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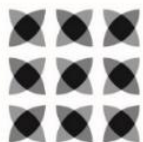
Good Sammy Open Employment Trials

Final evaluation report

Prepared for: Paul Ramsay Foundation and Good Sammy Enterprises

June 2026

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Glossary

ADE	Australian Disability Enterprises, previous name for Supported Employment Services SES
CSI	Centre for Social Impact, UWA
Closed employment	not open employment eg ADE, SES, Work Integrated Social Enterprise
Community partner	RTOs, schools, DES that deliver the training or identify the trainees (section 2.2)
DES	Disability Employment Services, now called Inclusive Employment Australia
GSE	Good Sammy Enterprises
Hybrid employment	Person works in GSE (part-time) and employment under provision of service model
IEA	Inclusive Employment Australia. Employment services replacing DES from 2026
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
Open employment	Open employment paid full award wages in workplaces (GSE and this report refers to this definition as full open employment)
Provision of service	Businesses pay GSE to supply and employ staff who are paid a supported employment wage (below full award wage for non-disabled workers). GSE refers to this as open employment, although it does not meet the policy definition of full award wages open employment
SES, Supported Employment Service	closed employment, current name for ADE
Supported employment	Supported employment wage, Supported Employment Services Award, below award wage for non-disabled workers.
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
UWA	University of Western Australia
UNSW	University of New South Wales, Sydney

Short summary

Good Sammy Enterprises (GSE) tried new models of employment support, the Traineeship and licences trial and the Hybrid employment trial. The trials offered training and work experience, with the goal to assist people with disability to build their capacity for open employment and to secure open employment with full award wages in workplaces outside GSE. The Social Policy Research Centre UNSW and Centre for Social Impact (CSI) UWA evaluated the trials with longitudinal mixed methods.

The effectiveness of the processes to achieve these goals was mixed. At the end of the trials, 3 people were in full award wage open employment and 7 people worked in businesses outside GSE and were paid a supported wage by GSE (provision of service). Other participants gained work experience, skills and confidence to consider open employment in the future. Future initiatives to enhance pathways to open employment by GSE and similar programs would focus on the following.

People with disability in open employment

- Offering school leavers direct customised employment and employment first to avoid transitions in and out of supported employment
- Ensuring training and licence options align with a participant's employment goals
- Developing individualised pathways to full award wage positions (e.g. from provision of service positions to part or full time full award wage employment)
- Combining pathways options with evidence-based employment first models, where an employment position is sought, followed by intensive on-the-job training at the workplace
- Offering personalised and tailored employment options through evidence-based workplace customisation, coupled with on-the-job workplace training and support
- Investing in sustaining open employment positions, including workplace training and ongoing support, social structures to develop belonging and inclusion in the workplace
- Collaborating with a range of mainstream employers and with Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) providers to leverage their capacity and employer relationships
- Tracking outcomes to monitor effectiveness of employment pathways, including tracking flexible movement between options and after exit in pathways to track sustainability and impact of employment and training outcomes.

Inclusive workplaces

- Designing initiatives aligned and/or integrated with IEA providers and other partners who could leverage employer relationships to secure and maintain full award wage employment
- Building employer capacity and confidence by collaborating with current programs to implement inclusive workplace practices, including transition plans to full award wage employment
- Engaging and supporting employers to employ people directly, with on-the-job training for the participant, co-workers and managers to build employers' capacity for workplace inclusion and adjustments
- Building GSE workforce capacity for customisation, employment first and other evidence based practices for tailored workplace support.

Business model to transform from destination employer to pathway service

- Planning the implementation steps to have sufficient staff capacity, time and infrastructure to deliver services with an end goal of full wage open employment
- Individualising the support with a small group of participants to test and refine internal mechanisms and external collaboration for support, communication and program oversight with GSE, other providers, employers, participants and families
- Building consistent oversight and tracking of implementation and participants' progress to identify progress and challenges to participants, employers and staff.

Executive summary

Summary of participants in open employment trials, qualification and employment outcomes by award wage type

	Award wage type			
	Full	Supported or trainee	N/A ¹	Total
Employment at start of trials				
Expressed interest in open employment	-	75+	10+	85+
Open employment goal planning	-	50	10	60
Hybrid trial employment transitions months 1-29*				
Hybrid: employed provision of service ² only	-	6	-	6
Hybrid: employed in GSE and provision of service	-	11	-	11
Hybrid trial employment outcome end of trial month 30*				
Hybrid: employed in GSE and provision of service	-	2	-	2
Open employment	-	-	-	-
Unknown or left		**	**	15
Traineeship qualification outcomes				
Total started traineeship**	-	12	21	33
Completed, achieved qualification	-	6	13	19
Participated in course, did not qualify	-	5	8	13
Pending completion	-	1	-	1
Licence (car and forklift) qualification outcomes				
Total started licence	-	41	1	42
Completed, achieved qualification	-	26	1	27
Participated in course, did not qualify	-	7	1	8
Pending completion	-	7	-	7
Traineeship and licence trial employment outcome				
Employment outside GSE	1	5	-	6
Employment at GSE	2	6	-	8
Not employed, exploring options	-	**	**	16
Unknown work status, includes participants who did not achieve qualification	-	**	**	15

Source: GSE administrative data, June 2023 to December 2025.

Notes: Hybrid trial 9/2023-9/2026, target 100 participants. Traineeship and licences trial 9/2023-12/2025, target 60 participants.

1. No pay (school) or data not available. 2. Work in business outside GSE, paid a supported wage by GSE.

*n=17 where payroll records were available for the entire 30 months. Some participants had multiple transitions in the 30 months. **Supported employment at GSE, school leavers or data not available.

***During the trial, all trainees were employed at GSE on traineeship award wages.

Good Sammy Enterprises (GSE) is a for-purpose social enterprise with a mission to create employment opportunities for people with disability in Western Australia. GSE trialled new models of employment support, the Traineeship and licences trial and the Hybrid employment trial. The trials offered training and work experience to assist people with disability to build their capacity for open employment and to secure open employment with full award wages in workplaces outside GSE.

The Social Policy Research Centre UNSW and Centre for Social Impact (CSI) UWA evaluated the trials. The longitudinal mixed methods evaluation aimed to find the impact, outcomes and processes that were effective to achieve open employment with full award wages and other outcomes for participants with intellectual disability and mainstream employers.

The three goals in the trials were to prepare participants for open employment, facilitate participants' transitions into open employment and prepare employers for inclusive employment, relative to direct transitions to open employment. The effectiveness of the processes to achieve these goals was mixed. These results are presented in the summary table above.

Implications of the open employment outcomes for participants

Participants in the trials benefited from more options to develop employment skills and confidence. Some participants increased their income and work opportunities. The impact from completing accredited training and licences on paid work or transition from hybrid to full open employment was marginal and probably less effective compared to direct transition pathways.

Trainees and licensees had opportunities to develop workplace related skills and more clarity about what they wanted to do for future paid work. Some school leavers with disability who entered the provision of service positions¹ after successfully completing training, gained in workplace confidence and were better prepared to move into full award wage paid work. Current GSE employees on supported wages who completed the traineeships and licences did not find it easy to shift to open employment. Findings from the hybrid employment trial were that participants diversified their income and work tasks. Few positions were tailored to participants' personalised employment goals to secure full award wage work.

The effectiveness of nationally accredited training and hybrid options and how the models contributed to successful open employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability and transitions into full award wage open employment were less

¹ Worked in businesses outside GSE and were paid a supported wage by GSE

effective relative to direct transitions to open employment. Evidence suggests that processes like customisation (paid work tailored around a persons' interests and work goals) and employment first (where a job placement is followed by intensive on-the-job training at the actual mainstream workplace) are more effective in achieving and sustaining open employment outcomes for people with disability and higher support needs.

Future initiatives by GSE or other providers to enhance open employment pathways would focus on:

- Offering school leavers direct customised employment and employment first to avoid transitions in and out of supported employment
- Ensuring training and licence options align with a participant's employment goals
- Developing individualised pathways to full award wage positions (e.g. from provision of service positions to part or full time full award wage employment)
- Combining pathways options with evidence-based employment first models, where an employment position is sought, followed by intensive on-the-job training at the workplace
- Offering personalised and tailored employment options through evidence-based workplace customisation, coupled with on-the-job workplace training and support
- Investing in sustaining open employment positions, including workplace training and ongoing support, social structures to develop belonging and inclusion in the workplace
- Collaborating with a range of mainstream employers and with Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) providers to leverage their capacity and employer relationships
- Tracking outcomes to monitor effectiveness of employment pathways, including tracking flexible movement between options and after exit in pathways to track sustainability and impact of employment and training outcomes.

Implications of impact on employers and inclusive workplaces

GSE started with forming relationships with large employers to offer work through provision of service arrangements, where a participant works at a business and is employed by GSE. This approach aimed to build trust and familiarity between employers, GSE and participants. Employers also developed some confidence working with people with intellectual disability, making some workplace adjustments. Over

time, some employers offered a greater range of tasks and roles, increased days, hours, speed, new ways of working, alongside employment support.

Future initiatives by GSE or other providers to enhance open employment pathways would focus on:

- Designing initiatives aligned and/or integrated with IEA providers and other partners who could leverage employer relationships to secure and maintain full award wage employment
- Building employer capacity and confidence by collaborating with current programs to implement inclusive workplace practices, including transition plans to full award wage employment
- Engaging and supporting employers to employ people directly, with on-the-job training for the participant, co-workers and managers to build employers' capacity for workplace inclusion and adjustments
- Building GSE workforce capacity for customisation, employment first and other evidence based practices for tailored workplace support.

Implications for a business model to transform from destination employer to pathway service

Designing and refining training and employment systems and processes, and integrating these within the existing GSE system, was a major undertaking. Other internal processes that needed investment included oversight of the trials, training and capacity building for GSE staff and resourcing for the open employment team implementing the initiative. GSE staff required capacity to work alongside and build capacity of mainstream employers, support people with disability during transitions and at the workplace/training placement and communicating with families.

Future initiatives by GSE or other providers to enhance open employment pathways would focus on:

- Planning the implementation steps to have sufficient staff capacity, time and infrastructure to deliver services with an end goal of full wage open employment
- Individualising the support with a small group of participants to test and refine internal mechanisms and external collaboration for support, communication and program oversight with GSE, other providers, employers, participants and families
- Building consistent oversight and tracking of implementation and participants' progress to identify progress and challenges to participants, employers and staff.

1 Introduction to Good Sammy open employment evaluation

1.1 Good Sammy Enterprises

Good Sammy Enterprises (GSE) is a for-purpose social enterprise and charity with a mission to create employment opportunities for people with disability in Western Australia. For over 60 years they have provided jobs for people with disability and intellectual disability within their social enterprises. The enterprises include retail, with 30 op shops and e-commerce, recycling, logistics, hospitality, property care, warehousing and office administration. GSE is an all-abilities employer, of the 840 employees approximately half have a disability. GSE is also a registered provider for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), providing employment supports to people with disability.

In 2023, GSE was funded by two philanthropic grants to deliver two open employment and traineeship pilots. GSE trialled two models of employment support to assist people with intellectual and other disability to identify their strengths and interests, gain skills and accreditation and with the right support enable trial participants to secure open employment in the community. A second objective of the trials was to learn how specialist disability employers, like GSE, can play a role in the transition of people with disability in ADEs into full award wage mainstream employment.

The traineeship and licences trial operated 2 years from September 2023 to December 2025. The original trial aim (up to 60 participants with an intellectual disability) was modified to focus on quality outcomes of qualifications, work experience and employment pathways. It operated in GSE sites in Perth and across Western Australia, with a home base of Canning Vale, Greater Perth.²

The hybrid employment trial was for 3 years from September 2023 to September 2026. The original trial aim (up to 100 participants with intellectual disability and supporting up to 10 mainstream employers) was modified to focus on quality outcomes of creating inclusive open employment opportunities for people with disability.

The vision of GSE was to transform workplaces and employer attitudes so more people with intellectual and other disability have access to employment aligned with their personal goals. To achieve this, GSE used a range of activities and processes to

² <https://goodsammy.com.au/jobs-and-training/training-programs/>

develop and build skills, confidence, and create employment pathways and work opportunities for people with disability, also supporting mainstream employers.

GSE and the funders commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) UNSW and the Centre for Social Impact (CSI) UWA to evaluate the two pilot open employment trials.

1.2 People with intellectual disability in employment

The rate of people with disability in paid work remains persistently low (AIHW, 2022). People with disability are twice as likely to be unemployed or work fewer hours compared to people without disability (AHRC, 2016; AIHW, 2022; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Most people with intellectual disability in Australia in paid work continue to work in disability specific employment settings (NDIA, 2020; Wilson, Crosbie, Qian-Khoo, & Campbell, 2022). Often people with intellectual disability who secure work in open employment do not have sustained work opportunities (Meltzer, Robinson, & Fisher, 2020; Ruhindwa, Randall, & Cartmel, 2016).

The primary barriers to open employment for people with intellectual disability are two types, structural and systemic, as well as attitudinal. Since the 1980s, policies and programs have directed people with higher support needs to work in ADEs, where they work mostly in segregated settings and receive less than the full national minimum wage (Disability Royal Commission, 2023). Once connected to an ADE, most people with disability remain in disability specific employment, with few people shifting to open employment (Kregel et al., 2020; NDIA, 2020; Wilson et al., 2022).

Social connection, feelings of belonging and being valued and respected at work, are central determinant for the sustainability of open employment (Meltzer et al., 2020; Robinson, Hill, Fisher, & Graham, 2020; Sharpe, Hutchinson, & Alexander, 2022).

International evidence about supporting people with intellectual disability and higher support needs to gain and sustain community employment, points to core good practices for inclusive employment (Alexander, Gendera, Robinson, Fisher, & Howe, 2023; Sharpe et al., 2022):

- Working with employers to raise awareness, build disability inclusion confidence and provide tailored support to employers and workplaces to adapt practices, policies and create inclusive workplace cultures.

- ‘Place and train’ models of employment support, where the emphasis is on job placement in a preferred workplace and second, providing tailored employment support to the person with disability and the employer.
- Ensuring people with disability in open employment have ongoing support (including practical workplace adjustment, transport, job development, coaching and mentoring) so they continue to develop in their role, in confidence and feel socially included and belong in paid work.
- Supporting young people in their final years of school to have work placements that reflect their interests and employment goals.

The introduction of the NDIS shifted funding and policy directions away from segregated employment. The aim was to create new employment opportunities and redesign employment support. In addition to reasonable adjustment requirements on employers, the NDIS has the potential to facilitate high levels of support in all workplaces. These changes are potential pathways for open inclusive employment for all people with disability who want paid work (Wilson et al., 2022). To achieve inclusive employment for people with higher support needs the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) report (2023) also found that major support services and sectors needed to undergo reform. The DRC recommended major changes to Disability Employment Services (DES), increasing inclusive employment opportunities in the public sector and leveraging government influence to boost inclusive practices in the private sector.

Inclusive community employment of people with intellectual disability and people with higher support needs can be complex, requiring collaboration, vision and investment of government, private companies and employers, services and policy reforms. Lessons from the redevelopment and transformation of closed employment settings in other countries can inform the direction of ADEs’ transformation in Australia.

A prolonged program of research and evaluation in USA is a consolidated source of evidence on the changes required. Lyons and colleagues (2022) examined the results of a technical transformation project on a sheltered workshop environment to change the organisational structure and services to people with intellectual and developmental disability. The project was informed by a Delphi study that identified 10 elements of successful transformation (Lyons, Timmons, Cohen-Hall, & LeBlois, 2018). The participating organisations joined a community of practice to implement the elements. The study found positive results where conditions were met included, preparing people for competitive integrated employment; facilitating an active, person-centred job

placement process; engaging key stakeholders in job development; and focusing on individual job placement in the context of organisational transformation.

The **10 elements for successful transformation** of closed employment settings to employment support for open employment with full wages in the USA (Lyons et al 2018) are

1. Explicit commitment to integrated employment, including measurable goals for the organisational change
2. Organisational culture change to value inclusion and no longer support closed work or less than full wages
3. Person centred job placement process, one person at a time
4. Internal and external communication plan about expectation, process and celebration
5. Reallocated resources towards a post-transformation model
6. Staff professional development
7. Customer engagement including self-advocates, families and business
8. Accountability measures for baseline, data and communicating change
9. Holistic approach to the person's needs and relationships; and
10. Diverse community partnerships to promote exchange and influence.

The implications are that to meet the right to work of people with intellectual disability, employment support must take a dual track of closing or transforming closed employment, while also directly addressing opportunities for open employment and tailored person-centred support for people to succeed and thrive in community employment. The goals of the GSE open employment trials were to contribute to these two tracks. These elements are applied in Section **Error! Reference source not found..**

1.3 Evaluation approach and methods

The approach for this developmental evaluation was codesign of evaluation methods with program stakeholders and people with disability. The approach used inclusive research practice, involving advisors with disability in the design and data analysis stages to deliver sound findings reflecting the lived experience and priorities of people with disability.

The evaluation of the trials was designed to assess the process, impact and outcomes from the two trials using a longitudinal mixed methods design. The core evaluation

methods included program data review (documents and administrative data collected by GSE), stakeholder interviews (GSE staff and managers, employers, program partners, like RTOs, schools and family members), inclusive stories of most significant change and outcome surveys with participants with intellectual disability in the traineeship/licences and the hybrid employment trial.

The longitudinal mixed methods evaluation aimed to find the impact, outcomes and processes that were effective in the trials to achieve the intended outcomes for participants with disability and employers with a particular focus on

1. Impact and outcomes for participants with disability and their families
2. Impact on mainstream employers
3. Impact on the GSE business model (replicability and scalability of open employment models)
4. Impact and lessons for systemic change and advocacy
5. Lessons for the partnership between GSE and the two funders.

Figure 1 is an overview of the key evaluation questions mapped against the evaluation data sources. Appendix A has a detailed list of evaluation questions guiding the 18-month and 3-year research.

Table 1. Core evaluation questions by evaluation data

	Program document review (policies, framework, reports)	Interviews - staff, managers, partners, employers, policy makers	Stories of change – people with disability from interviews and observations	Program data and economic analysis (Outcome, output trial data compared to GSE and govt datasets)
1. Impact on participants with disability. Open employment outcomes for people with disability after six, twelve and eighteen months?		✓	✓	✓
Impact of trials on other outcomes - PwD social, emotional and skills development		✓	✓	✓
2. Impact of trials on mainstream employers (changes to employer practices, inclusion confidence, retention)	✓	✓	✓	
3. Impact on the GSE business model	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Generalising from the trials				
What is the potential of the employment models to be replicated and scaled up (other ADEs, social enterprises)?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impact of trials on systemic change and advocacy		✓	✓	
5. Lessons for the partnership between GSE and the two funders		✓	✓	

See Appendix A For the full list of evaluation questions

The evaluation study had UNSW ethics approval Number iRECS5997. Stakeholders involved in the data collection (interviews, stories of change) provided written or verbal consent to include the data collected for analysis.

2 Implementing the open employment trials

This section presents the findings about how the trials were designed and implemented. The two trials are presented separately, with a descriptive overview of key activities, processes, systems and support mechanisms. Appendix C is a visual overview of GSE processes relevant to the trials in the Program logic and refer to the description of GSE activities and processes. The outcomes for participants from the trials are presented in Section 3.

Evaluation questions about trial processes

- i. What aspects of each model contribute to successful open employment outcomes and for whom?
 - How do nationally accredited training programs (traineeships and licence programs) contribute to open employment outcomes?
 - How does providing hybrid employment across ADE and open settings prepare participants and employers for mainstream employment relative to direct transitions?

2.1 Summary of implications from the trial processes

GSE established new processes to engage with trial participants to enrol and maintain training or work in the trials. GSE also established employer and employment service partnerships in the community for training, employment support and employment.

GSE introduced changes by establishing positions for coordinators to manage the trials and relationships with employers developing and integrating systems within GSE, payment to participants, inclusive adjustments in the training and workplaces. They aimed to personalise paid work to the person and their interests. They established dedicated workplace supports to provide quality support at work as well as opportunities for team building and learning of new skills for employees with disability.

The three goals in the trials were to prepare participants for open employment, to facilitate participants' transitions into open employment and to prepare employers for inclusive employment relative to direct transitions to open employment. The effectiveness of the processes to achieve these goals was mixed.

