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JOBS AVAILABILITY SNAPSHOT 2018

 **Anglicare** Australia
in every Community

Anglicare Australia's Jobs Availability Snapshot was first published in October 2016.

Anglicare Australia's Jobs Availability Snapshot attempts to show what the job market is really like for those facing the greatest barriers to work – those who may not have qualifications or experience to draw on, those trying to re-enter the workforce after a long break, or those living in regional or remote areas.

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Anglicare Australia is a network of independent local, state, national and international organisations that are linked to the Anglican Church and are joined by values of service, innovation, leadership and the Christian faith that every individual has intrinsic value. With a joint budget of \$1.48 billion, a workforce of over 18,000 staff and more than 11,000 volunteers, the Anglicare Network contributes to more than 50 service areas in the community. Our services are delivered to more than one million Australians, in partnership with them, the communities in which they live, and other like-minded organisations in those areas.

Through our services and advocacy, the Anglicare Australia Network partners with people, families and communities to build resilience, inclusion and justice. Our first strategic goal charges us with reaching this mission by influencing social and economic policy across Australia with a strong prophetic voice.

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J O B S A V A I L A B I L I T Y S N A P S H O T 2 0 1 8

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Few doubt the importance of having a secure income. It protects us from living in poverty and allows us to enjoy the benefits of stability. Without a secure income it is hard to live beyond the next pay cheque, plan for the future, or take control of our lives.

Many people hope to draw a secure income from a secure job. For this reason, a growing number of Australians name unemployment, job security and the search for jobs as the biggest problems facing Australia.ⁱ

But work offers us more than an income. It remains one of the most important ways that we can participate in our communities. For many people, work offers a sense of belonging, security, and identity. It is an anchor that allows us to look after ourselves and our loved ones, pursue our passions, or start a family.

The Anglicare Australia Jobs Availability Snapshot seeks to show what the job market is really like for the people who face the greatest barriers to work. These are people who may not have qualifications or experience, who are trying to re-enter the workforce after a long break, or who are living in regional or remote areas.

The results show that these people have been left out of the dominant narrative about jobs in Australia – a narrative that assures us we are in the midst of a jobs boom, and that the inability to find a job is an individual failure instead of a structural one. In our sample month of May 2018, there were 110,735 jobseekers with barriers to work. But low-

skill, entry-level jobs (or ANZSCO Level 5 jobs) comprised just 14% of the jobs advertised, or 25,997 job advertisements out of 185,662. In other words, between four and five of these people are competing for each of these jobs across Australia.

The Snapshot includes a breakdown of State and Territory figures, and finds that there is no jurisdiction in the country where there are enough suitable jobs for the number of people looking for them. The situation is most dire in Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. In Western Australia, which is still recovering from the end of the mining boom, six people with barriers to work are competing for every low-skilled entry-level job. In South Australia, eight of these jobseekers are competing for each suitable job. And in Tasmania, there are a staggering twelve jobseekers for each suitable job.

These figures might seem overwhelming, but they are in fact a conservative estimate. Over 1.13 million Australians were underemployed in our sample month, and some of them were likely to be applying for the same positions as entry-level jobseekers.

It is also important to remember that people with barriers to work are not simply competing with one another. Many will find themselves competing with recent graduates, retrenched workers, and other applicants with greater skills who often apply for positions below their skill level. All of this means that competition for low-skilled, entry-level jobs is much stronger than this Snapshot suggests.

The Snapshot explores some of the reasons for this disparity. Key in these considerations is the decline in the number of Level 5 job vacancies. Just 14 percent of all vacancies were low-skilled jobs at the entry level when we took our snapshot.

In the face of these findings, it is clear that we need major reform of our employment services system. We must move away from a model that entrenches poverty and punishment to one that provides a tailored approach for each person. This approach would work in partnership with people to consider individual circumstances, strengths and aspirations. It would support people into the right training programs and jobs for them. It would also support them to stay in employment – a crucial factor for people moving out of long-term unemployment.

There remains a clear need to raise the base rates of government support for people who are unemployed. People seeking work should not be trapped in poverty while they search for a job, and current rates are so low that they are a barrier to jobseeking in and of themselves.

