Exploring the profile, needs and experiences of people on Community Correction Orders in west metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria

Jesuit Social Services
July 2020

Table of Contents

List of Tables & Figures

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CCO	Community Correction Order
CV	Corrections Victoria
EPA	Employment Pathways Advisor
EPS	Employment Pathways Service
ETE	Education, Training and Employment
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety (State Government of Victoria), formerly DoJR
DoJR	Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation (State Government of Victoria), now DJCS
LGA	Local Government Area
WMR	West Metropolitan Region (of Melbourne)

Executive Summary

The Community Correction Order (CCO) sentencing option was introduced in Victoria in 2012 to replace several other non-custodial orders (Sentencing Act 1991 [Vic], s.48). The CCO was described in a judgment case handed down by the Supreme Court of Victoria as being appropriate in a broad range of cases, including cases where a prison sentence may be appropriate, with sentences able to address the "particular circumstances of the offender [1] and the causes of the offending" (Victorian Court of Appeal, para. 2). To this end, the order includes standard conditions (e.g., that no further offence is committed) and discretionary conditions set for each individual by the court. These discretionary conditions are described as "variably coercive, prohibitive, intrusive and rehabilitative" (Victorian Court of Appeal, para. 2) and include unpaid community work (referred to in other contexts as community service), medical treatment and curfews. Overall, this sentencing option is understood to thereby fulfil both punitive and rehabilitative purposes, simultaneously promoting the best interests of the community and the person and potentially directing people away from Victoria's over-burdened prisons.

The use of community based sanctions is supported by a body of evidence indicating that responses to offending that are solely punitive have, at best, no impact on reoffending and, at worst, a negative impact (Gendreau et al., 1999, Nagin et al., 2009, Cullen et al., 2011). While studies show that there are greater rates of reoffending among people sentenced to prison compared with those on an alternative sanction (Cid and Martí, 2012, Cullen et al., 2011), there is currently little evidence to support the effectiveness of CCOs in reducing recidivism (Gelb et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, recent internal reports indicate that the system in Victoria may not be working as well as it could be to maximise the opportunity presented by CCO sentences. For example, the completion of CCOs was 56.4% in 2018-19 and the lowest in Australia (Productivity Commission [PC], 2020), with a range of implementation and systemic issues identified as being in need of urgent attention (Victorian Auditor General, 2017). While there has been investment into addressing such issues, the effects remain to be seen. Others point out that, while community work is a prominent component of the CCO (ordered in 76% of cases; Gelb et al. 2019), "not much attention has been paid in the literature to the issue of identifying or determining effective models for the operation of community service schemes" (community work) (Turner and Trotter 2013, p.44).

A review undertaken for this study identified scarce research attention to people on CCOs. For this reason, there is limited understanding of the circumstances and needs of this group, the extent to which they experience inclusion in the mainstream community (e.g., education, training and employment/ETE) and their experiences in the system while they are on a CCO, especially the extent to which CCOs are experienced as rehabilitative.

The current study aims to improve understanding about the needs of this specific group and how the system can better support rehabilitative pathways. This report presents analysis of mixed methods data derived from two sources:

1. surveys completed by 63 women and 137 men (N=200) on CCOs in Melbourne; and,

2. in-depth interviews with a sub-set of 20 participants from part 1.

Participants were recruited through a community work program site located in the City of Brimbank, a local government area in the west metropolitan region (WMR) of Melbourne that includes some of Victoria's most disadvantaged suburbs. This is pertinent given the demonstrated inter-connectedness of place-based disadvantage and justice system involvement (Vinson, 1999; Vinson and Rawsthorne,2015).

The study was conducted as a component of a larger project that investigated how services and programs in the City of Brimbank can improve the recidivism outcomes of people on Community Correction Orders and involved consultation with local stakeholders. The project was conducted by Jesuit Social Services with funding received from the Victorian Legal Services Board and support given by Corrections Victoria (CV).

The structure of this report proceeds as follows. After outlining some of the main demographic characteristics of the group **(Section 2)**, and the broad nature of their justice involvement **(Section 3)**, the report examines the educational and employment background and current involvement of participants **(Sections 4 and 5)**. Section 6 explores holistic aspects of wellbeing of participants with particular attention to: family background experiences; social connectedness and social supports; physical and mental health issues (including problematic drug use); involvement in structured or recreational activities and quality of employment among those who were employed.

---

[1] Where possible, labels such as 'offender' and 'criminal' are avoided in this report as they have potentially pejorative connotations and were associated with stigmatising experiences for participants in this study

Section 7, investigates participants' access to appropriate formal supports to address issues linked to justice system involvement; and their experiences in community work programs. **Section 8** discusses key findings and study limitations followed by consideration of implications for practice and areas for future investigation in **Section 9.**

The report is intended to be of specific relevance to service providers, policy makers and planners in both justice and intersecting government and community sectors in the local WMR of Melbourne, Victoria.

Given the general paucity of published work with people on community based orders, the implications of this study may be of relevance to professionals in other contexts as well. It is hoped that it may also inform future research investigating ways to improve outcomes experienced among this group – including, but not limited to, rates of reoffending.

The following is a summary of key findings under four key research questions.

Research question 1: What are the main demographic and justice-related characteristics of this group?

Demographic Characteristics:

– The sample of 200 adults included 63 women and 137 men (31.5% vs 68.5%).

– The average age was 34.9 years (range 19-61 years).

– 52% of participants had dependent children under the age of 18 years.

– Approximately two thirds of participants (n=127, 63%) were born in Australia and 37% (n=72) were born overseas.

– There were three Aboriginal participants (1.5%).

– 75% of participants resided in western metropolitan Melbourne (with the most common LGAs being the City of Brimbank, 26% and the City of Melton, 23%).

Justice-related characteristics:

– The average age of reported first involvement in the justice system was 24.4 years.

– Just over a quarter of participants (26.5%, n=46) were reportedly involved in the justice system as juveniles (age 17 years or younger).[2]

– A quarter (25%) had reportedly spent time in an adult prison (n=49; range 1 week to 9 years).

– Fifteen participants (7.5%) had spent one or more years in prison.[3]

Research question 2: Are there identifiable trends in relation to educational attainment and engagement in employment among this group?

Participation in the workforce, education or training activities:

– **Overall levels of disengagement from ETE pathways were high.** Approximately two thirds of participants (67%) who were able to engage in ETE activities were not doing so.

– **Long term unemployment was a common experience.** Of 104 participants who were reportedly job seeking, approximately two thirds (66%, n=69) had been unemployed for more than a year and over a quarter (26%, n=27) had been unemployed for five or more years.

Tertiary level educational attainment and experiences:

– The most striking characteristic of tertiary education experiences was the **common attainment of one or more 'Certificate' level qualification** as the highest qualification, particularly Certificates I and II. These low level certificates rarely appeared to lead to employment.

– Interviewees confirmed that the urgent need for an income, combined with experiences of undertaking courses that haven't led to employment, contributed to **reluctance to embark on further training.**

Secondary level educational attainment and experiences:

– Participants had **lower than average levels of educational attainment** (compared to Victorian and City of Brimbank populations).

– Interviewees commonly discussed having **very poor educational experiences**, characterised by disruption and often underpinned by **troubled home environments** including living in out of home care (n=4), family violence and refugee experiences (n=3).

– 15% of the survey sample reported having lower than year 9 level attainment.

Employment experiences:

– The majority of interviewees spoke about having **disjointed careers** traversing multiple industry types and some had **limited or no employment history.**

– Engagement in **precarious, low paying forms of work and underemployment** were common experiences among those who were working.

Research question 3: Are there common areas of need or barriers to participation in the mainstream community?

Main issues and areas of need reported by participants:

– **Mental health issues** (e.g. anxiety, depression and PTSD) and/or **problematic alcohol and/or drug use** were common experiences associated with justice system involvement.

– The majority of interviewees were **socially isolated**, having **limited social support** from informal networks.

– Many reported having **troubled personal relationships**. Experiences such as separation from a spouse/s, estrangement from children, recent contact with child protective services, family violence were some commonly mentioned issues.

– There were **very low levels of participation in recreational and social activities.**

– **Financial hardship** was reported by all interviewees with unmanaged debt and reliance on others for housing being very common.

– **Women had a range of distinct needs** and experiences compared to men. This was often heavily shaped by child care responsibilities.

Barriers to participation in the community:

– Having a **justice record** was the self-reported main barrier to employment for 38%. **Employer reluctance** to hire them and **community work obligations** were related factors identified in interviews.

– Interviewees commonly spoke about how their **community work was "unnecessarily drawn out"** as they were allocated program hours only one or two days a week, regardless of their availability. This **prolonged time they spent out of the workforce.**

– A **health issue, impairment or injury** was a commonly identified 'main' barrier to employment (reported by 11%).

– **Motivation or confidence** was the third most commonly mentioned main barrier to employment (reported by 10%).

---

[2] This may be higher as Victoria has had a dual track system in place for some time, meaning that it is possible for vulnerable young people to remain in the juvenile justice system until the age of 21 years. It was not reported whether 18-21 years olds were processed as juveniles or adults (see "Limitations" section).
[3] It is possible that some of these participants were serving a parole period or a "CCO Imprisonment Order" (a prison term followed by a CCO) when engaged by the employment pathways program. However, the needs assessment survey did not collect in depth information about the participant's justice record.

Research question 4: What is the extent and nature of engagement with services and rehabilitative opportunities?

Access to services and support programs:

– Though many participants described having actively taken steps to address issues that were recognised as a 'problem', there was **little evidence to suggest that the participants in this study were receiving adequate support** to address self-identified needs or to improve their inclusion in the community.

– The majority of service encounters described by participants in this study appeared to be associated with an element of coercion, thus potentially undermining benefits.

– **Employment services were the most common service type accessed by participants;** however, dissatisfaction levels were very high and many disengaged as a result.

– Those who accessed specialist employment providers, such as disability specialists appeared to have better experiences; however, numbers of such participants were small.

– Specialist alcohol and drug and psychological services were accessed by some participants.

– There was an identified need for assistance in the following areas: social isolation and social support, family and relationship functioning, use of violence in and out of the home, financial counselling and financial literacy, and the geographical accessibility of services.

– Participants placed the **highest value on the quality of interpersonal interactions** with professionals (above the functional role of the service). These included qualities of staff genuineness, respect, and willingness to help.

Experiences of community work programs:

– Participants in this study emphasised that they **wanted to "give back" or "repay" their debt** to the community.

– Participants gave the most negative assessments of community work programs when there were not clearly articulated links to community benefit.

– **No individual was able to identify any useful skills** that they had gained from any community work program and commonly described the work that they had undertaken as **time-wasting, punitive and demeaning,** linking these experiences to poor self-esteem and a perception of worthlessness.

– **Interactions with community corrections staff appeared to have a significant role** shaping program attendance, with significance of such interactions appearing to be amplified due to the common experience of social isolation.

– Male interviewees did not appear to benefit from the group environment of community work programs, with some describing how the **group environment had a negative impact** on them.

– The majority of women (86%) of women participated in the "light duties" compared to 25% of men. It appeared that this **over-representation of women in a program with the lowest skill requirement** was shaped by dominance of men in other programs and lack of availability of other appealing or suitable programs.

– Meeting **child care needs** was a barrier to attending programs and services, particularly for women and single parents.

Discussion and implications

In the context of Victoria's burgeoning prison population, there is a stronger case than ever for ensuring that CCOs are used by the courts wherever appropriate and that those who receive these sentences have the support and opportunities that they need to make positive changes towards living crime-free lives.

There has been remarkably little research attention given to people on community based orders such as CCOs in Australia and internationally.

In summary, the following key issues identified among this group are likely to have a significant bearing on health and wellbeing outcomes, as well as recidivism rates:

– Lower than average educational attainment often underscored by difficult or traumatic childhood experiences.

– Limited engagement in employment and, among those who were working, engagement in tenuous low paying employment.

– High levels of social isolation and common experiences of troubled personal relationships.

– Low levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and poor hope for the future exacerbated by the stigmatising impact of having a justice record.

– Ongoing complex needs including poor mental health, problematic alcohol and/drug use and involvement in the child protection system impacting capacity to focus on meeting justice system requirements.

Among this cohort there were people whose distinct needs exacerbate their vulnerability to experiencing poor outcomes and who require targeted consideration. These include women, people from culturally diverse groups, young people, single parents and people with cognitive impairments.

The data collected in this study has provided insights into participants' engagement in rehabilitative activities including therapeutic services and programs as well as mandatory community work, producing two key findings:

1. Limited evidence of access to supportive or therapeutic services to address identified needs or improve inclusion in the mainstream community.

2. Experiences of community work program involvement as solely punitive, unnecessarily protracted in length with little evidence of skill-building or rehabilitative elements.

What can we learn about approaches to practice from the experiences of participants on CCOs?

The conclusion of this report outlines key features for delivery of effective therapeutic services and community work that emerged from analysis of the experiences of participants. These features are consistent with, and reiterate, existing understandings about 'what works' in relation to program or service delivery with people in the justice system (e.g., Andrews, 2001; Andrews et al., 2011; Barnett and Howard, 2018; Borzycky, 2005; McGuire, 2013; Turner and Trotter, 2013).

Key elements of therapeutic programs:

– Delivery of multi-modal support, holistic and tailored forms of support.

– A relational approach to service provision.

– Emphasis on building confidence and motivation.

– Long term support.

– Programs that minimise use of coercion.

– Programs that are geographically accessible.

Key elements of community work programs:

– Placement in productive and valued community work roles.

– Opportunity for interaction with community members.

– Opportunity to build skills including 'soft' skills.

– Pro-social interactions with supervisors and others who are supportive of the individual and who encourage positive change.

– Individual or small group placements where possible.

– Collaborative approaches to arranging work placements using a strengths-based approach.

– Efficiency of placements.

The following areas for future investigation are discussed:

– Provision of effective ETE support to this group.

– Provision of training opportunities that are aligned with local employment opportunities.

– Rigorous evaluation of community work programs.

– Improved understanding of service use patterns among people on CCOs.

– Training to improve skills in pro-social modelling among corrective services staff.

– Investigation of ways to improve accessibility of CCOs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people living in rural and remote locations.

– Investigation of ways to improve support to children and family of people on CCOs and to maximise their role in rehabilitation where appropriate.

1: Introduction

1.1 Project background

Across Australia, the overall rate of incarceration is 2.1 times higher than it was 30 years ago (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019 [ABS], Carcach and Grant, 1999), having a direct economic cost totalling more than $3.4 billion across Australia in 2017-18 (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision [SCRGSP], 2019). The large and increasing expenditure on incarceration in Australia is concerning in light of considerable research finding that imprisonment either has no deterrent effect or, in some cases, leads to a slight increase in reoffending (Gendreau et al., 1999, Nagin et al., 2009, Cullen et al., 2011). There is also a large body of evidence showing that imprisonment has a deleterious impact on an individual's physical, psychological and social wellbeing, as well as that of their family members, having a ripple effect throughout the community. The trend towards increased use of custodial measures in Australia is contrasted by a decrease in their use in other comparable countries including New Zealand, England and Wales, Canada and the United States/U.S. (Gelb et al., 2019).

In Victoria, the context of this study, the rate of imprisonment increased by almost 50% in ten years (ABS, 2019) and is at its highest point since the late 19th Century (Sentencing Advisory Council [SAC], The increased use of remand [4] and changes in the use of parole (early release) are understood to be some factors behind the dramatic increase (SAC, 2016). Victoria's prison system is the most costly in the country (SCRGSP, 2019); nevertheless, rates of recidivism are high. In 2018-19, 57% of people sentenced to prison in Victoria returned to either community corrections or prison within two years of release (Productivity Commission [PC], 2020).

There is a prevention case to support the use of alternative sanctions such as diversion programs and non-custodial orders. On the measure of recidivism alone, studies have found that there are greater rates of reoffending among people sentenced to prison compared with those on an alternative sanction (Cid and Marti, 2012, Cullen et al., 2011, McGuire, 2013, Wermink et al., 2010).

There is also a cost-benefit case supporting the use of community based sanctions. For example, the cost of imprisonment in Victoria in 2018-19 was almost ten times greater than the cost of managing a person in the community (at $317.90 vs $40.28 per person per day, respectively, in Victoria for 2018-19; Productivity Commission [PC], 2020). Accordingly, the use, availability and effectiveness of alternatives to imprisonment demand ongoing attention among scholars, policymakers and justice advocates – both in Victoria and more generally.

The Community Correction Order

The Community Correction Order (CCO) was introduced in Victoria in 2012 to replace several other non-custodial orders (Victorian Court of Appeal, 2014). [5,6] Though it is generally imposed for offences that would not ordinarily have resulted in a custodial sentence, it may also be appropriate for more serious offences where a custodial sentence would have been previously imposed, and can be served in addition to a prison sentence (i.e., a combined sentence). A guideline judgement handed down by the Supreme Court of Victoria in 2014 described the CCO as:

> … a flexible sentencing option, enabling punitive and rehabilitative purposes to be served simultaneously. The CCO can be fashioned to address the particular circumstances of the offender and the causes of the offending, and to minimise the risk of re-offending by promoting the offender's rehabilitation.
> (Victorian Court of Appeal, para. 2),

The CCO includes standard or core conditions (including that no further offence is committed) and, consistent with a flexible approach to meeting both punitive and rehabilitative aims (described above), it may include certain discretionary conditions set by the court. These are described as "variously coercive, prohibitive, intrusive and rehabilitative" (Victorian Court of Appeal, para.1) and include unpaid community work, drug and alcohol testing and treatment, medical treatment or curfews (Sentencing Act 1991 [Vic], s.48). The maximum length of a CCO imposed for one or more offences is between two and five years. In giving sentencing guidelines, the Supreme Court of Victoria reported the following:

> The conditions and length of a CCO should be structured in the least restrictive way possible, having regard to the circumstances of the offence, the offender and the sentencing purposes to be achieved.
> (Victorian Court of Appeal, para.80)

In summary, the intention of the order is to simultaneously promote the best interests of the community and the person.

Since its introduction, various legislative amendments have impacted the use of CCOs. For example, in 2014, courts were encouraged to impose a CCO in place of a suspended sentence (phased out in Victoria from 2011-14) (Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Workers) Act 2014 [Vic]), consistent with a general policy approach stating that incarceration should be a 'last resort' response to offending. This view is evident in a guideline judgment handed down by the Supreme Court reviewing the use of CCOs:

> Any period of imprisonment must be understood for what it is: onerous, unpleasant, oppressive and burdensome. It is, as it should be, the last available punitive resort in any civilised system of criminal justice. Public discussions about the need to deter crime by the imposition of heavier sentences are not always obviously, or at least apparently, informed by an appreciation of the significance of full-time incarceration upon men and women who receive such sentences. (Victorian Court of Appeal, para. 104)

Since this time, however, numerous changes have narrowed the availability of the CCO option to exclude a greater number of offences, particularly violent offences (SAC, 2017a), representing a potential shift away from this stance. It is likely that this will result in lower numbers of people who are sentenced to a CCO. The use of CCOs in Victoria rose steadily until 2018 where, on an average day, 14,561 people were on the orders. In 2019, this decreased to 13,361 (PC, 2020). However, it remains to be seen whether a downward trend will continue.

The rehabilitative component of CCOs (e.g., mandatory program attendance or treatment) has been informed by a broad body of literature demonstrating that targeted, therapeutic treatment appropriate to individual needs is effective in both reducing reoffending and improving health and wellbeing outcomes among people in the justice system across a range of measures. This is consistent with the "Risk-Need-Responsivity" (RNR) approach, an evidence-based paradigm widely used in countries including Australia in programming treatment for offenders (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990; Andrews, Bonta and Wormwith, 2011).

Interventions that are most strongly based in the evidence include cognitive behavioural therapies, skills training, moral reasoning, employment schemes and multi-modal interventions (Farrall, 2012). While large systematic studies have shown that treatment that is undertaken on a voluntary basis is more effective on a range of measures than treatment which is mandated or includes any coercive element (Parhar et al., 2008); the evidence shows overall that programs that are well implemented can reduce recidivism and enhance public safety (Przybylski, 2008).

While understood to be a 'lower risk' cohort compared to prison populations, there are indications that people who are sentenced to CCOs often have similarly complex needs that underpin and exacerbate justice system involvement and increase their marginalisation within the mainstream community. For example, the Victorian Auditor General (2017) reported that three quarters of people on CCOs in 2014-15 had at least two conditions on their order and, in 2015-16, the majority (85%) had conditions relating to alcohol and or drugs. Further, analysis of data obtained through courts has shown that individual characteristics including age have a bearing on recidivism outcomes (Sentencing Advisory Council, 2017b). However, there has been less investigation into what people who have been sentenced to CCOs experience as their main issues and barriers to mainstream inclusion. For example, while the Victorian Auditor General's Office stated that CCOs provide offenders "the opportunity to maintain and improve their social and economic support networks in a community setting" while fulfilling their obligations to the community (Victorian Auditor General [VAGO], 2017), the extent to which these purported advantages are experienced has not been explored.

While reoffending rates among people on CCOs are far lower than among prisoners generally,[7] it is unclear whether this is shaped by the risk profile of the respective cohorts or if the nature of the intervention has an impact. For example, calculations of recidivism rates are imprecise (Richards, 2011) and comparison of recidivism rates between cohorts who may have vastly different characteristics, such as prior offense history, is fraught (McIvoret al., 2010). Another potential measure of the effectiveness of CCOs is the rate of completion.

---

[4] A custodial measure used to detain individuals who are waiting court appearance.
[5] Since this time, New South Wales and Tasmania have introduced a similar legislative provisions for use of CCOs based on Victoria's model (Gelb et al. 2019).
[6] Other orders include "Fine Conversion Order", "Fine Default Unpaid Community Work Order" and "Community Work Permit". Prisoners may also be eligible to serve part of their sentence in the community under a "Parole Order" (Corrections Victoria, 2018).

[7] Just under a quarter (24.9%) of people on CCOs in 2017 went back through the correctional system within two years compared to over half of those released from prison (53.7%) in the same period (State Government of Victoria, 2017a).

In Victoria, the completion rates of CCOs, were the lowest in Australia in 2018-19, at 56.4% (PC, 2020). An internal review of Community Correctional Services (CCS) identified a number of urgent implementation and systemic challenges potentially driving this trend. These include the following:

- system challenges in managing unexpected growth;

- legislative changes driving higher-risk offender profiles;

- broadening expectations of the services that CCS delivers—community corrections being seen as both one step away from prison and an early intervention option for offenders;

- constrained CCS resources and access to community treatment options;

- challenges in recruiting and training appropriately qualified staff;

- case management roles for managing serious offenders being filled by inexperienced staff. (Victorian Auditor General, 2017)

One of the main challenges highlighted in the above investigation and in a more recent report released by the Victorian State Government Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) is associated with meeting the needs of a "more complex cohort of offenders" (2019, p.21). This has reportedly increased the demand for support programs and services and increased waiting times for people on CCOs (Victorian Auditor General, 2017). For example, in 2017, the Victorian Auditor General reported that 40 per cent of serious risk individuals on the offending behaviour programs list waited more than three months for a pre-assessment screening. Others have identified that access to appropriate services and programs is particularly difficult for individuals in regional and remote communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These groups and people with mental health issues are understood to be particularly vulnerable to becoming entrenched in the justice system and are more likely to breach their CCO (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2017; Gelb et al., 2019).

Community work (also referred to as community service) – or the requirement to undertake unpaid work – is a prominent component of the CCO, ordered in 76% of cases (Gelb et al. 2019). The literature focused specifically on effective program practices for offenders who have been sentenced to community based orders, including the possible rehabilitative or capacity-building function of court mandated community work, is limited. McIvor (1992)

notably found that reconviction rates were lower among people who believed their community service experience to be worthwhile, because it provided opportunities to learn new skills or was seen to be of value to the community. Positive experiences were associated with placements that featured high levels of contact between the person sentenced and "beneficiaries," including agencies or individuals (McIvor et al., 2010, p.52), enabling people to appreciate the tangible value of their work (Rex and Gelsthorpe, 2002).

More recently, Turner and Trotter (2013) identified factors that are well-substantiated in relation to successful community work programming. These are that community work should be: viewed as meaningful and worthwhile; favour individual placements over group work; ensure equal opportunity for participation; and, be delivered by staff employing a "pro-social modelling approach" to working with people (Turner and Trotter, 2013, p. 49). Closely related to the latter point is the quality of the relationship between the offender and their community supervisor (Trotter et al., 2012, Sapouna et al., 2015), with some researchers highlighting the influence workers may have in modelling and reinforcing certain values and behaviours (Trotter and Ward, 2013). In summary, the literature seems to indicate the rehabilitative potential of meaningful community work. However, the extent to which these principles are embedded in current practice across all regions of Victoria is unclear. Further, although there has been apparent state government investment towards addressing the general systemic and practice issues impacting CCOs, it is unclear at this stage if there has been any positive impact on completion rates or the overall outcomes of those who receive the orders (Gelb et al., 2019).

In summary, while the purpose of the CCO is described as being both punitive and rehabilitative, issues with the engagement and delivery of rehabilitative opportunities to this cohort have been identified. The current study is driven by the relative dearth of attention to this justice sub-group in the research literature more generally. It aims to improve understanding about the needs of this specific group and how the system can better support rehabilitative pathways – both through linkage of people to therapeutic programs and services to address underlying needs and participation in unpaid community work. It is only through improved understanding of the circumstances of this cohort and their experiences during their CCO that it is possible to consider ways to maximise the opportunity for rehabilitation presented by this sentence.

The current investigation is driven by the following (RQ):

RQ1: What are the main demographic and justice related characteristics of this group?

RQ2: Are there identifiable trends in relation to educational attainment and engagement in employment among this group?

RQ2: Are there common areas of need or barriers to participation in the mainstream community?

RQ4: What is the extent and nature of engagement with services and rehabilitative opportunities?

The Conclusion of this report considers what we can learn about approaches to practice from the experiences of participants on CCOs. While the findings of this report may be relevant to wider audiences, the data primarily describes a group of people who live in Melbourne's west metropolitan area (WMR). The following section outlines the justification for the geographical focus of this study.