Preparing participants (traineeships and licences) provided opportunities to develop workplace related skills and more clarity about what they wanted to do for future paid work. Some school leavers with disability who entered work through the provision of

service model, after successfully completing training, gained in workplace confidence and felt better prepared to move into full award wage paid work. Current GSE employees on supported wages who completed the traineeships and licences did not find it easy to shift to open employment. Findings from the hybrid employment trial were that participants diversified their income and work tasks. Few positions were tailored to participants' personalised employment goals and to secure full award wage work. GSE was unable to find work internally or externally that met these goals.

The effectiveness of nationally accredited training and hybrid options and how the models contributed to successful open employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability and transitions into full award wage open employment were less effective relative to direct transitions to open employment. Evidence suggests that processes like 'customisation' (paid work is tailored around a persons' interests and work goals) and 'employment first' (where a job placement is followed by intensive on-the-job training at the actual mainstream workplace) are more effective in achieving and sustaining open employment outcomes for people with disability and higher support needs.

2.2 Implementing the traineeship and licences trial

Design of the traineeship and licences trial

The traineeship and licences trial aimed to build participants' skills, confidence and work experience. The trial supported people with intellectual disability to undertake and complete a nationally recognised certification (Certificate 2 and Certificate 3) or a licence (car or forklift) to prepare for future employment. Traineeship candidates chose from a range of supported environments: retail (GSE opportunity shops), supply chain (warehousing), hospitality, business administration or human resources. The goal of the trial was for participants to complete the certificate or licence and seek open employment with GSE support.

Table 2. Traineeship and licences trial participants by recruitment, qualification and employment outcomes

	Qualification by recruitment source						
	Traineeship			Licence			
	School	Adults	Total	Car School	Adults* Adults*	Forklift Adults*	Total
Qualification outcome							
Total started	21	12	33	1	18	23	42
1. Completed, achieved qualification	13	6	19	1	4	22	27
2. Participated in course, did not achieve qualification	8	5	13	-	7	1	8
3. Pending completion	-	1	1	-	7		7
Employment status of participants after traineeship and/or licence							
4. Employed full award wage	1	2*	3	-	-	-	-
5. Provision of service (supported wage from GSE)	1	2	3	-	-	5	5
6. Employed at GSE – supported wage award	2	-	2	-	4	2	6
7. Not employed, exploring options	9	3	11	1	4	11	16
8. Unknown work status, includes participants who did not achieve qualification	8	5	14	-	10	5	15

Source: Good Sammy Funder report November 2025 and GSE administrative data.

Note: Target 60 participants. During the trial, all trainees were employed at Good Sammy on traineeship award wages. *employed at GSE

The trainees and licensees³ received support and skills from various professionals. The support they received depended on their pathway and support needs: education assistants through school, RTO (Registered Training Organisation) staff, licence training providers, GSE staff (mentor, managers, staff and supervisors) and their family.

Error! Reference source not found. summarises the participants in the trial to January 2026. Most trainees (21/33) were school students in their final years of high school (years 11-13). The licensees (42) were school students and existing GSE employees and other people with disability. Participants in traineeships were paid for their hours worked during the traineeship. Pay rates were determined by the person's current year at school or their final year of education when they had completed school. Pay rates were \$10.49 to \$21.31 per hour. The licensees received a free program that covered the cost of obtaining the licence (hours for learning, practice and licence).

³ The evaluation received administrative pay roll data for 9 participants, analysed in Section 3.

GSE employed staff and formed partnerships to implement the trial.

Traineeship Coordinator. The Traineeship Coordinator manages the trial. The position was central for coordination, troubleshooting and relationship building with other stakeholders and partners involved in the program (schools, RTOs, trainees and their families).

Schools. The traineeship trial established connections with schools through principals and VET, Workplace Learning and Careers Coordinators. Schools referred trainees who wished to complete a Cert 2 and Cert 3 accreditation and work alongside the RTO provider supporting students in their learning and course achievement.

Registered Training Organisations. RTOs document and certify when trainees attain their nationally recognised qualifications. The RTO role was to check in with trainees regularly (3-4 weeks) and make inclusive adjustments to support their learning and communicate progress with schools and families.

Accreditation training providers for licences. GSE partnered with mainstream registered licence providers who had expertise working inclusively to train people for car and forklift licences.

Experience implementing the traineeship and licences trial

The **traineeship coordinator role** was responsible for recruiting and enrolling participants, managing and building partnerships with schools and VET counsellors, selecting inclusive RTOs, liaising between parents, RTOs, school and the traineeship participants. When this role was vacant during the trial the duties were shared by other staff. The absence of a central point of contact at times affected the delivery of the trial from communication, administrative workload and VET expertise.

The **financial component** of the trial contributed to the success. Participants completed accredited training, while receiving an income for their time working in the traineeship. Participants, family, teachers and program stakeholder commented that the 'offer was too good' to be true. They said earning a decent wage was an incentive for young people to try something they might have otherwise not considered. Similarly, the trial covered the cost of licence practice hours and accreditation, which reduced barriers to access.

Inclusive adaptations and adjustments to the learning needs of the participants contributed to success rates in the trial. RTOs, GSE and the licence accreditors worked together within an inclusive practice framework (e.g. in the forklift licence program) to achieve completion of training and certification of most registered participants. In other

areas, like the car licence or retail traineeships, the inclusion adaptations varied and participants with fewer adaptation requirements were more likely to remain engaged in the trial. A small number of participants in retail traineeships exited the program (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The traineeships required school leavers to complete a minimum Certificate 2 or 3, which GSE staff said probably meant that schools and teachers were less likely to select students with complex or higher support needs to participate in the trial. Some traineeship participants exited (including due to change of mind, mismatch with participants' training interest, illness, limited adaptation to complete written component and other reasons).

Participants satisfaction with the **traineeships also depended** on the **options they had**, some had more than others, depending on their location, the types of training placements available in GSE at the time of enrolment and GSE connections with community partners, including RTOs, schools or DES, with commitment to quality inclusive practices. Participants with limited access to public or other transport options had restricted options for placement. GSE provided transport regularly for the benefit of participants and employers. Some traineeship participants said they were placed in work positions they had little interest in, but they were restricted to what was on offer at the time in a suitable location, until they could change to a different option, according to trainees and GSE staff.

As a large organisation, GSE has various social enterprises (office administration, warehousing, marketing, retail, gardening and catering) that contributed to the success of the trial. GSE made traineeship positions available throughout their business and set up processes to monitor upcoming vacancies.

GSE capacity to link trial graduates to paid employment varied. Where GSE had established links to employers with identified job vacancies (e.g., the service delivery model), some traineeship graduates were supported to enter paid open employment. Pay during the trial was on the trainee award (below full award wage). Participants and families in the interviews said the paid work gave school-leavers with a 'stepping stone' to find out what they wanted to do in the future and an opportunity to practise workplace skills and develop confidence. Trainees also grew in personal development (e.g., expressed greater clarity about future employment goals, transition into full award wage employment, career progression). Data about graduate pathways was limited, especially for school leavers. GSE had limited connections to DES providers. This limited GSE capacity to find paid employment opportunities for trial graduates except to employers where GSE had existing relationships.

Supportive, trained staff and managers. Families and participants spoke of GSE staff as 'committed', 'helpful' and 'supportive'. Staff changed during the implementation of

the trials. Communication about staff changes caused confusion and fear with some families and participants in the trial. They spoke of the risks of ‘people falling through the cracks’ during transition or having to repeat their ‘stories’. Change management processes potentially affected trust and relationships with some families and participants.

Philanthropic funding and partnerships. Essential for the delivery of the trial was the funding to deliver the program and payments to trainee participants. GSE management underlined the importance of funding ‘to test out ... new approaches’ within their business model. The sustainability of the trial depended on the availability of funding to fund GSE staff positions (coordinator, mentors, administration) and to pay for traineeship wages to participants with intellectual disability.

Implications from the traineeship and licences trial for similar programs

Implications of the evaluation are about the extent of the inclusive practices, the quality of the community partnerships and capacity and support of creating pathways to paid employment.

GSE were in the early stages of developing relationships with IEA (was DES) and RTOs to build from the experience of the trial, both within the design of the training and the opportunities to link graduates to paid jobs. These lessons were about how to recruit participants to the training, how to make personalised adjustments for accessibility and how to plan pathways to paid employment or further training that result in paid employment.

The first general implication is about how GSE addressed adjustments for inclusivity in training, certification and licences through direct support and engagement with partners who are committed to inclusive practice. This question has implications for which participants are selected into the training, how they are encouraged to participate, how their support needs are met, how their confidence is built that adjustments will be made and which choices they can make about training and licences.

The second implication is about the quality of the community partnerships. The partnerships with schools and RTOs (and potentially with IEA and employers) affect the level of participant engagement, choice of traineeship and licence options and degree of inclusive practice (above). Establishing and managing quality partnerships was critical to this type of program. It also informs the broader question about what form a complementary role of ADEs could take in the employment support system (Section 5).

The third implication is how GSE and the partners facilitated participants' pathways to paid employment outside of GSE (Table 2). Some participants from this trial were still in school or graduated without further support from GSE. Other GSE supported employment participants either remained in supported employment or entered provision of service positions. As open employment is a new service model for GSE, the trial was not sufficiently established to have data about this goal. Methods to track employment pathways towards open employment outcomes would be needed to know if this model was more effective than other training models to achieve pathways to open employment.

2.3 Implementing the hybrid trial

Design of the hybrid trial

The hybrid trial was designed to support the permanent transition of people supported by GSE and graduates from the traineeship/licences trial (school leavers and public) to open employment. The goal could include full time or part time work or hybrid work where the person continued part time work in GSE.

Open employment in the trial was where GSE supported people with intellectual and other disability to identify their own strengths, employment goals and opportunities that met their preferences for work and with support, transition to employment within an open job market with sufficient support to maintain the job. **Error! Reference source not found.**³ summarises the participants in the trial to 2025.

Table 3. Hybrid employment trial participants

		Recruitment to trial		
	Award wage type	GSE	Other	Total
Expressed interest in open employment		75+	10+	85+
Open employment goal planning		50	10	60
Employment transitions during trial (months 1-29)*				
Employed provision of service only	Supported wage	-	6	6
Employed in GSE (supported wage) and provision of service (Hybrid)	Supported wage	11	-	11
Hybrid participants employment status end of trial (month 30)*				
Hybrid (GSE supported employment and service provision)	Supported wage	2	-	2
Open employment	Full wage	-	-	-
Unknown or left		15	-	15

Source: GSE administrative data, June 2023 to December 2025 where payroll records were available for the entire 30 months.

Notes: *n=17. Target 100 participants. Some participants had multiple transitions in the 30 month trial

The intended processes and partnerships in the hybrid trial are described below.

Open employment goals. Open employment goals were to be identified for all people with disability in GSE, at entry to the service, or for existing clients in retrospect. Interest to work outside GSE was an individual choice (more than 85 participants) and not all GSE employees identified an open employment goal (340-75=265). Participants with open employment goals were recorded in a central client data management system (approximately 60).

Employment goal planning. As part of the GSE service delivery, staff (usually an Employment Pathways Coordinator – EPC) met with people with disability and their trusted supporters to develop a personalised employment support plan. The plan outlined the person’s employment goals, strengths, interests, strategies and indicators to measure achievement. Goals were to be relative to a person’s NDIS funding. The employment plan was to be reviewed regularly by an EPC (as part of the GSE open employment management system), at least annually.

Relationships with employers. The open employment team was the link between people with disability and employers, engaging and supporting employers and

establishing new relationships to potential future employers. The focus was on understanding employers' workforce needs and encouraging the creation of inclusive employment opportunities for people with disability.

Open employment full award wages. Some participants were to transition to open employment with full award wages where that was their preference. They were the 3 who were participants in the Traineeship trial first (Table 2). GSE no longer supported them once they were settled in their job.

Open employment provision of service supported wages. Some employers purchased provision of service jobs from GSE that were performed by one or more GSE employees with disability. In the provision of service arrangement, the GSE Employment Development Coordinator was responsible for transitions, support, contracts and communication with employers. For example, they managed the employee support and adjustment they needed at work and organised a GSE mentor (workplace support) as required. This role was also responsible for administrative and contractual aspects of the model (e.g., issuing of invoices). They oversaw the execution of the service agreement with the employer, execution of the assignment letter to the participant with disability. The provision of service arrangement was applied to facilitate open employment opportunities for long-term GSE employees on supported wages as well as with some trial participants who completed their traineeships. GSE paid the person a flat rate of \$15 per hour (excluding on costs – super) for employees on supported wages for hours worked in open employment. This rate was higher than working in GSE but less than full award wages. The experience was intended to build confidence for participants to move into full open employment.

Customised employment. GSE planned to use customised employment processes for employment pathways for trainees, people not yet employed at GSE and people planning to remain in hybrid employment. A few participants in the hybrid trial received customisation support from GSE to achieve personalised paid employment and service delivery contracts. GSE did not record the number of participants who received this service. Customised employment is a person-centred approach to employment supports, with the goal to tailor a job that fits the skills, interests, strengths and support needs of a person with disability. During the discovery stage, in-depth information is gathered about a person's motivation and interest in work. This knowledge is later used to tailor an open employment job that suits the person.

Experience of implementing the hybrid employment trial

Factors driving progress in the hybrid trial included building a diverse and qualified open employment team, establishing procedures and systems to align the organisation

with open employment pathways, building quality relationships with local employers and creating quality systems of support to employees with disability in the hybrid provision of service delivery model.

The open employment team was a critical factor in the delivery of the hybrid trial. A sufficiently qualified, diverse and resourced hybrid team was required to deliver the trial and drive the engagement with participants with disability and with existing and future employers. The team identified organisational pressure points to inform changes to systems and solutions (eg. communication and engagement, monitoring and systems integration). As part of an organisational restructure some resources were added to key roles, for example the EPC (Employment Pathway Coordinators) in charge of supporting existing GSE employees into employment pathways. Recruitment and establishment of the hybrid team underwent several phases, with several leadership changes during the trial to gain capability and leadership in the key roles. The most recent hybrid leadership team was a senior manager from a previous disability employment agency to drive the relationship building with Inclusive Employment Australia providers (formerly DES), other community disability employment organisations and employers.

Trial **procedures, human resource, payroll** and communication systems to align the organisation with the two trials were developed in GSE. The systems were novel, complex and evolving. They tracked participants' (trainees and existing employees with disability) interest in open employment outside GSE. They responded to employment demands at particular employers/sites. They rostered employees with disability and GSE support mentors to deliver the hybrid paid work. They made contingency plans for employees and mentors who could not attend on a particular day. They organised financing, which included linking the provision of service delivery with GSE payroll systems and aligning a person's NDIS plan where employment supports were externally funded. They communicated with participants with disability, families, and employers in the hybrid trial. Developing these interconnected yet distinct systems and procedures was time consuming. It was an ongoing task for the open employment team in the second year of the trial, as systems needed to be adapted and remain responsive to frequent changes (e.g., change to employer service delivery contacts, employee missed hours of work).

Engaging people about their open employment goals was the start of the hybrid trial. All participants (people on supported wages in GSE) were asked, many for the first time, about their open employment goals and interest to work outside the organisation. This was a first step to establish who was interested in hybrid or part/full time open employment, to systematically record people's work goals, their interests and support

needs. The open employment team used the information gathered in the GSE database to identify potential participants for service provision delivery positions, once paid positions became available. An effective mechanism in the hybrid trial was to align participants with disability with the work opportunities. This involved how to tailor, customise, and personalise paid work to the interests, skills and support needs of the person. Staff and family members reported that in a few cases this tailoring to the opportunity was ‘well and truly’ achieved. In other cases, the workplace offered less choice and options for personalisation because certain tasks had to be completed within a service delivery contract. For example, in the stories of change some people spoke of tasks that were difficult (physically or emotionally demanding) but they needed to be done. In some cases, participants worked in jobs that were vaguely or not at all aligned with their employment goals. These jobs were selected to build foundational skills and experience to build towards these goals and interests.

Building relationships with employers was a core role of the open employment team. They connected with existing and new employers, support employers to become more inclusive, and to transition people with intellectual and other disability to open employment opportunities. This role included identifying local employers with workforce needs and with diversity and inclusion goals; engaging with employer leadership teams to gain commitment to employ people with disability and working with GSE; supporting employers and employees with disability to establish inclusive workplaces, including disability awareness training; supporting employees with disability in the provision of service delivery model to receive workplace support, connection and team building activities. Over the 2.5 year hybrid trial period (to December 2025) GSE engaged 11 employers. Most employers used the provision of service delivery model. One employer employed people with disability on full award wages.

Engaging and working with mainstream employers to become more inclusive workplaces varied greatly, according to GSE staff. The quality of the relationships depended on factors such as level of commitment to inclusive employment in the employer leadership, employers’ perceived gains and motivations for working with GSE and the hybrid trial, consistency of relationship with employers in leadership roles, and employers’ willingness to enact lasting workplace change. GSE planned to foster connections and integration with employment disability providers in the future to enhance GSE capacity to connect and transition people with disability to mainstream employment. The restructure of DES to IEA (Disability Employment Services to Inclusive Employment Australia) delayed this plan. This aspect of the program remained a future goal while the disability employment support was restructured.

Workplace supports were arranged by the open employment team once employees with disability and mainstream employers were connected (through the provision of service delivery model). Supports included creating opportunities for socialising and team building at the workplace. Staff and family members they said that people's 'sense of belonging' at the new workplace mattered for their employment satisfaction and hinged on the on the quality and consistency of support. Consistency was sometimes available from a regular mentor who knew the mainstream workplace, work tasks, and employees' roles and support needs well. High quality workplace support enabled employees with disability in the service provision model to 'flourish', to feel connected with each other, supported to achieve at work and learn new skills.

Peer influence and storytelling was adopted in GSE to communicate and share the experiences of people working in GSE and hybrid employment with other employees. The purpose was to increase awareness and motivation for people who had worked in GSE for a long time and were hesitant to try unfamiliar options outside of GSE.

Implications from the hybrid employment trial for similar programs

The implications of the hybrid trial are for similar programs aiming to create and diversify pathways and options of open employment for people in supported employment or who might otherwise enter supported employment.

The experience in the trial was that all participants in the hybrid trial remained in GSE employment either in supported employment or in provision of service contract work. This type of employment contributed to skills and experiences relevant to pathways to open employment in the long term, but the evidence of the long term goal was not available yet. These other contributions are discussed in Section 3. Further steps on pathways to open employment could be designed to accelerate the process of transition, avoid supported employment for school leavers not yet in that system and collect information to evidence outcomes.

Experience from the trial was to identify and address people's individual employment goals; broaden employment opportunities beyond provision of service jobs to part-time and full-time full award wage employment transitions for people currently employed on supported wages; work with other parts of the disability employment and training system to complement their connections to open employment opportunities, including IES, RTO, advocacy and peers.

GSE was aware the need to address the risks of the provision of service approach, such as when employees were not interested in the job content and context and when employers were not required to be engaged in workplace change to build inclusion

confidence, workplace adjustments, invest in inclusion organisational changes and workforce inclusion awareness and capacity building. The ways GSE was addressing the risks include participants moving through different roles; employers engaging in workplace change discussions; and beginning to implement job carving and job customisation practices.

A specific implication from the hybrid trial was how to identify and respond to participants' diverse employment goals and interests. Some participants in provision of service hybrid employment showed interest in "trying more workplaces" (diversification of skills, working in different workplaces with diverse people) after they overcame initial uncertainty about participating. Other participants were not interested in the type of job they were placed in. Other GSE supported employment participants expressed work goals that were not related to the provision of service opportunities.

The implication about the need to individualise and respond to each person's work goals points towards approaches such as customised employment and support based on an employment first approach (Kamau & Timmons, 2018; Moore, Friedman, Sevak, Stapleton, & O'Neill, 2017; B. Taylor, 2019). These practices have tested ways to address people's work interests and to build sustainable positions and inclusive workplaces. They include supporting a person to develop aspirations outside the closed employment setting, and developing customised employment for that person in response to their aspiration (Hemphill & Kulik, 2017; J. Taylor, Avellone, Wehman, & Brooke, 2023; Wehman et al., 2018). The processes prioritise identifying the persons' core values and strengths, start with a work placement in open employment or relevant industry where on the job training and other tailored support can be offered. These models commonly focus on placing one person at a time or working with small number of people who have a shared employment goal and interest.

3 Outcomes of participants with disability

The section presents the findings about the evaluation questions about participant outcomes (Appendix A) for both trials. The discussion refers to participants' stories of change in Appendix B

The section discusses processes in the two trials, factors that contributed to or hindered employment outcomes for trial participants and changes to participants' non-employment and other outcomes from the trials.

- Job satisfaction
- Choice and flexibility about open employment
- Customisation, employment meeting work interests and goals
- Support and mentorship
- Social connection and belonging at work
- Employer inclusion practices and workplace changes
- Vision, expectations and planning for future employment
- Economic dignity
- Independence and personal growth.

