



# HIRING OPPORTUNITIES & MEANINGFUL ADVANCEMENT (HOMA)

PROGRAM 2021 - 2024



# PROGRAM SUMMARY

There are around 37,000 people who are homeless in New South Wales right now. The ways to homelessness are diverse and complex, as are the ways out.

The Will2Live Cafe Redfern is now in development and will provide many pathways to employment.

Homa is Will2Live's employment pathway for the long term unemployed, the homeless and those on or below the poverty line in Sydney, to train, employ and transition them into mainstream employment over a period of up to 12 months.

Four people are taken into the program every 3 months, making the total yearly intake 16 people.

Homa creates person-centred employment pathways that allow marginalised people to build their confidence and self-esteem, it also helps them to become work-ready in the practical and supportive workplaces of its social enterprises. They will then transition into meaningful jobs within a network of supportive mainstream employers. The program consists of three steps:

**STEP 1** Holistic case management to address individual barriers to employment, being trained in and earn career certifications.  
*[1 to 2 weeks]*

**STEP 2** The people step into our social enterprises and begin practical, on-the-job, employment skills training. The people progress at their own pace from trainee positions into genuine roles  
*[1 to 6 months]*

**STEP 3** When the people are 'employment ready' they transition into aligned roles within a network of supportive mainstream companies. The person and mainstream employer are provided with support during the first few months of the role *[3 months]*

*Homa creates person-centred employment pathways that allow marginalised people to build their confidence and self-esteem*



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*The cost of the total program equates to under \$8,000 per person for the full employment pathway over our 4 year plan.*

*The outcomes are sustainable because a graduate is not only employed within a mainstream company, they have also learned how to be an effective employee and to maintain a job.*

## COST

The capital cost of the Will2Live cafe is \$250,000. The running cost of Homa is \$65,000 per year, a cost which is associated with these primary areas: housing relief during the program; the salaries of the staff that provide care; the wages paid to the people while they are training in the social enterprises, before they progress into regular roles; and running costs of the cafe.

The cost of the total program equates to under \$8,000 per person for the full employment pathway over our 4-year plan.

## OUTCOMES

Homa supports marginalised people into sustainable mainstream employment. The outcomes are sustainable because a graduate is not only employed within a mainstream company but they have also learned how to be an effective employee and to maintain a job.

They have certifications and a recent work history, having successfully sustained a role within Will2Live's social enterprises, and within a mainstream company. They have a current resume and a written reference from their manager in the social enterprise. And they have an understanding of their identity as an employee, the skills and value they bring to a workplace, and an awareness of their challenges and the strategies they use to manage them.

# MODEL

How can we reduce poverty in Australia?

Poverty is everyone's responsibility. Governments must be encouraged to implement policies and strategies that reduce social inequality. We must ensure that Australia's welfare system provides a sufficient income for every citizen. There also needs to be investment in housing. More than 250,000 Australians are sitting on public housing wait lists, so a sustained ongoing investment by the Government to provide for those not provided for in the housing market is required. Changes are needed in the housing system to reward investment in affordable housing and increase housing supply. Business, government and communities need to provide people who are in poverty with increased opportunities for civic and economic participation and engagement through employment, education, training and social inclusion.

Will2Live recognises that entering the workforce can be difficult for marginalised people, and that it has become significantly more so due to the effects of COVID-19.

- The people may have no work experience, no referees, and few employment skills
- They may not know their individual work strengths and preferences, or what type of job is suitable at this point in their career
- They may lack the basic requirements of entry-level jobs, such as a White Card, RSA, RCG, and First Aid Certificate
- They may have challenges in areas such as stable housing or mental health, and may lack the support network to assist them with addressing these needs
- Mainstream workplaces may also be unsure how to employ or manage someone from a marginalised background or how to lead an inclusive workplace.

