



# Homelessness and Unemployment: Understanding the Connection and Breaking the Cycle

Adam Steen, David Mackenzie and Darcy McCormack

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Contact details: Adam Steen, c/- Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne  
University, P.O. Box 218, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122; PH: 0392148825.

First author email: [asteen@swin.edu.au](mailto:asteen@swin.edu.au)

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For more information contact: Swinburne

Institute for Social Research

Swinburne University

Mail 53 P.O. Box 218

Hawthorn Victoria 3122

Business: +61 3 9214 8825

Facsimile: +61 3 9819 5349

[http:// www.sisr.net](http://www.sisr.net)

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# Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics.
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
Employed	Persons, aged 15 years or over, are defined by the ABS as employed if they have worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or in a business, or worked for one hour or more in a family business or are employees who are not at work.
FaHCSIA	Department of Families and Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
JSA	Job Services Australia – the Australian Government’s national employment services program created in 2009 on the basis of reforms to the former Job Network program of the Howard Government.
JSCI	Job Seekers Classification Instrument (JSCI) - a questionnaire used to determine eligibility for Streams 1-3 and to identify individuals with multiple or complex issues that are barriers to employment.
NAHA	National Affordable Housing Agreement - an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments that began on 1 January 2009 to provide a whole-of-government approach to housing affordability and homelessness.
NILF	Not In the Labour Force – people classified by the ABS as neither employed nor unemployed (ie. looking for work) who are therefore not in the labour force.
Primary homelessness	Individuals without conventional accommodation - for example, people living on the streets or sleeping in parks, or in cars and railway carriages.
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program - created in 1985 from pre-existing state/ territory and Commonwealth programs
Secondary homelessness	Individuals in temporary accommodation, including those staying in emergency or transitional accommodation, people temporarily living with other households because they have no accommodation of

their own, and people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis.

SHS	Specialist Homelessness Service
Stream 1 Job Seekers	Individuals assessed as ready for work. The services that JSA providers are required to offer these job seekers include activities to develop their skills in preparing resumes, write applications, 'cold call' potential employers, career planning, interview techniques, job search and work experience.
Stream 2 Job Seekers	Individuals assessed as experiencing moderate levels of disadvantage. For job seekers classified in Stream 2, JSA providers should provide activities and assistance, both vocational and non-vocational, aimed at improving the client's employability.
Stream 3 Job Seekers	Individuals assessed as experiencing significant disadvantage. Stream 3 clients receive similar support to Stream 2 job seekers, but should receive a greater level of support.
Stream 4 Job Seekers	Individuals assessed as having the highest levels of disadvantage. These clients may be affected by mental health issues, physical disability, homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction or other issues. JSA providers are required to work with Stream 4 job seekers to address their most pressing issues and barriers to employment first.
Tertiary homelessness	People living in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis. These people are sheltered, but do not belong to a household that has exclusive access to kitchen and bathroom facilities. Boarding house residents generally do not hold a lease over their accommodation.
Unemployed	Unemployed persons are defined by the ABS as persons aged 15 years and over, who were not employed during the reference week, and (a) had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week, and (b) were available for work in the reference week, or were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available.

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Interviews were conducted at the following sites with the following agencies:

- Salvation Army Flagstaff Men's Crisis Centre, the Anchorage, and Salvation Army East Care;
- Wise Employment Richmond, Frankston, Broadmeadows and Werribee;
- Matchworks Corio, Torquay, Werribee and Geelong; and,
- Workskil Broadmeadows, Brunswick, Belmont, Coburg, Corio, Geelong, Flemington and Craigieburn

Four other JSA agencies were approached; however, they were unable to assist at the time the survey was to be implemented.

# Executive Summary

While there are many studies of the characteristics of homeless individuals and unemployed individuals, there is minimal research that specifically addresses the relationship between the two conditions. Prior studies show that a significant number of homeless individuals are engaged in the labour-force and that not all unemployed persons become homeless. It is widely accepted though that unemployment is a significant contributing factor to housing instability or homelessness. This study investigates the relationship between homelessness and unemployment. Specifically, it examines the factors that distinguish homeless individuals (i.e. clients of Specialist Homelessness Services – SHS) from the most seriously disadvantaged groups of job seekers - JSA Stream 4 clients.

A cross-sectional survey of clients of homeless service providers and Job Services Australia clients was undertaken. A questionnaire was developed from factors identified in the extant literature that were identified as being associated with the two conditions. The survey was conducted over several months across multiple sites and providers in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

The findings reveal that previous labour market experience (using number of past jobs as the main indicator) and 'housing stability' are not significantly different between clients of SHS or JSA agencies. The principal factors that distinguished between the two groups were: long-term physical and mental health problems, as indicated by whether the client received a disability pension; social isolation, as indicated by whether clients had lived alone prior to engaging with the service; and whether individuals had been looking for work in the past year. In addition, substance use disorders were significantly higher for the SHS group than for the JSA group. Finally, the SHS group reported a lower level of post-school qualifications although the extent of early school leaving was high across all groups in the study.

The results are instructive but should be interpreted with some caution as several factors such as the nature of the sample surveyed limit the scope of the study. Due to budget and time constraints the study lacked a significant cohort of indigenous and newly arrived Australian clients. There were insufficient numbers of clients of both service sectors for comparative analysis by age cohorts. Also, the

survey was confined to Victorian agencies. The size of the sample is not problematic for the multivariate analysis undertaken but sample selection bias needs to be factored into interpretations of the findings and in particular, how generalisable the findings can be taken to be.

One implication of these limitations in the light of the findings is that a larger national study could usefully be undertaken to compare the findings of this report with models developed for other client cohorts, services, and locations. The report did not collect detailed data on the duration and long-term housing history of client groups and some of the questions raised by this study require better data on lifetime histories of both homelessness and labour market experience. An analysis of SAAP and Centrelink administrative data could facilitate a more sophisticated causal analysis and is strongly recommended for future research. For any analysis of the extent to which employment/ unemployment contribute to the onset or persistence of homelessness this data would be vital.

# Introduction

A properly functioning community and economy relies on its labour force. The 'welfare to work' agenda to encourage more people to participate in the labour force and move off benefits derives from two overarching policy imperatives. First, there is a declining birth rate and an ageing population with a need to counteract a shrinking labour force. Second, the current tight fiscal policy settings are impacting on the welfare sector in a time of worldwide economic uncertainty and weakened labour market. Thirdly, employment is seen as a pathway out of poverty and a necessary if not sufficient condition for social inclusion

There is an imperative to work from an individual's perspective as well as from a societal perspective. Long-term unemployment can have significant negative health impacts (Sheehan and Rio 2007). Work provides social relationships and support networks and prevents isolation. According to Freud (1930), life has a two-fold foundation: the compulsion to work created by eternal necessity, and the power of love in human relationships. Homeless populations are over-represented with various conditions notably mental illness and substance abuse (Burt et al. 1999). Obtaining employment and a living wage is a fundamental pathway to ending homelessness and preventing people who experience homelessness from ever becoming homeless again. The key to reengaging both homeless and long-term and chronically unemployed individuals with the workforce is to harness the skills, abilities and interests of these individuals (Sheehan and Rio 2007).

Research from the US indicates that homeless people are willing and able to work. Sheehan and Rio (2007: 343) note "contrary to stereotypes, homeless people do want to work and they often want to engage in work quickly". Research studies in the US by Rog and Holupta (1998), Theodore (2000) and Marrone (2005) indicate that even chronically homeless individuals and those with multiple disabilities can participate in the labour force, provided they have appropriate support.

Cook et al. (2001) and Min, Wong and Rothbard (2004) propose that offering employment to homeless people as early as possible is an effective way to develop trust, motivation and hope. Sheehan and Rio (2007) go further, noting that re-engagement with the work force can serve to prevent and end homelessness. The question for most researchers is how best to go about this.

The homeless face multiple hurdles in obtaining jobs, particularly jobs that pay a living wage and are not transitory. Many jobs are often not located where housing is affordable - thereby reinforcing patterns of marginalisation and social exclusion. Homeless persons face multiple barriers in re-engaging with the workforce. To re-enter the workforce homeless people need interview skills and appropriate credentials. Because of their lack of a permanent address communication may be difficult with potential employers. Employers may view homeless persons as less than ideal candidates for positions.

It is widely accepted that homelessness follows unemployment for some people (see, for example, Holmqvist 2009); however, by no means do all unemployed people become homeless. Furthermore, it is unclear which unemployed people become homeless and equally unclear as to what factors make those people susceptible to becoming homeless. Of equal importance, is the fact that homeless people are a heterogeneous group who become homeless for a variety of reasons including unemployment (Chard, Faulkner and Chugg 2009). Following the 2001 Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics identified unemployment and inadequate income as significant structural factors contributing to, and causing, homelessness across Australia (Lynch 2005).

A more comprehensive understanding of the trajectories into unemployment and through to homelessness is vital to better inform early intervention and prevention strategies. The Federal Government White Paper proposed a strategy of prevention and early intervention termed 'turning off the tap, but for those who do become homeless, it offers a strong position on moving people quickly into stable long-term housing with reconnection to employment and/or education and their community more broadly.

*Wherever possible, homelessness should be prevented. People who experience homelessness should move quickly through the crisis system to long-term housing and at the same time should get help to reconnect them with education, employment and the community. Both the specialist homelessness system and the mainstream system have roles to play to help people participate socially and economically in their communities and to maintain long term housing (The Road Home, 2008: ix).*

Furthermore, *The Road Home* (Australian Government, 2008a: 61) acknowledges the importance of the issues to be examined in this proposed study: "There are

significant research gaps. There is little research looking at long-term outcomes of clients assisted by SHS. Better information is also needed on longer-term outcomes for people experiencing homelessness who use mainstream services, such as health, housing or *employment services*". A point of expressed concern was that: "mainstream agencies which are in contact with people who are homeless may not always be aware of people's accommodation needs" (Australian Government, 2008a: 60). In the main, 'employment services' refers to the Job Services Australia providers network throughout Australia. There are many permutations and combinations of the status of relationships between JSA agencies and homelessness services. In some cases, relations are close and referrals take place between them. Some JSA agencies seem to be very homeless aware while others not so much. Broadly, JSA agencies are funded to provide employment support and placements while SHS provide supported accommodation. JSA clients can be homeless but not actively seek that kind of support. Homeless clients in crisis services may be dealing with other life issues as a priority during a crisis or be in no fit state to engage in the labour market. The extent to which homeless agencies and JSA agencies cooperate when working with clients seems to vary widely despite guidelines that mandate a close working cooperation. An appropriate 'homelessness' intervention when people are seeking employment assistance may prevent an at-risk individual or family becoming homeless.

This report follows Flatau et al. (2009) in adopting a 'cultural definition' of homelessness. Under this approach, homelessness is more than the absence of shelter (living on the streets or in squats or makeshift dwellings). It includes accommodation that falls below minimum acceptable community standards of housing security and access to facilities. The cultural definition of homelessness includes the following three categories of homelessness, as identified by Chamberlain and Mackenzie (2003 and 2008):

Primary homelessness: those without conventional accommodation - for example, people living on the streets or sleeping in parks;

- Secondary homelessness: those in temporary accommodation, including those staying in emergency or transitional accommodation and temporarily living with other households because they have no accommodation of their own, and people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis;
- Tertiary homelessness: those living in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis.

Under this definition the dividing line between secondary and tertiary homelessness, and 'marginal housing' involving severe overcrowding or dilapidated housing is sometimes difficult to draw. The categories are situations of homelessness that can be seen as providing a hierarchy of risk but in reality people who are transient move between categories and their situation changes.

This research project aims to address priorities specified in the National Homeless Research Agenda (Australian Government 2009a). These priorities, and how this project attempts to address them, were:

- *Inform and improve the service system by relating findings to policy and programs*
- *Increase the understanding of homelessness by investigating the link between the two endemic societal problems of homelessness and unemployment*
- *Improve data and measurement by building knowledge and data on the two issues and the relationship between them.*

The research is directed to contributing to all three of the above objectives.

This project was developed to address these priorities by undertaking a survey of those seeking housing assistance and of those seeking assistance in finding employment. The survey of clients of homeless support agencies and Jobs Services Australia providers is aimed at analysing similarities and differences between the two groups on several dimensions including educational, health, and employment experiences.

It is generally accepted that there is a relationship between labour force status and homelessness. The recent findings of the *Journeys Home* research study note that homeless individuals are less likely than housed individuals to be employed and also less likely to be in the labour-force (Scutella, Johnson, Moschion, Tseng and Wooden, 2012). The provision of employment assistance to the clients of homeless services also supports this. The National Youth Commission Inquiry report entitled *Australia's Homeless Youth* (MacKenzie et al. 2008) recommended that foundation education, job preparation, training, and job creation should be embedded as part of the coordinated effort to address homelessness. Most importantly, the Federal Government's White Paper *The Road Home* (Australian Government, 2008) highlighted 'social inclusion' as one of the guiding principles underpinning its vision for ending homelessness.

