

# Evaluation of the Just Moving On program pilot

Connect42

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SGS Planning and Economics acknowledges that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia are one of the oldest continuing living cultures on Earth, have one of the oldest continuing land tenure systems in the World, and have one of the oldest continuing land use planning and management systems in the World.

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, past and present, and acknowledge their stewardship of Country over thousands of years.

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# Executive summary

In 2023, SGS evaluated Connect42's Just Moving On (JMO) pilot program for its effectiveness in improving post-release employment and other outcomes for people exiting the Tasmanian Prison System. JMO is a collaborative throughcare program piloted in 2020 and subsequently funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) for the period between 31 March 2021 to August 2023.

Our evaluation combines a structured analysis of the pilot JMO's formation, implementation, and demonstrated outcomes to conclude that on the balance of the evaluation criteria the program was appropriately designed, efficiently delivered, and effective. True to the nature of a pilot program, this evaluation also highlights several areas where refinements can be explored in future JMO delivery.

Our findings attest to the pilot JMO's success in co-creating a better future *with* participants, not merely for them. When every interaction between JMO participants, facilitators, and the wider community is consciously grounded in this understanding and dynamic, positive change is nurtured from within the individual to grow the enabling capacities for a steady life, lived in safety and security.

## About JMO

JMO embodies a whole-person, therapeutic, and continuous care approach to fostering communication and literacy skills for people living in prison. The program acknowledges the range of risk factors stemming from period(s) of incarceration<sup>1</sup> and draws from the broad skillsets of the speech and language pathologists trained in early intervention and diversionary programs, restorative justice, and rehabilitation initiatives. The focus on mindful communication and emotional development and its benefits to those living in prison, their families, and wider society also permeates Connect42's Just Time program, and is detailed in the Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time.<sup>2</sup>

During the early development stage of pilot JMO, the delivery team was supported by a Peer Support adviser with lived experience of the Tasmanian prison system and personnel from the Tasmanian Prison Service (TPS). Project collaborators at the early stage also included the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), Uniting Care, Anglicare's Social Action Research Centre, and JusTas.

The pilot JMO was available to individuals exiting the justice system and returning to the community. There were no formal eligibility requirements, although several considerations informed the referral

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023), 'Adults in prison', <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/adults-in-prison>

<sup>2</sup> Connect42 and SGS Economics and Planning (2023), 'Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time', [https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning\\_Just-in-Time-report.pdf](https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_Just-in-Time-report.pdf)

decisions and were shared with potential candidates. In its initial funding application, JMO flagged the overarching goal of employment, whose tailored roadmap would see individuals benefit from individualised language and literacy programs, skills-based training, clinical case management, and other services.

### Key findings

This evaluation concludes that the pilot JMO was appropriately designed to address a throughcare service gap in Tasmania, that it was delivered efficiently, and that it achieved four of eight intended objectives in just over two years (March 2021 to August 2023). The insights volunteered by several program participants and the evidence gathered from therapists and community program partners affirm that the pilot JMO succeeded on four of eight outcomes specified in the 2020 Grant Deed:

- Improved skills, confidence, resilience, and experience for participants
- Improved connections with family and community
- Increased understanding of the needs and potential of people exiting the justice system
- Sustainability of the program to provide opportunities for Tasmanians

The evidence also shows that the pilot JMO partially achieved the remaining outcomes. Chapter 3 identifies several influences that led to this assessment, which include unforeseen events in participants' personal and household circumstances and the suitability of the stipulated timeframes. The remaining outcomes that were partially achieved are:

- Increase in number of people in employment
- Improved employment access for those experiencing barriers
- Increased participation in training and education that leads to employment
- Improved communication skills including language, literacy, and interpersonal skills

Moreover, this evaluation identifies the following success factors of the pilot JMO, which should inform future delivery:

- Its design and delivery embeds a novel understanding of how individual, practice-based, social, and systems issues<sup>3</sup> interact to shape employment outcomes. This was evident in the ongoing collaborations between JMO participants, trusted individuals, expert contributors, and community organisations partnered with Connect42 during the program. Contemporary evidence shows that the success of throughcare programs lies in their tailored approach to every individual and in the ongoing and trusting relationship with therapists.
- Its tailored approach distinguishes it from other employment programs and interventions for prisoners returning to community. Every interaction and detail of the JMO approach was designed to counter the effects of the rigid prison environment and to encourage every individual to flourish – at ease and without resort to antisocial behaviours – in the 'real world'. JMO considers not merely the opportunity embodied through prison release as a point in time, but the potential

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<sup>3</sup> Areas of focus as identified in a 2017 study of Australian employment agencies and their provision of services and supports for prisoners and ex-prisoners to engage in meaningful work. Baldry, Eileen, et al. "A future beyond the wall: Improving post-release employment outcomes for people leaving prison." *Final Report, Sydney* (2018).

within individuals who, with dedicated support to improve language and literacy, build capacity to overcome histories of disadvantage.

It was clear from interviews with the pilot JMO participant that the program had changed aspects of their lives beyond the immediate TCF funding objectives: empowering self-belief, an openness to trying new things, resilience, trust in others, and optimism for the future ahead. Several expressions of the client voice are shared below:

- ‘Yeah, it's [relationship between JMO therapist and client] blossomed, definitely. Blossomed, definitely. Yeah, I love it. I was the cocoon and I see myself as a butterfly now. Yeah, definitely.’ – *in response to a prompt on how the JMO participant's relationship with their therapist has changed them.*
- ‘Well, I'd like to get back with my family and start a fresh life with them because it'll be about six months, seven months time I get back into there [home], and I'd like to try and get a full-time job somewhere, be good so I can support my family and live a happy peace of life.’<sup>4</sup> – *in response to ‘What would you like to achieve in one year's time?’.*
- ‘I remember I'd get the flowers and I was just like, "Oh, that's so beautiful." I tend to push people away. I always do it. I still do it now. I'll probably do it for the rest of my life, but then, I get to the point where I push them away too much and they don't come back. But you doing that, it also showed me that maybe my dark periods can be less dark if I do let people in. And me getting the flowers or a little card on the doorstep, it showed that you were still there, that I hadn't pushed you away to the point that you were giving up on me or anything like that. It was just nice to know that you were thinking of me.’ – *in response to a prompt to reflect on being seen and having their feelings and emotions matched by the JMO therapist in times of need, in non-intrusive ways.*
- ‘The best thing on the program, is we've got so many opportunities that other people would not have gotten, like even just when we [two] went out for lunch. And the kind of things, I guess, it's the connection. A lot of people that are in prison probably lack connection with people, and so having that connection, it's really awesome.’ – *in response to an invitation to attend a conference with their JMO therapist.*
- ‘And being able to have someone to go to and for them to not judge me, for them to listen, for them to literally hold my hand when I needed it, I've never really had that a lot in my life with mom and all that. So to have that, it made me realise that I do deserve it and that there is people out there that will... If I ask for help, if I ask the right people, they're not going to turn me down. Mom would just be, "Just get over it. You'll be right. Pick yourself up, off you go." It [JMO] was nurturing. Whenever I asked for help, the help that I received was nurturing.’ – *in response to ‘Have you ever asked your JMO worker for help?’*

### Approach to evaluation

This evaluation was undertaken between September 2023 and January 2024. It combines a review of process documentation, de-identified personal information of participants, personal information of

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<sup>4</sup> This participant was engaged with the JMO program and reincarcerated. The participant maintains contact with their JMO clinician and during an interview as part of this evaluation offered several descriptions of the high levels of support they received from the JMO program and their strong resolve to ‘move on’ and ‘break the old habits’.



participants who have granted express permission for SGS to include as part of this evaluation, and a literature review of the effects of throughcare on employment and social outcomes.

SGS also conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with JMO participants, facilitators, and other key personnel to better understand the success factors of JMO's impact and areas for future refinement. SGS developed a survey for JMO participants, which Connect42 facilitated and subsequently shared interview transcripts.

These insights informed our evaluation of JMO's appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness. We note the range of program evaluation guidelines that exist and set out the rationale for applying a human services-centric approach to the design of this evaluation in Chapter 3.

It is important that the findings of this evaluation be interpreted in the context of a program pilot. The nature of a pilot is to facilitate exploration, engage in genuine inquiry, and to advance an understanding of the factors that would support the program to flourish at scale. The Pilot JMO achieves this purpose and highlights valuable learnings where efficiency improvements and refinements to the program objectives should be explored for future JMO delivery (Chapter 4).

As a result of that, a limitation of the evaluation is the number of participants. There were 18 participants, which is a small sample to draw statistically robust conclusions from. The other limitation is the short timeframe of the pilot and its evaluation (as explained later in the report, some of the intended outcomes of the program are typical long-term outcomes beyond the timeframe of the program and its evaluation).

## **Recommendations**

Our evaluation makes the following recommendations to enhance future JMO delivery and to inform government policy and investment in relation to targeted employment programs based on upskilling participants' literacy, behavioural health, and emotional regulation.

- Recommendation 1: Advocate for more nuanced human services outcomes indicators
- Recommendation 2: Enhance the referral pathway for JMO participants
- Recommendation 3: Explore mechanisms for maintaining and re-establishing contact with individuals showing early signs of disengagement
- Recommendation 4: Consider a bridging period between Just Time and JMO prior to prison release
- Recommendation 5: Develop a more detailed budget breakdown
- Recommendation 6: Enhance quality record keeping to support longitudinal follow-up
- Recommendation 7: Develop a plan for JMO program expansion

Each recommendation is discussed further in Chapter 4.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The pilot JMO is a collaborative throughcare program that seeks to improve post-release outcomes across a range of life domains for people exiting the Tasmanian Prison System.

The design and delivery of JMO builds on a recommendation for Connect42 to ‘further throughcare initiatives that include the delivery of Just Time...within the community’ and to provide ‘support for program participants upon release that is akin to case work’.<sup>5</sup> In 2023, SGS undertook a retrospective Social Return on Investment Analysis of Connect42’s Just Time program, finding that every dollar invested in Just Time generates \$3.23 of benefits for the wider community in the form of avoided costs of social harm, improved mental health, improved employment outcomes, improved lifetime earnings of children whose parents participated in Just Time, reduced rates of reoffending, and other benefits that were not expressed in dollar values.<sup>6</sup>

SGS was subsequently engaged in September 2023 to undertake a program evaluation of the pilot JMO. The timing of this coincided with the pilot JMO’s early conclusion in August 2023, some eight months earlier than its planned completion in May 2024. Notwithstanding this, this evaluation drew from a comprehensive evidence base, collated over a period of more than two years, of case notes, participation data, and interviews with community stakeholders, JMO facilitators, and the participants themselves.

In this evaluation we have sought to elevate what was observed, felt, and understood by key stakeholders. The evaluation findings offer timely evidence of the need for bolstered investment in throughcare innovations to ensure that ex-prisoners can access opportunities for a socially and economic productive future. The breadth of contributors to this evaluation also serves as a reminder to the change that is possible through broad collaboration between policymakers and practitioners of clinical therapy, criminology, and sociology.

If we accept that ‘the first step in care is to seek to understand’,<sup>7</sup> we hope that this study provides sound evidence for governments, policymakers, benefactors, and wider community to maintain their support for Connect42’s rehabilitative programs.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this evaluation are twofold:

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<sup>5</sup> University of Tasmania (2019), ‘Just Time evaluation Report’, [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Connect42 and SGS Economics and Planning (2023), ‘Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time’, [https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning\\_Just-in-Time-report.pdf](https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_Just-in-Time-report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Barrett, T., & Sorensen, J. (2015). Human Services Program Evaluation: "How to Improve Your Accountability and Program Effectiveness". *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*.

- To conduct a rigorous, independent evaluation of JMO's effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness, and sustainability for achieving its desired outcomes for program participants, and
- To develop a suite of research-informed recommendations that enhance JMO's future delivery.

SGS has applied best practice principles in program evaluation to ensure that the findings and recommendations provide sound, practical evidence. This evidence will be a crucial basis for a culture of continuous program improvement and sustained, justice system-wide collaboration for the benefit of JMO participants, their families, and wider society.

### **1.3 Report structure**

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of JMO, summarises participation trends, and reviews the literature on the effects of prison throughcare programs on a range of outcomes.
- Chapter 3 introduces the evaluation framework and assesses JMO against each element of the framework, with reference to the evidence.
- Chapter 4 makes recommendations as to the potential future design and delivery of JMO.

## 2. Just Moving On program context

This chapter summarises the program context of the pilot JMO and reviews the evidence on effective practice in throughcare for prisoners returning to the community.

The pilot JMO was designed by Connect42 with the aim of facilitating improved post-release employment outcomes for individuals who have recently exited the Tasmanian Prison System. It is a collaborative throughcare program piloted in 2020 and subsequently funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) for the period between 31 March 2021 to 31 August 2023. The pilot program was originally planned for a three-year term until May 2024, but concluded early for various reasons outside of this evaluation's scope.

The pilot JMO was anchored by the 'overarching goal of employment'<sup>8</sup> for participants, per the focus of the Tasmanian Workforce Engagement Round<sup>9</sup> and complemented by seven other objectives. This is further detailed in the program profile (section 2.2).

JMO complements other relationship- and literacy-based programs administered by Connect42; these are the Just Sentences<sup>10</sup> literacy program and the Just Time parenting program. The latter combines the Circle of Security (CoS) Parenting<sup>11</sup> model, delivery by speech pathologists, and Connect42's expertise as a purpose driven not-for-profit organisation that works with people to create positive connections through language, literacy and love.<sup>12</sup> Recent evaluations of these programs have shown that structured engagement and skill building are key determinants for individuals to establish stronger, more sustainable connections to community.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.1 Trends in pilot JMO participation, 2021-2023

Connect42's records indicate that between 2021 and 2023, a total of 18 participants were enrolled in JMO. For various reasons noted as part of the evaluation (section 3.5), the rate and continuity of participation differed by quarter and between participants (Table 1).