1.2 A focus on Melbourne's west

Attention to 'place' in this study is informed by understandings of the inter-related and multi-directional nature of place-based disadvantage and justice system involvement (Vinson and Rawsthorne, 2015). In a study called 'Dropping off the Edge' (DOTE) researchers described how disadvantage tends to occur in a "web-like" structure of factors that constrain individual life opportunities (Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015). The DOTE study showed that those living in the 3 per cent most disadvantaged postcodes in Victoria are:

- twice as likely to have criminal convictions;

- 3 times more likely to be experiencing long term unemployment;

- 2.6 times more likely to have experienced domestic violence; and,

- 2.4 times more likely to be on disability support (Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015).

Criminology experts argue that studies have neglected investigation of the role of context in relation to understandings of the associations between disadvantage, ETE pathways and crime, and the effectiveness of interventions delivered to offenders (Sampson, 2013, Sharkey and Faber, 2014).

There has been increasing focus among planners and policy makers on the role of place-based approaches in addressing problems associated with entrenched disadvantage, including persistent offending. Further, there is growing acceptance that individualised approaches alone have limited impact on recidivism reduction (Allard et al., 2013). That is, local organisations, institutions and systems play an important role in shaping pathways of people in the justice system. Attention to how these are experienced at a local level is necessary in order to make meaningful change.

The majority of participants in this study were residents of the City of Brimbank and the City of Melton. The characteristics of these local government areas (LGAs) are described briefly below.

The City of Brimbank

The City of Brimbank is the second largest municipality in Melbourne located between 11 and 23 kilometres west and north-west of the Melbourne CBD (id.community, 2019a). In 2019, it was estimated that the population of the City of Brimbank was 209,523 (id.community, 2019a).

According to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), an index that measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage based on a range of Census characteristics, in 2016, Brimbank was the second most disadvantaged municipality in the Greater Melbourne area, and the third most disadvantaged in Victoria (Brimbank City Council, 2018). Three suburbs in the City of Brimbank LGA (Ardeer, Albion and St Albans) represent some of the most persistently disadvantaged postcodes in Victoria (Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015).

The municipality is culturally diverse, with 47.9% of the population being overseas born compared to a state average of 28.4% (State Government of Victoria, 2017b). In recent years, the City of Brimbank has experienced strong growth, both in residential, industrial and commercial development. It incorporates one of the largest industrial areas in Melbourne, with the main industry being chemical product manufacturing (City of Brimbank, 2018). It is also the location of important institutions, including Sunshine Hospital and a campus of the Victoria University of Technology, contributing to the diversity of services and employment opportunities in the area.

Overall, a recent report confirmed that the WMR, more generally, has a large 'blue collar' workforce having twice the concentration of jobs in the transport, postal and warehousing industry sectors compared to metropolitan Melbourne. Retail trade is also focused around key centres (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

Research ranking the skill level of residents in the WMR found that the City of Brimbank had the lowest proportion of residents in Skill Level 1 and Skill Level 2 jobs (the highest skill levels) and the highest share of residents in Skill Level 5 jobs (the lowest) (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019). In 2016, 52.3% of Brimbank residents aged 15 years and over indicated that they had completed Year 12 or equivalent – lower than the greater Melbourne average of 59.5% (Brimbank City Council, 2018).

Victorian employment data indicate that the level of unemployment in the City of Brimbank increased for five consecutive years up to 2018, reaching 11.66% in September 2017 (.idcommunity, 2017). This was almost twice as high as the rate of unemployment in the state of Victoria (5.9%) at the same time (.idcommunity, 2019a). In 2018, the Brotherhood of St Laurence reported that youth unemployment in the western suburbs of the Melbourne area (including, but not limited to, the City of Brimbank) was the highest in Victoria, at 18.6%. Brimbank has a crime rate higher than Melbourne or Victoria, especially for property-related crimes (Public Health Information Development Unit, 2014).

While highlighting many strengths, analysis of the social, economic and health and wellbeing profile of the City of Brimbank has confirmed that there are many ongoing community challenges. In recent years, there has been considerable investment of resources to lift outcomes in the area (Young, 2014, Taylor, 2017). Significant investment into developing detailed baseline measurements of health, education and social characteristics (Public Health Information Development Unit, 2014) has underpinned the development of a place-based initiative ("Impact Brimbank" [8]). This is a partnership between the Australian Health Policy Collaboration at Victoria University and the City of Brimbank. The extent of existing collaborative efforts in the municipality suggests that discussions about ways to better integrate services and promote greater participation of people in the justice system are aptly targeted.

The City of Melton

Approximately a quarter of participants of this study were residents of the City of Melton, which neighbours the City of Brimbank to the west. The City of Melton is located on the urban-rural fringe of Melbourne, with the central suburb, Melton, being 37km from Melbourne's CBD. The overall geographical size of the municipality is over four times that of Brimbank and it has approximately one-fifth lower population density (.idcommunity, 2019a, .idcommunity, 2019b). Unlike Brimbank, the area is not characterised by cultural diversity (State Government of Victoria, 2017b).

The City of Melton, as a whole, sits higher on the SEIFA scale of disadvantage compared to the City of Brimbank (ranking 994 compared to Brimbank 921 – with lower scores being indicative of greater disadvantage). Melton also has lower offence rates compared to Melbourne and Victoria (Melton, 2019). Being a growth area, construction is therefore also a dominant sector (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019). Nevertheless, analysis shows that, similar to the City of Brimbank, there are concentrated pockets of disadvantage in this LGA, with suburbs located closer to the Melbourne CBD having generally lower levels of disadvantage (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

While there is overall favourable economic growth in the area, researchers have found that some potential issues that may contribute to disadvantage include the accessibility of public transport. The City of Melton has the lowest frequency of public transport services in the WMR (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

The same study found that the area has a vulnerable workforce due to concentrations of lower employment skills and lower household income than in other parts of the region and compared to the Victorian state average. The City of Melton is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, growing at around 5.4% per year (almost four times Victoria's rate of growth of 1.5%) (Melton, 2019). Therefore, while the focus of this study is primarily on the City of Brimbank, findings in this report may be of particular interest for planners in this area.

1.3 Method

This report presents an integrated analysis of mixed methods data collected from a purposive sample of individuals who had received a community based sanction and were undertaking community work at a Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) [9] site located in the City of Brimbank. The data sources include the following:

i.   survey data collected from 200 adult men and women on CCOs who engaged in a Jesuit Social Services' Employment Pathways Advice program ; and,

ii. in-depth, semi-structured research interviews conducted with a subset of 20 participants from part i. [11]

The methods used to collect these data are described below.

i) Survey data

The study utilises service data of 200 male and female adult participants (n=137 men; n=63 women) of an employment pathways service (EPS) that was nested in a DJCS community work site located in the City of Brimbank between October 2017 and April 2019. Participants were on CCOs and accessed the service voluntarily and confidentially. The program (described page 16) was managed by Jesuit Social Services and not connected to the participants' justice obligations.

Data were collected in a 'needs assessment' survey spanning approximately 15 minutes in length conducted in the early stage of engagement. Items recorded include: demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, country of birth and residency status, postcode of residence, dependent children, housing circumstances); ETE background and current status; future goals; nature of justice history (e.g., recent most serious offence type, prior incarceration); disabilities and health issues; levels of confidence and motivation for job seeking, if relevant (see Appendix 1 for full instrument). The survey instrument was developed by staff at Jesuit Community College in collaboration with the Learning and Practice Development Unit at Jesuit Social Services.

Informed written consent was obtained by the EPS from participants for use of the de-identified data in this study (see Appendix 2). The sample size was limited to 200 participants, which is sufficient to identify trends; however, the purposive sampling strategy limits the potential to extrapolate findings (limitations discussed Section 8). The EPS staff also gained separate consent from eligible participants to be contacted by a researcher to participate in an in-depth interview, described next.

ii) In-depth interview data

In-depth interview data were collected in this study to gain a richer understanding of the personal circumstances of people on CCOs, with a focus on what has helped or hindered pathways out of the justice system and identifying areas of unmet need. Development of a semi-structured interview guide was informed by literature identifying factors associated with justice system involvement and best practice approaches to recidivism reduction, specifically among people on community based orders. The interview guide was refined following preliminary analysis of data from the first 100 EPS participants. This ensured that the interviews enriched understanding of the themes identified in the quantitative data and elucidated the lived experiences of participants.

Interviews were conducted by a researcher (the report author) with 20 participants (n=13 men and n=7 women) from part a), including 15 participants who were residents of the City of Brimbank and n=5 residents of the City of Melton. Interviews spanned 20-45 minutes and were undertaken face to face at the DJCS site, a local JSS site, or via telephone if a face to face meeting was not possible. Interviewees were reimbursed with a $40 shopping voucher. Interview data collection commenced in October 2018 and occurred simultaneously with the EPS, ceasing once the researcher had attempted to contact all eligible participants, with data collection ceasing in April 2019. Interviews were digitally voice recorded, transcribed verbatim and names and other identifying material was removed or changed to de-identify the participant.

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis of aggregated survey data was conducted. There was a full response rate (N=200) for most demographic questions, but a lower response to more sensitive questions (e.g., justice history). This is indicated where applicable. Responses to open ended items of the needs assessment were analysed thematically and quantified. Interview transcripts were analysed using NVivo v12 (QSR International). The initial coding strategy involved broad thematic coding of the transcripts using the interview guide as a framework and then development of sub-themes based on identification of repetition in the data through detailed line by line coding. The coded data was read by the project manager (Learning and Practice Development Unit) who assisted with identification of sub-themes and issues. Some quantification of responses was undertaken where possible. The data sources are also integrated where possible, with the EPS data contextualising and being used to confirm qualitative themes. The four research questions identified earlier (Introduction, page 13) guided analysis and structure the findings.

Governance, ethics and reporting

Development of the study approach and materials were guided by a Project Advisory Group (PAG) comprising senior Jesuit Social Services' staff. Analysis of themes was presented to the PAG who assisted with refinement of analytical categories and development of findings and recommendations. Procedures were approved by the Jesuit Social Services Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC, May 2018), the Corrections Victoria Research Committee (15/18/508698), and the Justice HREC (Department of Justice and Regulation, now DJCS; CF/18/22493). Survey data were aggregated, all interviewees have been de-identified and quotes are labelled with an interview number, gender and age.

The Employment Pathways Service (EPS)

Recruitment of participants to this study was undertaken via an Employment Pathways Service (EPS), which was embedded into the DJCS community corrections work program site in Derrimut (the City of Brimbank). The service was managed and staffed by Jesuit Community College (Jesuit Social Services) in collaboration with the Derrimut DJCS Community Correction Services site. The role of the Employment Pathways Advisor (EPA) was to improve pathways of people in the justice system by facilitating greater connection to ETE opportunities. At a practical level, this involved engaging clients face to face when attending the DJCS site as a part of their community work program. An initial needs assessment was conducted (spanning approximately 15 minutes) and, based on indicated needs, the EPA provided a linkage role to connect individuals into appropriate services and opportunities. The EPS was operational from October 2017 to June 2019. The service engaged with 220 participants over this time (200 of whom consented for their data to be used in this study).

Some outcomes associated with this program are noted in the Discussion section of this report.

1.4 About this report

This report is intended to improve understanding about the profile, needs and experiences of this group and to stimulate discussion about how collaborative approaches may be leveraged to: meet the unaddressed service needs of this group in Melbourne's WMR; increase participation in the community (with a focus on ETE engagement where this is possible and appropriate); and, improve health and wellbeing outcomes including recidivism rates. It is anticipated that, given the scarcity of research with this justice group, this report may also be of interest to a broader audience of service providers, policy makers, advocates and scholars. The structure of the remainder of this report proceeds as follows.

Sections 2 and 3 draw from EPS survey data to examine the demographic profile and the nature of justice system involvement of participants. **Section 2** outlines the main demographic characteristics of the group including: current suburb of residence; age and gender; country of birth; residency status; language spoken at home; dependent children; and, housing status. **Section 3** outlines the broad characteristics of the justice involvement of participants, including: age of first involvement in the justice system, whether they had spent time in a correctional facility as a juvenile or as an adult and the nature of the most serious, recent offence that led to the current order. It then presents a comparison of the main characteristics of the sample with Victoria's prison population.

Section 4 explores the ETE profile of participants; including secondary attainment, overall level of tertiary attainment and current involvement in training. Qualitative interview data is integrated in this section in order to offer insight into participants' past educational experiences and views on involvement in future training. Similarly, **Section 5** integrates EPS survey and interview data. It explores the past and current involvement of participants in employment, the nature of experiences in the workforce and or of job seeking, and the main barriers to securing employment for those who were unemployed.

In **Section 6**, the report draws from qualitative data to explore holistic aspects of wellbeing among interview participants with particular attention to family background experiences; social connectedness and social supports; physical and mental health issues (including problematic drug use); and involvement in activities that give meaning and purpose to life. **Section 7** draws from primarily qualitative data to investigate reported access to appropriate formal supports to address issues that may underlie or exacerbate their justice system involvement; and, experiences in community work programs.

Section 8 summarises the main findings from the study under the four research questions and limitations of the study. **Section 9** explores implications for practice and provides recommendations for future action.

2: Demographic characteristics of participants

2.1 Age and gender

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 66 years (N=200). The average age of participants was 34.9 years and the majority of participants (67%) were aged between 25 and 44 years (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Participants by age segment (%, N=200)
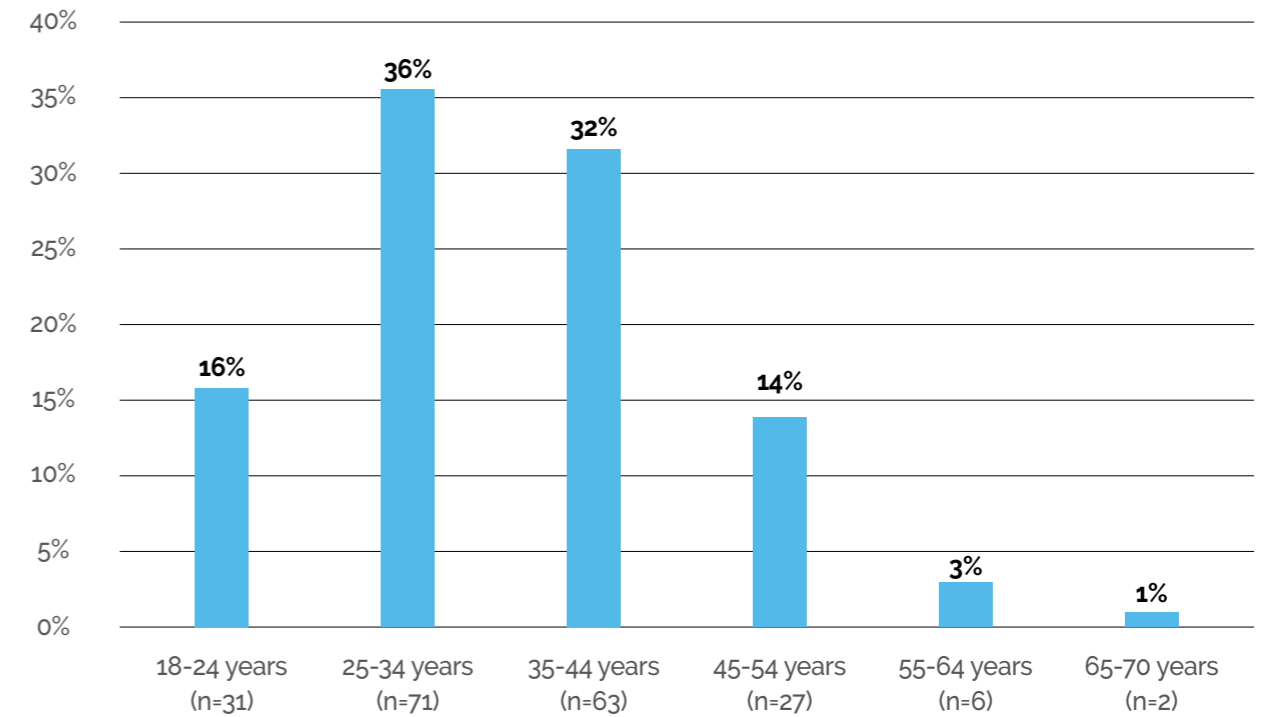
Just over two-thirds (68.5%, n=137) of participants were male and slightly less than one-third (31.5%, n=63) were female. Representation of men and women by age segments is shown in Figure 2. The average age of females in the sample was 36 years, which is slightly older than men in the sample (34.5 years).

There were twice as many men compared to women in the youngest age bracket of 18-24 year olds; however, these young participants represented a small proportion of participants overall (n=31, 15.5%).

Figure 2 Ages of participants in years by gender (N=200)

- 18-24 years (n=31)
- 25-34 years (n=71)
- 35-44 years (n=63)
- 45-54 years (n=27)
- 55-70 years (n=8)
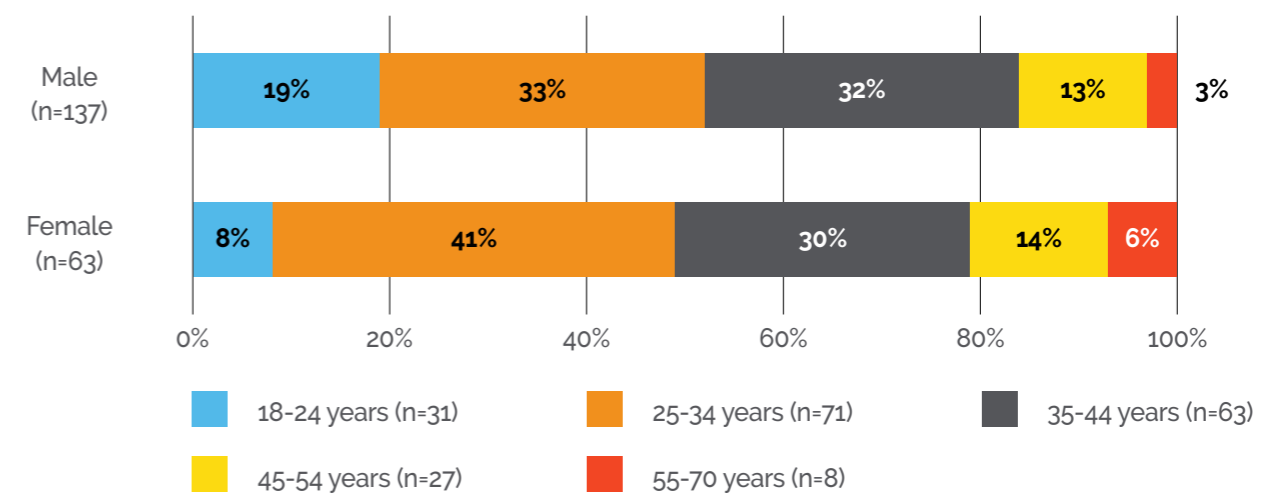
2.2 Suburb of residence

Suburb of residence was recorded for 197 participants. These have been categorised by LGA and metropolitan region. The majority of participants (75%) lived in a western metropolitan LGA of Melbourne – an expected result given the location of the recruitment site was in the City of Brimbank. Just over a quarter (26%) of participants lived in the City of Brimbank LGA. A similar proportion of participants (23%) lived in the City of Melton.

Just under one in five participants (17%) lived in the north metropolitan area of Melbourne and 8% reported that they lived elsewhere. [12] Eighty-six (86) suburbs were mentioned in total, with the suburb of Melton being the most common suburb of residence among the full sample (n=20, 10%), followed by St Albans (n=15, 7.5%), Hoppers Crossing and Deer Park (n=8 each, 4%), Werribee and Caroline Springs (n=7% each, 3.5%). The remaining 80 suburbs were mentioned by five or less participants each.

Figure 3 Participants by LGA and metropolitan region of Melbourne (n=197).

Region	LGA	Participants	Tally	Subtotal
Western	Brimbank	52	26%	75%
	Melton	46	23%	
	Wyndham	29	15%	
	Maribyrnong	13	7%	
	Hobson's Bay	4	2%	
	Moonee Valley	4	2%	
Northern	Hume	20	0%	17%
	Moreland	6	3%	
	Darebin	3	2%	
	Whittlesea	2	1%	
	Mitchell	2	1%	
Inner south east	Stonnington	2	1%	1%
	Melbourne	8	4%	6%
	Yarra	2	1%	
	Port Phillip	2	1%	
Eastern	Manningham	2	1%	1%
Grand Total		**197**	**100%**	**100%**

2.3 Country of birth, residency and language spoken at home

Slightly few than two thirds of participants (n=127, 63%) were born in Australia and the remaining 73 participants (37%) were born overseas. Three participants were Aboriginal. The range of countries of birth was large, with 42 individual countries listed. These were categorised into broad regions using grouping devised by the United Nations, with Australia being separated from the group of countries categorised as Oceania. [13] Following those born in Australia, participants were most commonly born in Asia (n=26, 13%) [14] followed by Africa [15] (n=19, 9%). All country groupings are represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Region of birth of participants (N=200)
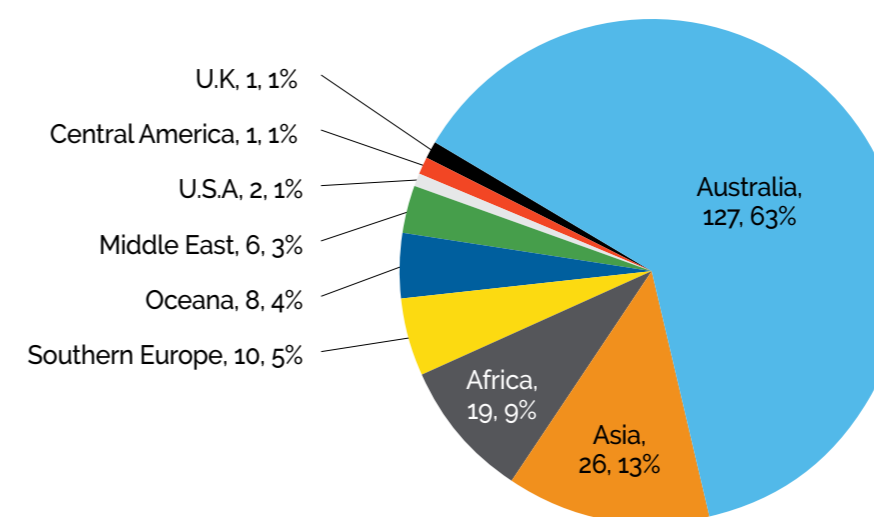
The proportion of overseas-born participants (37%) is higher than the Victorian state average, where the overall percentage of overseas-born people is 28.4% and reflects a high proportion of overseas-born participants in Melbourne's WMR (State Government of Victoria, 2017b). For example, four of 10 LGAs in Victoria with the highest proportion of overseas-born participants are located in the WMR (State Government of Victoria, 2017b). [16] Over half of overseas-born participants (53%) were Australian citizens, approximately 40% were on permanent resident visas and almost 7% were recorded as being on temporary visas.

Twenty-eight different languages were spoken at home among participants; however, the majority (65%) spoke English as their main language at home. The next most common primary languages spoken at home were Arabic (8%), Dinka (4%). Twenty-four other languages were listed by participants [17] each being spoken by 2% or fewer participants.

2.4 Dependent children

Of 197 participants who responded to the question, just over half (53.3%, n=105) reported that they have children under the age of 18 years in their care and 46% did not (see Figure 5).

No response was recorded for three participants. Two thirds of female participants (66.7%, n=42) reported that they had dependent children in their care compared with just under half of men (47%, n=63).

Figure 5 Dependent children among participants (n=197)
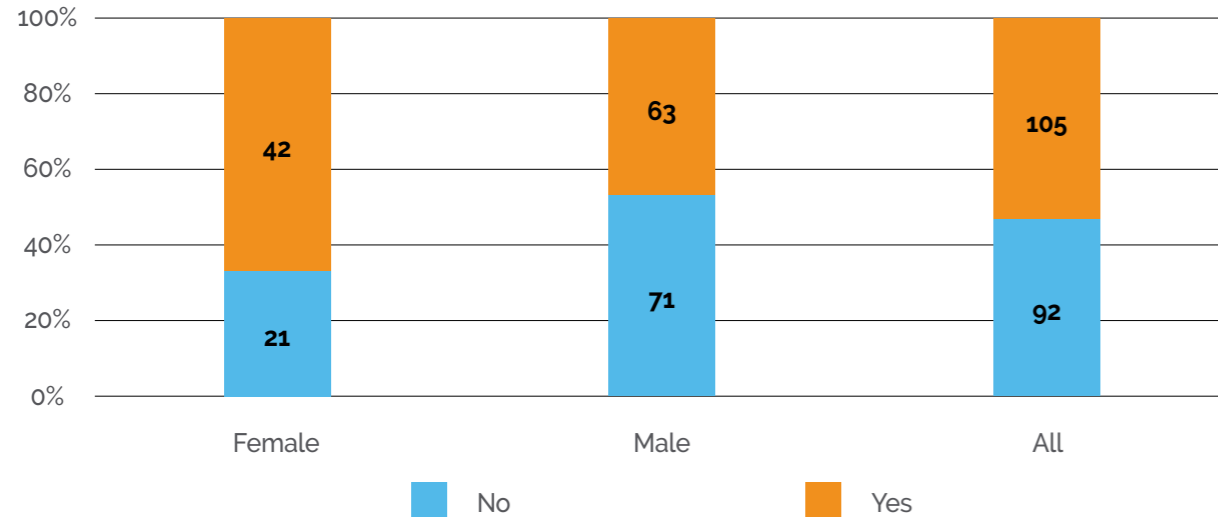
2.5 Housing status and suburb of residence

The majority of participants (84%) reported that they live in one of the following types of housing: public housing, community or social housing, private rental, or that they own their own home which were categorised as "stable housing" – represented in Figure 6. More than one in ten participants reported that they lived in transitional, temporary or emergency housing (n=22).

Four participants were "sleeping rough" at the time of engagement (e.g. in a car or another form of makeshift accommodation) or living in a residential or institutional care arrangement. Of those 26 people who reported that they were either sleeping rough or living in transitional, temporary or emergency housing, 73% were men.