3.1 Summary of outcomes of participants

Work experience and training. Most participants in both trials liked the work experience and content. The arrangements were flexible in response to the person starting in a position, for example, they could change placements, hours and training programs. This flexibility was a way to respond to the person's interest. The participants were supported by mentors from GSE, workplace supervisors, corporate service roles, community partners and family. Not all community partners (RTO, DES, schools) were sufficiently inclusive or made adjustments to meet the needs of the participants. Social connections were mainly isolated to the ADE context for both trials because of the reliance on the provision of service model, which did not require employers to make workplace adjustments for social connections.

The participants' work experience in the trials were either participation as part of a registered training course (licence or traineeship) or provision of service positions. The trainees in these work experiences were based at GSE in positions relevant to the certificate courses. For example, trainees studying retail worked in GSE op shops, trainees studying logistics worked in the GSE warehouse in Canning Vale and hospitality trainees worked at GSE hospitality locations. Provision of service positions included GSE's property care and gardening business and other social enterprises, as well as mainstream provision of service contracts with private employers. These work

experience opportunities gave them confidence to continue to work towards finding a mainstream paid job. Income increased for participants in both trials.

Open employment on full award wages. Three participants entered full award wage open employment. Almost all participants were not in open employment by the end of the trials (Tables 2, 3). This outcome was due to several factors. The traineeships and licences took up to 18 months to complete, with potential open employment engagement occurring towards the end and after traineeship completion. Some people continued to work towards completing car licences due to health and other factors. Most trainees were school students, who were not seeking open employment until they completed school. School based participants could be expected to continue to plan for work in 2025. Most hybrid trial participants worked in provision of service jobs (17), arranged by GSE. They gained experience and confidence within an open employment workplace, while maintaining GSE supports, with the long-term goal of open employment. Other people did not have clear open employment goals. Few people transitioned out of GSE employment and they remained in continued supported or hybrid employment. The extent to which people considered the impact of their eligibility for the Disability Support Pension as a reason for not transitioning was not tested.

The qualitative data samples were small for all stakeholder groups. Emerging evidence was that the trials were contributing to participants' achievement of longer-term employment goals and positively affecting other outcomes, including confidence, personal growth and economic dignity.

Future longitudinal data after the trials could examine whether the early positive outcomes were sustained over time and whether the hybrid trial approach could progress participants' employment towards achieving participants' longer term employment goals. This would require staff capacity and connections to employers offering open employment and support to employers to provide inclusive employment.

Implications for future similar programs. Participants in both trials benefited from more options to develop employment skills and confidence. Some participants increased their income and work opportunities. The impact from completing accredited training and licences on paid work or transition from hybrid to full open employment were marginal within the pilot timeframe and probably less effective compared to direct transitions.

Future initiatives would need specific data to answer questions about the effectiveness of these types of employment pathway models, including about their impact on sustained employment outcomes, achieving changes in pathways to full award wage

positions (moving from provision of service positions to part or full time full award wage employment) and questions about variations between different cohorts.

The implications from the outcomes are relevant for the two groups of participants in the trials. Young people in their final years of high school seek to build vocational skills and experiences aligned with pathways for their future work goals, including support to find and sustain full award wage employment. People currently in supported employment need support to express open employment goals and support for pathways to find and sustain full award wage employment. This would be particularly important for people long term employed in supported environments. Employers need support to provide inclusive employment.

Some of these supports were available in the trials. Other supports are available from other providers in the training and employment system. Implication for similar programs are how to integrate this support with other inclusive training and employment support programs, such as at school, TAFE and other individualised or group NDIS funded supports so the pathways from training to employment are sustained.

3.2 Impact on work

Evaluation questions on participant outcomes

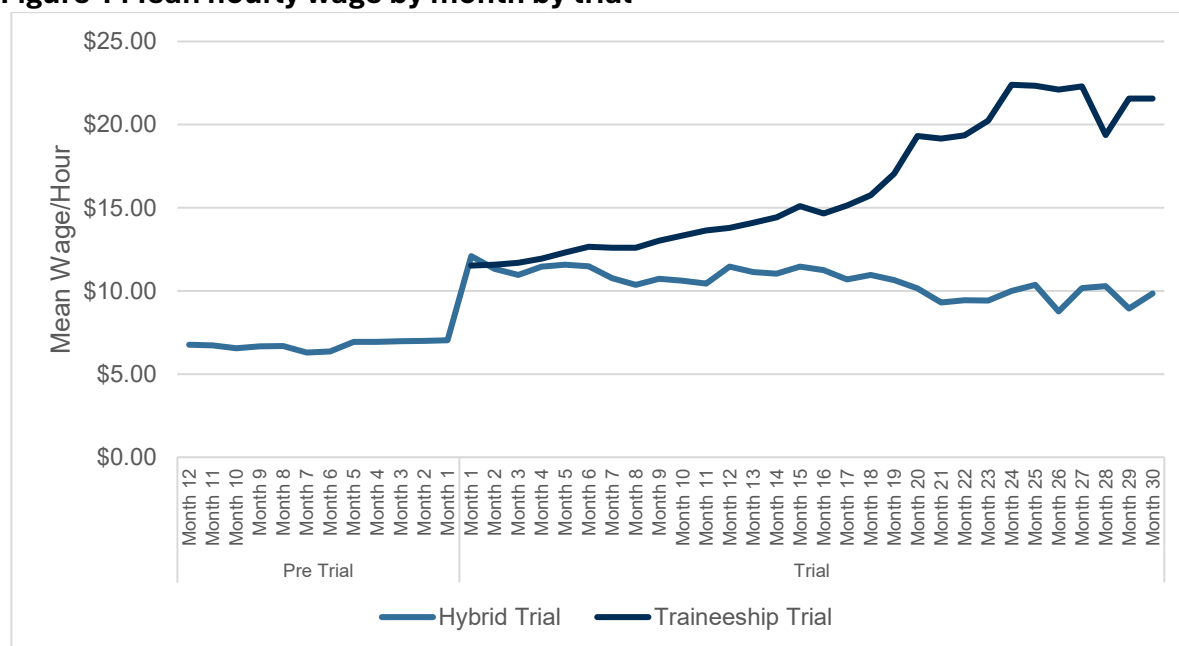
- a. To what extent are GSE's traineeship and hybrid trial models effective at achieving open employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability after six, twelve and eighteen months - and relative to the baseline at GSE and to other ADE and to DES providers? How do effects vary between different cohorts and demographic groups?
- b. To what extent have the traineeship and hybrid trials achieved the employment goals of the participants and relative to the baseline of direct transitions?
- c. To what extent have the trials resulted in increases in the weekly incomes of participants after six, twelve and eighteen months?

Traineeship and licences trial. The priority was for participants to commence and complete traineeships and licence accreditation. One trainee was in part time open employment on full award wages with a mainstream employer and two with Good Sammy (Table 2). Eight were employed in provision of service positions outside GSE (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Some participants completed parts of open employment planning, some together with family members, identifying future open employment aspirations aligned and outside of their current employment skills development. The main outcomes from the traineeship trial were building confidence,

employment skills and social skills. Most participants in the forklift licence component completed their accreditation. Few people in the car licence program completed the licence, some participants moved to other options, like the forklift licence instead (Table 2).

Hybrid employment trial. Participants were in hybrid employment as part of the provision of service model (**Error! Reference source not found.**). On average participants worked 4 to 12 hours weekly in paid jobs outside GSE. Three participants were in full open employment; two of these people were in full-time full award wage positions with GSE. One participant transitioned from a mainstream employer provision of service (employed through GSE) to full award wage employment in the mainstream employer.

Income increased for participants in both trials, who previously had no income or lower supported wages. Trainees in the traineeship trial received an hourly wage depending on their current school year, for example Year 11 students received \$10.49/hour while Year 12 students received \$11.55/hour. One adult trainee was engaged in the program and was paid \$21.31/hour. Participants in the hybrid provision of service positions were paid \$15/hour (plus superannuation), which was above the supported disability wage but below award wages. Figure 1 below, presents the mean hourly wage for participants in both trials, by month. The wages included in Figure 1 were for hours worked, excluding hours of paid leave and public holiday (which were paid at the supported disability wage for participants in the hybrid trial). As can be seen in Figure 1, the average hourly wage was just under \$7/hour for participants in the hybrid trial in the year before the program, increasing to ~\$10/hour in the 2.5 years after starting the trial. Because average hours worked in the hybrid trial, ranged from a few hours weekly (3-4) to a couple of days per week, the impact of wage growth was modest.

Figure 1 Mean hourly wage by month by trial

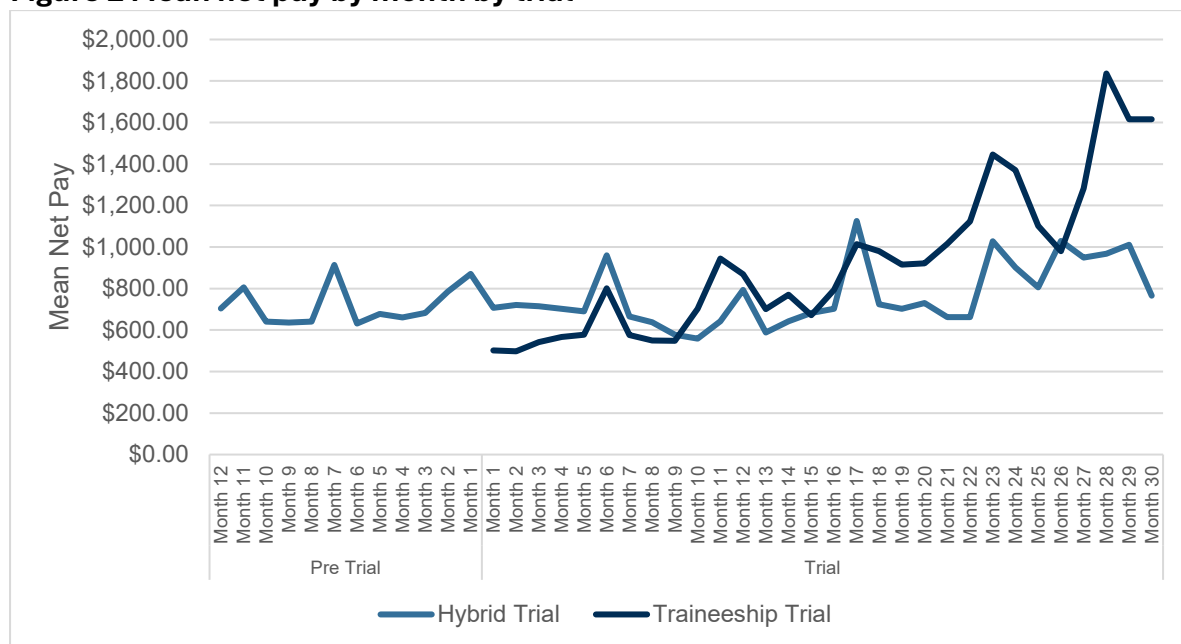
Source: GSE administrative data

Note. Hybrid trial $n=17$, Traineeship trial $n=9$. Includes only hours were worked (excludes paid leave and public holiday hours). See Appendix D for calculation methodology.

Figures 2 and 3 present the mean net pay for 26 participants in both trials, by month. Net pay is presented as it is the amount the participants received directly in their bank accounts, available to them to spend. Figure 2 presents the mean net pay only for employees who received payment during each month. That is, participants employed by GSE in the 12 months before the hybrid trial ($n = 12$) received, on average, \$600-800 per month.⁴ Accordingly, there was a modest increase in income in the 2.5 years of the hybrid trial. By contrast, participants in the traineeship trial had similar levels of income to participant in the hybrid trial for the first 18 months and had a sharp increase in income in the last 12 months of the trial (i.e., months 19-30). This was largely due to three traineeship participants moving to open employment pathways and receiving full award wages over the last 12 months (two with GSE and one participant with a mainstream employer).

⁴ Alternatively, if we assume participants who were not employed by GSE before the trial received \$0 in employment income per month (Figure 3), this average drops to ~\$400 per month.

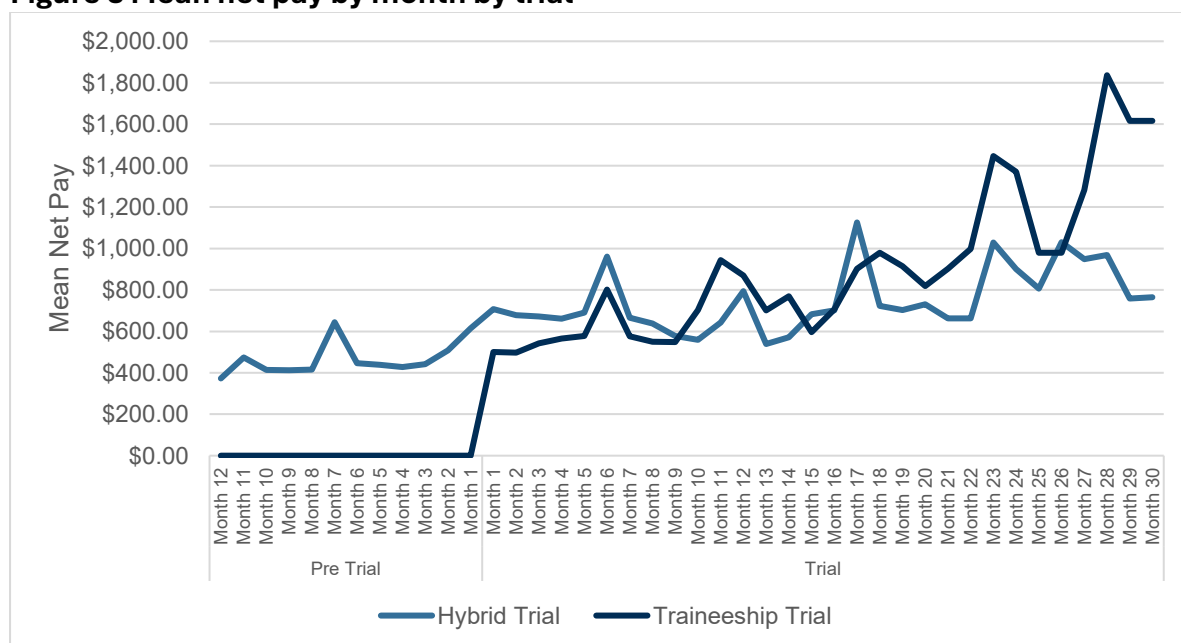
Figure 2 Mean net pay by month by trial



Source: GSE administrative data

Note: Hybrid trial n=17, Traineeship trial n=9. Excludes months where no work was completed through GSE. See Appendix D for calculation methodology.

Figure 3 Mean net pay by month by trial

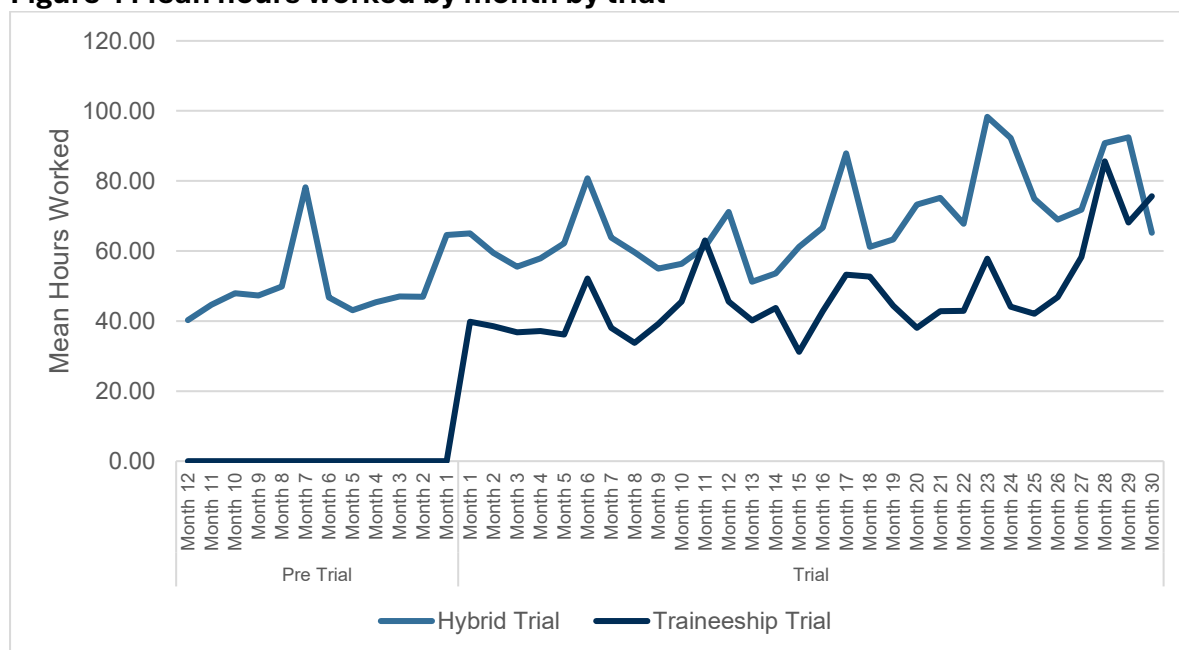


Source: GSE administrative data

Note: Hybrid trial n=17, Traineeship trial n=9. For months where no work was completed through GSE before the trial, net pay was coded as \$0. See Appendix D for calculation methodology.

Figure 4 presents the mean hours worked each month by trial. There was a steady increase in hours worked each month by participants in the hybrid trial over the 2.5 years covered by the data. Participants in the traineeship trial worked fewer hours per month, on average, compared to participants in the hybrid trial up until month 28. This was likely because many participants in the traineeship trial were still attending school.

Figure 4 Mean hours worked by month by trial



Source: GSE administrative data

Note: Hybrid Trial $N = 17$, Traineeship Trial $N = 9$. For months where no work was completed through GSE before the trial, hours worked were coded as 0. Includes only hours that were worked (i.e., excludes paid leave and public holiday hours). See Appendix D for calculation methodology.

Section 3.3 presents the qualitative data about work outcomes including sustainability and other employment paths people experienced. Section 3.2 analysis did not have administrative data about the sustainability of the outcomes after the trials. Administrative data were also not available about employment outcomes relative to the baseline at GSE, other ADEs or DES providers.

3.3 Impact of factors on work outcomes

d. What factors have contributed to or hindered the durability of employment outcomes for participants?

Job satisfaction

Young people in the traineeships reported they were mostly satisfied with the program. Factors contributing to participants' satisfaction included enjoyment at work, acquiring new skills, working in a welcoming environment, tasks being adapted to learning needs and diversified, having choice about activities also the selection of their placement (e.g. changing from a retail to an office administration traineeship). Family members of young trainees and young people themselves who started work in the provision of service positions said benefits were earning an income, gaining meaning from work, feeling that one's contributions mattered, also building confidence and a vision for their future work (e.g., transition to full award wage jobs, creating a business, or study). These benefits were all aspects that contributed to participants' satisfaction with work (for example, Ricky 15. Story of change).

The participants' roles in provision of service jobs were often aligned with their work tasks and responsibilities at GSE, for example, several people sorting recycling in GSE worked in recycling of resources in open employment (for example, Teddy 16. Story of change). Other participants in hybrid provision of service jobs had the opportunity to learn and perform new skills as part of their hybrid job (e.g. painting and maintenance skills, sorting and organising mail). Staff, workplace mentors and participants reported the participants enjoyed the diverse work tasks, acquiring new skills and working in a variety of teams and locations and sites (outdoors versus indoors work settings).

Limited qualitative and quantitative data were available about job satisfaction or how the provision of service positions met participants' longer term employment goals and overall job satisfaction. The evidence from the stories of change suggested that diversity of employment tasks, working with various teams of colleagues and earning higher incomes contributed to hybrid trial participants work satisfaction. Some participants increased their hours of work in provision of service positions. This trend indicated that for some people, "opportunities to gradually become familiar with, to test out something new" was a useful way to increase their confidence to work in new workplaces. Participants said in their stories of change that being able to trial different workplaces, even for short time, contributed to their job satisfaction. Some hybrid trial participants tried different provision of service jobs to test which type of work, location, and social aspects aligned with their preferences for work.

