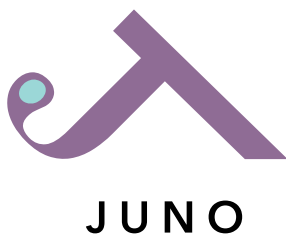


JUNO EMPOWER PILOT PROGRAM

ENDLINE EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY



Developed in its original iteration by For-Purpose Evaluations, November 2023
To access the report in full please scan the QR code below



JUNO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We at Juno acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the rightful Custodians of the Lands. We particularly pay our respects to Sistergirls and Brotherboys who have lived and Dreamed outside the gender binary since time immemorial. Our building and the work we do is conducted on the unceded Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the mighty Kulin Nation.

We acknowledge Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples and anyone else First Nations' to other so-called lands and borders.

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of dispossession and slavery within this current iteration of the penal colony. We acknowledge the ongoing survival and cultural wisdom held by the rightful Custodians of the Lands we find ourselves on today. May we meet together and continue to decolonise our minds, spirits and communities.

Always Was, Always Will Be Aboriginal Land.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THOSE CONNECTED IN OUR SHARED WORK

Juno and For-Purpose Evaluations would like to thank the women (trans and cis) and non-binary people participating in the program who generously gave up their time to provide essential insights and perspectives to this report. We are grateful for their openness when discussing their experiences, challenges, goals, fears and successes with regards to the program. Without these people this project would not have been possible. We also extend our appreciation to our current and previous EMPOWER coaches, without you this work would not be possible.

We also extend our thanks to our partners and funders, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, Phyllis Connor Memorial Fund and Erdi Foundation, for making the pilot program possible.



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THE EMPOWER PROGRAM

OUR LOCAL CONTEXT

In Victoria, approximately 61,200 women (trans and cis) access Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) each year.¹ Additionally, 44% of all people accessing SHS services in Victoria are a result of family and intimate partner violence.² Within Juno's homelessness support programs, most participants' income places them under the poverty line and only 10% of that income is received from formal employment.³ In Victoria, these people are supported with case management, temporary housing and other services. However, after the immediate crisis is addressed and a level of stability is achieved, there is a lack of services to support them to work towards a more sustainable future for themselves and their families.

EMPower is Juno's flagship program for capacity building and poverty reduction. EMPower is an innovative coaching model supporting women (trans and cis) and non-binary people with the skills to achieve greater economic freedom and confidence to recover from trauma and thrive. Juno has adapted the program for the Australian context, based on a highly successful model developed by EMPATH, a Boston-based organisation. EMPower uses a neuroscience approach to support participants, recognising the executive functioning skills needed to build a more sustainable future are often jeopardised by trauma, stress and poverty.⁴ The program enables participants

61,200
women (trans and cis) access Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) each year.¹

44%
of all people accessing SHS services in Victoria are a result of family and intimate partner violence.²

1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022

2 Ibid

3 Juno 2020

4 Babcock 2014

to rebuild these skills by engaging them in a coaching process where they develop and work towards a staged set of goals for family and housing, career and education, finances, and health and wellbeing. EMPower is recovery-focused and not a replacement for case management but aimed at people who have moved out of crisis and are wanting to set goals related to economic security.

Coaching serves as a complementary approach to traditional case management. The unique approach of EMPower shifts from “doing for” the participant, as can occur within case management models, to evoking change by asking the right questions, supporting participant-led goal setting and providing accountability and recognition for achieving those goals. The program is designed so that coaches typically meet with participants on a more intensive and frequent basis in the early stages of the program and move to more infrequent sessions as participants progress and achieve their goals.

Importantly, the EMPower program delivery is heavily influenced by the foundational intersectional feminist approach embedded in Juno as an organisation.

OUR INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT EVIDENCE BASE

The program and Theory of Change is informed by research undertaken by EMPath and Harvard University that examines the impacts of poverty, stress, and trauma on the brain, behaviour, and decision-making. This Economic Mobility evidence-base recognises the impact of structural inequality and discrimination which can lead to living in poverty and experiencing homelessness and trauma, thereby impacting the area of the brain associated with many of the analytic processes called executive functioning skills. It is important to note executive functioning skills within the current iteration of the EMPower program, speaks to the impacts of trauma only and does not include considerations for neurodivergent participants. When an individual encounters stress or crisis, the limbic brain can become overactive and powerful signals of desire, stress or fear can cause the pre-frontal brain to become swamped and waves of emotion to drown out focused decision-making.⁵ It is in the pre-frontal cortex where executive functioning skills such as future planning and staged decision-making processes take place.

Therefore, for participants to succeed in reaching goals, it is necessary to develop, practice and strengthen these key executive functioning skills through setting and working towards smaller goals and receiving ongoing support and recognition for their progress. The more these executive functioning skills are practiced, the more the ‘brain physically develops increasingly rich networks of neural connections in the areas of the prefrontal cortex that support these functions’.⁶ The confidence that reaching staged, planned goals creates then flows into greater executive functioning skills such as planning, prioritisation, flexibility and metacognition.

The EMPower program specifically works on the areas of impulse control, working memory and mental flexibility that are likely to have been compromised by trauma. Strengthening these active neural pathways can also enable better reasoned decision-making and planning in the longer-term.

⁵ Casey et al 2011

⁶ Babcock 2014

TIMELINE OF THE EVALUATION AS CONDUCTED BY FOR-PURPOSE EVALUATIONS

This evaluation considers the implementation and impact of the Economic Mobility Power pilot program (EMPower or “the program”). The evaluation was conducted between March 2021 and November 2023. The endline evaluation follows the midline evaluation completed in March 2023.

DIFFERING COVID-19 IMPACTS ON GROUP 1, GROUP 2 AND GROUP 3

It must be acknowledged that the EMpower program commenced during the 2021 lockdowns. Accordingly, there have been fewer group activities than intended. Group 1, in particular, who have since exited the program in March 2023, had less access to group activities. Only 56% of survey respondents from Group 1 and 2 said that they were still able to work on their goals during COVID- 19 lockdowns. The disruption negatively affected opportunities to address employment and education goals, while also necessitating a focus on the wellbeing and mental health related outcomes for this group.