Figure 6 Participants' housing status (N=200)
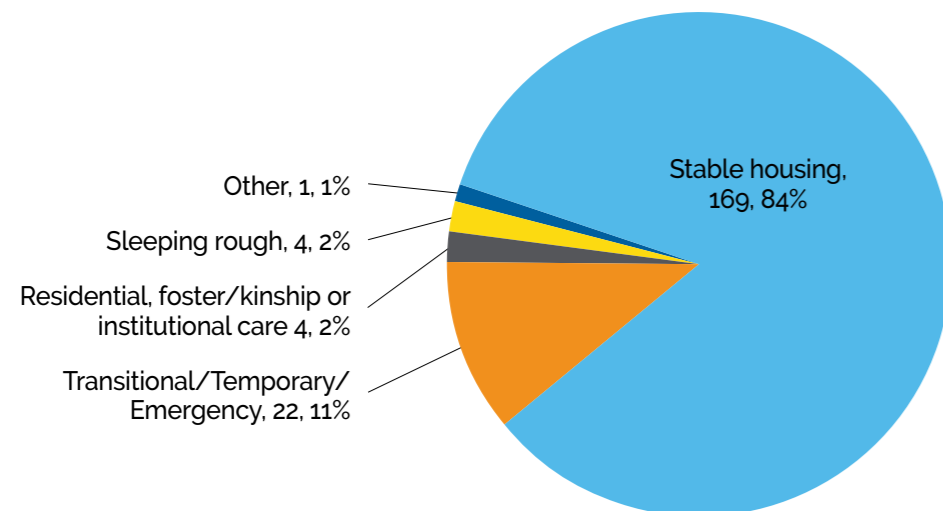
Interview participants discussed their housing arrangements in more detail than what was asked in the needs assessment questionnaire. This deeper inquiry highlighted that housing arrangements among individuals in this cohort were varied and may be less stable than indicated in the needs assessment data. For example, seven of 20 participants described living in either temporary forms of accommodation (with a family member), for example, or with a parent/s due to financial hardship or crisis. Three individuals stated that they live in Government housing. Of those who stated that they lived in a private rental, three described having an informal rental agreement (e.g., through family or friends). Of three individuals who reported that they had a mortgage, two received support from family to keep up with repayments.

3: Justice system involvement of participants

3.1 Previous justice system involvement

Participants were asked at what age they were first involved in the justice system. There were 173 recorded responses. The average age of first involvement was 24.4 years, the median age was 21 years and the range was 9-64 years. Around a quarter of respondents (26.5%, n=46) were reportedly involved in the justice system as juveniles (age 17 years or younger [18]).

Figure 7 Age of first involvement in the justice system (n=173)
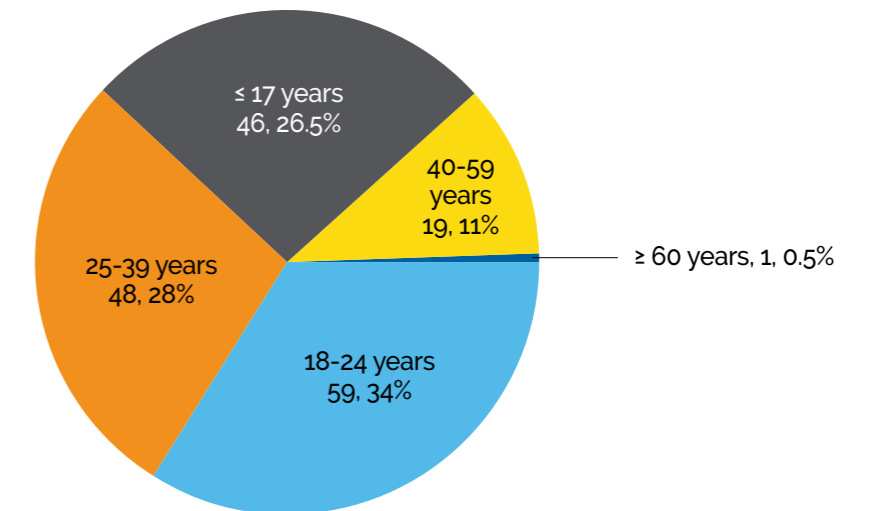
Participants were asked if they had spent time in a juvenile justice or adult correctional facility. There were 190 responses. Around a quarter of participants (n=48, 25%) reported that they had spent time in an adult correctional facility. Six participants (3.1%) reported that they spent time under supervision as a juvenile.

Half (n=3) of these individuals had also spent time in an adult prison. It is possible that the experience of incarceration was under-reported among this sample, with CV data indicating that almost 40% of offenders on a CCO at 30 June 2016 had one or more terms of imprisonment (Victorian Auditor General, 2017).

[18] This may be higher as Victoria has had a dual track system in place for some time, meaning that it is possible for vulnerable young people to remain in the juvenile justice system until the age of 21 years. It was not reported whether 18-21 years olds were processed as juveniles or adults (see "Limitations" section).

Participants who had spent time in an adult prison were asked what was the total length of time that they have spent incarcerated. There were 44 responses of a possible 48 (represented in Figure 8). The reported range of time spent in prison was one week to nine years, indicating that the nature of involvement in the justice system among participants was varied.

Fifteen participants had spent a substantial amount of time in jail (1 year or more), with three participants having spent five years in prison, and two having spent eight and nine years respectively. It is possible that these participants were serving a parole period or a mixed sentence when engaged by the EPA; however, this detail was not recorded (see "Limitations" heading, Section 8). The median length of reported time spent in an adult prison among the sample was 11 months (average 1.73 years – skewed by a small number of lengthier sentences).

Figure 8 Length of time served in an adult prison (n=44)
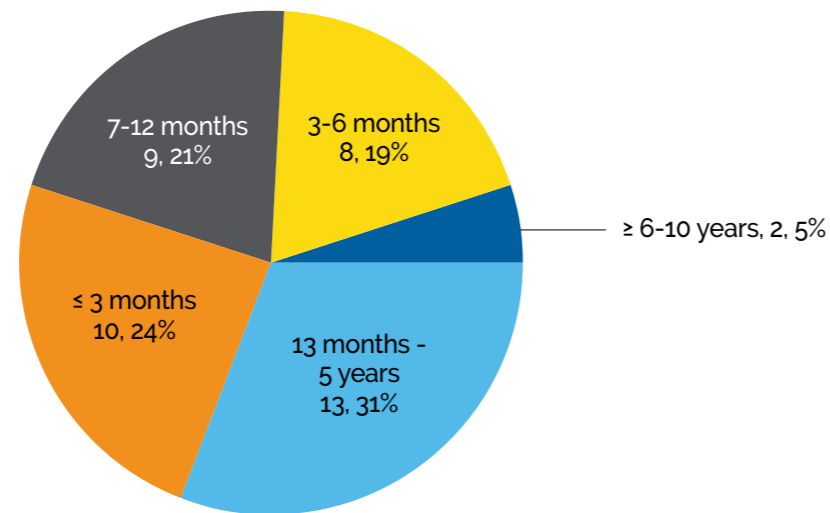
3.2 Nature of recent offending

The EPA asked participants to name the main/most serious offence that led to their current community corrections order. [19] Responses were recorded for 193 of 200 participants. Responses were verbatim recorded verbatim. Where multiple charges were mentioned, the most serious offence was recorded with reference to a Corrections Victoria (2018) guide which orders offence types by degree of severity (see Appendix 4). Data were analysed using the 10 offence categories outlined in this guide and are presented in Figure 9.

The three most common offence types reported by participants were driving offences (21%) followed by assault (18%) and drug offences (14%). Similar numbers of participants reported that their recent offence was robbery and extortion, breach of a court order or "other property offences" (which includes firearms and weapons offences, receiving or handling stolen goods, vandalism and property damage). When the categories of assault (18%) and sex offences (6%) were combined, crimes against the person comprised the most common offence category (24%). Representation in other categories is shown in Table 1.

Figure 9 Offence categories (n=193)
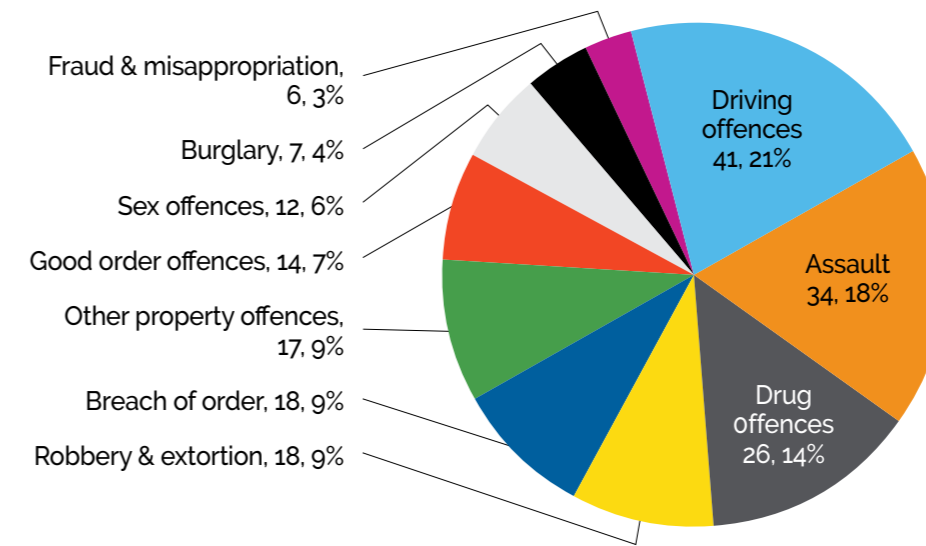
A more detailed analysis of the offence types mentioned under each category is presented in Table 1. Assault was the most commonly reported offence type (reported by 27 participants). This was followed by theft and drug trafficking (reported by 18 participants each). In addition to the limitations described above (associated with the self-report nature of the data), we note that reporting is imprecise in some categories. For example, many participants reported "assault" but did not mention any further detail about the charge (with assault being a larger category of offence).

It is not clear to what extent this item overlaps with "intentionally causing injury" or if other types of charges have been included in this category. In four cases, violence was reportedly against a family member; however, it is unclear how many more cases were against family members. It was not possible to precisely determine what type of offence was committed in relation to "Centrelink related charges" (this one item was categorised under "fraud and misappropriation" but could also possibly a different charge such as an infringement). Other general limitations of the data presented in this report are also discussed in the conclusion.

[19] We note that these data are limited as it is self-report and is indicative only. It may not match official charges and does not reflect the individual's history of involvement with corrections or cumulative charges.

24

25

Table 1 Most serious offence leading to CCO (self-reported)

MSO/MSC category	Offence type	Count
Assault	Assault	27
	Harassment and/stalking	4
	Intentionally causing injury	3
Sex offences	Indecent assault	9
	Sexual offences against under age person	2
	Exposure	1
Robbery & extortion	Theft	18
Burglary	Burglary	3
	Aggravated burglary	3
Fraud & misappropriation	Fraud	5
	Centrelink related charges	1
Other property offences	Firearms and weapons offences	5
	Receiving or handling stolen goods	5
	Vandalism and property damage	5
	Proceeds of crime	1
	Theft motor vehicle	1
Breach of order	Breach of an intervention order	16
	Failure to answer bail	2
Drug offences	Drug trafficking	48
	Drug possession	6
	Cultivation	2
Driving offences	Driving with a disqualified licensed or driving unlicensed	14
	Other driving offences including reckless driving, unpaid speeding fines	14
	Exceed 0.05% BAC	13
Good order offences	Infringements	6
	Affray	5
	Trespassing	2
	Perjury	1
Unknown	No response recorded	7
	Total	**200**

* Corrections Victoria (2018) used to categorise offence types (see Appendix 4).

3.3 The demographic composition of the CCO participant sample compared with Victoria's prison population

The main characteristics of this sample of people on CCOs were compared with data describing Victoria's prison population (CV, 2018). This was undertaken to draw out general similarities and differences and to elucidate areas of need among the CCO population (explored in the Discussion, Section 8).

The average age of the CCOs sample was slightly lower than the prison cohort (CCOs 34.9 years vs prison 37.6 years) and analysis by age segment found that a slightly higher proportion of participants on CCOs were aged under 25 years (CCOs 16% vs prison 12%). A smaller proportion of participants on CCOs were aged 50 years and over (CCOs 10% vs prison 14.4%).

Compared to prisoners, the CCOs sample included a lower proportion of Australian born people (64% vs 73.7% prisoners), a feature likely to be at least partly explained by the geographical location of the study, with parts of the WMR of Melbourne and the City of Brimbank in particular being characterised by cultural diversity. There was low representation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in the CCOs sample compared to the prison population (1.5% vs 8.5%).

The most significant finding emerging from the comparison; however, was the large proportion of women in the CCOs sample compared to Victoria's prisons (31.5% vs 7.1%) – a finding that has implications which are discussed in Sections 8 and 9.

The self-report data collected from the CCOs sample on offence types were compared to data describing Victorian's prison population at a similar time (CV 2018) (see Figure 10).

Most serious charges among sample of people on CCOs (n=193) compared with Victoria's prison population, 2016-2017 (%). [21] Crimes of a particularly serious or violent nature (e.g. homicide and sex offences) preclude eligibility to receive a CCO sentence and therefore it is expected that prisoners are more likely to have committed "crimes against the person". This was found to be the case with 25% of people on CCOs and 45.9% of prisoners committing such crimes [22] (noting that, when the categories of assault (18%) and sex offences (6%) were combined, crimes against the person were still the most common, most serious and recent offence type reported by the CCO sample, discussed in Section 3.2 above). As expected, charges against the prison cohort within this category of "crimes against the person" included those that were more severe in nature (such as homicide). The prison cohort were also more likely to have committed crimes in the "burglary" category (including aggravated burglary, break and enter with intent), with 10.3% of prisoners falling into this category compared to 3.6% of the CCO sample.

Comparison of the samples showed that compared to a prison cohort, people on CCOs were more likely than those in the prison population to report that their most serious charge was a driving offence (CCOs 21% vs prison 2.9%) or a "good order offence" (CCOs 7% vs prison 1.4%).

[21] This comparison is indicative only, as it is reliant on broad, self-report information only (limitations to the study are discussion Section 9 of this report).
[22] The "crimes against the person" category includes assault (CCOs 13.5% vs prison 23.7%), sex offences (CCOs 6% vs prison 14%), and homicide (CCOs zero vs 8.2% of prisoners – noting that homicide offenders are not eligible for a CCO).

Figure 10. Most serious charges among sample of people on CCOs (n=193) compared with Victoria's prison population, 2016-2017 (%)

CCO sample

Prison population Victoria 2016-2017
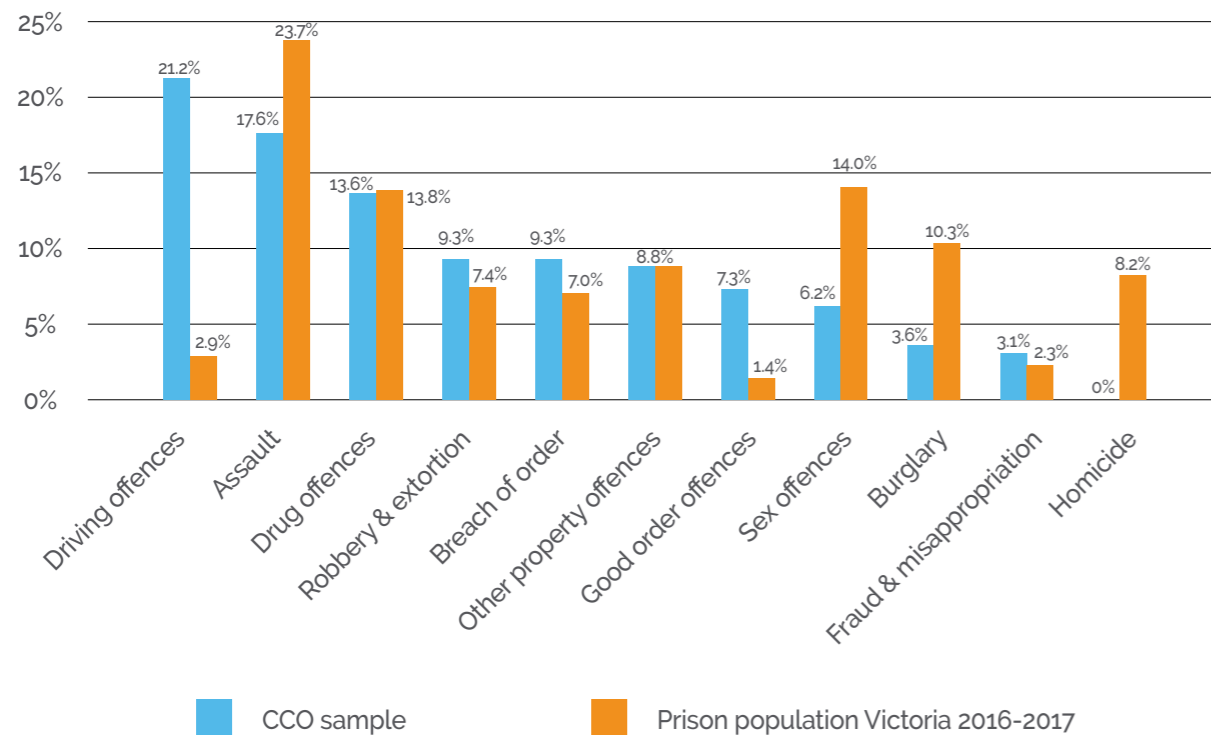
Source: CV, 2018

4: Educational attainment of participants

4.1 Secondary level attainment

Level of secondary educational attainment was recorded for all 200 participants (Figure 11). 90 of 200 participants (45%) reported that they gained year 12 or equivalent level of educational attainment and 40% (n=79) reported having gained either year 10 or year 11 equivalent attainment.

A small but substantial proportion of participants (15.5%, n= 31) had very low secondary educational attainment, that is, reaching year 9 or below, with one participant reporting that they never attended school. There were no significant differences in reported secondary educational attainment between males and females in the sample.

Figure 11 Secondary level educational attainment of participants (N=200)
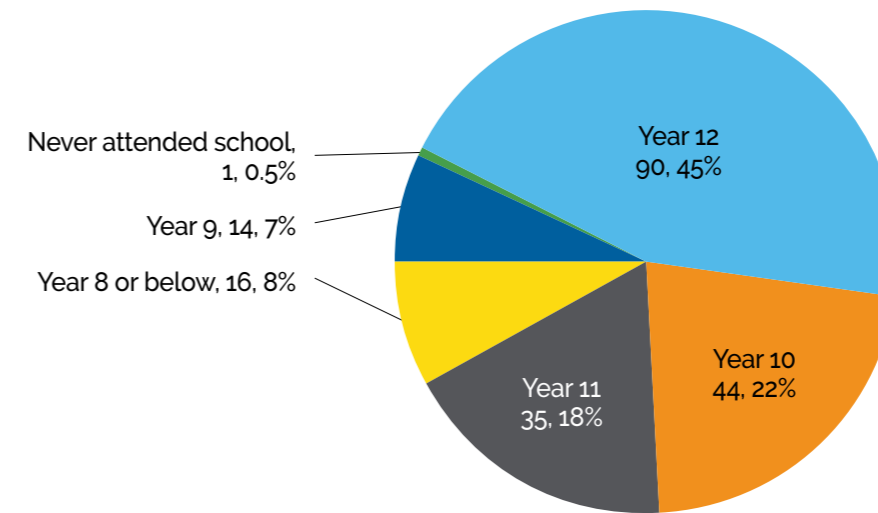
Interviewees were asked to discuss their educational experiences. Many described experiencing serious difficulties at home which impacted on their educational trajectories. These included being in the out of home care system (4) which resulted in being placed in many different homes and moved to multiple schools, family violence (2), and death of a family member resulting in having to work (2), conflict with parents post migration (1). One participant spoke about falling pregnant as a teenager and eventually leaving school:

"I was about to start year 11 and that was when the baby got involved. I found out that there was a school for mums – young women – you can come with your own child in that school in class and I continued year 11 but it became too difficult there – he was crying too much and so I left." **(#5 female, 25yo)** [24]

Five interviewees reported reaching year 9 or lower level of educational attainment and had low levels of English language literacy:

"I found it a bit hard at the end. I struggled. I think the last couple of months I might have wagged – going around with my friends and that. I got kicked out. Because I lived with my grandparents, my grandmother said because you're not at school you need to find a job, you need to work. I was going on 16 at the time." **(#4 male, 59yo)**

Among interviewees who spoke about schooling, many discussed how school was an overall negative experience:

"I hated school" **(#9, male 41yo)**

...

Interviewer: "What was school like?"

"My experience is that I didn't want to be there, to be honest. As soon as I was old enough to get out, I went out to get job."

Interviewer: "How old were you then?"

"Fourteen, because I did year 9 but I didn't pass. So I repeated it but I didn't pass – so I only got a year 8 pass." **(#11 male, 25yo)**

[24] yo = year-old

Three participants spoke about how they were bullied at school – with two of these leaving early as a result. The participant below was asked about their experiences at school:

"Ahh, well they weren't the best. They weren't the best experiences as a new European. But… you've got to understand the whole dynamics of everything to understand how it was for a person then and how it is now. It was very racial and umm I didn't understand it. Like I didn't understand what the whole thing was about. Like I understood that I was getting punched and kicked but I didn't understand why. Like you're rejected from your group of friends, you so, so. It's your colour, your race, and there's… it was a bit different then." **(#17 male, 50yo)**

When asked about his decision to leave during year 10, the same participant said:

"Look it wasn't for being ummm… eager to learn. I just found it too much pressure, with everything that had happened. I just felt like I needed to get out. Back then you could start working apprenticeship early."
(#17 male, 50yo)

4.2 Overall educational attainment

The highest overall level of educational attainment (secondary and tertiary level) of participants was analysed by ranking both secondary and tertiary data for all 200 using a guide produced by the ABS (e.g., Certificates II and I are deemed to be lower than a year 10 level qualification). [25] Equivalent measures were available using the 2016 Australian census data (ABS, 2017) for the populations of Australia, Victoria and the City of Brimbank LGA. A comparison of the data sets is shown at Table 2.

Overall, the rate of attainment of year 12/equivalent or higher levels of education among the CCO sample was almost 7% lower than the population of Victoria as a whole (65.9% vs 59%). The high level of attainment of Certificates (I, II, III or IV) among this sample compared with the general population of both Brimbank and Victoria is particularly noteworthy. Certificates were the highest qualifications for 41% of CCOs compared with 12.6% and 14.5% of the populations of Brimbank and Victoria respectively.

Conversely, there were low levels of reported attainment of bachelor or higher degrees among people on CCOs (7%, compared to 16% of Brimbank and 24.3% of Victoria).

Four interviewees did not discuss their school experiences – with three of these being migrants to Australia, completing the majority of their education overseas. English was a second language for these participants and their transitions to further education and employment were impacted seriously by migration to Australia. Experiences of bullying among those interviewees who were arrived in Australia as a child or young person were relatively common among interviewees who were migrants. Some interviewees noted that they often lie about their actual attainment to employers:

Interviewer: "What is the highest level of high school that you passed?"

Year 8. "But I always say year 11 on any job application."
(#11, male, 25yo)

This admission, combined with the common experience of starting and not finishing tertiary course suggests that the actual qualifications of participants may be lower than what is reflected in the EPS data. This result can be explained by self report biases that emerged in the context of the service in which the data was collected, particularly because the focus was on employment pathways. Limitations to the data are more fully discussed at the end of this report.

Combined, these data indicate a stronger level of tertiary engagement in trade schools in preference to universities compared with the general population. It is also possible, however, that the completion of tertiary Certificates among the CCO sample is an artifice of involvement in the justice system (e.g., prisons), where opportunities to complete these qualifications is common.

While analysis of the EPS data highlighted that the majority of participants were likely to be disadvantaged in the job market or potentially limited to unskilled or semi-skilled types of work due to low levels of attainment, the extent of educational disadvantage was particularly highlighted among interviewees.

Some themes emerged from discussion among interviewees about tertiary education experiences. Consistent with the survey data, it was relatively common for interviewees to have undertaken multiple short courses such as forklift licence, truck licence or hospitality courses.

While participants commonly described courses as "useful" or "handy", often they had not led to employment. In many cases, the decision to undertake a course had been opportunistic (e.g., offered through Centrelink employment services, undertaken in prison) rather than driven by a genuine interest or desire to seek work in the field. Further, there was not always work available that was aligned to the area of training.

Courses had often been started and not completed. For many, this was because they did not have the opportunity to undertake the practical component of the course. One participant described her experience of undertaking training in prison:

"Everything is just in theory. Where's the practical? You know what I mean? And even your theory is like ummm you answer it the best as you could and then send it off and they sent it back and they say "oh this is not good enough, try adding this" so you're not really learning, you're just going along. In the end it almost feels like it's all about just about getting the funding because the more you guys come, the more money we get – it just becomes the dollar sign, really." (#1, female, 35yo)

The same participant spoke about how people in the justice system were often encouraged to undertake Certificate II levels qualifications which were simply not high enough to be competitive in the job market:

"It's almost like it's just a facade. Yeah, you're providing me an education that is just so basic that is really when

I get out in the real world, it's so irrelevant. It doesn't really help me get the job. It won't even help me get the job as a receptionist. Because, you know, I hand my resume, like "wow you've got Cert II" and then the next person comes along "oh, she's got a diploma and a Cert IV" (laughing). Like hahah well […] I think that they need to offer more in regards of education. Cert II is so basic. It is really basic that although it looks good that you've got a Cert II on your resume it's really not that valid. Let's be realistic… So not only am I more at a disadvantage because I've got a CRN and I've just been inside, I'm also disadvantaged because my qualifications are simply not enough." (#1, female, 35yo)

* "Corrections Reference Number" – a unique personal identity number assigned to prisoners.

Many participants spoke about how their qualifications were incomplete or somewhat worthless because they did not have necessary practical experience. This was described by the below participant:

"I've got my plant manager's certificate, but I haven't had the opportunity to work much with plant machinery. So it's a bit difficult sometimes. I have applied for numerous jobs and I've said that I've got my ticket and they ask me how many hours that I've done and I say I haven't done much at all and they say thank you very much for applying, we'll consider you in the future and blah blah blah." (#19, male, 33yo)

Table 2. Comparison of highest reported educational attainment of populations of Australia, Victoria, City of Brimbank and CCO sample (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017b, .idcommunity, 2019a).