Overall, participation was highest from the second quarter of the 2022 calendar year (averaging 191 program hours aggregated from direct clinician, supervision, therapy assistant hours, travel time, and

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<sup>8</sup> Connect42 (2023), Submission to the Inquiry into Tasmanian Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention Matters, [https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/69857/56.-Connect42.pdf](https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0035/69857/56.-Connect42.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Tasmanian Community Fund (2021), '2021 Workforce Engagement', <https://tascomfund.smartygrants.com.au/2021WorkforceEngagement/270642/download.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Connect42 (not dated), 'Just Sentences', <https://connect42.org/just-sentences>

<sup>11</sup> Circle of Security International (2022), Resources for Parents, <https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

<sup>12</sup> Connect42 (not dated), About Us, <https://connect42.org/>

<sup>13</sup> See for example University of Tasmania (2019), 2019 Just Time Evaluation, [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf) and SGS Economics & Planning (2023), Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time, [https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/69857/56.-Connect42.pdf](https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0035/69857/56.-Connect42.pdf)

indirect hours), falling to 161 total program hours between April and June of 2023. Each participant's hours of engagement also varied widely, ranging from several hours for some to more than 100 hours across several years in some cases.

**TABLE 1: JMO PARTICIPATION BY PARTICIPANT AND YEAR (IN HOURS)**

Participant number	2021		2022				2023			Participant totals
	Jun - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Aug	
1	21.30	11.90	2.75	3.31	13.65	3.31	2.20	6.76	0.21	65.39
2	1.80									1.8
3				11.76	8.70	11.76	2.31	21.21	6.30	62.04
4	12.50	6.95		34.08	10.45	34.08	14.95	12.66	2.70	128.37
5	12.40	16.75	1.75	30.26	30.70	30.26	13.85			135.97
6	10.25	13.50		33.26	40.13	33.26	13.81	10.93	7.68	162.82
7	0.45				0.40					0.85
8				10.06		10.06	14.33	13.05		47.5
9	5.75									5.75
10				5.68	3.90	5.68	0.73	11.65	1.05	28.69
11	10.85	1.25		13.31	13.50	13.31	66.15	27.48	6.23	152.08
12				1.16		1.16	0.20			2.52
13							0.95	7.82	0.40	9.17
14			1.25	9.46	19.80	9.46	31.70	24.53	7.96	104.16
15				11.81	9.10	11.81	6.14	5.35	1.55	45.76
16				10.56	24.35	10.56	10.05	9.00	0.80	65.32
17				22.47	10.66	22.47	1.54			57.14
18				3.71		3.71		9.57	4.95	21.94
# enrolled	8	5	3	14	12	14	14	12	11	-
Total hours	75.3	50.35	5.75	200.89	185.34	200.89	178.91	160.01	39.83	

Source: Connect42 (2023). Participant numbers were assigned by SGS for the purposes of this evaluation. Total hours equals total of direct clinical, indirect, travel, supervision, and skills practice with therapy assistant hours.

The low number of hours recorded in the first nine months of pilot implementation, particularly between January and March 2022, is partially attributable to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These disruptions delayed the JMO referral pathway and service delivery<sup>14</sup>.

Two participants also relocated their place of usual residence to the mainland following release, while seven participants were reincarcerated at Risdon Prison during the pilot JMO. No further breakdown is available as to participants' time in custody or other forms of detention.

<sup>14</sup> Connect42 (2022), Just Moving On Progress Report 31 March 2022. Not published.

## 2.2 JMO program profile

### Pre-commencement (2020)

A pre-pilot JMO was self-funded by Connect42 with one client and one speech pathologist in 2020. This individual was later offered and accepted paid employment as a Peer Advisor on JMO's Steering Committee, and contributed to the core project team as someone with lived experience of the Tasmanian criminal justice system.

In 2020, Connect42 was successful in its application for \$400,000 in grant funding from the TCF under its Workforce Engagement Round.<sup>15</sup> Eight project outcomes were specified in the Grant Deed:

1. Increase in the number of people in employment
2. Improved employment access for those experiencing barriers
3. Improved skills, confidence, resilience, and experience for participants
4. Increased participation in training and education that leads to employment
5. Improved communication skills including language, literacy, and interpersonal skills
6. Improved connections with family and community
7. Increased understanding of the needs and potential of people exiting the justice system
8. Sustainability of the project to continue to provide opportunities for Tasmanians

Funding contributions from Conect42 and its philanthropic donors totalled \$301,502, bringing the total JMO funding to over \$701,502, to be applied over three years between 31 March 2021 and 31 May 2024.

With this project budget in place, a Steering Committee was formed and its Terms of Reference specified. The inaugural Steering Committee comprised representatives from Connect42, The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), the TPS, Speech Pathology Tasmania (SPT), Uniting Care, Anglicare's Social Action Research Centre, the Salvation Army's Communities for Children & Doorways to Parenting team, and JusTas (Figure 1).

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<sup>15</sup> A summary of the TCF's Workforce Engagement Round objectives, eligibility criteria, and application process is available here: <https://tascomfund.smartygrants.com.au/2021WorkforceEngagement/270642/download.pdf>

FIGURE 1: JMO STEERING COMMITTEE



Source: Connect42 (2023).

Prior to the launch of JMO, Connect42 had already partnered with TPS and SPT to deliver the Just Time parenting program since 2018. Connect42's earlier conversations with the TCCI had also revealed a mutual desire to sow the seeds of literacy as an oft-overlooked agent of change in the context of criminal justice interventions.

JMO was officially launched in March 2021, following minor delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the leadup to launch, the Steering Committee finalised grant arrangements, engaged in JMO co-design, prepared a marketing and communications agenda, and documented program governance and Memoranda of Understanding with project collaborators.<sup>16</sup> The final project plan of 2020 also noted 'evaluation setup' as a priority, however it was unclear whether this referred to a framework for program evaluation (not available) or the clinical evaluation of participants' language fundamentals (referenced and documents in Annual Reports to the TCF).

### Delivery (2021 – 2024)

Broadly, JMO adopts a case management model to provide intensive, 1:1 support to prisoners returning to community. A case management model is concerned with the individual's needs, drawing from a broad mix of services and how they relate to one another.<sup>17</sup> The remit of case management follows a common arc of referral, screening, assessment, planning, implementation (care co-ordination), monitoring, transitioning, and evaluation.<sup>18</sup> Throughout this process, case managers perform multiple functions: they are service and resource coordinators, client advocates, and counsellors to their clients.<sup>19</sup> In their co-ordination capacity, the case manager assesses an individual's needs, plans an effective resource network, and facilitates contact with required services.

JMO's proposed delivery timeline is summarised below (Table 2).

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<sup>16</sup> Connect42 (2020), Just Moving On Final Project Plan. Not published.

<sup>17</sup> Ballew, J. R., & Mink, G. (1986). *Case management in the human services*. Charles C Thomas Pub Limited.

<sup>18</sup> Marfleet et al. (2013), 3rd Edition, *National Standards of Practice for Case Management*, Case Management Society of Australia & New Zealand.

<sup>19</sup> Ballew, J. R., & Mink, G. (1986). *Case management in the human services*. Charles C Thomas Pub Limited.

**TABLE 2: SUMMARY DELIVERY TIMELINE OF JMO**

Stage	Critical tasks	Personnel
<p><b>Stage 1 (months 1-3)</b> Recruit and welcome participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inform <i>Just Time</i> participants of <i>JMO</i> plan</li> <li>▪ Introduce Peer Advisor to <i>Just Time</i> participants to share her experiences as a participant in the <i>Mini-JMO</i> pilot</li> <li>▪ Conduct welcome sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Just Time participants</li> <li>▪ Just Time speech pathologist facilitators</li> <li>▪ Mini-JMO participant (Peer Advisor)</li> <li>▪ Members of the prison-based Integrated Offender Management team</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 2 (months 2-6)</b> Formally assess participants' language, literacy, social communication skills; commence relationships pertaining to evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administer and score language and literacy assessments.</li> <li>▪ Introduce evaluation team to all stakeholders to build relationships</li> <li>▪ Commence gathering data</li> <li>▪ Commence analysis of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ JMO participants</li> <li>▪ Mini-JMO participant (Peer Advisor)</li> <li>▪ JMO speech pathologists / therapists</li> <li>▪ Language and literacy evaluation team members</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 3 (months 3-8)</b> Develop individualised language and literacy intervention programs based on assessment data; connect participants with therapy assistants/support workers; continue relationships, building relational trust, and activities pertaining to evaluation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure individual communication-skills intervention plan. This task scientifically connects the participants' individual assessment data with evidence-based intervention strategies that are nuanced for each participant according to their skills-profile.</li> <li>▪ Introduce participants to their therapy assistant/support worker</li> <li>▪ Support establishment of rapport and enlargement of trust</li> <li>▪ Coach therapy assistant/support worker in the delivery of individualised therapy tasks. This is to assure high-quality delivery of intervention exercises to participants; to give therapy assistants/support workers' confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ JMO participants</li> <li>▪ Mini-JMO participant (Peer Advisor)</li> <li>▪ JMO speech pathologists</li> <li>▪ JMO therapy assistants and support workers</li> <li>▪ Language and literacy evaluation team members</li> </ul>



Stage	Critical tasks	Personnel
	<p>and accurate skill in delivery; to expand participants' and support workers' knowledge of the processes of language and literacy - which they then take reflectively into their wider lives; to create shared vulnerability leading to mastery for both therapy assistants/support worker and participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Speech pathologist to monitor and dynamically update therapy goals each three weeks. This keeps the program moving forward in a sensitive balance between self-paced and externally-driven; it helps to create and maintain momentum that evokes curiosity and satisfaction but doesn't overwhelm participants; it is the basis for new skill development.</li> <li>▪ Therapy assistants/support workers deliver the practice activities connected to the therapy goals 2-3x/week. This ensures the necessary intensity of practice that causes behavioural change and embeds it as habit.</li> <li>▪ Continue gathering and analysing data</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Stage 4 (months 4-30)</b></p> <p>Direct teaching and skills development; connection to employment pathways; continue relationships and activities pertaining to evaluation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing coaching by speech pathologists of therapy assistants/support workers in the delivery of individualised therapy tasks.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing speech pathology monitoring and dynamic updating of therapy goals each three weeks.</li> <li>▪ Therapy assistants/support workers continue to deliver the practice activities connected to the therapy goals 2-3x/week.</li> <li>▪ Four electronic direct mail outs to the TCCI network (distribution of approximately 7,000). This</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ JMO participants,</li> <li>▪ Peer Advisor</li> <li>▪ JMO speech pathologists</li> <li>▪ JMO therapy assistants and support workers</li> <li>▪ Language and literacy evaluation team members</li> <li>▪ TCCI team members</li> <li>▪ Prospective employers</li> </ul>

Stage	Critical tasks	Personnel
	<p>communicates the program, showcases the participants and seeks interest for placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One or more articles in the Tasmanian Business Reporter newspaper (distribution of approx 12 000). This communicates the program and seeks interest for placements.</li> <li>▪ Networking event providing an opportunity for employers to meet participants and vice versa</li> <li>▪ Development of profiles showcasing participants - to be used in communication with potential hosts.</li> <li>▪ Five hours of intensive reverse marketing calls to businesses to seek employment placements for participants.</li> <li>▪ Continue gathering and analysing data</li> <li>▪ Communication of progress outcomes, more broadly sharing learnings</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Stage 5 (months 31-36)</b> Post-program assessments and report; continue relationships and activities pertaining to evaluation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administer and score post-program reassessments of participants' language and literacy.</li> <li>▪ Undertake program evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ JMO participants,</li> <li>▪ JMO speech pathologists</li> <li>▪ Program evaluators</li> </ul>

Source: Connect42 (2020), JMO Final Project Plan

## Eligibility and enrolment

JMO's target community is people exiting the justice system and returning to community. Beyond this, there are no eligibility requirements, although several considerations informed TPS' referral decisions.<sup>20</sup> For transparency, these considerations were also shared with potential candidates:<sup>21</sup>

- **Socio-demographic characteristics:** has children, access to stable accommodation, safety considerations, home environment, well known associates, potential for exposure to unsafe environments, spectrum of needs within the support system, criminogenic needs (TPS-informed),
- **Intrapersonal traits:** desire to want to make a change, desire for training or education, prospect of employment,
- **Other factors:** has completed Just Time, prison release date, links to support workers, case workers, and service organisations.

Participants were required to complete an Informed consent form, which sets out at a high-level program details, the voluntary nature of JMO, participants' rights in relation to the sharing of de-identified quotes, test results and other information, and commitments to partaking in interviews while enrolled in the pilot JMO.

## 2.3 Evidence of throughcare for improved employment, social, and policy outcomes

This section reviews the literature on the links between prison throughcare programs and JMO's objectives to facilitate employment and deeper connection with community. This section does not detail the extensive evidence linking language, trust, and secure attachment and desistance from crime that forms the basis of JMO's approach. These elements are comprehensively described in the Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.3.1 What is throughcare?

Throughcare is defined as the continuous, co-ordinated and integrated management of offenders from the offender's first point of contact with correctional services to their successful reintegration into the community and completion of their legal order.<sup>23</sup> Throughcare clarifies the line of sight so that prisoners understand the transformations that are possible.

There is strong evidence in the Australian<sup>24</sup> and international<sup>25</sup> literature that demonstrates the value of effective throughcare in reducing recidivism, easing community re-integration, and in meeting the

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<sup>20</sup> Connect42 (2022), Just Moving On Progress Report 31 March 2022. Not published.

<sup>21</sup> Connect42 (not dated), Just Moving On – Participant Considerations. Not published.

<sup>22</sup> Connect42 and SGS Economics and Planning (2023), 'Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time', [https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning\\_Just-in-Time-report.pdf](https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_Just-in-Time-report.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Clay, C. (2002). Case management and Throughcare – Can it work? SA Corrections: Adelaide.