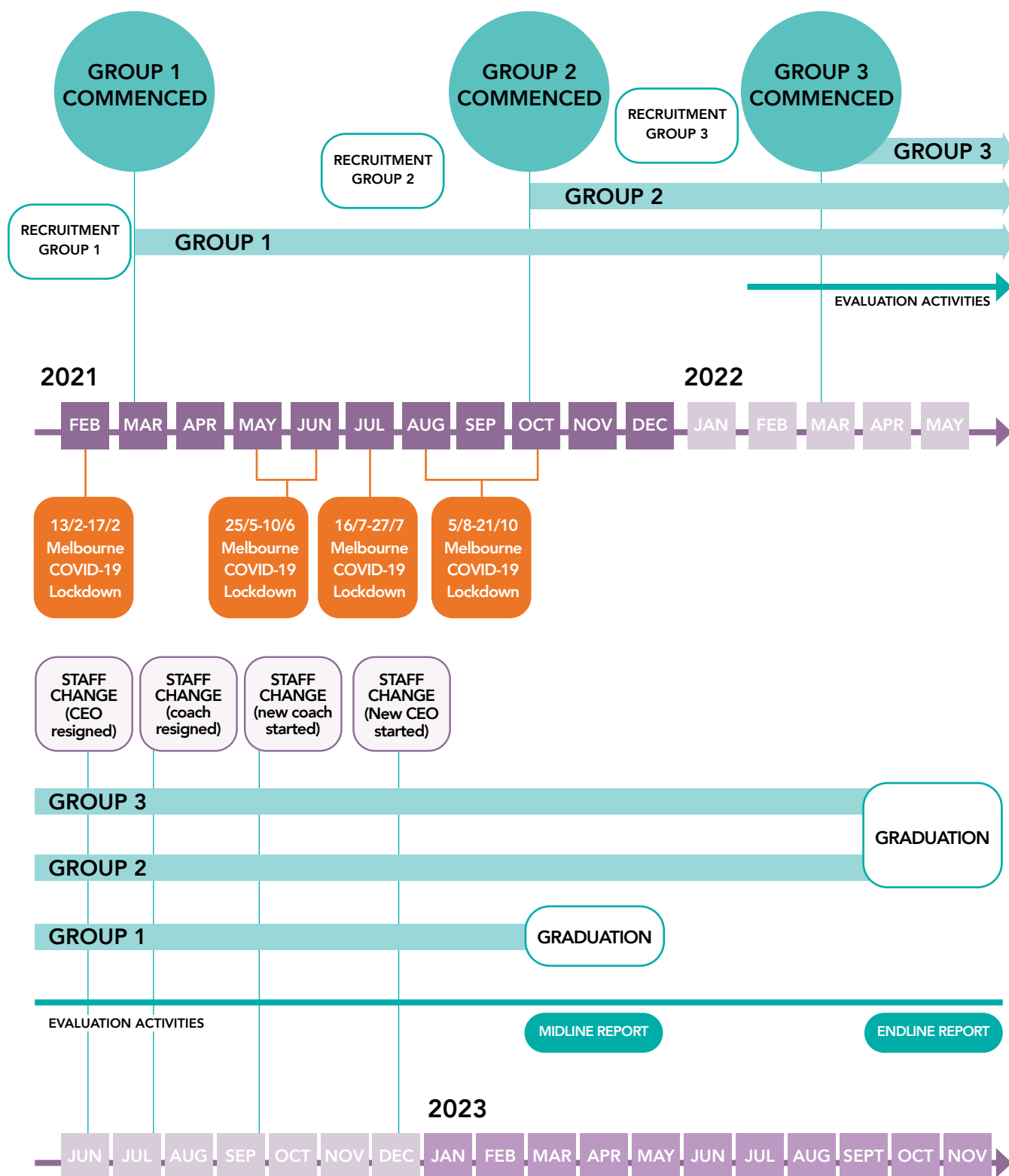


“A lot more focus around growth mindset than originally in the model... There was an element that was required around recovery and wellbeing [after COVID-19 lockdowns].” – EMPower coach

Overall, the EMPower program has been implemented with fidelity to the model, in particular, the relationship with coaches, being client-led and utilising the tools to structure the program. There have been some changes in response to external factors, specifically COVID-19, clients’ experiences of crisis, and staff changes at Juno. Notably, recruitment for Group 2 (October 2021 intake) took place during the June – October 2021 COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria.

PROGRAM CHRONOLOGY

Figure 1 below shows a timeline of the delivery of the EMPower pilot from 2021-2023, including recruitment periods, group start dates, COVID-19 lockdowns and staff changes.





IN BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

More than a one-third (39%) of participants were previous Juno participants. Other common referral pathways included self-referral, Women's Property Initiatives and Orange Door.

The key demographic information for participants displayed in the table below demonstrates the diversity of needs which presented in the program. Therefore, there is a need for responsive and flexible coaching support for each participant. For example, participants who are culturally and linguistically/faith diverse and/or living with a disability may experience additional barriers to employment and may require specialised support to help them achieve their goals. Of note, throughout the 3 groups, the majority of participants straddled multiple intersections i.e. CaLFD and persons with disability and persons with dual diagnosis of mental health/generalised ill mental health, hence the strong observable outcomes surrounding the relationship between service provision by an intersectional feminist organisation and the high level, applied intersectional feminist practice of our EMPOWER coaches.



39%

**Culturally and
Linguistically, Faith
Diverse**



92%

**Australian Citizen or
Permanent Resident**



8%

Temporary Visa



32%

**Long term health
condition / disability**



42%

**Mental health
diagnosis**



71%

**Has one or more
children**

THE BRIDGE TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The Bridge to Self-Sufficiency, known as the “Bridge” is a research-based tool developed by EMPATH and supported by neuroscience.⁷ The Bridge illustrates the journey people undertake as they advance from poverty to economic self-sufficiency, through setting and achieving goals across each of the five pillars.

The Bridge is designed to facilitate conversations, support contextualised decision making and provide a framework for accountability and outcomes measurement. The five pillars broadly represent the domains of life identified as the most essential to move towards economic self-sufficiency.⁸ These domains include Family Stability, Wellbeing, Financial Management, Career and Education and Income and Employment. The Bridge takes a holistic approach, recognising that difficulties in one area of a person’s life often results in difficulties in another. Conversely, successes in one area can reinforce success in other areas.



⁷ EMPATH 2021
⁸ Babcock 2012

SOPHIE'S* JOURNEY

Sophie is a passionate, strong, creative single mum of two young boys. After experiencing homelessness and family violence, which forced her to live in her car for six months, she found a private rental with the support of a Juno housing case manager and moved into her new home with her kids.

Once she had settled into her new home, Sophie was referred to EMPower. At the time, she was not working or studying but had dreams of getting back into the workforce and regaining her self-confidence and sense of direction for her life. Sophie set a variety of goals with her coach, with her main goals being to update her CV, speak with recruiters and find work that was both meaningful and flexible.

After just four months in the program, she secured a job with the Melbourne Magistrates Court and began to work four days per week online from home whilst COVID-19 restrictions were still in place throughout Victoria. It was her dream job, as she was working in a team environment, supporting the courts with information around IVO processing, and was supported to work flexibly whilst raising her two boys. Sophie continued to set goals related to further education and training and explored which courses she may like to study part-time in the future. She also became engaged in various advocacy projects, where she began powerfully sharing her voice and lived experience of homelessness and family violence.



"The work I've been doing with my coach has given me the confidence to know what I can do. I can achieve my goals, be confident, advocate for myself and get what I deserve. The strength, patience, and ability to work towards my goals are just a few of the things I've learnt about myself since joining EMPower."

After two years of working and saving diligently, meeting regularly with her coach to set planned and staged goals, Sophie saved up enough money to put a deposit down on a home. In the last month of the EMPower program, she achieved the extraordinary feat of independently purchasing and moving into a new home with her two children.



BRIDGE PILLAR DOMAIN: HOUSING

Overall, EMPOWER participants increased their Bridge scores within the housing pillar, moving from an average score of 7.7 to a score of 9.5, 89% of participants joined the EMPOWER with safe, affordable and secure housing. This reflects the eligibility criteria that people are in stable housing at intake. **After 18 months, 100% of participants were in safe, affordable and secure housing.** Importantly, case note analysis revealed that at least three participants experienced housing instability during the program, largely due to crisis such as family and / or community violence.