In terms of contributing to knowledge through research, the proposed study focuses on a gap in the literature on homelessness. As far as we are aware, the issue of the relationship between homelessness and labour market status has not been the primary focus of any Australian research studies. Only minimal previous work (particularly recent work) has been undertaken to consider the nature of the relationship between homelessness and unemployment in light of current policy and practice.

Statistical evidence of the workforce participation of the homeless exists. Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003), using figures from the *2001 Census of Population and Housing* (Australian Bureau of Statistics), identify the employment status of those classified as homeless. Of residents in boarding houses and private hotels, three-quarters (74%) were unemployed (14%) or NILF (60%) in census week. Of those staying with family and friends 16% were unemployed and 43% were NILF while for marginal residents of caravan parks 25% were unemployed and 60% were NILF.

Results of the ABS General Social Survey (GSS) (2012) show that in 2010, 1.1 million adults (7 per cent of the 16.8 million adult population living in private dwellings) had experienced homelessness at some time in the previous 10 years. The numbers of males and females experiencing homelessness were approximately equal. In 2010, adults who had been homeless in the last 10 years were more likely to report being unemployed (9%) than those who had never been homeless (3%). They were also more likely to be NILF (41% compared with 31%). It should be noted that the GSS collects information from residents of private dwellings and does not by definition include people who were staying in homeless shelters, sleeping rough, staying temporarily with other households, or staying in boarding houses. It therefore excludes most people who were experiencing homelessness at the time of the survey.

Studies which consider the work profile of homeless persons are limited; however, one Australian study (*i.e.*, Grace, Batterham and Cornell, 2008) considered youth who experienced homelessness and unemployment by reporting the findings of the YP<sup>4</sup> program. The paper presented a detailed description of the circumstances of young people living with homelessness and unemployment - however, it was confined to homeless and unemployed youth and did not consider the trajectories into or out of either situation, or the nature of the relationship between the two situations.

While there is a growing literature on homelessness with research undertaken into the pathways and trajectories into and out of homelessness (see, for example, Pinkney

and Ewing 2006) a major investigation of the relationship between homelessness and unemployment has not been done.

The structure of this report is as follows. In Chapter 2, we provide a broad overview of the existing literature relating to the relationship between homelessness and employment. The studies reviewed provide a good reference point for the present report - particularly those that deal with precipitating factors leading to both situations. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the study's methodology, research aims and questions. Chapter 4 presents the research findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of results, concluding remarks and policy implications.

# Homelessness and Unemployment: A review of the literature

While the literature on homelessness and unemployment is extensive, analysis that deals with both issues conjointly is limited. Most homelessness studies consider unemployment as just one of several precipitating factors. It is from this perspective that we analyse the relevant literature, focusing primarily on Australian evidence but also on international studies where relevant.

Homelessness is a complex and multi-dimensional problem (Wright-Howie 2003). Unemployment impacts on homeless persons particularly hard given that they are often facing numerous other challenges. The lack of access to employment contributes to homeless people not having sufficient and sustained income to meet basic needs; this is particularly so for those who do not receive welfare assistance.

High levels of unemployment and disengagement with the workforce amongst the homeless have been cited in both Australian and international studies. For example, over 90 per cent of SAAP clients in 2001-02 were either unemployed or NILF (NDCA 2002). Furthermore, despite the generally good economic conditions and low unemployment in Australia over recent years, the number of homeless continues to rise.

Unemployment amongst the homeless population can produce costly negative externalities for the community. For example, studies by Baron (2006 and 2008) in Canada examined the role that unemployment plays in the criminal behaviour of homeless youth and note that youth experiencing both these issues are particularly prone to criminal behaviour. Prince, Akincigil, and Bromet (2007) note, in their study of incarcerated persons suffering from a mental illness, that the risk factors for becoming involved in the criminal justice system include unemployment and homelessness. The role that drugs and substance abuse play with those experiencing homelessness and unemployment has been highlighted (Kemp, Neale and Robertson 2006; Rose, Brondino and Barnack, 2009), as has the impact on children's life outcomes from parental homelessness and unemployment (Parton 2008).

Most research into homelessness that mentions employment issues cite unemployment as one of several precipitating causes of homelessness. For example, Morris, Judd and Kavanagh (2005) conducted in-depth interviews with 59 clients of the

Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) program and 15 ACHA managers (ACHA is a Commonwealth funded program that assists older people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to access housing and/or services). It was observed that, for older Australians, unemployment was one of the pathways into homelessness.

While most studies have found unemployment directly contributes to homelessness, some studies have failed to support this contention. Crane et al. (2005) considered the causes of homelessness among newly homeless older people in selected urban areas of the United States, England, and Australia. They conducted interviews in each country with 122 older people who had become homeless during the previous two years. Information was also collected from the subjects regarding the circumstances and problems that contributed to their homelessness. Antecedent causes of homelessness were found to be accommodation being sold or needing repair, rent arrears, death of a close relative, relationship breakdown, and disputes with other tenants and neighbours. Contributory factors were physical and mental health problems, alcohol abuse, and gambling problems. Unemployment also often resulted from these factors - for example, a case where the death of a partner led to depression and loss of employment, rather than directly contributing to homelessness. This study found that most subjects became homeless through a combination of personal problems and incapacities, welfare policy gaps, and service delivery deficiencies. While there were some nation-specific variations across the three countries, the principal causes and their interactions were similar.

As will be discussed further below, the exact nature of the relationship between unemployment and homelessness is unclear. Accepting unemployment as a cause of homelessness carries a common-sense plausibility, but is not clearly supported by the available evidence. There is a relationship but not necessarily for most groups a simple cause and effect relationship. As Mackenzie and Chamberlain (2006: 42) note "it does not follow that a decrease in unemployment necessarily results in a decrease in homelessness." Knowing the characteristics of those unemployed who are likely to become homeless would be invaluable by enabling a more focused allocation of resources and facilitating the development of targeted programs to achieve the stated policy goals of government.

In the sections of this chapter that follow, we will define important pertinent terms and review the literature that deals with homelessness and unemployment. In our review

we consider relevant international studies due to the limited research that has been undertaken in Australia. In the concluding part of the literature review we discuss the policy context of homelessness and unemployment.

## Definitions

Australian literature generally acknowledges that homelessness is not simply the lack of shelter (Fopp, 1988; Maas and Hartley, 1988; HREOC, 1989; Neil and Fopp, 1994; Casey, 2001; Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2002; Norris et al. 2005). As noted in the introduction, the approach adopted in the Australian research literature acknowledges that homelessness exists when there is the absence of safe and secure living arrangements and the existence of living conditions that would be generally unaccepted by the Australian community.

There are two commonly used definitions of homelessness in practice in Australia. The definition embodied in the *Supported Accommodation Assistance (SAAP) Act (1994)* has been superseded by the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA). At the time of this report an exposure draft of new legislation has been put out for comment and this draft legislation contains a 'definition of homelessness'. However, the SAAP definition remains an important reference point in the public debate about homelessness. Under the provisions of the former SAAP Act, homelessness is defined in terms of 'inadequate access to safe and secure housing'. This is said to exist when the only housing to which a person has access:

- Places the person's health and/or safety in jeopardy;
- Marginalises the person by failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the normal economic and social support of a home; or
- Places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing.

There is also the influential 'cultural' definition of homelessness advanced by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (1992). Their definition identifies a continuum of circumstances in which individuals can be considered to be 'homeless' and the definition organises these circumstances into categories that distinguish between different intensities of homelessness:

- Primary homelessness, such as sleeping rough or living in an improvised dwelling;

- Secondary homelessness, which includes 'couch surfing', staying with friends or relatives and with no other usual address, residing in SAAP accommodation or other SHS; and
- Tertiary homelessness including people living in boarding houses or caravan parks with insecure tenure and no private bathroom, both short- and long-term.

The present study adopts the cultural definition of homelessness. However, in practice, it should be recognised that it might be difficult to distinguish between secondary and tertiary homelessness, as defined under the cultural definition, and 'marginal housing' that can involve living in often overcrowded and/or dilapidated accommodation with some security of tenure. There is a debate about the definition of homelessness in Australia currently underway as the Australian Bureau of Statistics picks up the task of enumerating the extent of homelessness.

Homelessness may be a one-off experience for many Individuals. Others may face repeated episodes (Robinson 2003), while still others may be in a chronic and persistent homeless situation. In recent years, there has been interest in the dynamics of homelessness and the pathways or careers that people experiencing homelessness pass through. MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2003) distinguished three ideal-typical careers – the youth career, a family breakdown career a the housing crisis career. Mallett (2005) has looked more closely at the pathways for different cohorts. A finding from this work was that a significant group of homeless teenagers progress to experiencing homelessness as adults. Chamberlain and Johnson (2003) further developed a model of adult career paths. A study by Eardley and his colleagues. (2008) of SAAP clients provides some statistics on homeless progression - 10 per cent of those studied had an experience of homelessness going back over two decades, and approximately two-thirds were homeless more than once. In addition, six per cent of all respondents received help for more than five years, while the proportion of men getting help for more than five years was close to 10 per cent.

As with homelessness, there are various ways to define unemployment. The ABS (2001) defines people as officially unemployed if they are aged "over 15 years and satisfy all of the three following conditions:

1. The person must not be employed - that is, they must be 'without work'.

2. The person must be 'looking for work'. A person must have, at some time during the previous four weeks, undertaken specific 'active' steps to look for work, such as applied to an employer for work, answered an advertisement for a job, visited an employment agency, used a touchscreen at Centrelink offices, or contacted friends or relatives. The search may be for full-time or part-time work. In either case, however, the person must have done more than merely read job advertisements in newspapers.

3. The person must be 'available to start work'. This is taken to mean that they were available to start work in the survey reference week (i.e. the week before the interview)."

These criteria could be considered to be too restrictive as they exclude certain groups. For example, those who have no other option but to take part-time or casual jobs (the 'underemployed') but desire full-time work. Accordingly, an alternative measure of the number of unemployed people has been developed. This measure calculates the number of unemployed based on the number of people receiving labour market income support payments administered by Centrelink (i.e. Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance (other) recipients). In 2007, there were nearly half a million (478,300) unemployed people according to the ABS definition compared with 321,800 individuals receiving labour market payments (ABS 2009).

The difference in the two measures of unemployment occurs for several reasons. In particular, those receiving labour market payments may be employed part-time while still receiving an allowance, providing their income falls within income test limits. The ABS definition classifies as employed a person who has worked for one hour or more, has worked in a family business, or engaged in voluntary work during the survey reference period. Conversely, those who do not apply for a labour market allowance, or those who do not receive an allowance because their income and/or their partner's income exceeds the income test limit, may be classified by the ABS as unemployed but not be included in the number of allowance recipients.

Included in the number of unemployment allowance recipients are also those who have undertaken the 'Work for the Dole' scheme. While on the scheme, participants continue to be registered as unemployed and receive a labour market benefit and must continue to actively look for work. The ABS considers 'Work for the Dole' participants to be undertaking unpaid work and they are therefore not classified as employed. Because they are considered not employed and they are actively looking for and able to start

work, Work for the Dole participants are considered by the ABS to be unemployed. Since JSA was launched, 'Work for the Dole' is not a specific program as everyone has an option for work experience, training or volunteering. For most JSA clients this would happen after 12 months, if not before, but in the case of Stream 4 job seekers, this can happen later at about 18 months.

For unemployed persons to receive labour market benefits they must first be registered with Centrelink. Centrelink then assesses their level of disadvantage and directs them to a local JSA provider. The services offered by JSA providers are funded by the Australian government with the JSA providers being selected by tender. Service provision to clients differs according to each client's individual level of disadvantage as well as the allowance they receive from Centrelink. Job seekers are required to enter into an Employment Pathway Plan (EPP) which is a plan prepared by the JSA agency in conjunction with the client. Job seekers are classified into one of four streams of disadvantage:

- Stream 1 job seekers are those who are considered as ready to work. The services the JSA providers are required to offer to these job seekers include activities to develop their skills in preparing resumes, write applications, 'cold call' potential employers, career planning, interview techniques, job search and work experience;
- Stream 2 job seekers are those assessed as experiencing moderate levels of disadvantage. Job seekers classified in this stream The JSA providers should provide activities and assistance, both vocational and non-vocational, aimed at improving the client's employability;
- Stream 3 job seekers are assessed as experiencing significant disadvantage. They receive similar support to Stream 2 job seekers but should receive a greater level of support; or
- Stream 4 job seekers are assessed as having the highest levels of disadvantage. They may be affected by mental health issues, physical disability, homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction or other issues. The JSA providers are required to work with the job seeker to address their most pressing issues and barriers to employment first. The overarching aim for these clients, like those in other streams, is to achieve employment although it is recognised that this may take considerably longer to achieve.