<sup>24</sup> Borzycki, M., & Baldry, E. (2003). Promoting integration: The provision of prisoner post-release services.

<sup>25</sup> Jardine, C., & Whyte, B. (2013). Valuing desistance? A social return on investment case study of a throughcare project for short-term prisoners. *Social and Environmental Accountability Journal*, 33(1), 20-32.

specific needs of ‘offenders as parents’, a cohort often overlooked in catalogue of current support services.<sup>26</sup>

Throughcare refers to social and relational support that begins in prison and continues ‘through’ the processes of release and reintegration. It consists of the following principles:<sup>27</sup>

- Assistance and support to offenders whilst in custody or under supervision in the community
- Whole of sentence planning, involving intensive one-to-one rehabilitation support, individual structured assessments, and individual case plans, created before release and followed through in the community.<sup>28</sup>
- Integrated case management; case managing being the process through which throughcare is achieved
- Provision of seamless service to avoid duplication and/or isolated work practices
- Effective working partnerships
- Provision of consistent interventions across community and custody which are proven to be effective in reducing recidivism.

In Australia, throughcare is provided by both independent and government agencies. They include corrective services, law and justice agencies (such as parole authorities), government departments, and service providers who focus on specific areas such as accommodation, employment, addiction, mental health and vocational skills.<sup>29</sup> All Australian jurisdictions recognise the importance of throughcare in policy, however there is not currently a nationally coherent framework for throughcare programs, nor a systematic application and evaluation of successful approaches.<sup>30</sup>

### 2.3.2 Effects of throughcare on released prisoners’ employment outcomes



There are significant barriers to employment for former offenders in Australia. Discrimination by employers based on a prior criminal record may be explicit (such as in the context of being barred from applying for certain licenses, checks, and registrations), or latent (such as where employers favour other candidates without criminal record due to perceived operational or reputational risks to the

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<sup>26</sup> Birch, P. (2022). Reconnecting from beyond the prison bars: A rapid evidence assessment on parent/children engagement post-release. *University of Technology Sydney*.

<sup>27</sup> Baldry, E. (2007). Throughcare: Making the policy a reality. In *Reintegration Puzzle Conference*.

<sup>28</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission (2017). *Incarceration Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (DP 84)*.

<sup>29</sup> The Scottish Centre for Crime & Justice Research (2013). *The elements of effective through-care. Part 1: International Review*.

<sup>30</sup> Griffith University (2018). *A future Beyond the Wall: Improving Post-release Employment Outcomes for People Leaving Prison Final Report*.

company).<sup>31</sup> Combined with the presence of other social and economic disadvantage where prison populations are over-represented – poverty, poorer mental and physical health, lower likelihood of access to secure housing and finance, lower levels of educational attainment, and substance use, to name several – it is clear that post-release from prison is a critical juncture in these individuals' lives.

In 2012, the Northern Territory Corrective Services commenced the Sentenced to a Job (STAJ) Prisoner Employment Program with the aim of providing prisoners with employment experience. Prisoners received training and entered paid employment in various domains: catering, hospitality, horticulture, and bus driving.<sup>32</sup> Evidence suggests that STAJ is successful in improving employment outcomes:<sup>33</sup>

- In 2015-16, the total number of all STAJ participants was 577 prisoners, of which 355 prisoners (62 per cent) had paid employment, 392 (68 per cent) had voluntary employment during the program.
- The number of prisoners from the STAJ program who retained or obtained other paid employment after release from prison doubled from 36 in 2014 to 72 in 2017.
- Participation rates are high (and increasing), and the program is regarded positively by prisoners, staff and employer stakeholders alike.

Although STAJ was characterised as an employment rather than a throughcare program, several of its success factors are in fact shared by the throughcare philosophy and are instructive as to their benefits:

- Correctional services staff involved in the 'careful matching of each prisoner to both job and employer,
- Normalisation of work for prisoners, that means requiring regular attendance, and satisfactory performance paid at award wages, with no differentiation from other workers in terms of treatment or respect,
- Guarantee of a reliable sober punctual workforce for employers, which meets their needs, addresses skill shortages and provides satisfaction of contributing to prisoner rehabilitation.

In New South Wales, the Gundi program was established by New South Wales Corrective Services specifically to integrate education, training, and post release employment.<sup>34</sup> Similar to STAJ, the Gundi program is premised on linking prisoners with institutional support and employment opportunity, rather than implementing a throughcare strategy. Between 2013-15, 99 prisoners participated in the program, and of the 53 prisoners released in this period, 27 gained employment and 2 engaged in further education.<sup>35</sup> Factors that led to Gundi's success include the recognising the importance of mentoring and support, allowing for the preferred learning styles and work preferences of prisoners, and the use of existing referral pathways to post-release employment.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Australia. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. (2004). *Discrimination in employment on the basis of criminal record*. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

<sup>32</sup> Transforming Corrections to Transform Lives (2020), 'Northern Territory Programs', <https://www.transformingcorrections.com.au/northern-territory-programs/>

<sup>33</sup> Wodak, J. & Day, A. (2017). *Sentenced to a Job: A Case Study* Sydney: UNSW Sydney.

<sup>34</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission (2018), 'Existing programs', <https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/pathways-to-justice-inquiry-into-the-incarceration-rate-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-alrc-report-133/9-prison-programs-and-parole/existing-programs/>

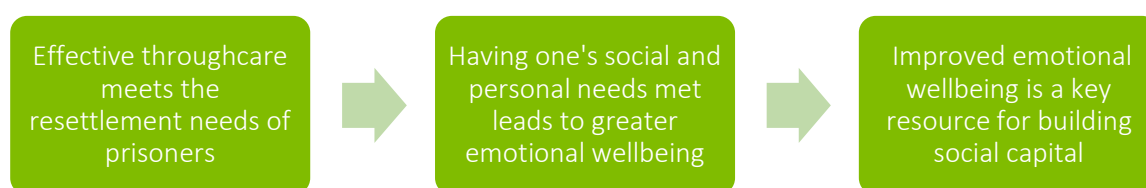
<sup>35</sup> UNSW (2016). *Adult Prisoner Participation in Education, Training, and Employment in Australia, 2008-15*.

<sup>36</sup> Griffith University (2018). *A future Beyond the Wall: Improving Post-release Employment Outcomes for People Leaving Prison Final Report*.

The international evidence also reveals several case studies where throughcare programs have supported returning prisoners into employment. Zubilis is a throughcare program in Germany that was borne out of a recognition that there was a lack of support ‘through the gate’ i.e. those leaving prisons fail to make contact with service and training providers in the community. Before release, prisoners were offered individualised vocational and employment guidance and were helped to contact potential employers outside to arrange a placement. Post release, there is a network of aftercare agencies that worked closely with the personnel providing guidance in the prison and put the plans developed within the prison into practice, ensuring that support was consistent across both settings. The program has achieved great outcomes:<sup>37</sup>

- 50 per cent of participants gained a placement, of which 80 per cent led to employment, with many others leading to a place in education or training.
- Over one third of participants requested support from aftercare agencies for issues such as health, accommodation, and debt.
- Only 16 per cent disengaged from the aftercare program before results had been achieved.

### 2.3.3 Effects of throughcare for (re-)establishing social capital



Social capital refers to the development of connections between people, social ties, trust, and engagement in civil society<sup>38</sup>. Social capital is correlated to human capital, that is, the skills and personal resources an individual needs to function effectively in employment and in the community. Most people develop these kinds of relationships with colleagues, family, and friends over the course of their lives in their communities.

In contrast, it is generally accepted that many prisoners and ex-prisoners have had few opportunities to create these networks during their lives,<sup>39</sup> and that this absence of familial or social connection is a risk factor for incarceration. At the same time, periods of incarceration can weaken or dissolve ties to friends, peers and families, and research shows that younger inmates may become more connected to the criminal community as a result.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Malloch, M., McIvor, G., Schinkel, M., & Armstrong, S. (2013). The elements of effective through-care part 1: International review.

<sup>38</sup> Griffith University (2018). A future Beyond the Wall: Improving Post-release Employment Outcomes for People Leaving Prison Final Report.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Folk, J. B., Mashek, D. J., Stuewig, J. B., Tangney, J. P., Moore, K. E., & Blasko, B. L. (2019). Changes in jail inmates' community connectedness across the period of incarceration. *Deviant behavior*, 40(8), 897-911.

From this emerges a growing body of literature that recognises social capital as a key dimension of desistance.<sup>41</sup> Although the reality is that the processes of desistance are rarely linear,<sup>42</sup> studies affirm that effective throughcare must focus on the building of supportive relationships and averting the processes of social exclusion that are closely linked with reconviction.<sup>43</sup>

In Australia, the ACT Corrective Service's Extended Throughcare program<sup>44</sup> is deemed one of the most successful throughcare programs in Australia. Commenced in 2013, it is a voluntary program that aims to promote and contribute to community safety through coordinating community resources that support eligible detainees leaving the Alexander Maconochie Centre.<sup>45</sup> The program is individually tailored, commences pre-release, and continues for 12 months post-release with the support of community organisations. It provides person-centred case management and support in five core areas – accommodation, health, basic needs, income, and community connections. The types of supports on offer include: individual needs-based assessment, service liaison and coordination, day of release support, intensive outreach where required, and limited brokerage.<sup>46</sup>

The Extended Throughcare program was evaluated by UNSW's Social Policy Research Centre in 2021, who concluded that the Program was very effective in terms of outcomes such as reducing risk of offending, improving community integration, and improving social health of clients.<sup>47</sup> More specifically:

- The program reduced the rate of ex-prisoners returning to jail by 23 per cent.
- The program had a significant impact on the self-esteem and confidence of clients in social situations, helping them to participate in community and social life and to reduce stigma associated with being an ex-offender.
- In terms of personal wellbeing, clients received mental health counselling, physical health treatments, drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment via coordination from the Throughcare Unit, with most clients reporting positive outcomes from these treatments.
- The program is estimated to provide significant savings to the ACT Government such as reduced use of custodial services, legal and court services, hospital and psychiatric services, etc in the medium and long term.

The evaluation also highlighted a few strengths of the program:

- Emphasis on personal support – participants mentioned that they could relate to the staff, that they were approachable and non-judgmental.
- Consistently strong participation throughout the study period.

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<sup>41</sup> Brown, M., & Ross, S. (2010). Mentoring, social capital and desistance: A study of women released from prison. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 43(1), 31-50.

<sup>42</sup> MacDonald, M., Williams, J., & Kane, D. (2013). Throughcare for prisoners with problematic drug use: a European perspective. *EuroVista, Probation and Community Justice*, 2(3), 142-151.

<sup>43</sup> Malloch, M., McIvor, G., Schinkel, M., & Armstrong, S. (2013). The elements of effective through-care part 1: International review.

<sup>44</sup> ACT Government (not dated), 'Extended Throughcare', <https://www.correctiveservices.act.gov.au/reintegration-and-release/extended-throughcare#:~:text=Extended%20Throughcare%20participants%20are%20able,%40act.gov.au>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Social Policy Research Centre (UNSW) (2017). Evaluation of ACT Extended Throughcare Pilot Program.



In New South Wales, the Additional Support Unit (ASU) program administered by Corrective Services NSW provides specialist education, training, and employment programs for prisoners with cognitive disabilities.<sup>48</sup> The PEOP study<sup>49</sup> concluded that the program has universal applicability as it uses recognised best practice in learning, multi-disciplinary approaches and is culturally sensitive. The program was well received by participants and staff, and advanced a range of foundational skills for building social capital upon return to community:

- For many prisoners, their experience in ASU was the first time they have felt ‘respected’ and taken ‘seriously’.
- The program adopted a flexible approach to integrate literacy and numeracy training in teaching of ‘daily living’ skills, skills that prisoners with a cognitive disability often lack:

*‘We organise for them to do warehousing, they do horticulture. In the past they’ve done cooking or hospitality skills ... With that, we add on a literacy component so that they’re always practising their reading and writing and learning through ways where they’re not just sitting in a classroom doing ABCs. That doesn’t really work with them. When they’ve got a hands-on thing to do, they’re learning what they need to in literacy and numeracy [and] it goes under the radar for them. They don’t realise they’re learning it, but they’re learning it. It works very efficiently.’<sup>50</sup>*

- Improving foundational skills in literacy and numeracy in turn improves confidence and lowers the risk of recidivism:

*‘Teaching them those very, very basic skills increases their confidence, increases their motivation, gives them hope for the future. Even if they do come back to jail again, it may be over a longer period of time. They’ve just been able to function that little bit easier when they get out of here’<sup>51</sup>*

In Victoria, the Bridging the Gap throughcare program provided intensive support to offenders with drug or alcohol problems, through a combination of direct service provision by five community-based agencies and support in accessing a range of other services. The program involved pre-release planning, intensive contact immediately following release and longer-term support focused on securing employment, accommodation, drug treatment and dealing with health issues. The study<sup>52</sup> showed that participants had:

- Better outcomes on measures of drug dependence
- Greater participation in treatment programs and accommodation
- Lower recidivism rates in the first 120 days after release

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<sup>48</sup> Corrective Services NSW (2023), ‘Additional Support Units’, <https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/reducing-re-offending/initiatives-to-support-offenders/specialist-support/services-for-inmates-with-a-disability/additional-support-units.html>

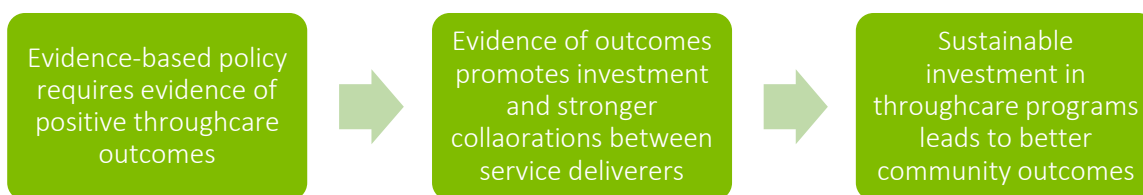
<sup>49</sup> UNSW (2017). Education, Training and Employment for Prisoners with Cognitive Disabilities: A Case Study.

