management committees.

The NHT Management Committee (MC) Handbook is available on NHT website for Houses to access. Newsletters written for committees were distributed. One free governance training session was offered to Houses during 2016. (Ron Sutton, who developed the MC Handbook, was contracted to deliver the training. Each session was tailored to respond to the individual House needs and requests for assistance.) Sixteen sessions were run. Ron has developed a package of training that NHT staff can utilise to deliver governance training into the future. Further work needs to be done to enable NHT staff time to continue to deliver the training.

There has been intensive governance support provided to 2 Houses during the Project. NHT has negotiated a group buy with Quartz Consulting to provide HR and IR advice and support to Houses, and are updating NHT template policies and procedures that Houses can access.
Project Outcomes

The Outcomes delivered by the Project (as outlined in the Deed of Grant) included the completion of, or progress towards:

1. **Appropriate pathways identified for individuals to reconnect with education opportunities**

Ongoing discussion and consultation throughout the Project between NHT, the RTO Avidity and Houses has led to a greater understanding of the accredited training system and what is available within it.

Community Services qualifications have proven popular and successful within the sector as the course content provides good general skills to enhance employability and gives a taster for potential career pathways, rather than locking someone in to the choice they make when they first take up training. It gives them scope to explore potential options and broaden their employment possibilities. By creating the environment for people to re-engage with education and training, Houses are supporting the setting up of pathways into the workforce, which is not just about providing skills but the trust and support people need to build confidence in their abilities and dare to dream of bigger things.

Avidity has provided monthly reports to NHT regarding training within Houses (new, ongoing, completed, pending, numbers and requests) as part of the communication agreement in their MOU. This has provided an ongoing overview of what accredited training is happening in the network, which has helped to map where newly emerging funding opportunities can support the demand. It has often been the case that once people have engaged with training at a House, they are keen to engage in more training at the next level along the pathway. The evidence supports the view that if training opportunities that allow participants a confidence-building taster are not on-going, it is doubtful that people will move very far along the pathways to economic and educational engagement.

**Case Study:**

*During November we held an information session with the community members at the Risdon Vale Community House. There is currently an Aged Care Facility being built in the suburb. There are also Disability, Youth, Child Care and Home-based Care facilities in surrounding areas. The community members were able to make an informed decision about their career/learning pathway and identified that they want to undertake a Certificate II in Community Services. The majority have little or no previous work experience and want to start with a qualification that they believe is achievable. We also discussed the methodology that will best suit them, such as days and times of delivery, location and if there is a need for any additional supports, such as; transport, childcare, LLN etc. Twelve members attended the session and another five have since expressed a keen interest.* (Avidity 2015)
2. More community members engaged in education, leading to better educated communities.

As outlined earlier, Avidity has been working effectively with Houses to deliver accredited training (see attached Appendix 3 document regarding accredited training delivered to Houses 2014-17 by Avidity). This level of participation was unprecedented in the network prior to 2014.

One of our disappointments has been with the public provider, which is now TasTAFE. After expressing our concerns to Skills Tas regarding contestable funding rounds and the inadequacy of many training providers, and after Skills Tas had discussions with TasTAFE, NHT met with representatives from TasTAFE and discussed our members’ disappointment with the public provider over recent years, particularly in regional areas. NHT does not say this lightly, as we would appreciate a public provider that works effectively with our members, but this has not been the experience, particularly with the regional communities of recent times. TasTAFE committed to rebuilding the relationship with our members, which we fully supported. We discussed ways to explore a pilot with the Houses that had been unsuccessful with a recent Skills Fund grant to rebuild the relationship. NHT has engaged with 3 different representatives due to frequent role changes at TasTAFE. To date nothing has come to fruition and we remain extremely frustrated with the public provider.