	Population of Australia	Population of Victoria*	Population of City of Brimbank^	CCO sample
Bachelor degree or higher degree	22.0%	24.3%	16.0%	7.0%
Advanced diploma or Assoc degree	8.9%	9.2%	8.0%	9.0%
Certificate IV	2.9%	2.9%	2.3%	8.0%
Certificate III	12.8%	11.5%	10.2%	19.5%
Year 12	15.7%	15.9%	21.0%	15.0%
Year 12 or equivalent or higher	**62.3%**	**65.9%**	**57.5%**	**58.5%**
Year 11	4.9%	6.2%	5.8%	9.5%
Year 10	10.8%	7.8%	8.0%	10.5%
Certificate II	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	11.0%
Certificate I	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Year 9 or below	8.0%	8.9%	13.0%	9.0%
No educational attainment	0.8%	1.0%	3.0%	0.5%
Not stated	10.4%	10.0%	10.3%	0%

Sources: * Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) ^ .idcommunity (2019a).

[25] Described at https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2900.0main+features100562016

4.3 Current involvement in training and future intentions

Seven per cent of EPS participants (n=14 of 198) were enrolled in training or an educational course at the time of the needs assessment (93% were not). Among the 184 participants who were not currently involved in study, over half (52%, n=96) reported that they were considering future training, 37.5% (n=69) were not considering future training and the remainder were unsure (10%). This sample included those who were currently employed. When employed participants were removed from analysis, the proportion of participants who indicated that they were intending to study in the future increased to 58% (n=83 of 143 respondents).

Among interviewees, there were mixed attitudes when asked about plans to undertake etraining and future education. For most of those who were unemployed, gaining employment was an urgent financial priority and they were not interested in participating in training. Many had financial responsibilities and could not afford to study – particularly those with dependent children. One male interviewee spoke about how gaining an apprenticeship would be a way to improve his financial future, however he had sole custody of two young children and could not afford to support them on an apprenticeship wage:

> *"But that was when I was sort of 16, 17 – they were all sort of my young, good sort of dreams. Now I'm 25 and looking at like – imagine going back to a first year's wage – it wouldn't work out."* **(#11 male, 25yo)**

While financial priorities were important, there were other factors that appeared to have a bearing on interviewees' views about future study. As discussed above, many participants had undertaken numerous low level tertiary courses. Some had not been able to complete them because they could not gain practical experience. It appeared that previous experience undertaking courses that did not lead to employment led to reluctance to undertake further courses. Many were concerned about the impact of their justice record on finding employment. For example, one participant said:

> *"I don't want to waste the money if they're just going to say "well, with your record…"* **(#7 male, 45yo)**

Others were open to continued learning while they were getting paid:

> *"I suppose still learning and getting paid work as well… that sort of makes sense. That would be a good option because you learn skills, you're learning more about it. Getting paid at the same time would be good."*
> **(#4 male, 59yo)**

Six interviewees spoke about intentions to undertake further training/education; however, this was not often an immediate priority. Most spoke about how they needed to finish their community work before moving on to training or employment. Some participants also had child care responsibilities.

5: Employment and job seeking status of participants

The EPA asked participants a range of questions to gain an understanding of their current ETE status, if they are job seeking, intentions to engage in education/training, and the individual's circumstances or reasons if they were unemployed and not seeking work (see questions 19-25 in Appendix 1). 200 responses were recorded. The range of responses of participants are shown in the chart at Figure 12.

Over half of the sample (52%, n=104) reported that they were unemployed and seeking work. A further 13 participants (6.5%) were seeking work while they were employed. Of those seeking work, 87.5% were seeking full time work (n=91, or 45.5% of the full sample) and the remaining 13 participants were seeking part-time work (6.5% of the full sample). Thirty-seven participants (18.5%) were employed and not seeking work. Thirteen of these participants were employed full time, nine were

employed on a part time basis or casually, ten stated that they were self-employed and five employed participants did not state on what basis they were employed.

When those individuals who were either current students or seeking training opportunities were removed from the sample, twenty percent of the full sample (n=40) reported that they are not engaged in education, training or employment and not seeking work. Of this group, 75% (n=30) reported that they are not able to work. Reasons were varied with 14 participants reporting that they have a health condition or a disability, 12 having carer responsibilities (9 for children and 3 for a family member) and four participants stating that their CCO obligations prevented them from gaining paid employment. Ten participants (5% of the full sample) did not specify a reason why they were not seeking work.

Figure 12 Employment and job seeking status of participants (N=200)
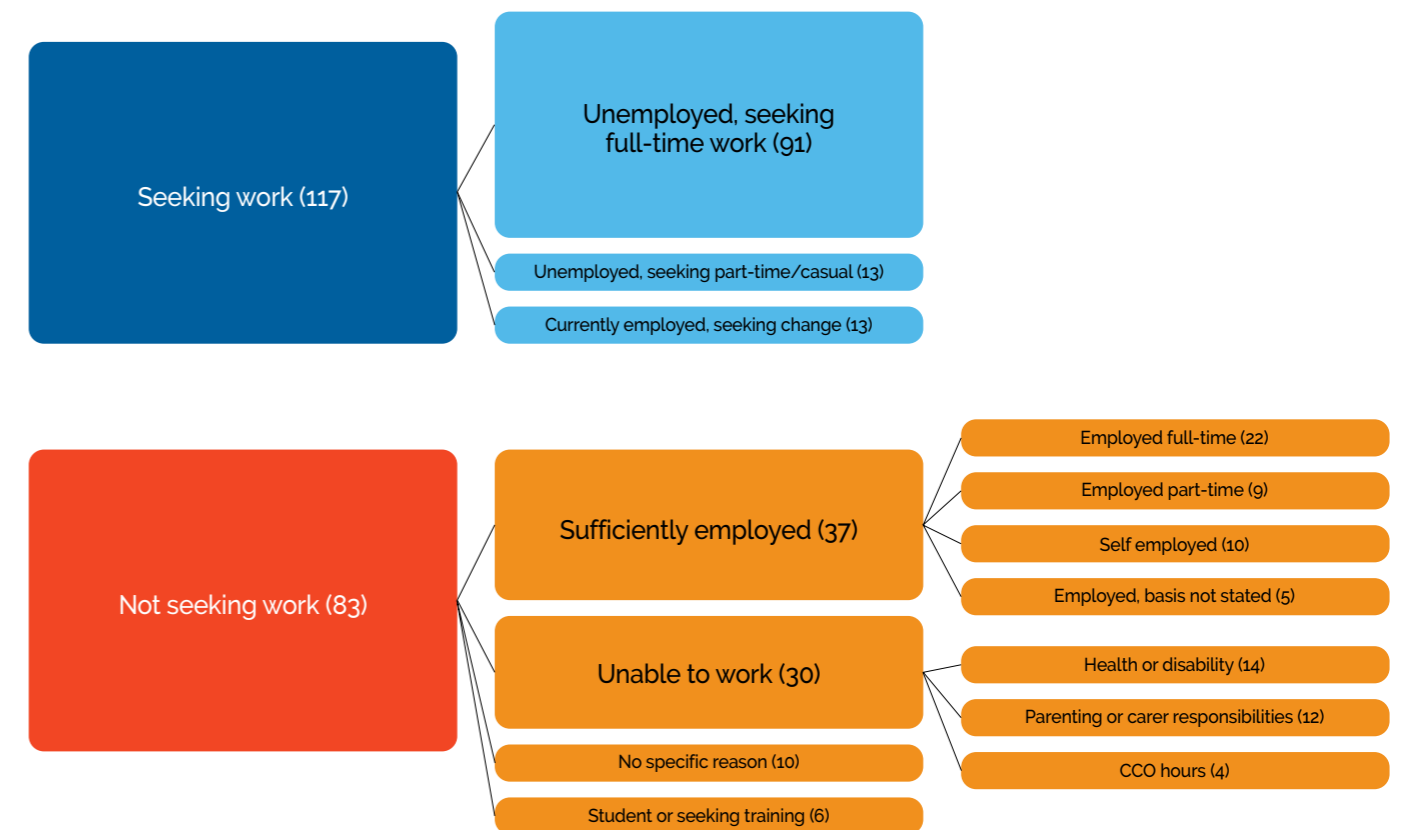
Analysis of unemployment status among age segments was undertaken and indicated that there were no age-related trends in unemployment (see Table 1, Appendix 3). Some gender-related trends were identified. Women were less likely to be employed and less likely to be job seeking if they were unemployed (e.g., 14% of women vs 20% of men were employed; 46% of women vs 54% of men unemployed and seeking work – see Table 2, Appendix 3). Women were more likely to be seeking part time work than men (11% vs 4% of men) and slightly more likely to be employed on a part time basis (8% vs 6%). It is likely that much of this can be explained by the higher number of women with carer responsibilities compared to men, meaning that they may only be able to work part time working hours while managing these duties. Women were more likely to report that illness or disability were their main barriers to work (reported by 11% of women compared to 5% of men seeking work).

ETE data of overseas-born participants (n=73) were compared with Australian-born participants (n=127) in order to explore if overseas-born participants experience greater exclusion from the workforce than Australian-born participants (e.g., due to potential disadvantages in English language ability, disrupted education and work history). Analysis showed that a greater proportion of overseas-born participants were employed (22% compared with 16.5% of Australian-born participants) and a lower proportion of overseas-born participants

were unemployed and job-seeking (49% compared with 54% of Australian-born participants). Australian-born participants were more likely than overseas-born to report that an illness or disability was the reason that they are not seeking work (9% compared with 4% of overseas-born). It is important to note that, while overseas-born participants did not appear to experience greater unemployment, measures of employment quality (e.g., pay, conditions) were not taken. Further, this analysis is not explanatory, as many variables were not factored into analysis including years of residency in Australia, English language competency and visa type (e.g., some individuals in the sample may have arrived in Australia on skilled visas).

Some interviewees spoke about how the migrant experience has shaped both their educational and employment experiences in many ways, for example, due to bullying at school and discrimination by employers. However, experiences were diverse. While half the interview sample were born overseas (10 of 20), they were born in nine different countries and arrived under very different circumstances (e.g., with some being more recent arrivals, arriving as refugees, and others arriving as children with family during peace time). Numbers of participants with similar migrant experiences within this small sub-set were small and themes not clearly identifiable.

5.1 Income source

Of 199 participants, a quarter (25%) reported that their current source of income was derived from employment (see Figure 13). Over half (56%) of participants reported that their current source of income was a Government pension or allowance.

The remaining 12% reported nil income or that they were supported by family (1%). A small number of participants (6%) reported that they had an unspecified source of income, recorded as "other". No response was recorded for one participant.

Figure 13 Income source of participants (n=199)
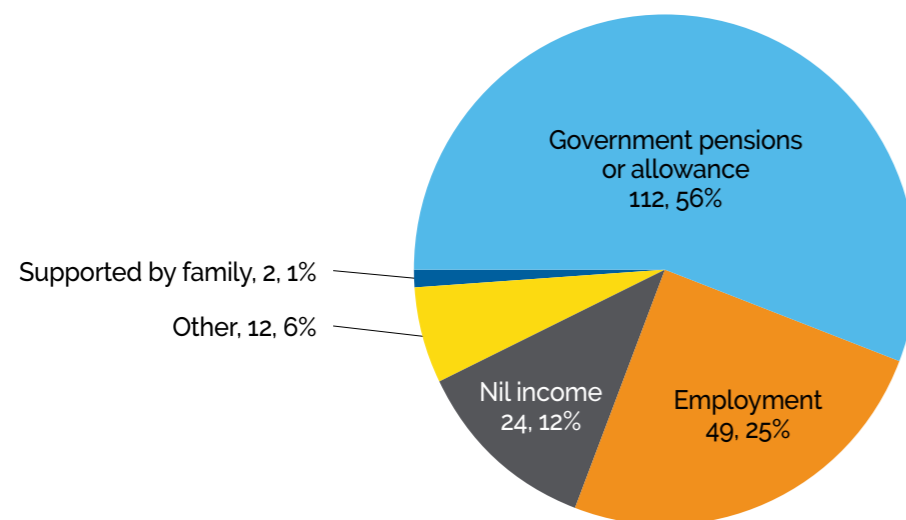
5.2 Industries in which participants reported having the most experience

The EPA recorded where participants had the most significant work experience. Responses were recorded for 175 participants. Entries were grouped using 19 industry categories described in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) guide (ABS, 2006). [25] Nine participants reported that they had never worked and were excluded from analysis. Although 15 of 19 industry categories were represented (see Figure 14) the majority (83%) of participants were involved in one

of six industry categories, including: transport, postal and warehousing (n=34); construction (n=30) [26]; retail trade (n=29); administrative and support services (n=22) [27]; and, accommodation and food services (n=17). Four industry categories that were not mentioned by any participant included: arts and recreation services; education and training; mining; and, public administration and safety.

Figure 14 Most significant industry area of work experience (n=175)
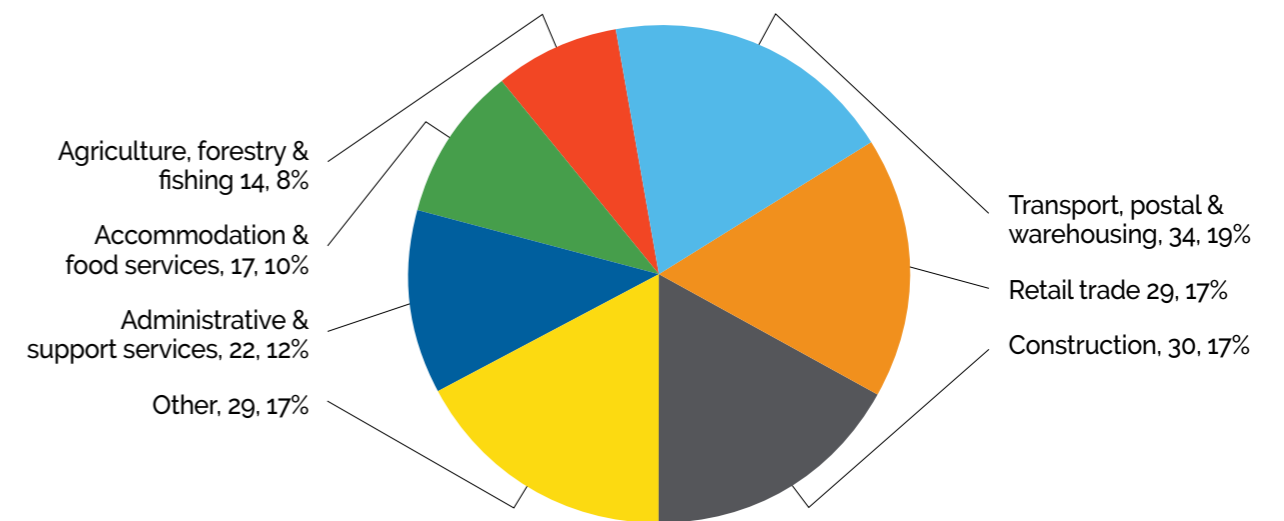
* A small number of participants (i.e. ≤ 2) had experience in other industry categories. These are grouped as "other" and include: electricity, gas, water and waste services; financial and insurance services; information media and telecommunications; mining; professional, scientific and technical services; rental, hiring and real estate services; and, wholesale trade.

5.3 Experiences of employment

Six of 20 interviewees reported that they were employed. While this was a small sub-sample of interviewees, some common themes among them were identified. One individual of these was satisfied with their current employment, and the remaining five reported that they either needed to find new work soon or they were actively looking for other opportunities. Four of 5 of these individuals were working part-time or casual hours.

None reported earning a living wage – the main reason driving the need for change. The only interviewee who reported that he was able to meet his basic living costs was working six day weeks and 10-11 hour working days. Nevertheless, he spoke about experiencing continued financial stress nevertheless, as he was unable to pay fines and debt and was expected to send money to family living in Africa.

[25] http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/EEEBBA8478AF7657CA25711F00146D6A?opendocument
[26] This category included carpenters, of whom there were five.
[27] Cleaners and gardeners/landscapers were some common professions listed under the "support services" component of this category.

In addition to being underemployed and being low income earners, interviewees also discussed how their employment was not secure and they were vulnerable to redundancy. The below interviewee discusses some of these issues:

Interviewer: "Have you had a job
that you've really enjoyed?"

"The last one [warehousing] was alright
except the pay wasn't good"

Interviewer: "What kind of work are you doing now?"

"Forklift driving"

Interviewer: "At the moment how well
are you able to make ends meet?"

"Not very well. It's difficult to find a job in general, really."

Interviewer: "When you look for jobs,
what kind of things do you look for?"

"Anything with good money really. Anything I can get generally. Can't really get much with the job agencies in Melbourne, they're all shocking." (#16 male, 23yo)

The above interviewee also spoke about being vulnerable to being made redundant. He was asked if he had any experiences of being dismissed.

"Ahh yeah sorta where they make you redundant – but then you know that there is work going because they hire people all the time" (#16 male, 23yo)

He believed that it was common for employers in his industry (warehousing) to employ staff who will complete the work for the lowest pay. Other interviewees spoke about being made redundant. Experiences of retrenchment were also relatively common; with injury being the most commonly associated reason (reported by 3 interviewees). Many interviewees had worked in jobs with short term contracts and this resulted in unemployment for some.

5.4 Financial well-being among interviewees

The theme of financial wellbeing was explored in in-depth interviews. Six of twenty interviewees received money from a source of employment. The remaining interviewees received money from Centrelink and this often was supplemented by family support (often in the form of accommodation).

Interviewees were asked how well they are able to "make ends meet" – that is, pay for basic necessities. Stories of financial struggle were very common. Interviewees who were paying rent or who had mortgages (of whom there were three) reported serious hardship.

One interviewee spoke about how they had not been able to secure employment since their contract job ended:

"I had a job last year for about 8 months but it was a temporary job, a contract and it finished in… July I think last year – oh the year before actually. 2017. Since then I haven't really worked." (#14 female, 30yo)

However, this was not the experience for all. One interviewee spoke about how this had been a choice:

"So it was usually contract after contract and I didn't take time off to find a full time job. And for me it was like work is work and I'm happy to take it on. Probably the last position, that was full time, but most of them were full-time hours but contract work."

Interviewer: "How long would you say
most of your contracts were?"

"We're looking around 12 years in office work."

Interviewer: "Have you ever felt like
you've had job security?"

"Ummm not really. I've always had two jobs. I've always had things to fall back on. So I've never been worried about being out of work. There's always contracts and there's always work. Sometimes I sort of look forward to… being full time… but yeah it's not really been a priority it's been continuous – even if it's a 6 week contract it's often extended or I'll find the next thing pretty much straight away. With experience it became more and more likely that I'd find something straight away. In a sense it worked to my advantage because I worked with a bunch of companies, not just one company." (#7 male, 34yo)

While this interviewee seemed somewhat satisfied with having multiple jobs and emphasised that he had not had difficulty securing work when contracts ended, the strategy of having "two jobs" appeared to be a defensive strategy, with a second job adding to his sense of job security; that is, giving him "things to fall back on".

"I'm going to be honest with you… when I haven't got money and I have to go see my psychiatrist or come here [to community work], I just go on the bus and I don't use Myki card. I don't want to get in trouble but I got no money so what else am I supposed to do? There is no other way. […] At the moment, nothing in my life is good. Sometimes I go to supermarket and I pinch some food. And what we are talking about is some apple or something. When you got no money, what am I going to do? How many days can you carry on without food? Just drink water?"
(#8, male, 53yo)

Four individuals experienced hardship because they were under-employed (i.e. working part-time or casual hours).

"Oh, it's a huge struggle. A huge struggle yeah. The part time hours are just barely making ends meet. If there wasn't some kind of financial support coming my way from mum and dad, I wouldn't have my house today."
(#6, male, 54yo)

Debt was reported to be "a problem" by six interviewees, with the most commonly reported forms of debt being unpaid fines and bills and loans.

Experiences of financial dependency on family members for housing were common. Among those interviewees who were able to live with family and not pay rent, or who lived in Government housing with heavily subsidised rent, most were able to "get by" solely on income from Centrelink. However, these interviewees continued to have limited resources:

"Umm I just live day by day. I don't really go out much and I don't have a car at the moment so I don't have overheads at the moment." (#12, female, 33yo)

One female interviewee aged 30 years had never moved out of the family home because she was unemployed. Interviewees often discussed how financial hardship and debt were a significant cause of stress (e.g., being chased by debt collectors and banks) and that having limited financial resources contributed to poor quality of life, isolation and a bleak outlook (e.g., "At the moment, nothing in my life is good"). Three interviewees reported being on a disability pension.

5.5 Experiences of unemployed and job seeking participants

Length of previous employment

Analysis of the survey data highlighted some factors associated with the ETE backgrounds of participants that were likely to be ongoing barriers to employment for participants including length of previous employment and length of (current) unemployment).

One of the EPS questions asked participants who were unemployed and seeking work were asked "What is the longest period of time that you have ever worked for an employer?" Five participants had never worked. Among the 94 participants who had previously worked (but were currently unemployed and job seeking), the average length of time was 4.5 years, with 50% reporting that the longest that they had been employed was between two and five years. Figure 15 includes the five participants who had never worked.

There were some trends that indicated that short term unemployment was relatively common. For example, among the 99 participants, almost one in five (n=19, 19%) reported that the longest they had previous been employed was 12 months or less. Conversely, five job seeking participants had worked over 20 years with one employer. However, these data require comparison to population level data on length of employment in order to form any conclusions. No gender related differences were identified.

Analysis of the EPS data found that the employment histories of interviewees were characterised by work in roles with little job security (e.g., short term contracts, casual work, informal work). This was underpinned by the low educational attainment of many participants, meaning that they were working in low skilled or semi-skilled areas. One participant, a 25 year old male who had reached year 8 level education, described changing employment fields multiple times:

Interviewer: "Ok, so what happened
after your car detailing job?"

"Carpentry job, a scrap metal job, then a carpentry guy who was ripping me off and promising me an apprenticeship but it never happened, then a paving job – cash in hand as well. I worked for about five different carpenters, just labouring, ahhh welding – that was recently actually. Ummm, plastering… tyre fitting."

Interviewer: "So you've been pretty
much a Jack of all trades?!"

"Yeah, all trades pretty much except electrician and plumbing. Or tiling or air conditioning fitting."

Figure 15 Longest length of previous employment among unemployed job seeking participants (n=94)

Never worked, 5, 5%

20+ years, 5, 5%

<1 year, 7, 7%

10 to <20 years, 10, 10%

1 to 2 years, 10, 10%

2 to <5 years, 32, 33%

5 to <10 years, 30, 30%
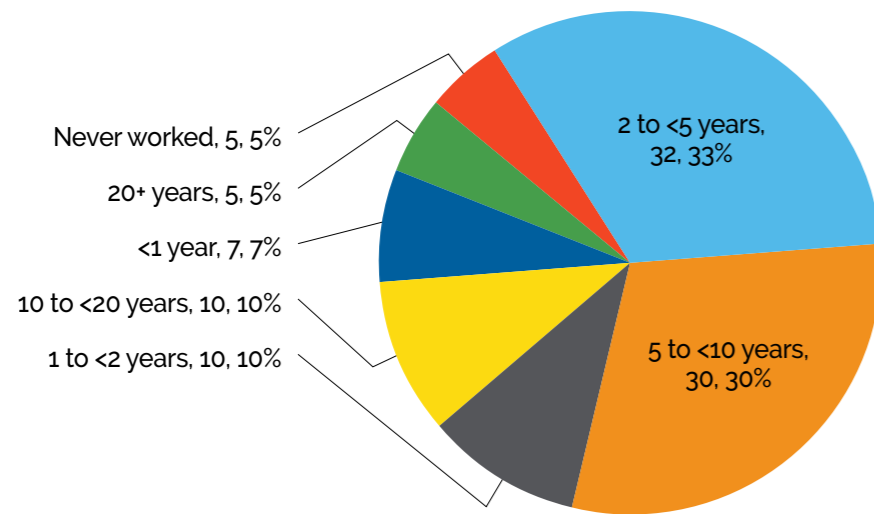
Interviewer: "Have you managed to get any qualifications or along the way?"

"Always off the books. They are always promising me apprenticeship but I always found it a bit hard. It was harder to try and get that – I was only ever good physically." (#11 male, 25yo)

Another interviewee had a similarly disjointed employment history having left school at a very young age. He reported that it had been difficult to hold down a job. He attributed this to a traumatic childhood – having lived in out of home care since the age of 10:

"I started work at the age of 13 for a company called [name of transport company]. I think it was 13 – it was when I left high school. During my life, yes, I have worked off and on. I have never been able to hold a steady job. Which has seriously depressed me."

Interviewer: "What do you think is the main reason that you have not been able to hold down a job?"

"No stability. My life was never structured. There was constant chaos of moving around and people moving in and out of my life so I was never taught to... to stay strong. To don't give up even though I don't like it, just stick at it for quite a while. I wasn't taught those things." .
(#19 male, 33yo)

Another participant had a disjointed employment history, with multiple job changes. They spoke about how this had not previously been a problem, but they began to find it more difficult to secure work as they aged. Now that they had a justice record, they could not find work at all, illustrating how multiple issues often converged.

Length of unemployment among job seeking participants

It is well-established that finding employment can be more difficult for those who are long term unemployed. According to the ABS (2018), an individual is considered to be "long term unemployed" when they have been unemployed and seeking work for 12 months or more. The EPA asked all participants who were unemployed and job seeking (n=104) how long they had been unemployed.

There were 99 responses. The range of responses was 1 week to 16 years. Grouped responses are represented in Figure 16. The majority of job seekers (n=69, 70%) had been unemployed for more than a year, potentially meeting the above criteria for long term unemployment (noting it was not clear if they had been actively job-seeking for the entire period of unemployment).

Participants who had been unemployed and job seeking for more than a year represented 34.5% of the entire sample (N=200 people) engaged by the EPA.

Data were collected on the type of work participants were seeking. The majority (n=86, 87%) were seeking full time work and n=13 (13%) were seeking part time work. Those who were seeking part time or casual work were more likely to have been looking for longer than a year than those seeking full time work (68% vs 84.5% of participants seeking full time work). The median length of unemployment for those who were seeking full time work was two years compared to five years among those seeking part time or casual work. It is possible that many of these participants had been out of the workforce for a lengthy time because of child care responsibilities.