<sup>50</sup> Corrective Services NSW (2023), ‘Additional Support Units’, <https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/reducing-re-offending/initiatives-to-support-offenders/specialist-support/services-for-inmates-with-a-disability/additional-support-units.html>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Melbourne Criminology Research and Evaluation Unit (2003). Bridging the Gap: A Release Transition Support Program for Victorian Prisoners - Final Evaluation Report. Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner, Department of Justice: Melbourne, Vic.

### 2.3.4 Advancing criminal justice outcomes through effective throughcare programs



The reach of the JMO pilot also includes its second order effects on criminal justice policy and the growing intersection between the fields of criminology and speech pathology. Where evidence of its outcomes is embedded to shape and modernise policy, this has flow-on effects for the sustainability of investment and therefore the breadth of individuals who may benefit from participation in throughcare.

Currently, there is limited evidence to illustrate this process, despite the introduction of throughcare in South Australia in 1998.<sup>53</sup> Research has identified that ‘the few post-release programs that do exist for ex-prisoners in Australia are fragmented, often under-funded and usually based on limited evidence’, and it is arguable that this remains the case in 2023.<sup>54</sup>

There are only a few published evaluations of Australian throughcare programs, namely the Bridging the Gap program in Victoria and the ACT Extended Throughcare program, both referenced earlier in the context of their beneficial effects on employment outcomes and participants’ social capital. The ACT program, initiated in the 2012-13 fiscal year with an initial investment of \$1.2 million, received additional funding of \$2.2 million in the 2014-15 budget<sup>55</sup> and a further \$5.3 million in the 2018-19 budget.<sup>56</sup>

The increased funding demonstrates the growing importance and recognition of these throughcare programs, with the first Former Minister for Corrections, Shane Rattenbury, commenting that:

*‘By continuing to work closely and supporting detainees post release we are further targeting our efforts in addressing systemic causes of imprisonment for the majority of detainees. This will result in lower incarceration rates and a safer, more secure community.’*

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<sup>53</sup> Baldry, E. (2007b). Throughcare: Making the policy a reality. Sydney University of NSW, Reintegration Puzzle Conference, May; Sydney, Australia.

<sup>54</sup> Kinner, S. (2006). The post-release experience of prisoners in Queensland. Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre (QADREC), The University of Queensland.

<sup>55</sup> Riotact (2014), ‘Improving offender rehabilitation by extending Throughcare’, <https://the-riotact.com/improving-offender-rehabilitation-by-extending-throughcare/127042/comment-page-1>

<sup>56</sup> The Canberra Times (2018), ‘Throughcare program to help 150 ex-inmates a year avoid jail’, <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6030261/throughcare-program-to-help-150-ex-inmates-a-year-avoid-jail/>

## 3. Evaluation of Just Moving On

Drawing from best practice methods, we developed and applied the elements of evaluation to JMO's processes, outcomes, impacts, and economic efficiency.

This evaluation concludes that JMO is worthy of future continuation and investment, with clear potential to catalyse social and economic value for participants and wider beneficiaries.

### 3.1 Approach

Evaluation is the 'systematic assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness, and/or overall value of a program, policy or service'.<sup>57</sup> Evaluations occupy an important role in the program life cycle because they establish an evidentiary basis for whether the object of evaluation should continue to be funded, modified (and if so, recommendations as to how), or halted. These speak to the practicalities of program delivery and feasibility, yet equally important are the ethical obligations of evaluation: concerned with whether participants in fact benefit, and are not harmed by, attendance.<sup>58</sup>

Evaluation practices vary between fields of research and depending on research application. This ensures that the outcomes of evaluation are framed constructively and meaningfully to support their intended audience. Typical evaluation questions are listed below (Table 3), which have informed the development of a tailored JMO evaluation matrix.

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<sup>57</sup> Tasmanian Government (2022), 'Office of Review and Evaluation', [https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/office\\_of\\_review\\_and\\_evaluation](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/office_of_review_and_evaluation)

<sup>58</sup> Giancola, S. P. (2014). Evaluation matters: Getting the information you need from your evaluation. *Giancola Research Associates, Inc.*

**TABLE 3: SUMMARY EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

Element	Questions
<b>Appropriateness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent does the program address an identified need?</li> <li>▪ How well does the program align with government, societal, and/or other priorities?</li> <li>▪ Does the program represent a legitimate role for the entity?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent is the program achieving the intended outcomes, in the short, medium and long term?</li> <li>▪ To what extent is the program producing worthwhile results (outputs, outcomes) and/or meeting each of its objectives?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do the outcomes of the program represent value for money?</li> <li>▪ To what extent is the relationship between inputs and outputs timely, cost-effective and to expected standards?</li> </ul>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023), adapted from Tasmanian Government Office of Review and Evaluation (2022)

### Tailoring an approach to JMO program evaluation

A known challenge that permeates human services program evaluations is the absence of universally accepted outcomes.<sup>59</sup> In the case of JMO and its target population, such is the richness of the human experience that the ‘successful’ reintegration of ex-prisoners can be plurally defined. The degree of success is not only specific to individual capacities for change but also the various life domains, such as family, health, accommodation, employment, and skills.

Therefore, two concepts are embedded into the evaluation approach:

- **Spheres of influence.** We distinguish between short-term outcomes that are visible and attributable to a program and those outcomes that are beyond the influence of a program (see section 3.2). The program logic components are categorised by whether it is under the program’s direct control, direct influence, or indirect influence.<sup>60</sup>

As the Pilot JMO has only been in operation for several years, performance indicators in the evaluation matrix (see section 3.3) will primarily focus on short-term outcomes (typically changes skillsets or knowledge) within the program’s sphere of direct influence. Many intermediate (e.g. changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices) and most long-term outcomes (e.g. employment, more systemic changes) also depend on other influences and it may not be possible to causally

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<sup>59</sup> Barrett, T., & Sorensen, J. (2015). Human Services Program Evaluation: "How to Improve Your Accountability and Program Effectiveness". *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*.

<sup>60</sup> NHS Health Scotland (not dated), ‘Using results chains and logic modelling to strengthen planning and evaluation’, [https://www.healthscotland.com/ofhi/Admin/Resources\\_documents/SimpleGuide2\\_ResultsChains\\_Logic\\_Modelling%20nc.doc](https://www.healthscotland.com/ofhi/Admin/Resources_documents/SimpleGuide2_ResultsChains_Logic_Modelling%20nc.doc)

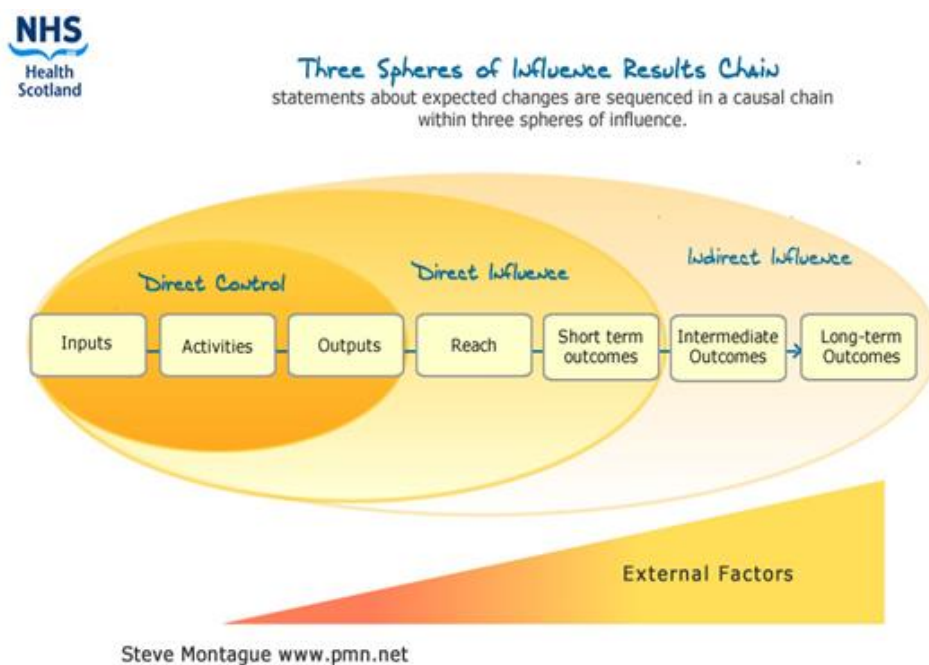
attribute outcomes to a program.<sup>61</sup> For example, the employment status of any individual is sensitive to a host of factors, only some of which are addressed by JMO.

- **Outcomes and process evaluation in equal measure.** To ensure funds are spent well, processes and efficiencies must also be examined for how they contribute to the intended outcomes.<sup>62</sup>

### 3.2 Program logic

As a JMO program logic was not formalised at the time of program design, it has been retrospectively developed as part of this evaluation and is based on what is known as a results chain (Figure 2). The purpose of a program logic is to map the links from inputs and activities to a program’s intended outcomes.

FIGURE 2: PROGRAM LOGIC AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE



Source: Health Scotland (2017), Simple Guide Results Chains Modelling

The JMO program logic highlights that over the short- and medium-term, there are many precursors to achieving the employment objective. Alternatively stated, achieving, and maintaining the employment objective is the cumulative effect of achieving and sustaining many other outcomes.

<sup>61</sup> Stewart, J., Joyce, J., Haines, M., Yanoski, D., Gagnon, D., Luke, K., ... & Germeroth, C. (2021). Program Evaluation Toolkit: Quick Start Guide. REL 2022-112. *Regional Educational Laboratory Central*.

<sup>62</sup> Barrett, T., & Sorensen, J. (2015). Human Services Program Evaluation: "How to Improve Your Accountability and Program Effectiveness". *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*.

FIGURE 3: JMO PROGRAM LOGIC



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023), adapted from the University of Wisconsin Logic Model (undated) and Health Scotland (2017).

### 3.3 Economic appraisal

An economic appraisal was not undertaken, because the nature of the program being a pilot, only allows for a qualitative appraisal at this point in time. Nonetheless, results achieved by the program, suggest the benefits of the program will easily outweigh the costs.

The benefit of JMO has the potential to easily outweigh the costs of the program. JMO would cover its costs if it were to keep a participant from returning to prison for as little as two weeks at any time in their future.<sup>63</sup> The estimated cost of JMO is \$4,846 per participant per year.<sup>64</sup> This represents a mere 4 per cent (or just over two weeks in a year) of the cost of annual incarceration (\$109,500) in Tasmania.<sup>65</sup>

A review of the pilot JMO's participation trends shows that 11 of the 18 participants did not return to Risdon prison between July 2021 and August 2023. Acknowledging the small sample, this indicates a lower recidivism rate compared to Tasmania's 51.1 per cent of prisoners released during 2019-20 who returned to prison within two years.<sup>66</sup>

During its first two years of implementation, the pilot JMO achieved a range of objectives towards the goal of supporting individuals into employment. Participants and therapists reported improvements in social and literacy competencies, and pro-social behaviours (section 3.5). However, JMO also contributed to positive outcomes not explicitly recognised under the eight program objectives. For example, the development of individuals' trust in others and in community when they felt unconditionally supported by their therapist to overcome challenges and to succeed. Other short- and intermediate-term outcomes were also reported (Figure 3), which supports the provisional finding of the pilot JMO's economic efficiency.

In the future, a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) could be undertaken to evaluate JMO's economic performance. CBAs offer a systematic method for comparing the total costs to the total anticipated benefits of undertaking a project or making an investment. Should a CBA be conducted in the future, the costs will differ from those incurred by Just Time (see Annual Report 2023<sup>67</sup>) since JMO is delivered in community. However many of the benefits quantified in the Just Time Social Return on Investment Analysis (2023)<sup>68</sup> will be relevant inputs, given that JMO's intended referral pathway is through Just Time.

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<sup>63</sup> This analogy as high-level approach to assessing the economics of a program was applied in the 2019 evaluation of Just Time.

<sup>64</sup> Connect42 (2023), 'JMO Key Elements', not published.

<sup>65</sup> TPS (2022), 'Budget estimates brief', [https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF](https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF)

<sup>66</sup> Australian Government Productivity Commission (2023), 'Report on Government Services 2023', <https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2023/justice>

<sup>67</sup> Connect42 (2023), TCF Progress Report 2023, unpublished.

<sup>68</sup> Connect42 and SGS Economics and Planning (2023), 'Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time', [https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning\\_Just-in-Time-report.pdf](https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_Just-in-Time-report.pdf)



### 3.4 Evaluation matrix

SGS developed the following matrix for the pilot JMO (Table 4) to consider the appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the program.