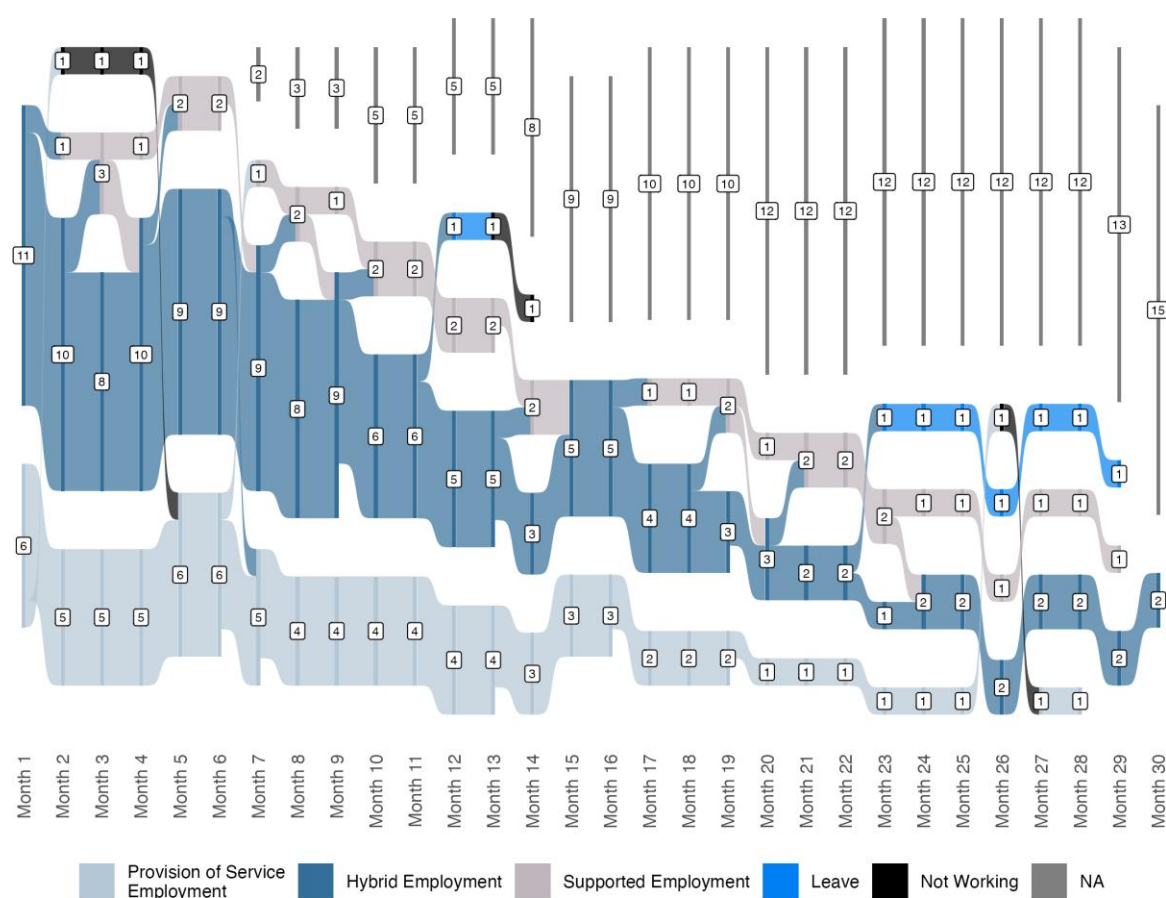
Choice and flexibility about open employment

Flexibility in program delivery was a positive aspect for sustaining employment outcomes for people with disability in both trials. The trials were managed flexibly enough to accommodate the expected and unexpected changes and make the program ‘work around people’s needs as much as possible’. While the trials were managed separately, staff described them as ‘interlinked, complementing each other’. Examples of accommodations included trainees and employees in hybrid work shortening a workday or splitting one day into two shifts over two days to better suit the person. Another example was gradually increasing work responsibilities with participants’ growth and interest in new work tasks.

Participants in both trials were supported to make decisions and have some choice about their open employment and skills development options. Traineeship programs were limited to the types of work available at GSE (Retail, Hospitality, Supply Chain and Business Administration). Several trainees changed their mind about which type of work after commencing a traineeship. Participants in traineeships and licences were supported to transfer into a different option that better met their interests, such as a different licence (e.g. truck to car or forklift licence). Similarly, participants who started in the hybrid trial were offered to complete licences if they were aligned with their vision for future work and skills development. For example, Jeff (Story of change 18), worked 3 days a week in a hybrid job, said he completed a forklift licence hoping it could improve his job prospects and capacity to ‘lift heavy things’ at work. However, due to safety and other concerns he was not yet able to use his forklift skills at work.

Participants in hybrid trial had some choice and were supported to change their workplace, hours or days of work, and to test out various types of workplaces. Several participants and GSE staff spoke about participants trialling hybrid jobs to find what suited them the most. GSE staff reported people in the hybrid trial ‘frequently changed their mind’ about attending a particular shift, a couple of participants decided to stop working in hybrid jobs entirely and were supported in their decisions. One person who was offered full time open employment rejected the offer as they preferred to continue with hybrid option.

Figure 5 presents the transitions for the hybrid trial participants across the 30 months of the trial. Note that due to the rolling nature of recruitment, not all participants have been in the trials for 30 months (indicated by “NA”). Figure 5 illustrates the flexibility of program participation described above. As can be seen in Figure 5, some participants switched between hybrid employment and supported employment, and others took leave or breaks from working.

Figure 5 Hybrid trial: employment types and transitions over the first 30 months

Source: GSE administrative data

Note: n=17. NA=data unavailable for participants who were not in the trial for 30 months. Numbers indicate the number of participants allocated to that employment type for the month. See Appendix D for allocation methodology.

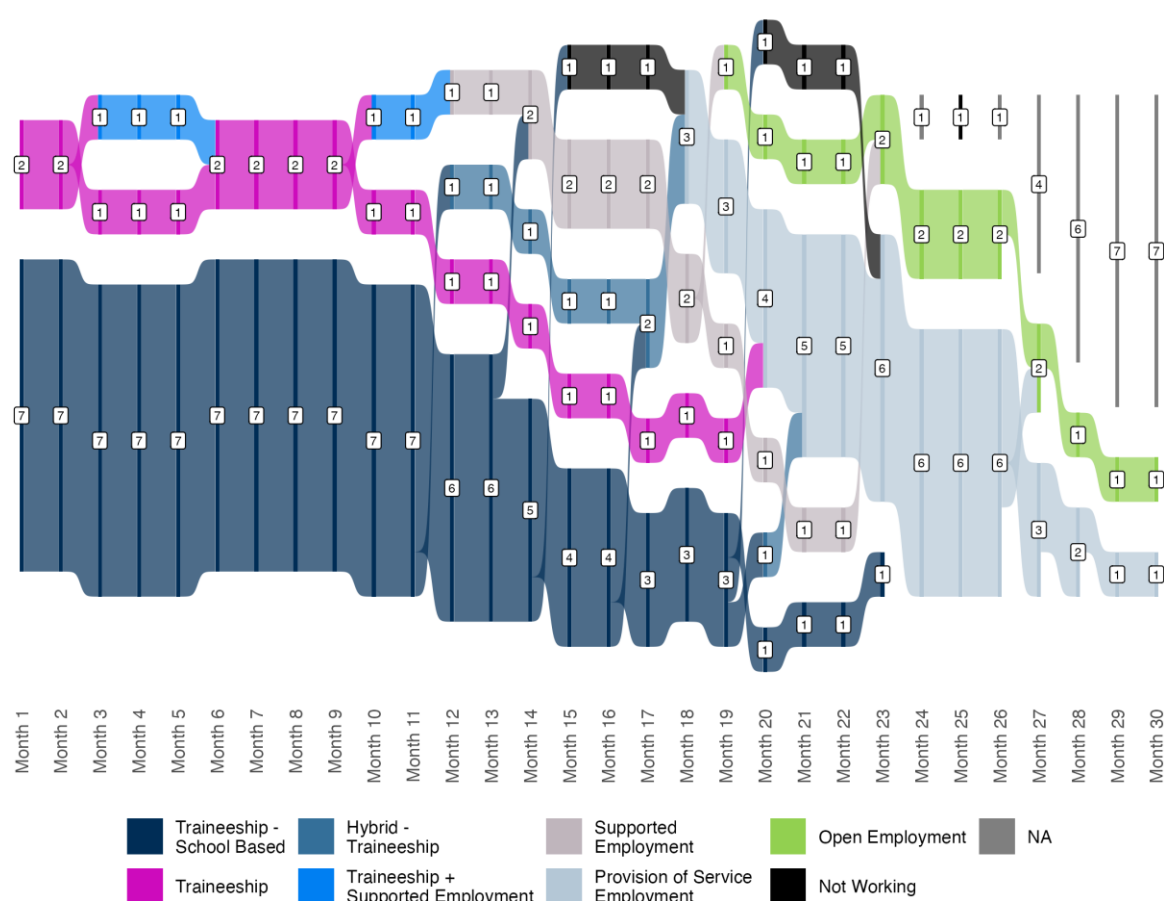
Some of the early hybrid placements may have been rushed, with insufficient social and other support in the new workplace (Kenny, Story of change 1). The administrative data indicated (Figure 5) that participants continued to test out their options for short periods (see variety of transitions depicted in Figures 4 and 5). The long term trend was that participants who were interested in hybrid work settled into one or more workplaces and increased their hours in provision of service employment. Jeff (Story of change 18) increased hybrid work hours from 1 day to 4 days a week over 1.5 years in the program.

The reasons for participants testing out hybrid work for short periods were likely diverse. Changes could indicate that support was not available to make the workplace sufficiently socially welcoming, and people preferred to stay with the work at GSE that

they were familiar with. Some participants were working in jobs that did not or only partly met their interests, skills and employment goals. Some participants with long-term established relationships at GSE needed more support to adapt to changes to their new work and social environment.

Figure 6 presents the transitions for the traineeship trial participants across the 30 months of the trial. Note that due to the rolling nature of recruitment, not all participants have been in the trials for 30 months (indicated by “NA”). As can be seen in Figure 6, Traineeship trial participants engaged in a variety of employment types. For example, during the traineeship some participants also engaged in supported employment or provision of service employment. Others left the traineeship and took on supported employment, hybrid employment, provision of service employment, and open employment.

Figure 6 Traineeship trial: employment types and transitions over the first 30 months



Source: GSE administrative data

Note: n=9. NA=data unavailable for participants who were not in the trial for 30 months. Numbers indicate the number of participants allocated to that employment type for the month. See Appendix D for allocation methodology.

Longitudinal qualitative data suggested that especially young traineeship graduates in hybrid work, after 1 or 2 years, felt ready, were confident and prepared to transition to full award wage open employment that offered greater career prospects and skills development. The administrative data demonstrate this too (green ribbons from month 18 onwards). An example is Ricky (story of change 15). Ricky and his family said that the hybrid provision of service delivery position was a ‘great stepping-stone’ to get ready for open employment with full award wages. Ricky and his family said securing financial independence was important, which meant earning a higher income. In addition, Ricky emphasised he was ready to step up in this employment, to progress to more complex tasks, take on greater responsibility with minimal supervision. At the end of the evaluation, he was still looking for a full award wage position.

An example of a successful transition from service delivery contract work to full award wage employment is Tom who, after 8 months with the mainstream employer, approached his manager asking if the company would employ him at full award wage part time so he could earn more than the supported wage (Story of change 12 and employer story of change 24).

Customisation and adjusting employment to the person’s interests and goals

Outcomes from customising and adjusting hybrid work were mixed. For some participants the customisation was around work safety and implementing a suitable level of support. A successful example of customisation was Simon who worked 4-8 hours a week without peers in a maintenance role. GSE staff reported that Simon left GSE because he did not enjoy working there. Later Simon sought the hybrid team’s expertise and employer connections to find open employment. Simon was an active member of other community recycling activities. The part time work role required walking around the parameters of the workplace collecting discarded items and rubbish, which aligned with Simon’s interest and preference to work independently. Simon’s mother Susanna emphasised,

Simon enjoys a clean and neat environment, he enjoys his autonomy, performing tasks in his way, without other people intervening too much. At his work he also gets to spend most of the time outdoors, which he enjoys. This job is well tailored to Simon’s needs and interests. He is not cut out for a group environment. (Susanna, mother of Simon, story of change 21)

Adjusting positions was in an example actively pursued by a mainstream employer (Employer in finance, story of change 24). This employer transitioned one trainee in hybrid provision of service work after about 1 year to full award wage employment. They also personalised a hybrid work role for a second employee with disability, who remained in a provision of service delivery position.

A less successful example was adjusting a position to accommodate someone's interest was in a large government service. Benjamin (Story of change 4) had an employment goal to run a café or become a barista. At the hybrid provision of service job, Ben managed restocking of coffee and tea items including large orders of milk also sorting of milks by due dates. Ben's work also involved managing and sorting mail, which did not align with his interests or skill, so this part of the job is done by the GSE support worker. Another aspect of Ben's work that did not suit him was he did not have contact or integration with other workers, which made him feel isolated, "I don't get to meet other people who work here" (Benjamin, Story of change 4).

Support and mentorship

Participants in both trials had access to a range of formal and informal support. The suitable level and type of support was critical for participation in the traineeships and satisfaction and outcomes in hybrid employment.

Support to trainees included GSE mentors, teacher assistants from school, RTOs, store managers and family members, such as transport training or drop off/pick up from the traineeship location. Success in the licence training occurred when the accreditation and learning program was tailored and adapted to meet the particular access and support needs of the person. For example, most participants in the forklift licence gained a certificate. The RTO training provider was described as 'inclusive and understanding'. GSE also broke down the steps to make the licence program accessible (eg., dividing it in shorter parts, delivered over several days). In other parts of the program (car licence and traineeships) some problems arose when the providers did not make sufficient adjustments in their practices and support to meet each trainees' needs.

Similarly, the stories of change with participants in hybrid employment and interviews with staff indicated participants mostly had sufficient support and mentorship. Support from supervisors and mentors involved transport to attend work and to perform work responsibilities safely. A mechanism to deliver on-site support at a hybrid workplace was to have dedicated and knowledgeable mentors on site, who knew the work area, tasks and participants well. Consistent and quality support allowed for quality relationships and trust building between trial participants and staff.

Some people also had other peers at work, which was important for some people's social connection and peer support. For example, Ricky (Story of change 15) 'showed tasks to others' with disability starting at this workplace. Mentoring colleagues was something Ricky took pride in. He aspired to a managerial role in the future.

Social connection and belonging at work

Social connection and belonging in the workplace was mixed for participants across both trials. Participants in the traineeship trial and their families said the participants felt included at work and part of a work community.

[Thomas] he enjoys the relationship. They are very understanding [at the store] and give Tom the opportunity to try every task available in the shop. He feels included and accepted at work. (Pam, mother of Thomas)

[Mike] says he enjoys it there. He never says they were unfriendly [the staff] or abrupt with him. [The staff] know how to work with people with special needs, they seem to really understand people with disability. They know how to get the best out of him. (Hanae, mother of Mike)

The evidence about social belonging and being part of the workplace community was weak for participants in hybrid employment. Some participants enjoyed working with peers at the same workplace, during similar hours. Other participants, who wanted to build social connections at work, worked in areas without meaningful peer connection had no social or job integration with other employees without disability, other than the paid GSE support/mentor (Kenny, Story of change 1 and Benjamin Story 4). It appears that most employees in hybrid work socialised with each other and with the GSE support mentors. There was little evidence of participants developing connections with people other than their peers in the longitudinal qualitative data. A couple of people in the stories noted unfavourable contact with some co-workers, describing them as 'impatient', 'snobby' or 'unfriendly' (eg. not returning a morning greeting) (see stories of change Donald 17, Jeremy 13, Geraldine 14). Employees with disability called upon GSE workplace support mentors to intervene in instances of disrespectful workplace relations. Another social issue raised by one parent was that some hybrid workplaces were not sufficiently diverse. Benjamin's mother Sarah said,

At work Ben enjoys the social aspect, socialising with the Good Sammy supervisor and his peers. He would love to have a peer his age, but most other Good Sammy employees are much older ... Benjamin enjoys his work, he loves getting paid, he saves up most of his pay package! (Sarah, mother, story of change 22)

Limited social connections at work, given the somewhat isolated nature of the role, meant that some participants in the hybrid trial chose to leave the trial or were unhappy with their current work arrangements due to the lack of interpersonal interactions with colleagues. In these cases, sustainability of employment outcomes and participants satisfaction with their work were affected by their role not having clear connections to other work and activities. In these workplaces formal and informal workplace connections (communal morning tea, buddy systems, collaboration with others on work tasks) were not established as fully as could be by the employer or GSE.

Employer inclusion practices and workplace changes

Practices from some mainstream employers were gradually emerging where they engaged proactively with the stated intention of the trials to create long term sustainable employment transitions and employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability. Most employers, except one, were still involved through the provision of service arrangements. Employers using this model were mostly engaged with the transactional aspects of work, such as accounting, management of payment systems and hours worked/services delivered. Evidence was emerging that the quality of work and reliability of services delivered had positive ‘flow-on’ effects for the partnership. Employers who had positive experiences of working alongside GSE and people with disability in the trials grew in their confidence and openness to creating additional and more diverse employment options. Most of the employment growth continued to occur in the provision of service model.

One employer out of the 11 mainstream employers involved in the hybrid employment trial demonstrated a pathway to open employment with full award wages. The employer in finance (employer story of change Section 4) proactively made changes to improve participant outcomes (social and work integration). They made changes within their organisations to sustain employment outcomes (diversification of work opportunities, inclusion awareness training, customisation of work). These changes were possible when the employer had senior leadership commitment, dedicated resources to support employees with disability at their workplace, inclusion training and expertise of workplace customisation. These factors appeared key to achieving the sustainable open employment with full award wages for one participant with intellectual disability who moved from the service delivery model to full award wage employment in the trial. Three participants previously in traineeships transitioned to full award wage employment in GSE as a result of the trial. These outcomes demonstrated that arranging for people with disability to have choice and options, providing personalised training and support to progress at work led to some participants achieving higher employment outcomes.

In summary, there was some evidence about factors that positively contributed to sustaining and creating positive employment outcomes for participants (right level of support, flexibility, choice, support to have a say about the open employment path, motivation and feeling socially connected at work). There were also mixed results for some people (e.g. changes about attending a hybrid work shifts, insufficient inclusion awareness and support for some traineeships) and emerging evidence about employers' inclusion practices and confidence (see also, Joyce, Campbell, Crosbie, Macali, & Wison, 2025).

3.4 Impact on confidence to work

e. To what extent have the programs increased participants' confidence and preparedness for work?

Trainees and licensees reported they gained in confidence and work related skills in areas they enjoyed or imagined their future employment/careers. Participants experienced an increase in personal growth and confidence when they were motivated by their work and training and they had 'something interesting and meaningful to do'. It appears that learning skills meaningful to each young person's interests and employment was a key to their engagement and satisfaction. For example, Tameca (Story of change 2) enjoyed cooking and wanted to work in a bakery once completing high school, gained skills and confidence in hospitality. Starting with 'simple tasks like cleaning' the kitchen, Tameca soon tried out sensory tasks, kneading dough. After a couple of months of working with the GSE kitchen hospitality team, Tameca was proficient at following a recipe and baking a cake with little supervision.

The school students in the traineeship program (**Error! Reference source not found.**) gained a boost to their self-worth from engaging in useful work and understanding possibilities for their lives after leaving school. GSE staff and parents said many of the school students had not previously had a sense of direction for their lives after school. Completing a traineeship and gaining open employment in the hybrid trial afforded student participants opportunities for building work related and social skills and confidence. Several of the participants and their family members said, after 1-2 years in the hybrid trial they 'felt more ready' or wanted to 'move onto new things' and 'to find new challenges and new work'. For example, Ricky and his family consulted with the GSE open employment team to seek out full award wage employment with greater 'responsibility' at work. Tom transitioned from the provision of service position (hybrid supported wage) to full award wage open employment with the same finance employer. And Benjamin's mother spoke of the impact that open employment had on Benjamin's preparedness for life, for work and his outlook on his future employment,

We are delighted to see Benjamin step into young adulthood, try new things, grow in confidence, and learn practical life skills he needs ... The supported wage Benjamin receives is like a learner's wage – a 'stepping stone' to full award wage employment. We started speaking to the Good Sammy manager about options for Benjamin to move into the next stage of employment. Our goal is for Benjamin to earn a 'living wage', an income that recognises his contributions and supports his independence. (Sarah, mother, story of change 22)

Some participants in hybrid employment gained confidence and preparedness for open employment. Staff and mentors reported that participants felt a sense of achievement working outside GSE, trying new things and learning skills, earning higher incomes. Rich (Story of change 6) explained how working in an open workplace meant he had new responsibilities and was acquiring skills, which made him feel more confident and better prepared for work outside of GSE.

