

# Housing Futures

## National Housing Conference 2003

Building Community & Individual Well Being

### The Tenant Employment Program

#### 'The Lex Model'

Lex Johnston – Hotline Employment & Training

Fran Hopkins – NSW Department of Housing

Interview - Tenants Ed Franks, Maryanne Benkic

Video- Nev Kliendienst, Ed Franks, Glen Brunckhorst





**Goonellabah residents at work. Working smarter**



# Project Background



- Partnership between Hotline Employment & Training and NSW Department of Housing;
- Located in the Goonellabah social housing estate (Lismore);
- There are 620 residents in the Goonellabah estate;
- Participation in the project is voluntary;
- Over the past three years 150 residents employed;
- Work varied including fencing, painting, concreting, minor construction, landscaping, cleaning and lawns and grounds maintenance.



# Partner Contributions

- **DoH:** access to suitable contracting work, provision of work centre (modified cottage) for coordination of activities and the funds to subsidise a project coordinator/supervisor position;
- **Hotline Employment:** project co-ordination, work supervision, training and resources;
- **Social housing residents:** labour to fulfil the contract work.



# Community Renewal

## Transforming Estates into Communities

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The Community Development worker:-

- Identifies in the Goonellabah CRS Action Plan the ongoing commitment to supporting the project;
- Promotes the program to agencies and new Goonellabah residents;
- Identifies with local residents the expenditure of the CRS Home Improvement Budget as another opportunity for work;
- Assists with meeting procedures and building interest through community meetings.



# Target Group

- Goonellabah unemployed social housing residents and private dwellers;
- People 16 - 60 years of age;
- Males and females;
- Single parents;
- Indigenous and non-indigenous;
- People with disabilities.

# Achievements To Date

<b>Year</b>	<b>\$ Contract Value</b>	<b>Residents Employed</b>	<b>Pathways to Outside Employment</b>	<b>Pathways to TAFE &amp; University</b>
00/2001	230,000	44	5 f/t or p/t	3 Tafe 1 University
01/2002	315,000	56	9 f/t or p/t 15 casual	4 Tafe 1 University
02/2003	140,000	50	4 f/t or p/t	3 Tafe 1 University
<b>Total</b>	<b>685,000</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>



# How does the program Work?



- Contract work broken down into work segments eg. Fencing work includes: digging holes, cementing posts, fitting fence rails & palings;
- Calculation of how many workers and days needed;
- Work allocation meetings conducted with residents Interested residents decide and register their interest for available work;
- On the job training, supervision and support provided by project coordinator and supervisor.



NSW DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Lawns

Fencing

Concreting

Cleaning

Painting

Building



# RESIDENTS CHOICE

Work Type

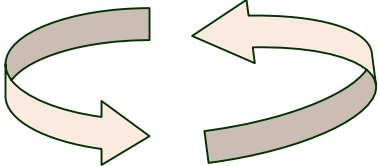
Hours

Family

Days

Study

Casual





# How is work allocated?



- Work allocation meetings held monthly;
- Available work listed on flip charts, broken into day segments ie work type & hours;
- Residents asked to select from nominated work ie type of work & number of work days that suit them;
- Flexibility is critical;
- Residents asked not to nominate for work where a conflict may exist between residents;
- Residents encouraged to nominate for other work locations.



# Work allocation cont.

- All resident work nominations received - open selection/culling process held;
- All residents participate in selection/culling process – until consensus is reached;
- Important to ensure process is clear, fair and democratic;
- Each resident sign a Job Allocation Agreement - defining work type, location, hours to be worked and agreed hourly rate;
- Standard Employee forms completed.



# Work Issues

- Occupational, Health and Safety;
- Privacy Issues;
- Work ethic, on-site behaviour, respect for other people's property;
- Support and expectations ie work supervised by qualified staff & residents work in line with potential and capacity.



# Work Payments

- Charts kept in the Work Centre Office clearly showing when pay fortnights occur;
- Simple charts listed with amounts of pay & tax deductions with examples of hours worked from 2 – 28 hours;
- A timetable prepared and issued to all employees.



# On & Off Job Training



- Work supervisors provide on-site practical skill based training; and
- Off site training including:
  - Basic computer skills;
  - Tax Help - Local Neighbourhood Centre
  - Learn to Drive - Adult Community Education
  - Laundromat basic small business skills
  - First Aid - TAFE Outreach



# Social Benefits

- Opportunity for rewarding work experience, increased confidence;
- The ability to obtain a genuine work reference;
- Pathways to outside work opportunities;
- Increased family income - workers can afford “extras” for their family;



# Social Benefits Continued



- Increased community connections & sense of belonging;
- Recognition and acceptance of social and cultural differences;
- More community role models for children and young people eg. children take pride in their parent's work;
- Residents are displaying increased responsibility for their own actions.

# Residents in their own words



**“This job has opened the door for me to:-**

- **Address fines and obtain my drivers licence**
- **Find a house to rent**
- **I now have access to my daughter**
- **Get a work reference” Ed.**

**“ I could work flexible hours that fitted in with children going to school” Maryanne.**



# Residents in their own words

“The extra income meant I had Christmas with my children last year, a great dinner and presents for the kids”  
**Anita**

“It’s good to experience that going to work feeling”  
**Terry**

“I now walk with confidence, my spirits are uplifted”  
**Tony**

“I have gained a lot of experience doing different types of work, it really builds up your confidence and self esteem”  
**Bill**



# Challenges



- Green card requirement by Workcover is a challenge due to the churn factor of casual employees;
- Low skill entry level of employees requires a high level of staff supervision;
- Project Cost due to training, high levels of supervision, increased use of materials;
- Nature of work changed from predominantly low skill to high skill.



# Plans For The Future



- Promote program to wider Lismore community;
- Gain contracts with other sectors of Social Housing;
- Increase part-time work opportunities suitable for young people;
- Explore the establishment of a small business enterprise.

# Men at Work

