# 

Working to provide training, find employment and support people in need





# OCTEC Limited

OCTEC Limited is a not-for-profit community organisation providing high quality employment, training, advocacy and youth services from more than 270 locations.

Our head office is in Orange in Central Western NSW. We deliver services across this state as well as the ACT, Victoria and Queensland. We have offices in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Brisbane, and in many regional centres in each of the three states. We engage and employ local people to ensure our services are relevant and appropriate for each location. On pages 59-62 you will find a directory which details our service locations.

- In 2022, the services we delivered were:
- Disability Employment Services
- ParentsNext Pre-employment Support
- Transition to Work Youth Employment Services
- Jobs Victoria Employment Mentoring Services
- National Panel of Assessors Services
- Services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Technology Services
- Nationally Accredited Industry Training
- Employment-based Traineeships
- Online Learning and Distance Education
- Business and Service Industries Training
- Training for Regional Councils
- Community Services and Health Training, and
- Health and Safety Training.

OCTEC provides quality services to all our clients regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious belief, marital status or disability. We actively seek to understand our clients, including the needs of jobseekers, training participants, disadvantaged or isolated community members, community organisations, government agencies, and national and local businesses. We are flexible in the delivery of our services, allowing us to meet the changing needs of all we serve, based on the circumstances in which they find themselves.

OCTEC acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work, and to their Elders past, present and emerging.





Work participant, Kaiya Driscoll, has developed greater confidence and self belief since startin work at SkinKandy Wollongong.

OCTEC Transitio

otty, are developi orkplace skills d gaining formal alifications while

ualifications while orking at Payce oundation's Kickstart ospitality van.



OCTEC Jobs Victoria participant, Shane O'Driscoll, loves his work at Bakery Republik where his supervisor, Russell Bald, is always willing to provide a guiding hand.



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# **Board of Directors**



Chairperson Cr Jeff Whitton FAICD Company Director



Deputy Chairperson Mr Tom Harvey Retired Head Teacher School Education



Director Mr Bruce Hansen MAICD NSW Rural Fire Service Senior Officer



Director Ms Val Myott MAICD

Business Manager

20



Director Cr Jason Hamling MAICD

Small Business Owner



Director Reg Kidd MAICD Agricultural Consultant

### Glenn Taylor Scholarship Program

Thirteen students studying further education in 2023 have received financial support from OCTEC in the inaugural year of the Glenn Taylor Scholarship program.

As a not for profit employment service and training organisation, a large focus of OCTEC's mission is to negotiate the width and depth of missed opportunities, inequality and unidentified talent in regional and rural areas, particularly in the area of further education.

OCTEC Board Member Glenn Taylor sadly passed away last year. The program is named in Glenn's honour to recognise his commitment to the employment and provision of training to those facing barriers.

The inaugural program was open to students from Central West NSW, with the recipients ranging in age from 18 through to their mid-thirties. The recipients (pictured) are studying in a range of disciplines from health and teaching through to wine science and cinematography. All had been finding it hard to make ends meet due to the financial demands of their education, accommodation and general living expenses.











WELCOME TO JUC ACAI The Academy of SYDNEY 1 MELBOURY

Kaitlyn Stevenson



# **Chairperson Report**

It is once again my pleasure to commend to you the Annual Report for OCTEC Limited.

As Australia, and the world, slowly emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, there was general optimism that better times were ahead. However, major challenges continue: the war in Europe, rising commodities prices, rising interest rates and extreme weather have tested us all during this past year. In times like these, organisations such as OCTEC are more important than ever. I'm proud to say that, once again, the resilience and innovation of our people shone through during 2022, and we continued our tradition of being there for others.

In 2022, OCTEC continued delivery of a broad range of employment services on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. In Disability Employment Services (DES), we delivered strong performance, assisting people with disability, injury or health condition to secure their future through work, while meeting the labour needs of employers - especially important during the economic uncertainty of the pandemic. OCTEC remains Australia's largest not-forprofit provider of this program. Similarly, in our ParentsNext services, staff have continued to meet ongoing challenges and have delivered excellent results for all stakeholders, with the quality of our work leading to invitations to participate in parliamentary reviews of the program. Our Jobs Victoria services continued to offer employment mentoring for disadvantaged and long-term unemployed job seekers across Melbourne and in regional Victoria.

Significantly, our work with disadvantaged young people – for more than forty years at the heart of what we do – expanded with the commencement of a new Workforce Australia Transition to Work contract. Starting in July 2022, OCTEC now delivers Transition to Work across five regions in NSW and the ACT, and the number of participants we assist has risen significantly.

In Training Services there was a shift of focus, concentrating on creating seamless pathways between the development of skills, completion of qualifications and securing employment. This not only assists employers – many struggling to find skilled staff after the COVID lockdowns – but also reflects the new Federal Government's "Jobs and Skills" agenda.

This year we continued to deliver services from Huntley Berry Farm, despite ongoing challenges posed by regular flooding. Staff at the farm maintained their mission, providing supported employment to NDIS participants, as well as offering a tourist attraction and family-friendly venue, as much as the challenging weather conditions would allow.

For the Board, the year was also impacted by the loss of long-term member, Glenn Taylor. His passing was the catalyst for a new scholarship program offering \$20,000 to students experiencing disadvantage, a fitting tribute to Glenn's life and years of community service.

The past year certainly tested all of us, especially our staff and managers, both in the regions and in corporate support. Flooding in NSW, Victoria and South-East Queensland impacted many of our offices, with our Lismore site the worst hit. I would like to thank our teams for their hard work, in extreme circumstances, ensuring OCTEC continued to deliver services to those in need. We will continue to build community, assisting our participants to connect with economy, culture and country, as they develop new skills and forge new careers. And we will continue to partner with local businesses to recruit, train and retain quality staff, meeting their needs today and into the future.

I would like to thank members of the OCTEC Board for their continued dedication and commitment to our organisational vision. I would like to commend our CEO, Andrew McDougall, and our senior management team for their guidance and leadership during this challenging period. And I would like to say a particular thank you to our amazing OCTEC staff for their ongoing support, hard work and resilience during 2022. The work you do makes a real difference in the lives of so many people.

Cr Jeff Whitton FAICD Chairperson



It's an unfortunate fact, but many mature age job seekers face significant barriers and discrimination. When Wendy came to OCTEC DES in Laurieton, on the NSW Mid North Coast, she'd been unemployed for more than three years. Wendy was worried about her financial future, and where she was going to live.

Vendy

In the past, Wendy had worked in customer service roles, including those in hospitality and tourism. She liked working with people. And the Mid North Coast is certainly an area with plenty of tourism jobs available. However, many of these jobs require staff to complete manual tasks – like housekeeping or cleaning – as well as administration. With severe arthritis in her hands, Wendy was unable to complete many of the manual tasks. She was worried that this barrier would prevent her from finding work. At OCTEC, Wendy was introduced to Dave Sargent, one of our DES Career Consultants in Laurieton. Dave worked with Wendy on her résumé, highlighting her administration experience and her personality profile; real assets for potential customer service roles. Dave identified a vacancy as a customer service worker at a local holiday park, which seemed perfect for Wendy. However, the role included housekeeping and cleaning duties, which Wendy would be unable to complete. Because Dave had a great working relationship with the manager of the holiday park, they negotiated a split role which would allow Wendy to perform only admin-related tasks. The employer offered Wendy an interview, and she was delighted when she won the position!

OCTEC provided the employer with access to an Australian Government Restart wage

subsidy, a scheme encouraging business to employ mature age job seekers. OCTEC also paid for corporate clothing and shoes. Once she began work, Dave maintained regular contact with Wendy to make sure things were going well.

More than one year on, Wendy is still thriving in a happy and fulfilling workplace. Her financial future has become much brighter and her housing issues are sorted, as she has stable accommodation at the holiday park. Wendy said, "I am so grateful to OCTEC, DES and Dave for their support. Having worked in an employment agency in the past, I was overwhelmed by the support I received from OCTEC. Not only did they negotiate a position to meet my needs, Dave matched my personality perfectly with that of my employer. Thank you OCTEC for all your support. Because of you, I no longer feel alone."

# **Chief Executive Officer Report**

May I present to you the OCTEC Limited Annual Report for 2022.

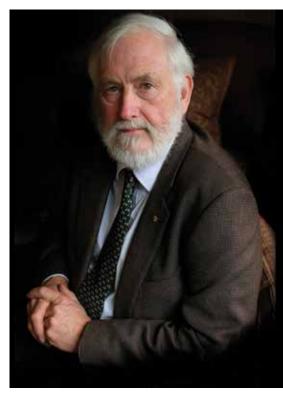
They say that challenges make you stronger. If this is true, then the past year has certainly been a strengthening opportunity for OCTEC's staff, participants and business partners. The impact of global instability, rising interest rates and extreme weather were all major challenges for businesses, communities and individuals. There was also a change of Federal Government and a renewed focus on equipping and qualifying job seekers to meet the skills demands of employers, many struggling to find suitable candidates to fill their vacancies.

In Employment Services, 2022 was a year of maintenance and growth. In July, we commenced the delivery of our expanded Workforce Australia Transition to Work youth employment service across five regions in NSW and the ACT. In the October Budget, the Commonwealth Government announced the extension of the existing contracts in Disability Employment Services (DES) for an additional two years, meaning OCTEC will continue to deliver DES in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and the ACT until 30 June 2025.

We also continued to deliver outstanding employment mentoring services to disadvantaged and long-term unemployed job seekers through Jobs Victoria Employment Services. And we contributed to, and participated in, a parliamentary review into ParentsNext, as the government considered the future of this important program.

Along with Employment Services, our staff and participants in Training Services and at Huntley Berry Farm have all faced the challenges of this past year with positivity and determination. Our Training Services team changed focus during 2022. Our new Head of Training Services, James Eskander, reports to our National Manager for Employment Services, reflecting the need for RTOs to offer tangible pathways between skills development and employment. At Huntley Berry Farm, we continued operations, facing the challenges posed by ongoing wet weather and associated flooding.

Once again, the year put our Corporate Services teams to the test, with organisational policies and procedures developed, tested, implemented and continuously improved. The



impact of flooding on several of our locations meant extensive renovations to sites, including rewiring and reconnecting IT infrastructure. Our Corporate Services team assisted hardworking local staff to get sites back up and running as quickly as possible.

As well as our core services, it was again wonderful to see our people engaging with the community through local charity, fundraising and other events. In 2022, we participated in initiatives such as NAIDOC Week, Push Ups for Mental Health and Footy Colours Day, as well as active involvement in local community and business events and expos. We also increased the use of OCTEC's social media platforms to promote a range of worthwhile causes, such as R U OK Day and National Homelessness Week.

I would like to acknowledge the support of OCTEC's Board and our Chair, Jeff Whitton, during another busy and demanding year. And I would like to acknowledge the passing of long-term Board Member, Glenn Taylor, whose sad loss was the catalyst for a new scholarship program bearing his name.

Despite the many challenges of 2022, OCTEC has continued our tradition of being there for people in the communities we serve. I extend my thanks to all our managers, staff, participants and partners for their hard work and support throughout this time.

Andrew McDougall OAM MAICD Chief Executive Officer











Clockwise from top left: Glenn Taylor Scholarship recipient Ella Lamrock; Tara Shire State College students and teachers taking part in ride to school day when 50 bikes were donated to the school by OCTEC; Samantha Strudwick and Tony Belmonte at Huntley Berry Farm; OCTEC Training Services participants Emma Kennedy, Rayne Paull, Belinda Calderon, Phillipa Ritchie and Casey King, celebrating their Certificate III in Retail graduation with OCTEC Trainer Pamela Fleming; students in the OCTEC-sponsored and supported computer lab at Goldie College in the Solomon Islands; Workforce Australia Transition to Work participants Brooke Keuenhoff and Shania Salmon-Crotty at the Kickstart hospitality van where they work with Payce Foundation's Stephanie Ervin and Tom Mcnee, and are supported by OCTEC Workforce Development Coordinators, Amed Fares and Maggie Lockington.



OCTEC assists communities by providing individuals with pathways to employment, as well as helping people adjust to changing local employment conditions. To do this, our primary focus is to provide vocational education, training and employment assistance to disadvantaged people.

A key to our success has been tailoring services to meet individual needs and local circumstances. For 46 years, we have continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of those we serve.