My new job in the community ... it's a surprise, I never know what's up that week ... I am learning new skills like most days ... maintaining the yard, organising equipment. I enjoy learning, also making more money! ... If there are options to do more work outside (GSE), to work at different sites and business every week that would be my preference. It is interesting to go to different places, to meet different people. (Rich, Story of change 6).

Positive outcomes were documented for most participants in the story of change data (Appendix B). The evidence about increased preparedness for open employment were limited to a small qualitative sample. There was limited evidence about how participants skills and confidence in the hybrid trial translated into securing and sustaining open employment with full award wages in mainstream workplaces. It appeared that school students who had completed traineeships and people with family support were more likely to transition to open employment with full award wages. Stories by Ricky (Story 15), Benjamin (Story 22) and Tom (Story 12) were examples of participants who already gained full award wage employment or they and their families were actively pursuing or considering open employment with full award wages as their 'next step' in discussion with the GSE open employment team.

3.5 Impact on wellbeing

- f. What other outcomes (e.g., wellbeing, confidence in addition to employment outcomes) did participants and their families experience as a result of the trials and open employment?
- g. How effective were the programs in addressing participants non-vocational needs?
- h. To what extent and how have the trials contributed to improved economic dignity and independence for participants?

Vision, expectations and planning for future employment

Several trainees formed goals about their employment future – from bus driver, community leader/politician, baker, gardener, inclusion support teacher, computer games designer, zookeeper, retail manager to museum director. Several young people were also clear about how they wanted to achieve their goals by attending university or TAFE or to seek out employment with businesses/employers in the community to build their experience. Others were less clear or confident about their interests and future employment.

Family members said they attended open employment planning meetings at GSE, together with the person with disability, discussing trainees' interests, goals and identifying strategies to find community employment. These were documented in an individualised plan. An outcome for some families of young people in the traineeship trial was greater clarity, optimism and higher expectations for their family members' future and employment.

For us as a family, connecting with Good Sammy felt like winning, knowing someone is there to support us in helping Conrad with his transition to becoming a young adult ... I feared Conrad would end up pushing trolleys at a supermarket, now he is working in a retail store, that's better. I am more hopeful about his future. (Family member, traineeship)

Our goal is for Benjamin to earn a living wage (award wage employment), an income that recognises his contributions and supports his independence. (Mother, traineeship and hybrid trial)

Tony is happy, so we his family are happy! His younger sister, who also has a disability, she's inspired that her brother goes to work now, he is her role model. People with disability can have and deserve good jobs! (Mother, traineeship trial)

I am happy Eduardo found a job that's paying well that he likes, it is giving him a head start for his future. (Father, traineeship)

It has been a great learning experience for Sam and that's translated to us as a family. We are more confident and happier about Sam leaving school and making his transition into the workforce. (Mother, traineeship)

Several former trainees in hybrid work and family members expected GSE would assist them to find paid work, including full award wage employment in similar or in a different industry. Families spoke of past negative experiences with DES providers and said that they were more likely to trust the GSE open employment team with whom they had developed a relationship.

Some traineeship graduates and their families were hopeful that GSE could help find them paid work and that if no 'other job come up' the participant could at least find work at GSE in closed employment.

Many supported employees in GSE completed planning to identify and document their work goals as part of the hybrid trial processes (Table 3). Kenny (Story of change 1), who had started in a recycling business, then moved to yard work for a logistics company, said he was 'really good at gardening' and content working in an 'outdoors environment', as this was closer to his 'dream job, gardening'. Kenny (Story 1) and Ben (Story 4) were two participants in hybrid work, who said the jobs were a novel opportunity to earn more income, but the work was not yet aligned with their work goals. Rich (Story of change 6), for example, discussed how the yard work for a logistics company was good because it added to the diversity of tasks 'breaking up' the week, but the work was physically demanding. Rich's preference was to have 'even greater diversity at work', the option to continue in the hybrid program but do different jobs in diverse locations, with new people,

I like my work in the warehouse [GSE], it's also good that I get out one day a week and work outside [logistics company], I don't get as bored with my work and get to learn new things ... If there are options to do more work outside [provision of service job] ... that would be my preference. (Rich story of change 6).

Evidence was not available about how the trials addressed and met participants' non-vocational needs (wellbeing, social connections, health). The GSE academy delivered additional supports, like interview preparation, resume writing, social and communication skills developing.

Economic dignity

Across both trials, participants and other stakeholders (family members, program staff) reported that people with disability felt valued and motivated to earn an income and/or higher wages, including building greater economic resilience (superannuation contributions).

Young people in traineeships said the financial aspect of the traineeship was an incentive to 'get involved, in the first place', helping some young people hesitant about change and the uncertainty of the 'new' to decide to start the program. For participants in the licence component, the fact that the training hours and accreditation (drivers and forklift licence) were paid by the trial removed a barrier to participation and was an opportunity to try out something 'outside the box'. Family members commented that because the traineeships were paid, it gave them confidence that the GSE program was well-intended, it is 'a genuine opportunity for young people to take the first steps into the world of employment, to learn skills in a supported environment and become more independent and prepared for work.' (Mother, traineeship trial).

We are satisfied with Good Sammy program because they give the person with disability real work opportunities like in the op shops, it's a supported and friendly environment, to gain certified training and skills. These work opportunities give people with disability opportunity to feel useful, become more independent and earn an income that's acceptable for a young person. (Father, traineeship program)

The trainees and other stakeholders in the program (staff, teachers, GSE managers) commented that young people in the traineeship program 'love making their own money', 'being paid' and 'feeling valued and appreciated' for their contributions at work. Earning an income was a central aspect of the design contributing to participants' engagement and satisfaction at work, as well as contributing to participants' growth in self-worth and independence. For trainee graduates (former high school students) who were linked to open employment in the hybrid trial, this was generally seen as a useful and mostly rewarding 'stepping stone' for young people to gain skills and confidence before moving onto 'other things' (full award wage employment, training, university).

Participants in hybrid employment were also motivated to earn higher wages and felt valued for being paid higher wages and incomes. Less data were available from this participant group about the impact of wages on recognition and financial dignity. Some participants increased their hours of work over time, which meant they earned more. However, most people were in provision of service positions where their hourly rate was below full award wages (Story of change, 22 and 23).

Independence and personal growth

Participants in the traineeship trial experienced increased personal growth and independence. Participants said they were motivated to learn to travel independently to work/training, practising different public transport routes (Freddy, story of change 7). Some participants showed an interest in money and how to manage it, including budgeting, saving for larger expenses, opening bank accounts and using finance apps.

[Freddy's] enthusiasm is what we noticed! He wants to be more independent; he is better with money and more careful in planning his spending. That's something we have noticed. (Mother, traineeship program)

Some family members observed that trainees were excited about their traineeship and carefully planned for the day at work ahead of time. Some young people gained 'a heightened sense of self-esteem and achievement', which influenced other parts of their life and their openness to engage in new experiences – try new things at home, visit unfamiliar places or engage in social interactions. Several families commented about the 'useful' life skills important for 'young adulthood' their family members were learning connected to the traineeships and from attending hybrid work (e.g., using transportation independently, taxis, planning, budgeting, saving money, social skills).

4 Impact on employers

4.1 Summary impact on employers

The trials started from the premise that GSE would first identify and form relationships with large employers to offer jobs, mainly through provision of service arrangements. This approach to get ‘a foot in the door’, was to build trust over time and increase familiarity between employers and the GSE open employment team. Employers also developed confidence in employing people with intellectual disability, making small workplace adjustments. The businesses that contracted the provision of service adjusted arrangements to these positions and workers, such as tasks to occur at different days, hours, speed, in new ways, with supports alongside, also offering more diverse job roles.

Interactions between GSE and employers shifted to ensuring suitable onboarding and safeguarding practices in the administrative processes for participants with disability in the workplace. The presence of participants in the workplace gradually meant some employers increased work opportunities. For example, two employers expressed they wanted to hire trial participants on full award wage contracts. Other employers slowly increased demand for provision of service workers, offered more shifts and diverse employment opportunities, expressed their acknowledgment and satisfaction with the quality of work delivered.

This approach builds from a small employer commitment to the goal of adjusting workplace inclusiveness. Some employers started offering part time or full time full award wage employment but for most employers this remained a future goal. The process used by GSE in the trials to build employer trust and achieve open employment outcomes for participants took time. This was especially the case for current GSE supported employment participants who had long connections and were accustomed to a supported wage environment. It appeared that school leavers, including graduates from the traineeships, were most likely to expect to gain and sustain open employment with full award wages or provision of service positions.

The evaluation had limited evidence about employers’ experience and engagement in the trials. One employer reported making changes and investing in creating meaningful employment for people with intellectual disability in their business. None of the other 9 mainstream employers were available for comment at the time of reporting. It is therefore unknown many disability inclusion changes occurred within most of the employers connected to the trials (e.g. changes to workplace practices, commitment to inclusive employment outcomes, or addressing challenges employer faced).

Evaluation question 2. Impact on employers

a. To what extent have inclusive employment practices become part of the practices of mainstream employers involved in the trials?

- How and to what extent did the trials contribute to changes in employers' practices of attracting, recruiting and retaining people with disability?
- How and to what extent did the proportion of employers' job applicants, overall workforce and executive team with disability change through the trials?
- What challenges did the employers encounter?

b. How and to what extent have the trials led to changes in the long-term capacity of mainstream employers and their employees to be confident employers of people with disability?

4.2 Experience of employers

Most employers were slow to engage in the trials. Interactions between GSE and employers were mostly about establishing contact and administrative systems. As the trials progressed, partnerships strengthened and knowledge about how to collaborate with each other increased for all parties. Many employers experienced the quality of work, consistency and capability delivered through the provision of service positions and increased work opportunities over time, including some employers offering full and part-time full award wage employment.

Having a person or people with disability in the workplace through the provision of service model began to influence employers' approaches to inclusive workplaces. They gradually witnessed the benefits of committed and capable employees with disability, resulting in a gradual increase in demand for more labour.

Several mainstream employers offered more shifts, more diverse roles and some sought out deeper collaboration with GSE over the 2 years. Two employers after about 1 year offered a full-time open employment position to an employee they knew through the provision of service arrangement. One person accepted a part-time position (Tom, story of change 12) the second person declined the offer as they wanted to remain in the hybrid model.

One mainstream employer in finance (story of change 24) demonstrated that key organisational factors were helpful in creating and maintaining the momentum needed for sustainable disability inclusive employment. The organisation had senior leadership commitment, dedicated resources to support employees with disability from induction to creating personalised employment, workplace inclusion training for staff, and

existing experience with driving workplace related changes, including workplace customisation.

These changes demonstrated the positive outcomes for employers from the approach of ‘getting a foot in the door’ by building relationships with employers, people with disability demonstrating their capability and commitment to working through hybrid positions. The approach required ongoing relationship building and time to show effects on organisations and changes to people’s employment opportunities.

The change from DES to IEA, with new providers, during the trials made it more challenging for GSE to build partnerships with DES providers to grow the pool of employment providers.

Story of change 24: Employer in finance

I am Jennifer, I work as an HR Director of a medium sized financial services company.

What made the partnership work?

In 2025, we partnered with Good Sammy. The partnership started at the Executive level. The two CEOs met at a function, where they identified they had shared objectives and interests in disability employment inclusion. When the Good Sammy CEO approached us, it was an opportunity for us to demonstrate we are sincere about trying to create opportunity for greater workplace diversity.

From the start we had senior leadership commitment. Today, we employ Tom at award wage (part-time) and Jasmin started 4 months on a supported wage (1 day a week).

This change came about because we had the ingredients for success: purpose and vision and someone high in leadership to drive change. If we ever experienced roadblocks, we spoke with our CEO and it has made all the difference.

Experience of creating roles and supporting two new staff, Tom and Jasmin.

I used to work for an agency that supported people with disability into open employment. I was familiar with concepts of customisation, workplace support, listening to each person to understand their needs and seeing opportunities for growth.

Tom started on the hybrid placement. He had completed a traineeship with Good Sammy and he had an interest in numbers, accuracy and working on the computer. Tom worked for 8 months with us as a contractor. We did not need to create a new role for him, because he gradually learnt the skills and developed confidence to do a customer support role. After 8 months, Tom approached us asking if we would employ him part

time so that he could earn more than the supported wage. At that point, we had established a relationship with Tom, we could see his diligence and potential for the job, we were happy to offer him an award wage position.

Jasmin's support needs, skill set and interests mean she does not want to sit at the computer all day long. I created a customised role for Jasmin that offers her diversity at work, where she is also challenged to learn new skills. Creating the role that is right for Jasmin and supporting her at the workplace has been my role. Jasmin would have benefited from on-the-job training support, however, that was not offered to her or us as the employer. A lot of that work has remained my responsibility.

Impact on workplace and organisation

As an organisation we are more attuned to disability and other diversity since Tom and Jasmin began working with us. We are proud to celebrate and raise awareness. One example is the last World Autism Day we invited our staff, including leaders, to write brief personal stories of raising a child with disability and what it meant to them. Some spoke about the rewards and challenges they faced as a family.

After the newsletter, we received positive responses. Employees said the short stories highlighted the personal side of employees and leaders, making other staff feel more compassionate. As an organisation we have grown, we practise and we celebrate inclusion. We encourage staff to have empathy and understanding at work.

Implications for similar programs are that approaching large employers to offer provision of service positions is a slow approach that takes time. It relies on first building familiarity through provision of service arrangements to then move into more sustainable and inclusive employment positions, where employers might directly employ and take responsibility for employee support and workplace adjustments.

Other approaches to consider or incorporate could include

- Supporting people into open employment with full award wages in workplaces specific to the person's interest (customised employment or place and train models)
- Building GSE workforce capacity for customisation and employer inclusive practices
- Engaging with employers to employ people directly and build employers' inclusion awareness and capacity for workplace adjustments
- Engaging with IEA providers to leverage their capacity and employer relationships to achieve open employment placements.

5 Impact on the GSE business model

One goal of the trials was to gradually transform GSE from a closed employment model to a pathways model that also supported people with disability through training, work experience and mentor support to gain and maintain open employment with full award wages. This process takes time. The evidence in the literature about the 10 principles to achieve that change is summarised in Section 1.2. GSE management report the trials aim to achieve that business transformation through a commitment to similar principles.

The impact from the two trials on GSE as an organisation and business model were moderate. There was evidence that GSE made considerable changes to its systems and processes. For example, identify open employment goals of people with disability already in GSE supported employment and new people (school students) coming into contact with GSE. The systems involved identifying people's interests, training and support needs, and longer term employment goals, tracking job and traineeship vacancies (internally within GSE) and establishing pathways into open employment through the service delivery contract model.

Designing and refining and training systems and open employment processes and integrating these within the existing GSE system was a major and ongoing task. The GSE leadership team said that some processes and communication needed further refining if GSE was to deliver training and skills building in the future (e.g. better oversight of trainees' progress to identify and respond to additional support needs earlier).

Through the trials, GSE demonstrated it was possible to engage and support people with disability to complete accredited training and licences and to build new relationships with mainstream employers, design and pilot a provision of service hybrid model that opened up diverse work options for people with intellectual disability employed in ADEs.

The provision of service contract model was a way to develop partnerships with employers. Its establishment demonstrated that some people with intellectual disability employed in ADEs wanted more diverse employment options and had the capacity to work in open employment with full award wages given the choice and sufficient support. The hybrid trial established one form of group open employment (small team placements in mainstream settings), internationally also known as 'enclave or group employment'. There was less evidence that the trial would in the long term lead to more tailored customised employment outcomes with full award wages for participants and transform GSE from a destination employer into a pathways model.

Policy and providers of disability employment and training support continued to change, which meant that GSE was required to postpone goals and decisions about integrating their support with services from IES, RTOs, schools and other employment service providers.

The extent to which GSE was transforming to a transition pathway for people with disability into open employment with full award wages was unclear. Future initiatives would require commitment and measurement about the 10 principles for organisational transformation to be able to address questions about achieving a transformed business model .

Evaluation question 3. Impact on the GSE business model

- a. What are the impacts of the traineeship and hybrid models and its associated outcomes on GSE's business model in the short, medium and longer terms?
- b. What do ongoing supports in employment look like for trial graduates? What is the role of ADEs in delivering this?
- c. What are the impacts of the models and any associated open employment outcomes on business for ADEs?
- d. What does it look like when GSE operates more as of a transition pathway instead of a destination employer?
- e. To what extent can these models be supported by existing funding streams?

Experience of changes to the GSE business model. The impact in the short and medium term from the trials on the GSE business model remained unclear. The trials relied on external funding to operate the trials and bring about internal changes to GSE operating systems. The trials were not mature enough and sufficiently long to test the financial sustainability of the program streams or the associated employment outcomes of people in supported employment or new people with disability seeking employment support from GSE.

Some findings emerged about **relationships and partnerships**. GSE was investing in increasing the connections with community partners, schools, RTOs, IES, mainstream organisations and employers. A question for transforming GSE is how to establish a complementary role between the contribution of GSE expertise and the established responsibilities of these community partners. Policy to support disability employment continues to change to respond to the needs of people seeking work and employers

seeking advice. It continues to be challenging to find sufficient support for people and employers in the context of these changes.

GSE also advanced their **profile in the broader community** including with families and young people who may not know GSE or the diversity of services they offered, including open employment planning and transitions for young people leaving school. It appears that the growth in the profile and expansion of GSE programs, for example through the school leavers traineeship program into regional communities (with WA funding), means that more young people with disability and families were aware of GSE. The diversification of offerings and programs raised their expectations that GSE could support people to build skills and move into full award wage open employment.

The **hybrid trial design relied on provision of service arrangements**, which meant GSE employees on supported wages remained with GSE. GSE worked with NDIS to calculate costs associated with workplace supports (mentors) and the open employment team for future customisation of open employment. GSE worked out how to claim supports delivered through the hybrid trial. They continued to adjust administrative and policy questions internally through GSE systems and building relationships with NDIS.

A **transformation question for GSE** was about how to avoid the risks of acculturating young people not yet connected to ADEs to becoming accustomed to closed employment through their traineeship or hybrid work experience. GSE expertise was working with and supporting people long term who were accustomed to closed employment. The transformation was requiring GSE to adjust the content and approach of GSE staff, managers and systems to work with new people with disability and their families to focus on customised employment goals and supporting people to find and maintain positions in individualised workplaces with full award wages.

Evaluation question 4. Replicability and scalability of the trials

- a. What is the potential of GSE's model to be replicated by other ADEs and/or other social enterprises? What learnings from implementation inform replication in new sites?
- b. What insights do these trials provide for ADE transformation toward becoming an employer and provider of pathways into open employment of first choice?

The approaches of the trials relevant to other ADEs and other parts of disability employment and training support services are to combine nationally accredited qualifications with paid traineeship positions and to offer work experience in provision

of service positions in various workplaces. These two approaches are potential steps towards open employment with full award wages.

Considerations for other ADEs and social enterprises are whether these steps are within the expertise of the organisation. That is does the organisation have the employer and training relationships and the organisational structure and culture to support these approaches. Other considerations are whether these approaches are consistent with the transformation of the organisation away from closed employment and whether more direct pathways to open employment are possible for the potential people to be supported (eg. employment first or customisation approaches).

Evaluation question 5. Systemic change and advocacy

- a. How effective are the traineeship and hybrid models of employment at transitioning people with disability into open employment compared to the conventional pathways through Disability Employment Services?
- b. To what extent has the trials been successful in influencing policy, funding and practice related to employment services provided through NDIS and DES?
- c. To what extent has the trials been successful in influencing mainstream employer attitudes, capabilities and practices in employing people with a disability?
- d. How has GSE's advocacy efforts contributed to shifting policy, funding and practice within the disability employment sector?

Questions of the impact of the trials on system change and advocacy were addressed earlier in the report. Participants gained qualifications, training, work experience and confidence, which are steps towards open employment. Few people entered open employment with full award wages.

GSE engaged with NDIS about how the support offered in the trials fits within NDIS definitions of support. This was important for GSE as a support provider to contribute to the financial model of the approach. DES was restructured to IEA during the trials, which delayed the building of support relationships between GSE and IES.

GSE engaged with employers to offer provision of service contracts. This exposure influenced some employers to understand how to make their workplaces more inclusive. The process was slow in terms of an inclusive experience for the participants and opportunities for sustained open employment with full award wages.

The combined effect of the trials contributed experience to GSE about potential steps towards transformation away from closed employment. Participants benefited from training and work experience towards open employment with full award wages. Employers benefited from experience of people with disability in their workplaces. These benefits took time and indirectly contributed to GSE's advocacy about longer term changes in the disability employment sector.