The purpose of an evaluation matrix is to organise the analytical framework for an evaluation, setting out the questions, indicators, data collation methods and tools, and other key information to ensure rigour, credibility and transparency in the evaluation design. A detailed evaluation matrix itemising these elements is contained in Appendix A.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> World Food Programme Office of Evaluation (2020), 'Technical Note: Evaluation Matrix', <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000003176/download/#:~:text=The%20Evaluation%20Matrix%20serves%20as,will%20need%20to%20be%20collected.>

**TABLE 4: EVALUATION MATRIX**

Questions	Sub-questions
<p><b>How appropriate was the design of the Pilot JMO?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was the nature and extent of the problem or opportunity that the Pilot JMO was designed to address?</li> <li>▪ What were the likely consequences of not addressing these problems or opportunities?</li> <li>▪ Was the Pilot JMO adequately resourced?</li> <li>▪ What mechanisms did the Pilot JMO use to assess outcomes, and against which indicators?</li> <li>▪ What lessons from previous programs and/or best practice were used to inform the Pilot JMO?</li> <li>▪ Did changes in the Pilot JMO’s operating context occur during its lifetime and did these warrant a change in the program’s design or scale?</li> <li>▪ What is the continuing rationale for JMO?</li> <li>▪ How is the Pilot JMO consistent with the Tasmanian Government’s strategic and policy agenda?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Was the Pilot JMO administered and delivered efficiently?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was the Pilot JMO delivered within budget?</li> <li>▪ Was the proposed delivery timeframe realistic?</li> <li>▪ What governance arrangements were in place to support decision-making?</li> <li>▪ Were records kept to demonstrate consistent procedures and decision-making?</li> <li>▪ How did the Pilot JMO anticipate and mitigate risks?</li> <li>▪ How well did actual participants match the program’s intended participants?</li> <li>▪ What reporting requirements were in place and were these met by Connect42?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Was the Pilot JMO effective?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did the Pilot JMO achieve its project outcomes?</li> <li>▪ What was the magnitude of changes that occurred?</li> <li>▪ How or why were these outcomes achieved?</li> <li>▪ Is there evidence for the counterfactual (what would have happened if the Pilot JMO did not go ahead)?</li> <li>▪ Can the Pilot JMO’s return on investment be quantified?</li> </ul>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023), Australian Government (2019).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Australian Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (2019), Policy Hub: Evaluation Question Bank, <https://www.policyhub.gov.au/sites/default/files/resources/er-evaluation-question-bank.docx>

## 3.5 Analysis

The analysis below should be interpreted in the context of the program being a pilot. The nature of a pilot is to facilitate exploration, engage in genuine inquiry, and to advance an understanding of the factors that would support the program to flourish at scale.

### 3.5.1 How appropriate was the design of the Pilot JMO?

1. What was the nature and extent of the problem or opportunity that the pilot JMO was designed to address?

Building literacy and communication skills among inmates was identified as JMO's key objective, to help prisoners lay the foundations for social connection, positive emotional regulation, and positive behavioural change as they reintegrate back into the community. Illiteracy is common among inmates and the evidence shows they have lower levels of educational attainment and experience more learning difficulties than people in the general community.

Stakeholder consultation suggests critical service gaps within the justice system whereby inmates with complex needs are expressly or inadvertently excluded from support programs. Either individuals who are deemed 'high-risk' are ineligible for some services, or programs try unsuccessfully to engage with them. The pilot JMO bridged this gap by providing services that were highly tailored and flexible to individual needs. One JMO participant noted that:

*'Before I come to prison... there was no community support. I had no support at all really. It was just living life out there without support, not knowing that I could go and get help. But now that we're down here, I know that I can come to you [JMO therapist] for help or I can go to Community Corrections or there's a lot of other supports there...'*

JMO also aspires to advance the collaborations between criminology and speech pathology to improve criminal justice outcomes. A practice gap in Australian throughcare programs currently exists, whereas short-term funding cycles and few documented evaluations inhibit the scale-up of effective throughcare. JMO provides evidence of positive throughcare outcomes. This evidence will not only inform policy makers but also empower stakeholders to advocate for the continuation and expansion of throughcare initiatives.

2. What were the likely consequences of not addressing these problems or opportunities?

The costs of failing to address poor literacy as a risk factor for criminality are both social and financial, and manifest at the individual and societal scales. In the absence of a strong foundation for connecting with community, returning prisoners are likely to face challenges in accessing resources and, by extension, rehabilitation opportunities, which increases the risk of recidivism. Studies have shown that crime is significantly linked to illiteracy, and that poor literacy and numeracy capability impacts one's behavioural, cognitive, self-esteem and, in some cases, motor capacities.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Australia Parliament House (2021). Response to House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (Committee) inquiry into and report on adult literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills in Australia.

There are hidden consequences to families if the cycle of parental incarceration is not overcome. The children of parents in prison face challenges such as the 'psychological strain from the separation experience, learnt harmful behaviour, or a reduction in household income with subsequent adverse effects on human capital investment'.<sup>72</sup>

At the societal level, the financial implications of imprisonment are substantial. Prisons currently cost Australian taxpayers more than \$5 billion per year, equivalent to more than \$330 per prisoner per day.<sup>73</sup> Rising imprisonment rates has led to an increase in real government expenditure on corrective services by 40 per cent between 2013 and 2020.<sup>74</sup>

### 3. Was the Pilot JMO adequately resourced?

The TCF Grant Deed specified that the pilot JMO was to receive \$701,500 in combined funding from the TCF and philanthropic donors, which was to be applied to a minimum of 15 participants over the course of three years. This roughly translated to a planned budget of \$15,500 per JMO participant each year for therapist and speech pathology meetings and other activities itemised in Table 2.

However, a review of the Financial Statement<sup>75</sup> shows that program expenditure between July 2021 and 31 March 2023 amounted to approximately \$232,600 in costs. On average, this translates to an actual per participant cost of \$4,846 per year.<sup>76</sup> This is comparable to the costs outlined in the 2017 evaluation of the ACT Extended Throughcare Pilot Program, which identified an average cost of \$4,700 per client, based on a \$3.56 million investment over 4 years and a total of 745 clients.<sup>77</sup>

Monetary investment in the pilot JMO is therefore comparable of at least one other recent Australian throughcare program.

A formal breakdown of program costs (labour, materials, equipment, overhead) was not available for this evaluation, so it is difficult to assess the appropriateness of this budget in detail. However, assuming 2-3 therapist meetings per participant per week (Table 2), it appears that the budget is somewhat constrained with approximately \$300 allocated for 2-3 meetings each week (i.e. a planned budget of \$15,500 over 52 weeks). A pilot cohort with fewer JMO participants may have been more realistic to ease management, co-ordination, and the agility to implement learnings in real time. A total of six therapists participated in the pilot JMO, and a pilot cohort of six participants was initially discussed but ultimately increased by members of the Connect42 Board.

JMO's approach of 'bringing the program to the client' involved therapists visiting clients at their homes. While this contributed to its effectiveness by removing physical barriers to service access, this

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[[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Employment\\_Education\\_and\\_Training/AdultLiteracy/Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Employment_Education_and_Training/AdultLiteracy/Report)]

<sup>72</sup> Productivity Commission (2021), Australia's Prison Dilemma – Research Paper, <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/prisondilemma/prison-dilemma.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Connect42 (2023), TCF Progress Report 2023, unpublished.

<sup>76</sup> This calculation is based on 16 participants, as 2 participants relocated to the mainland shortly after JMO commenced. Nominal program costs are assumed in relation to these participants. We note that costs in the future may be slightly higher, as the mid-term and full-term participant assessments were not completed for all participants for the pilot JMO.

<sup>77</sup> UNSW (2017). Evaluation of ACT Extended Throughcare Pilot Program Final Report, [https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/unsw-adobe-websites/arts-design-architecture/ada-faculty/sprc/2021-06-Evaluation\\_of\\_ACT\\_Extended\\_Throughcare\\_Pilot\\_Program.pdf](https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/unsw-adobe-websites/arts-design-architecture/ada-faculty/sprc/2021-06-Evaluation_of_ACT_Extended_Throughcare_Pilot_Program.pdf)

program feature potentially increased operational costs compared to other programs in more centralised delivery settings. Although the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic led to online meetings, it also amplified administrative challenges as program staff attempted to maintain regular contact with participants.

From a personnel perspective, it appears that the JMO delivery team was adequately resourced. Under the support of six therapists, JMO delivered almost 1,100 service hours to its rolling cohort of approximately 15 participants between June 2021 and August 2023. Seven participants undertook language and literacy assessments, totalling 25 assessments and all participants conducted the Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) Goal Setting Survey. The pilot JMO was well equipped with relevant materials, assessment frameworks, and the capacity and skill of personnel to effect positive change in the literacy and communication of its participants.

#### 4. What mechanisms did the Pilot JMO use to assess outcomes, and against which indicators?

The pilot JMO employed several language and literacy assessment frameworks. These include the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test for assessing an individual's understanding of lexicon,<sup>78</sup> the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests for reading readiness and achievement,<sup>79</sup> the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, a holistic measurement tool of empathy.<sup>80</sup> As such, this evaluation considers the pilot JMO to be structured in its approach to assessing individuals' baseline and improvements to literacy and communication.

The initial design of pilot JMO includes assessments at the beginning, middle and final stages of the program. While initial assessments were conducted for almost all participants, completion rates for mid-program assessments varied for several reasons (e.g. generalised anxiety from assessments tasks, sporadic engagement and availability), or were not aligned with the participants' best interests at the time (e.g. they were still in contact with therapists about matters higher on their hierarchy of needs).

Final program assessments were not routinely completed, due to the early conclusion of the pilot JMO. Some therapists elected to complete the assessment pro bono, in early 2024 and after funding was discontinued for the pilot JMO.. Where this is the case, the results have informed this evaluation (section 3.5.3).

#### 5. What lessons from previous programs and/or best practice were used to inform the Pilot JMO?

The design of JMO is grounded in best practice, supported by four bodies of evidence and research. These are summarised below, having been discussed in section 2.3 of this report and in the prior Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time:<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Eigsti, I. M. (2021). Peabody picture vocabulary test. In *Encyclopedia of Autism Spectrum Disorders* (pp. 3357-3360). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

<sup>79</sup> Pearson (2023), 'Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests', <https://www.pearsonclinical.com.au/store/auassessments/en/Store/Professional-Assessments/Academic-Learning/Woodcock-Reading-Mastery-Tests%2C-Third-Edition/p/P100010181.html?tab=product-details>

<sup>80</sup> Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy, [https://www.uv.es/~friasnav/Davis\\_1980.pdf](https://www.uv.es/~friasnav/Davis_1980.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> Connect42 and SGS Economics and Planning (2023), 'Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time', [https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning\\_Just-in-Time-report.pdf](https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_Just-in-Time-report.pdf)

- **Throughcare** is effective for reducing recidivism and supporting positive pro-social reintegration into society following release from prison. Key elements of throughcare include place-based support, skilled workers, long-term case work, and strong inter-agency relationships, all of which are present in JMO.
- **Desistance from crime** is supported through the dignity of reflection and freedom of choice about personal change. JMO supports reflection and personal choice in all of its activities, and more importantly, it supports the skills of language which are the basis of reflective capacity.
- **Language, learning and communication** – there is a growing body of evidence that skilled language intervention effects positive functional changes in communication, interaction, knowledge and self-insight. JMO intentionally brings the skills of speech pathologists who are trained in evidence-based approaches to intervention in all areas of language and communication.
- **Trust and secure attachment** in relationships underpin regulatory steadiness, mental good health, positive success in relationships, and the willingness to repair ruptures in communication. JMO begins from the open and willing communication about secure attachment that is founded through participation in the Just Time program in prison.

The pilot JMO also extends the learnings from a 2019 Program Evaluation of Just Time, putting into practice a recommendation that:

*‘Further throughcare initiatives that include not only the delivery of Just Time/Circle Of Security Program within the community, but support for program participants upon release that is akin to case work, building upon what has been established in their program participation, may be essential to participants’ further success as parents.’<sup>82</sup>*

6. Did changes in the Pilot JMO’s operating context occur during its lifetime and did these warrant a change in the program’s design or scale?

The main shift in the operating context related to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to minor delays in program commencement and affected the ability to stay in touch with some participants who were less familiar with virtual meetings. This did not, in our view, warrant a departure from JMO’s design, namely the flow and intensity of formal literacy and empathy assessments, individualised programs, and direct teaching and skills development (Table 2). It was important, in the absence of similar throughcare programs, for the pilot JMO to demonstrate how consolidating *all* of these best practice elements and tailored delivery were essential to provide prisoners returning to community with the best chance of forging positive connection through language and literacy.

The timing of the COVID-19 pandemic, coinciding with the planned commencement of JMO, may however, have warranted a reconsideration of program scale. It is not known whether these discussions were broached with the TCF or the philanthropic donors. As mentioned above, a pilot cohort of six JMO participants may have enabled a wider buffer to accommodate ad hoc issues, particularly when individuals’ external stressors (e.g. access to services, housing instability) were heightened in the early stages of the pilot.

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<sup>82</sup> University of Tasmania (2019), ‘Connect42’s Just Time Program Evaluation Report’, [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf)

7. What is the continuing rationale for JMO?

Based on the available evidence, 4 of the 8 program objectives were achieved and partial progress was made towards the remaining 4 objectives (see discussion at question 16). On average, the recidivism rate among JMO participants is 38.8 per cent<sup>83</sup> which is lower than the recidivism rate across Tasmania (51.1 per cent) under no intervention.<sup>84</sup> This evaluation notes that this percentage is calculated from a small sample and would need to be refined from longitudinal data collection and monitoring over time.

Beyond quantitative targets, however, this evaluation has highlighted the value generated from well-designed program processes and implementation. The benefits of this are sometimes obscured due to the focus on outcomes and impact measurement. A JMO therapist reflected on her experience:

*'I haven't felt like my time working with [the participant] has been wasted. I sometimes wonder if I could have provided more or different or better support to help him remain in the community, however I come back to the idea that, despite a step backwards, there have been many more steps forward for him and his family.'*

8. How is the pilot JMO consistent with the Tasmanian Government's strategic and policy agenda?

The pilot JMO is strategically aligned with the Tasmanian Government's goal of reducing recidivism by 10 per cent by 2027<sup>85</sup> from a baseline of 51 per cent in 2019-20.<sup>86</sup> The Tasmanian Government's Strategic Plan for Corrections advocates for throughcare case management principles and includes an action centred on 'developing and implementing a person-centric case management framework'.<sup>87</sup> In this regard, JMO has the potential to contribute to the body of knowledge that informs the development and implementation of similar initiatives, having piloted its approach with promising success (refer to question 16).

Furthermore, JMO aligns with TCF's vision of increasing community wellbeing through removing barriers to learning.<sup>88</sup> This was evidenced by JMO's success in securing grant funding from the TCF through the 2021 Workforce Engagement Round. The grant was specifically designated for projects aimed at increasing participation rates in education, training and lifelong learning, life opportunities, functional literacy and numeracy, and individual capacities to transition through life stages. These were reflected in the pilot JMO's key objectives and woven into program design.