Case Study:
Jane* reluctantly attended the Certificate I in Business at East Devonport. Jane is a job seeker in her 50’s and had not done any study since being at school. Jane proudly graduated and has eagerly commenced the Certificate II in Business. Jane commented that it was the first Certificate she had ever received and is now confident to continue her learning. All 10 participants graduated, with 8 continuing on to Certificate II in Business. (*not her real name)

3. The ability to plan and consult communities over time (regarding training needs) rather than respond to rushed tender processes

The Project has resulted in a shared understanding that some training needs will be on-going and training programs will need to be delivered routinely. These include governance, some IT skills development, HR, etc, and will respond to the relatively high staff and volunteer turnover that is normal for the Neighbourhood House sector. Establishing a regular training program and maintaining the resources to support this is an aspiration for NHT.

- Governance training: Houses operate under a community development framework that underpins the governance and operational model. This model mandates the involvement of community in governance, as volunteers and participants. Relevant governance training is an on-going demand. NHT has developed a Management Committee Handbook. During the course of this Project a series of governance workshops were offered to Houses, based on the Handbook and delivered by Ron Sutton, who had developed the Handbook. One free session was offered to each House,
with each session tailored to respond to individual House needs. Fourteen sessions were run during 2016.

- Customer Service training: To address HR issues within their own House, a staff member at Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre developed a workshop for their staff and volunteers. NHT then supported the development of the content into a ‘train the trainer’ workshop for other Houses to modify and use for their own purposes as and when required.
- First point of contact training: Houses have long identified the issue of needing to train staff and volunteers in how best to be the ‘front person’ for a House, especially how to handle difficult circumstances that may arise with people coming into a House. NHT has contracted a House manager to develop and deliver this House-specific training.

4. **NHT to plan how to leverage appropriate funds for training and workforce development in NHT and the member Neighbourhood Houses by being aware of the ‘big picture’ of funding opportunities**

NHT has learned much from its role in this Workforce Development Project. Capacity has been built within NHT across many dimensions including:

- A better understanding of the education and training system in Tasmania
- Relationships with stakeholders
- A clearer understanding of training and development needs within the House Network
- Improved abilities to identify and apply for funding opportunities for further workforce development across the Network
- Improved abilities to evaluate progress
- Signing an MOU to engage as a Strategic Industry Partner with Skills Tas

This increased capability has already resulted in increasing the opportunities and broadening the scope of workforce development for Houses. Examples include:

- Emerging Voices: This new and innovative leadership training program will be delivered by the program’s developer to Houses during 2017, made possible by a Tasmanian Community Fund grant that NHT supported.
- Community Development (CD) training: Based on the findings of the 2013 Project, NHT was approached by Primary Health Tasmania (then Tas Medicare Local) offering to fund and deliver CD training according to the Project’s recommendations for best practice. Twenty seven Houses engaged with this training (held between 2014 -16) that was developed specifically for them and delivered by a contractor in individual Houses. This process of delivering training to the network was evaluated and proved that when training is targeted and purposeful people will engage.
- Leadership training: Steve Willing, a leadership training consultant, delivered 3 regional training workshops in May 2016, with 54 people from 17 Houses attending. A ‘train the facilitator’ workshop was delivered in June 2016, designed to build the capacity of House staff to conduct leadership training in their own Houses. Twelve people from 8 Houses attended. The workshop content was tailored specifically for Houses.
- NHT’s support of applications for accredited training as listed in Appendix 1
This demonstrates the value-add of central coordination from the Peak Body for the network. NHT needs to be able to maintain a strategic focus on workforce development, without which it is likely that the recent successful workforce development activities will lapse and communities will not continue to experience the opportunities that they have done because of this Project. In the medium to long term, sustainable outcomes cannot be expected to be achieved.

While much ground has been made, the environment around contestable grant funding remains problematic for NHT and the network. Canvassing interest in upcoming potential funding opportunities creates expectations in communities that are then dashed if the funding application is unsuccessful. A level of cynicism about short term funded projects already exists across the network, and a similar scenario in relation to workforce development does not support efforts to create a culture of participation in learning.