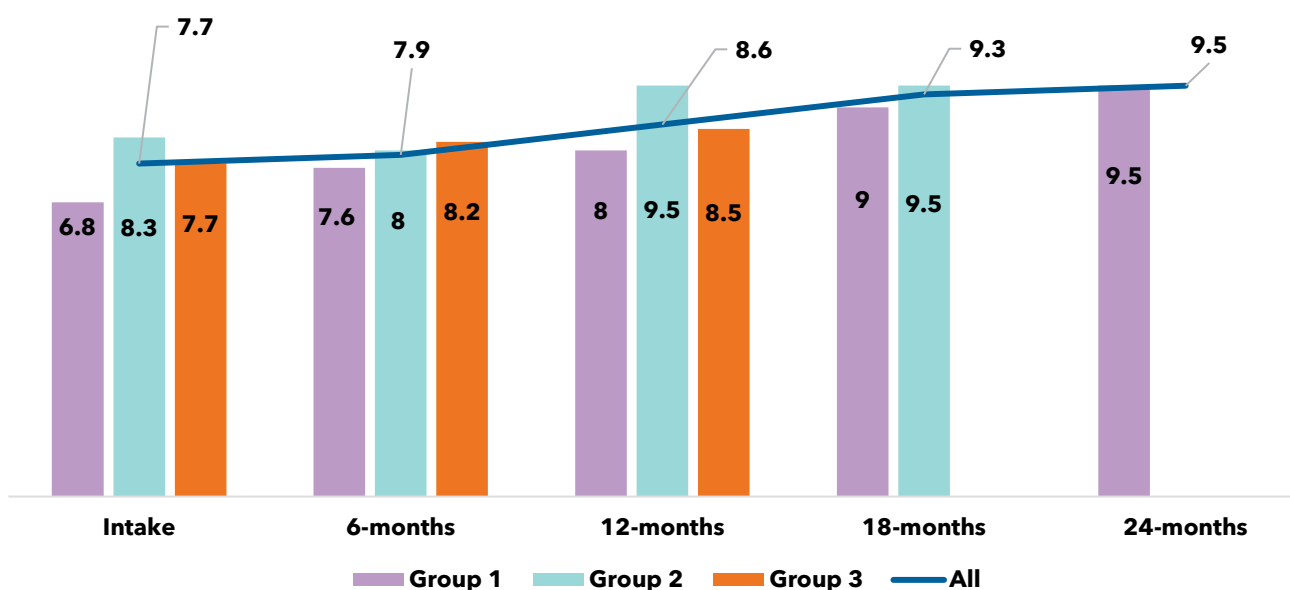
Significantly, two participants embarked on a journey of savings and have successfully achieved home ownership while participating in the program. Both participants were engaged in the program for 24 months. Three interviewees also secured a safe rental property with support from their EMPOWER coach.

100%
of participants
were in safe,
affordable and
secure housing.



"Before I lived in a boarding house, now I live in my own place. I will always be grateful after so many years of not having my own space." - Participant

BRIDGE SCORES: HOUSING

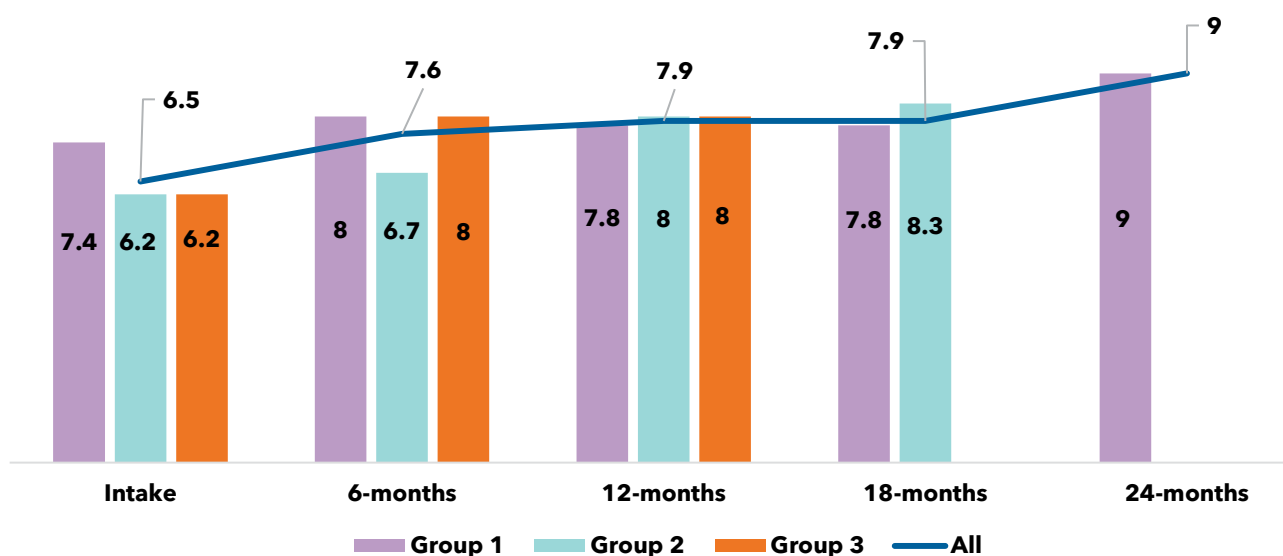




BRIDGE PILLAR DOMAIN: FAMILY STABILITY

Overall, EMPOWER participants increased their Bridge scores within the family pillar, moving from an average score of 6.5 to 9.0. The below shows the positive change in the average score in the family area of the Bridge over the course of the program. Notably, participants aged 46-65 years experienced greater change in the family area than young participants, with an increase of 3.1 points and 1.5 points respectively.

BRIDGE SCORES: FAMILY



EMPower supported participants to strengthen their family relationships, as well as build capacity to set boundaries and disengage from unhealthy relationship dynamics. For some participants, improvements in this area took the form of enhanced family, social and community connections, such as increased quality time spent with their children and reconnecting with friends and family members. One participant noted that the conversations they had with their EMPower coach helped them to change their perspective on relationships, leading to sustained re-connection with an estranged family member.

“I spend time with my daughter and even make her part of the program. Baking with my daughter became a celebration for achieving my goal; I brought her in to the celebratory process.” - Participant

“I had lost my friends, I got them back.” – Participant

Enablers of success in this area included the supportive conversations with their coach; savings goals that enabled them to spend quality time with family; and their own personal growth and self-care.

“Having someone there, it’s like a friend that you can turn to. It gave me power to keep the relationship with [family member] going and get a few things out in the open. EMPower taught me to let bygones be bygones. I’ve forgiven [that person]. We now talk a few times a week. EMPower gave me confidence to do that.” – Participant

“My rewards are pretty big now, I go out to dinner with the kids. When the weather is nice, we do a half day activity at the city or the beach, go out and eat...the next goal is a cruise for me and the kids during the school holidays.” – Participant

For some participants, improvement in this area meant feeling more confident to identify, avoid and remove themselves from negative relationships. Specifically, participants spoke about being able to identify unhealthy behaviours; engaging in protective strategies; setting boundaries; and building respect in relationships through improved communication skills.