### 3.5.2 Was the Pilot JMO administered and delivered efficiently?

9. Was the Pilot JMO delivered within budget?

Based on a review of the latest Financial Statement,<sup>89</sup> program expenditure between July 2021 and 31 March 2023 was within budget. Approximately \$232,600 of total costs were incurred during this period,

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<sup>83</sup> Connect42 (2023). Tasmanian Community Fund Progress Report 2023

<sup>84</sup> Connect42 (2023). Tasmanian Community Fund Progress Report 2023.

<sup>85</sup> Department of Justice (2023). Changing lives, creating futures. A Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania.

<sup>86</sup> In 2019-20, Tasmania had a recidivism rate of 51% (within two years of release). Sourced from <https://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/sentencing-statistics/released-prisoners-returning-to-prison>

<sup>87</sup> Department of Justice (2023). Changing lives, creating futures. A Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania.

<sup>88</sup> Tasmanian Community Fund Strategic Plan 2022-2030.

[https://www.tascomfund.org/\\_\\_data/assets/image/0014/311018/TCF-Strategic-Plan-UPDATE.png](https://www.tascomfund.org/__data/assets/image/0014/311018/TCF-Strategic-Plan-UPDATE.png)

<sup>89</sup> Connect42 (2023), TCF Progress Report 2023, unpublished.



compared to the \$701,500 of combined TCF and donor funding. Extrapolating these figures, it appears likely that had the Pilot JMO would have been delivered to budget had it continued to its planned completion in May 2024.

However, a more detailed analysis of cost components reveals insights that could inform program design recommendations in the future. For example, whether greater emphasis and resources should be channelled towards some items. While most actual expenditures aligned with the stage of the project (i.e. 2 years into a 3 year term) there were some outliers:

- The costs of 'Individual direct teaching – adults (post release)' exceeded allocated costs by approximately \$46,000, or a factor of 1.6,
- The costs of 'clinical case management' incurred by March 2023 were one third of allocated costs,
- No costs were reported in relation to 'skills practice with therapy assistant – adults' nor 'SPT contractor payments'
- The costs incurred by March 2023 of 'TCCI Work ready employment partnerships' amounted to approximately 16 per cent of allocated deed costs.

Although travel costs were generally lower than the allocations, this could be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic environment and the likelihood that some meetings were held virtually.

#### 10. Was the proposed delivery timeframe realistic?

The program logic map (Figure 3) demonstrates that most JMO program objectives materialise between 1 and 3 years, while others such as employment attainment require a longer timeframe. On this basis, the proposed delivery timeframe to achieve all 8 objectives was not realistic. As outlined in section 3.2, the achievement of longer-term outcomes, such as employment and improved employment access, is dependent on the solid and cumulative foundations built on short- and medium-term outcomes.

Other short- to medium- term outcomes were achievable within the pilot timeframe. For example, participants shared they had improved emotional regulation, skills, confidence, and resilience:

*'Definitely, more confidence. Absolutely. Definitely, more confidence. Not as much nerves, not as anxious. I think, having six kids, that I would be pretty open and easygoing, but I find myself in situations where I've found myself anxious before and now, I'm a lot more open to talking about things without becoming so emotional. It's actually opened me up for a little bit more trust in people. Definitely.'*

One learning from the pilot JMO is therefore to bring attention to the diverse factors that shape the realities of prisoners returning to community. Consultation with JMO staff and service providers noted that participants' drug and alcohol issues, personal relationships, and mental wellbeing all impacted on their overall engagement with JMO and therefore progress towards job-readiness. Moving forward, the design of the program should take these factors into account.

#### 11. What governance arrangements were in place to support decision-making?

The Pilot JMO was governed by a Steering Committee led by Connect42. The committee comprised representatives from Connect42 and stakeholders from TCCI, SPT, Uniting Care, Anglicare, the Salvation Army, and JusTas (Figure 1). The role of the Committee was to provide strategic direction and resolution of issues arising, leadership, to facilitate external outreach, and to offer project oversight.

For example, in July 2023, the Committee made the decision to cease all new referrals to the program at the end of two full years of the pilot JMO to evaluate the program's processes and outcomes. The Committee declined the grant variation in June 2023 due to issues related to client impacts, staff safety and program design.<sup>90</sup>

Under the leadership of SPT Senior Clinician Rosalie Martin, a total of 11 meetings were facilitated from June 2021 to August 2023, bringing together JMO therapists as a collective group. These sessions provided a platform for therapists to collaboratively share valuable learnings and reflections.

Soon after the commencement of the pilot JMO and partly as a result of the receipt of grant funding, Connect42 was required to undertake substantial governance and structural reform. These initiatives include governance training for Board and staff, rewriting of its Board Charter, and update to the Constitution.<sup>91</sup> Therefore this evaluation concludes that not all the required governance arrangements were initially in place, but that there is now a clearer understanding of the governance requirements for future JMO delivery.

#### 12. Were records kept to demonstrate consistent procedures and decision-making?

Connect42's Record Keeping Policy and Procedure<sup>92</sup> was enacted to systematically record participants' engagement throughout the program. The Policy states that records for JMO must be timely, thorough (both quantitative and qualitative), accurate, and electronic (i.e. if paper records were made, they must be transferred into electronic form).

Connect42 maintained digital records capturing the date and location of participant engagement, number of direct and indirect clinical hours,<sup>93</sup> travel time hours. Furthermore, therapists prepared anonymised case notes and quarterly reports to document reflections from both participants and therapists, as well as participants' progress toward their goals. The 2023 Annual Progress Report catalogued 'letters of support' written by therapists on the topic of participants' progress and engagement over time. The combination of a structured data and narrative documentation supported this evaluation.

#### 13. How did the pilot JMO anticipate and mitigate risks?

The pilot JMO incorporated several mechanisms to address the procedural, participant, and therapist risk. Procedural risk relates to the context of the program's objectives. In this regards, annual progress reports, the preparation of policies and procedures,<sup>94</sup> detailed records of program hours by activity category (e.g. direct and indirect clinician time, travel time), and Steering Committee meetings minutes together provided channels for stakeholders to classify, discuss, and record risks. Policies and procedures were initiated by the service provider SPT, revealing a risk where Connect42 relied on

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<sup>90</sup> Connect42 (2023). Board Paper – JMO Program Future. Not published.

<sup>91</sup> Connect42 (2023). Tasmanian Community Fund Progress Report 2023. Not published.

<sup>92</sup> Connect42 (2021). 'Record Keeping for Just Moving On'. Not published.

<sup>93</sup> Based on a review of Connect42's 'JMO referrals, workflow, time tracker', 'direct' clinical activities related to the weekly sessions while 'indirect' clinical activity referred to out of session correspondence with JMO participants emails and calls to specialists involved in case management, and the writeup of clinical notes and referral letters.

<sup>94</sup> Spanning information for JMO clinicians, suitable locations for meeting JMO participants, policies for collecting and recording JMO participants' assessment results.

subcontracted infrastructure, i.e. policies, procedures, and SPT's network of 20-30 staff who were well distributed across Tasmania and who all had deep experience working with clients in their homes.

These risks were not detailed in a risk management register nor risk matrix to proactively identify risks, their potential impact, and strategies for mitigation.

Participant risks are specific to the individual, and may include the risk of harm, discomfort, or emotional distress. The pilot JMO sought to mitigate participant risk in several ways: via the considerations that informed the referral pathway (see section 2.2) and through the close attention of the participant's therapist.

Therapists risk may also relate to the harm, discomfort, or distress of therapists. JMO's design lead, speech pathologist Rosalie Martin, was assigned to 9 of the 18 participants as it was important to know what she was asking her team to do. An interview with Rosalie highlighted that in the process of meeting with participants who had completed Just Time, a sense was gained of who could be suitably matched with other therapists to manage safety and risk factors.

In the future, a formal risk management framework would support JMO decision-makers in their consideration of potential risk factors and strategies for mitigation.

**14. How well did actual participants match the program's intended participants?**

A review of case notes and participant survey results indicates that JMO's participants aligned with the intended participant profile (section 2.2). Processes like the We Care Survey,<sup>95</sup> Employment Survey, and Circle of Security Parenting Goal Setting Survey deployed by JMO program facilitators at the start of the program have helped to support participants transition into the program.

Participants expressed a common set of aspirations, including a desire to reconnect with their families, and to improve literacy and social skills.

**15. What reporting requirements were in place and were these met by Connect42?**

The TCF Grant Deed outlines reporting obligations for Connect42, namely the submission of two progress reports on 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023, along with a final project report on 31 May 2024. Additionally, financial statements, verified by a Registered Auditor designated and funded by the Board, were required to demonstrate the grant's utilisation.<sup>96</sup> These items were sighted as part of this evaluation, as were detailed records of program hours. The final project report is expected to be delivered by 31 May 2024.

### **3.5.3 Was the pilot JMO effective?**

**16. Did the pilot JMO achieve its project outcomes?**

The Pilot JMO accomplished four of the eight objectives outlined in the TCF Grant Deed and made partial progress towards the remaining four. Each is considered below.

**(1) Increase in number of people in employment.**

**Partially achieved.** A review of participant records shows that four participants of the eighteen who

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<sup>95</sup> This survey is a basic needs screening tool that asked about questions related to their education and employment background, housing situation and food security issues.

<sup>96</sup> Tasmanian Community Fund (2020). Connect42 Grant Deed. Not published.

were enrolled in JMO (for any duration) secured employment. However, most placements were short lived. When examining the reasons why, it seemed that there was generally an underappreciation for the ways in which setbacks and other challenging circumstance continue to loom large despite progress on other indicators (e.g. literacy, empathy, social skills, resilience). One therapist interviewed for this study noted that a participant later reflected, having returned to prison, that they hadn't felt ready to be in employment.

### (2) Improved employment access for those experiencing barriers.

**Partially achieved.** JMO improved employment access for participants experiencing barriers in several ways. The program nurtured job-readiness skills of problem-solving, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills and connected participants with employment agencies such as MAX Employment and local job hubs. The most valuable aspect of JMO's approach, however, relied on the relational trust developed between participant and facilitator to motivate participants on a personal level:

*'You [JMO therapist] were encouraging me to look like go and look for work and stuff like that... You helped me try to get a course thing [TAFE], a mechanics course at the Kingston... You also said, 'Oh, maybe the opportunity, we get back to the [Royal Botanical] gardens and stuff,' And I thought, 'Well, that'd be good. And because I've already worked there [at the botanical gardens] before, through the prison.' I thought I might be able to go there at the end... But he [support officer from another program] didn't encourage me and because they're supposed to give you paperwork and say, 'Oh, this job's here, this job's here, go apply for them.' They just make you go and look in the papers and stuff like that for yourself. Go and then just send you off, see you next fortnight. So it's like, yeah, he didn't really encourage me...'*

### (3) Improved skills, confidence, resilience and experience for participants.

**Achieved.** The impact of JMO on participants is evident in their reported improvements in skills, confidence, resilience, and overall life experience. Most participants said that they felt respected by program staff and that JMO gave them hope and self-confidence. They highlighted the significance of having a trusted person available through JMO; someone they could always reach out to for support. This support was described as a source of strength that bolstered their determination to face life's challenges. One participant expressed their gratitude:

*'It gives us hope that not all is lost. And confidence to believe in ourselves and that someone believes in us – and that we matter. Thank you. We are ever grateful.'*

Participants also articulated their aspirations for the future, emphasising a desire for continued personal growth and independence. When asked about their future goals, one participant said they hope to:

*'Just keep going in the path that I'm going, for sure. A lot more goal orientated, just a lot more independence for myself and being able to co-function in that independence. Of not feeling lonely. Or having programs in place so that I have more things to look forward to, and definitely better health.'*

One participant completed the mid-program assessment, and the results indicated a reduction in personal distress and increase in perspective taking and empathetic concern for that participant. Unfortunately, mid-program assessments were not completed for other participants due to various reasons (see page 34).

#### (4) Increased participation in training and education that leads to employment.

**Partially achieved.** Engaging participants in formal training and education was challenging at times due to the issues they were facing in their lives. One participant entered into employment at her mother's business while another participant was temporarily engaged in part time work. Six JMO participants were also connected into the services offered by MAX Employment, a Registered Training Organisation that provides vocational, educational, and certified training services to individuals across the country.<sup>97</sup>

A learning from the pilot JMO is that steady involvement in education is a gradual process; time is needed to grow habits and build areas of focus in one's life. Although JMO succeeded in connecting participants with training and education pathways, some participants ultimately needed more time to build foundational skills:

*'When you [JMO therapist] tried to help me get the course at the TAFE, but I think because my ability for not... like slow learning, and spelling and stuff wouldn't help... but you tried to help me, and stuff like that... IQ, I reckon that's how they judged it, by my IQ wasn't high enough to their standards.'*

#### (5) Improved communication skills including language, literacy and interpersonal skills.

**Partially achieved.** Generally, participants reported improvements in their communication skills and were proud of their progress. One JMO participant shared a vignette from their educational journey:

*'I've been doing education courses with Prison-Based-Literacy-Worker from the [prison-based] education, doing Literacy and Learning program, and she's been helping me how to do full stops and breaking the words up. So how I felt it was I'd put one 's' in it or now I know that it needs two 's' or something like that, or a full stop. And when I write things I'll write it. But now I know the first lot would be like I'm asking a question at first and then the second lot will be the breakdown... I'm doing real good at that.'*

Final program language and literacy assessments were not completed for the majority of participants due to the early conclusion of the pilot. Notwithstanding this, one therapist extended pro-bono assistance to facilitate assessment for three participants. The high-level assessment results are summarised in Table 5 and highlight significant improvements in the percentile ranks of P3 and P5 over the two to three year period. P2b, P3 and P5 were aged between 36 and 43 at the time of post-program assessment.