An example is that at the start of 2015 there were 195 training places sought across 13 Houses, covering 5 Certificates under the Skills Fund. No funding was received, so all these places were lost – real people waiting to engage with training, many for the first time in years, and the negative impact of this was immediate and considerable within the network. There were letters of disappointment sent from Houses to the Minister of State Growth, lamenting this lost opportunity and venting about the inappropriate and unresponsive nature of contested grant rounds. People need to be able to trust the system to support them if they are going to take that initial risk to engage. This trust is built on consistency of approach and outcomes, as well as relationships.

The sector needs to be able to rely on the availability of places on a regular basis so as to meet the needs as and when they arise, or at least within a reasonable timeframe so as not to lose the people who have indicated they want to engage. The timeframes for the funding rubber to hit the road means that people get lost during the process. There is too much uncertainty for Houses and individuals, with hopes raised and then dashed. Constructive relationships of individual trust and understanding of the network are negated in a space where we know that relationship building is an essential element of helping people to create pathways into training and employment. The foundation work put in by Houses to establish networks with industry in their communities is an added pressure when it yields no results.

Grants are most often for a package or series of training sessions that targets a specific issue or learning outcome. The time it takes for Houses to create a project that fits the guidelines and addresses community needs (remembering that Houses work from a community development model) doesn’t always fit into funding round timelines. The timelines also make it impossible to plan for future workforce development. What is clearly needed are resources to support on-going regular training delivery PLUS the capacity to respond to opportunities as they arise.
5. NHT able to coordinate and take up the opportunities that exist to fund the training that House workers, volunteers and participants want

In addition to the operational and relationship building capability that this Project has supported within NHT and across the network, NHT is able now to play a role at a strategic level with regard to workforce development in this State.

In 2015 NHT was invited to attend a private meeting with Simon Birmingham, the then Assistant Minister for Education and Training, who was in Hobart for a COAG meeting. He asked to meet specifically regarding our concerns relating to the poor vocational training delivery experiences within the Neighbourhood House network, and our concerns over the proliferation of door to door sales people spruiking on-line training. A statewide coordinated approach led by NHT, enabled us as a network to identify where predatory training organisations and brokers sought to target and exploit disadvantaged and regional communities. We then collectively advocated to the government and the media as a network, contributing (we believe) to the Federal Government changing the regulations, and these organisations either leaving the industry or being sanctioned by the ACCC. We believe it is because of the strength of the network that this appalling practice got highlighted so quickly in Tasmania. Houses are committed to supporting the statewide workforce development approach we have undertaken through this and our previous project, not just to take up opportunities for funding but to be a watchdog against bad practices to protect their communities. (see Appendix 3)

During 2016 NHT was invited to become a strategic industry partner with the Department of State Growth through signing an MOU with the Secretary of State Growth, and then joined the Ministerial Forum. 2016 was the first year that community-based organisations and some peak bodies were invited to become strategic partners and attend the Ministerial Forum. NHT now attends regular meetings with the Director of Skills Tasmania to discuss and advocate on key issues for the House network. This has been made possible through NHT having a focused workforce development role resourced through this grant.

Information sharing at a strategic level enables shared understanding of key issues, both long-standing and emerging concerns. This opens up opportunities for the relationship between funder and funded organisations to lead the sector from a position of shared objectives. The cultural change in Houses is observable as coordinators, staff and volunteers have increased participation in training and development activities, articulate their needs to NHT and actively seek responses to those needs.

A partnership approach to applying for and being successful in funding through the Tasmanian Community Fund Grants Program has enabled the delivery of the Changemaker Training series “Emerging Voices” in Houses during 2017.

Through working with the RTO, Avidity Training and Development, Houses and their communities have been able to pilot a new way of working. This has demonstrated the effectiveness and validity of our community development approach that is inclusive and
supportive of vulnerable groups, and that this approach, when coupled with properly adapted training by a responsive RTO, leads to employment outcomes or successful transition into further advanced training, particularly in disenfranchised communities. NHT has developed an MOU with our key Training Industry Partner Avidity which formalises our mutual understanding of what Houses want and expect from accredited training content and delivery in their communities.