The primary focus of this study is Stream 4 clients as they have similar levels of disadvantage to the clients of SHS. Stream 4 clients may or may not have experienced homelessness in the past although it seems likely that a sizable proportion of them may have - given the definition of Stream 4. Furthermore, Stream 4 clients tend to be unemployed for longer periods than clients in other streams (DEEWR 2011). As with the homeless, long-term unemployed people are commonly characterised by poor physical and mental health, social isolation, and poverty (Saunders 2006; Butterworth 2009). They also tend to be less educated than clients in other streams (Fowkes 2012).

## Homelessness and Unemployment

While many homeless people are employed it does not necessarily follow that all unemployed will become homeless (May, 2000). Being homeless, however, makes finding and retaining work problematic for several reasons including difficulties arising in communicating with and meeting the requirements of potential employers and Centrelink (Mundell 2003). Finding a job takes time as well as money and many homeless people are not in receipt of any income, as was highlighted in *Project I* (Rossiter et al. 2003) which found, in a survey of 300 homeless young people, that 22 per cent had no income at all. Even when homeless people have worked, their engagement in the labour market is often minimal and dated (Parkinson 2011).

Various aspects of the complex relationship between homelessness and unemployment have been the subject of earlier studies. The salient point of this study is to consider the factors that lead unemployed persons into homelessness.

The literature divides the main causes of homelessness into "structural" and "individual" causes (Main 1998). The debate has tended to centre on which type of cause, structural or individual, is primary. Several researchers (e.g. Shaly 1994) have acknowledged that homelessness is a complex phenomenon with multiple contributing factors. Morris and Cooper (2005), amongst others, have noted that pathways into homelessness include drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, and poverty. Proponents of structural explanations identify factors such as trends in unemployment and poverty, the housing market, the economy generally, and sometimes large-scale social policies (Wright-Howie 2003).

Researchers in the US have pointed to structural explanations such as globalization, deindustrialization, restructuring, technological change, and similar trends

(Lee, Price-Spratlen and Kanan 2003). In urban areas where these influences have been most noticeable, stable jobs that pay a living wage (especially of the sort once common in manufacturing) have fallen in number. Localised unemployment can be relatively high despite overall economic prosperity and a moderate national unemployment rate. Those less skilled workers who can find work often resort to casual, temporary, or part-time positions in service industries (Law and Wolch 1991). Unemployment, combined with a reliance on service sector employment that is often inadequate, maintains downward pressure on earnings. This can lead to poverty and accompanying problems such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and social isolation and heighten their vulnerability to homelessness (Wright, Rubin and Devine 1998). Other research is consistent with this line of reasoning. Burt (1992) analysed homelessness rates for 147 US cities with populations of 100,000 or more. Using the number of shelter beds as a surrogate for the actual number of homeless people he found that homelessness rates increased with local unemployment levels.

Zlotnick, Robertson and Tam (2002) found that while many homeless adults are in the labour force, the majority of these appear to have low-paying and sporadic jobs. This finding came after the earlier 1996 US National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients which comprised a nationwide evaluation of homeless assistance programs involving over 4,000 of their clients. Forty-four per cent of the homeless persons studied had been in some form of paid work in the 30 days prior to being surveyed although the bulk of these were in temporary, day labouring, or itinerant jobs (Burt et al. 1999). In their longitudinal study of 397 individuals, involving repeated interviews of subjects over a 15-month period, Zlotnick et al. (2002) reported that 80 per cent were in the labour force at least once during the study; however, only 47.7 per cent remained in the labour force across the 15-month study period. Recent drug users were only five per cent as likely as other homeless adults to be in the labour force while consistent public entitlement recipients were only 18 per cent as likely as other homeless adults to be in the labour force. While recent illicit drug use was found to be a deterrent to labour force participation among homeless adults, this was not the case for heavy alcohol users. Most of the homeless adults in the study were not consistently in the labour force and those who were, did not receive public entitlement benefits. This finding is significant since previous studies indicated that homeless adults who are consistent public entitlement recipients were more likely to find housing than those who were not.

As discussed above, in the US many of the working homeless are employed in lowly paid jobs in the day labor industry. The day labor industry is particular to a small number of countries, notably the US and Japan. Several studies have focused on this industry and the largely homeless workforce that constitute it. Kerr and Dole (2005) examined the difficulties encountered by homeless workers in the city of Cleveland in gaining full-time work; these challenges included discrimination, unsafe conditions, irregular hours and low wages. As a result of these difficulties, many homeless workers relied on day labouring for income. On a slightly different note, Aoki (2003) proposes that the homeless population in Japan has increased and become visible since the mid-1990s due primarily to the disappearance of the day labour market. According to Aoki, globalisation has led to 'deyosebisation', which means the gradual disappearance of day-labourers from yoseba (the day-labour market) and the disemployment of casually employed unskilled workers.

Further evidence of the connection between low pay and homelessness can be seen in studies of US homeless shelters. In 2007, a survey conducted by the US Conference of Mayors found that 17.4 per cent of homeless adults in families were in employment while 13 per cent of homeless single adults or unaccompanied youth were in employment (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009a). In a 2008 report, 11 of 19 cities reported an increase in employed homeless people - indicating that employment does not automatically mean an end to homelessness (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009a). Similarly in Canada, Persaud, McIntyre and Milaney (2010) highlight how young adult men in a prosperous regional city are simultaneously working and homeless. The worsening economy and rising unemployment numbers highlight several reasons why homelessness continues to exist and grow in the United States (*National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009b*).

While wage rates of the lowest paid are generally higher in Australia than in the US, there is evidence that a similar pattern of working homeless has developed in Australia. As noted in the introduction, Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2003) found that while the majority of homeless people are not working or NILF, a significant number are working or looking for work.

Additional evidence on the employment of homeless persons comes from the Home Advice Program Evaluation (MacKenzie, Desmond and Steen 2007). Home Advice was a pilot early intervention program aimed at preventing family homelessness.

Of the 1,636 families assisted by the program (comprising 2,303 adults and 3,438 accompanying children) the largest group of families were NILF - due principally to the high number of single parents with children. Only 14 per cent of the adults registered as the main client were employed when they entered the program while 24 per cent were unemployed but looking for work and 63 per cent were NILF.

Unemployment rates reported for most studies of the homeless are high compared with the rates for the general community. However, considered from another perspective, the figures contradict the notion that the homeless are indolent and unemployed or unemployable as often portrayed by politicians, the media and public (Speak and Tupples 2006).

Nunez and Fox (1999) noted that unemployment is a key driver of family homelessness. The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness (2001: 14) noted that employment is in many ways a key to housing stability and is essential for preventing and reducing homelessness. The lack of financial resources due to unemployment may be a significant contributing factor to homelessness. Even when there are available jobs there may also be other factors that impede a homeless person's engagement with the work force.

An alternative perspective to the 'structural' explanation is that 'individual' factors are the most significant cause of homelessness. Such a perspective highlights the role played by various disabilities among the homeless, including "mental illness, alcoholism, substance abuse, lack of education and disaffiliation. Unemployment is one of the consequences of these individual factors. The "lack of shelter becomes lack of affiliation with family, or other social spheres that could supply shelter; unemployment becomes lack of affiliation with the labour market; poverty as lack of affiliation to work, or other social spheres that produce resources" (Main 1998, 44-45).

Cross and Seager (2010) report on a four-year study of street homelessness in South Africa and highlight the way unemployment stresses poor households and fosters exclusion. The paper recommends both prevention and remediation, via housing delivery, the provision of a social wage, and allowing access to street livelihoods.

'Individual' factors seem to be the dominant cause of homelessness in older people. Crane and Warnes' (2002) in an UK study of older homeless persons noted that some become homeless for the first time in their 50s following the death of a spouse or loss of employment. In addition, many homeless people aged 50-59 years were found to

have chronic health problems and disabilities normally associated with old age and were unlikely to return to work. The study of older homeless persons in the UK, US and Australia by Crane et al. (2005) found that major factors leading to homelessness in Melbourne included housing being sold, converted or needing repair (28%), disputes with landlords, co-tenants and neighbours (27%), and difficulties in paying rent/mortgage (26%). About 40 per cent of respondents noted gambling had been a major factor but was not the only antecedent. Other issues included financial difficulties leading to relationship breakdown, poor management skills, and mental health and addiction issues.

The findings of a more recent US study of homeless adults and adults residing in public housing echo many of the findings of Crane and Warnes (2002) and Crane (2005). In the study by Shinn et al. (2007), 61 housed (all residing in public housing) and 79 homeless adults aged 55 and over were interviewed regarding their experiences of disability; economic, human and social capital; and stressful life events prior to becoming homeless. Over half of the homeless group had previously led 'conventional' lives. Based on their findings, Shinn et al. proposed that human capital, social capital and life events were more important than disability or economic capital in predicting homelessness. The homeless adults were younger, more likely to be male, and better educated than housed adults, but had shorter job tenure and fewer social ties.

Other 'individual' causes of homelessness include health disorders and disruptive childhood experiences (Susser, Moore and Link, 1993; Herman, Susser, Struening and Link, 1997) a history of state care or prison and family violence (Pinkney and Ewing, 2006) and, with respect to youth homelessness, family conflict and breakdown (Batten and Russel, 1995; Cockett and Tripp, 1995; Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 1998).

The Seeds of Exclusion (2009) study investigated the needs of clients of Salvation Army homelessness residential and day services in the UK and Ireland. The study involves self-reporting and assessment by 967 clients. The main reasons for homelessness were relationship breakdown (43%), drug issues (21%), and alcohol issues (16%). On rescreening, over 80 per cent of the respondents had one or more substance misuse problems. Only eight per cent reported that unemployment was the main cause of homelessness; however, 96 per cent were unemployed, six per cent had never worked, while 37 per cent had no formal qualifications. Those with poor

relationships with their parents in childhood were more likely than others to have been homeless in childhood and subsequently have addiction issues.

The role that problem gambling plays, particularly in indigenous populations, and the link between it and homelessness and unemployment have been highlighted in an Australian survey by Antonetti and Horn (2001). Amongst indigenous populations, problem gambling may indeed be a causal factor in both housing crises and homelessness. Separation from a partner, unemployment, a death in the family and even domestic violence proved to be trigger events resulting in a gambling addiction. Living on a pension or unemployment benefit meant that minimal amounts were available to spend on excessive gambling. Respondents therefore either went broke, accumulated debts, or committed illegal offences to get the extra money to gamble, thereby contributing to homelessness.

Young homeless people may be deterred from participating in education and this causes problems later in life, including unemployment and homelessness. Flatau et al. (2009) note these factors as being present in the cycle of intergenerational homelessness. This observation has been supported by the results of a study of 331 individuals in the city of Minneapolis (Piliavin et al. 1993). The study found that people who have less consistent work histories, experienced childhood foster care, and currently express less discomfort with life on the streets are homeless longer than are other individuals.

Youth homelessness and the relationship with unemployment in Australia has been studied by Quiggin (1998). Quiggin notes that from post-World War 2 through to the late 1960s homelessness in Australia was generally confined to older males who had multiple issues aside from unemployment. Since that time not only has the homeless population increased but a greater proportion of the community has been affected. By the late 1970s unemployment became an increasing problem for young people, with around one-third of the unemployed being aged between 15 and 19 years. "This unemployment problem, combined with a widespread expectation that young people completing school should be able to leave home and live independently contributed to the problem of youth homelessness" (Quiggin 1998: 8).

Widespread unemployment contributed to the creation of low income ghettos during the 1980s. Typically suburban areas became populated with households in which there were often no employed members. Quiggin (1998) also notes that since the 1990s

the labour market has become increasingly competitive, thereby placing increasing pressure on workers such that they cannot regard their employment as secure. “This decline in security of employment is reflected in declining rates of home-ownership which in turn increases the proportion of the population directly vulnerable to homelessness” (Quiggan 1998: 8).

The contraction of the youth labour market and the increasing dependence of youth on their families for financial support have been found to have been significant factors in the rise of youth homelessness. Mackenzie and Chamberlain (2003: 59) observe:

“It also means that young people who leave home because of family conflict are unlikely to get full-time employment if they drop out of school. In the 1960s, most of them avoided homelessness because they got jobs. Now they cannot.”

Unemployment is therefore but one of several factors which have been identified as leading to homelessness. The potential role that employment can play in facilitating people’s exit from homelessness is highlighted by the Australian Federation of Homeless Organisations (AFHO): “The interdependent relationship between employment and housing is an important consideration in attempts to alleviate or prevent homelessness. Many people become homeless as a result of unemployment, and attaining employment can offer a direct pathway out of homelessness.” (AFHO 2004, as cited in Forell, McCarron and Schetzer (2005: 57).

Shaheen and Rio (2007) summarise the US research that indicates the importance of employment in the lives of homeless individuals and shows how they can be assisted in job-seeking. Some of the reports that Shaheen and Rio cite suggest it may be effective and worthwhile to offer employment at the earliest stages of engagement with homeless services to help homeless people develop trust and motivation. Such an approach would represent a departure from the normal common practice whereby the initial focus is on providing safe and affordable housing as well as support services, with employment issues being addressed later. Shaheen and Rio maintain that facilitating employment is an unrecognized and underutilized practice for both preventing and ending homelessness. As Balkin (1992) suggests, helping homeless persons to become self-employed also has potential to help them fully, or at least partially, meet their accommodation costs.

