

Through the collaboration and commitment of four local community businesses Interwork Limited, WorkCover SA, Employers Mutual Limited and Brock Harcourts, a young woman finds success and independence through meaningful employment.

## A Workcover sponsored Return to Work Innovation

Brock Harcourts' new receptionist Amber Southgate is a young woman with everything to look forward to in her new career thanks to the team effort of Interwork, Workcover and Employers Mutual Limited.

Amber was only just starting out in the workforce when she suffered a repetitive strain injury which left her being unable to work for 2 years. Along with losing her ability to work, she lost her confidence, her belief in her own skills and her self esteem. Her world was shrinking as she took to sleeping in late, and mixing with a limited number of people.

By the time Amber met with Bessie Baker at Interwork, she was 20 years old, could not go back to the production work she had experience in, had few qualifications, and felt intimidated by the number of restrictions her Doctor had imposed on the type of activities she should do.

Amber was lucky enough to be referred to Interwork by her Case Manager at Employers Mutual Limited (EML). Interwork is one of 7 organizations undertaking a Return to Work Project with Workcover and EML was keen for Amber to try something new.

When assessing Amber, Bessie recognized her skills and abilities in administration and dealing with people. Bessie started to look for opportunities for Amber in admin, although she was advised by Amber's Doctor that she would not be able to undertake prolonged periods of typing.

It was not long before Bessie met with Jayne Baily at Brock Harcourts. Jayne needed a receptionist, and her commitment to corporate citizenship meant she was motivated to help someone on Workcover. Bessie's analysis of the job indicated that there was not a lot of data-entry required, and she was able to reassure Amber's Doctor that the amount of typing required for this position was unlikely to aggravate her injury.

While Jayne was impressed with the Workcover funded 'Re-employment Incentive Scheme for Employers' (RISE), the critical success factor was the workplace support and training provided by Alison Jutilane, an Interwork Support Worker. Alison has a background in Real Estate and administration and was able to provide quality coaching to Amber in a number of areas of her new job. Twice a week Alison would sit alongside Amber and coach her in a myriad of ways, including how to answer the phone professionally, work with industry specific documentation, and how to manage her time effectively. Alison became someone Amber could talk to if she had specific questions or wanted advice. Alison was able to talk to Amber about her motivation, attitude and presentation, which Amber struggled with occasionally after such a long absence from the workforce. Jayne was thrilled to have Alison in the workplace because of her industry experience and professionalism. Thanks to Alison and Interwork, Jayne was confident that Amber would meet the high standards required at Brock Harcourts.

EML and Workcover have never previously funded a Support Worker however; the key objectives of the project are to foster innovative solutions in returning people to work so they were keen to try something new.

Today Amber is off Workcover. Amber and Jayne at Brock Harcourts are looking forward to Amber developing a long term career thanks to Interwork's involvement with the Workcover Return to Work Project.



Left: Alison Jutilane – Interwork Support Worker  
Centre: Amber Southgate  
Right: Jayne Baily – Sales Manager, Brock Harcourts