And finally, we must start a conversation across the community about creative solutions. This Snapshot looks at proposals for a Universal Basic Income and a Jobs Guarantee, and calls for an inquiry to explore whether they could be trialled in Australia.

As it stands, there is a crisis facing the most vulnerable people in our workforce. If we do not change course, we risk leaving them behind and denying them a stake in our prosperity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the 2018 Jobs Availability Snapshot, Anglicare Australia calls for:

- 1 An immediate increase in the rate of Newstart and Youth allowance. People seeking work should not be trapped in poverty or denied the chance to participate in their community while they seek work. Establishing an independent commission to set the ongoing rates and indexation for these payments would ensure they continue to meet increasing costs of living.
- 2 A re-design of employment services around a person-centred model. Under this approach, providers would work in partnership with people seeking work, acknowledging their individual strengths, aspirations and situations. Recognising the failures of the previous system, the new model must be designed to meet the needs of people experiencing long-term unemployment.
- 3 An inquiry into the existing evidence and models for a basic income and job guarantee, and consideration of the benefits if trialled in Australia.

INTRODUCTION

The Jobs Availability Snapshot (the Snapshot) is an annual analysis undertaken by Anglicare Australia to test the opportunities in the labour market for people with the greatest barriers to work. The Snapshot was first conducted in 2016, and analyses government data to compare the number of people receiving income support who have significant barriers to gaining employment, with the number of suitable available positions in the sample month of May. This provides an insight into the experience of people experiencing disadvantage who are required by the government to seek work. It also opens a conversation about how the labour market and government interventions currently succeed or don't succeed in supporting people to participate in employment.

There are many barriers that hinder people from finding work, such as finishing school without a year 12 qualification; re-entering the workforce after a period of caring for someone; living in an area with few jobs and having no ability to move; living with a mental illness or disability; and having low literacy or numeracy. Similarly, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and older workers where the industry utilising their skills has declined, also face ongoing barriers to entering or re-entering the workforce. We also know that the longer people are unemployed, the longer they are likely to remain so.ⁱⁱ People with significant barriers to employment tend to seek jobs that require minimal qualifications, skills and experience, in order to get a foot in the door of the labour market.

The long-term economic trend is towards a more complex and highly-skilled jobs market, and less and less availability of low-skill, entry-level positions.ⁱⁱⁱ Despite this, consecutive governments have continued to tighten Australia's already targeted social safety net, and the current Government has passed legislation to further increase the highly punitive mutual obligation requirements for people accessing unemployment benefits. These requirements are based on an assumption that there is enough suitable work available and people who are unemployed and accessing income support could get a job if they tried hard enough.

The Snapshot tests this assumption by asking whether there are enough low skill, entry level jobs for the number of Australians needing them. In answering this question, this research shows that the reality of finding work particularly for those requiring low-skill positions is challenging and complex. This challenges us to rethink the support government provides to people as they look for work. We are faced with an alternate question as to what could happen if we regarded unemployment not as a result of a character flaw, but an economic and social policy issue which together we can change.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The Jobs Availability Snapshot examines whether there is enough work available for people with limited skills and experience, who are required by government to seek work. This annual Snapshot explores how well the labour market creates opportunities for people with significant barriers to gaining work. It focuses on unemployed people with limited skills, experience and qualifications because this group has the most difficulty finding a job. They are also likely to experience some of the longest periods of unemployment and are subject to the fiercest scrutiny when seeking assistance.

The Snapshot compares data on the number of people with significant barriers to gaining work with the number of suitable advertised positions in a given month. May was chosen as the sample month because it falls outside known large cycles that temporarily alter jobs availability such as seasonal work. It is also a typical reporting month for various publicly available government statistics on the labour market.