Having a mental health issue has been found in the US to predict whether a youth gains employment following an employment training program, when taking into consideration foster care history and other control variables (Lenz-Rashid 2005). Furthermore, Cook et al. (2001) propose that programs that work with mentally ill homeless persons may better serve their clients by placing as great an emphasis on providing employment services as on providing housing and clinical treatment. With respect to mental illness, Greenberg and Roseheck (2008) find that, when compared with other jail inmates, those with homeless backgrounds usually have mental health and substance problems and tend to be less educated and unemployed.

Employment may be a pathway out of homelessness for many; however, many if not most of the homeless face considerable challenges and barriers that prevent them from becoming employed. The situation of homeless families in the US was examined by DiBlasio and Belcher (2002) who found that parents in homeless families tended to be females. Female-headed families had above-average periods of homelessness, and a need for child care and other services. They noted that these households' typically low levels of requests for social service benefits were due to the homeless parents avoiding these services because of fears of losing their children to foster care.

Unlike studies which promote structural or individual factors as being the principle causes of homelessness, some studies highlight the multiple issues which afflict the homeless. Homeless people have problems that require sustained intervention strategies to enter the labour market, maintain permanent housing, remain healthy and functional, and take care of their families (Shlay 1994). To this end, more and more transitional housing programs have been opened in Australia and other countries, including the UK. These programs, such as those involving youth foyers, provide shelter stays of longer duration than those provided by emergency shelters, as well as an array of support services designed to help people move along the path toward economic independence (Clay and Coffee 2003).

The Home Advice program evaluation (National Youth Commission 2007) reported a low level of labour force participation for homeless families in the pilot program. Accordingly, only 37 per cent of clients had a case goal of securing stable employment. Some 22 per cent of those who had this case goal met it fully while 36 per cent met it partially. Around one-third (37 per cent) did not achieve this case goal. While non-indigenous families were also more likely to achieve this case goal, some 16 per cent of

indigenous clients did achieve stable employment. The report found that case complexity was not statistically related to change in labour force status. That is, whether a client had numerous issues or few issues did not impact on their ability to obtain stable employment.

In a study of biographies of male homeless hostel users in the UK, May (2000) found that, rather than fitting a description of either the long-term or more recently homeless or following a progressive 'drift' into homelessness, the majority of men interviewed had experienced numerous episodes of homelessness. Each of these episodes was of limited duration and separated by much longer periods in their own accommodation. The main private accommodation had been poor quality and was often insecure, privately rented bedsits and flats. Almost all the men had simultaneously been either long-term or permanently unemployed, with few additional 'vulnerabilities' to help account for their frequent returns to homelessness. May's paper challenges a conventional 'political model' of single homelessness to explain these men's homeless careers in relation to their position of multiple structural disadvantage.

The Michael Project (Mission Australia 2010) study of homeless men surveyed 253 men in Sydney who were using Mission Australia's accommodation services. This survey found that over 90 per cent of those responding were unemployed. Over half of these had been employed full-time within the last two years and a further 30 per cent within two to five years prior to the survey. It was found that the most significant impediments to gaining and maintaining full-time work were health issues, lack of skills and training, transport problems, and lack of vacancies.

Some novel programs have aimed at removing the impediments faced by homeless people in obtaining full-time work. One such program involved providing homeless people with free mobile phones to aid their job search. This provision also facilitated contact between the homeless individuals and medical and other services from which they had formerly been excluded (Huffingtonpost 2011). Another such program, the 'Create Potential Academy', provides catering services to local companies, using the skills of former 'rough sleepers' who had undergone intensive training. This program targets those who have come from vulnerable backgrounds, including having formerly been homeless or having been a rough sleeper or being socially excluded. Some of the homeless workers in the program had steady jobs and stable lives prior to becoming homeless: bereavement or break-up of a relationship subsequently led to their

homelessness. Others in the program had never held down a job. Wright (2011) notes that not all the homeless in the program were literate - hence pursuing a traditional accredited training route many not have been appropriate for them.

In summary then, the literature into homelessness and unemployment has the following key findings:

- Unemployment is one of several factors that contribute to homelessness;
- While the percentage of homeless engaged in the labour force is small, a significant proportion of homeless people work;
- Due to several factors, including poor education, homeless people are particularly vulnerable to lowly paid and unstable work which prevents them from having the economic means to exit homelessness.

## The policy context

The literature above has demonstrated that homelessness can affect the physical and emotional state of adults as well as the children in their care. Homelessness imposes significant personal costs on those affected and carries with it significant costs to the community.

In order to help break the transition of unemployed persons into homelessness, it is important, from a policy perspective, to identify and understand the circumstances in which unemployment as a major identified precursor, leads to homelessness. It is important also to understand the use of homelessness services which is likely to occur under these circumstances and to develop policy and program responses that will reduce the chances of homelessness being experienced by unemployed persons.

At the time of the 2006 Census, an estimated 105,000 Australians were homeless, of whom around 16 per cent were in the primary homelessness category (Chamberlain & MacKenzie 2008). However, Mackenzie and Chamberlain were able to show that many of the individuals and families classified by the ABS as 'primary homeless' because they lived in improvised dwellings were living in shed dwellings that had not been legalised under local health and safety legislation and building codes. Only, about 6,000 individuals were sleeping rough, or in situations without conventional shelter. The 2006 Census also showed increases in the numbers of both mature-aged and youth who were homeless. In addition, SAAP data, cited in the White Paper *The Road Home*, confirmed

that family homelessness has gone up, with the number of families with children seeking assistance from SHS increasing by 33 per cent between 2001 and 2006. According to Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) the data also reveal that families seeking accommodation are more likely than single people to be turned away from SAAP and are more likely to stay in crisis accommodation for longer than six months.

Another aspect that needs to be considered in any study of homelessness and unemployment is that because many homeless people may not be registered as job seekers, and thus may not be included in official unemployment statistics. Furthermore, such people may not be seeking, or be able to seek, assistance with finding employment and hence may not benefit from any improvements in employment levels in the overall community (Willis 2004).

In terms of support for homeless individuals and families, the main assistance in Australia is provided by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). SAAP is a consolidation of Commonwealth and State programs aimed at providing accommodation and support services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. SAAP is funded and administered by the Australian government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and relevant state departments. SAAP provides funding to organisations to provide services including emergency accommodation facilities, hostels, refuges and transitional supported accommodation and related support services including soup kitchens. Around 1200 organisations are funded nationally under SAAP.

In 1993 the Australian Government Taskforce assisting the Committee on Employment Opportunities released its background paper "Restoring Full Employment" (AGPS 1993). The taskforce noted that individuals' debts tend to increase as their length of unemployment increases and this may result in people having to sell their homes or any other assets. A move to cheaper accommodation can often result in a loss of the usual support networks or social support. The report noted also that higher unemployment increases the demand on social security outlays and places greater demands on public services such as health, housing, and transport (AGPS, 1993: 76).

Job Network was established in May 1998, comprising private and community organisations contracted by the Australian government. When job seekers registered with Centrelink for unemployment benefits, Centrelink used the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) Job Seekers Classification Instrument

(JSCI) to determine the job seeker's relative disadvantage in the labour market and the level of employment assistance for which they are eligible. Early evaluations of the network noted that the cost effectiveness of the system might have been achieved at the expense of difficult-to-place job seekers (Thomas 2007). Job service providers were compensated on an outcomes-based payment structure which created incentives “to park difficult job seekers in intensive assistance” (Thomas 2007: 18). However, the OECD (2010: 162) noted that with the *Star Rating* performance management system under which all JSA providers operate, “Australia has gone furthest in monitoring the performance of service providers. A good rating is crucial for a provider to be included in the next round of tenders and thereby stay in the market. Employment outcomes for more difficult clients would raise the rating, for instance”.

In 2009, the Australian Government replaced the Job Network employment services model with a new model program, Job Services Australia (JSA). JSA, as the successor of Job Network, is an Australian government-funded network of organisations (private and community) that is contracted through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), to provide employment services to unemployed job seekers on government income support payments and to employers. JSA providers are initially selected for the network and allocated business through a competitive public tender process, with contract periods running as determined by the Australian government. There are over 2,000 JSA sites across Australia (Australian Government, 2008b).

The JSA model links job seekers to a provider who would then develop a tailored plan, the Employment Pathway Plan (EPP), to bring together various types of assistance to address the individual's specific barriers (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). In JSA, job seekers are classified into one of four streams – ranging from Stream 1 for those considered ready for work to Stream 4 for those with multiple and/or complex vocational and/or non-vocational barriers including mental illness, social problems, torture/trauma, addictions, homelessness and unstable accommodation. Providers must be able, amongst other things, to help job seekers, regardless of their level of disadvantage, by providing tailored assistance and connect job seekers to appropriate skills development opportunities. The Employment Pathway Fund is available for use by providers to buy assistance to address vocational and non-vocational barriers such as drivers licence, clothing, and phone use. Job Seekers in Streams 1-3 move directly into the Work

Experience Phase after 12 months of servicing. For job seekers in Stream 4, JSA providers review a job seeker's circumstances after 12 months and can either commence them in the Work Experience Phase or service them for up to six additional months.

As individuals in Stream 4 have multiple and/or complex barriers to employment, approaches that are limited to addressing only a single issue may be found inadequate to improve the client's situation. Hence, DEEWR encourages employment service providers to develop partnerships with specialist community services such as homelessness services and drug and alcohol treatment services; however, to date there are no published examples of joint case management whereby the various service providers collaborate to jointly address client issues. A job seeker is placed into a Stream depending on their individual circumstances as assessed by the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) (and where required an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt)). The JSCI determines a job seeker's relative level of disadvantage in the labour market based on the job seeker's responses to a questionnaire and other relevant information. This relies to a large degree on the job seeker fully disclosing their personal circumstances to DHS and/or the JSA provider. Whilst servicing a job seeker, the JSA provider may become aware that the job seeker's individual circumstances have significantly changed or the job seeker may disclose new or additional information to the JSA provider. In these circumstances, the JSA provider will conduct a Change of Circumstances Reassessment to ensure the job seeker's JSCI reflects all available information about the job seeker's individual circumstances that may affect their servicing arrangements. Depending on the outcome of this reassessment, the job seeker may be commenced in a higher stream.

It has been noted that accurately identifying the signs of homelessness is a significant challenge (Parkinson and Horn 2003). Many job seekers participating in employment services have reported poor staff skills, high turnover, and limited time with caseworkers (Murphy et al. 2011). While this testimony should not be accepted as fact, it does raise an issue about the relationships between disadvantaged job seekers and the staff employed to help them in the JSA system. Staff who work with people with high and complex needs need to have the requisite skills and professional experience to do this case work effectively.

Furthermore, homeless individuals may not be able to access benefits because of a lack of a fixed address and if they move to a region with higher unemployment - for

example, in the case where they relocate to be with friends or family - their benefits may be reassessed. Discretion in decision-making, however, related to moving to an area of higher employment prospects allows consideration of a person's vulnerability, risk factors and personal circumstances.

It is encouraging that the link between homelessness and unemployment has been recognised in recent government initiatives, as illustrated by the recent *Wage Connect* initiative that subsidises the wages of long-term unemployed. However, ideas about the relationships between employment and labour market policy and the welfare agenda including homelessness have been in circulation for a long time, however, the real connections between the different policy areas have been limited

The point contained in the following quote remains as salient today as it was 20 years ago:

*Unemployment may be both a cause and a result of homelessness, but when unemployed young people join the ranks of the homeless their problems usually multiply dramatically. Such problems often become so intractable that the people concerned become permanently unemployed, locked into a state of poverty and social dependency from which they may never escape, and for which the Australian community will bear an ongoing cost (Commonwealth of Australian, 1992: 103).*

The Jobs Placement, Employment & Training program, which commenced in 1997, is an example of a labour market program directed to a particular cohort. JPET has been subsumed within the current JSA employment services network. For many years, there was discussion about how well services for homeless youth were connected to employment services for homeless youth. In some cases, the same agency provided both programs, while in other cases, the services were provided by different agencies.

# Methodology

This project was an exploratory study of the issue of homelessness and unemployment undertaken by collecting primary data on the labour market experience of homeless persons and clients of Stream 4 in the Job Services Australia program using a survey - *Homelessness and Unemployment Survey* - supplemented by a small number of interviews to investigate employment and unemployment of persons experiencing homelessness as well as long-term unemployed individuals, most of whom were not homeless at the time of the survey and most of whom had no prior experience of homelessness.

The core research involved a one-off cross sectional survey (Appendix A) of people (the *Homelessness and Unemployment Survey*) currently experiencing homelessness/ unemployment or both, recruited through SHS and JSA providers across Victoria. The ABS publishes a series on labour market experience. However, it is not possible to undertake any analysis of this data to obtain information on the labour market experience of homeless persons. It is known from data on people entering the SHS system that most are unemployed or not in the labour force at the time they seek assistance (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2012). However, this fact does not mean that people experiencing homelessness have not been previously engaged in the workforce.