As indicated above, the RTO Avidity has worked effectively and collaboratively with a number of Houses to develop and deliver training that is relevant, appropriate and supportive of local needs. Through their commitment to building relationships of trust and support with participants, Avidity has engaged previously resistant communities (and community members) with formal training. Houses have shared their positive stories with each other, resulting in a snowball effect of numbers of people wanting to engage with training.

6. Other outcomes as agreed

No additional outcomes agreed to.

Methodology

The methodology included:
1. The production and provision of a Project Plan to Dept of State Growth.
2. The production and provision of Progress Reports 1-4 to Dept of State Growth within the required timeframes.
3. The production and provision of a Final Report to Dept of State Growth on or before the completion date of the contract. (This document)
4. The NHT Board representatives provided feedback to the project worker on each document prior to its submission to Dept of State Growth.
5. All documents completed to a professional standard of editing, and provided to the Dept of State Growth delegate identified in the Deed of Grant Schedule.
6. NHT representatives attended an initial briefing and subsequent meetings as requested by the delegate.
7. Ongoing conversations were held with Houses, via phone, email and face to face meetings, to gather up-to-date information regarding training needs of target groups.
8. Ongoing research conducted, via internet, newspapers, etc, into available training options and funding opportunities, and this information was shared back to the network via various communication methods.
9. The development of a communication strategy across the NHT network to coordinate the gathering and delivery of information regarding workforce development, training opportunities, funding streams, etc, to and from the network.
10. Ongoing research conducted into RTOs, their scope and qualifications they offer primarily via www.training.org.au
11. Ongoing conversations with RTOs regarding the training they offer and their suitable engagement with Houses through the promotion of the ‘Working With Houses’ checklist and MOU developed in Phase 1.

12. Maintenance of a preferred provider list of RTOs willing to sign an umbrella MOU with NHT, and promote this list to the network. Ongoing promotion of ‘Working With Houses’ checklist and MOU to Houses to use as a tool when engaging with a training provider.

13. The development and maintenance of a workforce development profile within the network which included making the topic of workforce development a standing agenda item at NHT regional meetings and creating a dedicated section for workforce development news and information on the NHT website, and in the regular NHT e-news and newsletters sent to the network.

14. Drawing on the survey information from 2013 Project, the specific governance training needs of House management committees were identified and a strategy developed to best deliver the training, utilising the NHT Management Committee Handbook as a training tool, thereby ensuring consistent training content across all committees.

### Timeframes and Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Submitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreed Project Plan</td>
<td>28 Nov 2014</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 1</td>
<td>26 June 2015</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 2</td>
<td>18 December 2015</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 3</td>
<td>24 June 2016</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 4</td>
<td>27 January 2017</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>31 March 2017</td>
<td>yes – this document</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Project Evaluation Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Standards</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Achievement of deliverables | Progress against Project Outcomes in 4.0:  
  a. appropriate pathways for individuals to reconnect with education opportunities identified  
  b. more community members engaged in education, leading to better educated communities  
  c. communities consulted over time regarding training needs, providing NHT and Houses the ability to plan rather than respond to rushed tender processes  
  d. NHT planning how to leverage appropriate funds for training and workforce development for Houses by being aware of the ‘big picture’ of funding opportunities  
  e. NHT coordinating and taking up identified opportunities to fund the training that House workers, volunteers and participants want  
  f. other outcomes identified  |
| Satisfied clients and engaged stakeholders | The steering committee is satisfied with the outcome of the project |
| Meeting project milestones and timelines | Project milestones and timelines are met |
| Meeting project budget and resources | Project budget and resources are met |
Lessons Learnt & Observations

Houses provide and create opportunities for people disengaged from their communities to make connections through a wide variety of social, learning and volunteer opportunities. For many people in these communities, Houses play a vital role in bridging the gap back to formal education and learning environments. Through this Project NHT has supported Houses to build the capability of staff, volunteers and community members to engage in learning and skills development. By improving their capability as organisations, whose core business is community development, this has contributed to the increased participation in training and skills development by members of their regional and outer urban communities.