The community, employment and training sectors are extremely competitive, with a wide range of private and community sector providers, including national and international organisations, operating in a 'user-choice' and constantly-evolving market. In the face of this competition, OCTEC has grown from a small, locally-based organisation to be a major notfor-profit provider, with a network of customised services across eastern Australia.

# Mission

Providing individuals with training and employment opportunities, assisting industry recruit and develop skilled workforces, and contributing to communities becoming more sustainable.

# Purpose

To develop and manage projects that assist people to acquire and improve their ability to seek, obtain and retain employment.

To research, initiate and develop programs that provide support services for local people, in particular young or otherwise disadvantaged people.

To seek support in the community to assist people to develop their capacity for obtaining and retaining employment and to become more self-reliant and better skilled during periods of unemployment.

To research, initiate and develop programs that provide industry training and employment opportunities. To provide services and programs which address and relieve poverty, sickness, distress, misfortune, destitution or helplessness.

# **Participants**

OCTEC provides programs and services to all members of local communities, with particular focus on people facing barriers to employment, education and training services. Our participants include early school leavers, disengaged youth, disadvantaged parents, First Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people with disability, mature age people, people with learning difficulties, those living in rural and remote locations, people seeking retraining for a new career, people unable to progress from insecure employment, and those who are long-term unemployed. More than 80% of participants accessing our services fall into one or more of these categories. We partner with employers - including small and family businesses - specialist organisations and other employment service providers to assist each of our participants overcome their individual barriers.

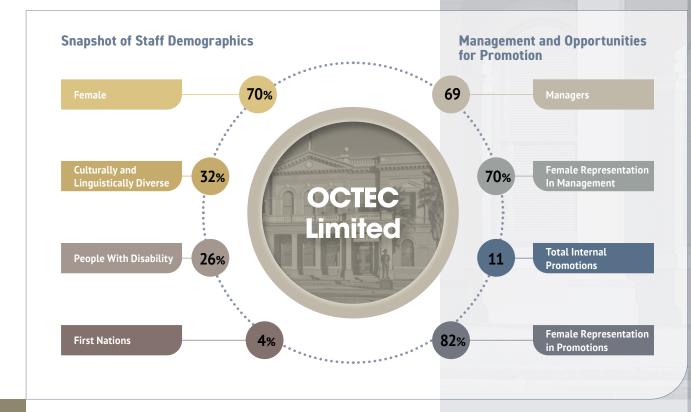




# **Our Staff**

OCTEC is committed to partnering with people from all backgrounds and situations. We exist to help create a fairer and more equitable society. One of our key values is respect for everyone who uses and delivers our services regardless of their gender, race, religion, disability or socio-economic background. This key value is reflected in our staffing practices which include merit-based recruitment

and equal employment opportunity. OCTEC knows that maintaining a diverse workforce, reflecting the characteristics of the communities we serve, is a critical element to quality service provision.





# **Our Senior Management Team**



Chief Executive Officer Andrew McDougall OAM



Manager Employment and Training Services Chris Clark



Deputy Chief Executive Officer Stephen Nugent



Deputy Manager Employment and Training Services Adam Swist



Manager Corporate Services Fred Emmi CPA



Manager Business Performance and Strategy Karen Grumley



Business Manager Andrew McInnes



Head of Training Services James Eskander

# **Our Corporate Services Team**



# **Coverage** Further Details at www.octec.org.au

**Kiewa** 

Albury

Forbes

Parkes

Lachlan

# **New South Wales & ACT**

# ACT/Capital

Belconnen Braddon Goulburn Queanbeyan Tuggeranong Woden

### Canterbury/ **Bankstown**

Bankstown Campsie Condell Park Punchbowl Riverwood

### **Central Coast**

Toukley Gosford Lake Haven The Entrance Woy Woy Wyong Budgewoi Doyalson

Central Western **Sydney** 

Parramatta Auburn Chester Hill Granville Hornsby Merrylands Wentworthville Oberon **Coffs Harbour** Coffs Harbour Woolgoolga Bellingham Nambucca Heads

# Fairfield

Chifley

Bathurst

Fairfield Bonnyrigg Cabramatta Wetherill Park Cabramatta West Fairfield East Smithfield

# Hastings

Port Macquarie Laurieton Wauchope

# Hunter

Cessnock Kurri Kurri Maitland

# Illawarra Wollongong Corrimal

Shellharbour **Inner Sydney** Surry Hills

# Marrickville Redfern

Condobolin Lake Cargelligo Peak Hill West Wyalong Liverpool Liverpool Miller

# Hoxton Park Lower Hunter Newcastle

Charleston Mayfield **Raymond Terrace** Toronto Wallsend

# Macarthur

Campbelltown Camden Ingleburn Minto Narellan Picton Macleay Kempsey Manning Taree Forster

# Gloucester Bulahdelah Tuncurry **Murray Darling** Wentworth Balranald Dareton Nepean

Penrith Katoomba Richmond Rouse Hill Springwood St Marys Windsor

# New England and North West

Armidale **Glen Innes** Inverell Tamworth Gunnedah Guyra Moree Narrabri Tenterfield Tingha Uralla Walcha **North Coast** and Richmond Ballina

## Alstonville Casino Goonellabah Grafton Lennox Head Maclean Murwillumbah

Lismore

Mullumbimby

# Northern Sydney

Chatswood Dee Why Mona Vale North Ryde Brookvale Hornsby

# **Outer Western** Sydney

Blacktown Mount Druitt **Quakers Hill** Seven Hills Luddenham Wallacia Patterson

# Orange

Cowra Young

## South Eastern Waqqa Waqqa Tumut

Cootamundra

# St George-Sutherland

Kogarah Hurstville Sutherland Caringbah Rockdale

# Sturt

Griffith Deniliquin Leeton Hay Hillston

# Tweed

Tweed Heads Tweed Heads South **Banora** Point Kingscliff Pottsville

# Windamere

Lithgow Mudgee Gulgong Kandos Portland Rylstone

# Victoria

Coburg Meadow Heights Pascoe Vale Sunbury Broadmeadows Craigieburn Fawkner Glenroy

# Geelona

Geelong Corio Drysdale Grovedale

**Goulburn Valley** Shepparton Echuca Mooroopna Rushworth

# Hampden

Warrnambool Colac

### Inner Melbourne & Bayside

Dandenong Box Hill Cheltenham Edithvale Elsternwick Melbourne CBD Oakleigh South Yarra

# **Kiewa**

Wodonga Beechworth Corryong

# Maroondah

Boronia Mooroolbark Ringwood Rowville Wantirna South

Monash Pakenham Cranbourne

# Hampton Park Narre Warren Peninsula

Frankston Somerville Hastings Rye

# Plenty

Preston **Doncaster East** South Morang

Thomastown Epping Heidelberg Greensborough

# Sunraysia

Red Cliffs

# District

Hamilton Portland

# Westgate Melton

Deer Park Footscray St Albans Sunshine Tarneit Werribee Cairnlea **Taylors Lakes** 

# Byron Bay Kyogle

# Lalor

Mildura Merbein

# Western

# QUEENSLAND

NEV

**JES** 

# Queensland

# Capricornia

Rockhampton Yeppoon

# Fraser Coast

Maryborough Pialba

**Gladstone** Gladstone

Biloela Moura Agnes Water

# Gold Coast

Southport Nerang Biggera Waters Coomera Labrador Palm Beach Parkwood Pimpana Robina

# Gympie

Gympie Kingaroy Nanango

# **lpswich** Ipswich

Goodna Blackstone Dinmore Lowood Redbank

# Logan

Logan Central/ Woodridge Beaudesert Beenleigh Browns Plains Dunwich

# **North Brisbane**

Strathpine Chermside Mitchelton Fortitude Valley Nundah Toowong

### Outer North Brisbane

Caboolture Deception Bay Bongaree Burpengary Kilcoy Margate Redcliffe

# South Brisbane

VICTORIA

Upper Mount Gravatt Inala Wynnum Capalaba Victoria Point Woolloongabba

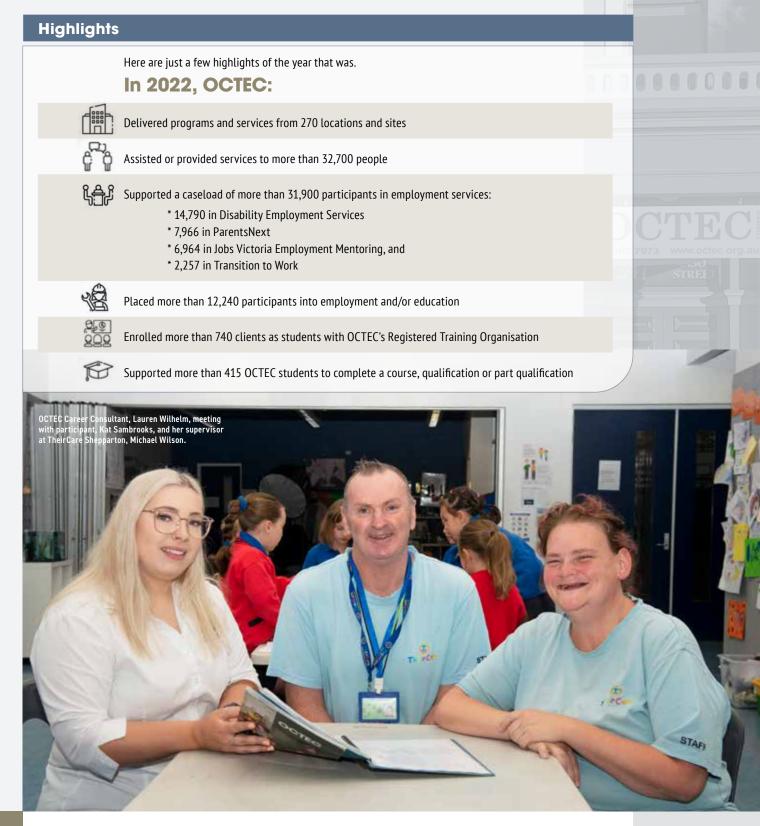
# Darlii

Toowoomba and Darling Downs

Toowoomba Chinchilla Dalby Gatton Goondiwindi Laidley Oakey Roma St George Warwick

# **Our Programs**

OCTEC delivers a wide range of vocational programs and services, each with a community focus. These programs and services are funded by government and industry, along with the use of our own funds. We are resourceful and innovative. We develop active partnerships. We build capacity and community. During 2022, and despite the significant challenges faced across the country, OCTEC managers and staff were there to provide support, encouragement and practical positive assistance to thousands of Australians. You will read the stories of some of these amazing people throughout this report.



# **Disability Employment Services**

Having a job is about more than earning money. Employment improves our health and wellbeing. Our work helps shape who we are. And having secure, sustainable employment models positive future behaviours for our family and friends. For this reason, OCTEC is passionate about our employment services, and the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of unemployed Australians.

OCTEC knows that employing people with disability is not an act of charity, but makes sound business sense. We deliver both DES subprograms – Employment Support Services (ESS) and Disability Management Services (DMS).

Disability Management Service (DMS) is for job seekers with disability, injury or health condition who need assistance to find a job and occasional support in the workplace to keep a job.

Employment Support Service (ESS) is for job seekers with permanent disability who need help to find a job and who need regular, ongoing support in the workplace to keep a job.

At the commencement of 2023, OCTEC had a caseload of more than 14,700 DES participants



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### **Our Vis**

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and we had made more than 6,080 placements into employment and education. Our locallybased consultants deliver DES across a range of Employment Service Areas (ESAs) in regional Queensland, NSW and Victoria, plus the ACT, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney. In October 2022, the Federal Government announced that the existing DES funding arrangements would be extended by two years, meaning OCTEC's current delivery of the program will now continue until 30 June 2025.

In 2022, our focus was two-fold. We supported job seekers with disability to overcome their barriers, obtain skills and experience, and secure meaningful employment. We also invested significant time and energy with employers, many of whom have struggled to find suitably skilled and qualified staff for their OCTEC works closely with supportive employers such as Pasific Care in Sydney South West to create opportunities for our participants. Gabriel To'o (second from right) is supported in her employment by supervisor Loraine Turua, OCTEC Regional Manager, Fifita Allen-Kepu, and OCTEC Consultant, Tupesiliva Too.

vacancies, especially since the return to full operations following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. We continued working to equip participants secure employment in job growth sectors, while assisting employers in those sectors to meet their staffing requirements.