The Snapshot compares the number of people with barriers to work with the number of suitable advertised positions



A detailed methodology for the Snapshot can be [found online](#). In summary, the Snapshot draws on three federal government data sets:

- » The **Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)** which is a typology of all potential positions in the labour market by the qualifications and skill levels required, and experience;^{iv}
- » The **Internet Vacancy Index (IVI)** which examines the distribution of currently advertised positions, by ANZSCO skill level;^v and
- » Jobactive caseload data associated with the **Job Seeker Classification Index (JSCI)**, used to classify people accessing government funded employment services according to the barriers they face to entering the workforce.^{vi}

The Snapshot analysis draws on these three data sources to compare the number of jobs available with the number of jobseekers who have significant barriers to gaining employment. Firstly, the ANZSCO is used to identify the range of suitable jobs for someone with minimal qualifications, skills or experience. Secondly, the IVI data is used to determine how many of the jobs advertised in the given month are suitable. Finally, the Jobactive caseload data is used to compare the number of jobseekers with significant barriers to work with the number of suitable positions. This provides a ratio of the number of people to the number of jobs, which paints a picture of whether there are enough jobs to meet demand.

The Snapshot compares data on the number of jobseekers with the number of low-skill, entry- level jobs

Job classification

The ANZSCO categorises the different types of occupations available in the modern Australian labour market and the skill level required for each kind of work. The ANZSCO lists each job type according to five skill levels:

- 1: Bachelor degree or higher qualification, or at least 5 years relevant experience
- 2: Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma or Diploma, or at least 3 years relevant experience
- 3: Certificate IV, Certificate III with at least 2 years training, or at least 3 years relevant experience
- 4: Certificate II, Certificate III, or at least 1 year relevant experience
- 5: Certificate I, compulsory secondary education, and/or on-the-job-training.

The Snapshot compares the number of level 5 jobs, and level 4 and 5 jobs combined, to the number of people with barriers to work who are looking for employment. We do this to ensure that our conclusions are robust and to acknowledge variation in the skills and qualifications of the people and jobs on offer.

Job advertisements

The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) collates the number of job vacancies advertised across Australia and rates them according to ANZSCO skill levels. The IVI counts online job advertisements newly posted on SEEK, CareerOne and Australian JobSearch during the sample month. This does not capture all available jobs – while the IVI sometimes includes duplicates where a single vacancy appears on multiple job sites, it can also mask the number of vacancies such as when a single advertisement is placed for a bulk recruitment round. However, analysis by the ABS has established that these variations do not affect the efficacy of the IVI in measuring shifts in employment, and it is therefore a credible indicator of the number of actual job opportunities.^{vii}

The Snapshot draws on the IVI to calculate ratios of people seeking work to jobs advertised nationally and in each state and territory. While the IVI provides data at a regional level, this does not correspond to the regions used by the ABS for Jobactive data.

People seeking work

The Snapshot uses data provided by the Department of Jobs and Small Business on people accessing government funded employment services. It focuses on those classified as Stream C jobseekers who need significant support to gain employment.

This cohort must undergo a rating through the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) to determine the level of difficulty they face in gaining work. The JSCI assesses a number of factors known to be associated with difficulty in gaining work, including low level of education, low skills or qualifications, long-term absence from the workforce, and particular demographic factors associated with workforce exclusion such as older age, disability or culturally and linguistically diverse background. According to their score on the JSCI, people are moved into “streams” of employment support. Stream C is for those with the greatest barriers to work and who require the most support.

The Snapshot is conservative in estimating the number of people with significant barriers to employment, as not every person experiencing disadvantage accesses government employment services or qualifies for Stream C. However the use of Stream C data allows the Snapshot to compare official federal government data on the number of people seeking work with significant barriers to employment and the skill level of job vacancies. This provides an evidence based snapshot and reflects government information on this aspect of the labour market.

As the Snapshot is necessarily conservative, the experience of someone with significant barriers to employment is likely to be even more difficult than our findings show.

SNAPSHOT FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the number of people looking for work, including those classified as Stream C in the sample month of May 2018.

Table 1. People seeking work, May 2018

People seeking work	National total
Number of people unemployed	714,500
Number of people underemployed	1,127,400
Jobactive caseload	673,771
Jobactive Stream C caseload	110,735

Sources: ABS Labour Market Figures Seasonally Adjusted^{viii} May 2018 and the Labour Market Information Portal May 2018

This context is important. It shows that while our Snapshot focuses on the ratio of people in Stream C jobactive to suitable jobs, there are many others who may be applying for the same positions. The ratios we calculate are therefore likely to be very conservative as a measure of the actual competition for available and suitable jobs.

