



### Real examples of social problem and opportunity

Former offenders are in need of specialised, transitional employment opportunities to assist in the process of reintegration into society alongside existing support services.

To highlight the real opportunity for real people we are sharing below three stories – the first two are examples from Doron’s experience as a clinical psychologist in Barwon Prison and Caraniche's Abbotsford Clinic. The third example is an email received from a Taskforce clinician in May 2016 regarding employment opportunities for fruit2work. All names have been changed to protect the identity of those involved.

#### 1. Challenge to find work that accommodates for critical appointments

David was a male prisoner that became abstinent during his time in prison and was optimistic for his release back into the community. He was granted parole due to good behaviour but within a few months his parole was cancelled and he was back in prison - Why?

*“I was really lucky to get a job quickly but I only got it because I never told them that I had been in prison.”*

David was required to attend parole appointments, random drug testing and drug and alcohol counselling. He was unsure how to manage his full-time job and meet the requirements of his parole.

*“I didn’t know how to manage both, so I skipped an appointment because I really needed the work. That missed appointment sent me back to prison! This time when I am released, I will not be seeking employment until after parole”*

#### 2. Finding work with a criminal record can be difficult and lead to low self-esteem and relapse

Susan grew up in an abusive household and ran away from her family at the age of 15. Living on the streets and associating with negative influences, Susan found herself in trouble with the law and served a short term of imprisonment.



*"It has been 5 years since I was involved in crime and while I have managed to get government housing and Centrelink support I have found it impossible to get work. There are no employers out there willing to give me a chance"*

*"I spend a lot of my time at home and unlike the rest of society, I have no way to contribute and be a valued member of the community."*

Lack of employment for Susan has exacerbated low self-esteem and depression. During her free time Susan often thinks of reconnecting with some of her old friends from the streets who she believes understand her and don't judge her for her past.

### 3. There is demand for jobs at fruit2work from Former Offenders

Email from TaskForce clinician requesting fruit2work contact a potential employee

*"I have a client that is desperate for this kind of work and loves this idea. He said he would love to do what's needed to secure a job with fruit2work"*

fruit2work has been set-up to help people like David and Susan. Through supported employment individuals can increase their confidence, feelings of self-worth and earn a living to support themselves. fruit2work helps individuals overcome the barriers for receiving and maintaining employment and breaks the cycle of substance use and crime. Long term, former offenders that have worked at fruit2work will gain the experience and work-readiness skills to succeed elsewhere.