**Management and Support Team** 

Chris Clark (Manager Employment and Training Services), Adam Swist (Deputy Manager Employment and Training Services), Charissa Mossop (Transition to Work and ParentsNext Manager), Fiona Quilkey (Operations and Performance Manager Disability Employment Services), Emma Fletcher (Employment Support Services Manager) and Jade Ward (Administrative Assistant).



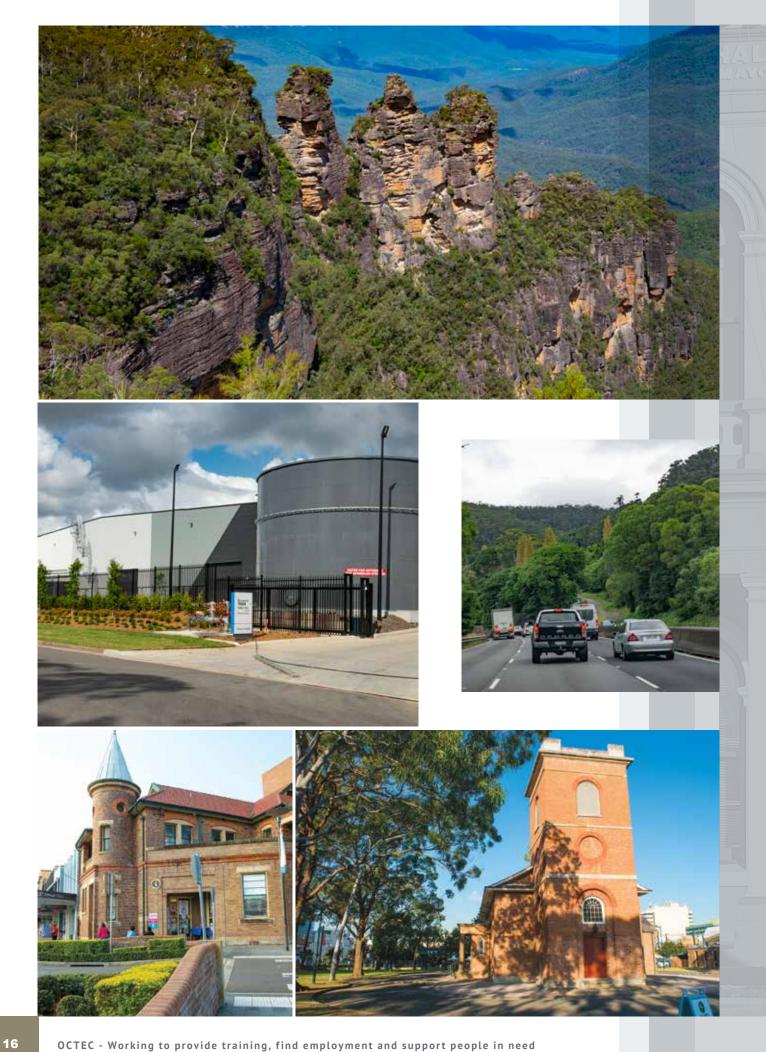
### **Quality and Compliance Team**

Karen Grumley (Manager Business Performance and Strategy), Charlotte Allen, Katie Connolly, Leemar Dankha, Dominik Hamlin, Michael O'Keeffe and Belinda Wilson (Business Performance and Strategy Coordinators), Stephen Brown and Heath Watkinson (Performance and Quality Coordinators).



### **National Sales Team**

Tammy Alexander (National Sales Manager), Kathleen Butler, Jeffrey Chew, Kathryn Ettritch, Amed Fares, Matthew Foreman, Dan Hyndman, Maggie Lockington and Shaun O'Cass (Workforce Development Coordinators).



# **Sydney**



lelany Maynard Manager Sydney egion), Marie lason (Special rojects Officer)

OCTEC's Employment Service Management Team is based in Penrith, and we deliver DES services from nine Sydney Employment Service Areas (ESAs): Nepean, Macarthur, Northern Sydney, Central Western Sydney, Fairfield, Inner Sydney, Liverpool, Outer Western Sydney and St George-Sutherland. OCTEC works closely with employer partners across Greater Sydney, seeking to understand their individual requirements for skilled staff. We know local employers in sectors such as health and community services, education (including early childhood), hospitality and retail currently experience skills shortages. With training partners, OCTEC equips our Sydney DES participants with the skills and qualifications employers require, maximising each job seeker's chance of building a worthwhile career.

# **Central Western Sydney and Outer Western Sydney**



(Regional Manager)







Shiva Shamsborhan, Nigel Singh, Norma-Marie Abboud, Michelle Hayton, Karen Hermez, Benita Lockyer, Vinod Shrivastava, Uato'a Suafo'a, Jesse Suitupe (Career Consultants)

# Fairfield and St George Sutherland



John Collins (Regional Manager)



Sanjalini Singh, Svetlana Momirovska (Senior Career Bahtisan Anaz, Pauline Iwassi, Ngoc Le, Mai Nguyen, Joan Obuchowski, Palwasha Shinwari, Samira Tannous, Anh Tran, Vali Velardi, Yuling Huang, Katherine Zgouras, Pei Zhao (Career Consultants)





# **Inner Sydney and Northern Sydney**



Ranjana Dhakal (Regional Manager)









Kristen Vallance (Senior Career Consultant), Peter Doan, Parewhai Campbell Seymour, Mee Youn Kim, David Sarich, Jenny Zhang (Career Consultants)

# Liverpool



Aipunou Smith (Regional Manager)



Rosie Bradbrook, Holly Heraud, Walid Karroum, Tijuanna Lokeni, Josephine Mapesone, Nuti Taiti-Taanoa, (Career Consultants)

### Macarthur



Carolyn Lynch (Regional Manager)



Lesley Butler, Seema Kumar, Jonette Ngawhika, Pauliasi Pikula, Rina Richter, Sylvia Tiatia and Sara Tuigamala (Career Consultants)

# Nepean



Angela Finch (Regional Manager)







Sandra Hope (Senior Career Consultant), Sonia Beattie, Jacqualyn Dean, Michael Dwyer, Robyn Hatfield, Margaret Lundall, Kylie Quinn, (Career Consultants)

# Western NSW and ACT



Aaron Fraser (Manager Regional NSW and ACT)

OCTEC has been delivering vocational services to local people in this region since 1976. In 2022, we delivered DES in the ACT and Queanbeyan, Chifley, Kiewa, Lachlan, Murray-Darling, Patterson, South Eastern NSW, Sturt and Windamere ESAs. OCTEC has been working with businesses in western and south western NSW for decades. We have an unparalleled understanding of the needs of local employers. Currently, there are skills shortages in sectors including health and community services, education and training (including early childhood education), customer service (retail and hospitality) and in the public sector. Through our RTO, and with training partners, OCTEC equips our DES participants with the skills and qualifications employers require, maximising each job seeker's chance of securing work and building a career.

# **ACT and Queanbeyan**



Aaron Fraser (Manager Regional NSW and ACT)





Emily Kennedy (Senior Career Consultant), Nicole Booshand, Jennifer Dunn, Zoe King (Career Consultants)

# **Chifley and Windamere**



Nathan Fairbrother (Regional Manager)



Jacob Lyle, Rosalyn Stambe, Liz Lovett, Annette McPhail, Ryan Pickering (Career Consultants)

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Sasha Clarke, Barry Marinus, Shane Packer, Amy Boyland, Stacy Bulger, Sharon Lyons (Career Consultants)

# Chris van Duursen (Regional Manager)







Kim Eager (Regional Manager)







Chelsea Phillips, Amy Townsend, Jeleaha Cutmore, Verity Morris, Tracey Thompson, Hannah Wisse, Allison Allen, Judy Murphy, Leanne Rawlings (Career Consultants)



# **Northern NSW**

OCTEC delivers DES services in 12 Northern NSW ESAs from the Central Coast to the Queensland border: Central Coast, Lower Hunter, Hunter, Manning, Hastings, Macleay, Coffs Harbour, Keepit, New England, Richmond, North Coast and Tweed ESAs. A number of our sites in these areas were impacted by severe

weather in 2022, especially record flooding in the Northern Rivers.

Northern NSW is a hospitality and tourism hotspot. Post-COVID lockdowns, this sector has experienced significant skills shortages. Similarly, employers in the health and community services sector (especially aged care) are struggling to



ISW & ACT)

find suitably skilled and qualified staff. OCTEC has continued to work closely with employers across Northern NSW, seeking to understand their individual requirements for skilled staff. We work with these employers and our training partners, to match job seekers' skills with those that employers need.

### **Central Coast, Hunter and Lower Hunter**



Leeane Williams (Regional Manager)





Astra-Dee Wetherall (Senior Career Consultant), Kriztle Greco, Nicole Hill, Jessica Jeffries, Charlene Wilson, Katherine Smith, Abdullah Alanazi, Jamie Cranney, Emma Ward (Career Consultants)

# **Coffs Harbour, Hastings and Mcleay**



Kellie Reeve (Regional Manager)







Dion Hyde (Senior Career Consultant), Julie-Anne Clifford, Amie-Lee Cumming, David Sargent, Darryn Yule, Brent Kelly (Career Consultants)



# **Keepit and New England**







Kinisha Verning, Kealia Fields, Donna Uphill (Career Consultants)

Samantha Sayers (Regional Manager)

# Manning



Shani Hunter (Regional Manager)





Tegan Brooks, Tiah Cadd, Andrew Figg, Maree Grady, Amber Emerton, Cindy Foley-Tennant, Danielle McCarthy, Kris Mashman, Shelby Rathborne, Amy Villis (Career

# **North Coast and Richmond**



Matt Tancred (Regional Manager)







Rebecca Davidson (Regional Manager), Tonje Dyran, Tara Paish, Karen Fischer, Jessica Skerry, Alex Wallace (Career Consultants)

### **Tweed**



Zoe Parkinson (Regional Manager)



Michelle Maxwell (Senior Career Consultant), Catherine Cooling, Lisa Earsman, Robyn Morris (Career Consultants)





# Queensland

In 2022, and despite the challenges posed by major flooding in several locations, OCTEC delivered ongoing DES services across Central and South East Queensland. Our 11 ESAs are: Gold Coast, Logan, North Brisbane, Outer North Brisbane, South Brisbane, Capricornia, Gladstone, Fraser Coast, Gympie, Ipswich and Toowoomba. It is estimated that tourism contributes more than \$20 billion to the state each year. Following on from COVID closures, the sector is currently experiencing major skills shortages, with employers needing appropriately skilled and qualified staff. Additionally, Queensland employers in the health and social services sector

Corrina Page (Manager Northern Region)

(including aged and disability care) are experiencing a shortfall in skilled and qualified staff. OCTEC works closely with employers in these, and other sectors, and with local training partners, to equip our DES participants with the skills and qualifications they need to meet employer needs, and build worthwhile careers.

# **Capricornia and Gladstone**



Louise Simpson (Regional Manager)



Lee Holzwart (Senior Career Consultant), Brodie Ramdor, Karyn Stockdale, Ashleigh Buhse, Sarah Dunn, Kelli Johnstone, Julian McDonald, Teleah O'Connor, Sharni Pickett, Maria Richardson, Michelle Riley (Career Consultants)

# **Fraser Coast and Gympie**



Felicity Hill (Regional Manager)





Annie Angelone (Senior Career Consultant), Aliesha Cawley, Matthew Drewe, Robert Pilkington, Lily Steel, Tracey Gyde, Belinda Lambert, Stephany Prickett, Graeme Townsend (Career Consultants)

### **Gold Coast**



Zoe Parkinson (Regional Manager)



Michelle Maxwell (Senior Career Consultant), Tanya Ewins, Anita Johnstone. Emily Marshall, John Norman (Career Consultants)

# **Ipswich and Toowoomba**



Rachael Scott (Regional Manager)



Trent Davies, Eleanor Sparrow, Misha Temple, Emily Ware, Isabella Bath, Missy Hall, Stacey Liebelt, Sharon McCabe (Career Consultants)

# Logan and South Brisbane



Sue Gregoratos (Regional Manager)





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Kayla Apiata, Melissa Cruickshank, Rachelle English, Tui-Lee Hayward, Reuben Kake, Mefilopati Palamo, Rebecca Tedder, Natasha Hepi, Sophia Lewis, Tanya Mackay, Lanuola Otto, Jesse Seiuli, Briane Stininato (Career Consultants)

# North Brisbane and Outer North Brisbane



Nadine Wheeler (Regional Manager)







Robyn Pearce (Senior Career Consultant), Catherine Crawford, Michael Mills, Anthony Newman, Tijana Radanovic, Mequita Toomata, Louise Crowther, Angela Chan See, Sheryl Day-Millar, Kayla Skipper (Career Consultants)





# **Melbourne**



Tristan Knoop (Manager Southern Region)

As the city continued to recover from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19, in 2022, OCTEC delivered DES services across seven ESAs in metropolitan Melbourne.