A sub group of participants (n=27, 27.2% of job seekers) had been unemployed for five or more years. Five of these participants had been unemployed for longer than 10 years and four had no employment history (three male participants, aged 21, 36, and 38 years, each of whom were seeking full time work; and a 22 year old woman with three children who was seeking part time work).

Figure 16 Length of unemployment among those seeking work (n=99)

Never worked, 4, 4%

10 to <20 years, 5, 5%

1 to <2 years, 12, 12%

5 to <10 years, 18, 18%

2 to <5 years, 30, 30%

<1 year, 30, 30%
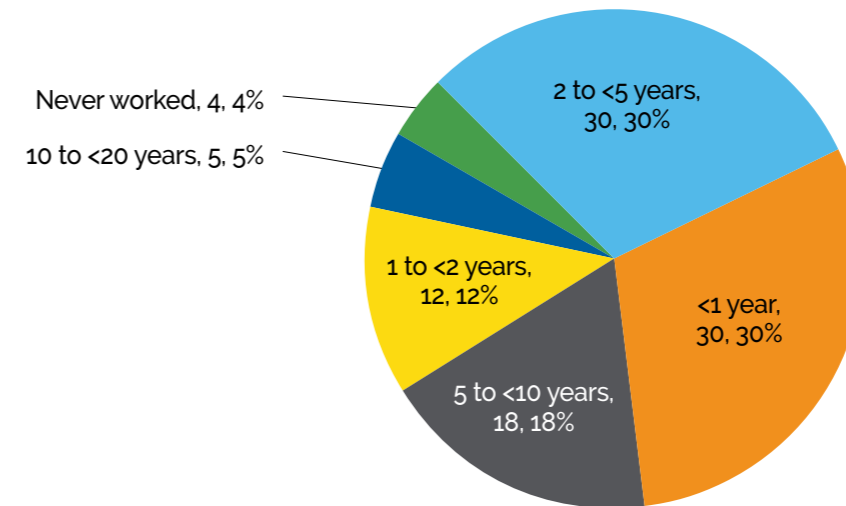
Analysis of characteristics of unemployed participants highlights some gendered trends. For example, male job-seekers were more likely than women to have been unemployed for less than a year (34% compared to 21% of job seeking women, see Figure 17). Furthermore, 36% (n=10) of women who were seeking employment had been unemployed for five or more years compared to 24% (n=17) of male job seekers. In summary, women in the sample who were seeking employment had been unemployed for longer, meaning that they are more likely to be disadvantaged when trying to enter the labour market.

Figure 17 Length of unemployment among job seeking women and men (%, n=66)

	<1 year	1 to <2 years	2 to <5 years	5 to <10 years	10 to <20 years	Never worked
Women	21	14	29	22	7	7
Men	34	11	31	17	4	3
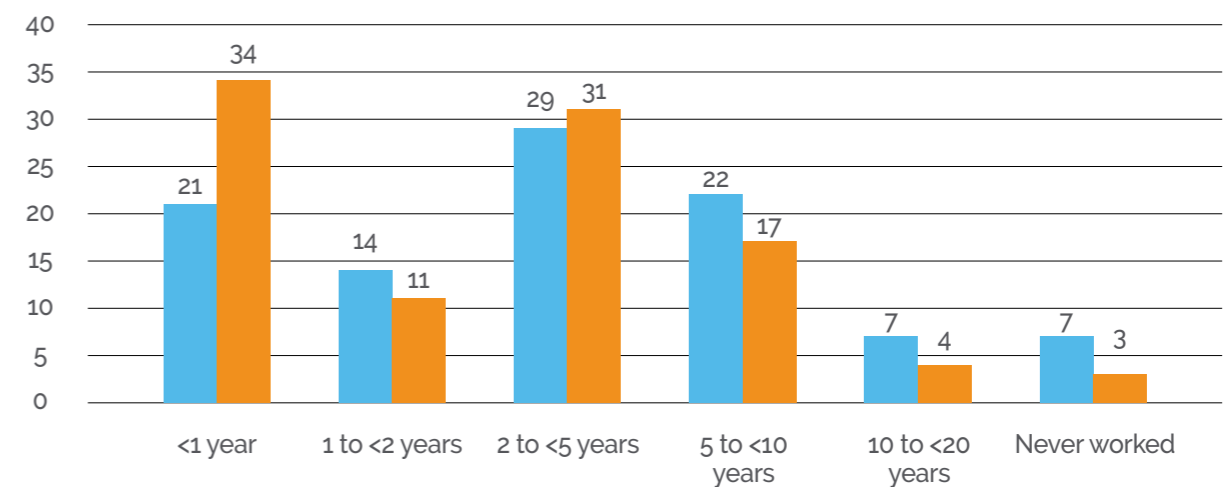
Experiences of long term unemployment were particularly prominent in the interview sample, with many interviewees reporting that they had very limited employment experience. Four of 14 interviewees who were not engaged in ETE had been out of work for ten or more years. Two of these individuals had a cognitive impairment or a learning disability (both of whom had very limited employment history and year 9 level educational attainment). One of them spoke about this:

Interviewer: So have you been able to find employment in the past?

A little bit off and on… back then in the days… I was permanent in one job that I had to leave… they found out about my disability and yeah I couldn't find any proper work… I wasn't looking for work as much… I was just on disability. And now I've been putting in and trying to find work… coz my body is still alright – like, I can work.
(#2 male, 44yo)

5.6 Self-identified barriers to employment

Survey participants who were unemployed and either seeking/not seeking work (n=104) were asked an open ended question 'What is your main barrier to gaining employment?' Responses were grouped into themes during analysis and analysis is shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18 Main barrier to gaining employment among unemployed job seeking participants (n=71)

Having child care responsibilities was the reason that some interviewees (two women and one man) were not seeking work; however, these responsibilities also meant that some individuals, particularly women, had a limited or no employment history. Two women had been out of the workforce for over 10 years because they were been carers of young children; however, this was exacerbated by problematic drug and alcohol use and involvement in the justice system (including community work obligations). A third woman aged 25 had never worked, having become pregnant with her first child while she was in high school and never subsequently entered the workforce.

Limitations associated with having a justice record

Among the 71 respondents to this item, over a third (n=27, 38%) responded that their justice record (e.g., employer reluctance to hire, restrictions) was the main barrier. Related to this, a further four participants (6%) stated that having CCO hours prevented them from gaining employment.

Consistent with the survey data, when discussing barriers to employment, interview participants spoke most often about facing stigma and discrimination from employers associated with their record:

"Oh it's a big barrier, yeah. It's the only thing that's actually stopping me from working. I get interviews no problem – so I have got an interview two, three times a week. It's just that I go for the interview and then they ask do I have any prior convictions… It's hard to get a job with a record though because everybody wants a background check."
(#14 female, 30yo)

Another interviewee spoke about how having a criminal record made them more vulnerable to being retrenched:

"They know that I've got a criminal record. I told them from the get go. But that's just it. Because I've got a criminal record. It's easy for them to just turn around and say "sorry, laters"." **(#1, female, 35yo)**

Health issues, impairments and injury

Health issues, injury or other types of impairments were the second most common barriers, reported by just over one in ten job seeking participants (n=8, 11%). For example, almost one in five EPS participants who were not working or not engaged in any ETE or job seeking activities (19.8%, n=22 of 111 respondents) indicated that a health condition or disability was their main barrier to ETE participation. Consistent with the EPS data, having a health issue or disability was also a prominently discussed obstacle to employment among interviewees. Six interviewees reported having serious health issues or injury that have impacted their employability.
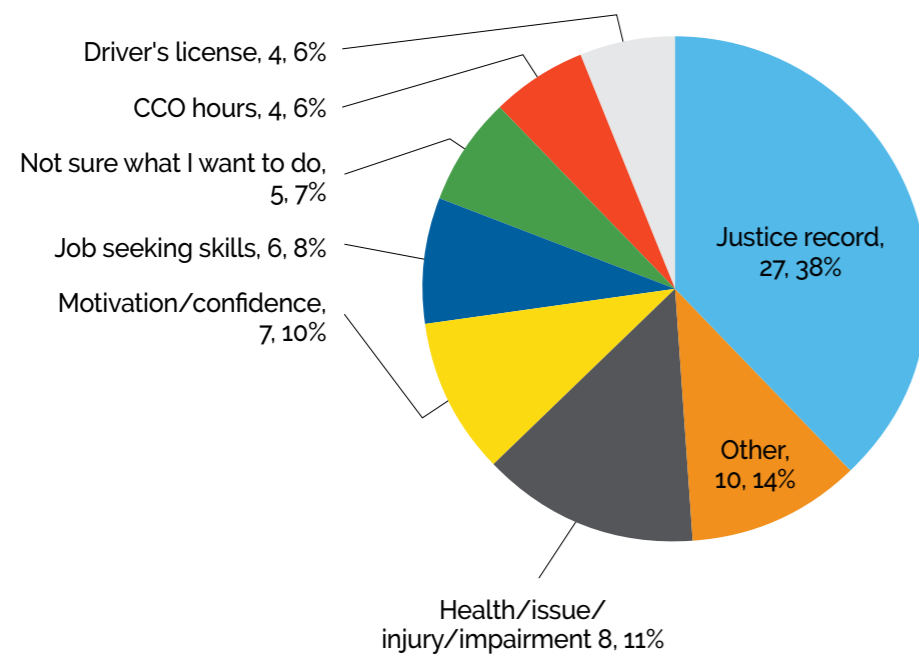
Other barriers to employment

Poor motivation and/or poor confidence (grouped together) were recorded as the third most common main barrier to gaining employment (reported by n=7, 10%) – a factor that appeared to be associated with involvement in the justice system itself by interviewees. This is illustrated in the below interview excerpt:

Some had not directly experienced discrimination, but anticipated that they would. This appeared to affect their confidence and motivation to seek a job. One interviewee who finished her order on the week of the interview spoke about how she anticipated experiencing discrimination:

"Well I wasn't really looking, coz I was on CCO, I wasn't really driven or inspired to look because I have a record and I wasn't really sure if anyone would want to hire someone like me." **(#18, female, 38 years)**

As mentioned above, a small proportion of EPS participants (n=4, 6%) specifically stated that having community work hours was their main barrier to employment. However, this issue was far more prevalent among interview participants, who commonly spoke about how they planned to seek employment when their community work was complete. One interviewee spoke about delaying seeking work because they anticipated experiencing difficulty managing the issue with employers:

"…because you are not going to say to your boss, 'I've got to go to court and I've got to do community work twice a week'." **(#9, male, 41 years)**

For three, this was so serious that they were unable to work at all. Two of these participants had been retrenched due to workplace injuries.

A further five interviewees reported that they have a cognitive impairment or learning disability that have impacted their ability to learn and/gain employment. Two of these individuals were not seeking work and were on disability support due to their impairment and one had an acquired brain injury after being in a car accident, but had part time work.

Interviewer: "So you've found jobs that do suit you?"

"Yeah, I have"

Interviewer: "And how confident you are about getting a job?"

"With a conviction I'm not confident at all. As soon as I kind of get to that stage… if I didn't have that conviction, I think I'd be employed by now – I'd be happy."
(#14, female, 30yo)

Six respondents (8%) reported that they lacked job-seeking skills, five respondents (7%) reported that they were not sure what they wanted to do and four respondents reported that they did not have a driver's licence (6%).

The "other" category shown in Figure 18, representing 14% of respondents (n=10), groups seven different response types. These responses include the following: age discrimination (mentioned by a participant aged over 50 years), carer responsibilities, equipment needed (i.e. the participant could not afford the equipment needed in order to undertake a particular type of work), homelessness, over-qualified, not adequately skilled and poor work history.

Age discrimination was only mentioned by a small number of respondents as being the main barrier to employment in the EPS data but was more prominent in interviews.

Past incarceration experience

Individuals who have served time in prison experience a number of obstacles to securing future employment. One of these is employer discrimination (Visher et al., 2008, Visher et al., 2011). Analysis of data on employment status found that those who had spent time in prsion were more likely to be unemployed (14% of ex-prisoners were employed compared to 39% of those with no reported prison history; n=147). While this analysis shows that prison experience was likely to have some correlation with current employment status, previous studies have shown that it is not the only factor determing employment outcomes post-release.

Four men in the interview sample were aged 50 years or older and spoke about how they believed that their age was a barrier to employment. One interviewee spoke about how his age combined with health issues made it difficult for him to find work, illustrating the intersecting nature of issues:

"I actually got retrenched 18 months ago, so I only started this [current] job in July this year. I got it through an employment agency called [agency name], they tend to deal with people who have some sort of - for lack of a better word – disability. I got injured in the workplace, went on 'WorkCover' and subsequently lost my job while still injured. So it's been a major uphill battle trying to find full time employment because – the workforce is ageist. I'm over 50 – they don't take into account that I've got over 35 years' experience in the industry." **(#6 male, 54yo)**

Factors such as employment history prior to incarceration, AOD use and physical health are understood to be important factors shaping employment outcomes (Visher et al., 2008, Visher et al., 2011). Further, some participants in the sample may have been limited in their ability to seek work if they had been recently released from prison due to post-release conditions. Nevertheless, those individuals who have a prison history are undoubtedly more vulnerable to marginalisation from employment than those who have never been incarcerated.

Figure 19 Employment status by time spent in adult prison compared to CCO only (n=147)
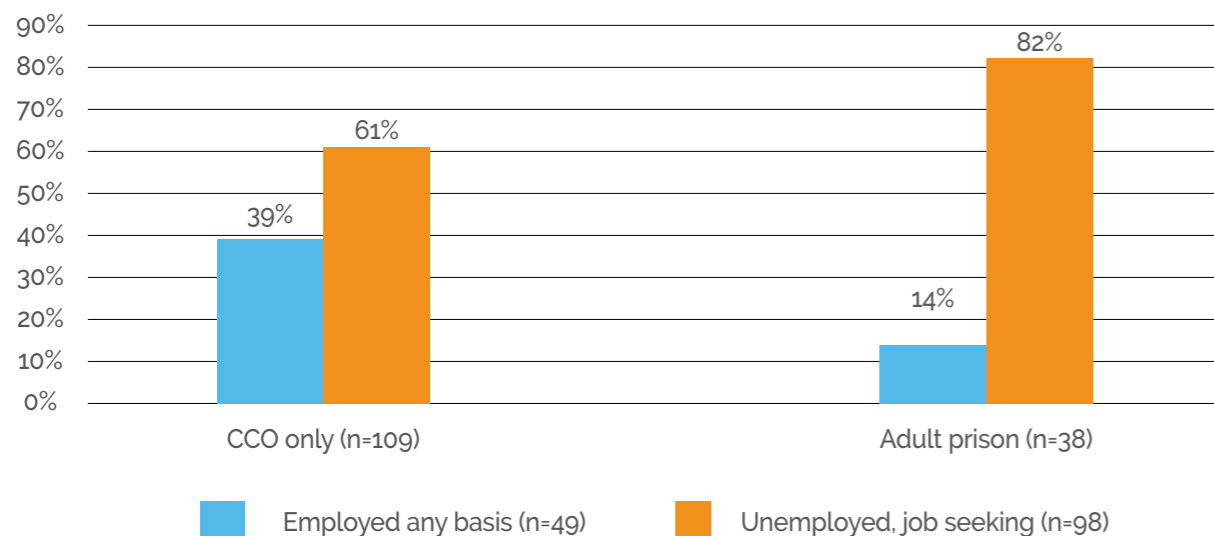
6: Social connectedness and wellbeing among interviewees

6.1 Background experiences of interviewees

Many interviewees reported having had difficult experiences as children and young people that are often associated with poorer health and wellbeing outcomes as adults. These include, but are not limited to: being brought up in out of home care, experiencing family violence, experiencing bullying at school, having a parent or family member who is incarcerated and leaving school at a young age. Some examples of these experiences are explored briefly below drawing on accounts of interviewees.

Four interviewees reported that they had grown up in either out of home or kinship care. Three of these reported having very difficult childhoods, having lived in multiple environments. For example, one woman said:

"I lived in about 18 different homes by the time I was 18." **(#12 female, 33yo)**

One had significant trauma and mental health issues associated with growing up in out of home and residential care, and having also experienced sexual abuse by a class teacher as a child. [29] One of these participants was raised by his grandparents while the remainder of his siblings were raised by his biological parents, an experience that caused him psychological damage. Another participant spoke about how he experienced violence perpetrated by a parent:

"I was in and out of home a lot."

Interviewer: "So where were you living?"

"Ahh I lived with an aunty for a year, lived at friends' houses, stuff like that."

Interviewer: "So was there trouble at home?"

"Yeah, a lot of intervention orders."

Interviewer: "Was there violence against you or members?"

"Against me." **(#16 male, 23yo)**

The above interviewee later disclosed that the violence was perpetrated by his father, eventually resulting in him moving into supported housing as a teenager. He was one of three interviewees who spoke about living in a family where there was violence perpetrated by a parent. One of these interviewees described experiencing violence at home as well as bullying at school. He moved schools multiple times because of bullying:

Interviewer: "Ok so you had quite a few disruptions to your schooling, was there anything else going on at home that contributed to that or was it just the bullying?"

"You could say that 95% of my high school or my adolescence was a mixture of DV and bullying."

Interviewer: "OK, so you had domestic violence going on at home?"

"[Between] my parents and then my parents against kids. As in, any kind of thing you could use as a weapon, they probably used."

Interviewer: "So a physically violent home…"

"Yeah so belts and sticks, electric cables, garden hoses, wooden spatulas… you name it. If it could be held in a hand and used as a punishment, they used it."

Interviewer: "I'm really sorry to hear that – it must have been incredibly tough for you."

"It wasn't as tough as the bullying in high school" **(#13 male, 26yo)**

The same participant described how his father was in the justice system:

"Oh, so my parents are living in [suburb], but my father is currently incarcerated. He has been in the justice system since the 1980s. In and out and in and out in and out and in." **(#13 male, 26yo)**

Interviewees were recruited from a low socio-demographic area and consistent with this, many described growing up in impoverished environments where resources were stretched. One participant who grew up in the City of Brimbank was asked: "Can you name one or the most positive thing about living in this area?" he responded:

"[Long pause] I don't know just living lower. Like you know, so I guess living lower, I guess when you're up higher I guess you get to know you could always be a bit lower (laughs)."

Interviewer: "What do you mean by living lower?"

"Living in poverty, living that, way you learn how to survive sort of thing."

Interviewer: "Do you think that you have lived in poverty?"

[29] This matter had been addressed through the courts.

"Oh yeah definitely."

Interviewer: "All your life"

"Yes, definitely." (#11 male, 25 yo)

The same participant described being one of eight kids. He described how he was encouraged to leave school after year eight so that he could contribute to the family, financially.

"Mum agreed with me when I went to work because my dad didn't work. He had carpel tunnel and nobody was really working at the house and I was the only one who started working. I was the youngest, the smallest"

Interviewer: "So when you started earning money, what happened?"

"I got charged board. I had to start paying. My brother started paying too, but he was on Centrelink. I got a job and in the end I had to pay $80 a week and my older brother paid $80 a fortnight. I had to pay more and work more." (#11 male, 25 yo)

As a result of leaving school, the participant had only year 8 level income and no qualifications.

Half of interviewees (10 of 20) were born outside Australia. For all of these interviewees, English was not their first language; however, none could be considered recent arrivals. Among this group, three had lived in Australia for between 10 and 14 years and the other seven had lived in Australia for between 17 and 51 years. Among the three interviewees who had lived in Australia for under 15 years, all had arrived as refugees from African countries affected by conflict and had experienced grief and trauma (e.g., loss of family members and forced separation from family).

All migrant interviewees described other post-settlement challenges including learning the language, participating in school in Australia, cultural dislocation and family conflict. It was evident, based on descriptions of their lives that this had contributed to experiences of struggle and marginalisation and, at least inadvertently and cumulatively with other factors, to justice involvement.

Among those who had been in Australia for longer, relocation to Australia had resulted in long term disadvantage. Transitions to education and employment were seriously impacted by the migration experience. English was a newly learned language during schooling in Australia and, in combination with other post-settlement challenges, this had impacted on educational attainment.

Participants also discussed the long term impact of other challenges. Three men (aged 45, 54 and 50 years) migrated to Australia as children and discussed how racism-related bullying resulted in early school leaving. This had ongoing implications in relation to career pathways and employment opportunities. Some spoke about how they had little/no family networks in Australia – this was particularly felt during 'hard times'.

The background experiences of interviewees, commonly characterised by disruption and trauma, formed a backdrop to the troubled experiences that many had as adults, including their involvement in the justice system. Further, it is likely that experiences of grief, loss, abuse, neglect and abandonment (some described above) also underpinned difficulties that they had in their relationships as adults.

6.2 Participant's intimate partner relationships and experiences as parents

Interviewees also commonly discussed having experienced difficulties in their intimate partner relationships as adults. Very few interviewees (5 of 20) were in current partnered relationships and only two participants were living with a partner. Two of three women who were in intimate partner relationships had partners that were currently incarcerated. Social isolation was very common and there were very few participants who spoke about relying on a partner in difficult times.

Relationships with partners were commonly discussed in the context of negative factors including problematic drug use, involvement in crime and distress associated with negotiating custody of children.

There were indications that intimate partner violence was experienced in many relationships and was associated with justice involvement. Three of 13 men in the sample were on CCOs having breached an intervention order.

Two women in the sample reported that intimate partner violence was one of the factors associated with their current justice system involvement. Experiences of intimate partner violence (as survivor or perpetrator) were likely to be under-reported.

More than half of interviewees (11 of 20) had children under the age of 18 years. Many had a large number of children (i.e. four of 11 interviewees had four or more children), potentially placing pressure on limited resources. Relationships where children were involved were very commonly fractured. One participant (of 11) was living with a partner in a co-parenting relationship. The same participant was estranged from two children from a previous relationship.

Over a third of interviewees who were parents were sole parents (4 of 11). Involvement of child protection services was common. Two sole parents had custody granted to them by a court and a further four interviewees reported that child protection government services currently restricted their access to some or all of their children.

One interviewee spoke about the involvement of child protection services in her life and described the ongoing impact that this has had on her young daughter:

"No, umm the reason that I can't work at the moment is due to with my daughter because I have DHHS involvement… due to drugs – because I was on drugs – and my daughter was taken away from me and she was 23 months old. So I had a lot to do – I had to get off drugs and fix my life, basically, to get my daughter back – which I did. And now she suffers severe anxiety if I leave her somewhere. She's been through a lot. She will not stay with anyone – I can't even go to the toilet on my own. She is very difficult to leave." (#3, female, 40yo)

Interviewees discussed how conflict or other difficulties in intimate partner relationships resulted in estrangement or long periods of separation from children. For example three (of 11 interviewees with children) were estranged from some or all of their children aged under 18 years.

6.3 Friendships and social networks

Poor quality of social networks was reported by many interviewees, with discussion of drug and crime involved associates being common. Some participants spoke about being abandoned by friends when times got tough:

"When you got money you got people next to you. When you're down, nobody is next to you. They know you are going to ask for help." (#8, male, 53yo)

Another spoke about losing friends because of his actions:

Interviewer: "Do you have many friends in the area?"

"No, I burned all of my bridges."

Interviewer: "When you say burned your bridges, what do you mean?"

"Just ripping 'em [stealing from them]. Ripping 'em left, right and centre." (#11, male, 25yo)

Some spoke about having deliberately cut themselves off from friends, for example, the below interviewee:

Interviewer: "Do you have family and friends here that can give you support?"

"I wouldn't say family nah except for my children. Friends, yes, but… umm limited… because ahh the friends that I had, I don't want 'em around, you know what I mean? Coming from where I got myself into [drugs and crime], to trying to come back out the other side, I've had to cut a lot of people off from my life. And that's a choice that I don't regret because, as I said, my son is number one."

Interviewer: "Right, and so… and family are overseas"

"Main family overseas. I have one sister in [interstate]. She's the only family yeah I do have everyday communication with. I've got very few, but those few are more than enough." (#1 female, 35yo)

Another young woman reported a very similar experience when asked if she has many friends who were involved in drugs and crime:

"Nup, no longer. I did, but no longer. I have disconnected from them. It all fell out because I needed a lawyer and they weren't there to help me and so I decided, I'm getting out of this scene."

Interviewer: "Do you have many friends now?"

"Look, I've only got about two close friends and that's all I really want, really – two girlfriends." (#12, female, 330yo)

For most, informal social support was derived from a parent or family members, with friends and partners being very rarely mentioned.

6.4 Mental health issues and problematic drug use

While every interviewee had a slightly different story, difficulties in close family or intimate relationships were commonly discussed and intersected with other health and social issues, particularly problematic drug use, mental health issues and justice involvement. Eight (of 20) participants described having problems with alcohol and/or illicit drugs. The below participant described how this was embedded into other difficulties, including a troubled relationship with an ex-partner and separation from her children:

"Ahhhh. I got into drugs. I lost my dad. My relationship, my previous relationship, broke down. Ummm after my dad died, arsehole [partner] cheated on me. And then ummm at the beginning we were still sharing my son we had together and his sister was getting married [overseas] at the time and then he asked me if my son could be a ring-bearer, which I thought well you know that's a family thing, that will be marvellous for him. Unfortunately the dad signed the passport and stole my son. He took off with my son and by this time I just chucked in the white towel. I just got into the drugs. I lost a lot. I lost myself. I lost everything. I went to jail. And by the time I, you know, by the time I came out, but the time they came back in the country, I was already... [says quietly] fucked... like excuse the language, but is the best way I can describe it. And at that time I wasn't really willing to fight for him because wouldn't have been fair to bring him into my life where I was a mess." (#1 female, 35yo)

6.5 Involvement in recreational or structured activities

Overall, the level of involvement of the interview sample in structured recreational activities or other activities in the community was very low. Twelve of 15 interviewees who were asked a question about involvement in recreational or structured activities reported that they did not currently participate in any activity outside the home with the exception of community work. Five interviewees were not asked the question explicitly (for a variety of reasons e.g., two interviewees ended the interview early, one participant had a low level of English language competency). However, none of these five interviewees indicated that they were engaged in any community activities. Interviewees described how social isolation intersected with mental health issues:

"I just have my best friends and that but mostly these days mostly to myself sort of thing. It's pretty much, going through anxiety and depression it's really impacted my life socially as well." (Male, 45yo)

Problematic drug use was particularly strongly linked to involvement of child protection services (reported by four interviewees). This is described by the below interviewee:

Interviewer: "So if you don't mind me asking, when did drug use start coming into the picture and become a serious problem for you?"

