

Transcript – Vanguard Laundry Case Study 4 video

Are you interested in how other for-purpose organisations measure their outcomes and impact?

Introducing Vanguard Laundry Services.

Mark Gates: “Vanguard is a work-integrated social enterprise based in Toowoomba and it was originally started in 2016 to help people with a lived experience of mental health. Since then its evolved to a more broader socially disadvantaged background so we now offer employment opportunities for people from a socially disadvantaged background and help transition them into further extended and long-lasting employment.”

Over the past several years, Vanguard have been investigating ways that they could grow their operations and social impact in three areas.

Firstly, they have been scaling operations within their current site in Toowoomba with an increase in average weekly production of nearly 130% over the past two years.

Secondly, they have been further developing operational processes across both their enterprise and social impact functions. This includes the implementation of an organisational Strategic Plan, Human Resources systems and a new Social Impact Curriculum to help support staff transition to other employment.

Thirdly, Vanguard have been seeking to expand operations to a new site.

To support their attempts to grow, Vanguard has been working with the Centre for Social Impact (Swinburne) to undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the outcomes and impacts of their social and enterprise activities.

Mark Gates: “Impact Reports allow us to evaluate our assumptions made around Vanguard, the impact we’ve had on our community, target staff etc.”

As Vanguard matures as a social enterprise, three areas of focus for their future outcome and impact measurement activities have been identified: supporting continuous improvement; tracking the journey of target staff; and continuing qualitative data collection.

Vanguard have identified a number of opportunities for their outcome and impact activities to inform the continuous improvement of their social enterprise.

To support their social function, they are seeking to identify opportunities to maximise the impact of the support that they provide for staff to transition to other employment.

From an enterprise perspective, Vanguard’s future outcome and impact measurement activities can provide additional transparency and evidence around potential improvements to efficiency or productivity.

Vanguard has also been developing an internal Staff Tracker Tool.

Harry Sillett: “So we use the staff tracker to map out where our staff cohort sits at any one time. We also use it to map the journey of our staff through Vanguard both currently and in the past

and that helps us to make decisions about how we work with employers and how we work with referral partners to target staff.”

Vanguard has also identified the value of the qualitative data collected as part of their annual evaluations. This data involves interviews with staff across the organisation, including target staff, management, board members and transitioned staff.

Harry Sillett: “Hearing about the experience of staff first-hand has helped us to make important decisions about how we operate as a social enterprise”

To find out more about Vanguard Laundry and their journey to grow and report on their social impact visit dss.gov.au and search ‘Vanguard Laundry’ for the full case study.