OCTEC works closely with employer partners across Greater Melbourne, seeking

logistics, education and training, health and community services, and construction are currently experiencing significant skills

shortages. With training partners, OCTEC equips our Melbourne DES participants with the skills and qualifications employers require, maximising each job seeker's chance of building a rewarding career.

# **Bayside**



Karen Lim (Regional Manager)



to understand their individual requirements

for skilled staff. We know local employers in

sectors such as hospitality, transport and

Jennifer Murrian (Senior Career Consultant), Tass Andreopoulos, Maxime Bodin, Christine Cabral, Phillip Crawford, Shakira Fayazi, Abdelrahim Juma, Kristine McDonough, Mark Nguyen, Claire Phillips, Raj Singh, Cat Wright (Career Consultants)

# Calder



Hind Al-Madhoun (Regional Manager)







Duoa Alkaisi, Maria Baldo, Fouad Elali, Janelle Flynn, Vinod George, Kylie Kent, Manuela Maya Mesa, Dieu Ngoc Nguyen, Sharbel Youkanna (Career Consultants)





Lawanya Herath (Regional Manager)





Sharon Cassidy, Charlie Pham, Asanthi Bulathsinghalage, Ronnie Koh, Ajay Kumar, Monalisa Thakur, Allison Stewart (Career Consultants)

# Plenty









Rhiannon Quinlan, Julian Pike, Israfil Sahin, Blaga Vinogradoff (Career Consultants)

Tony Papaioannou (Regional Manager)

# Westgate



Thao Le (Regional Manager)



Hang Nguyen (Senior Career Consultant), Jing Chen, Roy Chin, Ritsa Gaitanas, Eddie Gordo, Said Ismail, Alister Le'Toille, Hoang Nguyen, Dinh Tran, Rachael Violi, Trisha Vo (Career Consultants)



# **Regional Victoria**



Amanda Carlton, Ashleigh Hughes, Dyrone Watene, Andrea Bellman, Delaney Foster (Career Consultants)

Tristan Knoop (Manager Southern Region)

As the regional areas of Victoria emerged from the pandemic, OCTEC continued to deliver DES services in five non-metropolitan ESAs, covering the south, west and north of Victoria.

Across Regional Victoria, employers in sectors including agriculture, health and community services, education and in customer service industries (such as retail and hospitality) are experiencing staff shortages. OCTEC works closely with

employer partners in these, and other sectors, understanding their specific needs, and then working with training partners, to equip our DES participants with the skills and qualifications these employers require.

# Geelong, Hampden, Western District



Allan Benfield (Regional Manager)





Tony Papaioannou (Regional Manager)





Casey Osborne (Senior Career Consultant), Brittany Mullins, Melissa Wilson, Lauren Wilhelm (Career Consultants)

### Sunraysia



Kim Eager (Regional Manager)

Allison Allen, Judy Murphy, Leanne Rawlings (Career Consultants)



# **Parents Next**

OCTEC is one of the largest providers of this important Australian Government program. At the end of 2022, we had a national caseload of approximately 7,950 ParentsNext participants, and we had placed more than 2,540 parents into employment and/or education.

Funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, ParentsNext (PN) is a pre-employment program for disadvantaged parents with young children, often single women. Operating out of more than 80 locations, our ParentsNext staff develop early intervention assistance for parents at risk of long-term welfare dependency. We tailor services to meet the needs of each individual participant, considering their childcare needs as well as their cultural background and local circumstances. We help parents identify and achieve education and employment goals, participate in self-development workshops and activities, and connect with local services as they prepare to enter or re-enter the workforce.

OCTEC has been delivering ParentsNext since the program commenced in July 2018. Our services are delivered across 10 employment regions in NSW and Queensland. Based on this extensive experience, we know the program and our participants, and understand the transferable skills that parents develop. OCTEC ParentsNext Consultants support participants to gain work in a wide range of industries including in sectors such as early childhood, community services and customer services. We work with local employers, our RTO and other training partners to give our participants the specific skills, qualifications and support they need to develop, or redevelop, great careers, while meeting the skills needs of employers.







Charissa Mossop (ParentsNext Manager), Fińta Allen-Kepu (Operations Manager), Leanne Tramonte (Senior Business Performance and Strategy Coordinator), Sarah Derrett, Rhiannon Knaggs, Harsha Mungur, Vanessa Smith (Business Performance and Strategy Coordinators)

# **Brisbane South East and Somerset**



Mana Faifai, Sekou Kenneh, Jason Cochrane, Kylie Dwyer, Corrine Noonan, Nicole Taylor (PN Consultants)

Melinda Walton (Regional Manager)

### **Darling Downs**



Alana Burnett (Regional Manager)



Leonie Bastiaan, Ashleigh Bergen, Loren McLennan, Victoria Ryan, Libby Smith (PN Consultants)

# **Gold Coast and North Coast**



Sandra Parkinson (Regional Manager)





Kimberly Harrison, Heidi McDonald, Merry-Anne Poumale, Kirsten Putland, Tara Sharplin, Naomi De Boer, Michelle Fuller, Jenny Rock, Sue Robertson, Margaret Sexton (PN Consultants)













Laura Ferris, Beth Neumaier, Tanya King, Courtney Kelly, Robyn Klein, Nahria Shannon, Teresa Turner (PN Consultants)

(Regional Manager)

# Sydney Greater West and Sydney South West



Julie Stricek (Regional Manager)









Raed Al-Khadadi, Sherry Farhan, Cheryl Hatzistamatis, Sharlene Longman, Arzu Ozturk, Kelly Nowland, Annastasia Sen, Maheen Khan, Mary Nakirijja, Thanh Ha Ly Nguyen, Elvedin Topcagic (PN Consultants)

### Wivenhoe



Peta Mullins (Regional Manager)



Each day, OCTEC's ParentsNext consultants undertake some incredible work, assisting disadvantaged parents on a

Sbon

pathway to a career. It can be extremely challenging and also very rewarding.

When Ebony first came to our ParentsNext site in Chermside, in Brisbane's north, she was facing some incredible challenges. Estranged from her three children, she had survived cancer, had been battling addiction, and was victim to domestic violence. She began working with our consultant, Catherine Crawford, who found her to be shy and lacking self-esteem.

It was therefore quite a shock when Ebony told Catherine she'd found herself a job. Ebony was very worried about whether she'd be able to keep her job and if this newfound independence would inspire a reconnection with her kids.

Catherine spent time with Ebony, asking some important questions, and focusing on the future. Ebony was incredibly honest. Catherine's questions really started her thinking.

Together, they formulated coping strategies – the things Ebony could do to help herself, and her family, to move forward. Ebony was bound by a need to please others, rather than setting goals for herself. Catherine helped Ebony to see that improving herself could also mean doing the right things by those she loved. Together, Catherine and Ebony reflected on how a new job could be the first step in Ebony's goal of financial independence. She was supplied with a new mobile phone by OCTEC after hers had been stolen, as well as other practical help.

The two women caught up recently. Ebony was incredibly thankful to Catherine, OCTEC and ParentsNext for all the support she'd received. "There were tears," Catherine remembers. "It was very humbling."

r three children, she had started her thinking. Ebony was incredibly thankful to Catherine, OCTEC and ParentsNext for all the support she'd received "There

OCTEC - Working to provide training, find employment and support people in need

# **Transition to Work**

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, OCTEC has been successfully delivering Workforce Australia Transition to Work (TtW) since May 2016. A specialist youth employment program, TtW is designed to assist 15 to 24-year-old job seekers, supporting them as they move from school to secure employment, or into other vocational activities. We focus on young people who have disengaged from this transition process and are therefore at risk of long-term dependence on welfare payments.

In 2022, we continued supporting participants to undertake vocational learning relevant to their goals and ambitions, as well as helping them to complete work trials and casual placements, to build their practical work experience. In this way, our participants develop the skills and experience they need to build great careers, while also meeting the specific labour demands of local employers.

As a result of our strong performance, commencing in 2022 OCTEC was offered additional TtW services. We now deliver in Capital Region, Central West NSW, Murray Riverina, Sydney South West and in the Illawarra. In February 2023, we had a caseload of more than 2,250 TtW participants, and had placed more than 1,120 young people into employment and/or education.





Ilecia Astill, Jacksyn Blewitt, Nahom

Ghebreevesus. Yassin Ismail. Samantha Roberts, Ellie Wykes (TtW Consultants)



Charissa Mossop (ParentsNext Manager), Fifita Allen-Kepu (Operations Manager), Leanne Tramonte (Senior Business Performance and Strategy Coordinator), Sarah Derrett, Rhiannon Knaggs, Harsha Mungur, Vanessa Smith (Business Performance and Strategy Coordinators)





Lana O'Brien (Regional Manager)

# **Central West**





Nichole Strain (Regional Manager)

Workforce

Australia

**Employment Services** 

Delivered by OCTEC Limited

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OCTEC's 'On Track – Stories from the Transition to Work Program' booklet shares inspirational stories of our Transition to Work participants, consultants and partners. It has been well received by all stakeholders including participants, employers, community service providers and government authorities and officials.

# Illawarra







Seychelle Albert, Bonnie Brightling, Abby Brownlee, Storm Dallas (TtW Consultants)



Lesley Hallett (Regional Manager)

# **Murray Riverina**



Lauren McCarthy (Regional Manager)



Tanealle Eccleston, Cameron McRae, Krystal Maytom, Neisha Mullen (TtW Consultants)







Lesley Hallett, Jason White (Regional Managers)



Rawda Itani (Senior TtW Consultant), Codie Collier Appleyard, Ahmad Arsalah, Sene Auelua, Michael Bui, Christina Crouche, Shyla Fulu, Tasesa He, Marie Kitiona, Emily Lester, Fuatino Lole, Angela McColl, Alison Mclean, Tianna Martinez, Jeanene Maxwell, Felecia Wood (TtW Consultants)



# Kaiya

Commencing in July 2022, OCTEC's Transition to Work sites in Wollongong represent an important expansion of our services in the Illawarra. In a short period of time, we have already seen the lives of disadvantaged young people transformed as they embark on the journey to work and a career.

Kaiya first came to TtW through a 'meet and greet' activity held at our Wollongong site. She was extremely anxious about attending, but soon made friends with some of the TtW participants already engaged at site.

With the encouragement and support of our TtW staff, Kaiya and several other participants organised to meet up and hand out their résumés to potential employers. One of those employers was SkinKandy, the country's largest specialist skin piercing and jewellery business, in Wollongong. The employer was extremely impressed with Kaiya's enthusiasm and drive, and they offered her a sales assistant position.

Receiving post placement support from her TtW consultant, Kaiya has thrived, building experience, skills and confidence, and we wish her every success in her future career!



# PAYCE Foundation Kick Start Program



Created by a leading property and investment company, the PAYCE Foundation run numerous social enterprises, including the Kick Start Café program, which provides training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

In Sydney's South West, OCTEC's Transition to Work team has been working with the Foundation, and their Kick Start food caravans, which are set up at construction sites around Sydney. The caravans provide café and canteen facilities to cater for the needs of construction workers.

Working in the Kick Start program our TtW participants have the chance to attain a barista qualification, before moving into a Certificate III in Hospitality and a transition to employment.

Through this important partnership, OCTEC's TtW participants develop skills, experience and qualifications relevant to sectors experiencing significant staff shortages – such as hospitality – setting them up for exciting careers.

# **Jobs Victoria**

OCTEC has been delivering job seeker mentoring services under the Victorian Government's Jobs Victoria initiative since July 2021. We're the second largest provider of Jobs Victoria services and at the end of 2022, had more than 6,960 job seekers receiving our Jobs Victoria employment mentoring services, with more than 2,500 achieving employment placements.