The Neighbourhood House sector provides a complex and unique environment for workforce development through the community development framework that underpins the governance and operational model. This model mandates the involvement of community in governance, as volunteers and participants. Workforce development is not therefore solely about paid staff but encompasses volunteers and community participants in the House, as well as community members that come to the House to engage in programs and want to progress on pathways to becoming work ready and to look for employment. This means that the target group is not static, with new people engaging with Houses regularly.

Due to this complexity there needs to be a flexible, creative, informed approach to delivering training and workforce development within the Neighbourhood House sector as no singular approach can address all its issues and training needs. Access barriers need to be addressed and the content has to have meaning and relevance for dis-engaged people and regional communities.

For many people in these communities formal education was a bad experience, and Houses play a vital role in bridging the gap back to formal education and learning environments. Houses have been the starting point for many Tasmanians in progressing out of poverty and into self-reliance through the volunteering, and other engagement strategies that Houses provide in communities across Tasmania. Houses are spread across the whole state, with a regionally diverse footprint, which allows workforce development activities to occur in often hard to reach regional areas. We believe Skills Tas has seen the potential for our network to play a key role in increasing workforce participation in Tasmania.

Houses are not just a venue. Nowhere else provides the relationships focus in the ways that Houses can and do; providing support to people in fundamental ways, providing the building blocks of confidence, motivation, trust, and giving purpose in a real way to get engaged. Non-threatening approaches to training, adapted for, and delivered in Houses are proving to be an effective response to existing barriers to formal education. Previous negative experiences can be overcome through the attachment, support and comfort experienced by individuals within the House itself. Houses have proven to be very successful mechanisms for linking disengaged community members to training and other development opportunities, by engaging people in a non-threatening, inclusive and supportive
environment that addresses some of the traditional barriers to further education. Houses provide pathways for community members into activities and volunteer roles within a House. With the potential to now offer accredited training to committed volunteers through a Skills Tas funding round, Houses can directly support their volunteers into training, providing an inclusive, non-threatening pathway, having the confidence of the direct relationship between their volunteer role and the training content for individuals who may otherwise lack the confidence to take the formal step into accredited training on their own. We have seen that training in itself creates confidence and motivation through the sense of achievement that comes with participation and success.

Houses are always looking for ways to address the barriers that prevent local people from engaging with vocational pathways and training. The network of 35 Houses they advocated strongly to NHT as a Peak Body that a state wide coordinated approach is vital to effectively address these issues. They have seen over the last two years the benefit of NHT advocating for consistent training information, content and provision by RTOs that work for their communities.

Neighbourhood Houses are proving to have the ability to create and support accessible pathways into education and training for people living in the disadvantaged communities where the Houses are located. The pathways that Houses provide are not just from a Certificate 2 to a Certificate 3, but are fundamental pathways from people’s homes into the community and then into expanding their potential as citizens Pathways into education and training start at people’s doorways and Houses are a key conduit into that engagement.

Case Study:
'I was scared to get out of the house to the point that I would walk to the bus stop, and freak out that something was going on at the house, worry that I didn’t turn things off, think are we going to be safe on the bus, really high and anxiety, then I would walk back home and not go out again. My sister became very concerned...and she convinced me to come along and meet everybody and start a course here. Which means my life has changed, once I started to not get scared to get out of the house. I did a Certificate 2, then a Certificate 3, then a Certificate 4 in Community Services. I got offered a job in disability. I was in a very dark sad place and didn’t know what happiness was until I came here and did stuff and it unlocked that, the judglement that I was fearful of...is just gone’. Christine Gagebrook CC

Recommended Actions

It is recommended that Skills Tasmania continue to work with NHT to develop the capability of the Houses to fulfil government and community objectives regarding supporting disadvantaged people to maximise their participation in the community, in training and in pathways to employment.

