

# BARRIERS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

## Feedback from the Learners Cohort

We worked with agencies like Flat Out, CoHealth, Mental Health Legal Centre, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre and Best Start ( a program of **commUnity+** funded by Ross Trust) to consult with the clients who were at risk, vulnerable and identified a range of barriers that they faced to pursue education and employment opportunities.

Information was also collected from sources like published reports, the internet and stakeholders and client surveys.

**The consultation focussed on clients who experienced the following issues mainly:**

### Family Violence

- ⊗ Lack of capacity to address education and employment opportunity due to emotional stress and lack of confidence and self esteem
- ⊗ Financial crisis resulting in homelessness
- ⊗ Dealing with bureaucracy and the legal system in relation to child support and custody
- ⊗ Gender-biased social stigma and fear of being judged
- ⊗ Social isolation resulting from moving to a new area to escape the family violence situation
- ⊗ Post-traumatic stress
- ⊗ Lack of awareness about the available support services at the right time

### Mental Health Issues

- ⊗ Lack of access to proper medical services
- ⊗ Lack of integrated legal support
- ⊗ Lack of accommodation, financial support and family support
- ⊗ Low self-esteem, the fear of being judged and the social stigma attached to mental illness
- ⊗ Lack of functionality due to heavy medication

### Drug and Alcohol Problems

- ⊗ Stigma and fear of being judged even while making attempts to address the issue with support from drug and alcohol support agencies
- ⊗ Lack of support from family and friends through the daunting rehabilitation process
- ⊗ Relapse resulting from lack of proper accommodation, family breakdown and other complex issues
- ⊗ Lack of access to financial support and risk of homelessness
- ⊗ Complex legal issues resulting in lack of focus and time to pursue education or employment opportunities

### Incarceration

- ⊗ Poor self-esteem, social isolation and a sense of shame resulting from stigma and fear of being judged
- ⊗ Trouble in reconnecting back with family and children post release
- ⊗ Lack of housing and financial support
- ⊗ Inability to secure employment resulting in re-offending
- ⊗ Priorities like social support agencies meetings, appointments and commitments.
- ⊗ Lack of confidence due to low literacy level
- Post – traumatic stress due to long periods of incarceration