Our services link disadvantaged job seekers (including long-term unemployed, people from CALD backgrounds, First Australians, mature age, disengaged youth, ex-offenders, people with disability and those experiencing domestic and family violence) to employers across all industries and sectors. As with our other services, Jobs Victoria is a program that enables OCTEC to do what we do best: assist and equip disadvantaged and long-term unemployed people to find a job, keep a job and start a career.

Each OCTEC job seeker is partnered with a mentor who coordinates their specific and individualised services throughout their time in the program. Similarly, employers have a single point of access to our services through a dedicated Workforce Development Coordinator. We partner with specialist support services across Victoria, helping our jobseekers overcome employment barriers. And we have agreements in place with vocational training providers across Victoria to equip our jobseekers with the skills and qualifications they need to secure and retain employment.







Ka So Pe Su Co Ma

Kate Peart (Manager Jobs Victoria), Soula Krikelis (Business and Performance Strategy Coordinator), Susan Archer (Employment Support Coordinator), Dana Dawaname, Sally Molero (Administration and Compliance Officers), Anna Alberico, Tony On (Workforce Development Coordinators)





# Jobs Victoria (Cont'd)

OCTEC delivers Jobs Victoria services across seven regions (involving six OCTEC teams) covering both metropolitan and rural

locations. We work closely with employers across the state, understanding their specific skills shortages, while mentoring

our job seekers to ensure they develop these same skills and qualifications.

# **Barwon and Great South Coast**





Melanie Bant, Andrew Carmichael, Danielle Clancy, Patrick Mercaldi, Stuart Pyers, Paul Scorpo, David Trenholm (Employment Mentors)



# **Eastern Metro**



Pollyvianne Faauli (Regional Manager)



Suet Curzon, Chaolynn Faafoi, Marie Ocene Francis, Fariza Ibrahami, Julie Molenaar, Aisha Siddaqa, Tere-Lee Simon, Luyen Ton, Victoria Uini (Employment Mentors)

# **Inner Metro and Inner South East**



Melania Felekidis (Regional Manager)



Helen Aladeva, Richard Begazo, Peggy Pang (Employment Mentors)

# **Southern Metro**



Manu Rastogi (Regional Manager)







Amanda Blight, Peter Hermawann, Jason Kallaste, Maree Leonard, Kam Samingtat, Medhi Shaheen, Vera Singh, Shah Yusoff (Employment Mentors)





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#### Western Metro (Inner)









Gordana Brkic, Nafissa Hajiali, Isabelle Hoey, Thao Huynh, Wayne Mallia, Ipekbahar Ocal, Reanne Orrico, Michelle Partridge (Employment Mentors)

Wendy Omene (Regional Manager)







Van Ngo (Regional Manager)



Sonal Dang, Mark Jekic, David Pham, Ben Tran, Karina Vaaivaka, Hillary Wealprasert (Employment Mentors)



When you have been unemployed for a long time, finding a job can be tough. OCTEC's Jobs Victoria Employment Mentors have the skills and experience to assist job seekers with their job search, as well as contacts and connections with employers. This can make the difference between a job seeker winning or missing out on a vacancy.

When Sekone Faaleolea commenced with OCTEC Jobs Victoria Oakleigh in mid-2022, he'd been unemployed for 20 weeks. After working as a farmer for more than 10 years in his native Samoa, Sekone believed in the importance of hard work to provide for his family. He just needed some additional guidance and assistance to secure work in Australia. Sekone connected with our Jobs Victoria Employment Mentor, Chaolynn Faafoi, who assured him his work ethic would be well-regarded by Australian employers. Because he lacked experience in job search, and had limitations with his English, Chaolynn assisted Sekone improve his résumé and mentored him through the job search process.

Once they felt he was ready, Chaolynn and Sekone began considering what kind of work he would like to do. S.M.A.R.T Recycling is a specialist recycler of timber packaging waste produced by local

manufacturing, retail and construction businesses. Chaolynn had worked with the Manager of S.M.A.R.T before and, because she had found suitable participants for his previous vacancies, he trusted her judgement and referrals. Such was the rapport and trust Chaolynn had developed with the employer, Sekone secured an interview and was offered a job as a labourer on the same day, despite not having worked in the industry before.

To assist with the placement, OCTEC assisted Sekone to purchase appropriate work clothes and work shoes. Chaolynn maintained ongoing contact with Sekone as part of our post placement support and everyone has been encouraged by how well he has done with the team at S.M.A.R.T.

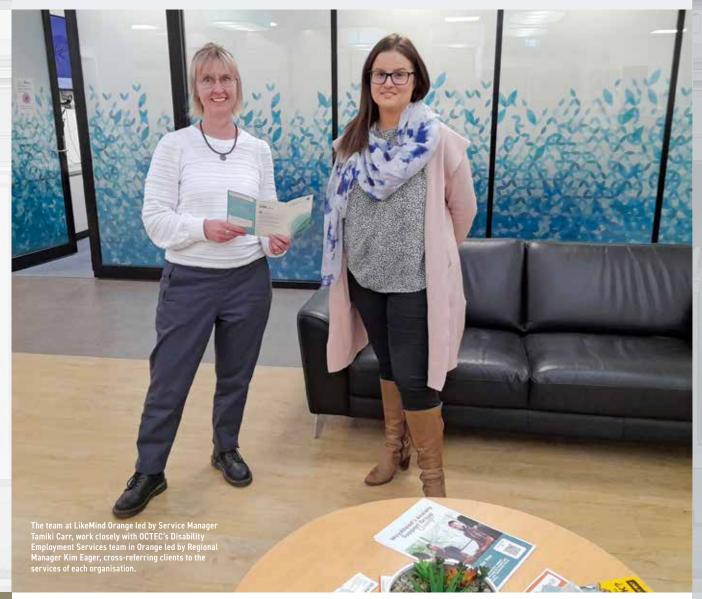
## **Mental Health Employment Strategy**

OCTEC's Mental Health Employment Strategy (MHES) is an important element of our employment services delivery. Mental health is a serious barrier for many job seekers, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a wellreported rise in the incidence of mental health-related issues, especially for those facing redundancy and unemployment.

OCTEC staff work to maximise employment outcomes for people with mental health barriers, developing partnerships with specialist service providers including headspace youth mental health services across Australia. We also partner with locally-based service providers such as community mental health centres, psychologists and other specialist clinicians to ensure our participants receive the professional assistance they require to overcome barriers and participate more fully in the jobs market.

As an example, OCTEC actively works with two important local mental health services in Orange in Central West NSW, Orange headspace and LikeMind Orange. Operated by Marathon Health, Orange headspace provides mental health services to young people aged 12 to 25 years. OCTEC's Transition to Work team works closely with Orange headspace, referring participants with mental health barriers and taking referrals from headspace where employment has been identified by a young person as a goal to support their recovery and future development. OCTEC also supports the centre by delivering vocational training services to headspace clients.

The LikeMind Orange Centre is funded by the NSW Government and provides an integrated and holistic mental health service for participants aged 18 to 65 years. OCTEC has a Memorandum of Understanding with LikeMind lead agency, Stride, to provide in-kind support to the centre, particularly in relation to the vocational and social needs of participants. We are also represented on the LikeMind Consortium.



## **Training Services**

OCTEC is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO 90142). We offer quality vocational training relevant to both job seekers and employers. We equip job seekers with skills and qualifications that lead to careers, and assist employers meet their demands for skilled, job-ready staff.

In 2022, the structure and focus of our Training Services underwent significant change. Our Head of Training Services, James Eskander, now reports to our Manager Employment Services, Chris Clark. In line with the new Australian Government's Jobs and Skills agenda, this structural change helps provide a 'one-stop-shop' approach to vocational training. Under this model, our organisation provides integrated training and employment services to job seekers and employers. OCTEC provides direct assistance to job seekers from course enrolment right through to post-placement employment support, as well as training courses that leads directly into employment. We also tailor specific training solutions to our employer partners, giving them direct access, and input, into the training of their current and future staff.

Aligned with this change of approach, we continue to maintain a wide range of qualifications on our scope. We respond to the needs of job seekers and employers in an effective and timely manner. We provide our students with nationally-recognised qualifications at the Certificate II, III and IV levels of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).





James Eskander (Head of Training Services), Casey Crook (Training Manager), Karen Gerke (Training Administrator), Jill Cummings (RTO Compliance Manager), Lee Cuff, Pamela Fleming, Allyna Neville, Rebecca Sawell, Samantha Sculthorpe, Dharra Vyas, Susi Witt (Trainers and Assessors)





## **Training Solutions for Job Seekers**

As Australia emerged from COVID-19 and battled economic and climatic challenges, OCTEC continued to provide training customised to the needs of job seekers, along with employers and their current staff. The upheaval in the Australian economy, largely due to rising supply costs and interest rates has had an impact on the vocational training sector. Continued economic pressure has led to a hesitancy on the part of some employers to investing in the training of their staff.

OCTEC seeks to overcome business hesitance by offering training solutions for job seekers that directly align with employer needs. Following on from the Australian Government's Job and Skills Summit in September 2022, our focus has been to offer a 'one stop shop' for job seekers and employers – where employment and training solutions come together. Our training and employment services staff work together to identify the specific skills and qualifications local employers are looking for, and then offer access to relevant courses run by our RTO. Current sectors experiencing skills shortages include retail, hospitality and health and social assistance, and OCTEC offers both accredited training and recruitment services for these sectors.

Our training approach is flexible and adaptive. Delivery models we use include online course delivery, as well as one-on-one support via phone and online conferencing. Job seekers also have access to OCTEC's world class training facilities, including our state-of-the-art Phillips Centre at Croagh Patrick in Orange.

Working closely with our employment services teams, our Trainers and Assessors have experience in a range of industries, ensuring our training reflects industry best practice, and remains relevant to the changing needs of employers.

2022 was a year of challenge and change for OCTEC's RTO. Despite this, by December, OCTEC had issued the following qualifications:

- nine qualifications at Certificate IV level,
- 64 qualifications at Certificate III, and
- 345 Statements of Attainment.



## Partnering with Employers and Industry

Under our 'one stop shop' approach to employment and training services, OCTEC works closely with employers across a broad range of industries, and we offer the skills and qualifications businesses require to meet their current and future staffing needs. Examples of sectors where we offer accredited training include health and community services, retail and hospitality.

#### Health and Community Services

The health and community sector – especially aged care – is one still recovering from the impacts of COVID-19, and the demand for skilled staff in the sector remains high. OCTEC delivers a range of nationally-recognised qualifications from the Community Services and Health training packages, including qualifications in aged care, disability services and individual support. We offer community services employers accredited skills training for both new and existing staff members.

Bupa is a major provider of health care services, including aged and disability care. In 2022 OCTEC continued working with Bupa staff, offering Certificate courses – such as Certificate III in Individual Support – to develop their skills and improve the quality of care provided for their clients. In addition to Bupa, in 2022 OCTEC provided accredited health and community services training for the staff of NSW aged and disability care providers in the Central West, Southern Tablelands, Central Coast and Northern Rivers regions.

Moving into 2023 and beyond, our goal is to expand our community sector training into areas relevant to the NDIS. This includes training in certificate level qualifications such as Individual Support, Disability and Leisure and Health. We also plan to expand our services to the community and health sector by offering business-related qualifications for managers and administration staff who work in this growing sector.

#### **Retail and Hospitality**

OCTEC's Training and Employment Services staff are also working together to identify employers in the retail and hospitality sectors requiring access to qualified, skilled and job ready staff. These two sectors are still facing post-COVID labour shortages, as well as the impact of inflation and rising interest rates.

In 2022, we provided accredited training for retail and hospitality employers such as general retail stores, supermarkets and cafés across regional locations in NSW.

Transition to Work Retail Training



Commencing in October 2022, a group OCTEC Transition to Work participants from Campbelltown in south west Sydney completed in a retail training program delivered by our RTO team.

Graduating in February 2023, the training program involved completion of a Certificate III in Retail, which included practical work placements at a range of Best and Less stores. Feedback from both participants and the host employers was positive, and these young jobseekers have taken a major step towards work readiness. And they were able to do so without having to deal with multiple providers.