Jobs advertised

The number of jobs advertised in May 2018, as measured by the IVI, was in line with trends over the year where an average of 177,728 jobs were advertised each month. Of the 185,662 jobs advertised in May, 26% were at a skill level 4 and 14% at skill level 5 according to

the consolidated ANZSCO metric. As Table 2 shows, by far the greatest proportion of jobs advertised were at skill level 1. This is in keeping with an ongoing trend of jobs being created at higher professional skill levels, and fewer jobs at low or entry skill level.

Table 2. Proportion of jobs advertised by skill level, May 2018

Vacancy skill level	National total	National percent
Level 1	72,481	39%
Level 2	16,140	9%
Level 3	22,193	12%
Level 4	48,853	26%
Level 5	25,997	14%
All vacancies total	185,662	100%

Ratio of people to jobs

When comparing the number of people in Stream C jobactive to the number of jobs advertised, we found a ratio of 4.26 people with significant barriers to work to positions advertised at level 5. We found a ratio of 1.48 people to positions advertised at combined levels 4 or 5. This means for every level 5 position, there are at least four people looking for work. The ratios of people to advertised positions in each state and territory are shown in Table 3. The situation is most difficult for people seeking low skill positions in Tasmania and South Australia.

Table 3. Ratio of people in Stream C jobactive to jobs advertised by region

Region	People per job level 5	People per job levels 4 and 5
Australia	4.26	1.48
Queensland	4.77	1.81
NSW	3.72	1.20
ACT	1.82	0.62
Victoria	3.17	1.12
Tasmania	11.86	5.43
South Australia	8.48	3.29
Western Australia	5.93	1.93
Northern Territory	2.63	1.01

Compared to the 2017 Snapshot^{ix} the overall ratio has improved slightly. However this is not because there are more jobs for those who need them, but because there are less people in Stream C jobactive. As Figure 1 shows, there has been an ongoing decline in the number of entry-level jobs. Government analysis also shows that despite increases in high skill positions, entry-level positions have continued to drop significantly, with a less conservative consolidation of skill level 5 positions declining by 5.1% between May 2017 and May 2018.^x

Figure 1. Trends in national job advertisements 2010 to 2018



Despite the decline in suitable work, the number of people in Stream C jobactive has also declined significantly. As Table 5 shows, there has been a consistent reduction of 10-11% of people in Stream C jobactive each year since the first Snapshot. It is this decline that has led to a more favourable ratio of jobseekers to the number of jobs available.

Table 5. Change in number of people in Stream C jobactive 2016-2018

	May 2016	May 2017	May 2018
Stream C caseload	138,812	124,385 (-10.4% from 2016)	110,735 (-11.0% from 2017)
Jobactive caseload	778,676	739,153 (-5.1% from 2016)	673,768 (-8.4% from 2017)
Stream C as % of total Jobactive caseload	17.8%	16.8%	16.4%

There are a number of possible explanations for this decline in the number of people in Stream C. The overall number of people in the jobactive caseload has also decreased over the last three years. However, the proportion of people in Stream C as a total of the overall caseload has remained relatively stable. If anything, we would expect this proportion to be increasing, given recent analysis from ACOSS and Jobs Australia which shows an increasing percentage of people on unemployment payments are people over the age of 45 and people with a disability (after the tightening of Disability Support Pension eligibility). Both of these cohorts face significant barriers to employment, and are more likely to qualify for Stream C support.



These findings point to experiences of disadvantage that have not been addressed through economic growth, which has resulted in more complex work at higher skill levels



ACOSS and Jobs Australia's research also found concerning levels of ongoing unemployment, where 44% of people receiving unemployment payments had done so for more than two years, and 15% for more than five years.^{xi} This is consistent with the Department of Social Services' 2017 valuation report which found there were no significant improvements in the rate of people leaving Newstart and Youth Allowance payments between 2013-17.^{xii} This situation is particularly difficult for Stream C participants, where the Department of Jobs and Small Business has found the average length of time in jobactive for people in Stream C is five years.^{xiii}

These findings point to experiences of significant disadvantage and barriers to employment. These experiences have not been addressed through economic growth, which has resulted in more complex work at higher skill levels. It is possible that more people have found informal or casual work to get by, not picked up by the Internet Vacancy Index. However, the lack of significant growth in appropriate entry-level jobs suggests the decline in the number of people in Stream C jobactive is not necessarily due to people moving into employment, but fewer people in need accessing or being granted Stream C support. As it is, the Snapshot findings show that there is still not enough work for those seeking low skill entry-level positions, and this group continue to be systemically excluded from the workforce.