"Umm oh about four or five years ago?"

Interviewer: "So not that long ago, really? Was there something that triggered it then?"

"Umm a broken up relationship with my ex. It was breaking down and I turned to drugs for that. Then I met my new partner and he was on drugs too so we were together for a while and had our baby and then DHHS became involved and so we became clean after that." (#3, female, 40yo)

No participant reported having a current problem with illicit drug use at the time of interview; however, some individuals were in the early stages of recovery and were regularly participating in drug testing as a part of their CCO.

Of the three interviewees who reported that they participated in organised recreational activities, one volunteered in her community and participated in sports and social activities. A second participant had a gym membership and reported that he took his mother to church and the third of these individuals had a gym membership only. The two male lone parents reported that they had found it difficult to participate in social activities through their children's school because they are male.

Over half of EPS interviewees (56%, n=112; Figure 13) relied on government benefits (Centrelink) as their main form of income and described how financial difficulties and lack of transport were a barrier to engaging in activities in the community.

7: Engagement with rehabilitative opportunities and support

This section explores evidence provided by participants about their engagement in services and programs that are supportive of transitions away from the justice system including community work programs.

The analysis presented in this section draws primarily from qualitative interview data but is supported by survey data particularly relating to engagement in community work programs.

7.1 Access to services and programs

Many participants appeared to have taken steps to address issues that were a problem for them (e.g., drug and alcohol use and cutting involvement with crime associated peers), but most had ongoing issues that impacted their health and wellbeing and could be potential predictors of future justice involvement.

Most prominent of these were unemployment and/disengagement from an ETE pathway. Accordingly, the most common service type, reportedly accessed by 13 interviewees, was employment support providers. However, it is worth noting that this type of service is typically a requirement for those accessing welfare benefits and was often accessed in the context as a part of 'mutual obligation' requirements.

Very low levels of satisfaction with employment support services were reported. Several interviewees discussed receiving infrequent and impersonal contact from providers:

"I think that they [employment service providers] are just like Centrelink – just absolutely appalling – they don't bother helping at all. I'm the one looking for jobs – they don't help me like at all. I've actually told Centrelink this – I have to change job providers. They say I can't do that. So yeah they're not very helpful." (#14, female, 30 years)

...

"Yeah I started off with one, wasn't happy with their level of support. I considered it almost non-existent. Other than the fact that I had to turn up for appointment times. And very little support came my way." (#6, male, 54 years)

...

"I feel like one time when I signed up with that employment scheme and there wasn't really much involvement and interaction where they explain if there's anything out there for us to get a job- yeah, you know like, just go out and look for work and find a job and show us the documentation. There was no push in that direction, like is there you are interested in, is there anything we can help you with?" (#17, male, 50yo)

Some interviewees spoke about how agencies only considered meeting their targets and had unrealistic expectations of them. For example, a woman spoke about her experience of job searching while pregnant:

Interviewer: "Have you ever connected with any employment agencies?"

"Yeah, but they're just numbers. They are so numbers. [I went and said to them] "I'm pregnant". My belly was big. People thought that I was having twins! And I've got – I think his name was [name]. I was happy I got a job because I was pregnant! He wasn't happy because I was only casual."

Interviewer: "Ok, I see..."

"And I said to him "Are you alright? Are you fucking joking me? Do you see my belly? "I'm about to give birth in like two months bro!" (#1, female, 35yo)

Another spoke about being referred to a job that was inappropriate for him:

"They wanted me to be a foreman on the... like telling everybody what to do. And I'm thinking well how am I going to do that when I don't even know how to read and write? I got the job and I said to them "well I can't take that job" because how am I going to write if anybody got hurt, or anything like that. At the end of the month or year, the check up on the materials..." (#9, male, 41yo)

Appraisals of specialist providers appeared to be more positive, with three participants reporting being helped by disability specialist providers and one by a state-funded service, 'Jobs Victoria Employment Network' (JVEN). However, the qualitative sample was not large enough to comment on the quality of experiences across employment service types.

"Yeah, yeah WISE have been really good. They don't judge you. I'm sure that they deal with that all of the time." (#4, male, 59yo)

"They were supportive especially when I was on my CCO. They understood what I was… that I had to do some hours for my orders and they didn't give me as much load of having to pressurise me to look for a job at the time, so yeah." **(#18, female, 38yo)**

Interview participants who were located in the LGA of Melton found it particularly hard to access specialist providers and all interviewees spoke about how there were very few specialist providers in the local area. Although there was a justice specialist job network staff member available through DJCS, no interviewee reported accessing this service.

Disengagement from employment services was very common. One participant discussed how he was wary of involvement of services and relied on himself:

7.2 Community work program participation

Participants were recruited from the Derrimut community work program (DJCS) site from a range of different programs, represented at Figure 20. The program from which most participants were recruited is referred to as "light duties" (44%), which is a program that is designed to have the lowest physical impact (performed while sitting). Activities that were performed as a part of light duties

during the data collection period included unpicking labels from clothing and knitting. Over a quarter of participants (28%) participated in a woodwork program and the next most common community work programs were repair work (15%, grouped with graffiti removal, n=1) and a bike repair program (13%).

Interviewer: "I know that you've spoken to our Employment Pathways Advisor, but are you currently getting any other formal support to get a job/become job-ready?"

"They just recently … they were talking about opportunities pathways to employment for people that have a real record, and I guess I didn't take it that well. Because I was uhhh see through my experience, there's always a catch. There's always some kind of shifty night. I guess it's some form of paranoia – of not trusting. You know? I was like well what are you guys trying to get out of this. I decided to go off by myself. I got myself enrolled in some Government funded course. I didn't need their help. I don't want their help. I can do this by myself." **(#19, male, 33yo)**

Figure 20 Community work program activities of participants (N=200)
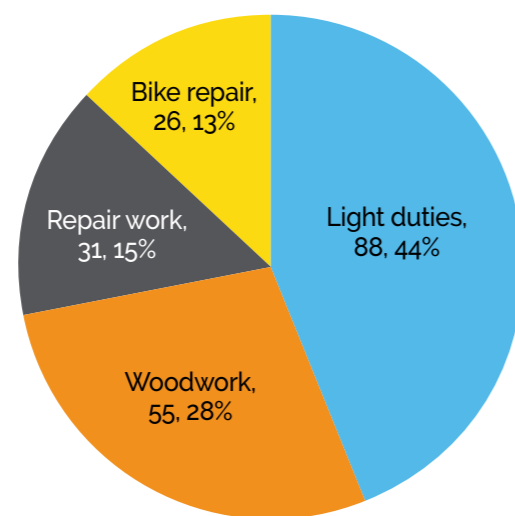
Analysis of work program involvement by gender showed some differences in program participation. Most significantly, the majority of women (54 of 63, 86%) participated in the light duties program (Figure 21).

Many of the remaining nine women participated in the bike repair program (n=7, 11%) and one female participated in repair work and the woodwork programs respectively.

By comparison, the division of men between the available programs was more even (also shown at Figure 21). The majority of men participated in woodwork (39%), a relatively even proportion of participants were split between light duties and repair work (25% and 22% respectively) and a smaller but significant number of men (14%) participated in the bike repair program (Figure 21).

Figure 21 Community work activities of participants by gender (N=200)
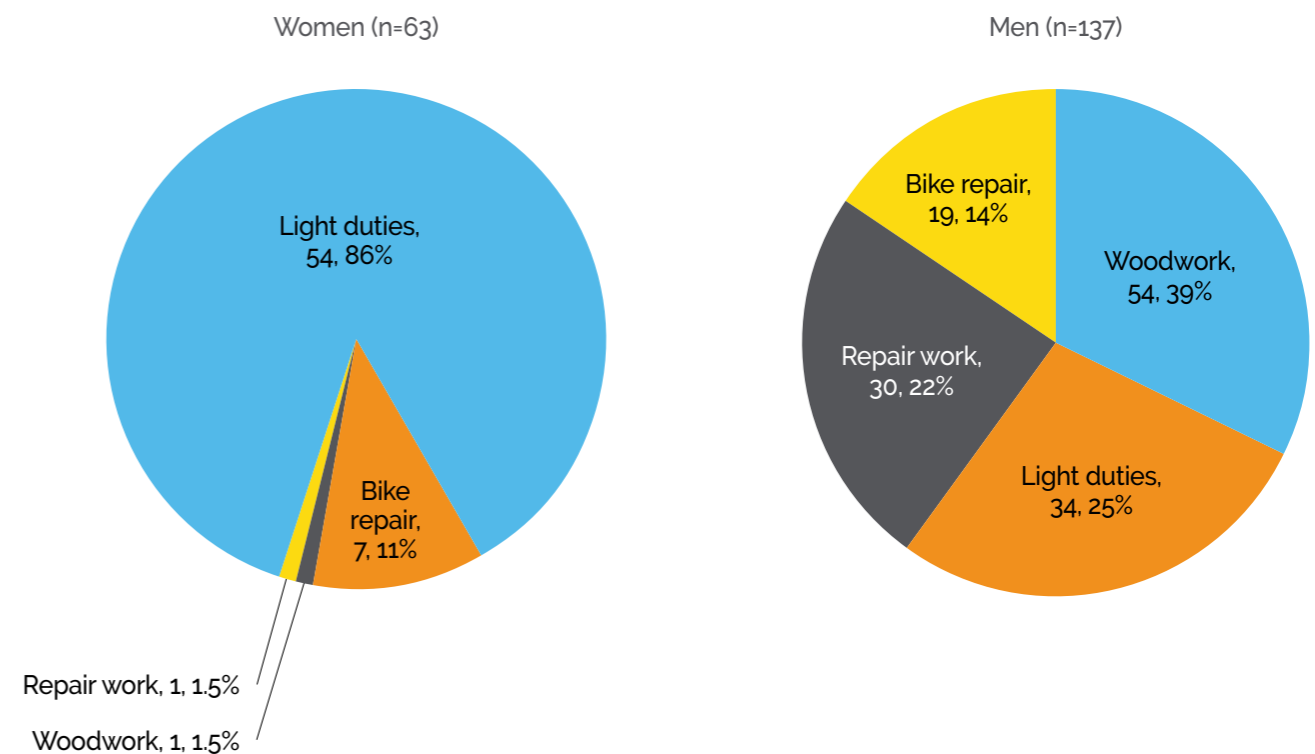
Analysis of the available data indicates that, although light duties is designed to cater to participants with limited capabilities, program participation may not reflect actual capability of participants. For example, over half (50 of 88 or 56%) of people who participated in the light duties program reported that they did not have a health condition, illness or disability that impacted on their ability to work (no response was reported for three participants). Women in the light duties were more likely to report that they did not have a condition or a disability compared to men (65% of women vs 43% of men), indicating that women may participate in the program for reasons other than having any limitation on their ability to work.

All interviewees reported attending community work one or two days/week. While some participants had other obligations restricting their availability to undertake community work (e.g., due to child care responsibilities or illness), most participants reported they were able to attend more frequently than they did. Some expressed frustration at this:

"They [Corrections Victoria staff] only really want to give me one or two days a week. I asked for more than that just so that I can knock it out [finish quickly]… but (sighs) they just mess you around more than anyone really [...] Yeah, it's pretty much like having a job. If they don't think that you are reliable, they don't give you a few days but if you only go once a week it's going to take you a year to do it." **(#16, male, 23 years)**

Participants were asked if they gained any useful benefits from community work. Regardless of which program/s they attended, interviewees were rarely able to give examples of opportunities to develop useful skills. The 'light duties' program received the most negative feedback:

"No. Listen, no offence – I mean no offence at all – but I have not gained any [emphasis] skill from light duties. Nothing at all. Light duties is essentially unstitching and err de-badging pins from a piece of cardboard. As far as I can see, the activities that they have got us to do are more punitive than education. That's just my personal opinion." **(#13, male, 26 years)**

"Oh God no. If anything, I think it's just made me more stressed out [laughs]. Some of the people I really don't want to associate [with]. But you're pretty much sitting in one room all day together. You pretty much have no choice. But definitely there are no skills at all that you can learn from... none at all. I think it's just something that they make you do to pass time, pass the hours. It's something they can give to everyone – get them to do anything – as long as they're there then they're doing something."
(#7, male, 45 years)

It was common for participants to describe the program as a punitive and time-wasting activity. The above participant also described the negative impact of associating with other men in the program. However, many female participants valued the 'social' group environment, regardless of the program's skill-building value.

Other programs that were more positively appraised (woodwork and bike repair) were perceived to have community benefits. For example, when asked if he had gained any skills during community work, one participant said:

"No, because half the stuff is ridiculous. Ok, right the woodwork is brilliant because you're giving back to society. It's charity work, right. That one's good. Woodwork, you're building stuff for kids. And the fixing bikes for people who need bikes – the fixing bikes one is good too. [...] There needs to be a purpose, a goal. They [CCO participants] need a goal. Something to guide them, right, this is... so it's a purpose for what they are doing." **(#19, male, 33 years)**

7.3 Valued aspects of services

When asked about what services or programs they needed to help them to 'move on' or that would support transitions to ETE where appropriate, most interviewees spoke about the qualities of services, including: a focus on helping (i.e., a therapeutic focus - noting that most services reported were accessed in a punitive context or as a part of a welfare-system requirement); attention to individual needs; and services that considered their justice-related requirements and barriers. For example, interviewees commonly discussed the importance of subjective experiences of respect, care and genuine interest shown by staff when discussing what they needed from services:

Interviewees commonly stated that they had hoped for the opportunity to 'give back' to the community or gain skills through community work but had been let down:

"There have been other projects that I have always wanted to do – like cooking or feeding the homeless and I never got my chance to do it. They never offered it and when I asked about it, it essentially got shut down by my case worker. [...] Actually, I know people who have gone to their corrections worker and asked them to put them into various things and the community corrections officers have done it. I've obviously drawn the short straw."
(#13, male, 26 years)

...

Interviewer: "Did you gain any extra skills through the work that you did through these programs?"

"None at all. I was disappointed with that because from what I understood of how this program works, they try to support you in acquiring some basic skills that you can try to transfer into the workplace. And I watched a number of guys go through that and pick up some skills – OH&S courses, first aid courses depending on how able-bodied you were from what I understand, the facility runs a forklift driver's licence. I would have loved that opportunity. None of that came my way. [...] it's a lost opportunity now – it's eight months gone." **(#6, male, 54 years)**

The participant described variation in assignment to programs, determined by individual case workers and likely by program location. This was reported by others. Most prominently, participants spoke about being capable of undertaking more skilful work than what they were allocated.

"I guess like... having that extra support. Yeah, where you can actually go to a place where that person would actually see you as a person, go through with you, "OK, what have you got? What could we do to help you go further? Like oh, you've got Cert II, are you interested in maybe getting a Cert IV and let me see what I can do where I can lead you to that" Stuff like that, you know what I mean?" **(#1, female, 35 years)**

"I just think that having support is the main thing. Somebody to believe and help you try – that helps me, I guess. Even just having [Jesuit Social Services staff] come in when we are doing community work – even him coming in and asking what kind of work we are into, that kind of thing helps – I believe. Even if it's for a short time, it makes an impact, it really does - it does help."
(#14, female, 30 years)

...

"I want to work with somebody that is actually open. I want to work with somebody that actually loves the job and is not just there because they need to earn money too... and not about what they need to tick off the box. You're in a position where you can help us, so help us! Don't put us down. Don't degrade us further than what we already have been." **(#1 female, 35 years)**

One interviewee reflected on others and his own experiences when discussing what services are needed:

"Social support. They need a lot of support. They do need support, that's one thing... Not many people have got the comfort of having family around them. And umm, how can I say it? It's the family support and there is not a lot of places that actually do support that are close. You have got to go far away. There's not enough of that, I believe anyways. There's just a lot of pressure to get your hours done and to look for jobs and no support to help with that. That's it, more or less." **(#17, male, 50 years)**

The above participant had a health issue impacting his ability to work and highlighted that specialist and local support is important. Some interviewees reported that financial counselling and development of financial literacy skills would be valuable. Assistance with child care was also an identified area of need for many, particularly women. It was identified that meeting child care needs was very difficult and often led to absence from community work programs.

8: Discussion

The CCO is an intermediate sentencing option that has the potential to re-direct people away from justice system involvement and help to alleviate burden from Victoria's prison system by reducing recidivist offending. Multiple government reports and literature reviews have highlighted numerous issues that potentially impact the completion rates of CCOs and underscore the need to ensure that appropriate services and programs are delivered to this group to address complex needs (Gelb et al., 2019, Trotter, 2012, Victorian Auditor General, 2017, Australian Law Reform Commission, 2017, CV, 2019). However, it is likely that, due to the overall assessment of this group as being of 'lower risk' to the community (compared to prisoners) and the relatively recent introduction of CCOs in Victoria in 2012, there has been little research attention to this justice sub-group.

This report has presented integrated analysis of mixed methods data, including: a 'needs assessment' survey conducted with 200 participants who, as a component of their CCO, attended a community work program in the City of Brimbank; and, in-depth research interview data collected from 20 of these individuals. Purposive recruitment of residents from the City of Brimbank and the City of Melton – municipalities in the WMR of Melbourne impacted by persistent socio-economic disadvantage – was undertaken for the interview component in order to gain insight into place-based experiences and the availability of local services and supports.

This study has sought to contribute to an improved understanding of the circumstances and needs of this group, their barriers to participation in the mainstream community (particularly in ETE), the extent to which they appear to be engaged in rehabilitative opportunities and to point to practice and systems learnings and area for possible future research investigation.

What follows is a summary of the key findings of this study, structured under four main headings to address the research questions.

RQ1: What are the main demographic and justice related characteristics of this group?

RQ2: Are there identifiable trends in relation to educational attainment and engagement in employment among this group?

RQ2: Are there common areas of need or barriers to participation in the mainstream community?

RQ4: What is the extent and nature of engagement with services and rehabilitative opportunities?

Implications for practice, and future inquiry are presented in Section 9, Conclusion.

Demographic and justice-related characteristics

Participants were diverse in age (range 19-61 years) with the majority of participants (67%) being aged between 25 and 44 years (average age 34.9 years). Just over two-thirds of the sample were male (68.5%), with women representing 31.5% of the sample. Over half the sample (52%) had dependent children under the age of 18 years.

Three quarters of participants lived in an LGA in the west metropolitan region of Melbourne, with participants most often residing in the City of Brimbank (n=52, 26%) followed by the City of Melton (n=46, 23%). All interview participants were purposively recruited from these LGAs. Three participants were Aboriginal (1.5% of the sample), which is a small number but approximately twice the rate of representation in the Victorian population, reflecting over-representation of this group in the justice system. [30]

Over a third of participants (n=72, 36%) were born overseas – higher than the Victorian state average of 28.4% and reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Melbourne's WMR. The most common languages spoken at home after English were Arabic (8%) and Dinka (4%).

It is noteworthy that, while the recruitment site was located in the City of Brimbank, the sample was not solely comprised of participants who live in the WMR. A quarter of all participants (n=50, 25%) reportedly resided in LGAs that required them to travel a substantial distance to attend their community work program. This is not explained in the data; however, it is important to note that inaccessibility of programs due to distance is likely to be a significant barrier to completion of CCOs. For example, recent serious driving charges were reported by about one in five EPS participants (and were likely to be more common).

---

[30] In the 2016 Census, approximately 0.765% of Victoria's reported having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origins (ABS 2016).

Analysis was undertaken of self-reported justice involvement, with prior involvement and particularly past incarceration being a marker of both disadvantage and complexity (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019) and associated with increased likelihood of recidivism (SAC, 2017b). The findings confirmed that many participants had previous justice involvement, with 25% reporting prior incarceration as adults. This is lower than CV records, which indicate that around 40% of people on CCOs have been incarcerated previously (SCRGSP, 2019). The discrepancy may be accounted for due to the sensitivity of this information. Just over a quarter of participants (n=46, 26.5%) reported that they first became involved in the justice system as a juvenile (that is age 17 years or younger) and six participants (3.1%) reported that they spent time under supervision as a juvenile. [31] Analysis of self-reported most serious recent crimes found that, when the assault (18%) and sex offences (6%) were combined, crimes against the person comprised the most common offence category (24%). This was followed by driving offences (21%) and drug offences (14%).

The main characteristics of the CCOs sample were compared with data describing Victoria's prison population (CV, 2018). This was undertaken to draw out general similarities and differences and to elucidate areas of particular need among the CCO group for further exploration. [32] The most significant finding emerging the comparison, was the large proportion of women in the CCOs sample compared to Victoria's prisons (31.5% vs 7.1% in 2019; SAC, 2019).

Another notable point of difference was that a higher proportion of the CCOs group were aged under 25 years (CCOs 16% vs prison 12%). Analysis of CV data indicated young people aged 18-24 years on CCOs are twice more likely to reoffend than others (SAC, 2017b).

Education, training and employment trends and related experiences

It is well established that educational attainment shapes an individual's life opportunities, with low attainment being a marker of disadvantage. In Australia, in 2018, the apparent retention rate to Year 12 was 85% (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). It was anticipated that our sample may include a higher proportion of individuals who had lower than average levels of education as many were residents of a low socio-economic area. Indeed this was the case, with 45% reporting that they completed year 12 (not including equivalent qualifications) – which is also substantially lower than Victorian state averages and those recorded among residents of the City of Brimbank (.idcommunity, 2019a, ABS, 2017).

This is consistent more broadly across the criminal justice system (Andrews et al., 2011) indicating that specific attention to the needs of this group is warranted.

Compared to prisoners, the CCOs sample included a lower proportion of Australian born people (64% vs 73.7% prisoners). This feature is likely to be at least partly explained by the geographical location of the study, with parts of the WMR of Melbourne and the City of Brimbank in particular being characterised by cultural diversity.

Of general note is the low representation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in the CCOs sample compared to the prison population (1.5% vs 8.5%). This cannot be explained with the available data; however, a recent report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are less likely than non-Indigenous offenders to receive a community sentence (ALRC, 2017). The ALRC (2017) and a recent review of the literature on community based sentencing orders (Gelb et al., 2019) highlight that community-based sentences may be particularly effective with this group and identify potential ways that orders could be tailored to suit their needs.

The most serious charges recorded among our sample of people on CCOs were compared with data Victorian prisoner records. While offences categorised as "crimes against the person" were the most common among the CCO cohort, as expected, these types of crimes are more common among prisoners (reported by 45.9% vs 24%). CCO participants were more likely than those in the prison population to report that their most serious charge was a driving offence (CCOs 21% vs prison 2.9%) or a "good order offence" (CCOs 7% vs prison 1.4%).

Interviewees commonly discussed having poor educational experiences, characterised by disruption and, in many instances, underpinned by troubled home environments and/or traumatic experiences. Four interviewees had lived in out of home or kinship care and a further two had experienced violence perpetrated by a family member as children. Three had arrived in Australia as refugees. Experiences of growing up in poverty were very commonly reported. A small but substantial proportion of the survey sample (n=30; 15%) reported very low level of educational attainment (year 9 or below).

There were indications that educational attainment was likely to be over-reported among the survey sample, with very poor or minimal school attendance and associated low levels of literacy being more prominently discussed in interviews. For example, four individuals had either cognitive impairment or a learning disability impacting their schooling, discussed further in the next section.

The most striking characteristic of tertiary education experiences was the common attainment of one or more 'Certificate' level qualification as the highest qualification, reported by 41% of the sample (compared to 14.5% of Victorians), with the corollary being that very few (7%) reportedly attained a university level degree. Particular issues were associated with low level tertiary courses (especially Certificates I and II), which appeared to be undertaken opportunistically in conjunction with justice or welfare system obligations. Many were incomplete and undertaken in disjointed areas and appeared to very rarely lead to employment. The majority of interviewees spoke about having disjointed careers traversing multiple industry types and some had limited or no employment history.

While one purported advantage of serving a community based sentence (when compared to incarceration) is of being able to maintain connection to economic support (Victorian Auditor General, 2017), the study found instead that unemployment was the dominant experience. Many interviewees were limited in their capacity to participate in the workforce due to carer responsibilities and health issues/disability. However, around two thirds of participants who were able to engage in ETE activities were not doing so (n=114, 67%, excluding n=30 who were not able to work). Over half of the sample (56%) reportedly depended on government benefits as their

main source of income and long term unemployment was also very common. For example, of 104 job seekers, approximately two thirds (66%, n=69) had been unemployed for more than a year and over a quarter (26%, n=27) had been unemployed for five or more years. There were also low levels of current engagement in education or training, with 7% of the sample being enrolled in a training course. Moreover, participants expressed reluctance to embark on courses in the future, framed by the urgent need to earn an income but also potentially linked to previous experiences of undertaking courses that have not led to employment.

While there is evidence in the literature of the association between employment and crime cessation; the link is not straightforward. That is, having 'any' employment is not enough to guarantee desistance from crime. For example, some studies have found that employment stability and quality of work are important variables (Uggen, 2000). This study found that, among n=50 participants who had any form of paid work, approximately a quarter (26%, n=13) were simultaneously seeking other work. Among the interview sample, most participants with work were in precarious, low paying forms of work and many were underemployed. General satisfaction with employment was low – strongly related to low income and lack of job security. Many discussed how they were vulnerable to retrenchment due to the nature of their employment (with experiences of retrenchment being common). Most were seeking other forms of work.

Common areas of need and barriers to participation in the mainstream community

Data describing areas of need and barriers to participation were primarily derived from the qualitative component of the study. However, when contextualised by empirical data highlighting issues such as widespread long term unemployment (presented above), analysis elucidates the extent of marginalisation experienced among this group. It also flags the range of likely underlying and intersecting issues that impact the health and wellbeing of individuals in this cohort and that, left unaddressed, are likely to impact rates of reoffending.