## **Government-Funded Programs**

#### **Smart and Skilled**

Smart and Skilled is a NSW Government initiative providing subsidised vocational training to eligible students in priority regions across the state. OCTEC is an approved Smart and Skilled Training Provider and during 2022 offered eight accredited courses. These comprised:

- one course at Certificate IV level, and
- seven courses at Certificate III.

Our courses include those in skills demand sectors such as health and community services, and hospitality, as well as courses with multi-sector application such as Certificate III in Business. A number of our courses under Smart and Skilled involve Australian Apprenticeships and/or Traineeships. Courses are offered across NSW, through small group classroom and distance training options, for durations between one and four years.

In November, OCTEC applied to continue delivery of courses under Smart and Skilled during 2023-2024. The current Smart and Skilled funding arrangements cease on 30 June 2023.

#### **ACT Funding Agreement**

Since 2020, OCTEC has had an ACT Funding Agreement (ACTFA) to deliver programs that address the major objectives of the ACT vocational education and training (VET) system, with places initially being offered in Certificate II in Business. During 2022, OCTEC maintained our ACT Government funded provider status, liaising with the government to identify specific funding for courses that will meet local employer and job seeker needs.

#### **JobTrainer**

Responding to skills gaps experienced by employers following the COVID-19 lockdowns, the Commonwealth and state governments initiated a funded skills program called JobTrainer. The aim of the fund was to support employers and job seekers by offering low fee or fee free accredited training in the skills areas of greatest demand.

During 2022, OCTEC delivered a range of skills demand courses under JobTrainer, including Certificate IV courses in Ageing Support and Disability Support, and Certificate III courses in Retail, Community Services and Individual Support.

JobTrainer funding ceased on 31 December 2022.



# Computer Skills for Careers

These days it can be very difficult to secure work if you don't have at least a basic understanding of computers and how to use them. A lack of computer knowledge can make searching for and securing a job a real challenge, particularly if you are a job seeker who is mature age and/or has a disability. In early 2023, as part of our comprehensive approach to skills development and job search, OCTEC Training and Employment Services in Central West NSW combined to deliver a Basic Computer Training course for a group of OCTEC DES participants. Conducted over three days, and delivered by OCTEC Trainer Allyna Neville, the course was delivered to OCTEC DES participants whose initial assessment identified a lack of computer skills, knowledge and/or experience as a barrier preventing them from finding employment.

The program was designed to be highly experiential, covering subjects such as understanding a computer and computer components, basic computer operations, programs and software, creating and saving a Word document, using email, and using the Internet. The initial course was very well received by participants and there are plans to roll out similar courses for disadvantaged job seekers across other regions.





"We spent the weekend in Orange and had Huntley Berry Farm at the top of our to-do list! We picked the most delicious blackberries and strawberries and had a wonderful time getting to explore every corner of the farm ... We were blown away by the hospitality. Thank you again for a wonderful afternoon at your farm ..."

Kaye Gill via Facebook



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## **Huntley Berry Farm**

Huntley Berry Farm (HBF) is OCTEC's Australian Disability Enterprise situated on the outskirts of Orange in Central West NSW. The farm is a multi-faceted operation that provides specialised supported employment for participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, as well as being an important tourist attraction in Orange and the Central West and a working farm that grows high quality produce for local consumers.

Since 2019, HBF has faced a series of challenges starting with drought and bushfire smoke, followed by two years of COVID-19 restrictions and most recently, flooding. The challenges of a changing climate were most apparent in the second half of 2022 when significant spring rainfall led to flooding at the farm, damaging or destroying berry crops and leading to delays in opening for the berry season.

Despite these challenges, the farm managers continued to provide a safe and inclusive work environment for our ten supported employees, while growing some truly spectacular produce including a range of berries, plus other fruit and vegetables. The quantity and diversity of produce may not have matched previous years, but the quality was as strong as possible given the extreme conditions.

Our HBF team are always looking to improve and expand what we do, both to increase the range of work activities available to our supported employees, as well as enhancing the visitor experience. In 2022, this included hosting a JAM Orange concert in early February; trialling a range of local produce picnic hampers for the concert and for farm visitors during the berry season; expanding the range of plants in the Marang Indigenous Edible Garden and providing more detailed signage; providing schools, community groups and families with the opportunity to take guided tours of the garden with local First Nations community leader, Gerald Power from Indigenous Cultural Adventures; and developing a range of Lemon

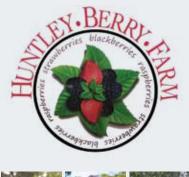
Myrtle infused jams and coulis for sale through the HBF online shop and farm shop.

These initiatives built on the regular annual program of farm activities that includes a 'pick your own' experience from November to April, periodic family fun days, our HBF pop-up shops in Orange and Bathurst in December, and the annual program of planting, pruning, watering and weeding that keeps the farm looking great.

While our regular farm activities were impacted by heavy rains and flooding in Spring 2022 - including cancellation of the usual season-opening family fun day and the unavailability of cherries and other produce for the pop-up shops in December - the HBF team remained positive, focusing on what could be achieved, rather than what could not.

The team has continued this same positive approach in 2023. The delayed season meant more produce was available in January and February, compared to previous years, and we have renewed our involvement in farmers markets across the Central West, showcasing our fresh produce as well as our jams, coulis and olive oil.

With cautious optimism, the HBF team looks forward to continuing our unique 'not just a berry farm' experience as we move through the year ahead.





Tony Belmonte (HBF Manager), Gianni Belmonte (Marketing and Operations Officer), Max Dennis, Keith Gartrell, William Good, Daniel McGregor, Luke Mavrak, Alex Paniz, Hunter Press, David Quinlan, Jay Reed, Samantha Strudwick (Supported Employees)



## **NDIS**

OCTEC is a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Through participation in the NDIS, we seek to help people with disability gain employment, develop skills and become more independent. Our NDIS service provision is focused on OCTEC's core business areas of employment and training.

During 2022, we successfully delivered Specialised Supported Employment at Huntley Berry Farm and at Old Town Hall, our Head Office in Orange. We also have capacity to deliver School Leaver Employment Supports, Individual Employment Support and Employment Support and Preparation in a Group in Orange and across our network of Employment Service sites.

## OCTEC NDIS Your Choice, Brighter Future

## National Panel of Assessors

OCTEC delivered National Panel of Assessors (NPA) services in four Employment Service Areas throughout 2022: Patterson in Central West NSW,

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OCTEC NPA Assessors Debra Baskerville, Anita Nikolovski, Eadithmin Selveraj and Raj Singh.

Nepean and Macarthur in Sydney, and Bayside in Melbourne.

NPA develops community capacity by supporting the delivery of Disability Employment Services. We deliver two service streams of NPA: Ongoing Support Assessments (OSAs) and Supported Wage System (SWS) assessments. OSAs help determine the level of ongoing support required by a DES participant, especially those in Employment Support Services, to help them maintain employment. SWS provides reliable productivity-based wage assessments to help eligible people with disability obtain and maintain employment.

## **Tools for Careers**

OCTEC uses numerous career assessment and development tools to help our participants identify and overcome barriers, and to find and continue working. Our Barrier and Ability Recognition Tool (BART) is an assessment mechanism exploring each participant's individual barriers, interests, abilities, communication, education, training, employment history and transport access.

Our Career Capital assessment tool assists participants to discover careers that suit

their preferences, strengths, skills and past experience. Career Capital also helps participants to write and develop a quality resume. In addition, OCTEC uses a range of other devices to help our participants seek work, develop skills, and sustain careers relevant to local economic conditions. Across all our sites, we use a range of Biz Support financial packages to provide resources, training, mentoring and postplacement support for our participants and their employers.

Where lockdowns and/or natural disasters impact connection between participants and staff, OCTEC uses innovative tools and strategies for engagement, assessment and career development. Some of these initiatives include online study groups using video conferencing, allowing participants engaged in online vocational education to connect and support each other. We have hosted online OCTEC Parents Advisory Groups under the ParentsNext program, conducted proactive online reverse marketing of job seekers to employers, continued the delivery of online training and assessment services, and re-conducted participant assessments to identify previously undisclosed barriers, such as mental health challenges.



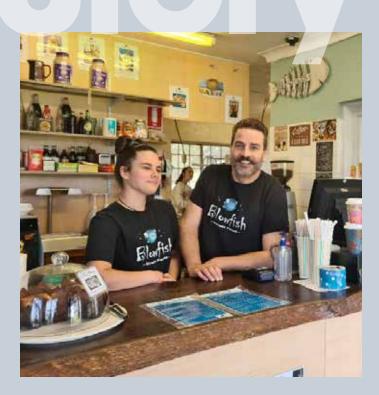
# Blowfish

We've all heard the stories about a person who loved a business so much, they ended up buying it. Well, that was the experience of OCTEC DES participant, Stuart Rhodes.

When Stuart started with OCTEC DES in Taree a few years back, he had significant mobility issues due to lumbar spasms in his back. Despite this barrier, Stuart was determined to turn his life around. OCTEC arranged for Stuart to secure RSA and RCG certificates, and we assisted him to secure jobs with local hospitality providers.

One of these jobs was at a takeaway street café called Blowfish, near the beach at Old Bar. Stuart loved his job so much, that when he was able and the opportunity presented, he bought the business.

Today, thanks to the support of OCTEC, Stuart is now a business owner and employer in his own right. And, when he needs staff for his business, he looks to OCTEC for his recruitment needs. So, if you're ever down at Old Bar beach, and feel like some amazing takeaway, please say hello to Stuart at Blowfish.



Vinnie



Job seeker connection and engagement is an important part of OCTEC's approach. And, as part of our outreach, OCTEC actively uses social media to inform and connect with potential job seekers.

Vinnie Veng arrived in Australia from Cambodia in early 2022. She was looking for a job to help fund her studies and living expenses. She went online and found details of OCTEC Jobs Victoria mentoring services on Facebook. She completed an online form and connected with Shah Yusoff, a Jobs Victoria Employment Mentor in Edithvale. After their first meeting, Shah discovered that Vinnie was positive and yearned for success, but was being held back by a lack of local work experience, job search skills and understanding of Australian work culture. The two spent time together, developing Vinnie's résumé and a cover

letter and discussing the local job search process. Once Shah felt Vinnie was ready to start job searching, he used his local employer connections to help Vinnie take the next step.

Shah had a strong relationship with a local Noisette Patisserie. He contacted the employer and discovered they were looking for café staff. Shah introduced Vinnie to the employer, who was so impressed, a work trial was arranged immediately. To prepare Vinnie for her trial, Shah spoke about what was involved in café work and sent her some YouTube videos showing working life as a café attendant. Vinnie's work trial went well and she was offered paid employment.

Shah continues working with Vinnie and her employer, through post-placement support. As well as having regular catch-ups, Vinnie knows she can contact Shah at any time with questions or to discuss any issues.

## **Fostering Local Partnerships**

## **Employers**

The past few years have been incredibly difficult for many Australian employers. Rising energy costs, interest rates and critical skills shortages have made the current business environment a particularly challenging one.

OCTEC offers employers tailored recruitment services, finding the right candidate for each and every vacancy, as well as offering financial and mentoring support to deliver long-term labour solutions. Our innovative Biz Support initiative provides employers of OCTEC participants with targeted assistance, which can include induction training, mentoring and wage assistance, as well as covering the costs of tools, equipment and licences.

OCTEC has connections with more than 70,000 employers across Australia, covering all industry sectors. We offer employment and pre-employment services, innovative business support, labour hire, traineeships and vocational training opportunities. We strive to be the preferred human resources partner for employers, meeting their specific workforce recruitment and development needs.

## Small and Family Businesses

Small and family businesses are essential to the success of the Australian economy, with over 95% of all Australian businesses fitting this catagory. The resilience of these businesses has been especially tested by the ongoing impact of rising costs, increasing interest rates and skills shortages.

OCTEC partners with small and family businesses across all our service locations. Through our employment and training services, and Biz Support assistance, we help these businesses recruit, train and retain quality staff. We understand the impact of rising costs and, throughout 2022, our consultants have worked alongside thousands of business owners, delivering quality employment services at no cost to them.

## Government

OCTEC works with departments and agencies at all levels of government, delivering services including employment, pre-employment programs and vocational training. We remain one of Australia's largest providers of Commonwealth-funded employment service programs, including Disability Employment Services (DES), ParentsNext and our growing Transition to Work program.