## HOMA IN 2021 IS A THREE-STEP PATHWAY, DESIGNED IN RESPONSE TO THESE NEEDS;

**STEP 1 PREPARATION** – supports the person to address their individual barriers to employment, while starting to build routine, responsibility, and communication skills. It also includes the opportunity to complete certificates such as a White Card, RSA, RCG, and First Aid Certificate

**STEP 2 EMPLOYABILITY** – gives the person the opportunity to learn again how to work by training and employing them in Will2Live's social enterprises. They are able to gain a positive workplace experience, a referee, and an understanding of and confidence in themselves as a worker

**STEP 3 MAINSTREAM EMPLOYMENT** – sets the person up for success in the mainstream workforce by matching them with a suitable job in one of Will2Live's network of partner businesses, and by supporting the person and the new employer through the first months of employment



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# PROGRAM APPROACH

The task of achieving sustainable mainstream work outcomes with people who are homeless, have been excluded from the workforce, or who come from intergenerational unemployment is not easy.

It is difficult because people who face significant barriers to employment need more than a job agency. They need more than office clothes and interview tips. They need more than to be told the theory of how to work again. And they need even more than the handout of a job from a well-meaning company if they have not first learnt how to meaningfully apply themselves.

For this reason Homa uses a comprehensive, innovative, and holistic approach, built upon three interrelated foundations:

1. Holistic case management of each person throughout the program
2. Practical employment skills development within a live business
3. Supportive first step into the mainstream workforce

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## HOLISTIC CASE MANAGEMENT

When stepping into the program the people are connected with a Homa case worker who supports them in regular one on one meetings, to identify and address their individual barriers to employment. This support is holistic and continual throughout the program, and follows trauma-formed principles. Along with their direct care, the case workers draw upon a strong network of other agencies to ensure the people are provided with professional and expert care by the most appropriate service providers.

There is a schedule of the certificates most commonly required in entry-level roles such as Introduction-to-Hospitality, Hospitality-Cafe-Skills, Cookery Skills for Work, First Aid Certificate, White Card, Working with Children Check, Responsible Service of Alcohol, and Responsible Conduct of Gambling. The people in the program can elect to attend the training and certificates that align with their career goals. Attaining these certificates increases employability, adds points of value to resumes, as well as acting as an incentive to remain engaged in the program and giving a sense of achievement.

## PRACTICAL EMPLOYMENT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A LIVE BUSINESS

The power of employment-focused social enterprises and the reason they can achieve impressive outcomes is that they enable people to learn how to work. They do this through creating a safe training environment and culture within the workplace that together fosters learning and personal growth. In a social enterprise there is no 'us' and 'them', and in that lies strength as well as alignment with the Will2Live ethos. It is this

experience, of stepping into a workplace community, being seen for their strengths, being accepted as part of the team, valued by their colleagues and trusted by their managers, that spurs the growth of each individual. In the workplace, the people find a new community and a new identity, and an appreciation of work. For this reason, Will2Live's social enterprises are the 'heart' of its employment pathways.

Once they have completed Step 1, the people gradually move into employment training within Will2Live's social enterprises, the Will2Live Café in Redfern and the Food Trucks at Central Station, Wentworth Park and Lilyfield. Their transition into the workplaces is on a staggered schedule. Their employment training journey is structured into three sequential but flexible blocks, each with incrementally increasing responsibility and expectations. They start with a short period of work experience; this is unpaid and there is a strong focus on training, and a relatively low expectation on performance. They then move into a traineeship which is defined by ongoing training each day, a higher degree of responsibility, a capped number of hours per week and a trainee wage.

The traineeship continues until a regular employment role becomes available in the social enterprise. When a role becomes available, the person can apply for it and if they are ready then they are offered an award wage role within the general staff of the business. In a regular role, their level of responsibility is raised once again, along with their pay and their status as part of the staffing team. This graduated and flexible pathway through the enterprises allows the people time to learn at their own pace and to slowly build the required skills.