Given that the research team had done some preliminary work talking with homeless persons about employment, the methodological decision was to undertake a cross-sectional survey to obtain data on the labour market experience of homeless individuals.

Obtaining ex-post facto information from a cohort such as people experiencing homelessness of who are highly disadvantaged carries the risk that respondents will not be able to remember many of the details that are important for the research. The longer people experience homelessness and further back they are being asked to recall information the more difficult it will be to obtain accurate data. Awareness of these kinds of issues informed the range of questions asked in the survey.

In the future, it may be possible to undertake longitudinal analysis of data from the SHS collections. An important source of new information on the relationship between homelessness and unemployment will be longitudinal analysis of the FAHCSIA funded *Longitudinal Study of Australians Vulnerable to Homelessness* being undertaken by the

Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne (Journeys Home – Scutella et.al. 2012)). The larger Journeys Home project reached a more representative sample than was possible in this project, and a much larger sample of 1682 individuals in Wave 1. Results from their survey showed that ‘current labour force activity is related to current homelessness, with homeless respondents not only less likely to be employed, but also less likely to be in the labour force than the housed’ (p.30). People whose homelessness was long-term were either unemployed (24%) or not in the labour force (66%). It was also found that ‘there does not appear to be any strong relationship between labour force histories and current homelessness’ (p.31)

## The sample

Several JSA and SHS providers were contacted to negotiate access by project interviewers to their clients for the purpose of doing the Homelessness and Unemployment survey. The not-for-profit peak-body for the employment and related services industry in Australia, the National Employment Services Association (NESA) was contacted to help recruit JSA providers. JSA agencies were asked at their national conference if they would be willing and able to participate in the project. Agencies that expressed a willingness to participate were contacted by letter explaining the aims and methods of the *Survey*. Five JSA providers and three SHS providers agreed to take part in the study. As many clients as possible were interviewed at these agencies. The total sample size was 149 usable surveys (two surveys could not be used) comprising 86 clients of Job Services Australia programs who were not currently clients of a homeless service, 44 homeless individuals who were clients of homeless services but not clients of JSA, and a third group of 19 individuals who were clients of both JSA and SHS providers.

Every effort was made to achieve a representative coverage of age and gender in the homeless population. However, it was difficult to recruit women experiencing homelessness and they are less represented in the sample. Young adults and teenagers are also less represented in the sample than in the homeless population. This is of less concern because policy settings in Australia seek to postpone entry of young people into the labour force and encourage participation in education to Year 12 and into some form of post-secondary education and training.

## Aims of the study

Initially, the project formulated the following research questions:

- RQ1 What is the housing stability of people seeking employment?*
- RQ2 Does this stability differ amongst the different classes of unemployed persons?*
- RQ3 What is the employment history of different classes of homeless persons?*
- RQ4 What employment assistance do homeless persons seek and/or receive?*
- RQ5 How long does it take different groups of unemployed to enter homelessness?*

In the preparatory stage, during which the focus of the research was reviewed and clarified, the questions submitted in the original proposal for funding were revised and strengthened:

- RQ (a) Is 'housing stability a factor determining whether or not a homeless person can participate in the labour market and labour market programs (i.e. JSA)?*

Question RQ (a) more clearly expresses questions RQ1 and RQ2.

- RQ (b) Does prior labour market experience determine the extent to which homeless persons are able to participate in the labour market?*

Question RQ (b) reformulates RQ3.

- RQ (c) What factors account for the difference between people able to participate in job market programs and people in the homeless system who do not?*

Finally, question RQ (c) more clearly formulates what the original research proposal was attempting to achieve.

After review, question RQ4 was considered redundant in that employment assistance is provided mainly through the extensive Job Services Australia system, although consumers have a choice of providers. In most cases, employment assistance from SHS can be regarded as making a connection to a JSA agency.

Question RQ5 in the original proposal expressed an interest in looking into the causal relationship that might exist between unemployment and homelessness. However, causal modelling carries a raft of caveats tied to the application of causal

modelling statistical methods such as path analysis. These amounted to more than could be handled in an exploratory study of this size and on this timescale. Also, the homeless population consists of a number of different sub-groups that prior research suggests become homeless for different combinations of reasons.

## **Project support**

A steering group was formed comprising the researcher team, a representative of FaHCSIA and three independent experts with significant experience relevant to homelessness and employment programs and policy.

## **The Homelessness and Unemployment survey**

The survey instrument was developed by the research team but drawing on advice from members of the steering group. Questions were included on the basis of being identified in the extant literature as being precursors to either unemployment or homelessness. As far as possible, survey questions were taken from existing surveys relevant to the current research topic. Appendix C provides the details of where questions were sourced. The Survey was piloted with a small group of homeless and JSA clients to check that it was understandable to the respondents in the sample.

The survey comprises 11 sections with 118 questions in total. The titles to, and number of, each question in each section are:

- Section 1 Demographic details (questions 1 -16)
- Section 2 Experiences growing up (questions 17 - 21)
- Section 3 Living arrangements questions (questions 22 - 28)
- Section 4 Education (questions 29 – 38)
- Section 5 Income (questions 39 – 56)
- Section 6 Employment (questions 57- 92)
- Section 7 Health services (questions 93 – 95)
- Section 8 Justice Services and Criminal Behaviour (questions 96 -101)
- Section 9 Alcohol and Other Drugs (questions 102 – 109)
- Section 10 Physical Health (questions 110 – 111)

- Section 11 Mental Health (questions 112 - 118)

Members of the research team administered the surveys to clients of participating agencies drawn more or less randomly from those receiving support at the time of the survey. As an incentive to participation, clients were given a \$20 supermarket voucher at the completion of each survey. The survey was designed to be able to be completed in about 45 minutes.

Within the agencies who agreed to participate, 37 days of surveying took place within 21 sites located in metropolitan and regional Victoria. At JSA agencies, appointments were sometimes made by the staff and clients failed to show. In the homeless agencies, that were providing accommodation, clients were easier to contact directly. Although in the planning stage it was thought that agency staff might be able to conduct some of the surveys, during the implementation stage, it was quickly realised that this was not practical on the project timetable. All surveys were done as interviews by members of the research team or by two research assistants.

## **Practical issues of data collection**

Several challenges were presented in the execution of this study. As agencies from which the sample was drawn volunteered to participate in the project, there is sample selection bias, as is the case with many exploratory studies. Participating JSA agencies were accommodating in contacting and scheduling clients for surveying, however, significant numbers of clients did not arrive at their scheduled time. This was frustrating at times but not surprising given the many serious life issues that these clients typically face. In addition, some of those who arrived for interview were clearly alcohol and drug impaired. This considerably pushed back the surveying schedule.

Another major challenge was engaging with women's homeless services. We were unable to get more than one agency that catered to homeless females to participate, mainly due to security concerns. Some agencies that the researchers contacted stipulated that they required only females to survey their clients. Similarly most female migrants had children and did not speak English - this would have required the survey to be conducted with trained interpreters present and female research staff to conduct the interviews. Additionally, most agencies catering for homeless females had clients in community care and were not disposed to allow researchers to interview their clients without case managers being present. Because of budget constraints and for fear of

compromising confidentiality, we were unable to interview this cohort within the project timetable. The sample and any inferences drawn from analyses of this data should not be interpreted as applying to homeless women. The age range of clients in homeless services suggests the degree of sampling bias. Despite reaching out to various agencies without any deliberate selection strategy the sample is a convenience sample not a random sample, as is the case in many studies. This does not render the analysis and inferences from analysis of no empirical value. The caveat is to consider the findings in the light of what is known about selection bias.

Other limitations are that the study sites were restricted to metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria. It can't necessarily be assumed that results in Victoria are typical of Australia overall. Finally, the sample comprised fewer than the national average of indigenous and migrants from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## **Qualitative data**

The survey design provided opportunity for clients of both types of JSA and homeless agencies to make comment on the level of support they received and other issues which they believed were pertinent to their situation. The interviews also provided an opportunity to sometimes canvass points broader than the questions on the survey. This was done as a way of gaining clarification and insight, rather than as a separate body of data to be reported in detail. Also respondents often expressed their perceptions about what was happening for them.

# Analysis of Survey Results

The sample of JSA and SHS clients comprised three groups that can be usefully compared to investigate the aims of this research project. The first group (88 individuals) were clients of JSA who were not currently homeless (the JSA Group); about one-third of this group had, however, had an episode of homelessness at some stage in their life. The second group (the SHS Group - 44 individuals) were SHS clients who were not in JSA programs. A third smaller group (the 'JSA & SHS' Group - 19 individuals) were currently JSA and also SHS clients.

As a first step, comparison between these three groups suggests a logic of analysis that looks for similarities and differences that suggest factors that might account for the observation that some people who experience homelessness seem to proceed along a pathway that leads to participation in the labour force while others do not. That is, are there any factors in the characteristics, backgrounds, behaviour, or situations of individuals in these groups that are significantly related to membership of the JSA group, but not the 'homeless' group?

## Basic Demographics

In total, 151 individuals participated in the homeless and unemployment survey (Female = 52, Male = 99). There were 27 participants under the age of 25, a majority were in the 25-44 age group (n=73), and there were 51 aged 44-59. Only eight of the respondents identified themselves as ATSI. One hundred and twenty-nine of the participants were born in Australia, with the remainder listing England (n=6), New Zealand (n=4), the Philippines (n=1), Fiji (n=1) and "Other" (n=10). The majority of participants reported that they were single (n=84) while 43 stated that they were divorced, separated or had a deceased partner. Sixteen participants reported that they were living with their spouse or partner, while 'married or partnered and not living together' made up the smallest group (n=5). Twenty-seven participants noted they spoke a language other than English at home. Seventy-three participants had children while the remainder (n=77) did not. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the sample.

**Table 1: Demographic profile of sample**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=88)	(N=44)	(N=19)
<b>GENDER (N)</b>			
Male	45	41	13
Female	43	3	6
<b>AGE (N)</b>			
> 25 years	17	4	6
25-44 years	48	18	7
45-59 years	23	22	6
<b>FAMILY SITUATION (%)</b>			
Living as single person	86	100	79
Living w/ partner	14	0	21
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH (N)</b>			
Australia	72	38	19
Other country	16	6	0

Comment has already been made about some of the limitations of the sample. These limitations restrict some of the analytical comparisons that might otherwise be made. For example, there are not enough young people under the age of 25 years for useful analysis by age, nor are there sufficient females in the SHS group for gender to be entered into the analysis.

## Family Situation

A small number of questions about 'family' relate to the respondents' marital status and whether they have children or not. Another set of questions focus on experiences of violence and conflict while growing up in their family of origin. Table 2 shows the current marital status of the respondents. Most of the individuals in all three groups were single although a significant group had been married or in a de facto relationship and were now separated or divorced. The key distinction is whether individuals were now single or living together with a partner in a relationship of some kind.

**Table 2: Marital status by client group (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=87)	(N=42)	(N=19)
Single	60	59	47
Separated or divorced	26	41	32
Married/partnered and living together	14	0	21
Total	100	100	100

In terms of their family status, a large majority of each group were living as single persons who had either never been married or living with a partner or who had been divorced or separated from their spouse/partner (JSA – 86%; SHS - 100%; JSA & SHS - 79%). There was no information on how long ago divorces or separations had occurred.

A large proportion of the individuals in the sample had clearly been in family units and were the parents of children - this was so even amongst those who identified as 'single' in this survey. About half of the participants in each of the groups were parents of children (JSA - 49%; SHS - 44%; JSA & SHS - 58%). An indication of the participants' relationship with their families is provided in Table 3 that shows the extent to which each of the respondents who have children is involved with the care of children.

**Table 3: Children and childcare arrangements (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=42)	(N=19)	(N=11)
Involved with childcare	60	5	27
Child(ren) in care of other parent	24	47	55
Other arrangements or children grown up	16	47	18
	100	100	100

The SHS group have minimal involvement with child-care whereas the majority of the JSA clients and a minority of the JSA-SHS group are involved in care. Most of the SHS group either have children who are grown up and do not require the care we were asking about, or the other parent has that responsibility. Also, this group is almost all

men - if more female SHS clients had been surveyed, the profile might have been somewhat different. About half of the JSA group and about one-third of the JSA & SHS group are women and this may contribute to the differences in Table 3.

Table 4 provides information about family conflict that respondents experienced as children. The items range from 'arguments' and 'name calling' that would be experienced at some point in most families, to more extreme threats of violence, to acts of violence.

**Table 4: Indications of family dysfunction in family of origin (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=88)	(N=43)	(N=17)
Arguments	43	37	35
Name calling	38	42	44
Threatening violence	25	21	19
Violent behaviour	19	16	19
Threats with weapons	9	12	19
Violence against person(s)	11	14	31

## Education

The level of education of young people is strongly related to labour market outcomes later in life. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research has published a series of reports based on the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth that document the relationships between education and employment and life outcomes. Jung-Sook Lee (2010) found that higher levels of education are associated with more employment choices, higher levels of income, and greater job security. These benefits tend to widen the gaps between occupational statuses as time passes.