6 Implications of the trials for future programs

The longitudinal mixed methods evaluation aimed to find the impact, outcomes and processes that were effective in the open employment trials to achieve the intended outcomes for participants with intellectual disability and mainstream employers.

6.1 Implications of the open employment outcomes for participants

Participants in the trials benefited from more options to develop employment skills and confidence. Some participants increased their income and work opportunities. The impact from completing accredited training and licences on paid work or transition from hybrid to full open employment was marginal and probably less effective compared to direct transition pathways.

Future initiatives by GSE or other providers to enhance open employment pathways would focus on:

- Offering school leavers direct customised employment and employment first to avoid transitions in and out of supported employment
- Ensuring training and licence options align with a participant's employment goals
- Developing individualised pathways to full award wage positions (e.g. from provision of service positions to part or full time full award wage employment)
- Combining pathways options with evidence-based employment first models, where an employment position is sought, followed by intensive on-the-job training at the workplace
- Offering personalised and tailored employment options through evidence-based workplace customisation, coupled with on-the-job workplace training and support
- Investing in sustaining open employment positions, including workplace training and ongoing support, social structures to develop belonging and inclusion in the workplace
- Collaborating with a range of mainstream employers and with Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) providers to leverage their capacity and employer relationships
- Tracking outcomes to monitor effectiveness of employment pathways, including tracking flexible movement between options and after exit in pathways to track sustainability and impact of employment and training outcomes.

6.2 Implications of impact on employers and inclusive workplaces

GSE started with forming relationships with large employers to offer work through provision of service arrangements, where a participant works at a business and is employed by GSE. This approach aimed to build trust and familiarity between employers, GSE and participants. Employers also developed some confidence working with people with intellectual disability, making some workplace adjustments. Over time, some employers offered a greater range of tasks and roles, increased days, hours, speed, new ways of working, alongside employment support.

Future initiatives by GSE or other providers to enhance open employment pathways would focus on:

- Designing initiatives aligned and/or integrated with IEA providers and other partners who could leverage employer relationships to secure and maintain full award wage employment
- Building employer capacity and confidence by collaborating with current programs to implement inclusive workplace practices, including transition plans to full award wage employment
- Engaging and supporting employers to employ people directly, with on-the-job training for the participant, co-workers and managers to build employers' capacity for workplace inclusion and adjustments
- Building GSE workforce capacity for customisation, employment first and other evidence based practices for tailored workplace support.

6.3 Implications for business model to transform from a destination employer to a pathway service

Designing and refining training and employment systems and processes, and integrating these within the existing GSE system, was a major undertaking. Other internal processes that needed investment included oversight of the trials, training and capacity building for GSE staff and resourcing for the open employment team implementing the initiative. GSE staff required capacity to work alongside and build capacity of mainstream employers, support people with disability during transitions and at the workplace/training placement and communicating with families.

Future initiatives by GSE or other providers to enhance open employment pathways would focus on:

- Planning the implementation steps to have sufficient staff capacity, time and infrastructure to deliver services with an end goal of full wage open employment
- Individualising the support with a small group of participants to test and refine internal mechanisms and external collaboration for support, communication and program oversight with GSE, other providers, employers, participants and families
- Building consistent oversight and tracking of implementation and participants' progress to identify progress and challenges to participants, employers and staff.

Appendix A Evaluation questions

1. Impact on participants with disability

- a. To what extent are GSE's traineeship and hybrid trial models effective at achieving open employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability after six, twelve and eighteen months - and relative to the baseline at GSE and to other ADE and to DES providers? How do effects vary between different cohorts and demographic groups?
- b. To what extent have the traineeship and hybrid trials achieved the employment goals of the participants and relative to the baseline of direct transitions?
- c. To what extent have the trials resulted in increases in the weekly incomes of participants after six, twelve and eighteen months?
- d. What factors have contributed to or hindered the durability of employment outcomes for participants?
- e. To what extent have the programs increased participant's confidence and preparedness for work?
- f. What other outcomes (e.g., confidence, wellbeing in addition to employment) did participants and their families experience as a result of the trials and open employment?
- g. How effective were the programs in addressing participants non-vocational needs?
- h. To what extent and how have the trials contributed to improved economic dignity and independence for participants?
- i. What aspects of each model are contributing to successful open employment outcomes and for whom? In particular
 - How do nationally accredited training programs contribute to open employment outcomes?
 - How does providing hybrid employment across ADE and open settings prepare participants and employers for mainstream employment relative to direct transitions?

2. Impact on mainstream employers

- a. To what extent have inclusive employment practices become part of the practices of mainstream employers involved in the trials?
 - How and to what extent did the trials contribute to changes in employers' practices of attracting, recruiting and retaining people with disability?

- How and to what extent did the proportion of employers' job applicants, overall workforce and executive team with a disability change through the trials.
 - What challenges did the employers encounter?
- b. How and to what extent have the trials led to changes in the long-term capacity of mainstream employers and their employees to be confident employers of people with disability?

3. Impact on the GSE business model

- a. What are the impacts of the traineeship and hybrid models and its associated outcomes on GSE's business model in the short, medium and longer terms?
- b. What do ongoing supports in employment look like for trial graduates? What is the role of ADEs in delivering this?
- c. What are the impacts of the models and any associated open employment outcomes on business for ADEs?
- d. What does it look like when GSE operates more as of a transition pathway instead of a destination employer?
- e. To what extent can these models be supported by existing funding streams?

4. Replicability and scalability of the trials

- a. What is the potential of GSE's model to be replicated by other ADEs and/or other social enterprises? What learnings from implementation inform replication in new sites?
- b. What insights do these trials provide for ADE transformation toward becoming an employer and provider of pathways into open employment of first choice?

5. Systemic change and advocacy

- a. How effective are the traineeship and hybrid models of employment at transitioning people with disability into open employment compared to the conventional pathways through Disability Employment Services?
- b. To what extent has the trials been successful in influencing policy, funding and practice related to employment services provided through NDIS and DES?
- c. To what extent has the trials been successful in influencing mainstream employer attitudes, capabilities and practices in employing people with a disability?
- d. How has GSE's advocacy efforts contributed to shifting policy, funding and practice within the disability employment sector?

Appendix B Stories of significant change

Ten stories of change of people with disability in hybrid employment and traineeships and licences informed the findings of this report.

Some stories of most significant change were written by people with disability, others were collected with the input from trial participants by family members, GSE mentors and other supporters. The submitted stories have been modified or edited for consistency and length. All names in the stories are aliases.

At the end of the section are two stories of change with parents of traineeship participants.

Story of change 1: Kenny changing his mind about his work

Hi, I am Kenny, I like movies, bowling, dancing, church and I also like playing the drums.

I've been with Good Sammy for some years. One day Sylvie asked me if I wanted to try a job at Recycling business. I said yes.

The work at Recycling business is similar to what I do at Good Sammy warehouse. I like organising things into boxes.

At [Recycling business] it was strange to work at an unfamiliar place, but some of my colleagues from Good Sammy were there too, that made it a better experience.

We used to be six staff there, but now it's only two. I liked it a lot more when there was six staff because we could socialise at lunch and there was more of a community. I missed the social connection when there were only two employees from Good Sammy at Recycling business, that's why I stopped working there.

It was a noisy environment; I didn't like it there. I asked Sylvie if I can change my mind about the job, she said yes. So, I left that job.

Good Sammy, they help me with everything, Sylvie is good, Jamie is good too. They help me with things to do with my employment. I like working there.

Later Sylvie said there was a new job in the community and it would be very different, less noisy, than the first one. At first, I hesitated but I trust [my GSE mentor], so I gave the second job a go.

At Logistics company we do all sort of different stuff tidy up the gates and straps lying about, the truckies just throw them out. We tidy the carpet; we do small painting work. I enjoy the days I go out to [Logistics company] much better. Its outside, there is lots of machinery and I am with some of my friends. I've learnt a lot from doing these different tasks.

Working at [Logistics company] is closer to my dream job, gardening. In the future I would like to get a job in [Warehouse], but there is a lot of paperwork and online forms. I'm really good at gardening.

When there is not much to do at [Logistics company], I can get a bit bored. I don't enjoy it as much. When there is lots to do, the day goes faster. When the work team is smaller, I enjoy my work less. I feel more motivated and happier when there are other people.

Key message from person's story

It's been a great experience to try something new. I liked that I could change my mind about work when it didn't suit me. I've learnt a lot of new skills.

I prefer my work when there's a bigger team, it's more fun and social. I'd recommend the program to others in Good Sammy who want to try out new things.

Story of change 2: Tameca gaining confidence and skills working as part of a team

I am 18 years old; I finished school last year. I like sketching and hot baths. I have pets at home; I love my dogs and rabbits and learning about other cultures.

I started the Good Sammy traineeship program so I can get experience working in a kitchen and working with a team. I enjoy cooking.

My dream job is working in a bakery and make my own sweets and pastries. I am really good at cakes. I have a very good memory. I can make a cake once or twice and can remember the recipe.

During my traineeship I get support, I get feedback on what I do well from my manager. I feel I am working with people who respect me. I am getting experience and learning the "do's and don'ts" of cooking and baking.

I like working there because it's quite and slow paced, but not too slow! It's a good environment. I can always ask [Matt] the chef cook for help.

When I started, I was doing simple tasks, like cleaning. It was boring. I started observing Matt in the kitchen and taking notes, memorising the recipes and steps. Then Matt asked me to do sensory recipes like pizza dough. I liked that. When Matt needed cakes, I said I can do them. I started baking more cakes, I have even made eclairs, that was a special treat!

What don't I like? Sometimes other people curse and there can be loud noises. I don't like curse words or noise.

Doing the traineeship helps me not only with getting work experience and I am learning about food safety and how to cook delicious meals. It also helps me with my routine – getting up early, getting ready for work, taking the bus and coming to work on time.

Story of change 3: Conrad being creative in an office admin traineeship

My name is Conrad I am in year 12 at [name] college. I attend the ED unit. My school is very good; they help me to get my work done on time. I like my play station and watching horror movies.

My teacher asked me if I was interested to learn new things and get paid for it [do a traineeship with Good Sammy], I said “yes, I also was a bit sceptical; trying out new things can make me feel anxious.” I had done work experience at Coles, but it was boring. I didn’t learn much at all.

At Good Sammy, today, I work in the main office. It’s an administration type traineeship. I get to use computers, prepare or fix up presentations, using PowerPoint and animations. I enjoy that, I want to be a game developer one day.

When I started [at Good Sammy] I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do, I tried out sorting clothing in the warehouse for Containers for Change, I didn’t enjoy that much it felt meaningless, I wasn’t learning new things, just repeating the same thing over and over. I spoke to [mentor] and she supported me to change to an office based traineeship, once they found out that I liked working on technology and on computers.

The team I work with keep challenging me and I keep learning new things. I have used all Microsoft programs now but designing PowerPoints is my favourite! I get task to do and then have time to work out the solutions by myself, I enjoy that. Also, I can always ask for help when I need it.

My work is a friendly and good place to work. I also enjoy getting paid for my work. There are also boring things about my work, like when the task is too repetitive. Doing the written certificate tasks can feel like a burden, a chore sometimes.

It’s been 7 months now in the office and I feel I learned a lot. I know different computer programs, can do my own PowerPoint presentation, I am more confident to speak to people at work.

I feel more hopeful, when I finish year 12 it will help me finding employment and making new friends. I also know that I can learn new things when a person takes the time and shows me how to do it. Also, when I am left alone to try it out for myself.

I have saved all my money from my traineeship and saving up for a new play station and computer games.

Main message you would like others to know? It can be difficult to start a new thing, like a job. I didn't know what I wanted to do, I had to try out different things. I learnt that I can speak up and change my mind about it later.

Having the GSE mentors helps me, I can talk to them when I am unhappy, want to change something with work. I am glad I started the traineeship with them!

Story of change 4: Benjamin starting a new job, trying to fit in socially

I am Ben, I love I love spending time with my fiancé Kim. I also enjoy the outdoors, going camping, fishing in the local creek and crabbing.

My manager at Good Sammy asked if I wanted to try out a different role at government service. At first, I was hesitant, the extra pay was a welcome bonus. I can get bored easily at work. Trying something new was exciting.

At [government service] I refill and restock the fridges, organise the milk by dates, prepare milk and other staples, get the orders in for tea and coffee. I attend the job together with a mentor [Lucy]. Having Lucy there for support and company is great, it makes my work easier when there are challenging tasks to do and more interesting.

I find with [government service] that the work is always different, also I get paid more than in my second job.

One day, I would love to own my own café. I love chatting to and serving people, I also enjoy being a leader. Helping people and having people who look up to me is something I enjoy.

I am a chatty and friendly guy, being around people is important to me. Unfortunately, the work at [government service] is a bit isolated, I don't get to meet many of the other people who work there. Sometimes the other staff can be a bit snobby. I don't expect deep conversation but someone saying hi in return would be nice. That's one thing I'd like to change about my new job.

Other than the social aspect I like my new job. I enjoy working at [government service] because there's no rush to finish the tasks. I don't like being rushed, it's stressful. As long as we get the work done, my manager seems happy.

Since starting my new job, I feel a little more confident about myself and one day running my own café. I am learning new skills like planning, placing orders, restocking, ... I didn't think I'd ever be able to do a job like that. I feel more confident to be able to do things if I put my mind to them now and I can ask for support when I get stuck.

Lucy, the mentor I have at [government service] is probably the best mentor I've ever had. She makes the work really fun and easy; we work well together as a team!

I really enjoy mixing up my work week, having a few hours at [government service] and then being at Good Sammy with my old mates.

Story of change 5: Melissa gaining personal independence and confidence

Hi, I am Melissa. I finished school last year. My family heard about the Good Sammy program and we asked about me getting a driver licence. I live outside of town and it's hard for me to get around, go to uni or get a job without a licence.

When Good Sammy accepted me into the program and they said they would pay for my driver lessons, that was an exciting day for me.

I took regular lessons together with Sam, my teacher. Sam also got help from Tony [behaviour support specialist] how to best communicate with me.

It wasn't always easy, there were days where I felt quite anxious of doing something wrong, driving too slowly, or driving too fast. But Sam was very supportive and understanding. He knew how to motivate me, he kept talking to me and helped me believe in myself, that I could do it. Having Tony involved was important too.

Last month was the big day for me, when I passed my driving test on the first attempt! I could not believe it, ...I was absolutely thrilled!

Since then, I feel more confident in my abilities to learn new things and to succeed! And I love driving mum's car, go shopping, see my friends. I plan to apply for work, hopefully my driver licence will be a testament to my skills and get me more work opportunities.

I feel more confident about my future, doing a TAFE course further away and finding work. I love being independent, getting around by myself is a big achievement; I am proud of myself!

Story of change 6: Rich speaks about the importance of diversity and challenge at work

My name is Rich. I like doing martial arts and acting. I do mixed martial arts and I like doing stage acting and screen acting.

I want to get an agent and be a Hollywood martial arts superstar. That's my dream job!

I have worked at Good Sammy for four years or longer. I like working there. Tom [manager] asked me if I wanted to try a new job, its outdoors and its better paid. I said yes, that sounded interesting.

My new job in the community is at [a logistics company] ... it's a surprise, I never know what's up that week. We have done paining jobs, we put away gates, tidy the truck cabs, sort the shed. A mentor [Tom] goes there with me and some others [from Good Sammy], he explains what we need to do that day. Tom gives us instructions and helps fix problems.

I enjoy learning new skills and also making more money! I also enjoy when my work is diverse, it's a bit different every week, that keeps it interesting.

Sometimes the work at [Logistics company] [the logistics yard] it can be hard work. the gates are heavy. It's good we work there as a team, otherwise I could not do the job on my own.

A few times the truck drivers were rude to us, but our supervisor told them to go away. They truckies are busy people, always in a rush. Its good Tom [Good Sammy mentor] comes to work, he deals with this.

The workers at Good Sammy are good. I can speak to the coordinators about what I want to do in the future. They are helping me to apply for Tafe.

I like my work in the warehouse [Good Sammy] but it's good that I get out one day a week [Logistics company] and work outside, I don't get as bored with my work and learn new things.

If there are options to do more work outside, to work at different sites and business every week that would be my preference, because it's more interesting to go to different places, have different tasks to do, meet different people.

Story of change 7: Freddy learning to travel to work independently

My name is Freddy, I am 17 years old. I like reading, going out of town and on holidays down the coast, I like to dance every Wednesday.

My teacher asked if I wanted to do a traineeship to learn to be a retail assistant. I thought, why not. My dad thought it was a good idea, so we said yes

One day a week I work in a Good Sammy Op shop. The other days I go to school. The day I work I also get paid. I enjoy my work at the Op shop, I get to do different things, like decorate the short front, I am learning how to take credit cards and process the payments. I learn about the different parts of running a shop.

I like working as part of a team, being useful and I feel accepted at work. That's helping me to improve my confidence and to be more comfortable being around new people.

The paperwork tasks, part of the certificate in retail, they can be difficult to do, I'd rather be working than completing the online work. At the beginning I had a support teacher from school helping me with my certificate tasks, now I have learnt how to complete them myself.

I am learning how to take the bus to work independently, that's a big change. My dad is helping me to work out which bus to take and where to get off. It is a bit difficult because I have to change busses, when one bus is late, or not on time, I feel anxious about missing the second one. I still need to practice more.

After the traineeship I'd like to stay on and keep working at Good Sammy in the Op shop. My manager is very kind, she's funny and she understands my needs. I am okay to start a different job too. Once I finish school, I don't want to stay home do nothing, that would be terribly boring. I want to keep earning my own money and feel useful. I have something to do every day, I meet people and leave the house.

Good Sammy is helpful. They met with my dad to talk about my future work options and what I'd like to do once the traineeship is done in April next year. I hope they can help me find work in a café or a retail job, any shop that's not too stressful and busy. Where my manger understands me and takes their time. I get paid and am saving my money, the traineeship is! I feel I am being part of a work community.

Story of change 8: Chen gradually gaining in confidence at work

My name is Chen, I am 17 years old. I go to high school and doing a traineeship with Good Sammy. I like playing games with my friends and family. I like PlayStation. On the weekends I like kayaking, also watching movies and TV shows.

I started at the Good Sammy warehouse managing the recycling, sorting clothing. I care about the environment; it's a good job. I also like learning new skills and earning money while I study.

I enjoy seeing the recycling come into the warehouse and how it gets processes and sorted. I enjoy getting different challenges most shifts, trying out new things. I like most of the people I work with. I like that the traineeship there are other young people with disability.

Some days I can feel overwhelmed with the number of things that come into the warehouse, when work is too fast or too intense and noisy. I prefer to work in a quiet area, if work gets too noisy, I feel nervous and anxious.

The mentors are patient and helpful. I have a mentor he provides me with support. When I have questions, I can also ask my colleagues. I meet the RTO worker every few weeks, she helps me with the traineeship paperwork, so I can get my certificate.

Some mentors are not so understanding. They don't seem to understand my disability, they can get impatient with me, hurry me. They think I am not trying enough.

If there was a something I'd change about my work, it's the noise and the lack of storage space. I need to bring my safety equipment with me on the bus when I come in every day. That can be hard to remember.

Since starting at Good Sammy I have learned a lot. I am proud of it. I am no longer that nervous around other people or people at my workplace. I understand how the machines work. I feel more comfortable going about my tasks.

This traineeship has given me hope that there are other jobs out there for me. The mentors support me to overcome challenges and make adaptations at work. I am not yet sure what I'd like to do in the future.

I think I'd like a job where I am busy with new skills and leaning things every day. I don't like maths or numbers, but I am very good at storing and organising. I would like a job with detailed work processes in a quiet environment.

Story of change 9: Tim building skills in office administration

My name is Tim, I am 17 years old. I go to college, and I am studying a Certificate 2 in Workplace Skills at Good Sammy.

If I am not at work or school I read a lot, I also write on different topics and play chess with my family. My friends call me the 'human dictionary'. I used to rock climb and cycle in my free time.

Now I work in the Good Sammy head office. I edit excel spreadsheets, make PowerPoints, I write up notes and other office work and tasks. I enjoy my work. Excel can be difficult, but I am very good at PowerPoint. I learn a great deal at work. It's worth my time. I love being paid and I am saving up my money.

When I started, at first, I was in the retail online store. I didn't enjoy the work there, I found it quite boring. That was resolved by me changing roles. My mentor helped me to organise it, to get into a different traineeship program, in Workplace Skills Certificate 2.

With the traineeship certificate I will have the basic skills and knowledge working in an office, at a reception desk. I will know about safety at work, different software, how to

work in a virtual space online with Zoom and other stuff. These will be invaluable skills for my future work.