BRIDGE PILLAR DOMAIN: WELLBEING

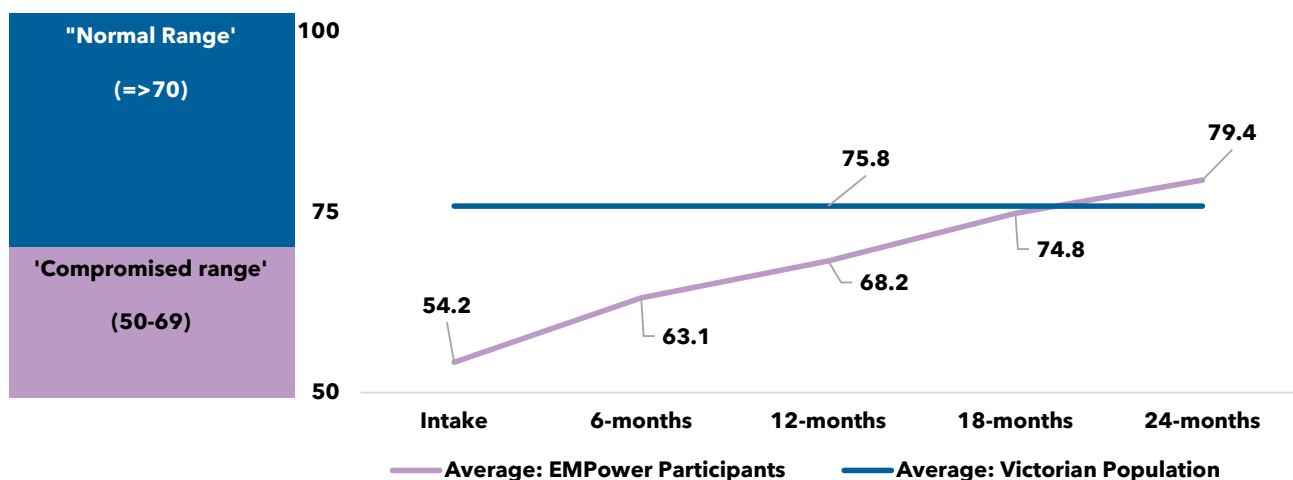
Poverty, stress and trauma can have a detrimental impact on physical health and overall wellbeing. A level of physical and mental health and strong social networks is needed for individuals to work towards and achieve their aspirations.⁹ The wellbeing pillar includes goals in the areas of health and networks. In the area of health, participants work towards strong and stable health. In the area of networks, participants work toward being part of positive social networks that are strong and supportive.

PERSONAL WELLBEING INDEX (PWI)

Overall, participants' wellbeing increased substantially as the program progressed. 76% of participants increased their overall PWI score. As participants achieve goals, build confidence, and progress in each of the pillars, their overall wellbeing and quality of life increases, reflecting the interconnectedness of the Bridge pillars and the holistic approach of the EMPower model.

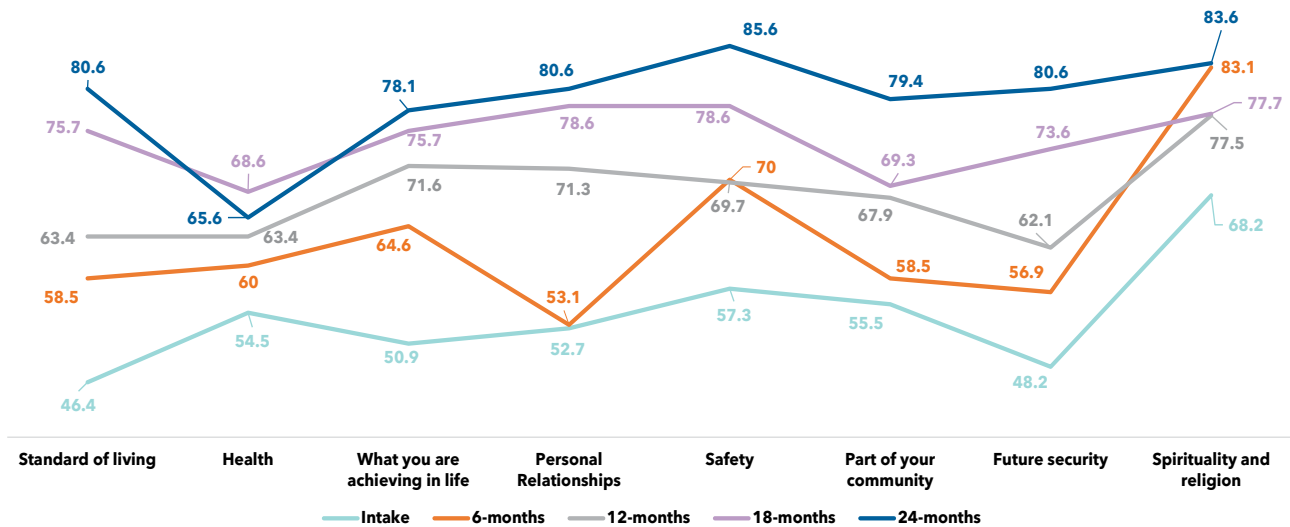
The PWI measure looks at a participants' overall life satisfaction, reflecting the impact of participants' improved situations across all key domains of life, as well as their sense of achievement and hope for the future. **The average PWI for the group increased 25.2 points from the "compromised range" to the "normal range."** Importantly, it is at the 18-month and 24-month intervals when the group reaches the "normal range" and then surpasses the average score for the general population in Victoria. In addition, the average wellbeing score across the whole group increased in all domains.

PERSONAL WELLBEING SCORES



⁹ Babcock 2018

PERSONAL WELLBEING SCORE: BY DOMAIN



People who have experienced a recent negative life event have consistently lower wellbeing scores over time than others.¹⁰ Further, personal wellbeing scores in the general population tend to increase over time, while wellbeing for people who have experienced trauma tend to remain consistent.¹¹ In view of this research, and of the complex challenges these participants face, any improvement in their wellbeing is a significant achievement.

“I feel my life has changed a lot. I’m not stressed like before.”
– Participant

“I’m more resilient and flexible and feel braver and fearless.”
– Participant

¹⁰ Australian Unity 2016

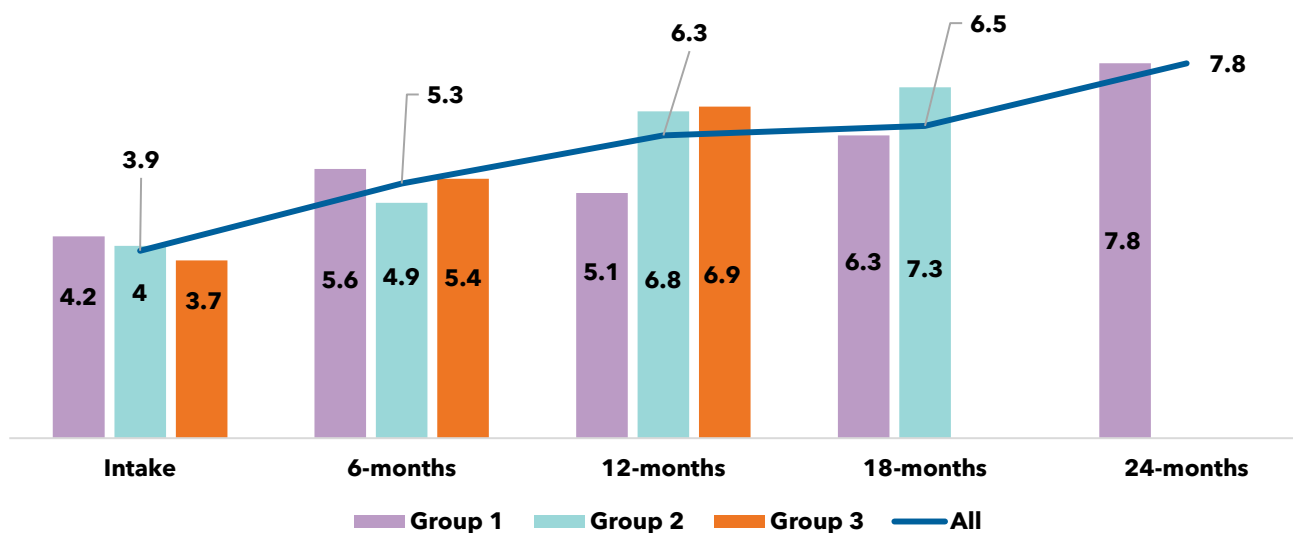
¹¹ Australian Unity 2016



BRIDGE PILLAR DOMAIN: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Overall, EMPOWER participants increased their Bridge scores within the financial wellbeing pillar, moving from an average score of 3.9 to 7.8 across all groups. Figure 5 shows the positive change in the average score in the financial wellbeing area of the Bridge over the course of the program.