At the State and Territory level, OCTEC services include delivery of employment mentoring services on behalf of the Victorian Government under Jobs Victoria. Our Training Services team work with the ACT Government's vocational education and training (VET) system, and continue to deliver courses funded under the NSW Government's Smart and Skilled initiative.

Our staff also work closely with local governments in a range of ways. We offer quality applicants for job vacancies, deliver accredited courses as a preferred training partner and use council facilities and services to assist participants on their employment journey. We have delivered accredited industry-based training to councils in the Hunter, Central West, South Western and North Western NSW in the past year.

OCTEC provides recruitment services to various government departments, agencies and enterprises. In 2022, OCTEC placed job seekers with various public sector employers including the Commonwealth Department of Skills, Education and Employment, Australia Post, NSW Department of Education and Training, Queensland Department of Education, Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, and local councils including Fairfield, Fraser Coast, Ipswich, Lismore City, Lockhart Shire, Melton City, Snowy Valleys, Knox City and Blacktown City.

## Providers of Services to First Australians

OCTEC recognises and acknowledges First Nations People as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we deliver our services. We continue to pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging of the many nations on which we work.

In line with government policy, in September 2021, OCTEC released our Indigenous Procurement Policy, which commits us to a target where at least 3% of all stakeholder relationships, including clients, staff, partnerships, memorandums of understanding and/or supplier contracts, will involve First Australian individuals or organisations. OCTEC has met these requirements, with 4% of our staff and approximately 10% of participants identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

We partner with local and national Indigenous organisations, including local land councils, Aboriginal health and community service providers, those who can aide connection to country, as well as community leaders and Elders. We also work with these partners to place our job seekers into employment. In 2022, our First Nations employer partners included Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander Community** Health Services in Brisbane, Birpai Local Aboriginal Land Council in Port Macquarie, and Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement Company in Toowoomba.



## Community Services Providers

OCTEC utilises a vast network of specialist service organisations to enable participants across the country. This includes assistance with housing and homelessness, drug and alcohol support, literacy and numeracy resources for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) participants, and support for First Nations people wishing to connect with country or culture.

With natural disasters and the rising cost of living impacting so many Australians, mental health was an important focus in 2022. During the year, OCTEC continued to partner with providers of national mental health programs, such as headspace youth mental health services, and with hundreds of local providers of specialist mental health services such as counsellors, psychologists, and specialist treatment services.

## Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Providers

Through the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships, OCTEC has developed close working relationships with a number of Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) providers. These providers play a critical role in the success of any apprenticeship or traineeship, as they process contract paperwork on behalf of employers and trainees, check eligibility and ensure the payment of employer incentives. By working closely with these providers, we ensure employers are able to access traineeship services with minimal confusion and maximum benefit.





Accessing Funded Programs

Throughout our 47 year history, OCTEC has been committed to providing employment, training and youth services, that are accessible and innovative, and which help build resilience among individuals and communities. Today, we continue to provide locally-focused access to support services, including government-funded programs and initiatives.

## 2022 Funding

During 2022, OCTEC delivered four Commonwealth-funded employment and pre-employment programs. Disability **Employment Services and National Panel** of Assessors are funded by the Department of Social Services, while Transition to Work and ParentsNext are funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. In addition, we receive Australian Government-sourced funding from our NDIS participants for Supports in Employment at Huntley Berry Farm. During the year, our RTO delivered skills in demand courses under the joint Commonwealth and state-funded program, JobTrainer.

OCTEC continued as the second largest provider of services under the Jobs Victoria program, which is part of the Victorian State Government's Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions porfolio. Training Services funding came from the NSW Department of Education. We continued our access to Department of Education funding through Smart and Skilled, achieving quality vocational education outcomes for our participants.

## **Equitable Access**

One of the most important principles guiding OCTEC's activities is offering equitable access to all our services. We provide quality services to all people regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, marital status or disability. Our offices and services are accessible for people with mobility and sensory impairment. We also work with employers and service partners to ensure equitable service access for all participants.

Consistent application of these principles was certainly a challenge in 2022, with face-to-face access to some of our services made impossible due to flooding. In flooded regions, our partners and participants were able to maintain access to their service(s) via online technologies, including email, video conferencing and social media. To ensure our programs are effective as possible, we provide staff with the knowledge and skills they need to assist participants achieve meaningful outcomes. We also recognise that the diverse needs of people can't always be met in-house, and so we partner with a national network of specialist service providers.

OCTEC actively seeks participant and stakeholder feedback to gauge the effectiveness of our access principles, and of our services more generally, and we take action to improve access wherever required.

## Delivering Tailored Services

OCTEC offers services where they are most needed. In employment services, we operate from an extensive network of permanent sites and outreach locations, maximising participant choice, while minimising travel for them. We supplement face-to-face services by using video, social media and other online technology. Our training services provide a variety of learning options, including face-to-face, distance and online education. And all services are tailored, flexible and ongoing, including worksite support for participants placed into work, apprenticeships or traineeships.



We employ skilled and experienced people to deliver innovative and locally-relevant solutions. When recruiting staff, we place particular emphasis on three characteristics: skills and qualifications; life and work experience; and local knowledge and community connections.

We recognise the unique personal situation of each participant in our approach, considering their skills, aspirations and abilities. We are there by their side as participants overcome their barriers, and meet employers' workforce needs.

## Children and Young People

To equip young people aged 15 to 24 for sustainable careers, OCTEC delivers a specialist youth employment service through our Transition to Work program in five regions. We have also delivered youth support services under the NDIS in Central West NSW.

Recognising the significant number of youth participants we serve, in 2020 OCTEC implemented a number of Child Safety and Wellbeing initiatives. These initiatives form our commitment to the protection, safety and wellbeing of the children and young people who participate in our programs. Specific initiatives include new policies, e-learning modules for our staff, and enhanced feedback and complaint mechanisms.

## Mature Age

Australia has an ageing workforce. The pandemic and associated economic downturns impacted on the employment prospects of many people aged 45 and older. OCTEC has a history of helping mature age job seekers find and maintain employment. For example, in our current DES services more than 60% of participants are aged 45 and above. OCTEC was the first provider in Australia contracted to deliver specialist DES services for mature age participants.

## **First Australians**

Approximately 10% of participants assisted in 2022 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We support First Nations people build better lives through sustainable employment. OCTEC has developed partnerships with culturallyappropriate services and Indigenousowned businesses. We have an Indigenous Procurement Plan and deliver services specifically tailored to the needs of First Australians, including our specialist DES services in Central Queensland.

In Orange, we have established the Marang Indigenous Edible Garden at Huntley Berry Farm as a key feature of the farm and a place for creating awareness and understanding. The garden celebrates the culture of the traditional owners of the land on which the farm stands, the Wiradjuri Nation, Australia's second largest Indigenous tribe. The berries, greens, fruit, herbs and spices are native to the Central West and represent a tangible connection to Wiradjuri country and culture. OCTEC worked in consultation with Juru man, Indigenous Cultural Adventures owner and Orange Deputy Mayor, Gerald Power, to establish the garden. It was opened in February 2022 by Wiradjuri Elders, Uncle Neil Ingram, Uncle James Williams and Aunty Julie Armstrong.

## People from a Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Background

Around one in five OCTEC participants come from a CALD background. And, in many of our metropolitan services, this figure is higher than 70%. We assist refugees and asylum seekers who have come from war-ravaged countries and are challenged by trauma and other mental health barriers. To assist these participants, we partner with providers of specialist services such as Migrant Resource Centres, Settlement Services and providers of English literacy programs, including the Commonwealth Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program. The OCTEC website has content translated into 75 different languages, ensuring accessibility for all our communities.





## **Providing Quality Services**

OCTEC implements systems that review and improve our services. The goal is to deliver employment, training and youth services that meet and exceed the expectations of all stakeholders. This includes participants, employers, specialist partners, local communities and funding bodies. We seek, collect and review program evaluation information, and we implement process change in response to stakeholder feedback.

OCTEC's commitment to quality services is underpinned by our certification against four national service standards – ISO 27001 Information Security Management, National Standards for Disability Services, NDIS Practice Standards, and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations. We achieved and/or maintained accreditation against all these over the past year. Our programs and services are subject to comprehensive internal and external audits to ensure compliance with contractual requirements and the quality standards. In October, OCTEC was able to follow up our excellent result in the ISO27001 Information Management Systems Audit and become one of the first Workforce Australia and DES providers to be formally acknowledged as "Right Fit for Risk", by passing an audit against the department's DESE ISMS accreditation scheme. The scheme is now a prerequisite for holding Commonwealth employment services contracts and provides confidence to the Government that our systems are secure, monitored and in line with the Australia Security Directorates Information Security Manual. Moving forward, our focus remains on compliance, continuous improvement and best practice in IT security.

In February 2022, OCTEC was subject to a surveillance audit against the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS). Conducted by BSI Group, the audit found our DES and NDIS services to be fully compliant with the standards and stated: "The Audit Team were highly impressed with OCTEC's commitment and providing evidence to meet the National Standards for Disability Services."

Our quality approach applies equally at the individual level as it does organisationally. As part of our overall performance management processes, each OCTEC staff member has regular performance reviews. These provide comprehensive feedback on current performance alongside future career planning discussions.



## **Building Local Communities**

## Supporting Local Communities, Events and Teams

Communities come together when times are tough. OCTEC has long been a sponsor of local community teams and events. During 2022, OCTEC continued to support community events including national awareness and fundraising activities, such as International Women's Day, Footy Team Colours Day (raising money for kids with cancer), Biggest Morning Tea (Cancer Council fundraiser) and Movember (raising funds and awareness of men's health issues).

We also assisted many local community services. In 2022 this included support for the Orange Rural Fire Service. In 2022, OCTEC donated funds to purchase a command trailer equipped to offer first aid, mental health first aid, catering and communications for volunteers in the field. Ian Sutherland, Brigade Captain

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

ORANGE

said, "the command trailer will be used to provide welfare support to both Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus crew and other bushfire fighting operations in forward locations and, most importantly, in the early stages of an incident".

OCTEC also continued to sponsor community events and sporting teams. One example is the Taipans, a softball team that competed in the Suncoast Hinterland Softball Association's Play for a Cure tournament in January 2023.

OCTEC Quality and Compliance Team member, Katie Connolly, plays for the Taipans Masters team. OCTEC paid for a speciallydesigned uniform for the team (which was changed from the Taipans' traditional red and black strip, to pink and black, showing support for breast cancer research and prevention). Katie said, "I wanted to make this tournament special for the Taipan family, as cancer has impacted all of us quite significantly, and we have several of the team who are currently in remission from several different types of cancer". OCTEC has also sponsored the Taipans' Under 12 team, made up of kids from all backgrounds, disabilities and skill levels.



Orange Rural Fire Service Captain Ian Sutherland (far right), and Senior Deputy Captain, Joseph Twikaki, were greatly appreciative of OCTEC's donation of a new incident management trailer presented by OCTEC Chairperson, Jeff Whitton, and Board Member, Bruce Hansen. Source: Central Western Daily



## Conserving Community Heritage

OCTEC continued our positive contribution to community life in Orange during 2022 through our maintenance of three heritage-listed buildings. Old Town Hall, Croagh Patrick College and the Lands Office building are all significant buildings in the history of both Orange and regional NSW. On behalf of the local community, OCTEC commits considerable resources to the ongoing maintenance of these beautiful buildings. As an extension of this commitment, we offer use of the buildings to community organisations for meetings, special events and photo sessions.

## Adopting Sustainable Practices

OCTEC knows how a changing climate is impacting our participants and the wider community. Heavy rains and flooding caused damage in service areas in Queensland and NSW and Victoria, with offices closed and relocated after being seriously impacted by flood waters. This weather was costly to the Huntley Berry Farm team, causing significant damage to berry crops.

We remain committed to adopting practices that reduce the generation of waste, lower our energy consumption and encourage the use of recycled materials. Our practices include the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, reuse of office furniture, purchase of more fuel-efficient vehicles, and offsetting our emissions through partnering with Greenfleet Australia.

To reduce transport costs and use of fuel, OCTEC continued to use our IT hardware and software to facilitate connection and engagement with new and existing stakeholders. This included the use of teleconferences and Zoom video sessions to conduct meetings, training and group activities.