In the future I'd like to study and do something in the political sphere. Have a leadership position. Few politicians have the will required to fix problems, I hope, one day, I can make a difference for myself and for others.

One thing I don't like much about my traineeship is the accreditation tasks. They are online and it takes me some time to complete them, when I'd be rather doing other work. I get support from the people work with to achieve my tasks.

Once I finish the traineeship I want to find work in the community, so far not much progress has been made towards my goal. But for now, I enjoy the work I do and look forward to coming every week.

Story of change 10: Aldo training to become a bus driver

I am Aldo. I am 18 years old. My favourite things are busses I know all the different brands of busses, the technical detail, how many passengers they can carry.

School work is not my strength, I don't enjoy sitting all day long. My teachers suggested I try a traineeship to help me get skilled and get work later. Once I complete my traineeship, I'd like to work close to buses or trucks. A General Charters relieve school bus driver, or a bus taking people to different places, like workers to mines, students to school excursions – that is my dream job!

At Good Sammy I have a team of support people around me [the Learning and Development team]. They explain the tasks and work to do and show me how to do it. Because I love buses that much, the team are working to help me learn how to drive a bus, first I need to get my driver licence.

If I am not taking driver licence lessons or studying for the test, I do different jobs around the warehouse, like washing the Hi-vis vests, putting them in the machines and getting them out. I work on the belt in the warehouse, laminating, doing CDS, I have done at least 20 different jobs in the Good Sammy warehouse.

Most of the jobs were OK. But I didn't enjoy writing minutes or working on the computer. Also, doing repetitive jobs, like preparing marketing materials and packs, I get too easily bored.

I like the diversity of tasks in Good Sammy, most of all, I look forward to the driver's licence lessons and getting my licence. Once I get the licence, I can start with the training for the heavy vehicle licence to drive a bus. It's going to take some time but it's something I really look forward to.

Good Sammy help me pay for my driver lessons. They talk to me about getting into a career and job that I would enjoy doing. Good Sammy have many staff and employees they too need to a bus to get people around; this could be my job.

Story of change 11: Jasmin commences work in a mainstream office

Jasmin tells her own story of change

How do say this ... I'm Australian, born and raised in the hills. I like to write, draw and wonder about. I have my own social art page on Facebook and Instagram. I've had it for a couple of years now. I take photos of people dressing up from conventions with their permission.

I work beforehand but I quit my job, it was too hard, it was not adapted to my needs. My mum heard of Good Sammy. I started with the Good Sammy traineeship program with a Cert 3 in retail. I chose this because I had experience in retail.

What was the traineeship like

Working in retail felt intimidating and frustrating at times. I had to do smaller tasks jobs, I'd love to commit to bigger more responsible roles. Being face to face with customers most of the day was challenging sometimes.

I enjoyed the Good Sammy traineeship. I learnt a bit more about retail than I had expected. Like different types of sales, organising skills. I had a good time doing the colour coding. I am proud I completed the certificate.

About my new part time paid job

After completing the Cert 3 Good Sammy offered me a part time role with an accounting company. I only started a couple of weeks ago. I work closely with Jennifer, my supervisor, she gives me different jobs to do, like organising, planning tasks, also tidying up the storage and organising items. I am also learning how to use the computer.

I don't really know much about other support at work. It's only been two weeks at the new office. Jennifer is very helpful; she plans out tasks I can do. So far no one else (from Good Sammy or outside) has come to my workplace.

My future dream job

I would love to be a writer and artist, to create my own comic books; it may be better a hobby. ... I am not sure what other work I'd like to do in the future. ... that's all I can think of right now.

Story of change 12: Tom gained paid work in accounting at full award wage

Tom tells his own story of change

I like to read and play games. I used to do rock climbing. I tried volleyball in the past. Mostly I read, virtually everything; I have a full wardrobe of books

My high school recommended Good Sammy for their paid traineeship program. I did an office job and completed a Cert 2 in Workplace Skills.

How did you find your current employment

I worked part time at the Good Sammy office, 6-8months after, [my mentor at Good Sammy] told me of an accounting company, they were looking for staff. I started, first working a few hours a week and then ramped up to 22 hours a week now.

At first, I got smaller tasks to do, Jennifer my supervisor broke down new tasks so I could learn them in my own time. Gradually the company introduced new programs and accounting tasks for me to learn.

Today, I work with minimal supervision. That's how I prefer to work. I know what to do, who to ask if I have questions, how the programs and systems work. I keep learning new stuff all the time.

What do you enjoy about your job

I'm learning new things and earn a good wage. The work is complex but straight forward. The workplace atmosphere is generally good. I see myself staying here for a while, especially while going to university, I can keep working part-time.

I am planning to do a double major in security and international studies. My dream is to work in politics, to work in a government job that brings about meaningful social change. I'm passionate about climate change, cost of living, public infrastructure.

A key message from your story for others to know

I don't like the concept of that there are things that I cannot do. It is sad but one in five people with autism do not have paid work in the community.

I've been working in this job role for 1.5 years now, I'm not Albert Einstein but I am capable of doing things independently at work; I want to be seen and respected for my strengths and achievements and not stereotyped, what other people think people with disability can and cannot do.

Story of change 13: Jeremy's experience working at a major company

Jeremy's story is told by his Jeremy and his workplace supervisor

My name is Jeremy. I love hanging out with my fiancé and my friends. Sometimes we go camping, fishing or crabbing.

I used to work in the Good Sammy warehouse, organising and sorting mail and marketing materials. My supervisor said they had a similar better paid job.

At first, I was a bit hesitant, however, the extra pay was a good bonus, so I said yes. I wanted to give myself something extra to do, I get bored quite easily. Strating this new job was exciting for me.

What I enjoy about my work

I find the work is always different, there are different tasks to do or new skills to learn. That keeps it interesting for me. I enjoy working with [name mentor] she is great to work with, supports me where I need it, and I enjoy [mentor's] company. It's more social working together.

I enjoy my work at the company I don't feel there is a rush to finish tasks. I can take my own time, I don't like feeling rushed or stressed. As long as we get the work done [the management] is happy.

There is one thing I'd change about my workplace, some staff can be a bit snobby. Others are lovely and talk to me. But there are a few staff who will just ignore me. I don't want a deep conversation but saying hi in return would be nice.

What I gained from my mainstream work

I feel more confident ... before starting this job, I didn't think I was able to do something like this work. Today, I feel confident to try out new things, new tasks, learn new skills, if I put my mind to it and I have good support.

In the future, if I could do anything I'd like, I would love to own my cafe. To serve people, make coffees and sandwiches, ... I also love being a leader. I enjoy mingling with other people and I don't mind the occasional chat.

Key message from Jeremy's story

"Get out there and have a go. Even if people say you can't do something, never give up, and believe in yourself. You can do more than you think".

Story of change 14: Geraldine completing a traineeship and getting into a new industry

Geraldine tells her own story of change

I'm a hip hop dancer. I do that Monday night. I also enjoy meeting new people, getting out the house and exercising.

Last year I did a Cert 3 in Retail. I liked the variety in the store learning about the cashier, handling money and organising donations.

Once I completed the training there was no vacancy at the store or other Good Sammy Op shops. I wanted to stay with Good Sammy and spoke to one of the mentors. They told me about the option to work in a large company organising mail and deliveries.

I didn't have other options, and did not want to go back to volunteering, so I said yes.

I enjoy my new job at the mailroom, I get to joke around and speak to other people, meet the contractors. I feel like I am learning new things every week. Importantly I get to work with Sam, he is the best mentor. We get on well and we have fun.

Sam is also there when couriers are in a rush or difficult, he deals with the unfriendly people. A great aspect of my work is the teamwork – with Sam [the mentor] and with the other employees from Good Sammy. Getting things done together!

In the future ... for work I'd love to be a team leader! I enjoy role modelling. Possibly in an industry that I work in now. I believe I have the necessary skills for it, I am kind, enjoy learning and leading, I help people when they need it at work.

Story of change 15: Ricky gaining in confidence and seeking for the next career 'step up'

Ricky tells his own story of change

I've been with Good Sammy for 2.5 years. I started in retail, doing the traineeship, later the forklift licence, which I both enjoyed very much. Then Good Sammy organised the pay supported contract work with a large company.

This new job has greatly expanded my employment goals.

I have reached the rank of Cadet Under Officer with the Australian Army Cadets. I plan to move out of home in a year or two. And building a granny flat on my sister's property. I think, the paid job showed me all the things that I can achieve in life.

The support I've received was from mentors and managers. The support was to complete administrative tasks rather than the work itself. I feel quite independent at work; I only go to my mentor for help in situations where there is an issue.

I enjoy my work because of the people I work with. Everyone here is really nice, because we provide the company an essential service. People who come and pick up parcels or mail are friendly and chat to me. If there is an issue, I can ask my mentor [name] for support. But it doesn't happen often.

I also enjoy showing others [contractors from Good Sammy] the tasks that need to be done in the mailroom. We had a few new people join; I stepped up and offered some help to my colleagues to get used the new tasks.

My future employment

I have really learnt a lot and grown in confidence with this job. In the future I prefer to have a paid position at award wages. I don't want to be using my NDIS funding to pay for support mentors, to pay a fee to the organisation to work there.

I love my work, to feel useful, I am contributing, learning and making a difference. I don't enjoy sitting around the house being idle. My family and I have spoken to Good Sammy they said they will help me find award wage employment. Working in a warehouse, even at Good Sammy, as long as I get paid at award wages.

Story of change 16: Teddy's experience of changing workplace

Teddy's story of change is told by a Good Sammy mentor

My name is Teddy. I like spending time with my sisters. I play footy for Kelmscott Bulldogs in the integrated football league. I go out for walks around my house.

I have worked with Good Sammy for a long time. It's close, so it's convenient to get here. One day my mentor [name] said they had another similar job that paid more money. At first, I was hesitant, but I also wanted the experience and try something different.

I enjoy my new workplace, it is a large warehouse close to Good Sammy, it is easy to get there. I like having two workplaces, it makes my work week interesting. I tried another contractor job; it was too far to get to. So, I stopped going.

I'm good at electrical test and tagging, organising, and fixing things around trucks. But my dream job would be working with animals, looking after them, training, not sure. I love all kinds of animals.

I get a lot of support from Good Sammy. They do my paperwork; I have two mentors/supervisors at the new workplace. They break down tasks for me, makes sure I know what to do and I take breaks when I need to.

I love working at the new warehouse. It's interesting. I like that it's close to work and easy to get to and earning extra money. I find sorting cans and bottles relaxing, I like organising them by colour and type of resource. My work can get a bit noisy. I take a break when I need to.

When it gets too busy, it can be a challenge to find things in a big pile of containers. Sometimes my work is boring. When they need to move the cages of aluminium or plastic, we need to stand and wait. Mostly my work is fine. I like that I am earning extra income.

Story of change 17: Donald had the courage to change to a new workplace

Kenny's story is told by a Good Sammy mentor

My name is Donald. I like martial arts and stage acting. I enjoy watching birds and being outdoors. My dream job is to be an agent or a Hollywood martial arts superstar. My hobbies keep me active but also fuel my creativity.

I joined Good Sammy 2 years ago, looking for more income and to learn new skills. I am eager to learn and so I can apply for an award wage job in the future. I want to be financially secure.

I spoke to the Good Sammy coordinator, they said they can help me apply for a TAFE course, I want to work towards my other employment goals. Good Sammy also helped me get into a contractor job with a large yard company.

My new employment is okay. I like the variety, learning and trying new things, and earning more money.

Most of my job is good, I get on well with the others from our team, there are difficult parts too. The work can be physically demanding, like lifting the gates from the ground, they are heavy. Some of the truck drivers are impatient and unfriendly, even rude. It is good to have the supervisor there; they make sure we are okay.

Key message for other people to know is that it is good to try new things out. Some jobs are for you, others are not; you can only find out by yourself.

It takes courage to try out new things in life.

Story of change 18: Jeff obtains an accredited forklift licence, but safety concerns prevent him from using it at work

Jeff's story is told by Jeff and a Good Sammy mentor

My name is Jeff; I enjoy bowling on Sundays and line-dancing on Sundays and church on Sundays and go shopping with mum. It's a busy life!

I started with Good Sammy over 30 years ago. I work in different areas of the business, in gardening, in the warehouse, in other areas. I have also worked in mainstream companies – big supermarkets, Bunnings, I used to work in their gardening business, but it was getting too much. I had to stop, then I came back to Good Sammy. I enjoy working outdoors on the fresh air.

When the opportunity came up to do a forklift licence I wanted to give it a go. It could be useful for my future work opportunities.

About 1.5 years ago I started contract work with two new businesses. Good Sammy found those jobs for me. At first it was only one day a week, to see how I like the new workplace. Now I work there 4 days a week as a contractor and one day in the Good Sammy warehouse. In the beginning we had 5-6 people from Good Sammy at the yard company, but the work is tiring and physical. Some people tried it out and stopped coming. I don't mind the physical side of the job. I like diversity and I get that working on a service contract on two sites.

After getting my forklift licence, I thought I could use it for the contracted yard job, to lift heavy things. But the supervisor is concerned the space is too small to use a forklift, it is a shame really. We need to have muscles and lift manually, I love doing it, it would been just nice to use my forklift skills at work.

My work as a contractor has given me a heaps ... I have learnt to trust and listen to people I don't know very well. Be more responsible and independent. At home now, I

cook more, I am learning how to make my own dinners, with little or no outside support. I feel I gained confidence to learn and try out new things in life.

I enjoy the work I do and feel supported. But Good Sammy should have more support, like outside of work to help people with disability access other things they want to do in life.

Story of change 19: Eduardo's father speaks about the families experience with the traineeship program

My son has had a few other casual jobs - gardener, delivery guy, and last year Eduardo stated his Certificate 2 in retail with Good Sammy.

The school contacted us, they offered Eduardo the traineeship with GSE, we were happy to go ahead for two reasons, first he gets a qualification at the end of 18 months, a piece of paper. But when you attend the TAFE during school you only get an attendance, not a completion certificate. The second reason we decided it was a good option was the pay; he gets about \$10/hour.

Eduardo is learning retail skills; he is also learning to be a young adult. He is taking responsibility to arrive on time, be dressed for work, plan his bus route. [...] In the beginning Eduardo still had support from the school EA within a couple of months, he no longer needed the extra support.

We are satisfied with GSE because they give the person with disability real work opportunities like in the op shops, in a supported environment, to gain certified training and skills. These work opportunities give people with disability opportunity to feel useful, become more independent, and earn an income that's acceptable for a young person, it's a great program.

Our experience with Good Sammy was amazing. We, my son and I, were out with other young people to see a movie at the cinema for free, Eduardo also attended the Grand Ball, a costume party at GSE. I feel that GSE are more authentic, they don't only want to take your NDIS funding, giving you hope your child will find a job, but nothing ever happens, they write a CV and that's it.

Future employment plans

Eduardo likes to work at his current workplace. If he could continue there after completing the traineeship, build on his skills and increase his hours that would be fine. Similarly, if he wanted to explore new retail options or if Good Sammy can help us find other community paid employment, that's good too. Possibly doing two days in GSE op

shops and two days in a different job and environment to make sure he keeps learning and diversifying his skills.

My main concern is about Eduardo completing high school and doing nothing all day. Just staying home alone, that's not a healthy environment and prospect for any young person. It is important for Eduardo to feel he has a purpose in life, he is working and earning, building his independence.

Story of change 20: Tony's mother Jennifer speaks about their involvement with the traineeship program

My son Tony heard through VET trainer at school. He started another traineeship with another company in hospitality, but they didn't put the time in to support him in his learning. He didn't enjoy it, he was coming home and not very happy, they didn't show him how to do any of the tasks.

His teacher recommended Good Sammy and Tony did the interview and got selected. When he was accepted [into the program], we had a meeting at the school with Tony's teacher, Tony, the GSE staff and me. They explained what would be involved, it sounded like a good fit.

Tony was keen to try a different traineeship, have a job and earn his own money. To start with he tried working in the recycling area but it didn't suit him.

Now Tony is doing a Certificate 2 in Workplace Skills. He's been with GSE 1-year and he is loving it! Tony has functioning Autism, he's good with numbers, he is working on computers in the head office, learning programs and entering data, producing comics and advertising material.

He enjoys his work and training. He loves the money, Tony gets about \$170/fortnight, he works one day from 8 am to 4pm. He also gets paid sick days and public holiday leave, works through the school holidays. He loves the continuity of his job.

Once he finishes year 12, Good Sammy offered him ongoing employment in the office, once he's completed his training and school. Tony might do that as a side job.

For future work he'd like to go to university, he's good at sciences and English. He originally thought about working part time in a cafe, but that first bad experience really disheartened him. At Good Sammy he feels understood and included.

Tony enjoys going to work because of his relationships with other staff and colleagues. His supervisor is great, easy to talk to, gets in touch with you, he has great suggestions.

His supervisor offered him the driver licence program. Tony now gets 15 paid lessons for free. Currently, I drive Tony when he goes to work and pick him up. Once he has his licence he can go to uni or to work on his own.

It's great the program it gives him some independence, he's learning work skills towards his future work and university, making friends and connections, being in the office he's learning to socialise with others.

Tony is happy with his work, the people, and what he is learning. His work understands his Autism and behaviours, he can be righteous, the team seem to know how to work around it. Other employers can be non-inclusive, if you tell them, you have Autism.

Story of change 21: Simon's mother Susanna speaks about Simon's customised workplace at a food distribution centre

Simon has many interests, he enjoys being active with a set routine and different activities that keep him busy throughout the week. Together with a self-managed support worker Simon performs jobs for neighbours, dog walking, washing cars or grocery shopping. He also takes part in volunteering groups that collect rubbish in public spaces. Simon enjoys taking long walks most days; it helps him feel balanced emotionally. On days that Simon has no paid or volunteering work, he works on developing his independent living skills with a support worker.

Two days a week Simon attends the markets, he walks along the market perimeter and scans the area for discarded objects. Simon enjoys a clean and neat environment, he enjoys his autonomy, performing tasks in his way, without other people intervening too much. He also gets to spend most of the time outdoors, which he enjoys. This job is well tailored to Simon's needs and interests. He is not cut out for a group environment, it makes Simon feel unsettled when he hears remarks from others.

With the markets job, Simon found work that he enjoys that is safe for him and others. Good Sammy handles all the employment requirements and paperwork and relationship with the employer. I do not have to negotiate with the management (employer) or deal with the administrative side, which is a true blessing.

After working at the markets for two years, a new manager started, he wanted to terminate Simon's maintenance contract. Good Sammy intervened and put in a good word for Simon. That changed the managers' mind and they agreed to continue the service contract with Good Sammy. Without the help from Good Sammy, Simon would have certainly lost his job and the opportunity to have this activity scheduled in his week. I am grateful to the Good Sammy employment team, they go out of their way to support us.

My main concern for the future is to ensure we have the evidence to support Simon's NDIS funding for the 1:1 support he requires to go to work or do volunteering and other meaningful community activities. He does not like to be stuck at home, which affects Simon and his family.

We are grateful Simon found an open employment opportunity that is cut out for him, he earns a decent wage, and can contribute to the community, because the work and setting are the right job and working environment for his needs and interests.

Story of change 22: Benjamin's mother Sarah speaks about Ben's work in warehousing

Benjamin loves organising, he really appreciates his job. Benjamin attended mainstream schooling, in year 10 he changed to a special education school because of the atmosphere at school. Benjamin was keen to get into the workforce. When the opportunity of a paid traineeship came up with Good Sammy, he was very keen.

Benjamin completed a Certificate 2 in logistics with Good Sammy. Part of it was onsite at the Good Sammy warehouse, the written tasks were completed with support from an RTO. Benjamin enjoyed how relevant the modules were to real working life and applying his study in practice.

During the traineeship he would come home, elevated, talking about the different tasks he had accomplished during that day. Whilst completing the certificate, Benjamin was offered to trial in a warehouse company. Because he enjoyed working on the large machines and belts, Benjamin decided to continue working on a supported wage with the company, supported by Good Sammy.

Benjamin has now been with the company for over a year. He attends work 2 days a week, 6-7 hours. He takes public transport to work. The two days are big achievements for him. Benjamin enjoys feeling he is doing a meaningful job he cares about. Benjamin is very passionate about his responsibilities.

At work Benjamin enjoys the social aspect, socialising with the Good Sammy supervisor and his peers. He would love to have a peer his age, but most other Good Sammy employees are older. Benjamin loves getting paid, he saves up most of his pay package.