BRIDGE SCORES: FINANCIAL WELLBEING



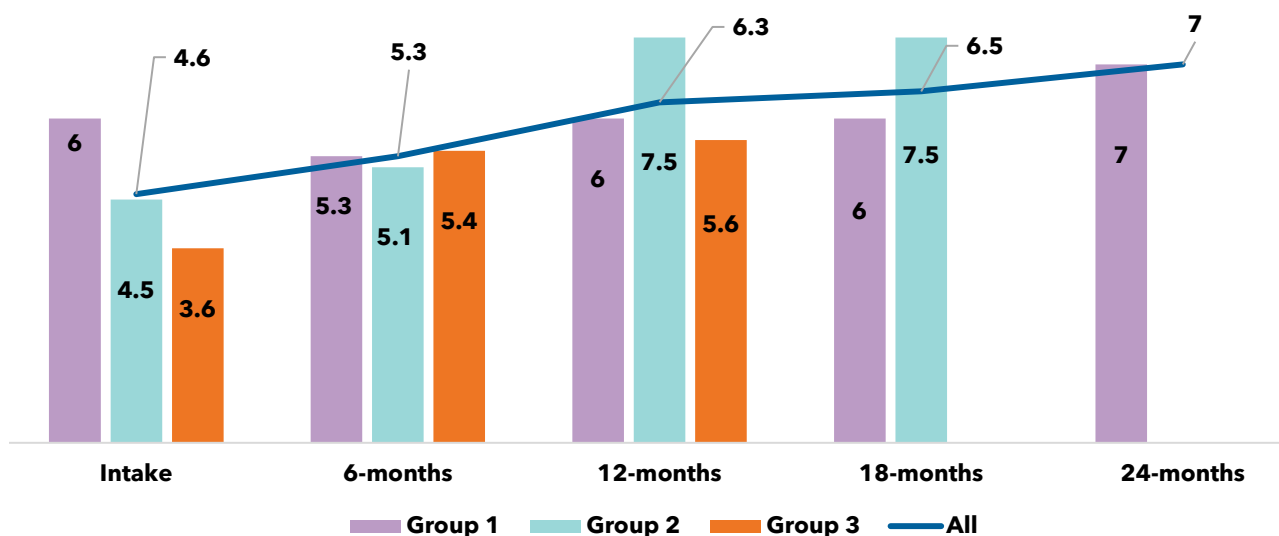
During interviews, participants spoke about having increased knowledge of budgeting and personal finance. Participants attributed their success in this area to knowledge and skill development opportunities, such as the Money Matters course as offered through Bridge Darebin which empowers participants to increase their financial literacy and wellbeing, and the incentives and tools offered by the program.

Overall, EMPOWER participants increased their Bridge scores within the savings and debt area, moving from an average score of 4.6 to 7.0. Figure 6 shows the positive change in the average score in the savings and debt area of the Bridge over the course of the program.



"I am able to save something which is completely opposite to before."
– Participant

BRIDGE SCORES: SAVINGS AND DEBT



Across the group, the median savings rose by 329% from \$490 to \$2,100. Further, 72% of participants increased their savings during their time in the program. This is a significant achievement given the economic context in Australia at this time, where savings across the general population have fallen following a rise in household consumption costs.¹² Additionally, case note analysis revealed that at least 45% of the total participant group were successfully working towards their savings goals. This evidence indicates that participants are more financially secure as they progress through the program. Building a consistent savings habit helps to break the cycle of poverty and is linked to improved overall emotional wellbeing.

Interviewees reflected that the program enabled them to develop better savings habits. EMPOWER participants largely attributed their success in this area to structured goal-setting and incentives.

72%
of participants
increased their
savings during
their time in the
program

“One participant who had no savings habit is on her way to saving \$5,000. The Money Matters program and learning specific budgeting goals created a mental shift - from having an idea of budgeting as a restrictive thing to something that can serve her. She’s now thinking about investing and earning a passive income.” – Staff

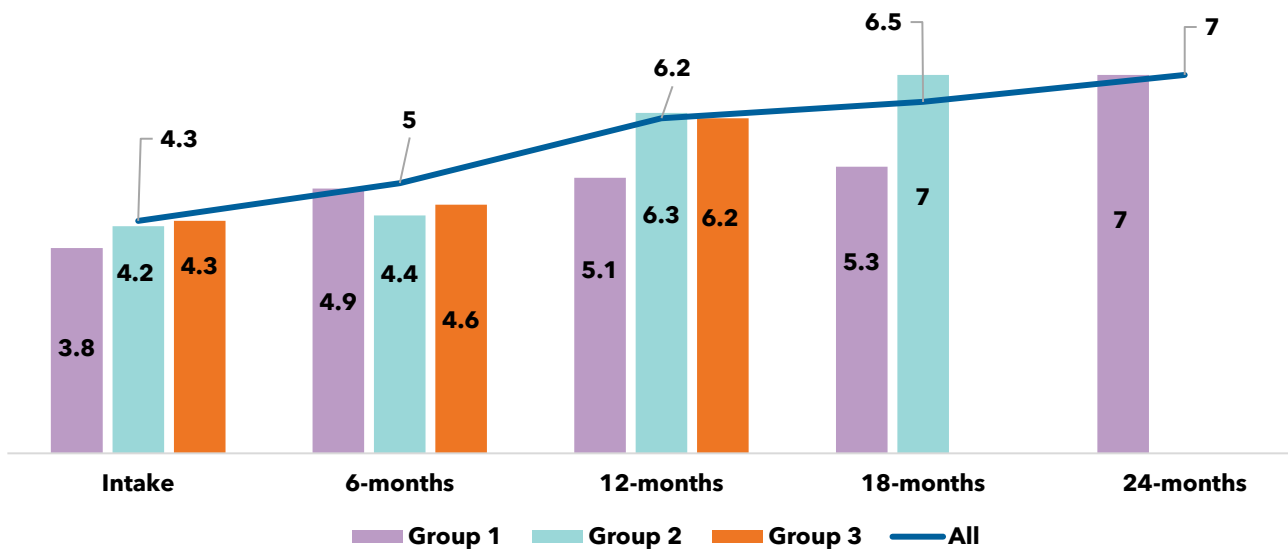
¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023
(*) name has been changed for privacy



BRIDGE PILLAR DOMAIN: CAREER AND EDUCATION

Overall, EMPOWER participants increased their Bridge scores within the career pillar, moving from an average score of 4.3 to 7.0. Figure 13 shows the positive change in the average score in the career area of the Bridge over the course of the program.

BRIDGE SCORES: CAREER



Participants who identified improvements in this area discussed having a greater understanding of their passions and personal strengths through the coaching process, as well as building self-confidence due to achieving their goals. As a result, participants identified an increased clarity around their future direction in life. Further, five interviewees saw their career as an avenue through which they could help and give back to others.



