



NOURISH™

OZHARVEST NOURISH PROGRAM REPORT SUMMARY

OzHarvest is Australia's leading food rescue organisation. Its mission is to fight food waste by rescuing food, running educational programs and advocating for food security.

OzHarvest launched the Nourish Program in 2015. The program currently operates in Adelaide, Newcastle and Sydney and offers a 'free', hospitality-focused pathway to employment and engagement for young people who face barriers to education, training, and employment.

An independent review of the Nourish Program was conducted by a team from Griffith University. The purpose of this review was to assist OzHarvest in maximising the potential of the Nourish Program, informing its ongoing facilitation, planning and promotion. The review team engaged with the OzHarvest Nourish Program Team to develop the framework for the review. A qualitative, exploratory approach was subsequently designed, including a program logic model, document analysis, participant, staff and stakeholder interviews, and a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Five key themes emerged from the review of what is working well in the program, and when considering opportunities for greater impact:

A. What is working well:

1. The Nourish Program “works” and successfully supports people in employment opportunities and in their broader life.
2. The Nourish Program staff are exceptionally well recruited and share a special, common goal of providing respectful, individualised support.
3. The Nourish Program staff, facilitators and volunteers are autonomous and empowered to modify aspects of the program to suit the participants and meet each participant's needs.

B. Opportunities to make even more of a difference:

1. Scale and expansion of the program, through strengthened resourcing of personnel and space.
2. Enhanced employment outcomes of participants through more support for the transition from graduation into ongoing employment and further education.

“I honestly wish that all my students would do the program - to improve confidence, success, employability skills, networking, exposure to industry.” – (Program referrer)

Key findings and significant quotes are included on the next page:

What is working well for the Nourish Program:

The Nourish Program was heralded as genuinely successful by the target population, as well as other stakeholders, in supporting employment and many other tangible and intangible benefits. Participants repeatedly described that this program met their needs at a time when their options were limited and has vastly opened up employment and social opportunities that have benefitted their quality of life, mental health, self-determination and future vision. Many participants and stakeholders described staff and volunteers as key to the program's success. An identified strength of the program was its ability to adapt components as required to meet the needs of individuals and cohorts.

Opportunities for the Nourish Program to make even more of a difference:

The Nourish Program relies on the generosity of funders to offer a 'free' program for participants. Resourcing is difficult, limiting the scale and spread of the Program, meaning growth can be facilitated by fostering funding opportunities. Despite the strengths and success of the Nourish Program, the transition from graduation to employment was viewed by stakeholders as a delicate and challenging time. Past efforts to individually place graduates in OzHarvest ventures or in services of partner organisations were well received, indicating this is an area that can be leveraged to further benefit participants and increase the Nourish Program's impact.

Value created by the Nourish Program:

The Nourish Program is providing benefits and creating value for its participants, employers and society more generally. The program is offering an alternative pathway to employment for people who may otherwise not have the opportunity to participate in the workforce. The benefits of the program were recognised by representatives of organisations, including greater self-confidence and self-determination, greater attendance and participation in education and employment and greater hope placed in the future regarding personal opportunities, income and security.

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"The program taught me the foundations needed to live." – (Past participant)

"I tell everyone about Nourish. In terms of the biggest visible benefit to the community, it is those young people re-engaged in learning, but from my professional expertise, it's about more than that, it's a sense of achievement and belonging, and a sense of self and belief in their own abilities". – (Referrer to the program)

"If we gave the students a formal structure of assessments that wouldn't work, as it would create more anxiety and stress, so we adjusted the program so that we do continual assessments all the time." – (Assessment Officer)

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"Quite often they love the program and get an apprenticeship but can't sustain it. You know mental health causes such anxiety for the graduates and they take days off work. ...maybe Youth workers could help with that transition... and help those graduates that require some extra help." – (Program Facilitator)

"We would like to see the program expand outside of metropolitan areas. Expanding out to another three locations over the next two years would be a great target." – (Program funder)

"I think having a psychologist on site would be very beneficial for participants." – (Parent of Nourish graduate)

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"Learning problems are increasing and these kids are falling between the cracks. They need to know there are other ways to learn. Not everyone wants to be a tradie, so a program that helps kids get into hospitality is perfect. By learning in a different way, these kids can engage and gain a qualification. It empowers them." – (Program referrer)

"I learnt how to function in life and in society again." – (Past participant)

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