

BROTHERHOOD Action

Last minute reprieve for JPET program

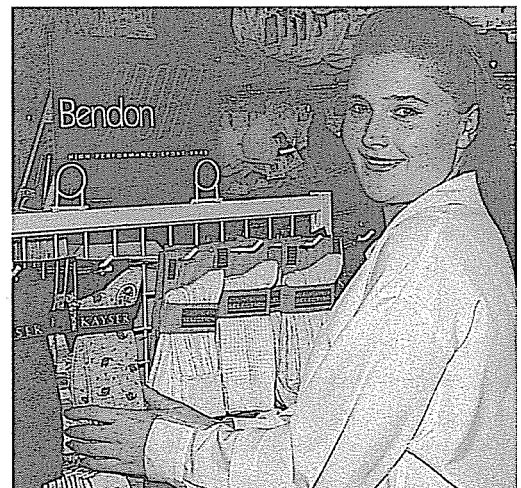
A breakfast organised to mark the closure of a successful employment program for young people has led to a last-minute reprieve for the program.

Oakleigh JPET (Jobs, Placement, Employment and Training) is an employment program for disadvantaged young people, first piloted in Australia by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. It has assisted 145 homeless young people, and has had an 80 per cent success rate in placing people in employment. There are now 45 similar programs throughout Australia, including a second JPET program auspiced by the Brotherhood which operates in Barwon.

JPET provides its clients with three months of accredited training, primarily in retail work skills. They learn job search skills, computer skills, customer service, interview presentation, and interpersonal skills. After the training period, they are assisted to find and retain employment, continuing to receive both personal and work-related support.

But when the Federal Government decided to adopt a Case Management approach to employment programs, JPET seemed set to close. Workers at the Brotherhood's Employment Action Centre feared that Case Management would not meet the needs of JPET clients, many of whom are long-term unemployed.

In late June the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Simon Crean, came to a breakfast organised by EAC workers to farewell



JPET trainee Angie on the job.

the Oakleigh JPET program. He was so impressed with what he saw that he was determined to help keep it going.

'After the breakfast, the minister's office contacted us that same day, asking that we put together a proposal to extend the program,' said Deputy Manager, Maria Alibrando. 'We've now put together a new model for the program, and will be working out with the department how this could be applied.'

The new model will provide a program for disadvantaged young people who are not yet ready for the Case Management approach. Other JPET programs can also use this model when they apply for funding.

In the meantime, the Oakleigh program has received interim funding, which is also available to other JPET programs.

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