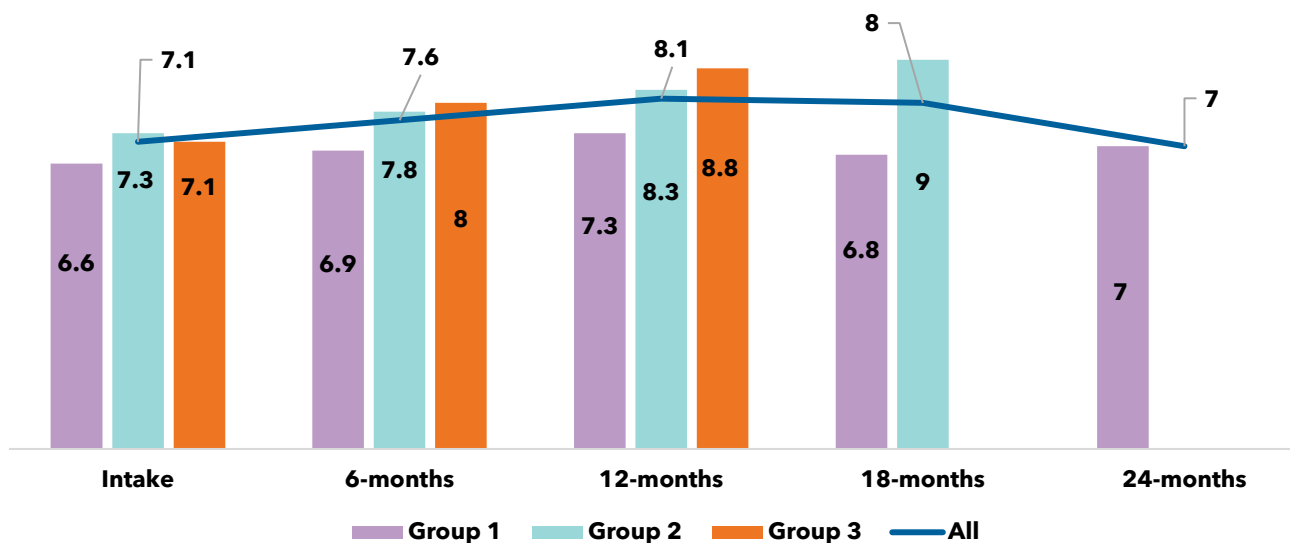
"I have worked out what I am good at and now I am able to make a career out of it." – Participant



*"I became passionate about making a positive difference about the lives of others and using my lived experience to help other migrant and culturally diverse women facing adversities. I looked at changing career paths, and as a single mum and mature age student went back to uni to study."
– Participant*

Overall, EMPOWER participants commenced the program with a reasonably high average Bridge score of 7.1, indicating that the majority of participants had already completed secondary and/or tertiary education. The below shows the change in the average score in the education area of the Bridge over the course of the program. Throughout the course of the program, participants increased their Bridge scores in the first 12 months, however there was some fluctuation between 12 and 24 months. After 18 months, 35% of participants were engaged in education or training. Case note analysis suggests that some participants needed to postpone their studies to focus on other priorities, such as mental health issues or moving house. Others may have completed a course and so not continued in education.

BRIDGE SCORES: EDUCATION



Notably, 44% of participants interviewed said they were engaged in training or employment related to their long-term education and employment goals. This finding highlights the future-focused nature of the EMPOWER model, which encourages participants to work towards meaningful career goals.



"I finished my Diploma of Financial Counselling. That's what I want to do, I'm on the job search now for financial literacy work." – Participant

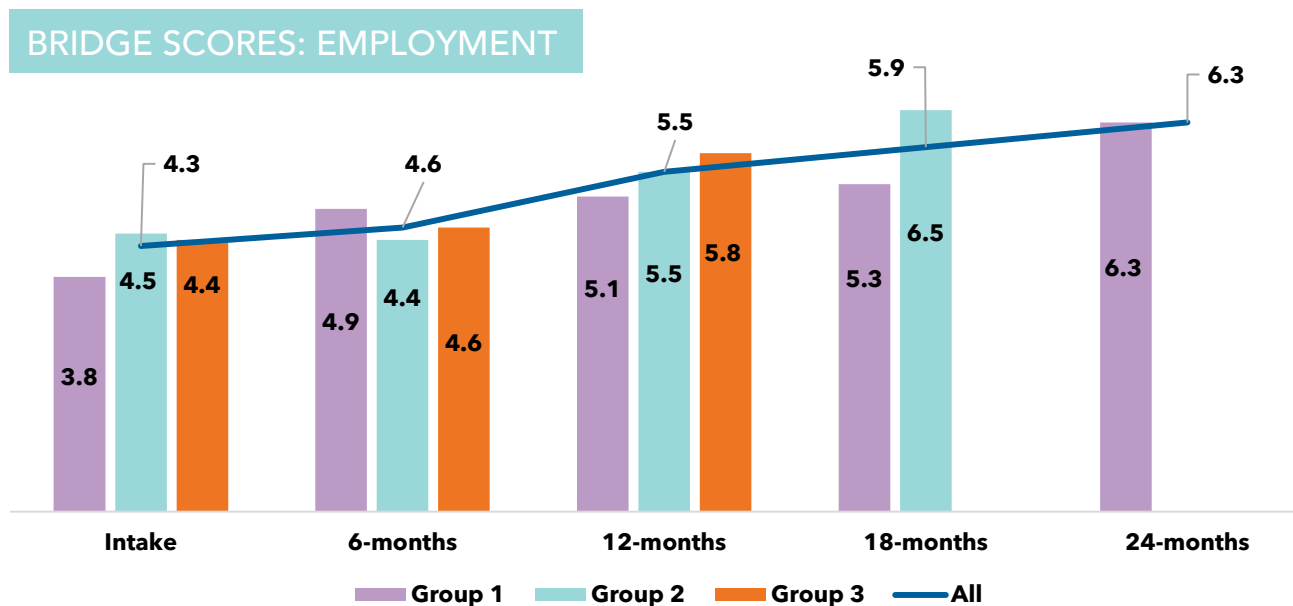


BRIDGE PILLAR DOMAIN: INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Poverty can bring stress and trauma, compounding the challenges and executive functioning impact of surviving on low incomes. People with low incomes experience more community violence and more violence in the home.¹³ Additionally, single parents on a low income often face the formidable task of juggling childcare while working or undertaking the education and training necessary to obtain higher paying jobs. Income is directly correlated with the ability to achieve goals.¹⁴

Within the Bridge pillar of 'Income and Employment', participants work towards an income above the relative poverty line, as well as permanent and stable employment with opportunities for professional growth. In doing so, participants move towards sufficient income to support their families and work towards goals in other areas of their life.

Overall, EMPOWER participants increased their Bridge scores within the employment pillar, moving from an average score of 4.3 to 6.3. The below shows the positive change in the average score in the employment area of the Bridge over the course of the program.



“It might not be their career goal, but they have some income coming in to support them to do other things, support their kids, support themselves while they are doing training or education to have a career that they want.” – EMPOWER coach

¹³ Ruiz De Lizuriaga 2015

¹⁴ Babcock 2014

Several participants faced significant barriers to gaining secure employment. Importantly, case note analysis revealed that 32% of participants identified barriers to employment due to their caregiving responsibilities. 59% also had physical and/or mental health issues that preventing them from maintaining stable employment. Further, some participants are on short-term contracts and casual employment so move in and out of work.

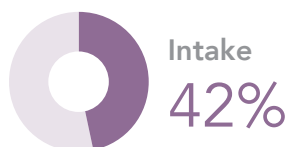
Younger participants (aged 26-45 years) experienced greater change in employment when compared to older participants (aged 46-65 years), achieving an increase in 4.2 points and 0.8 points respectively. Significantly, CaLFD participants also achieved substantial growth in the employment area when compared to the rest of the group. These participants experienced a 5.2 point increase, compared to a decrease of 0.1 points for others.