The previous section indicated that many individuals in this sample had very poor educational experiences often underpinned by difficult, unstable or damaging family environments The lasting psychological and social impacts of trauma experiences were also discussed. For example, many individuals in this cohort experienced mental health issues as adults (e.g., anxiety, depression and PTSD) and/or problematic alcohol and/drug use. Low educational attainment commonly stemmed from difficult or disrupted family environments and was undoubtedly a major ongoing barrier to gaining stable and well-paying employment for many.

[31] Nb. there were n=190 responses to these questions.
[32] Comparison is indicative only as the CCO data is self-reported and there may have been selection biases shaping the characteristics of the cohort.

One of the prominent findings in this study was the common experience of social isolation and limited social support from informal networks. Interviewees commonly described having difficult or troubled close relationships. For example, over half of EPS sample had dependent children, however, interviewees rarely reported being in intact partnered relationships. Other issues commonly mentioned, including recent or current involvement of child protective services and intimate partner violence, pointed to stress and dysfunction in many participants' social networks. Friendships were often linked to involvement in problematic drug use and offending.

Related to social isolation, there were very low levels of participation in activities that potentially provide structure, enjoyment and fulfilment to daily life among this cohort (e.g., recreational or social activities). For example, 12 of 15 interviewees reported that their community work program was the only activity that they participated in outside of the home. This meant also that, for many, the only opportunity to form new connections was in association with their community work program. Migrant participants faced extra hurdles to inclusion in the mainstream community, experiencing multiple disadvantages (e.g., having English as an additional language, isolation from family and community) and sometimes trauma experiences. However, the qualitative sample size was not large enough to draw out dominant themes among migrant groups.

Most interviewees reported growing up in poverty and all interviewees experienced current financial hardship, signalling the presence of intergenerational patterns consistent with understandings of how social-economic disadvantage is perpetuated. Financial hardship was especially severe among those who were long term unemployed. Experiences of unmanaged debt were very common. Interviewees very commonly discussed not being able to afford housing, with the majority reporting that they were financially reliant on others (usually family). Housing stability was a serious issue for 13% (n=26) of the survey cohort, who indicated that they lived in temporary housing or were sleeping rough (73% of whom were men).

It has been acknowledged in the literature that the needs of women in the justice system are very different to those of men; requiring different responses (Gelb et al., 2019, Trotter and Flynn, 2016; Trotter et al., 2012). The findings from this study indicated that this is also the case with the CCOs cohort. Analysis of the survey data indicated that women had distinct patterns of engagement in ETE activities. They were more likely to seek part time work and had, on average, been out of the workforce for longer making them less competitive in the job market. These trends were likely shaped by child care responsibilities, with two thirds (66.7%) of women in the sample stating that they had dependent children in their care compared

to less than half (44.6%) of men, with the actual burden for care of children by women likely to be greater. Single parent households were very common, placing pressure on resources. Though numbers of female interviewees were small (n=7) their accounts highlighted a number of complex and intersecting issues distinct from men, including experiences of intimate partner violence and problematic drug and alcohol use linked to trauma. Of three women who had partners, two of these partners were incarcerated, another indicator of stress and disruption in close relationships generally. Recent involvement of child protective services was common and some women were negotiating ongoing custody arrangements and trauma associated with having children removed from their care.

When survey participants were asked about their 'main' barrier to employment, the most common response was 'justice record' (mentioned by 38%). It is likely that many were referring to stigma and discrimination from employers, with this having a well-documented impact on employment outcomes (Graffam et al., 2008; Varghese, 2012) and being commonly discussed. Analysis showed that those participants who had spent time in prison were less likely to be employed. Some interviewees had experiences of setbacks because of their record while others described how they anticipated encountering stigma or discrimination and how this discouraged them from seeking work. The impact of community work as a barrier to employment was also commonly discussed, with most delaying entering the workforce until their unpaid hours were complete. Related to this, interviewees commonly spoke about how their community work extended for longer than they expected due to their placement in a program only one or two times a week. This unnecessarily prolonged time they spent out of the workforce and appeared to exacerbate the punitive impact of community work. It also had a reported effect on motivation and confidence. Additional negative impacts of community work programs on individuals are discussed in greater depth under the next heading.

Confidence or motivation was a common 'main' barrier to employment named among survey participants (reported by 10%). Interview data confirmed that this was likely to be partly attributable to the impact of justice system involvement itself and, for many due to the impacts of long term unemployment. Survey participants also reported that one or more health issues, impairment or injuries was their 'main' barrier to employment (reported by 11%). This was also prominently discussed among interviewees. For example, six of 20 interviewees reported that they had a serious health issues or injury impacting their employability.

For three individuals, this was so serious that they were unable to work at all. Others with health issues or injuries were often capable of working, but could not find appropriate work or were not competitive in the market because of the combined impact of their health issue and justice record. Retrenchment due to workplace injury was particularly common and some older participants experienced age-related discrimination as an additional barrier hindering efforts to make a career change. These are examples of the generally intersecting nature and cumulative impact of issues.

Cognitive impairment including acquired brain injury are more common among justice cohorts than the general population (Schofield et al., 2006), though the

extent that this is experienced among people on CCOs is not well described. Having a cognitive impairment is likely to have a strong bearing on ability to understand conditions of CCOs and other important information, thereby potentially impacting CCO completion rates. Although very few survey participants disclosed that they had a cognitive disability (n=6, 3%), a quarter of the qualitative sample (n=5) reported that they had either a cognitive impairment or learning disability that impacted their ability to participate in work (e.g. two interviewees were on disability support due to severity) [33]. Though the sample size is too small to make generalisations, the data indicate that the extent of cognitive impairments and serious learning difficulties (e.g., impacting on literacy) among this group is worth future investigation.

Engagement with services and rehabilitative opportunities

Access to services and support programs

The literature on 'offender rehabilitation' strongly emphasises the need to build in links to treatment services and rehabilitative opportunities, with research finding that punitive approaches are ineffective and can lead to poorer recidivism outcomes (McGuire, 2013, McGuire et al., 2002, Barnett and Howard, 2018). Delivery of support targeted to individual needs and timeliness of response are understood to be critical elements effective responses, and are embedded in the RNR model, an evidence-based paradigm for offender programming used prominently in a range of countries including Australia. Summarising this literature, Przybylski (2008) writes:

In essence, there must be a match between the treatment approach, staff characteristics, and the learning style and personality of the offender. Programs must take into account and be responsive to the motivation, cognitive ability, age, gender, ethnicity and other characteristics of the offender. (p.38)

It is not currently well understood how effectively the system in Victoria delivers therapeutic support to people on CCOs consistent with this approach. The Sentencing Advisory Council found that the majority of contraventions of CCOs in Victoria occur within the first three months of commencement, highlighting how critical it is to engage people early into their sentence (SAC, 2017b, p.xiii). However, a review conducted by the Victorian Auditor General (2017) indicated that wait times for pre-assessment were often longer than three months and that the system in Victoria was struggling to cope with both the level of demand and complexity of needs among this group. The literature, though diverse, emphasises the importance of program integrity, with treatment programs that are well designed, properly

staffed being likely to achieve positive results – and the absence of these factors being predictive of failure (Przybylski, 2008, Lowenkamp et al., 2006).

While the cost of managing a person in the community in Victoria is currently around one tenth the cost of imprisonment (PC, 2020), Gelb and colleagues (2019) point out that the provision of treatment options and programs that align with the evidence for effective practice targeting people with complex needs in the justice system is likely to require greater investment.

Interview participants in this study were asked to discuss whether they were receiving the support that they need to assist them to 'move on', whether they had benefited from experiences of community work program activities, and what services or type of support they would benefit from. Thus, while it did not comprehensively audit the range of supports that participants accessed in association with their CCO or the timeliness of their delivery, the data gives insight into current levels of need and characteristics of programs that are valued.

It should also be noted that many participants described having actively taken steps to address issues that were recognised as a 'problem' or directly associated with their offending, such as ceasing involvement with crime associated peers and ceasing problematic alcohol use. For many, however, this claimed independence appeared to be shaped by poor previous experiences with services and a damaged sense of worthiness of support (associated with the identity of being a 'criminal' or 'offender') and there were many areas where participants appeared to be floundering. In summary, there was little evidence to suggest that the participants in this study were receiving adequate support to address self-identified needs or to improve their inclusion in the community.

[33] One of these individuals acquired a brain injury as a young adult.

The most pronounced area of identified need among this cohort was for paid employment and, accordingly, the most common service type accessed by participants was employment services. Levels of dissatisfaction with this service type were very high and experiences of impersonal and infrequent contact triggered disengagement for many. These services were often accessed as a part of Centrelink's 'mutual obligation' requirements (and attached to welfare support) and this coercive context appeared to shape experiences. Participants commonly expressed the view that they were treated impersonally and did not perceive that staff wanted to genuinely help them. Some spoke about how they had been recommended jobs that did not consider their personal situation. Those who accessed specialist employment providers, such as disability specialists, appeared to have better experiences; however, numbers of such participants were small.

In relation to seeking employment, the data indicate that assistance to manage issues such as disclosure of their criminal record to employers and to build soft skills associated with gaining employment (e.g., interview skills) would be highly valuable. However, no participant reported receiving any assistance in this area. While it was reported that structured sessions relating to employment readiness skills training had been historically provided in the area and embedded into community work hours, no such support was available through the DJCS site at the time of the study.

While effective and tailored employment-related support was an identified area of need, previous research has identified that the provision of employment support programs alone are likely to be ineffective if the kind of multifaceted needs identified here and in other studies with justice-involved people are not adequately addressed (Newton et al., 2016). Others suggest that employment should be viewed as a longer term outcome, rather than the focus of rehabilitative efforts. For example, Skardhamar (2014) recently found that employment is a consequence of cessation in offending rather than a cause.

While a small number of interviewees reported receiving counselling or psychological support, including associated with problematic drug and alcohol use, access to other helpful services or therapeutic programs targeting their needs was uncommon. No participant reported attending other types of behaviour change programs. Experiences of social isolation and limited social support were particularly prominent issues among this sample, but are seldom emphasised in offender rehabilitation models and were issues for which participants appeared to receive little or no support.

Similarly it was clear that family violence was an issue for many and it appeared that others would potentially benefit from family counselling of parenting support though it was not reported if any related services were accessed. It bears acknowledgment that there was likely to be under-reporting of referrals to services and programs.

When asked about what types of services were needed, participants commonly spoke about how specialist services were not always available in their area and many had limited or no ability to arrange their own transport. Some interviewees reported that financial counselling and development of financial literacy skills would be valuable but was not received. Assistance with child care was also an identified area of need for many, particularly women.

Another challenge associated with the rehabilitative aspect of CCOs is that treatment programs have been shown to be more effective when undertaken on a voluntary basis (Parhar et al., 2008). This has implications in relation to how many treatment conditions are imposed by courts (and the effectiveness of doing so), as well as for program implementation. Unfortunately, the majority of service encounters described by participants in this study appeared to be associated with an element of coercion, thus potentially undermining benefits.

When asked about what services or programs they needed to help them to 'move on' or that would support transitions to ETE where appropriate, most interviewees spoke about the qualities of services, including: a focus on 'helping' (rather than coercion or punishment); attention to individual needs; and services that considered their justice-related requirements and barriers.

Participants placed the highest value on the quality of interpersonal interactions with professionals, including qualities of genuineness, respect, and willingness to help. This is consistent with the literature, which emphasises the centrality of the client-worker relationship and worker skill in relation to effective practice with involuntary clients (Turner and Trotter, 2013). Trotter (2015) reports that building positive relationships (for example through empathy, humour, optimism and some self disclosure) "can be the foundation for effective outcomes when accompanied by pro-social modelling and problem solving" (in Turner and Trotter, 2013 p.18). Many of these elements are relevant to the delivery of community work programs also, which is discussed next.

Experiences of community work programs

The research investigating effectiveness of community service programs is limited. Further, Turner and Trotter (2013) note that "very few studies have primarily focused their attention on the possible rehabilitative and reparative effects of community service" (p.21). In one such study McIvor (1992) found that reconviction rates were lower among people who believed their community service experience to be worthwhile, because it provided opportunities to learn new skills or was seen to be of value to the community. Previous literature has established that positive experiences in community service were associated with placements that featured high levels of contact between the person sentenced and "beneficiaries," including agencies or individuals (McIvor et al., 2010, p.52), enabling people to appreciate the tangible value of their work (Rex and Gelsthorpe, 2002). Similarly, Wood (2012) describes the rehabilitative value of providing the opportunity, through placement in positive productive and valued roles that allow individuals to experience, practice and demonstrate ability to do something well that others value. More recently, in their review of best practice principles for community service initiatives, Turner and Trotter (2013) identified that community work should be viewed as meaningful and worthwhile.

These elements were similarly valued by participants in this study, who emphasised that they wanted to "give back" or "repay" their debt to the community. Participants gave the most negative assessments of community work programs when there were not clearly articulated links to community benefit (e.g., donation of useful goods to disadvantaged community members). However, it is noteworthy that almost all 200 survey participants were engaged in one of four programs that were operated solely on DJCS premises [34] thus participants had little or no interaction with the community.

While interviewees in this study commonly anticipated being able to build useful skills through community work, no individual was able to identify any useful skills that they had gained from any community work program. Instead, many emphasised the negative impact of the work on them.

While it is possible that activities had skill-building elements that were not recognised by participants or had not been articulated to them, participants most commonly described the work that they had undertaken as time-wasting, punitive and demeaning.

This was particularly the case for the program termed 'light duties' which involved the lowest skill level. It is possible that some participants were assigned to this program due to health issues or injury, However all interviewees who participated in the light duties program (n=14) reported that they had capacity to undertake work of a higher skill level. This experience is consistent with one review identifying that work placements designed solely for 'busywork' are common (Turner & Trotter, 2013). The deleterious impact of undertaking these types of activities on the wellbeing of participants was noted, particularly linked to poor self-esteem and a perception of worthlessness. On a related point, many participants were aware of others who had been offered opportunities to participate in more meaningful work or accredited courses and expressed disappointment in their own comparative experience.

Numerous studies discuss the quality of the relationship between the offender and their community supervisor (Trotter et al., 2012, Sapouna et al., 2015), with a "pro-social modelling" approach being identified as instrumental to success (Turner & Trotter, 2013, p. 49). Elements such as role clarification, reinforcing and modelling pro-social values, collaborative problem-solving (based on the client's definition of problems and goals) are also identified in the literature as key practice elements in working with involuntary clients in corrections contexts (Trotter, 2015). This is consistent with literature demonstrating that a strengths-based (rather than deficits focused) approach to program delivery is most effective (Maruna and LeBel, 2010).

There was some evidence of the role of the quality of interactions with corrections staff and program attendance. For example, harsh or punitive interactions with corrections staff were linked to program dropout; and, conversely, one participant reported that they attended the program because the supervisor was a 'good guy'. Numerous participants in this study specifically spoke about the 'friendly' interactions that they had with the Employment Pathways Advisor, with some mentioning that this was the only staff member in the context of community work program who had asked them about their future plans. In this study, the significance of interactions with community corrections staff appeared to be amplified due to the common experience of social isolation among participants. Overall, there was wide variation in participants' appraisals of interactions with corrections staff, suggesting that there was room for improvement in this area.

[34] Light duties (n=88, 44%); woodwork (n=55, 28%); repair work (n=31, 15%); bike repair (n=26, 13%). Noting that one participant in the repair work category undertook graffiti removal.

All participants in this study were in group-based community work programs. However, while groups appear to be the dominant approach to community work programming in Victoria generally (Victorian Auditor General, 2017) and a cost efficient way to provide programs, the available evidence points to the effectiveness of individual placements (Turner & Trotter, 2013). The qualitative findings from this study suggested that there are negative effects of group participation, particularly among male interviewees, who commonly reported that the group environment of community work created "negative associations" and undermined efforts to change. Such experiences likely had other unseen effects on participants such as damage to confidence, motivation and self-esteem. The negative views of group participation were less pronounced among women, who commonly reported 'enjoying' the program because of the opportunity for social interaction.

Of particular note was the highly gendered participation in the light duties program (with 86% of women compared to 25% of men participating on the program). It appeared that the dominance of men in other programs partly shaped women's preference to attend this program. Other researchers have similarly noted the negative impact that dominance of men at community work sites had on women, particularly exposing them to intimidating and offensive behaviour (Alder and Edwards, 1992, McIvor, 1998) [35]. It also appeared however, that there was a lack of availability of other programs that were either appealing or suitable for this group. Issues associated with program availability identified here are consistent with those identified by the Victorian Auditor General (2017), who noted that "[P]roviding sufficient and appropriate opportunities for the growing number of offenders on CCOs is an ongoing challenge for CV" (p.30).

More generally, the circumstances of women also commonly shaped their availability to participate in community work programs. Interviewees with children (including single fathers) indicated that arranging child care while they attended community work was a significant challenge – with the burden often falling on other family members. The wellbeing of children of parents on CCOs is generally overlooked; however, it is undoubtable that these issues have an impact on them. Moreover, these factors likely have a bearing on the length of completion of their CCO (as they are less available) and potentially on likelihood of breaching their order.

A note on outcomes from the Employment Pathways Service

As discussed in Section 1.3 of this report, recruitment of participants to this study was undertaken via an Employment Pathways Service (EPS), which was embedded into the DJCS community corrections work program site in Derrimut (the City of Brimbank). The role of the Employment Pathways Advisor EPA was to improve pathways of people in the justice system by facilitating greater connection to ETE opportunities.

While this initiative was not formally evaluated, positive participant outcomes were noted. Jesuit Social Services' records show that 18% of participants (n=39) enrolled in ETE-related programs as a direct result of their engagement with the EPS. That is, 23 participants enrolled in Jesuit Community College's "Skills First Reconnect" program and a further 16 participants were referred to a Jobs Victoria Employment Network (JVEN). Numerous other participants were supported in other ways, for example, connected to adult literacy services and tertiary level courses (for example, the EPA accompanied one participant to a university open day).

In-depth interview participants identified that they benefited greatly from interaction with staff from this program. This role featured informal, relationship-based support with staff employed at Jesuit Social Services (i.e., with no supervisory role). Participation was voluntary. Consistent with the findings of the study, participants valued staff friendliness, helpfulness and interest shown in their wellbeing and this can be interpreted in the context of general experiences of social isolation, marginalisation and low self-esteem.

Experience gained from implementing this service, coupled with insights gained during the research generally, suggest that there is a real and ongoing need for this type of informal support among people in this justice cohort.

Embedding the EPS service in the Derrimut Community Work Office has strengthened the relationship between Jesuit Social Services and DJCS in the City of Brimbank. It has also improved communication and information transfer between the agencies as well as referral into services and opportunities. Learnings from this program will be incorporated into consultation and advocacy activities as well as into Jesuit Social Services' program development.

8.3 Study Limitations

The data collected in the EPS 'needs assessment' survey was obtained from a relatively large sample (N=200). However, a range of factors including the local geographical context, service context, biases associated with self-report data and the small qualitative sample mean that these data should be treated cautiously and the findings cannot be readily extrapolated to the population of people on CCOs in Victoria, although the identified issues are worth exploring in other contexts.

As mentioned in the beginning of this report, recruitment was undertaken in a persistently disadvantaged area of Melbourne, where there is higher than state average unemployment (Vinson and Rawsthorne, 2015). Further, the survey data were collected by the EPS – reflecting the characteristics of people who chose to engage in an initial assessment with the service. Both factors may have also led to over-sampling of participants with employment needs. Analysis of community work program participation is not a reflection of total program participation in the area. For example, the EPS did not have contact with many participants engaged in 'off-site' programs (graffiti removal is an example of one such program operational at the time). It is likely that individuals accessing these programs had different experience of undertaking community work to those who were working 'on-site'.

Further, there are many limitations to the 'needs assessment' data that are a product of the self-report method and the service provision context in which the data were collected. For example, reporting educational attainment may have resulted in social desirability response bias (tendency to give responses that may be favourable to the interviewer). This may have contributed to over-reporting of educational attainment and under-reporting of issues such as illicit drug use, motivation levels and prior incarceration.

Measures were taken to ameliorate the effect of reporting biases, particularly in the context of the EPS. Participants were offered written and verbal information about the nature of the service, the role of the EPA, how their information will be used by the service, the voluntary nature of their participation and the limits to confidentiality of their information (especially regarding mandatory legislation) (Appendix 2). We note that, while the response rate to the needs assessment questions was very good overall, [36] there is a lower response to some items (e.g., level of social support). This is possibly linked to the potential sensitivity of the items for some participants.

The scope of the information that was collected by the EPS and the level of detail recorded was also limited by the service provision context in which it was gathered (i.e., only information relevant to the EPS was recorded). Missing data include: details of sentences including multiple and concurrent sentences, court where the individual was sentenced in (i.e., Magistrates or higher court), historical justice records, justice system pathways, details such as child protection system involvement (including as victim and perpetrator) and problematic drug and alcohol use. It is possible that some participants in this sample were on Parole or CCO Imprisonment Orders. However, we do not believe that this is a substantial limitation, as the proportion of participants eligible for these orders was small (discussed in Section 2). The qualitative arm of the study also helped to verify some of the data as well as enriching, and helping to elucidate missing information including the social backgrounds and experiences of participants; however, the qualitative sample is small and limited to participants who were residents of the Brimbank and Melton LGAs.

[35] Nb. No interviewee in this sample reported having such experiences.

[36] There was a greater than 90% response rate for 22 of 26 items that are included in this report (100% response rate for 15 of 26 of these). There was a lower but still adequate response rate of 77-84% for the remaining 4 items that are included in this report.

9: Conclusion

In the context of Victoria's burgeoning prison population, there is a stronger case than ever for ensuring that CCOs are used by the courts wherever appropriate and that those who receive these sentences have the support and opportunities that they need to make positive changes towards living crime-free lives. There has been remarkably little research attention given to people on community-based orders such as CCOs in Australia and internationally.

This report contributes to an improved understanding of the profile of men and women in this cohort, their needs and barriers to inclusion in the mainstream community. The following key issues were identified that are likely to have a significant bearing on health and wellbeing outcomes, including the likelihood of future involvement in offending:

– Lower than average educational attainment often underscored by difficult or traumatic childhood experiences.

– Limited engagement in employment and, among those who were working, engagement in tenuous low paying employment.

– High levels of social isolation and common experiences of troubled personal relationships.

– Low levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and poor hope for the future exacerbated by the stigmatising impact of having a justice record.

– Ongoing complex needs including poor mental health, problematic alcohol and/drug use and involvement with the child protection system impacting capacity to focus on meeting justice system requirements.

Among this cohort there were people whose distinct needs exacerbate their vulnerability to experiencing poor outcomes and who require targeted consideration. These groups include women, people from culturally diverse groups, young people, single parents and people with cognitive impairments.

While these findings have particular local relevance, having been collected primarily from residents of Melbourne's west metropolitan region and from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they also bear consideration in relation to planning, policy, program development and practice in other contexts. This is particularly the case given the dearth of detailed research in this area.

Analysis has also provided insight into the extent to which the rehabilitative aspects of the CCO sentence are being realised. Recent internal reviews in Victoria indicate that the system may not be functioning as well as it could be. For example, there has been a declining rate of completion of CCOs in Victoria across several years and the rate of completion (at 59.2% in 2017-18) was the lowest in the country (the national average was 72.9%; SCRGSP, 2019). Moreover, issues have been identified in relation to the efficiency of the system in offering timely access to rehabilitative supports and community work placements (Victorian Auditor General, 2019). However, thus far, there has been very little attention to lived experiences of people on CCOs.

The data collected in this study has provided insights into participants' engagement in rehabilitative activities including therapeutic services and programs as well as mandatory community work, producing two key findings:

1. Limited evidence of access to supportive or therapeutic services to address identified needs or improve inclusion in the mainstream community.

2. Experiences of community work program involvement as being solely punitive, unnecessarily protracted in length with little evidence of skill-building or rehabilitative elements.

Detailed analysis of the accounts of participants on CCOs has provided considerable insight into program and practice elements that have the potential to improve the positive impact of this sentencing option, summarised next.

What can we learn about approaches to practice from the experiences of participants on CCOs?

Acknowledging that there is a large body of literature on effective delivery of therapeutic programs to people in the justice system, what follows is not a comprehensive discussion of every feature that is necessary to program delivery but, rather, a brief discussion of important features that emerged from analysis of the experiences of participants.

These features are consistent with, and reiterate, existing understandings about 'what works' in relation to program or service delivery with people in the justice system, (e.g., Andrews, 2001; Andrews et al., 2011; Barnett and Howard, 2018; Borzycky, 2005; McGuire, 2013). They bear repeating given that engagement with therapeutic services was low and experiences were often poor.

- **Delivery of multi-modal support, holistic and tailored forms of support** (as opposed to 'one size fits all') are some well-established key features of successful programs with people in the justice system and supported by study findings here. Participants in this study identified a range of holistic issues for which they could potentially benefit from support including problematic alcohol and drug use, mental health, education and employment transition support, family and relationship functioning, use of violence in and out of the home and financial counselling and financial literacy skill-building.

- The importance of a **relational approach to service provision**. Positive, supportive and respectful relationships with service providers were highly valued. These types of positive relationships can be instrumental to change, having the potential to supplant critical relational experiences that individuals may be lacking in their natural social networks (e.g., encouragement to persist despite setbacks).

- **Emphasis on building confidence and motivation.** Damaged self-esteem and poor self-belief were common barriers to change. Strengths-based approaches and motivational techniques are likely to be particularly effective. Building skills to manage the stigma associated with a justice record was also an identified area of need.

- **Long term support.** The conglomeration of multiple issues as well as justice system obligations was often overwhelming to participants, and goals such as gaining employment not immediately possible for many. Unrealistic expectations from services only exacerbated marginalisation. Services need the capacity to support the participant to work through smaller steps as they work towards larger goals, requiring persistence over a long period.

- **Programs that minimise use of coercion.** While coercion may be systemically viewed as a way to ensure participation in structured therapeutic activities, programs accessed in a coercive context or with elements of coercion are less effective than those accessed voluntarily. This is a complex area requiring employment of skilled staff and use of flexible approaches to service delivery.