# PROGRAM APPROACH

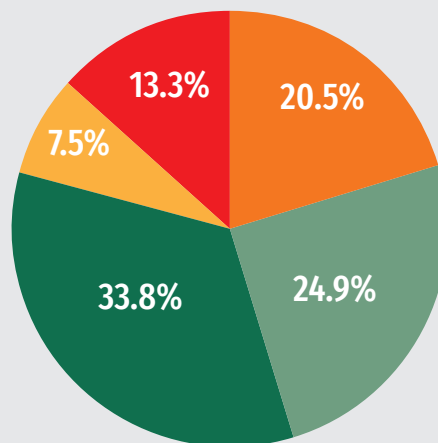
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## SUPPORTIVE FIRST STEPS INTO MAINSTREAM EMPLOYMENT

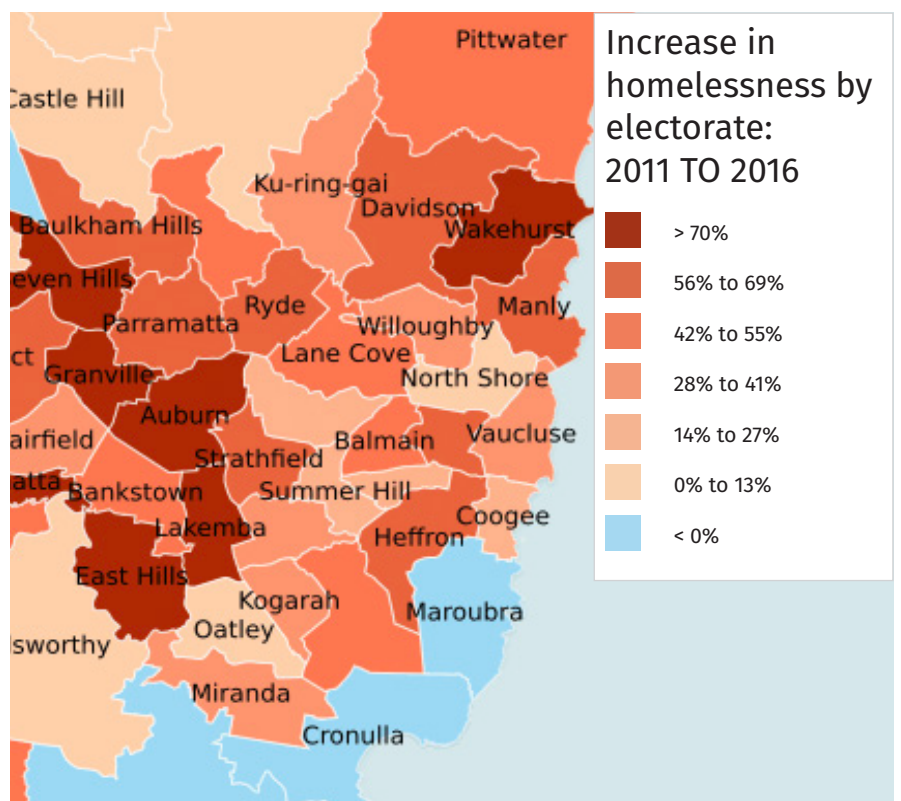
To reinforce the sustainability of the employment outcomes, Homa is developing a network of mainstream employers who are interested in practicing inclusive recruitment and are open to considering Homa graduates for roles that become available in their workforce. This network spans across various industries and locations across Sydney. When roles become available in the partner businesses, a representative shares with Will2Live the details of the role. Then the pool of employment-ready people currently working in the social enterprises are considered for the role, together with their manager. The people who are ready and interested are then supported to apply.

By having the people employed within the social enterprises before stepping out into the mainstream businesses, the people have the valuable opportunity to ‘trip, fall and rise again’ while in a safe and supportive environment. The managers in the social enterprises get to know each person well, and the person too learns about their identity as an employee. This knowledge allows the manager and person to effectively consider each mainstream role when they become available. This increases the chances of a ‘good fit’ between person and role and therefore increases the chance that the mainstream employment will be successful and sustainable. During the first months of mainstream employment, the person and their new employer receive support from Will2Live staff.

## Reasons reported for homelessness



- **Financial difficulties**  
Housing stress, unemployment
- **Accommodation issues**  
Housing crisis, inadequate or inappropriate dwellings
- **Domestic violence and relationship issues**  
Time out from family, family breakdown, violence and assault
- **Health reasons**  
Mental health issues, substance abuse issues
- **Other**  
Transition from care/ custody, lack of support, discrimination



Ref: Homelessness in NSW: Electorate Statistics NSW Parliamentary Research Service, Matthew Dobson and Daniel Montoya, 7/12/2018