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<sup>97</sup> Information gathered from interview with JMO therapist.

**TABLE 5: PRE- AND POST- PROGRAM ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Participant ID	Assessment		Pre-JMO	Post-JMO
P2b	Receptive vocabulary	Percentile rank	8	12
		Performance	Below average	Below average
	Oral reading fluency	Percentile rank	21	14*
		Performance	Low average	Below average
P3	Receptive vocabulary	Percentile rank	47	75
		Performance	Average	Average
P5	Receptive vocabulary	Percentile rank	10	39
		Performance	Below Average	Average
	Word Identification	Percentile rank	19	70
		Performance	Low Average	Average
	Passage Comprehension	Percentile rank	8	63
		Performance	Below Average	Average

Source: Connect42 (2024). The timing of assessments varied by participant. Generally, ‘pre-JMO’ refers to 2021-22 while ‘post-JMO’ refers to 2023-24. \*P2b’s post-program results show a small ‘drop’ in oral reading fluency skill compared to pre-program result, however an overlap in the confidence intervals means the change is not statistically significant. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words that people know and is strongly correlated with academic outcomes and verbal IQ. Oral reading fluency refers to the speed, smoothness, and accuracy of reading aloud. Word identification is an essential skill for reading fluency and efficiency. Passage comprehension refers to the ability to understand and interpret what is read and/or heard and its integration with what is known by the reader or listener.

**(6) Improved connections with family and community.**

**Achieved.** When asked about how JMO helped them, all six participants who were available and willing to be interviewed for this evaluation shared stories of how they felt better equipped to connect with their family and loved ones. For example:

*‘[JMO] help with how to talk to my girlfriend, who’s struggling right now... I’ve always felt more than comfortable to ask you [JMO therapist] for help with anything. Even just if I was feeling down and depressed. Talking to you, you know what I mean? I’ve always felt comfortable. My son... with how to deal with my grandson, how to talk with him, how to communicate with [a toddler], because the age gap between my kids.’*

As one therapist concluded her formal involvement with JMO due to personal commitments, the participant’s wife said:

*'We are mothers together. When I think of you [JMO therapist], I know that you will be at home with your children. Like I am. I will think of you being a mother. And when we've had enough of the kids or want a break, we can see each other.'*

Similarly, program partners interviewed for this evaluation described how a tenet of JMO's approach was to meet participants needs *in* community, 'teaching them to enter places with a positive attitude and [positive] body language'.

While not necessarily a routine feature of the program, an opportunity arose in May 2023 for several Pilot JMO participants to attend, with their therapist, a conference workshop. One participant comment 'that's what heals me', referring to the invitation to share stories that allow connection and a deeper comprehension of their peers' lives.

#### **(7) Increased understanding of the needs and potential of people exiting the justice system.**

**Achieved.** JMO takes a holistic approach to addressing the needs and elevating the potential of people exiting the justice system. JMO also contributes to a broader understanding of employment as a longer-term outcome and the steps required to ensure individuals are ready for employment. As a result, the program has promoted the need for an integrated throughcare approach. This was affirmed during interviews with program partners from the Salvation Army, the Tasmanian Health Service, and Justice Tasmania.

It is less certain whether the Pilot JMO increased this understanding among other key stakeholders, such as governments and policymakers, given the relative brevity of its implementation. It is hoped that findings of this evaluation will prompt future conversations and collaborations that embed a thorough understanding of how individual, social, and systems issues interact to support or challenge people exiting the justice system.

#### **(8) Sustainability of the project to continue to provide opportunities for Tasmanians.**

**Achieved.** The findings set out in section 3.5 demonstrate the breadth of positive outcomes experienced by JMO participants. Of the six participants who were interviewed in early 2024, all of them said they had a positive experience with JMO.

The findings above also reflect the rigour of the pilot JMO's design to address a service gap in an area of demand, of relevance to community need, and aligned with government's strategic priorities. Moreover, the element of stakeholder feasibility, evident through the feedback shared by community partners, is also a key driver of JMO's sustainability to improve the throughcare experience of Tasmanians who exit prison.

#### **17. What was the magnitude of changes that occurred?**

JMO brought substantial positive changes in the lives of its clients. When asked about how much better they are doing in life because of JMO, one participant responded with:

*'Massive, oh my gosh. Humongous. Seriously humongous. Yeah, humongous... I know I could talk to you about anything, even if it was... say, budgeting. It was to do with if I was struggling with people, with my neighbors, with just so many areas. You just, yeah...'*

Another participant reflected on their progress:

*'By a lot. Yeah, by a lot. I didn't realise that... Because when I first started doing it, I can read, I can write, I can do all that, but there was other parts of my life where I do struggle. And*

*working with you, it kind of highlighted the bits that I needed to work on, the areas that I needed help with.'*

A participant was described by a parole officer who knew him for a few years now as *'changed so much, grown up, mature, and not running from problems'*.

18. How or why were these outcomes achieved?

JMO is unique in its provision of a tailored response to a rights-denied and opportunity-denied cohort. This created a safe and trusted environment between participants and their therapists to work together, whatever the need. Community health professionals, Steering Committee members, and therapists interviewed for this evaluation lauded the ways in which JMO was acutely attuned to the needs of participants, leading to higher engagement and completion rates compared to other throughcare interventions. In contrast to other programs delivered in a more centralised setting, a feature of JMO is that therapists remove the physical barriers to attendance by visiting participants at their homes and/or sharing meals at restaurants.

One JMO therapist reflected on the program and shared insights into her relationship with the participant:

*"On a number of occasions, [the participant] expressed deep gratitude for the connection we had grown, and he would describe me as "the aunty we never had". My initial response to this was that I had overshot my boundaries in being seen as an aunty. But on further reflection, I realised that, for [the participant] and [his wife], family is held in the highest regard, and that such a relationship enables mutual honour, respect, trust and 'ongoingness' of connection."*

Each participant was supported by the same therapist throughout the program. This continuity reduced stress associated with navigating multiple service providers. When asked about their experience with JMO, one participant said that:

*'It [JMO] can range for different needs. It can link you in with really good services, as well as still having the main key person, if that makes sense. So you're always working with one one-on-one person. You're not getting juggled between people, so you feel more relaxed. It's [JMO is] easy to work with. It's beneficial, because when you're honest and you feel more comfortable, it's going to be a more successful program.'*

The pilot JMO's effectiveness was also underscored by flexible and timely responses to participants' needs. Another participant shared how they felt that JMO differed from other support programs:

*'I'm not waiting six months down the track, and if that [suggested solution] doesn't work, then we look for alternative things six months later. Yeah.'*

19. Is there evidence for the counterfactual (what would have happened if the pilot JMO did not go ahead)?

Evidence of the counterfactual is limited, as the nature of the pilot program and its funding arrangement did not envisage a comparison group for the purposes of pre- and post-JMO analysis.

Some insight may be inferred from the statements of JMO participants, captured in interviews conducted for this evaluation and during the post-program assessments, who were cognisant of the ways in which JMO had steered them towards a path filled with hope for their future. For example:



- *'It's [JMO] made me realise I should have woke up a long time ago, and there's lots of things I missed out on and that [JMO] brought me to the attention now that I want to move on and break the old habits that I had, and continue our [with family] life together when I do get out.'*
- *'I've never had this much support before. I've never had my own person for support.'*
- *'I just want a chance to get out there – to be given a chance to show that I can do this.'*

20. Can the pilot JMO's return on investment be quantified?

The cost of JMO is estimated at \$4,846 per participant per year.<sup>98</sup> This represents a mere 4 per cent of the cost of annual incarceration (\$109,500) in Tasmania.<sup>99</sup> In other words, JMO would cover its costs if it were to keep a participant from returning to prison for at least two weeks.

Beyond the financial returns on investment, JMO would generate a range of community and individual benefits. These include the reduced cost of children in out-of-home care, reduced risk of children entering the youth justice system, improved lifetime earnings, and improved outcomes across various social determinants – some of which are quantifiable.<sup>100</sup> In time and with quality data, a social return on investment analysis could be used to more comprehensively quantify JMO's return on investment.

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<sup>98</sup> Connect42 (2023), 'JMO Key Elements', not published.

<sup>99</sup> TPS (2022), 'Budget estimates brief', [https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF](https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/669630/Budget-Estimates-Briefings-2022.PDF)

<sup>100</sup> Connect42 and SGS Economics and Planning (2023), 'Social Return on Investment Analysis of Just Time', [https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning\\_Just-in-Time-report.pdf](https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_Just-in-Time-report.pdf)

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

What JMO does is clear from this evaluation. What it needs to sustain its reach and impact requires careful attention to the balance of funding feasibility, phasing program growth, and the ability to continuously connect with industry, academia, and governments.

On the balance of the discussion in Chapter 3, this evaluation concludes that the pilot JMO was, on the balance of the evaluation factors, appropriate in its design, efficient in its delivery, and achieved positive impacts for participants and wider community members. The detailed discussion in section 3.5 highlights several areas where the design could have been strengthened, namely in terms of governance (which has since been enhanced during the course of the pilot JMO) and the checks in place to anticipate and mitigate risks.

True to the exploratory nature of a pilot program, however, there are aspects where further refinements could help to achieve program scalability and sustainability. Section 4.1 considers the key success factors of the pilot JMO to inform the recommendations (section 4.2).

### 4.1 Success factors for the pilot JMO

Many elements of the pilot JMO's approach that are described in the evaluation are also noted in the literature as best practice regarding the influence of support for individuals after they have been released from prison. These success factors include individualised support in the domains of housing, employment, and education,<sup>101</sup> access to mentors and peer support,<sup>102</sup> and opportunities for family and community engagement.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to these program features, two attributes of the pilot JMO stood out as exemplar:

- Its design and delivery embeds a novel understanding of how individual, practice-based, social, and systems issues<sup>104</sup> interact to shape employment outcomes. This was evident in the ongoing collaborations between JMO participants, trusted individuals, expert contributors, and community organisations partnered with Connect42 during the program. Contemporary evidence shows that only through careful attention to the intersection of these dimensions can the optimal conditions for employment be established in a way that is sustainable and mutually beneficial for ex-prisoners and their employers.

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<sup>101</sup> Willis, M. (2018). Supported housing for prisoners returning to the community: A review of the literature.

<sup>102</sup> Cooper, B., & Congreve, E. (2022). Rehabilitating Scotland: Exploring the impact of mentoring-based throughcare.

<sup>103</sup> Birch, P. (2022). Reconnecting from beyond the prison bars: A rapid evidence assessment on parent/children engagement post-release. *University of Technology Sydney*.

<sup>104</sup> Areas of focus as identified in a 2017 study of Australian employment agencies and their provision of services and supports for prisoners and ex-prisoners to engage in meaningful work. Baldry, Eileen, et al. "A future beyond the wall: Improving post-release employment outcomes for people leaving prison." *Final Report, Sydney* (2018).

- Its tailored approach distinguishes it from other employment programs and interventions for prisoners returning to community. Every interaction and detail of the JMO approach was designed to counter the effects of the rigid prison environment and to encourage every individual to flourish – at ease and without resort to antisocial behaviours – in the ‘real world’.

JMO considers not merely the opportunity embodied through prison release as a point in time, but the potential within individuals who, with dedicated support to improve language and literacy, build capacity to overcome histories of disadvantage.

It was clear from interviews with the pilot JMO participant that the program had changed aspects of their lives beyond the immediate TCF funding objectives: empowering self-belief, an openness to trying new things, resilience, trust in others, and optimism for the future ahead. Several expressions of the client voice are shared below:

- ‘Yeah, it's [relationship between JMO therapist and client] blossomed, definitely. Blossomed, definitely. Yeah, I love it. I was the cocoon and I see myself as a butterfly now. Yeah, definitely.’ – *in response to a prompt on how the JMO participant's relationship with their therapist has changed them.*
- ‘Well, I'd like to get back with my family and start a fresh life with them because it'll be about six months, seven months time I get back into there [home], and I'd like to try and get a full-time job somewhere, be good so I can support my family and live a happy peace of life.’ – *in response to ‘What would you like to achieve in one year's time?’.*
- ‘I remember I'd get the flowers and I was just like, "Oh, that's so beautiful." I tend to push people away. I always do it. I still do it now. I'll probably do it for the rest of my life, but then, I get to the point where I push them away too much and they don't come back. But you doing that, it also showed me that maybe my dark periods can be less dark if I do let people in. And me getting the flowers or a little card on the doorstep, it showed that you were still there, that I hadn't pushed you away to the point that you were giving up on me or anything like that. It was just nice to know that you were thinking of me.’ – *in response to a prompt to reflect on being seen and having their feelings and emotions matched by the JMO therapist in times of need, in non-intrusive ways.*
- ‘The best thing on the program, is we've got so many opportunities that other people would not have gotten, like even just when we [two] went out for lunch. And the kind of things, I guess, it's the connection. A lot of people that are in prison probably lack connection with people, and so having that connection, it's really awesome.’ – *in response to an invitation to attend a conference with their JMO therapist.*
- ‘And being able to have someone to go to and for them to not judge me, for them to listen, for them to literally hold my hand when I needed it, I've never really had that a lot in my life with mom and all that. So to have that, it made me realize that I do deserve it and that there is people out there that will... If I ask for help, if I ask the right people, they're not going to turn me down. Mom would just be, "Just get over it. You'll be right. Pick yourself up, off you go." It [JMO] was nurturing. Whenever I asked for help, the help that I received was nurturing.’ – *in response to ‘Have you ever asked your JMO worker for help?’*

## 4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations target refinements to program design as well as the promotion of an enabling policy and institutional environment to maximise JMO's potential impact in the Tasmanian context.

### **Recommendation 1: Advocate for more nuanced human services outcome indicators**

The experience of delivering the pilot JMO reveals the challenges of human services delivery within mainstream parameters of funding support. While specific and measurable outcomes are important, their formulation requires nuance to recognise progress, fluctuations, and variation along individual journeys. To achieve this, the organisation delivering JMO in the future could better engage with the employment environment to address setbacks and other challenges faced by individuals, such as difficulties in setting up ID for government services, mental health challenges, and difficulties in relating to family members.