In 2016 NHT was invited to sign an MOU with Department of State Growth and is now recognised as a strategic industry partner, providing advice on issues affecting the
Neighbourhood House network on matters of training and workforce development across the whole state. Maintaining and strengthening this strategic relationship would be a priority of any future workforce development project, giving NHT the capacity to attend meetings, provide advice and advocate on House sector issues.

NHT needs future financial support to maintain the workforce development focus it has established through this Project.

Without continued support it is likely that the recent very successful workforce development activities achieved through this Project will lapse, and communities will not experience the opportunities that they have done because of this Project.

An application is currently lodged with Skills Tas for workforce development funding so that NHT is able to continue its advocacy and support of training within the network.

Skills Tas has, from our perspective, shifted its approach to see the vital need for training that is not just about the job at the end or a Certificate 4, and recognises the importance of creating and supporting pathways into training at all levels. We have also seen, with the latest Skills Fund Grant round, the acknowledgement of volunteers as workforce, and therefore legitimately entitled to accredited training, which NHT has advocated for. Our recommendation is that Skills Tas continues to approach and fund training this broadly.

Case Study:
Jeremy* is a 19 year old early school leaver. Jeremy attended a Cert I in Business Program with Avidity, delivered at Northern Suburbs Community Centre. Jeremy was sent to the program by his job agency and initially was painfully shy in the group, lacking confidence and sitting with his head down, going red if anyone spoke to him.

Jeremy also required a lot of one-on-one support from his trainer as he struggled a lot with understanding the content and his LLN skills were very poor. He formed a good relationship with the trainer and would ask for support when he needed it. His answers to questions were quite in-depth and showed insight when they were provided to him verbally and broken down into simple steps.

Jeremy was the youngest in the group and many of the other participants were women who had school aged children, taking Jeremy “under their wing”, taking turns of sitting with him and supporting him. This was instigated by the participants, not the trainer, and seemed to be a great experience for Jeremy, allowing him to form relationships with the other participants. This seemed to really help Jeremy overcome some of his shyness and anxiety in a group setting, as they often joked with him.

Jeremy was able to complete his qualification and was incredibly proud of himself. This was the first certificate Jeremy had ever received in his life and it was very meaningful to him. All the other participants understood that and made a big fuss of his achievement.

Jeremy’s raised confidence meant he announced at graduation that he had enrolled in a warehousing certificate with another RTO as a result of the program. (*not his real name)
# Appendix 1: List of Neighbourhood House Communities

1. Beaconsfield  
2. Burnie  
3. Bridgewater  
4. Chigwell (Bucaan)  
5. Clarendon Vale  
6. Deloraine  
7. Derwent Valley  
8. Devonport  
9. Dodges Ferry (Okines)  
10. Dowsing Point  
11. Dunalley  
12. East Devonport  
13. Exeter (Tresca)  
14. Fingal  
15. Geeveston  
16. George Town  
17. Goodwood (2)  
18. Gagebrook  
19. King Island  
20. Maranoa Heights  
21. Midway Point (Pittwater)  
22. Mowbray  
23. Ravenswood (Starting Point)  
24. Risdon Vale  
25. Rocherlea  
26. Rokeby  
27. Rosebery  
28. St Helens  
29. Scottsdale (Dorset)  
30. Ulverstone  
31. Warrane/ Mornington  
32. West Moonah  
33. Woodbridge (West Winds)  
34. Zeehan
Training provider to pay back $44m

A MAJOR training provider that signed up vulnerable Tasmanians for study courses so it could receive federal funding has agreed to pay back $44.3 million.

Careers Australia sales people are believed to have approached hundreds of clients of Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania, offering diploma courses so the organisation could receive $33,000 in government funds for each student signed.