Across Australia, there are at least four people competing for each low-skilled, entry-level job

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Anglicare Australia's third Jobs Availability Snapshot shows that current policy settings are failing people with barriers to work. Once again we have found there are not enough entry-level jobs for those who need them. Simply put, forcing people to look for jobs that simply aren't there is not helping.

The Snapshot adds to the growing body of evidence that people receiving a government income and looking for work are systemically excluded from the workforce.^{xiv} These findings demonstrate the need to change how we support people looking for work, particularly for people with significant barriers to gaining employment. They also challenge us to think more deeply about how we value and support people's participation in, and contribution to, our society.

From poverty and punishment to people-centred support

There is an overwhelming consensus that the Australian government sets income support at far too low a level.^{xv} As a consequence, people living on government incomes are trapped in a cycle of growing hardship, poverty, stress, ill health, and a daily struggle for survival that makes finding work even harder.

An immediate increase to income support is part of the solution. The Australian government must also recast the way benefits are calculated, removing the penalties and disincentives presently in place, and allow people to take advantage of incremental and part-time work. There is

also strong support for the establishment of an independent commission to consider the cost of living for people receiving income support, and to set these payments and ongoing indexation levels accordingly.^{xvi}

At the same time, employment services must be radically overhauled. The jobactive network is rightly facing intense scrutiny and criticism for its failure to offer genuine support and facilitate people into appropriate work – particularly people experiencing additional barriers to securing a job. The current system reflects a lack of acknowledgement of the job market – as the Snapshot consistently shows that there is a lack of entry-level jobs for those who need them.

The Department of Jobs and Small Business' own discussion paper on the future of employment services states that "almost half of the people in jobactive have remained in the service for two years or more. Among the most disadvantaged job seekers (Stream C), the average length of time on the caseload is five years."^{xvii} The recently released report by Per Capita and the Australian Unemployed Workers Union documents the failings of the jobactive network in detail.^{xviii} Clearly, the system is broken and must be overhauled as a matter of urgency.

Anglicare Australia has made several relevant recommendations in our submission on the future of the employment services system, which could be acted on immediately.^{xix} Research from our network shows that a person-centred approach would be much more effective in supporting long-term employment outcomes.^{xx} Such an approach would acknowledge individual differences and situational factors, and

recognises people's agency, strengths and aspirations. Employment services should be immediately reformed along these lines to support people into appropriate training and work, and to provide ongoing assistance to help them stay in employment. This is particularly crucial for people experiencing long-term unemployment and significant barriers to work.

Employment services must also be decoupled from penalties such as the loss of government income support. The current regime creates more hardship and suffering for people who are already highly vulnerable and trying to survive on government income payments well below the poverty line.

Finally, due to the marketisation and lack of proper regulatory oversight for jobactive providers, there is an urgent need to create a third party independent body to better regulate employment services. This body should also provide advocacy for the people reliant on these services.

Looking to the future, Anglicare Australia rejects the notion that increasing competition will necessarily provide better outcomes for people who are unemployed or increase the quality of services.

Indeed the evidence shows that human services are poorly suited to marketisation and competition as a means to produce better outcomes for the people they are meant to serve,^{xxi} an observation echoed by the Productivity Commission.^{xxii} The outsourcing of employment services, particularly the inclusion of for profit providers, has opened the way for widespread rotting of the system and harm to vulnerable people.^{xxiii}

// Employment services must be decoupled from penalties such as the loss of income support //

employment services. Recent research by the Productivity Commission has found that despite 27 years of uninterrupted economic growth, the proportion of Australians living on very low incomes (9-10%) has not changed.^{xxiv} This persistent disadvantage is one illustration that a new approach is needed to enable every Australian to have the opportunity to live a dignified life and participate fully in society. More broadly, the nature of employment has become more insecure and more casualised. Less than half of the employed population in Australia now holds a permanent full-time paid job with leave entitlements.^{xxv} It is particularly difficult for young people entering the workforce, with nine-in-ten new positions created in 2017-18 for people under the age of 25 being part-time.^{xxvi} However, deterioration of work security and persistent disadvantage are not inevitable. As a society we have the constant opportunity to shape and re-shape our course.