The logic model illustrated in section 3.2 offers a tool for communicating the temporal and relational dependencies between outcomes. The logic model should inform the design of program objectives in a way that aligns with the available resources and timing of a proposed program. Too often, a suite of program objectives is agreed with little or no upfront discussion of how the conditions for success interact over time.

### **Recommendation 2: Enhance the referral pathway for JMO participants**

Several considerations were relevant during the referral and enrolment of potential participants in the pilot JMO. Broadly, these related to their socio-demographic attributes (to inform an understanding of their post-prison environment and ability to maintain JMO contact and benefit from the program), intrapersonal traits (to inform their willingness to achieve positive change), and other factors of a logistical nature (e.g. release dates).

Should the pilot JMO be rolled out at a larger scale in the future, this evaluation recommends developing more detailed guidance on the referral pathway from Just Time. Although the above considerations were shared with JMO candidates, some participants lacked experience in receiving therapeutic services, due to language disorders and challenges with attention. Consequently, different expectations emerged. One therapist noted:

*'I believe that [the participant]'s initial picture of my role was different from my own. I don't think he envisaged something like a weekly catch-up but rather someone to call upon as a specific need arose.'*

As the frequency and intensity of JMO's delivery is one of its core features, potential participants would benefit from support to understand the operational aspects. To aid in their understanding, this could be framed in terms of similarities and differences to Just Time delivery, or their routines when living in prison. Material to aid participants' comprehension of the strategic aspects of JMO would also benefit their engagement from the outset. This could be informed with input from the peer advisor and current JMO participants.

### **Recommendation 3: Explore mechanisms for maintaining and re-establishing contact with individuals showing early signs of disengagement**

The degree of engagement with the pilot JMO differed across participants (Table 1). While some discontinuations were due to participants moving interstate, other instances highlighted the complex factors in post-release prisoners' lives that may have interrupted their ability to participate fully in the pilot JMO. Compared to JMO, Just Time delivery was more 'straightforward' in the prison environment, and it was harder to lose touch with individuals.

Suitable mechanisms to maintain and re-establish contact with participants should be considered in future JMO delivery. Strategies should balance the omnipresence of support without imposing on individuals' needs to attend to other aspects of their emotional and physical wellbeing. Some options may therefore include:

- Discussing, as part of pre-release communications and the welcome to JMO, how individuals would prefer to be supported through hurdles, and whether this should be initiated by the individual or the JMO facilitator,
- Considering what technologies or personal channels (e.g through a trusted relative or friend) could be used as an alternative to direct phone contact.

### **Recommendation 4: Consider a bridging period between Just Time and JMO prior to prison release**

Just Time is the primary referral pathway into JMO, however there is no standard length of time that defines the graduation from one to the other. For individuals who did not complete Just Time recently, it may be beneficial to consider what pre-release contact could serve to bridge the introduction of a facilitator as a significant individual in their community life. The complexity of pilot JMO funding meant that pre-release funding was not possible. It is recommended that future throughcare initiatives have access to pre- and post-release funding.

This would enable therapists to establish trust with the individual as a common denominator that extends beyond the prison environment. It would also give participants the opportunity to understand the JMO program and to reflect on the differences between their life in prison and in community. This approach would also ensure that the placement of therapists is practical, on-target and safe for both parties. The pilot JMO did not allow full exploration of this due to limited resources, time, and the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and community recovery.

### **Recommendation 5: Develop a more detailed budget breakdown**

It is recommended that a detailed budget breakdown is prepared to support the roll-out of JMO. This should be informed by the pilot JMO's cost categories and learnings of where costs exceeded planned allocations or were lower than anticipated (section 3.5.2). In the future, more specific budget items would inform investment decisions and help to manage budget risks so that resources are allocated efficiently.

### **Recommendation 6: Enhance quality records to support longitudinal follow-up**

For many in the inaugural JMO cohort, the evidence suggests that the program catalysed skill-building, confidence, resilience, and more positive life experiences. These are the building blocks of longer-term

achievements, including employment. The importance of time as a factor that cannot be rushed nor substituted is expressed by a JMO facilitator:

*The building of skills, confidence, resilience, and experience in anyone, is a slow build. Its mechanisms are through hours and hours of engagement and interaction. No less so in this cohort. When all is going well in early childhood and family life, these hours and hours happen as a matter of course. It's important to understand this and be sensitive to it. I look at [participant name removed] and see the changes in him now, seven years after meeting him and teaching him to read, that were not yet possible in the first three years after meeting him. Three years has been the length of the JMO project. So, this points toward the length of time of a typical pilot, three years, as being a commencement of the planting of skills, insights, and opportunities and relationships that have ongoing potential to develop and grow in individuals. Longitudinal follow up would ideally be part of the next design.*

Access to quality evidence of longer-term impacts would support a longitudinal follow-up to report on JMO's return on investment. The results of such studies could therefore help to raise awareness of JMO's value and attract program investment.

This evaluation drew from rich evidence of short- and medium-term benefits experienced by JMO participants. We recommend that JMO delivery continue to maintain quality records and consider what other data generated through the program may be captured easily and accurately to bolster the evidence. This recommendation echoes a recommendation 10 in the University of Tasmania's Just Time Evaluation Report to adopt a 'continuous evaluation model' for Just Time.<sup>105</sup>

### **Recommendation 7: Develop a plan for JMO program expansion**

Finally, we recommend that the JMO continue in some form in the future. This may be some time away, given the current focus on the inaugural JMO cohort and monitoring their medium- to longer-term progress. However, commencing planning and discussion early would:

- Establish an appropriate lead time for policy and advocacy work. Efforts could focus on advocating for more nuanced indicator measures (see recommendation 1) as well as on leveraging the fledgling application of speech therapy to the criminal justice context. The findings of this evaluation should be shared in suitable forums and conferences to provide a platform to share and scale JMO's benefits.
- Provide the opportunity to monitor suitable funding opportunities aligned with resource need and program timing.
- Provide greater capacity to sustain strong partnerships from the outset and throughout the duration of the program.
- Encourage a holistic discussion of program features, such as duration, enrolment considerations, the frequency of facilitator and therapist hours.

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<sup>105</sup> University of Tasmania (2019), 'Just Time Evaluation Report', [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just\\_Time\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/607e0f0e5e584b36c2326abf/t/60e6bfb1f3006732a1f4766b/1625735097130/Just_Time_Evaluation_Report_2019.pdf)

### 4.3 Towards a successful model of social and economic reintegration for ex-prisoners

A successful model of social and economic reintegration must be deployed with participants, and not merely for them. JMO's mechanism is to 'translate' the unfamiliar world of community for ex-prisoners so that one day they will navigate everyday life with confidence, resilience, and the knowledge that they are supported to make good decisions.

In the context of the pilot JMO, we note the emphasis on employment to be a worthy goal for all, given the known associations between employment, reduced recidivism and/or time to reincarceration,<sup>106</sup> and life satisfaction. There is, however, important nuance to the assumption that employment is the goal of all individuals. Inevitably, the features of a 'good' or quality job differ between individuals and by population cohort. An individual's ability to cope with the demands of employment must also be considered as a determinant of their overall wellbeing. And not surprisingly, employment may be low among other priorities of former inmates who are readjusting to society and complex personal circumstances. Buccafusco et al.'s (2009) study<sup>107</sup> articulates a version of the former inmate's experience that is likely misunderstood or beyond the understanding of many others in society:

*'Prison has a...complicated effect on happiness. To a noteworthy degree, people adapt to being in prison. Their happiness drops at the beginning and they expect it to remain at that low ebb, but it ascends as they adjust to their new surroundings. On the other hand, virtually any period of incarceration, no matter how brief, has consequences that negatively affect prisoners' lives in ways that resist adaptation, even after they have been released...living in prison itself becomes less oppressive with time, but the effects of having been in prison tend to linger and to diminish happiness indefinitely.'*

JMO therefore shoulders the considerable task of mediating the worlds of prison and wider society for program participants. These are worlds that coexist in every jurisdiction but ordinarily exhibit very few interactions, or at least interactions which are experiential rather than procedural. The potential for JMO to elevate theories of change into awareness and practice should not be underestimated.

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<sup>106</sup> Tripodi, S. J., Kim, J. S., & Bender, K. (2010). Is employment associated with reduced recidivism? The complex relationship between employment and crime. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 54(5), 706-720.

<sup>107</sup> Buccafusco, C. J. (2009). Happiness and Punishment (with J. Bronsteen & J. Masur). *University of Chicago Law Review*, 76, 1037.

# Appendix A: Detailed evaluation matrix

TABLE 6: DETAILED EVALUATION MATRIX

Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Main data sources	Analysis method Descriptive = based on document and desktop review Discourse = based on interviews Data = based on surveys and quantitative analysis	Reliability of evidence 1 = Strong 2 = Fair 3 = Weak
<b>Appropriateness</b>	▪	▪	▪	▪	
1. What was the nature and extent of the problem or opportunity that the Pilot JMO was designed to address?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent rates of recidivism in Tasmania</li> <li>Literacy levels in the prison population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desktop review</li> </ul>	<p><i>Varied. For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parliamentary Inquiry into Tasmanian Adult Imprisonment and Youth Detention Matters</li> <li>ABS Census data</li> <li>Participant survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	1
2. What were the likely consequences of not addressing these problems or opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desktop review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic literature</li> <li>Other program evaluations, comparing pre-, post</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	2



Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Main data sources	Analysis method Descriptive = based on document and desktop review Discourse = based on interviews Data = based on surveys and quantitative analysis	Reliability of evidence 1 = Strong 2 = Fair 3 = Weak
3. Was the Pilot JMO adequately resourced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$ program funding</li> <li># therapists and facilitators</li> <li># language and literacy assessments conducted</li> <li># training sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCF Grant Deed</li> <li>12-month progress review reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1
4. What mechanisms did the Pilot JMO use to assess outcomes, and against which indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of language and literacy assessment frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot JMO program plan</li> <li>Assessment questionnaires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1
5. What lessons from previous programs and/or best practice were used to inform the Pilot JMO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% stakeholders who considered Pilot JMO design to be effective</li> <li>% who considered design to meet best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCF Application</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> </ul>	1
6. Did changes in the Pilot JMO's operating context occur during its lifetime and did these warrant a change in the program's design or scale?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># operationally significant changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12-month progress reports</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1
7. What is the continuing rationale for JMO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># program objectives achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO participation data</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1

Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Main data sources	Analysis method Descriptive = based on document and desktop review Discourse = based on interviews Data = based on surveys and quantitative analysis	Reliability of evidence 1 = Strong 2 = Fair 3 = Weak
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in recidivism rates</li> <li>Trends in literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desktop review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABS Census data</li> </ul>		
8. How is the Pilot JMO consistent with the Tasmanian Government's strategic and policy agenda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># program objectives highlighted in government strategies and policies during similar time period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Desktop review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCF Strategy</li> <li>Breaking the Cycle: A Strategic Plan for Tasmanian Corrections 2011-2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	1
<b>Efficiency</b>					
9. Was the Pilot JMO delivered within budget?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% budget variance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCF Grant Deed</li> <li>12 month progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1
10. Was the proposed delivery timeframe realistic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree of alignment between short, medium and long-term outcomes (Figure 3) and intended delivery timeline (Table 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary JMO delivery timeline (Table 2)</li> <li>JMO participation data</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1
11. What governance arrangements were in place to support decision-making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree of independent relationships between JMO Steering Committee, TCF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering Committee meeting minutes</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> </ul>	2

Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Main data sources	Analysis method Descriptive = based on document and desktop review Discourse = based on interviews Data = based on surveys and quantitative analysis	Reliability of evidence 1 = Strong 2 = Fair 3 = Weak
12. Were records kept to demonstrate consistent procedures and decision-making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range of records and link to program related decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case notes</li> <li>Language and literacy assessments</li> <li>Participant surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	1
13. How did the Pilot JMO anticipate and mitigate risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a risk register</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering Committee meeting minutes</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	2
14. How well did actual participants match the program's intended participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of referral assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO Participant Considerations factsheet</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	2
15. What reporting requirements were in place and were these met by Connect42?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% requirements complied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCF Grant Deed</li> <li>12 month progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive analysis</li> </ul>	1
<b>Effectiveness</b>					
16. Did the Pilot JMO achieve its project outcomes?	<p><i>Per TCF Grant Deed: 8 outcomes relating to employment, skills, education and training participation, connections with family and community, and others.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> <li>Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO participant survey responses (Circle of Security Program Goal Setting, work interests, We Care Survey, Composite Caregiving)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1-2 (varies by objective)

Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Main data sources	Analysis method Descriptive = based on document and desktop review Discourse = based on interviews Data = based on surveys and quantitative analysis	Reliability of evidence 1 = Strong 2 = Fair 3 = Weak
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>		
17. What was the magnitude of the changes that occurred?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># stakeholders who express tier of change (no change, moderate, significant)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interview</li> <li>Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO participant survey (SGS &amp; Connect42, 2023)</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	2 (small sample)
18. How or why were these outcomes achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Factors cited by JMO participants as primary driver of outcomes achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO participant survey (SGS &amp; Connect42, 2023)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	2 (small sample)
19. Is there evidence for the counterfactual (what would have happened if the Pilot JMO had not gone ahead)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># stakeholders who consider lower likelihood of outcomes achievement in the absence of JMO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey</li> <li>Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO participant survey (SGS &amp; Connect42, 2023)</li> <li>Interview notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourse analysis</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	2 (small sample)
20. Can the Pilot JMO's return on investment be quantified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% return on investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JMO Key Elements document</li> <li>JMO benefits parameter values (adapted from Just Time Social Return on Investment Analysis)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>	1

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)

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