- **Programs that are geographically accessible.** This may include provision of multiple types of specialist support through local access points.

The study also provided rare insight into experiences of community work programs. Below is a summary of practice elements that were valued among this group. We acknowledge that many of the elements identified above overlap with those identified by Turner and Trotter in their review of best practice for the operation of community service schemes (2013), with the current study providing substantial insight into the impact that poor experiences of community work programs have on individual wellbeing including their efforts to change.

- **Placement in productive and valued community work roles.** Community work program activities should have a tangible benefit to the community, enabling participants the opportunity to genuinely 'repay' their debt or make amends and to improve their sense of self-worth.

- **Improved inclusion** through engagement in community integrated work programs involving contact with or supervision by community members. Avoidance of 'sheltered workshop' programs (e.g., closed environments).

- **Building skills** including 'soft' skills such as social and job readiness skills that support a non-offending lifestyle. This could be through incorporation of non-tertiary accredited modules delivered by community service providers into community work programs.

- **Pro-social interactions** with supervisors and others who are supportive of the individual and who encourage positive change.

- **Individual or small group placements where possible.** Group work environments appeared to have a particularly deleterious impact on males in this study, contributing to a negative self view (i.e., identity as 'criminal') and undermining efforts to change.

- **Collaborative approaches to arranging work placements** with a focus on enabling individuals to use their skills and build on their individual strengths.

- **Efficiency of placements.** Periods of engagement in community work should be streamlined and condensed where possible (including possibilities for after hours and weekend attendance) so that individuals are able to focus on 'moving on' with their lives as quickly as possible.

Areas for future investigation

- It appears that mainstream employment service providers are not meeting the needs of this group. The reasons for this, and strategies to improve outcomes, require further investigation. The employment-focused service attached to this study offered informal, voluntary, relationship-based support, recording good outcomes with participants, suggesting the approach is worth further exploration

- There is an identified need to consider how to improve ETE pathways through alignment of accredited/tertiary qualifications with realistic local employment opportunities. This involves collaboration with industry and ensuring that participants have the opportunity to attain the relevant practical experience necessary to secure employment.

- The evidence base for implementation of community work programs is weak. The types of programs that are offered and the quality of implementation is likely to vary substantially across Australia and within jurisdictions. Rigorous and detailed evaluation of community work program types is needed to improve understanding of effective practice. Measurement of impact should encompass a range of variables beyond recidivism and completion rates, including subjective experiences such as impact on self-esteem, confidence, the work supervisory relationship and it should also explore the needs of particular groups including women, people with cognitive impairments and those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- Analysis of the service usage patterns of people on CCOs in Victoria is needed, particularly to identify areas (i.e., geographical and service types) where people who have been referred to a program or service as a condition of their CCO experience delays or access issues.

- Exploration of training opportunities for corrective services staff to participate in programs that improve their skills in modelling pro-social relationships may be worthwhile. An example of one such program is Jesuit Social Services' "Modelling Respect and Equality" (MORE) program.

- The study found that there were very few opportunities for people in this cohort to improve their level of connectedness to community. Social isolation was a substantial issue. Exploration of opportunities and models that may help to decrease social isolation and improve sense of community belonging among this group is a worthwhile endeavour.

- It has been noted elsewhere that there are access issues impacting the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as well as people living in rural and remote locations on CCOs. These are issues worth further investigation that were beyond the scope of this paper.

- Children and significant others (i.e., partners and other family members) are often negatively impacted by the justice system involvement of their family member/significant other and of CCO conditions. They are a disadvantaged group whose needs are largely 'hidden'. They also potentially play a pivotal role in the person's journey towards desistance from offending. Investigation into ways to improve opportunities for support or inclusion of these groups where appropriate is recommended.

A note on the impacts of COVID-19

The final draft of this report was written during the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, with all data collection and analysis having been conducted prior. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged people worldwide and there are many indications that it has had, and will continue to have, a heavy impact on people involved in this study (and those in the justice system generally). In the context of Victoria thus far, people in the NWMR of Melbourne have been diagnosed with the disease at a greater rate than elsewhere in the state and the impact of shutdowns have a heavy impact on those with precarious forms of employment. The mental health toll of the pandemic is likely to be significant among the most vulnerable members of our community. Further, it is likely that much of the long term burden will be disproportionately experienced among already marginalised and disadvantaged communities, including people in the justice system, due to increased unemployment, and constraints on government expenditure.

The effects of the pandemic on the justice system itself have yet to be fully realised or described; however, prison numbers in Victoria have fallen for the first time in years, with indications that this is due to decreased use of remand (CV, 2020). While this is a reprieve for some, undoubtedly, others in the justice system have been deeply and detrimentally impacted by the pandemic. At a systems level, an increase in court backlogs has been recently identified as an issue (Parliament of Victoria, 2020). People on CCOs have been impacted by the suspension of community work group programs and changes delivery of other programs and services. It remains to be seen how well the system will cope with the challenges that lie ahead. In summary, continued pressure among advocacy groups is required to ensure that the needs of these people remain a focus in these difficult and uncertain times.

References

.IDCOMMUNITY. 2017. City of Brimbank Unemployment. Available: https://economy.id.com.au/brimbank/unemployment.

.IDCOMMUNITY. 2019a. City of Brimbank: Community profile. Demographic resources [Online]. Available: https://profile.id.com.au/brimbank.

.IDCOMMUNITY. 2019b. City of Melton: Community profile. Demographic resources [Online]. Available: https://profile.id.com.au/melton/home.

ALDER, C. & EDWARDS, A. 1992. 'Better than jail': Women's perceptions of community based orders. Melbourne: Office of Corrections.

ALLARD, S., SMALL, W. & MARIO, L. 2013. Reconsidering the urban disadvantaged: The role of systems, institutions, and organizations. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 647, 6-20.

ANDREWS, D. A., BONTA, J. & HOGE, R. D. 1990. Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 17, 19-52.

ANDREWS, D. A. 2001. Principles of effective correctional programs. In: MOTIUK , L. L. & SERIN, C. (eds.) Compendium 2000 on effective correctional programming Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Services of Canada.

ANDREWS, D. A., BONTA, J. & WORMITH, J. S. 2011. The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 38, 735-755.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS. 2016. Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. June 2016. 3238.0.55.001 [Online]. Available: https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3238.0.55.001

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2017. 2016 Census QuickStats. [Online]. Available: https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/CED801

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS. 2018. Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods. 6102.0.55.001. Available: https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6102.0.55.001~Feb%202018~Main%20Features~Labour%20Force%20Survey~19.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS. 2019. Prisoners in Australia, 2019: 4517.0. [Online]. Available: https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4517.0

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2019. Secondary education: school retention and completion [Online]. Available: https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/secondary-education-school-retention-completion.

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION 2017. Pathways to justice-inquiry into the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, final report no 133. Canberra: ALRC.

BARNETT, G. & HOWARD, F. 2018. What doesn't work to reduce reoffending? A review of reviews of ineffective interventions for adults convicted of crimes. European Psychologist, 23, 111-129.

BORZYCKI, M. 2005. Interventions for Prisoners Returning to the Community: A report prepared by the Australian Institute of Criminology for the Community Safety and Justice Branch of the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL 2018. Brimbank community profile 2018. Melbourne: Policy, Advocacy and Research Unit.

BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE 2018. An unfair Australia? Mapping youth unemployment hotspots. Melbourne.

CARCACH, C. & GRANT, A. 1999. Imprisonment in Australia: Trends in prison populations and imprisonment rates 1982-1998. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice. 130, 1-6.

CID, J. & MARTÍ, J. 2012. Turning points and returning points: Understanding the role of family ties in the process of desistance. European Journal of Criminology, 9, 603-620.

CORRECTIONS VICTORIA 2018. Annual Prisoner Statistical Profile 2006-07 to 2016-17. [Online] Available: http://www.corrections.vic.gov.au/home/prisoner+and+offender+statistics. Department of Justice and Regulation, Melbourne.

CORRECTIONS VICTORIA 2019. Annual Prisoner Statistical Profile 2006-07 to 2016-17. Melbourne: Department of Justice and Community Safety.

CORRECTIONS VICTORIA 2020. Monthly time series prisoner and offender data. Melbourne: Department of Justice and Community Safety.

CULLEN, F. T., JONSON, C. L. & NAGIN, D. S. 2011. Prisons do not reduce recidivism: The high cost of ignoring science. The Prison Journal, 91, 48S-65S.

FARRALL, S. 2012. Rethinking what works with offenders: Probation, social context and desistance from crime, New York, Routledge.

GELB, K., STOBBS, N. & HOGG, R. 2019. Community-based sentencing orders and parole: A review of literature and evaluations across jurisdictions Queensland University of Technology.

GENDREAU, P., GOGGIN, C. & CULLEN, F. T. 1999. The effects of prison sentences on recidivism. 3. Solicitor General Canada, User Report

GRAFFAM, J., SHINKFIELD, A. & HARDCASTLE, L. 2008. The perceived employability of ex-prisoners and offenders. Int J Offender Ther Comp Criminol, 52, 673-85.

LOWENKAMP, C. T., LATESSA, E. J. & SMITH, P. 2006. Does correctional program quality really matter? The impact of adhering to the principles of effective intervention. Criminolog and Public Policy, 5, 575-594.

MARUNA, S. & LEBEL, T. 2010. The desistance paradigm in correctional practice: from programmes to live. In: F MCNEILL, P. R. C. T. (ed.) Offender supervision: New directions in theory, research and practice,. Abington: Willan Publishing.

MCGUIRE, J. 2013. 'What works' to reduce re-offending 18 years on. In: LEAM, C., DIXON, L. & GANNON, T. A. (eds.) What works in offender rehabilitation: An evidence-based approach to assessment and treatment. First Edition ed.: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

MCGUIRE, J., KINDERMAN, P. & HUGHES, C. 2002. Effective practice in offending behaviour programs: Literature review. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales London.

MCIVOR, G. 1992. Sentenced to serve: The operation and impact of community service by offenders, Avebury.

MCIVOR, G. 1998. 'Jobs for the boys?: Gender differences in referral to community service'. Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, 27, 280.

MCIVOR, G., BEYENS, K., BLAY, E. & BOONE, M. 2010. Community service in Belgium, the Netherlands, Scotland and Spain: a comparative perspective. European Journal of Probation, 2, 82-98.

NAGIN, D., CULLEN, F. T. & JONSON, C. 2009. Imprisonment and reoffending. Crime and Justice, 38, 115-200.

NEWTON, D., DAY, A., GILES, M., WODAK, J., GRAFFAM, J. & BALDRY, E. 2016. The Impact of Vocational Education and Training Programs on Recidivism. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 62, 187-207.

PARHAR, K., WORMITH, J., DERKZEN, D. & BEAUREGARD, A. 2008. Offender coercion in treatment: A meta-analysis of effectiveness. Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 35, 1109-1135.

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA 2020. Inquiry into the Victorian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Interim report. Melbourne: Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION 2020. Report on Government Services 2020, 4517.0. Commonwealth of Australia.

PRZYBYLSKI, R. 2008. What works: Effective recidivism reduction and risk-focused prevention programs. Denver,: Colorado Division of Criminal Justice.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT UNIT 2014. The Brimbank Atlas of Health and Education: Mapping the Influences on Health and Education in the Brimbank Community, PHIDU, University of Adelaide.

REX, S. & GELSTHORPE, L. 2002. The role of community service in reducing offending: Evaluating pathfinder projects in the UK. The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, 41, 311-325.

SAMPSON, R. 2013. The place of context: A theory and strategy for criminology's hard problems. Criminology, 51, 31.

SAPOUNA, M., BISSET, C., CONLONG, A. & MATTHEWS, B. 2015. What works to reduce reoffending: a summary of the evidence. Justice. Analytical services. Scottish Government, Edinburgh.

SCHOFIELD, P. W., BUTLER, T. G., HOLLIS, S. J., SMITH, N. E., LEE, S. J. & KELSO, W. M. 2006. Traumatic brain injury among Australian prisoners: rates, recurrence and sequelae. Brain Injury, 20, 499-506.

SENTENCING ACT 1991 [VIC]. Available: http://classic. austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/sa1991121/

SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL 2016. Victoria's Prison Population 2005 to 2016. Melbourne, Victoria.

SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL. 2017a. Community Correction Order. Available: https://www. sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-sentencing/ sentencing-options-for-adults/community-correction-order [Accessed 4 July 2017].

SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL 2017b. Contravention of community correction orders. Melbourne: SAC.

SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL. 2019. Victoria's Imprisonment Rates [Online]. Available: https://www. sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/statistics/sentencing-trends/victoria-imprisonment-rates 2020].

SENTENCING AMENDMENT (EMERGENCY WORKERS) ACT 2014 [VIC] [Online]. Available: http://classic.austlii. edu.au/au/legis/vic/num_act/sawa20146902014435/

SGS ECONOMICS AND PLANNING 2019. Economic, social and environmental profile: Western metro region. Prepared for Infrastructure Victoria. Melbourne.

SHARKEY, P. & FABER, J. W. 2014. Where, when, why, and for whom do residential contexts matter? Moving away from the dichotomous understanding of neighborhood effects. Annual Review of Sociology, 40, 559-579.

SKARDHAMAR, T. & SAVOLAINEN, J. 2014. Changes in criminal offending around the time of job entry: A study of employment and desistance. Criminology, 52.

STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA 2017a. Managing Community Correction Orders. Victorian Auditor-General's report. Melbourne.

STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA 2017b. Victoria's diverse population: 2016 Census. Department of Premier and Cabinet.

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE PROVISION 2019. Report on government services 2019. Canberra: Productivity Commission.

TAYLOR, S. 2017. The Brimbank Spatial Map of Physical and Social Infrastructure 2017. Melbourne: Australian Health Policy Collaboration.

TROTTER, C. 2012. Effective community-based supervision of young offenders. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, 1-6.

TROTTER, C. 2015. Working with involuntary clients: A guide to practice, London, Routledge.

TROTTER, C. & FLYNN, C. 2016. Literature review: Best practice with women offenders. Melbourne: Melbourne: Monash University Criminal Justice Research Consortium.

TROTTER, C., MCIVOR, G. & SHEEHAN, R. 2012. The Effectiveness of Support and Rehabilitation Services for Women Offenders. Australian Social Work, 65, 6-20.

TROTTER, C. & WARD, T. 2013. Involuntary clients, pro-social modelling and ethics. Ethics and Social Welfare, 7, 74-90.

TURNER, S. E. & TROTTER, C. J. 2013. Best practice principles for the operation of community service schemes-A systematic review of the literature. Victoria: Monash University Criminal Justice Research Consortium.

UGGEN, C. 2000. Work as a Turning Point in the Life Course of Criminals: A duration model of age, employment, and recidivism. American Sociological Review, 65, 529.

VARGHESE, F. P. 2012. Vocational interventions with offenders: Interdisciplinary research, theory, and integration. The Counseling Psychologist, 41, 1011-1039.

VICTORIAN AUDITOR GENERAL 2017. Managing community correction orders. Melbourne: Victorian Auditor General's Office.

VINSON, T. 1999. Unequal in life: The distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales. Melbourne: Jesuit Social Services.

VINSON, T. & RAWSTHORNE, M. 2015. Dropping off the edge: 2015. Melbourne: Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia.

VISHER, C. A., DEBUS-SHERRILL, S. A. & YAHNER, J. 2011. Employment after prison: A longitudinal study of former prisoners. Justice Quarterly, 28, 698-718.

VISHER, C. A., DEBUS, S. & YAHNER, J. 2008. Employment after prison: A longitudinal study of releasees in three states. Washington: Urban Institute Justice Policy Center.

WERMINK, H., BLOKLAND, A., NIEUWBEERTA, P., NAGIN, D. & TOLLENAAR, N. 2010. Comparing the effects of community service and short-term imprisonment on recidivism: A matched samples approach. Journal of Experimental Criminology, 6, 325-349.

WOOD, W. R. 2012. Correcting community service: From work crews to community work in a juvenile court. Justice Quarterly, 29, 684-711.

YOUNG, C. 2014. Opening the Door: Brimbank community workshop report. Project Report. Melbourne: Victoria Institute of Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Employment Pathways Assistance needs assessment questionnaire

	Question	Brief description/category
1	Name of site (list if other)	Name of site (list if other)
2	Are you on a current community corrections order (CCO)? If NO, participant is not eligible for research study	Community corrections Y/N
3	What type of activity are you currently involved in to meet your community work requirements?	Community work activity
4	Engagement date	Engagement date
5	First name	First name
6	Participant ID	Participant ID
7	Date of birth (day/month/year)	Date of birth (day/month/year)
8	Gender	Gender
9	Suburb of residence	Suburb (type manually if not in City of Brimbank)
10	Postcode of residence *See validation page for City of Brimbank postcodes	Postcode
11	What is your country of birth?	Country of birth (skip to Q13 if Australia)
12	What is your residency status?	Residency status
13	What is the main language that you speak at home?	Main language
14	Spoken English language skills of participant (staff rated)	Spoken Engl language skills (v good, good, poor, v poor, no English)
15	Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background?	ATSI background
16	Do you have children under the age of 18 in your care?	Dependent children (Y/N)
17	What is your primary source of income?	Current income source
18	What is your current housing situation? (dropdown options)	Housing
19	What is your highest completed school level? (dropdown)	Education - school level
20	Have you done any courses since leaving high school? If none: write N/A and SKIP to Q23; If Yes: What is the highest completed level? (dropdown)	Tertiary - Highest qualification obtained
21	What is the area/field of your highest level of qualification?	Area/field of work (highest qual). Blank if none
22	Do you have any other qualifications? (refer to codes in next column if helpful to abbrev)	List other quals (e.g. 4, 7) Blank if none
23	Are you currently enrolled in any training courses?	Current training (Y/N/not sure)
24	Are you considering undertaking any training or education in the near future?	Future intent training/education
25	If yes, please name	List details

26	You mentioned that you are on a CCO… What type of offence led to your current community corrections order?	Nature of offending (re current order)
27	Have you ever served time in an adult prison? If NO, skip next question	Served time adult prison (Y/N)
28	What is the total length of time you have served in an adult prison?	Length time adult prison (days/months/years)
29	How old were you when you were first involved in the justice system i.e. attended a court?	Age first involvement justice (years)
30	Have you ever spent time in juvenile detention?	Spent time in juvenile detention (Y/N)
31	Are you employed at the moment? (dropdown options)	Employment status
32	If answered (4) NOT employed and NOT seeking work, why is this the case?	Reason not seeking employment
33	For how long have you been out of work? (Skip to Q35)	Length unemployment (months/years)
34	If (5) currently employed & job seeking, what are reasons you want change? (prompts: diff career, better pay, hours, conflict at work)	Reason seeking change
35	What is the longest time that you have ever worked for an employer?	Longest time prev employment (months/years)
36	Do you have any health issues, disability or impairment that impacts on your ability to work? Y/N	Disability, impairment, condition? If NO, skip to Q40
37	If yes, what is the main issue? (dropdown)	Nature of main disability, impairment or condition
38	Do you have any other impairments that impact on your ability to work? (dropdown options)	List any other disabilities or impairments
39	In what ways does this issue/do these issues impact you in relation to employment or education?	Nature of impact
40	What type of work have you had the most experience doing?	Most significant area of experience
41	What type of work are you seeking now? (e.g. industry, level) (dropdown options)	Type work seeking
42	How confident do you feel about getting a job?	Confidence (Very confident, confident, not confident, not at all confident, don't know, never looked)
43	How would you rate the quality of support that you have from family, partner and or friends? Note: not just financial or material	Social support (very good, good, poor, very poor, none)
44	If you were to name the biggest barrier to finding work for you what would it be? (dropdown options)	Main barrier
45	Are there any other barriers?	Other barriers
46	What is the main issue that you require assistance with?	Main area assistance needed
47	Do you have a current resume?	Resume
48	What is the best contact number for you?	Phone
49	What is your email address?	Email
50	If you no longer have contact with the participant, please state reason why	Reason no contact
	Consent items	Agrees to use of data for research (y/n)
		Agrees to be re-contacted by a researcher (y/n)

Appendix 2. Employment Pathways Advice service information and consent form

Employment Pathways Advisor
Information and consent form

Jesuit
Social Services
Building a Just Society

> Contact: Mr Byron Price, Project Officer (Jesuit Community College)
> Ph. (03) 9415 8700
> Email: byron.price@jss.org.au

About the service

Our Employment Pathways Advisor is here to learn about your needs and goals and, if it's what you want, *help identify strategies and opportunities* for you to move into employment and/or training.

Participation is **not** linked to any justice requirements (e.g., Community Corrections Order).

The service is **voluntary** – you do not have to participate and can stop at any time.

What information is collected about me?

The Employment Pathways Advisor will ask questions about you to help make sure that the service is **right for you**. The questions focus on your education, employment and justice history and your future goals.

The information is recorded on a Jesuit Social Services' computer. It can only be seen by other Jesuit Social Services staff and is **not linked to any other records** (e.g., justice).

You **may ask** to see this information. If any information that is written about you is wrong, you can **let us know** and we will talk with you about how it should be changed.

Your information is **confidential.** The only time we may break this is if we are very concerned about your safety or that of other people.

This form and the information that is collected about me will be **stored securely** at Jesuit Social Services and will be **destroyed after 5 years.**

Will my information be used in any other way?

Your information may be used in **Jesuit Social Services' research** to help us learn more about the needs of people in the justice system and strategies to improve pathways into education, training and employment. This may be published in reports or academic articles and published on our website and/or that of our funders.

We will **never identify you** in any information that is used (this means that you will remain **anonymous**) and your information will remain **confidential.**

How do I find out more or make a complaint?

If you have any questions about how information about you is used, just ask the Employment Pathways Advisor. You have a right to complain if you are not happy – just ask to speak to the following person:

Mr Garry Roach, Jesuit Social Services (General Manager Practice Development and Complaints Manager)

(03) 9421 7600

Participant Consent – tear here and pass this part of the form to Jesuit Social Services staff

I (participant's name) _____

☐ have read or have had read to me, the above information and agree to allow Jesuit Social Services to collect information about me and to use it for the purpose of working with the Employment Pathways Advice Service.

☐ I agree for information that is collected to be used in Jesuit Social Services research as described above.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

[Office use Participant ID: _____

Appendix 3. Analysis of ETE characteristics by gender and country of birth

Table 1. Analysis of unemployment^ by age

	All CCO participants	% All	Unemployed*	% Unemployed
18-24 years	31	16%	19	16%
25-34 years	71	36%	40	34%
35-44 years	63	32%	37	32%
45-54 years	27	14%	16	14%
55-64 years	6	3%	4	3%
65-70 years	2	1%	1	1%
Totals	200	100%	117	100%

^ For this analysis, the following groups were included: Those who were unemployed and seeking work, those who were not seeking and did not specify a reason and those who specified that their CCO was the main barrier to gaining work (as per Figure 12).

Table 2. Analysis of ETE characteristics of men and women (n=200)

Job seeking status	Description	Female (n=63)		Male (n=137)	
Seeking work	Unemployed job seekers:	29	46%	75	54%
	- seeking full time work	22	35%	69	50%
	- seeking part time or casual	7	11%	6	4%
	Employed and seeking change	2	3%	11	8%
Not seeking work	Employed (any basis):	9	14%	28	20%
	- employed full time	2	3%	11	8%
	- employed part time or casual /unsure of basis	5	8%	9	6%
	- self employed	2	3%	8	6%
	Student or seeking training	1	0.5%	3	2%
	Illness/disability	7	11%	7	5%
	Parental or carer responsibilities	9	14%	3	2%
	CCO hours barrier	1	0.5%	3	2%
	No stated reason	5	8%	5	4%

Table 3. Analysis of ETE characteristics of overseas compared to Australian-born participants

		Overseas-born (n=73)		Australian-born (n=137)	
Seeking work	Unemployed job seekers:	36	49%	68	54%
	- seeking full time work	30	42%	61	48%
	- seeking part time or casual	6	8%	7	6%
	Employed and seeking change	6	8%	7	6%
Not seeking work	Employed (any basis):	16	22%	21	16.5%
	- employed full time	6	8.5%	7	5.5%
	- employed part time or casual /unsure of basis	6	8.5%	8	6%
	- self employed	4	5%	6	5%
	Student or seeking training	3	4%	3	2%
	Illness/disability	3	4%	11	9%
	Parental or carer responsibilities	4	5%	8	6%
	No stated reason	3	4%	7	6%

Appendix 4. List of most serious offence/most serious charge categories (Corrections Victoria)

MSO/MSC category	Included offence types
Homicide	murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to murder, culpable driving causing death, defensive homicide, manslaughter.
Assault	assault in company, assault causing grievous bodily harm, assault police, assault with a weapon, cause injury, cause serious injury, kidnapping & abduction, stalking offences, unlawful imprisonment.
Sex offences	rape, incest, indecent assault, sexual offences against under age person, sexual penetration, wilful/indecent exposure.
Robbery & extortion	armed robbery, blackmail, extortion, other robbery.
Burglary	aggravated burglary, break and enter with intent, burglary.
Fraud & misappropriation	deception, false pretences, forgery and uttering, fraud, misappropriation.
Other property offences	arson, criminal/property damage, handling stolen goods, other theft, possess firearms, receiving, shoplifting, theft motor vehicle, unlawful possession of stolen goods.
Breach of order	cancellation of parole, breach of intervention order, breach of suspended sentence, breach of drug order, breach of other order.
Drug offences	dealing/trafficking in drugs, import/conspire drugs, manufacture/grow drugs, possession of cannabis, possession of other drugs, use cannabis, use other drugs.
Driving offences	dangerous/reckless/negligent driving, drive under influence of drugs, driving whilst disqualified, exceed 0.05% BAC, exceed 00% BAC, refuse breath test, unlicensed driving.
Good order offences	contempt of court, escape from prison, fail to appear at court, forfeited recognizance, loitering, resist/hinder police, riot/unlawful assembly/affray, unlawful of premises/ trespassing, drunkenness offences.

Source: Corrections Victoria (2018)

Jesuit
Social Services
Building a Just Society

🌐 www.jss.org.au

✉ jss@jss.org.au

📞 03 9421 7600

▶ /jesuitsocialservices

t /jesuitsocialser

f /jesuitsocialservices