The below outlines the key performance indicators in employment and / or training for EMPOWER:

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION METRICS

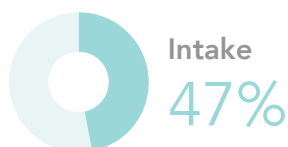
Funding Contract Key Performance Indicator

In either **full-time or part-time** employment and / or training

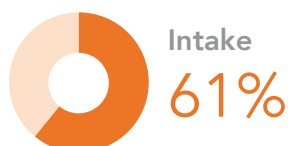


Other Metrics

In either **full-time, part-time or casual** employment and / or training



In the **labour force¹⁵**, and in **full-time, part-time or casual employment** and / or training



Importantly, 83% of those that were in the labour force¹⁶ at the 18-month interval were employed in full-time, part-time or casual employment, compared to only 32%¹⁷ at intake.

The benefits of gaining professional experience, regardless of length, should not be underestimated. For many, it is a significant milestone. **In total, 76% of participants have worked at some point during the program.** Fiscally, being employed offers them stability and independence due to increased income. On a more holistic level, gaining professional experience builds confidence in their ability to work and provides opportunity to explore what meaningful employment looks like for them.

76%
of participants
have worked
at some point
during the
program.

¹⁵ Includes participants who are able to work and seeking employment (n=12)

¹⁶ Includes participants who are able to work and seeking employment (n=12)

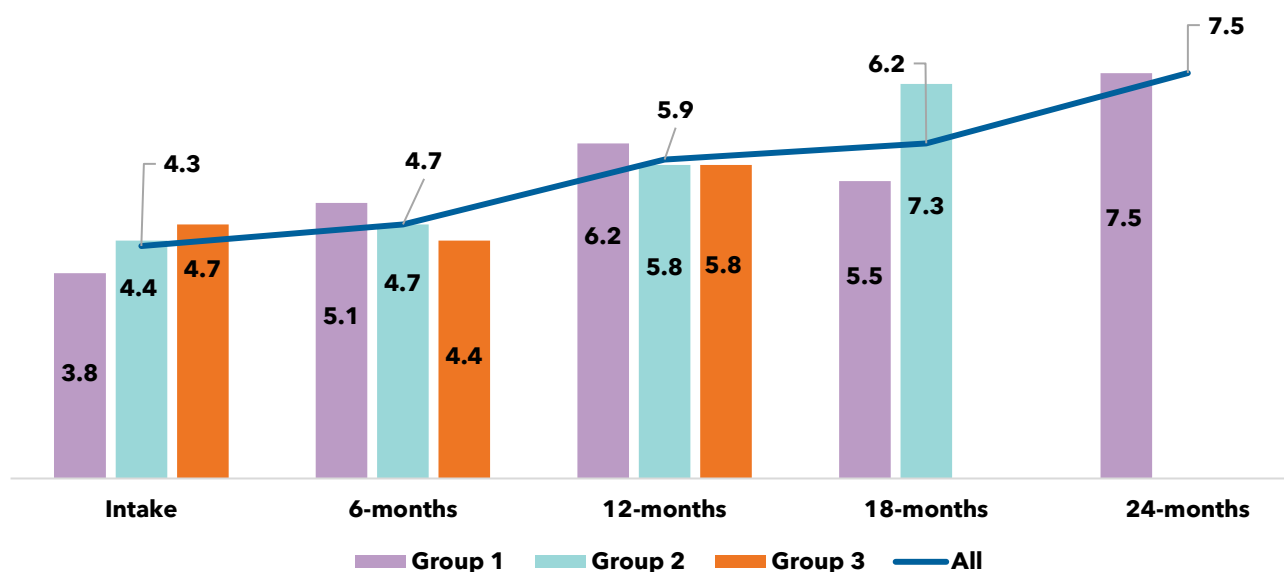
¹⁷ (n=28)

The below shows the positive change in the average score in the income area of the Bridge over the course of the program. Notably, participants with mental health diagnoses and / or disability achieved moderately higher growth in this area (3.4 points) when compared with the remaining group (2.6 points).

Overall, the median income across all groups increased by 46% from \$1,000 to \$,1463.50 per fortnight. This is a significant achievement, particularly when compared with the general population in Australia where median employee earnings increased by only 4.2% between August 2021 and August 2022¹⁸. The increase in income has also been achieved in the context of reductions in welfare payments as COVID-19 relief payments ended.

46%
Overall, the median income across all groups increased by 46% from \$1,000 to \$,1463.50 per fortnight.

BRIDGE SCORES: INCOME



"I'm now looking for work. I did have 9 months' worth of work before, which gave me a bit of confidence for myself instead of sitting at home doing nothing all day." – Participant

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022

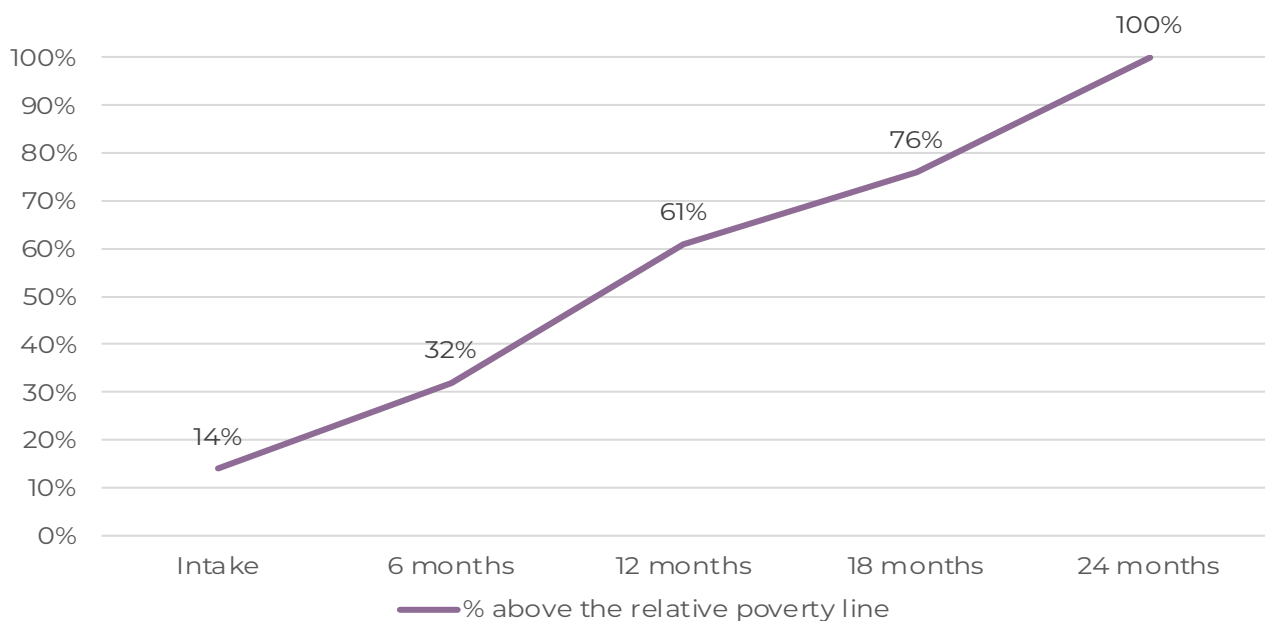
Having a steady income has a substantial impact on an individual's overall wellbeing. Interviewees spoke about the reduced stress of having increased income and being able to progress their savings goals as a result.