**Table 5: Level of school education completed (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHA</b>
	(N=88)	(N=44)	(N=18)
Year 12 or equivalent	23	9	0
Year 11 or 10	49	55	61
Year 9 or below	28	36	39
	100	100	100

In terms of school level achieved, Table 5 indicates that the SHS group was not altogether dissimilar to the JSA & SHS group. By contrast, about one-quarter (23%) of the JSA clients have completed Year 12; however, in all three groups a significant number had left school early - many before finishing Year 9. Across all three groups, a majority had left school before Year 12 and a significant minority are amongst early school leavers who leave before or at Year 10.

There are opportunities, however, to undertake training and further study after school and programs that encourage early school leavers to return to education. Table 6 shows the extent to which the comparison groups have post-school qualifications.

**Table 6: Post-secondary school qualifications (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=81)	(N=40)	(N=17)
No qualifications after school	36	73	35
Trade certificate or TAFE diploma	49	24	53
University degree	3	0	0
Other	12	3	12
	100	100	100

About one-third of the JSA clients who were currently homeless had completed no additional qualification - this is similar to the JSA Stream 4 clients who were not currently homeless. This means that about two-thirds had completed an additional qualification. For the SHS group, around seven out of 10 had not continued to complete further education or training.

## Health

Many respondents in each group reported having 'long standing physical health issue(s)'. This was the case for about half of the JSA clients (52%), slightly more than half of the JSA & SHS clients (58%), but for nearly three-quarters (74%) of the SHS clients. When asked about playing sport and physical activity, about half of the JSA and the JSA & SHS groups reported playing sport regularly but relatively few (17%) of the clients in the SHS group.

The interviewees were asked if they had ever been diagnosed with a range of mental health disorders. There were some significant differences between the comparison groups. SHS clients who were not in JSA programs had higher rates of personality disorders (38%), higher rates of psychotic disorders (31%), and higher rates of dissociative disorders (22%). Also, they more often reported having impulse control disorders (25%).

A high proportion of clients in all three comparison groups reported having had an ‘anxiety disorder’. Even though the question was asked in a way that required diagnosis, it may be that respondents simply reported high levels of anxiety.

**Table 7: Indications of mental health conditions (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=65)	(N=32)	(N=14)
Mood disorder	54	44	21
Anxiety disorder	72	66	79
Personality disorder	5	38	7
Psychotic disorder	8	31	0
Dissociative disorder	5	22	7
Substance use disorder	28	66	57
Eating disorder	12	13	29
Impulse-control disorder	6	25	14

Respondents were asked when they had last consulted a professional for their mental health issues and it seems from their responses that these issues appear generally to have been relatively recent. For many this has been within the past three months – JSA (47%), SHS (63%) and JSA & SHS (58%). Most of those prescribed medication were still taking that medication at the time of the interview.

## Living Arrangements

One of the research questions in this study was the housing stability of people seeking employment. The three groups can be compared in Table 8 in terms of where they were living immediately prior to entering the service.

**Table 8: Housing situation immediately before service (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=86)	(N=44)	(N=19)
Without shelter	10	21	5
Temporary shelter w/ friends	21	9	26
Supported Accommodation	2	14	5
'Tertiary homeless' situation	10	41	26
Institutions	7	14	0
Not homeless	49	1	37
	100	100	100

Most of the JSA clients reported experiencing homelessness previously but none in this group was currently a client of a homelessness service. However, when the living situation of JSA clients prior to coming to the JSA service is examined, half were living in accommodation that can be regarded as independent accommodation. The other half were in a range of situations that could be regarded as 'homelessness', including 21 per cent staying temporarily with friends. By comparison, the clients of SHS mostly came from situations of homelessness while only one per cent had previously been in private rental accommodation that they had lost. A majority in all three groups has been in situations that would be regarded as unstable housing.

**Table 9: Current accommodation (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=86)	(N=44)	(N=19)
Without shelter	2	0	0
Temporary shelter w/ friends	20	0	40
Supported Accommodation	2	55	7
'Tertiary homeless' situation	9	26	20
Institutions	1	7	7
Not homeless	66	13	33
	100	100	100

Table 9 shows where respondents reported living at the time that they completed the survey (current accommodation). At the time of the survey, 55 per cent of the SHS group were in supported accommodation, while 26 per cent were in rooming houses, seven per cent in some kind of institutional setting and 13 per cent in independent living; however, all those in the first three of these accommodation settings would be supported by SHS.

Respondents were asked to make a self-assessment about whether they felt they were in 'safe and secure accommodation'. Anyone who answered 'yes' to this question is giving their subjective assessment of whether they feel safe and secure in their current living situation. How professional workers in homelessness services would assess the safety and security of a living situation would in many cases be different. Security from a client's perspective, for example, might be not having to move on in the next week or two, but a homeless service would define security in terms of some legal right to occupy. There is a high degree of relativism in the subjective response captured in this question. Table 10 displays the results for the three comparison groups.

**Table 10: Self-assessment of current accommodation (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=85)	(N=43)	(N=19)
YES	79	91	58
NO	21	9	42
	100	100	100

Nearly all (91%) of the SHS clients felt that their accommodation is safe and secure. By comparison, more JSA and JSA & SHS clients felt their accommodation was not necessarily safe and secure. Some 20 per cent of the JSA clients and 40 per cent of JSA & SHS clients felt their accommodation was insecure or unsafe.

## **Labour Market Experience**

One important point of comparison is whether the Stream 4 JSA clients have a significantly different prior labour market experience to that of clients of the homeless service system. Nearly everyone in the survey sample had been previously employed. In all three groups life-time employment experiences were similar.

**Table 11: Prior life-time employment experience (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=88)	(N=43)	(N=19)
Never worked	2	9	0
1 – 2 jobs	13	5	32
3 – 6 jobs	42	51	26
7+ jobs	43	35	42
	100	100	100

As Table 11 indicates a large majority in all three groups had worked before and been employed in a several jobs. The table does not indicate the duration of employment. When this experience was situated on a time-scale by asking the participant when they last worked for at least two weeks of 35 hours or more, some clear differences emerge between the three groups. Some 40 per cent of the JSA clients had been employed on a full-time basis within the past two years, compared to only 6 per cent of the SHS, and some 20 per cent of the JSA & SHS group. One-quarter (25%) of the JSA group had not worked full-time for over 5 years, compared with 41 per cent of the SHS group and 16 per cent of the JSA & SHS group. It is possible that some respondents had some periods of part-time work during this period.

**Table 12: Last time worked for two weeks of 35 hours or more (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=88)	(N=32)	(N=19)
Less than 2 years ago	42%	6%	21%
2 to less than 5 years	25%	28%	47%
5 years or more	25%	41%	16%
Never	5%	16%	16%
Not sure	3%	9%	0%
	100%	100%	100%

Table 13 shows whether respondents had been in the labour force for all or part of the past year or not at all in the labour force in the past year.

**Table 13: Participation in the labour force over the past year (%)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>JSA &amp; SHS</b>
	(N=86)	(N=32)	(N=17)
For the whole year	40	3	23
For part of the year	38	19	18
None of the year	22	78	59
	100	100	100

Significant differences were apparent between the three groups. While most of the JSA clients were in the labour force for all or part of the year, most of the SHS clients had not participated in the labour force during the past year. The JSA & SHS clients were somewhere in between – 59 per cent had not been in the labour force. The most common reasons cited by homeless clients for not being in the labour force were illness or health issues.

## Predicting participation in JSA

The survey of clients of JSA and SHS agencies gathered an extensive amount of information about these individuals' labour market experience, health status, educational backgrounds, and family data. For this analysis, only the JSA and SHS groups were compared, and a range of variables that might plausibly be related to membership of the JSA group were rendered into a nominal dichotomous variable that could be examined in 2 X 2 cross-tabulations. These were variables were thought to be possibly relevant on the basis of prior experience and research and relevant extant research literature.

**Table 14: Demographics, biographical variables by JSA & SHS (Row %)**

	<b>JSA</b>	<b>SHS</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>Significance (2 sided)</b>
Living alone before coming into the service				
Yes	38	62	33.31	<0.0001 *
No	87	13		
Gender				
Male	52	48	22.84	<0.0001
Female	93	7		

Post-school qualifications				
Yes	26	39	2.22	0.136
No	74	61		
Highest primary/secondary school level completed				
Yr 10 or less	26	39	2.22	0.136
Yr 11 or 12	74	61		
Experience of threats of violence in family home while growing up				
Yes	70	30	0.29	0.589
No	65	35		
Experience of acts of violence in family home while growing up				
Yes	70	30	0.31	0.580
No	66	34		

Living alone indicates a strong association and difference between the two groups [ $\chi^2 = 33.31$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ]. The significant difference indicated for gender is an artefact of sampling and no other conclusions about a gender difference should be drawn on the basis of this dataset. On the other hand, there is every reason to think there might be significant gender differences. A more representative sample with more females would be required to test this.

A second set of potentially relevant health-related variables are listed in Table 15 in order of the significance of the Chi-square test for the 2 X 2 cross-tabulation. Commonly,  $p=0.05$  is used by convention as the level of significance test; if we use  $p=0.01$  several of the variables tested and displayed in the table below are significantly associated except that they are much weaker than 'receipt of a sickness/disability pension'.

**Table 15: Heath related factors by JSA & SHS (Row %)**

	JSA	SHS	Pearson Chi-Square	Significance (2 sided)
In receipt of a sickness/disability pension				
Yes	9	91	72.34	<0.0001 *
No	88	12		
Personality disorder				
Yes	20	80	15.906	<0.0001
No	72	28		

Opioids used in the past three months				
Yes	19	81	7.42	0.006
No	63	37		
Substance use disorder				
Yes	46	54	9.69	0.002
No	74	26		
Psychotic disorder				
Yes	33	67	8.33	0.004
No	71	29		
Diagnosed learning disability				
Yes	40	60	8.23	0.004
No	73	27		
Dissociative disorder				
Yes	30	70	6.21	0.013
No	69	31		
Impulse control disorder				
Yes	33	67	6.12	0.013
No	69	31		
Long standing physical health issue				
Yes	59	41	5.88	0.015
No	79	21		
Mood disorder				
Yes	71	29	0.88	0.347
No	63	37		
Anxiety disorder				
Yes	69	31	0.31	0.709
No	65	36		

The third set of potentially relevant variables are labour force and labour market experience-related.

**Table 16: Labour force experience by JSA & SHS (Row %)**

	JSA	SHS	Pearson Chi-Square	Significance (2 sided)
Been looking for work in the past year				
Yes	93	7	53.53	<0.0001 *

No	29	71		
Number of jobs during life-time				
Few (0,1,2)	68	32	0.016	0.900
Many (3+)	67	33		

The above analysis suggests three standout factors that were significant in distinguishing between JSA and SHS clients. These factors were whether:

- The respondent looked for work during the year
- The respondent lived alone prior to seeking assistance
- The respondent was receiving a sickness/disability pension

These are the three variables most highly associated with membership of either JSA or SHS groups. Multivariate analysis is required when there are several variables that might predict an outcome. Logistic regression is a preferred approach when the outcome variable is membership of one group or another as in in this case. This method will provide information as to the relationships and strengths of the contributing variables in the analysis. Accepting the limitations of the sample and its size, a binary logistic regression was therefore conducted to confirm the statistical significance of the three most highly associated variables.

An omnibus test of model coefficients was conducted to determine if the model was a good fit for the data. The Chi-squared  $\chi^2$  (df=3) = 82.242  $p < 0.0001$  indicates that the model is a good fit.

The Hosmer–Lemeshow test is a statistical test for goodness of fit for logistic regression models. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test produced a Chi-squared value of 1.552 (df=3) and  $p > 0.670$ . A p value of less than 0.05 in this case would indicate a poor fit. This test indicates that after inclusion of the three variables, 91.6 per cent of cases were correctly classified in the two groups - this indicates that the model is well calibrated.

Each of the three variables contributed significantly to the predictive ability of the model and each was significant. The most important predictor of whether a person was a client of the SHS or JSA systems is whether they were in receipt of a sickness/disability pension. Respondents who did not receive a sickness/disability pension were over 30 times more likely to be a JSA client than those who did receive a pension, controlling for other variables [B= 3.425;  $p < 0.0001$ ].

The second predictor of whether a person was a client of the SHS or JSA systems, was looking for work during the year, Respondents who did look for work during the year were over 14 times more likely to be a JSA client than respondents who did not look for work, controlling for other variables [B = 2.651;  $p < 0.0001$ ].

Finally, the third predictor of a person being a client of the SHS or JSA systems, was living alone before coming to the service. Respondents who did not live alone before coming to the service were over 5.5 times more likely to be a JSA client than those who did live alone, controlling for other variables [B =1.724;  $p < 0.05$ ].

With a larger more representative sample it would be possible to test a model containing more variables.