The Australian Government must recognise its responsibility for stewardship of the system and ensuring people who need government-funded employment services get high quality support. We also need governments to think beyond

We need to re-think our understanding of work based on what we find meaningful

Helping every person participate, valuing every contribution

Our current market economy, and the governments that shape it, insist on measuring and valuing participation in society solely in terms of paid employment. As a result, government assistance for people has become narrowly focused: A job is the only pathway to meaning and worth, the market is the best and only place to get a job, and not having one is a sign of individual failure and must be punished.

But these ideas are political constructs. This narrow definition of worthy participation in society neither reflects the reality of the many ways people contribute to our collective quality of life, nor how Australians themselves recognise the value of each other. Recent research commissioned by Anglicare Australia has found that the vast majority of Australians don't think anyone – whether working or receiving government income support – *deserves* to live in poverty. This research also found that Australians are much more compassionate towards people living in poverty than politicians commonly claim us to be.^{xxvii}

The results instead suggest that there is strong community support for Anglicare Australia's vision of a society which ensures that everyone is able to live a life in line with their inherent dignity, free of poverty and able to participate and contribute.

Perhaps this is because Australians are more aware that the contribution many people make to society is well beyond that of a narrow notion of profits and wages, and extends to creative endeavours, caring for one another, and caring for the environment and places in which we live.

For example, there are at least 2.7 million unpaid carers in Australia, 32% of whom are primary carers mainly for family members, of whom over half provide care for more than 20 hours a week.^{xxviii} There is also a strong ethos of volunteerism in Australia. A recent survey of the state of volunteering found 99% of volunteers would continue volunteering into the future and 93% saw positive changes as a result of their efforts, such as positive growth in others' lives, greater community connection, and greater personal sense of wellbeing.^{xxix} Volunteers make an enormous contribution to the work of the Anglicare Australia Network, with over 11,000 individuals serving their communities through our Network in 2016-17, including in aged care, foster and kinship care and emergency relief services. It is this social capital which is vital to a healthy, sustainable and connected society, and an expression of lives we feel are meaningful. Such contributions are 'work', even when it does not involve employment.

We need to re-think our understanding of work based on what we find meaningful, rather than a very narrow definition of the purpose of work as a means of wealth creation. The benefits of work are not simply fiscal. They extend a sense of contribution, mastery, connection with others and skill development. For example, research with mature age people in South Australia who had lost work found a common sense of frustration that they felt they couldn't contribute to society, support their children, and maintain their skills.^{xxx}

There is also a strong association between mental health and quality work. A longitudinal study with young people found that transition from school to satisfactory work was associated significant improvements in psychological wellbeing, while transition to either no employment or unsatisfactory employment saw no change in wellbeing.^{xxxi} These positive benefits of a sense of contribution, meaningful work, self-dependence and ability to care for others should be available to everybody. Where "job creation by the private sector is incidental to the main preoccupation, which is profitability",^{xxxii} we can deliberately create opportunities for work and centre work around what is a valuable contribution to society and what we find meaningful.

In practical terms, we could move towards this kind of society through adjusting the social safety net through policies such as a Job Guarantee, a Universal Basic Income, or both. Both of these policies represent a new way of thinking about work and participation, and how as a society we can support everyone to contribute, recognising the value of this both for the individual and society as a whole. Extensive work has been undertaken both in Australia and internationally to develop implementable models of a Universal Basic Income or a Job Guarantee. In this report, we will not focus deeply on the details of these economic and social policy proposals, but rather seek to further the broader public discussion on how such models may help us move towards the kind of society where everyone can contribute and live a happy and prosperous life.

