



MEDIA RELEASE

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EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE THAT ‘STICKS’ STARTS IN THE ILLAWARRA

Young people in the Illawarra are now able to access an innovative – and proven – employment program specifically designed to help young people develop the confidence and skills needed to enter the workforce – and stay in it.

The Sticking Together Project (STP) was co-designed by major not-for-profit organisation, SYC Limited (SYC), specifically to help young people who are struggling to find and keep employment. It uses an intensive coaching model.

The NSW program is funded by the NSW Department of Industry through a \$10m outcomes-based contract, with financing provided by investors through a social impact bond (SIB) managed by Social Ventures Australia. This is the first SIB in Australia focused on youth employment.

According to SYC CEO Paul Edginton, the program has been a resounding success in the locations where it has operated.

“We help young people and employers ‘stick together’ by providing 60 weeks of personalised, one-to-one coaching for each young person, while also working with employers to understand how to best engage with these young people, as they both tackle a time of change,” he says.

“We know it works and we’re delighted to now be able to offer the same support to young people and employers in the Illawarra.”

SYC’s data shows that after 60 weeks of engagement with the program pilots in Adelaide and Melbourne, participants had more than doubled their hours of work engagement and two thirds were no longer receiving any working-age welfare benefits.

Three months after they finished the program, 84 per cent were still working and 75 per cent were no longer receiving welfare payments.

“Even more compelling than the impressive numbers is the incredibly positive feedback we get time and time again from young people who had often given up on themselves,” says Mr Edginton.

One such participant in the NSW program, Skye, had never had a ‘proper’ job before and has already experienced first-hand the excitement and wellbeing that comes from getting a job.

“I was really excited and nervous for my interview, but I received so much guidance and support from my coach that I got the job!”

“Getting my first name badge and uniform made me feel like I was finally getting somewhere in my life. I am so excited!”

Sticking Together Project was conceptualised and co-designed by SYC in 2016 as an outcome of SYC’s My First Job initiative, which developed strategies to address Australia’s persistently high rate of youth unemployment.



The objective was to create a model that assisted young people in breaking into the workforce – and staying there – recognising that many young people had barriers to employment that required ongoing support to overcome.

Almost 900 young people aged 18 to 24 living in the areas of the city and inner south of Sydney, the Illawarra region and the Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven, will benefit from the coaching they will receive as participants of Sticking Together Project, which commences in April 2019 and will run for a period of four years.

SYC Head of the Sticking Together Project, Kellie Checkley, says she's excited to be able to introduce the program to young people in the Illawarra, given the success she has witnessed elsewhere.

"The young people we have worked with have the highest barriers to gaining and sustaining work and often an entrenched attitude that 'it's all too hard'. In the past it was easier for them to walk away than face the occasional and inevitable hurdles," she says.

"Employers are often willing to give jobs to young people with little experience, but sometimes have challenges when they're trying to support them. The Sticking Together Project supports employers to help them successfully 'stick together' with the young person they've employed."

The Sticking Together Project team is now inviting local referring partners to refer young people who could benefit from the program.

"This is great news for many young people in the city and inner south of Sydney who have struggled to get work and stay in work," says Ms Checkley. "We look forward to working closely with local referring partners as they embrace this opportunity."

ENDS:

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW:

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ABOUT SYC:

SYC has a relentless belief in people and their potential. We provide services that foster wellbeing, independence and opportunity for all Australians. A not-for-profit organisation, SYC invests back into the Australian community, helping more than 55,000 people every year with housing, education and employment. Founded in 1958 to support young people experiencing disadvantage, we now extend this expertise to people of all ages. With more than 50 outlets and 600 employees, SYC operates in South Australia, Melbourne, New South Wales and Queensland, offering services in our Work, Learning, Home and Justice portfolios.

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