Between August 1, 2013 and March 31 last year, Careers Australia received and processed applications from about 40,000 Australians for enrolments into its VET FEE-HELP courses, said the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Careers Australia has admitted that some of its agents told customers the courses were free and would increase their chances of finding employment. Some were offered inducements.

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania executive officer John Hooper said that door-to-door sales people had approached hundreds of NHT clients, from St Helens to Rosebery, even offering free laptops and free Wi-Fi for people who signed up.

Mr Hooper said customers were paid $100 for referring others to the providers and some sales people had bought people groceries to encourage them to sign.

Some of the people approached were not literate but had been signed up to online double diplomas in business management.

"It was unrealistic to expect people who had failed at school to do courses online without a teacher," he said.

"It was real vulture-type stuff offering a product that set people up to fail."

NHT said it blew the whistle on the door-to-door practices in June 2014 with a Facebook post and emails warning people to beware of what looked too good to be true.

NHT also referred the behaviour to the Tasmanian Office of Consumer Affairs, which found the behaviour unethical but not illegal unless the sellers were caught in the act of doorknocking.

Careers Australia has since cancelled at least 12,130 of these student enrolments and either repaid or partially repaid the government amounts totalling at least $44.3 million, including cancellations made in the course of the ACCC investigation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contract Places</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHC20112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Pathway for Volunteers 1 (RNH) Cert II Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC20112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Pathway for Volunteers 2 (RNH) Cert II Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House Cert III Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS020112</td>
<td>Burnie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Burnie Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Burnie Neighbourhood House Cert III Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS020112</td>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Eastern Shore Community House</td>
<td>ESCH Cert II Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS020112</td>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community House</td>
<td>NSCS Cert II Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHG02010</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Community House</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Cert II Horticulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHG02010</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Community House</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Cert II Horticulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHG30112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House Cert III Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHG30112</td>
<td>Burnie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Burnie Community House</td>
<td>Burnie Community House Cert III Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK01113</td>
<td>Burnie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Burnie Community House</td>
<td>Foundation Skills Burnie Community House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC02012</td>
<td>Fingal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Fingal Valley Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Doccas Ferry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Okinas community House</td>
<td>Cert II in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Eastern Shore Community House</td>
<td>Cert III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ridon Vale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Ridon Vale Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>Cert II in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>George Town Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (Signature Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (Signature Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Ulverstone</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Ulverstone Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (Signature Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Scottsdale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Dorset Community House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>East Devonport</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>East Devonport Community House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ridon Vale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Ridon Vale Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC22016</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Cert II in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC22016</td>
<td>East Devonport</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>East Devonport Community House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC22016</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Jobseeker Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contract Places</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ravenswood</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ravenswood Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (Signature Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (Signature Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSK20112</td>
<td>Ulverstone</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Ulverstone Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Cert II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways (Signature Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Scottsdale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Dorset Community House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>East Devonport</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>East Devonport Community House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ridon Vale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Ridon Vale Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workplace Traineeships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contract Places</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Ridon Vale</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Ridon Vale Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>Cert III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workplace Training - Existing Workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contract Places</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS842015</td>
<td>Devport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North/East</td>
<td>Dorset Community House</td>
<td>Cert IV in Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS842015</td>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Rosebery Community House</td>
<td>Cert IV in Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC30112</td>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Devonport Community House</td>
<td>Cert III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC52015</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania</td>
<td>Diploma of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC52015</td>
<td>East Devonport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>East Devonport Community House</td>
<td>Cert IV in Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC82015</td>
<td>Doccas Ferry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Doccas Community House</td>
<td>Cert IV in Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC52015</td>
<td>St Helens</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>St Helens Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Diploma of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC52015</td>
<td>Ulverstone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Ulverston Neighbourhood House</td>
<td>Diploma of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC40121</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Cert IV in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC52015</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Diploma of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC40121</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Cert IV in Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS842015</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Certificate III in Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contract Places</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHC22016</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Cert II in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC22016</td>
<td>East Devonport</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>East Devonport Community House</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC22016</td>
<td>Rocherlea</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Northern Suburbs Community Centre</td>
<td>Certificate III in Community Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>