## Qualitative responses

Several of the homeless men in the study cited the same trajectory into homelessness: marital or relationship breakdown, followed by an episode of couch- surfing with family, friends or relatives, then loss of job, alcohol abuse and, finally, drug abuse. Several, but not all, of these men had been living previously with their families in public housing. But irrespective of their housing situation, the relationship breakdown led to loss of accommodation and the improvised accommodation situation made it difficult to maintain regular work. In some cases the subjects noted that loss of employment was a precursor to relationship breakdown.

Appropriate counselling and support at the point of relationship breakdown may be able to intervene in this trajectory into homelessness and unemployment. An appropriate clinical study with control groups could be utilised to determine the benefit of such support.

Several of the JSA Stream 4 clients said they felt that they had received little or no support from their agency other than obligatory face-to-face discussions with agency caseworkers. In other cases, clients noted that they had received some training in the form of resume and job application preparation and courses such as responsible serving of alcohol and food preparation and handling. In a few cases, JSA clients were expressed resentment that they felt not enough was being done and that they were going through the motion with any real prospect of a job that they wanted or that would continue long-term.

No particular conclusions are drawn from these inputs in terms of how generally they might be found across the JSA system.

# Discussion and Policy Implications

This was an exploratory study of an important issue. Participation in the labour market and sustainable employment opportunities are clearly fundamental if individuals and families are to have a livelihood and income to live independently. The Australian Government's 'social inclusion' agenda is about 'participating in education and training', 'participation in employment', 'engagement' through connection with people and community resources and 'having a voice' (Australian Government, 2009b). Social inclusion conceptualises disadvantage more broadly and in a more nuanced way than simply defining poverty and disadvantage in terms of low-income position. However, education and training to gain vocational skills as well as employment opportunities and sustainable employment are fundamental underpinnings of the notion of social inclusion. Without these, individuals and families are dependent on various benefits and support from governments, and live in situations of poverty and often in communities where there is significant poverty. Homelessness is the ultimate form of social exclusion and 'reducing the incidence of homelessness' is one of the priority objectives for the social inclusion strategy. All of the factors highlighted as dimensions of disadvantage such as 'poverty, low income and income inequality', 'lack of access to the job market', 'poor educational outcomes', 'poor health and wellbeing' and 'lack of social support networks' are major issues to be addressed by the effort to respond to homelessness. It is in this context that the relationships between homelessness and unemployment or labour market participation are important.

In the discourse and public discussion about homelessness policy, there are several dichotomous lines of argument criss-crossing each other. One is emphasising chronic homelessness as a priority over early intervention for a broader cohort or vice versa; a second one is whether homelessness can be addressed largely through mainstream services as opposed to SHS; a third one is 'housing first' or 'work first' and then there is the tussle between whether support or housing/accommodation is the more important priority. It is the competition between the 'housing first' and 'work first' perspectives that deserves some comment within the scope of this research project. Housing first is a concept in the United States and is usually credited to Sam Tsemberis, who was CEO of Pathways to Housing in New York (Tsemberis et. al., 2004).

What started out as a program model for working with chronically homeless individuals, particularly those with psychiatric conditions has morphed into a broader policy paradigm and an universalised argument for prioritising chronic homeless. The argument underpinning the model was that rapid rehousing or rapid access to permanent stable housing was the key first step, followed by other supports according to the needs of the individual. Supportive housing projects are premised on the same argument. Over time, 'Housing First' has morphed into a policy paradigm that emphasises housing provision as the priority over other intervention and supports. The concept has been picked up in other Western countries by housing advocates, but during this dissemination the argument has become a more generalised pitch for supportive housing as an alternative to other programs characterised as 'transitional', 'continuums of care', and linear or staircase models.

A critical examination of Housing First was undertaken by Australian academics Johnson, Parkinson and Parcell (2012), who concluded that while providing stable housing for individuals with high and complex needs is a positive, 'the claims about Housing First outreach what the evidence says' and they warn about its translation into an Australian context. Several different initiatives now sit under the 'Housing First' umbrella. In Australia, Housing First has not been taken up to the extent it appears to have been adopted in the United States, perhaps because in the US the huge shelter system is something that is widely criticised despite an acceptance that it is a necessity. Herein is the source of a gigantic historical Catch-22 whereby supportive housing is widely accepted as a policy perspective despite underfunding, and the shelter system is the main funded accommodation despite widespread criticism of shelters.

However, Housing First notions also inhabit a level closer to the everyday world of practice. Amongst practitioners in the homelessness sector there is a tendency to believe that addressing homelessness and a person's issues is the priority before participating in education and training or employment programs such as JSA. Thus, a common proposition circulating in the discourse about homelessness and providing assistance to homeless people is that achieving a stable housing situation is a prerequisite to support for employment. This notion appeals to commonsense but requires radical qualification.

In contrast, 'Work First' stands at the polar opposite. As a concept, it nowhere has the prominence of its Housing First opposite number. The basic concept is that

employment, any employment or whatever employment can be obtained is a way of building work habits and vocational skills that can lead onto employment that a participant really likes and wants – a job they might otherwise choose.

One of the most prominent Work First programs for the homeless in the United States is the Doe Fund founded by businessman George McDonald. The Doe Fund promoted the value of paid work as a pathway to an independent livelihood. In 1990, Doe has contracts funded by the New City authorities and recruits homeless volunteers to do the work. Housing is provided in shelter-type accommodation for the volunteers in the employment program, who, are paid a small weekly stipend. The work experience and support is directed to assisting able homeless individuals to secure ongoing employment. The Doe fund has its critics who claim that the program is too much like a private business with lower than acceptable outcomes. There are many other examples of 'Work First' style programs within the broader Welfare to Work framework. Much of the thinking underpinning welfare to work reforms is grounded in this kind of argument. Philosophically, Work First approaches in the US (Brown, 1987) are similar to what has been designed into programs such Job Services Australia.

Again, at the everyday practice level, 'Work First' arguments are raised to say that work experience and employment, whether casual or short-term, are the surest pathway out of homelessness, with the suggestion that policy should be reshaped in this direction.

It can be argued plausibly that these two perspectives reflect the interests and priorities of different service sectors. While this may well be the case, both perspectives bring important ideas to the policy debate. The critical point is that these contrasting perspectives contest what should be the dominant priority in the homelessness policy space. Should employment services be the backbone onto which accommodation and other support is attached or should homeless people be settled into stable accommodation with support that can include employment services. Both questions might be drifting off the best way forward – which would be access to a package of support, accommodation and housing, education and training as well as employment services – determined on a needs-basis.

The first research question RQ(a) asked 'Is housing stability a factor determining whether or not a homeless person can participate in the labour market and labour market programs?' Analysis of the data in this project suggests that 'housing stability', as such, may not be a determining factor that distinguishes homeless persons from other

disadvantaged persons who are able to enter JSA Stream 4 programs. Several findings are relevant. Firstly, there was a significant group (N=19) of clients of homeless services who were also clients of JSA agencies. Most were not accommodated in the service but were being supported. Secondly, some 43 per cent (about half if those coming out of institutions are included as homeless) JSA clients were in situations that can be recognised as homelessness; however, they were not current clients of a homeless service. The results suggest that housing stability of itself should not be considered necessarily a significant barrier to participation in labour market programs such as JSA. Of course, the question then arises as to what situation is the person experiencing homelessness in, and how stable or unstable is that 'housing situation'. A person staying with a friend may have a relatively stable situation and be able to participate in a JSA program or look for work. Likewise, staying in a boarding house room may be a relatively stable situation, although it is a situation categorised as 'tertiary homelessness'. Also, supported accommodation is time-limited but relatively stable. Crisis services allow for periods of three months, whereas transitional accommodation is often extended by agencies when more secure housing has not been obtained. By contrast, a person sleeping rough has no access to the amenities available in a habitable dwelling. The findings from this study would support suggestions that support for employment preparation, job seeker program or employment should not be delayed until after stable housing is achieved. A more flexible approach would be advised.

The above finding should not be interpreted as relieving services from assisting homeless people into safe and secure housing. Also, it should be appreciated that attending a JSA program, which is the measure available of participation in labour market programs, is a lot less demanding than full-time employment. The outcome measure for this project was participation in JSA Stream 4 programs not achieving employment for a period of time. Leaving aside argument about priority and order in how the various supports are provided, ultimately homeless persons and families need affordable housing in a liveable community and relatively sustainable employment that provides a livelihood. Many will require assistance from both service sectors.

During the fieldwork for this study, interviewers had contact with clients of both JSA and SHS services, as well as contact with the services that participated in the study. An impression was gained from clients that there was not a lot of cooperation or connection between JSA and SHS agencies. However, in some cases, the same organisation

operates both types of services. This issue was not an objective of the present study, so data was not systematically collected. The comments made here are about raising an issue for further examination and should not be interpreted as findings or conclusions. That said, there was little or no evidence of close cooperation between SHS and JSA services. This is consistent with the well-established and general critique of service systems operating in 'silos' with minimal cross-accountability and collaboration.

It should be kept in mind that clients of an agency will often not be aware of how an agency really works and which other agencies it cooperates with. Understandably, clients tend to be focused on dealing with their own issues. So, testimony from clients carries this caveat or limitation. However, there was corroboration from discussions with agency workers, since there was virtually no reference to the other sector, even though Stream 4 was created to better serve the needs of homeless and highly disadvantaged persons. The question then is how well the JSA and SHS are working together to achieve the social inclusion objectives. As stated previously, this project did not explicitly set out to research this question, but the issue arose during the project.

*The Road Home* raised expectations about a more seamless system that worked better for homeless persons when it stated:

*New employment services to commence on 1 July 2009, will provide the right mix of training, work experience and other interventions to help job seekers, particularly disadvantaged job seekers and people who are homeless, obtain suitable employment. The new system actively encourages Employment Service Providers to forge close links and establish collaborative arrangements with organisations delivering homelessness services to provide a more integrated service to homeless job seekers. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations will assist peak bodies in the homelessness and employment sector to develop a template agreement, which can help providers to formalise their collaborative arrangements (Australian Government, 2008a, p.66)*

The new system referred to is Job Services Australia (Australian Government, 2008b) or the resulting reform of Job Network into a program with options (i.e. Streams 1-4) tailored more deliberately to client needs rather than a more generic 'one-size-fits-all' model. The template agreement assistance provided by DEEWR refers to the HOPE Project that was underway in 2009. This project aimed 'to facilitate effective linkages

between Job Services Australia (JSA) and homelessness service providers which strengthen their capacity to work collaboratively ...'. Two training manuals were published - one for JSA providers and another for SHS agencies. In addition to the training manuals, a report on some of the issues involved in the practices of both sectors was never published. Nearly three years after that report, there has been no evaluative assessment as to the extent to which the White Paper vision has been accomplished.

It appears that the level of collaboration may be much less than desired. Apart from the training packages and messages about collaboration, the reality on the ground seems to vary widely and if the level of cooperation encountered during fieldwork for this research is typical, then there has been no major shift. The Homelessness Council has continued to advocate more assistance for homeless jobseekers and further reforms in the system to more realistically and effectively support severely disadvantaged and homeless jobseekers. Tony Nicholson, Chair of the Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness and CEO of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, has been a strong advocate for such programs within the Welfare to Work agenda. Nicholson has argued:

*About three-quarters of all the people who experience homelessness in Australia are actually in the prime working years of 18 to 45 years but the combination of their unstable housing, their lack of work experience and skills and their poor health, means that they need a lot more assistance to get into world of work than what is currently on offer from the job services system. .... it is pretty clear now that the Job Services Australia system by international standards works quite well for people who don't have serious barriers to getting a job, but for those that have more complex circumstances and have significant barriers, it works very poorly ... It doesn't integrate what people who experience homelessness need. That is why we're, our council is saying that an alternative approach is required. An approach that takes homeless people who have been in the job services system for quite a long time and got nowhere, that takes them out of that system and offers them an alternative approach that integrates the various forms of assistance that they need and links them much more closely to employers. (The World Today Monday 11 April 2011)*

But what further system reforms would be appropriate? Can such programs comfortably sit within the Job Services Australia program and be delivered by the existing JSA providers.

Minister Kate Ellis's announcement of a trial of additional assistance for homeless job seekers shows that assisting highly disadvantaged job seekers better is still a live issue. The terms of the trial were 'all *primary* homeless job seekers – that is those who are living in a squat, sleeping in a car or tent or have nowhere to stay' (Press Release: More support for homeless job seekers, 31 August 2012). The extension of the Employment Pathways Fund in this way is consistent with the White Paper objective of offering 'supported accommodation to rough sleepers who require it', but while this measure is likely to be timely and useful for those whose primary homelessness is recent or incidental, it is likely to be less relevant for those individuals experiencing a pattern of chronic homelessness.