Working alongside the Good Sammy Open Employment team has been very good. They are very supportive. They understand Benjamin and try to find opportunities matching his interests. For example, they also offered training for other licenses, car and forklift. Benjamin has not been able to complete the car license yet, but he has attained his forklift license.

As his family we are delighted to see Benjamin step into young adulthood, try new things, grow in confidence, learn practical life skills he needs, like attending work, taking public transport, speaking up or making decisions about his life.

The supported wage Benjamin receives is like a learner's wage – a 'stepping stone' to full award wage employment. I started speaking to the Good Sammy manager about options for Benjamin to move into the next stage of employment. Our goal is for Benjamin to earn a 'living wage', an income that recognises his contributions and supports his independence. He needs a full income because you do not get a discount when renting privately just because you have a disability for example.

We are open to Benjamin moving into the mainstream employment, while also mindful that he enjoys the social, wrap around support and supervision he receives through Good Sammy. Finding a supportive employer will be tricky. Benjamin is clear, he's said recently, "I don't want to be doing this job all my life long". I keep reminding Benjamin, he has so many doors and opportunities open to him this is just the start to his working life!

Story of change 23: Ricky's mother Ramona speaks about her son's experience at a large company

Ricky is a history and museums buff. His dream job is to be a history museum curator.

Ricky completed a retail traineeship with Good Sammy at their op-shops. Ricky benefited from this paid opportunity. At first Ricky was not very confident. He quickly gained workplace and social skills, managing his emotions, engaging with a range of people and customers who come to the shop. Ricky was so engaged, he said he would like to become a retail manager.

After completing the Certificate 2 in retail, there was no vacancy at the shop and he could not continue there. We were in discussions about other options, which was delayed when staff changed. Good Sammy reached out when new staff were available and offered Ricky the opportunity on a service delivery contract with a large company. Ricky wanted supported employment where he could learn skills he needed gradually, so he accepted the position. The transition was good because going straight into the mainstream employment market would have felt too overwhelming.

The job is good because it is tailored to Rickys' strengths. For example, the Good Sammy manager set up systems and excel sheets where the employees can track and document the mail coming in and going out. These systems make it easy for Ricky to follow through on this work. Ricky also enjoys working alongside the supervisor. They have a good relationship.

After working there for some time, Ricky now feels he is ready to take on more responsibility, to work without supervision, to be and feel independent at work. These growth opportunities are not possible for him in this company, where the company requires that employees with disability have full supervision regardless of their capacity. Ricky Full supervision is also hard for Good Sammy because of staff changes. Ricky finds the uncertainty about support staff stressful.

Ricky service contract job was a good opportunity while Ricky was learning how to be in a workplace. We think it is probably time for Ricky to find a job where the support can be adjusted to his growing skills. It would mean over time he could spend less of his NDIS plan on employment support. Eventually we expect Ricky will be paid at award wage for what he is achieving at work and a job where he has career progression.

We spoke to Good Sammy about Ricky's work plans, they said they can assist us to find mainstream employment. Our past experience of DES providers (for other family members) was negative. The jobs offered were not good or they were enough tailored to the person's interests and abilities. We are hoping that Good Sammy can help Ricky find an award wage job in a role where he can grow and be more independent, work to the level of his abilities.

Ricky is a young man with great ambitions; he would love to become a retail manager or take on another leadership role. He is seeking a stimulating supportive environment where he can bring in all his passion and skills to work.

Story of Change 24: Employer in finance

I am Jennifer, I work as an HR Director of a medium sized financial services company.

What made the partnership work?

In 2025, we partnered with Good Sammy. The partnership started at the Executive level. The two CEOs who met at a function, where they identified they had shared objectives and interests in disability employment inclusion. When the Good Sammy CEO approached us, it was an opportunity for us to demonstrate we are sincere about trying to create opportunity for greater workplace diversity.

From the start we had senior leadership commitment. Today, we employ Tom at award wage (part-time) and Jasmin started 4 months on a supported wage (1 days a week).

This change came about because we had the ingredients for success: purpose and vision and someone high in leadership to drive change. If we ever experienced roadblocks, we spoke with our CEO and it has made all the difference.

Experience of creating roles and supporting two new staff, Tom and Jasmin.

I used to work for an agency that supported people with disability into open employment. I was familiar with concepts of customisation, workplace support, listening to each person to understand their needs and seeing opportunities for growth.

Tom started on the hybrid placement. He had completed a traineeship with Good Sammy and he had an interest in numbers, accuracy and working on the computer. Tom worked for 8 months with us as a contractor. We did not need to create a new role for him, because he gradually learnt the skills and developed confidence to do a customer support role. After 8 months, Tom approached us asking if we would employ him part time so that he could earn more than the supported wage. At that point, we had established a relationship with Tom, we could see his diligence and potential for the job, we were happy to offer him an award wage position.

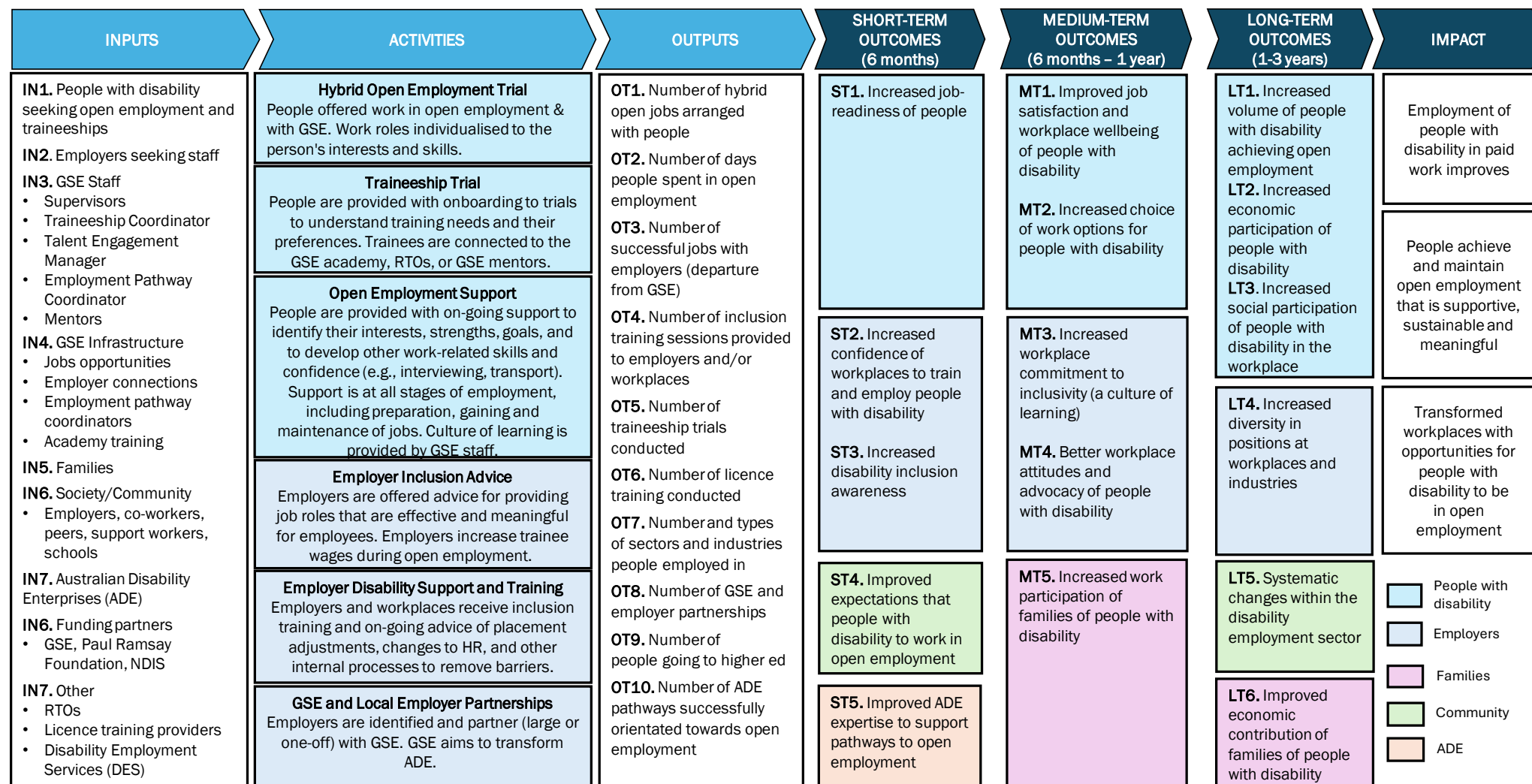
Jasmin's support needs, skill set and interests mean she does not want to sit at the computer all day long. I created a customised role for Jasmin that offers her diversity at work, where she is also challenged to learn new skills. Creating the role that is right for Jasmin and supporting her at the workplace has been my role. Jasmin would have benefited from on-the-job training support, however, that was not offered to her or us as the employer. A lot of that work has remained my responsibility.

Impact on workplace and organisation

As an organisation we are more attuned to diversity, disability and other diversity since Tom and Jasmin began working with us. We are proud to celebrate and raise awareness. One example is the last World Autism Day we invited our staff, including leaders, to write brief personal stories of raising a child with disability and what it meant to them. Some spoke about the rewards and challenges they faced as a family.

After the newsletter, we received positive responses. Employees said the short stories highlighted the personal side of employees and leaders, making other staff feel more compassionate. As an organisation we have grown, we practice and we celebrate inclusion. We also encourage staff to have empathy and understanding at work.

Appendix C Program evaluation logic and description of GSE activities



Overview: GSE activities and inputs (descriptive)

Information and advice. People with disability and their families can receive information and advice around employment options and pathways, how to navigate systems, including NDIS funding, working with DES providers and receive help finding mainstream work opportunities.

Social enterprises. GSE has a network of interconnected and distinct social enterprises offering supported employment and training opportunities for people with disability. The social enterprises include retail (op shops and e-commerce), management and sorting of recycling, logistics and warehousing, hospitality (food preparation/canteen, catering services), property care (cleaning, landscaping) digital media and office administration. The social enterprises are staffed with mentors, support workers and supervisors who support people with disability in their job roles.

Community Engagement Lead (CEL). This role supports people with disability approaching GSE to purchase services (support of find open employment) or join the GSE workforce. CEL will manage pricing estimates for service provision and connect the person with disability to relevant services within GSE (e.g. employment goal planning with EPC).

Mentors. GSE employs mentors with diverse experiences and expertise who work alongside employees with disability to build employment related skills and confidence. Support may include public transport training, on the job-support, getting 'job ready' (resume, interview preparedness) and others. Mentors work alongside Talent Engagement Managers to support participants' wellbeing, safety and achievement of employment goals. People with disability can choose to employ or work with an external job coach or mentor (not GSE staff).

Good Sammy Academy. This is a skill based learning component of GSE. The Academy provide structured learning and work experience opportunities through tailored programs. Participants receive practical workplace related skills, confidence building, obtain licences, or take part in traineeships.

Talent Engagement Partner/Manager. The Talent Engagement Partner (TEP) are primary responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Open Employment services and process at GSE.

Open Employment Service Process. Once a hybrid or open employment opportunity becomes available a Talent Engagement Partner will meet with the person to discuss the opportunity and arrange support (NDIS funding, GSE quote and execution of service

agreement). The process is tailored but will likely be conducted in three stages, Discovery, Job Carving, Post Placement support. In the discovery stage, individual support plans, risk assessment, medication or seizure management plans and other information will be completed. The TEP will support the participant to visit up to two different workplaces, discuss the work tasks of the potential job. Once the participant has chosen a work opportunity, during the Job Carving process, the TEP will search for prospective employers and liaise with employers to tailor the work opportunity to the persons' skills and strengths. Once an open employment opportunity has been secured – an employer has hired a person directly, the TEP staff will organise additional supports for the person (GSE mentor, routine on the job support and training), also disability awareness training to the employer and work team.

Procedures, policies and systems to facilitate Open Employment. GSE developed a suite of policies, procedures and tools to enable organisational change and implementation of the two trials. Changes run across GSE procedures like induction and onboarding, HR and payroll systems, safety and support, supported employee 'movement request forms' when a person commences part time open employment. Examples of redesigned tools and forms include the Open Employment Quoting and Pricing tools to obtain NDIS funding for individualised planning, mentorship and on the job support to people in the Hybrid trial.

Disability Employment Services (DES). Disability Employment Service providers are government contracted services designed to support people with disability to find the employment that meet their interests and receive the support they need to succeed at work. GSE is planning to establish relationships to select DES providers.

Employer disability awareness training. GSE are planning to deliver inclusion capacity building to mainstream employers to assist them to make changes to workplaces, hiring and management practices. Awareness training and inclusion support may include employers in the hybrid provision of service model or employers who are directly employing a person with disability.

Appendix D GSE administrative data analysis methodology

Pay roll data from GSE's finance team was provided for current GSE employees who were identified as participants in the trials. A total of 57,973 records were provided for 33 participants. The analysis excludes 7 participants as their records did not indicate that they were part of the trials. Of the remaining 26, 9 were identified as participants in the traineeship trials and 17 were identified as participants in hybrid employment trials (see Table 4).

Identifying employment types

The 'Project', 'Role', and 'Rate' information was used to classify shifts as supported employment, school-based traineeship, traineeship, provision of service employment, or open employment. The following table (Table 4) was confirmed with GSE.

Table 4 Employment type classification

Employment Type	Project	Role
Supported Employment	Belmont	Admin Assistant
	Booragoon	Cafe Assistant
	Butler	E-Commerce Assistant
	Canning Vale Cafe	Factory Assistant - CDS(Don't Use)
	Cannington	Factory Assistant - Unloading(Don't Use)
	Canteen	Factory Assistant(Don't Use)
	CDS - Canning Vale	Gardening Assistant
	CDS - Wanneroo	Kitchen Hand
	Ellenbrook	Labour Hire
	Factory Outlet	Maintenance Assistant
	Kelmscott(Gillam Drive)	NDIS Claims & Funding Admin
	Logistics	Online Store Assistant
	Maddington	People & Culture Officer
	Malaga	Retail Assistant
	Midland	Senior Online Store Coordinator
	Midland(G.E.Hwy)	Warehouse Assistant
	Mt Lawley	zzFactory Assistant
	NDIS Funding and Claims	
	Online Shop	
	People and Culture	

Employment Type	Project	Role
	Perth Metro Processing Property Care Reception and CC Repairs & Maintenance Repairs and Maintenance South Lakes Southern River Unloading and Distribution Wanneroo	
School Based Traineeship	CDS - Canning Vale Good Sammy Academy Admin Grant - Telethon Grant - Yajilarra Morley	Admin Assistant - School Base Traineeship Processing Assistant - School Base Traineeship Retail Assistant - School Base Traineeship Warehouse Assistant - School Base Traineeship
Traineeship	Grant - Yajilarra Kelmscott(Gillam Drive) Maddington	Admin Assistant Processing Assistant Retail Assistant - Traineeship Warehouse Assistant
Provision of Service Employment	Bull Motor Centurion Centurion. City of Cockburn Employment Operations External Pathways Activity Our Lady of Mercy Paywise Perth Markets Remondis Remondis. Service Delivery Western Power	Employment Operations Manager Gardening Assistant Labour Hire Open Employment Assistant Retail Assistant Warehouse Assistant
Open Employment	Employment Operations Mentor Morley Remondis	Mentor Offsite Supervisor (Mentor) Retail Assistant Supervisor (Offsite)

Open employment data was simulated for one participant, as the research team was notified by GSE that they had transitioned to an open employment arrangement outside

of the GSE environment. GSE provided the start date, number of hours they were rostered on for, and the full award wage they were paid. The research team used this information to estimate the number of hours worked and net pay received in the pay periods following their departure from GSE.

Identifying key trial dates

Trial start dates were calculated as the start date of the pay fortnight where the employee first worked a shift that was classified as an employment type other than Supported Employment. For example, if a participant had their first 7.5 hour shift at Western Power (classified as Provision of Service employment) on 12 June 2025, this would fall within the pay period 2 June 2025 – 15 June 2025, thus the hybrid trial start date for this participant would be 2 June 2025. The 26 pay periods prior to the trial start date were considered to be the 12 months prior to the trial start (e.g., pay periods between 3 June 2024 and 1 June 2025). Pay periods were allocated to months if the period end date fell within the month period. For example, pay periods allocated the month prior to the hybrid trial start in the example above would be those where the period end date fell within 2 May 2025 and 1 June 2025 (e.g., pay periods 21 April 2025 – 4 May 2025, 5 May 2025 – 18 May 2025, and 19 May 2025 – 1 June 2025). Pay periods had to be used rather than exact shifts, due to pay roll system quirks that required GSE to distribute hours across the fortnight.

Calculating variables for monthly summaries

Monthly summary variables were calculated for the two trial types separately. The method of calculation for each variable is described below.

Mean hours worked per month

The total hours worked over the pay periods allocated to a particular month were summed for each participant. For example, in the scenario above, the total hours worked would be summed for the pay periods 21 April 2025 – 4 May 2025, 5 May 2025 – 18 May 2025, and 19 May 2025 – 1 June 2025 to form the total hours worked in the month prior to starting the hybrid trial. This excluded paid hours that were not actually worked (e.g., public holidays and leave). In cases where no hours were worked in any of the pay periods allocated to that month, the total hours worked for that month was recorded as 0. Based on the totals for each month, the sample mean for each month was calculated to depict the changes over the trial.

Mean hourly wage per month

The mean hourly wage for each month is based on a weighted average for each participant. This was calculated as the sum product of the hours worked by the hourly rate divided by the total hours worked. For example, if a participant worked 20 hours of provision of service employment at a rate of \$15/hour and 10 hours of supported employment at \$4.03/hour, the mean hourly wage for all hours worked that month would be:

$$\frac{(\$15 \times 20 \text{ hours}) + (\$4.03 \times 10 \text{ hours})}{30 \text{ hours}} = \$11.34/\text{hour}$$

Based on the weighted means for each month, the sample mean for each month was calculated to depict the changes over the trial. Note that this calculation only included hours that were actually worked by the participant (i.e., excluded paid public holidays and leave). It should also be noted that leave and public holiday rates were paid at the GSE supported disability wage, regardless of whether they fell on a day where the participant would have ordinarily worked a service provision employment shift.

Mean net pay per month

The net pay participants received over the pay periods allocated to a particular month were summed for each participant. Based on the totals for each month, the sample mean for each month was calculated to depict the changes over the trial. Two versions of this variable were estimated. The first, only included months where payments were made through GSE (e.g., excluded months where no payments were recorded). The second, included months where no payments were made, and assumed that the net pay was \$0. It should be noted that it is possible, although unlikely, that participants recipients received income from employers outside of the GSE environment. However, for the purposes of these analyses, it is assumed that participants had no other employment, with the exception of the one case of open employment where the details were made known to the research team.

Classifying employment types

Participants were considered to be part of the traineeship trials if they had any shift classified as a Traineeship or School Based Traineeship. If participants worked a shift that was classified as Provision of Service Employment and did not have any traineeship shifts, they were considered to be part of the hybrid trials. In cases where employees did not have records of traineeship or provision of service employment shifts, these employees were excluded from the analysis. These trial classifications did

not change, even in cases where participants in traineeship trials worked supported employment, provision of service employment, or open employment shifts. The categories of employment types presented in the Sankey diagrams (i.e., Figures 4 and 5) were classified based on the following criteria:

Hybrid trials

- **Provision of Service Employment:** Only worked shifts at partner organisations during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Hybrid Employment:** Worked both shifts at partner organisations (provision of service employment) and GSE (supported employment) during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Supported Employment:** Only worked supported employment shifts at GSE during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Leave:** Did not work any shifts through GSE during the pay periods allocated to that particular month, but did receive leave payments.
- **Not Working:** Did not work any shifts through GSE during the pay periods allocated to that particular month and did not receive leave payments.

Traineeship Trials

- **Traineeship – School Based:** Only worked traineeship (school based) shifts during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Traineeship:** Only worked traineeship shifts during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Hybrid - Traineeship:** Worked both shifts at partner organisations (provision of service employment) and at GSE for the traineeship during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Traineeship + Supported Employment:** Worked both supported employment and traineeship shifts at GSE during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Supported Employment:** Only worked supported employment shifts at GSE during the pay periods allocated to that particular month (i.e., did not have traineeship shifts).

- **Provision of Service Employment:** Only worked shifts at partner organisations during the pay periods allocated to that particular month (i.e., did not have traineeship shifts).
- **Open Employment:** Only worked shifts where they were paid full award wages during the pay periods allocated to that particular month.
- **Not Working:** Did not work any shifts through GSE during the pay periods allocated to that particular month and did not receive leave payments.

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