

# PAVING JOB PATHWAYS

THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE IS PROVIDING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR BUSINESS AND BOOSTING THE LIVES OF JOBSEEKERS BY LINKING AN UNTAPPED LABOUR FORCE WITH VITAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

At a time when key Australian industries are experiencing skills shortages, non-government organisation the Brotherhood of St Laurence is demonstrating the importance of linking marginalised jobseekers with businesses across multiple sectors.

The Brotherhood's Centre for Work and Learning, Yarra (CWLY), based in inner Melbourne, is partnering with employers to determine their specific recruitment needs in a changing labour market. Through tailored training and support, the organisation prepares jobseekers to meet employers' requirements. These potential employees are highly motivated but require initial assistance to overcome any pre-vocational barriers and reach their employment potential.

Since the CWLY opened in 2009, it has driven a cooperative approach to supporting an untapped labour force and the employers who hire them, with excellent results. Long-term partner ANZ has taken on more than 52 Brotherhood-brokered employees since the partnership began, with 76 per cent of those placed achieving ongoing work with the bank. Recognising the benefits of this recruitment strategy, the company has plans for expanding its intake in 2012. The Brotherhood works with employers large and small, with a partner record including Grocon, Greening Australia, Allens Arthur Robinson, Mercy Private and the City of Yarra.

Misael Pacheco, 48, from Chile, is a CWLY client who experienced many obstacles during his search for work. Arriving in Australia in 1991, he had a range of skills and qualifications. Despite managing to secure short-term job opportunities, the father of five struggled to find more sustainable employment.

But Misael is now a Brotherhood success story. In March this year, he was the first CWLY jobseeker to be offered 12 months'



*Abigroup Traffic Controller, Misael Pacheco, employed through the Brotherhood of St Laurence.*

employment with the Brotherhood's newest employer partner, Abigroup. In late 2010, the construction company secured a contract with the Victorian Department of Human Services for a high-rise development project on the Atherton Gardens public housing estate in inner Melbourne. The company soon began looking to employ local public housing tenants for the contract and turned to the Brotherhood for recruitment support. Misael – a tenant at Atherton Gardens – had shown a positive attitude and a keenness to work, and so was put forward for one of the positions by his CWLY case worker.

Now employed full-time as a Traffic Controller on the construction site, Misael says he is enjoying the work.

"It's close to my house and it's good money," he says.

"It's secure; I've got a contract for one year. And the people are fantastic."

Misael is one of four CWLY clients Abigroup has offered employment to since the beginning of the project. Positions have included a building cadet, traffic controller and reception roles.

The partnership has been so successful that the company has agreed to take on at least ten more Brotherhood jobseekers in short-term roles until the project is complete. As with current roles, these will

be supported and payrolled through the Brotherhood.

Senior Manager of Learning and Development for Abigroup Andrea Banks recalls the early stages of the partnership when the Brotherhood took on a short-term project manager with construction industry experience to research partnership requirements.

"I think it's been a good business decision," she says.

"The effort by the Brotherhood was fantastic, in how they have tried to understand our needs as well as understand how to support people to find work."

Abigroup's Project Manager at Atherton Gardens Steve Cvek says the company has worked with the Brotherhood to build a program that not only meets Abigroup's aspirations, but provides structured training and experience to each employee, equipping them with improved skills and qualifications to help them find further employment.

"From our perspective, I think we've learned that everybody has something to offer," he says. ■

The Brotherhood of St Laurence offers flexible and tailored recruitment support in and around Melbourne. To find out how your business can benefit from Brotherhood-brokered recruitment, contact Anna Beamish, Employer Engagement at the Centre for Work and Learning, on 03 9288 9952.