A Job Guarantee

A Job Guarantee is an assurance from government that every person wanting to work could be employed through services to their community. People would be assured the minimum wage and employment entitlements, and the scheme would be voluntary (as distinct from current welfare requirements). The core values of a Job Guarantee scheme are contribution, reciprocity, citizenship and participation. The aim is to ensure everyone who wants to work is able to, and can contribute to their community and have the dignity of paid employment.

Many different models for a job guarantee have been developed, involving a government administrative system with community organisations partnering to facilitate employment opportunities. In Australia, researchers at the Centre of Full Employment and Equity at the University of Newcastle have developed an extensive workable model for a Job Guarantee in our context.^{xxxiii}

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A core principle of a
job guarantee is that it
is person-centred
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A core principle of a Job Guarantee is that it is person-centred, accepting each person as they are and where they are, and fitting a job to their expressed interests and skills.

This allows people to invest in their community where they have existing networks and social connections, and build on their strengths and aspirations. The kind of employment offered through a Job Guarantee scheme would be valuable to the community, but distinct to public service roles critical to the ongoing functioning of the community. The Job Guarantee provides a buffer when employment through the public or private sector shrinks or expands, as it would be expected that most people would transition from a Job Guarantee role into other employment. This approach accords with the findings of Anglicare Australia's research into the most effective approach to providing employment services.^{xxxiv}

Advocates of a Job Guarantee also argue that it would enhance the quality of paid work across all sectors, as employers in the public, private and not-for-profit areas would need to guarantee employees at least equal or better conditions than the Job Guarantee. Essential to the Job Guarantee is a broader recognition of different kinds of contributions people can make to society and an expanding imagination of what paid work could be. For example, Job Guarantee positions could be social and community services drawing on individual strengths and interests, such as assisting with local art classes, community visitor schemes, or Aboriginal communities taking care of land.

We can draw on case studies from the Anglicare Australia Network to demonstrate the material value of a Job Guarantee.

Roxanne lives with a severe mental health condition. Encouraged by Anglicare staff, Roxanne has started writing her life story, and with her quick-wittedness and engaging style has become an excellent public speaker. She has had a number of paid speaking engagements with local universities and social service agencies, providing education on what it is like to live with mental illness, and the importance of a home for stability and recovery. Roxanne deeply enjoys this work and through a job guarantee could receive regular payment employed as a community educator. (Name changed for confidentiality)

Dale lives with autism which affects his motor and socialisation skills. Dale has extensive knowledge about history and politics, gained through a hobby of listening to podcasts, and is a very skilled thinker and communicator. While Dale has a lot to contribute, it is difficult for him to find a job in the current market. Through a job guarantee, Dale could contribute his skills through tutoring in subjects where he has expertise. (Name changed for confidentiality)

These are just two examples of how a Job Guarantee could enable people to participate in their community and gain the benefits of stable employment. For many others, a job guarantee could allow them to maintain their skills in a period of otherwise unemployment, or gain the confidence and skills to transition to mainstream employment.

A Universal Basic Income

A Universal Basic Income would mean the government pays every adult citizen a basic minimum income, regardless of whether they are employed or not. There is increasing interest in a Universal Basic Income in Australia, and detailed analysis has been carried out on possible models for its introduction, including examining the socio-economic benefits for particular cohorts such as mothers.^{xxxv} Another Australian model has been proposed that includes a \$300 per week universal income floor with payment reduced for higher income earners, at an estimated cost of \$100billion a year.^{xxxvi} Various forms of a basic income are being or have been trialed in countries as diverse as Finland, Namibia, the Netherlands, India, Scotland, Kenya, Canada, and the United States. In Australia, there has been a small scale trial of a guaranteed Basic Income by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, from 1972-75 as part of the Family Action Centre project.^{xxxvii}

Advocates of a Universal Basic Income point to its potential to eradicate poverty and support people to contribute to society as they would like to without the pressures of securing an income. With the stability of a guaranteed income, people would be free to provide care for loved ones, contribute to local community projects, trial business ideas, pursue creative endeavours or further education, or engage in alternate forms of work if they choose to. Small-scale trials of a guaranteed income have demonstrated significant increases in wellbeing for people previously living under the poverty line, and associated decreases in costs to public health and social service systems.