For those individuals who comprise the SHS group in this study, whose homelessness is longer-term or a chronic condition, this kind of assistance will be less helpful unless there is close cooperation between the JSA agency and a SHS agency in the casework supporting the individual. If Nicholson and other critics are right that Job Services Australia in its current form does not effectively address access to the labour market for the most disadvantaged, and if the major barriers to employment are complex issues, then embedding employment services support within, and as part of, support and case-management work done by SHS might be a useful experiment. There are precedents. In the past, Centrelink has explored outreach to homeless services in the past on the grounds that Centrelink would not be the appropriate place for addressing all the issues a homeless person might have; after all, Centrelink is a more narrowly focused service provider dealing with income support. The recent development of the Centrelink homelessness indicator is a positive development. In the past - during the 1990s - there were some examples of the integration of employment support with homeless service provision.

The second research question RQ(b) asked: 'Does prior labour market experience determine the extent to which homeless persons are able to participate in the labour market?'. Nearly everyone in the sample (the JSA clients, the SHS clients and the JSA/SHS group) had been in employment previously. The inter-group differences on this measure were not significant. In the JSA clients group, some 86 per cent had three or

more jobs previously, compared to 76 per cent of the homeless clients, and 68 per cent of the JSA/SHS group. The number of previous jobs is the indicator used in this study. It is an indicator and the range of labour market experience realities is more nuanced than what this or any other indicator presents. The ABS labour market survey contains similar limitations in that it does not provide detailed information on life-time labour market experience or period prevalence data on labour market experience, mainly focusing on the previous 12 months. For the individuals in our sample, nearly all had been unemployed or not in the labour force during the previous twelve months.

Where there is a difference is when respondents were asked when they had last been employed. For the clients of SHS (the homeless group), more than half (57%) had not worked full-time (i.e. more than 35 hours per week for two concurrent weeks) in more than five years. Nine per cent could not remember when they had last worked. Only about one-third had a period of full-time employment within the past five years. By contrast, 67 per cent of the JSA group and 68 per cent of the JSA-SHS group had worked within the past five years. While lifetime labour market experience is not significant (using prior employment as the indicator), more recent participation in the labour market appears relevant. However, the measure that captures the most recent experience in the labour force is whether people had been looking for work in the past year. Again the homeless group is significantly different from the JSA participants.

The third research question RQ(c) asked: 'What factors account for the difference between people able to participate in job market programs and people in the homeless system who do not? What factors can predict whether a person is likely to participate in JSA Stream 4 programs?' The answer that this study can provide is achieved by comparing the clients of JSA, none of whom are currently clients of the SHS system, with SHS clients - none of whom is currently a client of JSA. There are clients of both systems and this small group has been incorporated in the tables in the results section. However, for the purpose of the multivariate analysis that can usefully be done with the dataset, only these two groups are compared – the JSA group and the SHS group.

The logistic regression model that was tested showed that receipt of a sickness/disability pension is the strongest predictor, followed by whether individuals had been looking for work in the past year. Whether 'looking for work' was answered strictly in terms of the ABS definition is not entirely clear despite the fact that as far as possible questions relating to labour force experience were taken from ABS surveys.

The third factor, living alone before entering either service system, is a measure of social isolation and perhaps a measure of how well someone is connected to family and friends. Social networks are important safety nets for people at risk of homelessness and almost certainly important as people try to extricate themselves from homelessness and find employment. As a factor in homelessness, social connection would not normally be considered on the same level as drug and alcohol abuse or mental illness, yet this may under-estimate its critical importance. Family support and social networks are protective factors when someone experiences homelessness. These kinds of relationships are part and parcel of social relations and cannot be easily recreated or substituted. The SHS clients tend to be single individuals with high and complex needs who have few family and other social connections. By contrast, the JSA group, even when they are single, are more likely to be involved with childcare and either living independently or couch-surfing with friends.

One of the arguments for early intervention is based on maintaining connections with family and a person's local social support network. However, there is not a lot of clarity how this part of the social inclusion agenda might be accomplished beyond early intervention when people become transient. A major problem is that people who have been transient and homeless for an extended period of time or chronically homeless have often detached from the community where they grew up or where family members live, they are estranged from family and many of the friends they might have had prior to becoming homeless, and their associates and friends are people who are themselves homeless. This becomes their social network ("community"), but it is limited in terms of the social support that can be offered. Having stable housing so that people are no longer transient is a starting point, but more than the provision of housing is needed to reconnect highly marginalised people into the mainstream community. Support for an extended period after homelessness has ended is clearly required. Wherever possible, people should not be placed in situations where the only community they can belong to is the community of people living in the same building or attending the same program. This is one of the dilemmas facing supportive housing models. To what extent do JSA programs address this aspect of social inclusion? Many SHS face the same problem with this cohort. More well defined are systems for supporting participation in education/training and labour market programs.

The predictive power of receiving sickness/disability pensions may be, in large part, because meeting the test to obtain such benefits exempts a person from having to seek work. The sickness benefit is a payment for people who were in the labour force but who have suffered an illness or injury. A medical certificate is required, and the benefit is time-limited and dependent on supportive medical advice. A person on sickness benefit is exempt from the work test. The Disability Support Pension is available for people who acquire 'a physical, intellectual or psychiatric condition' that prevents them from working over the next two years. Some conditions will be permanent, others not so, and the person is then expected to be available to look for work. A person on disability pension may elect to participate in labour market programs. On the policy front, successive governments have reviewed and revised the criteria for determining whether someone is entitled to these pensions or not as part of the Welfare to Work reforms. Eligibility tests have been tightened, with the objective of increasing workforce participation.

The SHS group has a much higher proportion of clients on sickness and disability pensions but this group has significantly higher proportions with serious diagnosed mental health conditions and other health issues. These health problems are clearly a major issue in people's lives. Our inference from this study is that this variable substantially predicts why many SHS clients are not in JSA; however, some SHA clients do participate in labour market programs such as JSA. Consequently, it is our contention, on the basis of this study, that homelessness and housing instability *per se* are not necessarily the barriers to participation in labour market programs that some might think. From a practice perspective, sorting out housing should be done as expeditiously as possible, but should not be seen as a precondition for attempting to link people to labour market programs. On the other hand, dealing with health issues should be seen as a priority in the support being provided to SHS clients with serious health issues. A more integrated approach for the long-term and chronic homeless job seekers is therefore suggested.

Education and training does not stand out as a distinguishing predictive factor between the JSA and SHS cohorts because across the sample early school leaving is high. However, qualifications and higher levels of education and training are required if disadvantaged and homeless people are to gain employment that leads to a sustainable livelihood and can become a viable longer-term career. Low-level vocational training and relatively short periods of employment in unskilled or semi-skilled employment fall

somewhat short of the higher aspirations of the 'social inclusion' agenda. More expensive and longer-term accredited educational programs can be funded by JSA providers, but whether that happens is up to the provider and not something the client can demand. Many of the most disadvantaged job seekers would benefit from such programs and their relevance would be enhanced if they were linked to employment. Critics suggest that the present system does not provide sufficient incentive for JSA providers to invest in more expensive options. New combinations of employment and work with return to education options could be considered in a revised Job Services Australia program in the future. For some of the chronically homeless, employment in the competitive real labour market is unrealistic. However, work experience or some form of employment is still important in terms of realising the vision of the 'social inclusion' agenda. But, if sustainable jobs in the highly competitive job markets are not realistic for a sizable minority of homeless persons, then some kind of 'real-world' employment program might need to be considered, not in isolated 'disability' workplaces, but in jobs, perhaps subsidised jobs in real work places with the appropriate support in order to ensure that the work experience is positive.

The Minister Kate Ellis has called for input into a review Jobs Services Australia to look at how the system might be further developed to better serve the needs of disadvantaged Australia. Clearly, there are some issues that require some further research and deeper policy thinking.

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# Appendices

Appendix A: The Homelessness and Unemployment survey instrument

Appendix B: Survey references

### Appendix C Survey References

Question No.	Part/Section	Source
	Part A	
1	Administrative information	
2	Administrative information	
3	Administrative information	
4	Administrative information	
5	Administrative information	
6	Administrative information	
7	Administrative information	
8	Administrative information	
9	Administrative information	
10	Administrative information	NAHA 2011
11	Administrative information	NAHA 2011
12	Administrative information	NAHA 2011
13	Administrative information	
14	Administrative information	
15	Administrative information	
16	Administrative information	
	Part B	
1	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
2	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
3	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
4	Section One: Demographics	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006

		(Reissue)
5	Section One: Demographics	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
6	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
7	Section One: Demographics	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
8	Section One: Demographics	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
9	Section One: Demographics	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
10	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
11	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
12	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
13	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
14	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
15	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
16	Section One: Demographics	Homelessness & Unemployment
17	Section Two: Experiences of Growing Up	AHURI Intergenerational Homelessness Survey
18	Section Two: Experiences of Growing Up	AHURI Intergenerational Homelessness Survey
19	Section Two: Experiences of Growing Up	AHURI Intergenerational Homelessness Survey
20	Section Two: Experiences of Growing Up	AHURI Intergenerational Homelessness Survey
21	Section Two: Experiences of Growing Up	AHURI Intergenerational Homelessness Survey

22	Section Three: Living Arrangements	Michael Project Baseline Survey
23	Section Three: Living Arrangements	Homelessness & Unemployment
24	Section Three: Living Arrangements	Homelessness & Unemployment
25	Section Three: Living Arrangements	Homelessness & Unemployment
26	Section Three: Living Arrangements	Homelessness & Unemployment
27	Section Three: Living Arrangements	SAAP NDCA (2008-2009)
28	Section Three: Living Arrangements	Homelessness & Unemployment
29	Section Four: Education	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
30	Section Four: Education	Michael Project Baseline Survey
31	Section Four: Education	Michael Project Baseline Survey
32	Section Four: Education	Homelessness & Unemployment
33	Section Four: Education	Homelessness & Unemployment
34	Section Four: Education	Homelessness & Unemployment
35	Section Four: Education	Homelessness & Unemployment
36	Section Four: Education	Homelessness & Unemployment
37	Section Four: Education	Adolescent Health & Wellbeing Survey
38	Section Four: Education	Adolescent Health & Wellbeing Survey
39	Section Five: Income	Michael Project Baseline Survey
40	Section Five: Income	Michael Project Baseline Survey
41	Section Five: Income	Michael Project Baseline Survey
42	Section Five: Income	Michael Project Baseline Survey
43	Section Five: Income	Michael Project Baseline Survey
44	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment
45	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment

46	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment
47	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment
48	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment
49	Section Five: Income	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
50	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment
51	Section Five: Income	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
52	Section Five: Income	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
53	Section Five: Income	Homelessness & Unemployment
54	Section Five: Income	Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales Social Exclusion Q3
55	Section Five: Income	Project I Baseline Survey
56	Section Five: Income	Project I Baseline Survey
57	Section Six: Employment	Project I Baseline Survey
58	Section Six: Employment	Project I Baseline Survey
59	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
60	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
61	Section Six: Employment	Labour Force Experience
62	Section Six: Employment	Labour Force Experience
63	Section Six: Employment	Labour Force Experience
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73	Section Six: Employment	Labour Force Experience
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75	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
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78	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
79	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
80	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
81	Section Six: Employment	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
82	Section Six: Employment	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
83	Section Six: Employment	2901.0 - Census Dictionary, 2006 (Reissue)
84	Section Six: Employment	Survey of Job Search Experience 2007, ABS
85	Section Six: Employment	Michael Project Baseline Survey
86	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
87	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
88	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
89	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment

90	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
91	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
92	Section Six: Employment	Homelessness & Unemployment
93	Section Seven: Health Services	Michael Project Baseline Survey
94	Section Seven: Health Services	Michael Project Baseline Survey
95	Section Seven: Health Services	Michael Project Baseline Survey
96	Section Eight: Justice Services and Deviant Behaviour	Michael Project Baseline Survey
97	Section Eight: Justice Services and Deviant Behaviour	Michael Project Baseline Survey
98	Section Eight: Justice Services and Deviant Behaviour	Michael Project Baseline Survey
99	Section Eight: Justice Services and Deviant Behaviour	Homelessness & Unemployment
100	Section Eight: Justice Services and Deviant Behaviour	Homelessness & Unemployment
101	Section Eight: Justice Services and Deviant Behaviour	Homelessness & Unemployment
102	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	Homelessness & Unemployment
103	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	Homelessness & Unemployment
104	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	Homelessness & Unemployment
105	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	Homelessness & Unemployment
106	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline

	Use	Survey
107	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
108	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
109	Section Nine: Alcohol and Other Drug Use	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
110	Section Ten: Physical Health	World Health Organisation International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision (ICD-10)
111	Section Ten: Physical Health	Adolescent Health & Wellbeing Survey
112	Section Eleven: Mental Health	American Psychiatric Association (2000). Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association
113	Section Eleven: Mental Health	Homelessness & Unemployment
114	Section Eleven: Mental Health	Homelessness & Unemployment
115	Section Eleven: Mental Health	Homelessness & Unemployment
116	Section Eleven: Mental Health	AHURI National Homelessness Baseline Survey
117	Section Eleven: Mental Health	Homelessness & Unemployment
118	Section Eleven: Mental Health	Homelessness & Unemployment

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