

# Department of Education, in partnership with Allianz

## SeekSMART

### overview

The Health and Wellbeing unit is responsible for the management of workplace and non-workplace injuries. This unit, together with Allianz TMF, uses best practice injury management strategies and risk management initiatives to facilitate and refine return to work programs.

SeekSMART is a pilot program which helps injured workers to return to the workforce in new employment.

### background

Statistics demonstrate, that for the Department, new employer claims costs are, on average, four times that of the same employer portfolio. Additionally, two thirds of Department workers make a full recovery after 13 weeks, and a small number don't return to their pre-injury role.

For many, this is a difficult transition and assistance is needed to help them prepare for this life change. By identifying which workers are not mentally prepared to begin a new career, specific assistance can be provided to improve their readiness for change.

SeekSMART highlights the importance of understanding the motivators and drivers of human behaviour in planning innovative approaches to achieve improved health, social and financial outcomes.

The approach we followed utilises the behavioural insight principles between psychology and economics, to offer intervention solutions that help people to make better choices.

Developed in conjunction with Esher House, SeekSMART utilises the Psychological Assessment of Readiness to Change (PARC) survey to identify and categorise participants into one of five stages of change:

1. Pre-contemplation

Overtly lacking desire or confidence to enter employment.

2. Contemplation

Know that they should try to re-enter employment. Maybe they will in 6 months' time.

3. Unauthentic Action

Want to be seen as trying, but aren't really committed.

4. Preparation

Genuinely want a job, but need tools, praise and support.

5. Action

Need only light touch support and refinement.

### Scope

The pilot consisted of a small unit of recently job detached workers and those approaching the end of their entitlement (in metro and regional areas). Workers who were approaching retirement, or who had recently been informed their benefits were terminated were not included.

**Jane indicated that “she would use her signature strengths in new and different ways to enhance her life...and avoid falling into thinking traps.”**

A similar control group was also selected for comparison purposes.

### Planning

Esher House was selected as a partner for this project because of its experience in harnessing knowledge from proprietary research and behavioural science. Its proven ability to deliver outcomes through implementation of controlled pilots within the long-term unemployed was also a strong drawcard.

Extensive discussions were held to customise and refine the tool prior to stakeholder training.

### the journey to change

The PARC survey was tailored to SeekSMART before engaging rehabilitation providers. Esher House and

Allianz developed training to engage case managers, as well as key resource documents to facilitate the workers buy in based on their results from the PARC tool. Three rehabilitation providers received specific training from Esher House to deliver the intervention. Esher received real time results and reporting which helped inform regular project and governance meetings.

## results

The success of the SeekSMART program is measured by:

1. Completion of the initial PARC survey
2. Participation in a support program based on the worker's stage of change
3. Number/percentage of participants that found employment after the program

### Results from the department's pilot:

There was a 60 per cent response rate to the assessment, while 68 per cent of assessment participants were deemed suitable for the intervention workshops, 88 per cent of program offers were accepted, and 32 per cent obtained alternative work.

The customer centred SeekSMART program aims to improve customer experience by providing services

to long term workers compensation recipients. A reduction of the overall costs of long term claims, created by an increase in people returning to new employment, has delivered commercial benefits to the employer and the scheme.

## challenges

Long term job seekers initially resisted the pilot, however this attitude shifted and a positive response was recorded at the completion of the program.

A small number of participants were required to fill-out a mail out survey which created some delay before services could be completed.

## future strategies

Future refinement of the SeekSMART program may include the ability for workers to complete their questionnaire during a meeting with a rehabilitation provider. A full rollout of the program is planned to be completed in Q3, 2017.

A similar program for workers who are still attached to their employer (but have not returned to work six months post-injury) has been approved for implementation.