We have continued to move away from paperbased handbooks, tools and forms, maintaining Intranet pages for each major program area. These online resources provide staff and the Board with easy access to OCTEC policies, procedures, forms and information sources. They also support continuous improvement by eliminating the need for staff to stockpile forms that are regularly updated. Located in South Gippsland in Victoria, on land traditionally owned by the Boon Wurrung people, Greenfleet has been revegetating Wurneet Laang Laang since 2016.





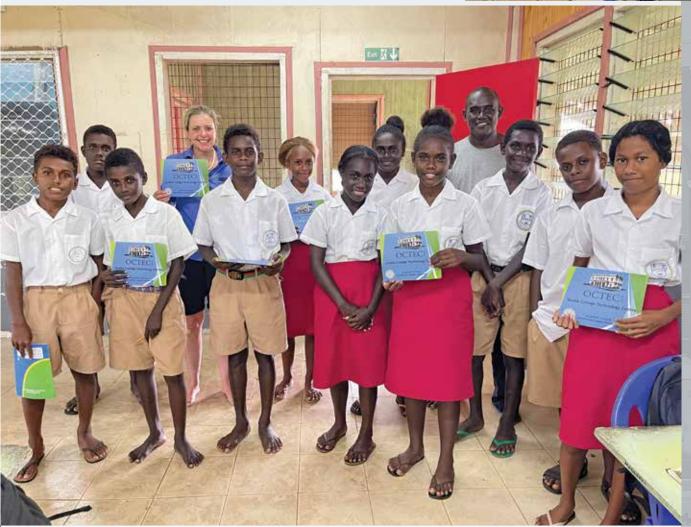
## Building Capacity in Other Countries

Back in 2016 and 2017, OCTEC donated computer hardware and IT expertise to a computer lab project at Goldie College, located on a remote island in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. This was the first computer lab of its type in the country.

Since the installation of the computer lab, college students have achieved excellent academic results, thanks to timely access to online information. The lab's success has largely been due to the 24/7 support provided by OCTEC's IT Manager, Meyenn Ngira, and his team. This support includes supplying the lab with replacement computers, monitors and IT consumables (such as toner); renewing security and antivirus licences; and keeping the lab server patched with the latest security and software updates. COVID travel bans to the Solomons continued to impact OCTEC's support of Goldie College during 2022, with support being provided remotely. Our IT team continued to provide account management and licensing arrangements for the computer lab, as well as maintaining student access and system security.

Despite COVID restrictions impacting the supply of hardware, work continued on the build of a second computer lab at the college. Electrical and network cabling is well advanced and new hardware has been purchased. OCTEC supplied 42 computer monitors for the new lab, and we will purchase new software licences in preparation for its launch in 2023. With travel bans easing, Meyenn and the OCTEC IT team are planning to travel to the Solomons to assist with the launch of this new facility that will provide Goldie College students with increased access to the web and online information critical for their education.





## Natalie

The focus of OCTEC programs and services has always been the transformation of lives. We work in partnership with our participants, giving them the opportunity to look forward – sometimes for the first time – and think about their dreams and goals.

Natalie May was a ParentsNext participant in Western Sydney a few years ago. Her story beautifully illustrates the life-changing opportunities OCTEC offers. Abandoned by her partner when their son was only one month old, Natalie was forced to give up her career as an environmental scientist. She relocated to Western Sydney and was referred to OCTEC and our ParentsNext service. Natalie didn't understand why she needed to do a government program. After all, she had a university degree. However, ParentsNext would be an important turning point in Natalie's life.

Working with our ParentsNext Consultant, Cheryl Hatzistamatis, Natalie was able to commence looking for a job. Cheryl also helped find an appropriate early learning place for Natalie's son. Only a few months after starting with ParentsNext, Natalie was able to secure a great position as an ecologist with a company in Wagga Wagga. OCTEC provided relocation advice and arranged for bond assistance for Natalie's new home; OCTEC even paid her bond. "I will never forget Cheryl's kindness and generosity, nor the assistance I received from ParentsNext," Natalie said.

Since that time, her career has soared. Natalie stayed in Wagga Wagga for seven months and was then offered a Senior Environmental Scientist role with a company in Cairns. It was an amazing opportunity. Today, she travels around Australia and surrounding islands, conducting ecological surveys and collecting data. Her employer is really supportive of parents and they allow Natalie the flexibility to work while also providing schooling for her son, who is about to start Year 3 and doing really well.

With that flexibility, Natalie has also been able to start her own conservation organisation. She is currently awaiting government permits to allow her to care for specialised threatened species. And she's not stopping there. Natalie's goal for 2023 is to seek out a suitable professor to support her research into avian (bird) diseases. She plans to commence a PhD program in 2024, looking at causes, impact and treatment of Psittacine Circovirus (Avian Beak and Feather Disease), which is killing so many beautiful Australian parrots.

Cheryl has kept in touch with Natalie, and it has been an incredible honour to see the things she has achieved as a result of her time in ParentsNext. "I am blown away by what this young woman is doing," Cheryl says.



# Partnerships for Jobs and Skills



OCTEC develops national partnerships which enable our job seekers to connect with training that leads directly to work. We are currently rolling out a national partnership with Evolution Traffic Management, a leader in traffic management, traffic planning and road safety and construction training.

Under this partnership, Evolution provides our participants with certified training including White Card (construction induction) and Traffic Control Licence courses. These courses include practical work placements, with many leading to offers of employment.

Courses have been completed in Queensland and NSW, with more planned for 2023. There are also plans in place for a roll-out of courses in Victoria. Courses are available to OCTEC participants in Disability Employment, Transition to Work, ParentsNext and Jobs Victoria Employment Mentoring services.



# Location Directory



### **NSW & ACT**

#### Sydney & Illawarra

#### Auburn

 Shop 10
 24 Northumberland Road

 Auburn NSW 2144
 Tel:
 (02) 8719 0629

 Fax:
 (02) 8719 0630
 Tel:

#### Bankstown

**DES & PN** 3/2 Meredith Street Bankstown NSW 2200 Tel: (02) 9708 4166 Fax: (02) 9790 7286

 TtW

 4 Bankstown City Plaza

 Bankstown NSW 2200

 Tel:
 (02) 8722 5070

 Fax:
 (02) 8722 5071

#### Blacktown

Part Level 2 45-51 Main Street Blacktown NSW 2148 Tel: (02) 8607 1565 Fax: (02) 8607 1566

#### Bonnyrigg

 Shop PADS2

 Bonnyrigg Plaza

 100 Bonnyrigg Avenue

 Bonnyrigg NSW 2177

 Tel:
 (02) 9753 0679

 Fax:
 (02) 9753 0712

#### Cabramatta DES

Suite 24 97-99 John Street Cabramatta NSW 2166 Tel: (02) 8722 0451 Fax: (02) 8722 0452 TtW Suites 22 & 23, 97-99 John Street Cabramatta NSW 2166 Tel: (02) 8722 5074 Fax: (02) 8722 5075

#### Campsie 11 Amy Street

11 Amy Street Campsie NSW 2194 Tel: (02) 9718 5496 Fax: (02) 9718 5182

#### Camden DES & TtW Shop 16 1-15 Murray Street Camden NSW 2570 Tel: (02) 4655 4997 Fax: (02) 4655 3117

 Campbelltown

 DES

 115 Queen Street

 Campbelltown NSW 2560

 Tel:
 (02) 4627 4421

 Fax:
 (02) 4626 5119

TtW Shop 1, 2, and 3, 138 Queen Street Campbelltown NSW 2560 Tel: (02) 4606 4983 Fax: (02) 8722 5075

Chatswood Suite 403/13 Spring Street Chatswood NSW 2067 Tel: (02) 9411 7848 Fax: (02) 9411 7807

### Corrimal

 TtW

 9/177-181 Princes Highway

 Corrimal NSW 2518

 Tel:
 (02) 4250 5860

 Fax:
 (02) 4250 5861

#### Dee Why

Suite 2 13-15 Francis Street Dee Why NSW 2099 Tel: (02) 9984 8401 Fax: (02) 9982 5714

#### Fairfield

DES & TtW Suite 3, Level 2 Neeta City Shopping Centre Fairfield NSW 2165 Tel: (02) 8722 0498 Fax: (02) 8722 0499 
 DES & PN

 1/1A Allan Street

 Fairfield NSW 2165

 Tel:
 (02) 8722 0446

 Fax:
 (02) 8722 0447

#### Hornsby

1/149 Peats Ferry Road Hornsby NSW 2077 Tel: (02) 9476 1802 Fax: (02) 9476 1802

 Hurstville

 12/10-12 Woodville Street

 Hurstville NSW 2220

 Tel:
 (02) 9570 4376

 Fax:
 (02) 9585 9405

#### Ingleburn

4/3 Ingleburn Road Ingleburn NSW 2565 Tel: (02) 9618 6826 Fax: (02) 9618 6304

#### Katoomba

115 Katoomba Street Katoomba NSW 2780 Tel: (02) 4782 7713 Fax: (02) 4782 3443

#### Kogarah

201/15 Kensington Street Kogarah NSW 2217 Tel: (02) 9588 3497 Fax: (02) 9587 7692

#### Liverpool

DES 208 Northumberland Street Liverpool NSW 2170 Tel: (02) 8711 3462 Fax: (02) 8711 3463TtW Ground Floor, 92 Copeland Street Liverpool NSW 2170 Tel: (02) 8107 4869 Fax: (02) 8107 4870

#### Miller

Shop 2, 90 Cartwright Avenue Miller NSW 2217 Tel: (02) 9826 0593 Fax: (02) 9825 0694

#### Minto

DES Shop 5, 4 Minto Rd Minto NSW 2566 Tel: (02) 9824 5952 Fax: (02) 9603 6135

 TtW

 Shop LG66

 Minto Market Place

 10 Brookfield Rd

 Minto NSW 2566

 Tel:
 (02) 8107 4879

 Fax:
 (02) 8107 4880

Mona Vale

Shop 7, 1 Mona Vale Road Mona Vale NSW 2103 Tel: (02) 8914 5974 Fax: (02) 8914 5975

**Mount Druitt** 

DES & PN 15 Cleeve Close Mount Druitt NSW 2770 Tel: (02)9625 6385 Fax: (02)9677 9409

#### Narellan

Suite 3, Shop 10-11 38 Exchange Parade Narellan NSW 2567 Tel: (02) 4647 6937 Fax: (02) 4648 3606

#### North Ryde

Suite 12b 33 Waterloo Road North Ryde NSW 2113 Tel: (02) 9887 2288 Fax: (02) 9887 2688

#### Parramatta

144 Marsden Street Parramatta NSW 2150 Tel: (02) 9687 9733 Fax: (02) 9687 9777

#### Penrith

1 Castlereagh Street Penrith NSW 2750 Tel: (02) 4732 1891 Fax: (02) 4731 6619

#### **Quakers Hill**

12/216 Farnham Road Quakers Hill NSW 2763 Tel: (02) 9625 6385 Fax: (02) 9677 9409

#### Richmond

Shop 15 / 298 Windsor Street Richmond NSW 2753 Tel: (02) 4578 8332 Fax: (02) 4588 5773

#### Redfern

1/34 Redfern St Redfern NSW 2016 Tel: (02) 8098 0736 Fax: (02) 8098 0737

#### **Rouse Hill**

Vinegar Hill Library Building 103 Civic Way Rouse Hill NSW 2155 Tel: (02) 8824 7411 Fax: (02) 8824 7199

#### Seven Hills

DES 150 Best Road Seven Hills NSW 2147 Tel: (02) 8607 1150 Fax: (02) 8608 7860

 OTS
 168 Best Road

 Seven Hills NSW 2147
 Tel:

 Tel:
 (02) 4761 0691

 Fax:
 (02) 8608 7860

#### Shellharbour

TtW Shop 1, Ground Floor Shellharbour City Plaza 2 Memorial Drive Shellharbour City Centre NSW 2529

#### Springwood

1A Hawkesbury Road Springwood NSW 2777 Tel: (02) 4751 2730 Fax: (02) 4751 9758

#### St Marys 189-191 Queen Street

St Marys NSW 2760 Tel: (02) 9623 6886 Fax: (02) 9673 0883

#### **Surry Hills**

Shop 2 174-182 Goulburn Street Surry Hills NSW 2010 Tel: (02) 8098 0736 Fax: (02) 8098 0737

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