The below shows the significant increase in the proportion of participants whose income rose above the relative poverty line.¹⁹

Crucially, 100% of respondents were living above the relative poverty line at 24 months. This is a substantial shift from the 14% of respondents who were living above the poverty line at the time of program commencement.

100%
of respondents
were living
above the
relative
poverty line at
24 months.

PARTICIPANTS ABOVE THE RELATIVE POVERTY LINE



¹⁹ Considered to be 50% of the median income and equates to a Bridge score of 6 or above

KEY FINDINGS

This evaluation identified the following key findings about the design and implementation of the EMPower model:

1 THE COACHING RELATIONSHIP, AND THE COACH'S SKILLS, ARE CRUCIAL TO THE PROGRAM'S SUCCESS.

Research from EMPath identifies that the two most important elements in successful coaching is the coach's belief in the participant's capacity for change, and holding high expectations for this progress to occur¹. EMPower participants developed a collaborative and trusting relationship with their coach, to which they attributed their success in creating positive change in their lives. Coaches evoke change by asking the right questions, supporting participant-led goal setting and providing accountability for achieving the goals, with unconditional positive regard. The EMPower coaches developed and refined their practice over the course of the pilot, through resources such as Motivational Interviewing training, resources from EMPath, peer reflections and supervision, and other reading.

2 THE FOCUS ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS AND BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE CONTRIBUTE TO TRAUMA RECOVERY.

EMPower recognises that the executive functioning skills needed to build a more sustainable future can be jeopardised by trauma, stress and poverty. Participants in the EMPower program have rebuilt these skills through setting, working toward and achieving goals. Participants are supported to achieve their goals through the unconditional positive regard of the coach, the financial incentives, and the structured process. After 18 months in the program, 88% of participants improved their Executive Functioning Skills profile. Overall, participants achieved 86% of the 311 goals they set for themselves.

Experiences of trauma can have a significant impact on people's self-confidence, impacting on their capacity to make changes in their lives. Through EMPower, participants rebuilt their self-confidence and personal wellbeing. Participants attributed this change to the experience of achieving the goals that they had set, and to the supportive relationship they had with their coach.

¹ Babcock 2018

3

THE LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN ACHIEVING THE OUTCOMES.

Participants who received a longer period of support (Group 1 and 2) had stronger outcomes and achieved more goals than those who had a shorter period of support (Group 3). Additionally, for people with a mental health diagnosis and / or disability, and those aged 45 to 65, saw the greatest improvement in their outcomes between 18 and 24 months. Coaches observed that, as people moved into the last six months of the program, their goals focused more on employment, income, education and sustaining the progress that they had made.



COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Overall, the benefit cost ratio (BCR) of the EMPower pilot, as delivered, is 1:1.095. That is, for every dollar the program cost, one dollar and ten cents of value was returned to society (Australia). These benefits accrued predominately to the program participants, with some avoided costs to the state and federal governments. The Net Present Value (NPV) is \$43,465.

Importantly, this does not include the unquantified benefits of the program. These benefits are significant and have been detailed by this evaluation.

They include: increased financial security, increased confidence and self-awareness, improved goal setting skills, improved relationships with family and friends, and improved wellbeing.



"The program helped me to get to know myself better and gave me a sense of purpose. Now I'm better at emotional management and self-disciplined. I learned how to treat myself kindly by forgetting the past and not overthinking the future. I'm more resilient and flexible and feel braver and fearless." - Participant

In addition, this BCR ratio does not include some avoided costs to the Victorian and Federal Governments, such as reduced number of people accessing JobSeeker, as these net out as transfers.

During the first two years of the program, the costs were greater than the benefits to society. After the third and final year of the program, the benefits outweighed the costs to society.

ECONOMIC APPRAISAL FOR THE FULL EMPOWER PILOT

YEAR ONE (2021)		
Increased wellbeing from improved health	\$62,744	
Increased wellbeing from maintaining a regular savings habit	\$3,724	
<i>Total benefits year one</i>	<i>\$66,467</i>	
Costs	\$189,660	
<i>Total costs year one</i>	<i>\$189,660</i>	
YEAR TWO (2022)		
Increased wellbeing from improved health	\$250,974	
Increased wellbeing from obtaining full time employment	\$39,054	
Increased wellbeing from maintaining a regular savings habit	\$14,894	
Increased wellbeing from obtaining part time employment	\$4,457	
<i>Total benefits year two</i>	<i>\$309,380</i>	
Costs	\$189,660	
<i>Total costs year two</i>	<i>\$189,660</i>	
YEAR THREE (JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 2023)		
Increased wellbeing from improved health	\$156,859	
Increased wellbeing from obtaining full time employment	\$39,054	
Increased wellbeing from maintaining a regular savings habit	\$11,171	
Avoided cost of loneliness	\$1,351	
<i>Total benefits year three</i>	<i>\$208,435</i>	
Costs	\$142,245	
<i>Total costs year three</i>	<i>\$142,245</i>	
	Net Present Value	Benefit Cost Ratio
	\$43,465	1.095

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this evaluation. They are intended to support Juno and any future programs of a similar nature to strengthen their impact.

1

THE EMPOWER PROGRAM IS EFFECTIVE IN ACHIEVING OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS AND HAS A POSITIVE BCR. CONTINUE TO SEEK FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM.

The EMPower pilot has been successful in achieving significant positive outcomes for participants, across all areas of their lives. It has supported recovery from trauma and increased financial security. Participants have achieved outcomes in relation to employment, education, income and savings. They have improved their overall wellbeing, self-confidence, health and connections. Overall, the benefits of the program have exceeded the costs. It is therefore very worthwhile to seek funding to continue the program into the future.

When seeking funding for the program, highlight the unique elements of the program and the role it can serve in the broader sector. This includes highlighting the neuroscience evidence that supports the model, such as the intersection of economic security and recovery and how they support one another. The ethos of the program should be reflected in funding KPIs, including education and employment outcomes.

2

ENSURE FUTURE PROGRAMS PROVIDE 24 MONTHS OF SUPPORT.

The BCR for the program became positive (above 1) only in the third year of the pilot. Participants who received a longer period of support (Group 1 and 2) had stronger outcomes and achieved more goals than those who had a shorter period of support (Group 3). Additionally, people with a mental health diagnosis and / or disability, and those aged 45 to 65, saw the greatest improvement in their outcomes between 18 and 24 months. There was also significant growth in executive functioning skills after 18 months. In order to maximise the impact of the program, future programs should provide 24 months of support. Another option may be offering an 18-month program, with an optional additional 6-months for participants that need it.



3

FORMALISE THE COACHING PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT.

The coaching relationship, and the skill of the coaches, is critical to the program's success. The EMPower coaches have developed their practice over the course of the pilot, using a variety of resources as well as through supervision. A formalised practice guide is now critical to harness the learnings from conducting the pilot program. This practice guide should include commentary on common challenges to maintaining a coaching approach, such as how to respond when a participant is in crisis. Guidance should also be provided on how to deliver the model through an intersectional feminist lens. This will support the sustainability and scalability of the program, by helping to ensure that future coaches and similar programs are delivered consistently and continue to create the intended outcomes.

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The Tree of Life is a narrative therapy exercise created at the group 2 and 3 EMPower graduation in September 2023.

The different elements on the tree represent different elements of the group's journey in the EMPower program. The leaves represent things the women have learned or achieved during their time in EMPower, the fruits represent hopes and intentions for the future, and the flowers represent what each woman is grateful for in her life. This collective artwork is now on display in the Juno office for everyone to look at and be inspired by as they walk past.



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