Recent participants in the Ontario, Canada trial of a Basic Income reported they had moved from “surviving to thriving”.^{xxxviii} Participants gave examples of being able to afford stable housing, healthcare, to eat properly, enroll in further education, purchase equipment to better manage a disability, and plan for the future. These findings reflect consistent results from other past Basic Income trials and those in progress. Other benefits noted through trials have included more children completing formal education, and people being able to save and set up small business enterprises. Further, the common assumption that paying a Basic Income would see people opt out of formal employment has not borne out in trials.^{xxxix}

One of the most appealing aspects of a Universal Basic Income is that it benefits every citizen. Most Australians strongly support universal policies that benefit everyone, such as Medicare, Family Tax Benefits and the Aged Pension. In each of these cases most of the potential population – those with children, those over 65, those accessing healthcare – receive a benefit. This universalism also guards against stigmatising recipients. Because most people receive a benefit it is seen as normal, and the larger constituency is more politically powerful. Forthcoming research from Anglicare Australia also supports this view, with Australians clearly showing a strong preference for a society which leaves no-one behind and values everyone.^{xl}

Not one or the other, but working together

A Jobs Guarantee or Universal Basic Income are often portrayed as opposing policy choices. In fact, there is increasing recognition that they could work well in tandem to address two critical problems of how we as a community value each other and recognise participation. A Universal Basic Income ensures everyone can live a decent life including those who can't work, and supports people to explore ways to participate when they don't have paid work. A Jobs Guarantee ensures paid work is available to everyone who wants it and ensures everyone can have stable and fairly remunerated employment.^{xii}

The benefits of a Universal Basic Income and a Jobs Guarantee should be considered for Australia as we look to create a society where everyone is valued and can contribute to building community.



The benefits of a universal basic income and a job guarantee should be considered for Australia as we look to create a society where everyone is valued

CONCLUSION

Anglicare Australia's Jobs Availability Snapshot highlights the consistent shortfall of jobs for people facing the greatest barriers to work. These findings underline the need to move away from ever-tightening welfare restrictions and individual responsibility to a broad safety net which supports the participation of everyone and from which we all benefit.

Analysis of May 2018 data found a conservative ratio of 4.26 people with significant barriers to work to positions advertised at the lowest skill level (level 5), and 1.48 people to positions advertised at skill level 4 and 5. While the number of suitable positions advertised has not changed significantly since 2017, the number of people in Stream C jobactive has declined, possibly indicating a tightening of needs assessments relating to being recognised as having significant barriers to work which require additional assistance.

In response to these findings, Anglicare Australia calls for an immediate increase to unemployment payments. Current levels are so low that they keep people trapped in poverty, rather than enabling them to look for work in a difficult job market. Further the Government should begin reforming employment services to provide a person-centred model, separate mutual obligations from government income-based penalties, and create an independent third party to regulate employment service providers. Employment services must support providers to work in partnership with people seeking work, understanding their strengths, aspirations and situations, to find long-term and quality work.

Finally, addressing systemic unemployment will take long-term changes and a willingness to re-think our understanding of work and employment. Anglicare Australia shares a vision for a society in which no-one lives in poverty and where everyone can participate, experience the dignity of work and be valued for their unique contribution to their community. In progressing this vision, the Australian Government and community should consider the benefits of achievable models of a Universal Basic Income and a Jobs Guarantee.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the 2018 Jobs Availability Snapshot, Anglicare Australia calls for:

- 1** An immediate increase in the rate of Newstart and Youth allowance. People seeking work should not be trapped in poverty or denied the chance to participate in their community while they seek work. Establishing an independent commission to set the ongoing rates and indexation for these payments would ensure they continue to meet increasing costs of living.
- 2** A re-design of employment services around a person-centred model. Under this approach, providers would work in partnership with people seeking work, acknowledging their individual strengths, aspirations and situations. Recognising the failures of the previous system, the new model must be designed to meet the needs of people experiencing long-term unemployment.
- 3** An inquiry into the existing evidence and models for a Universal Basic Income and Jobs Guarantee, and consideration of the benefits if trialled in Australia.

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