

Palmerston Farm TC

Vocational training
program –
2008 - 2010



An Australian Government Initiative



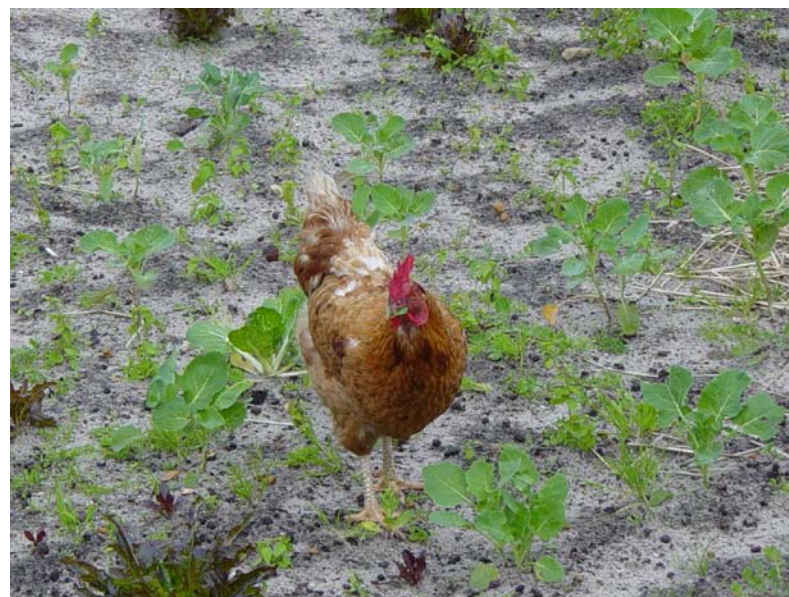
Purpose



- To run alongside the therapeutic program
- To increase the self-esteem of the participants
- To provide residents with better life prospects when they re-enter the general community

The horticulture program – run by local TAFE with the Farm TC

- Aimed to provide residents opportunity to understand horticultural principles
- Crop rotation, companion planting
- Soil preparation
- Growing seedlings



Safe use of Farm TC machinery and equipment



- Use of tractor, ride on mower
- Occupational Health and Safety training and evaluation
- Developed familiarity with competency based training and assessment

Program Evaluation

- Challenges with communication between two sites
- Turnover of residents before completing TAFE course
- Not feasible to meet full certification – led to record of skill sets



Further challenges

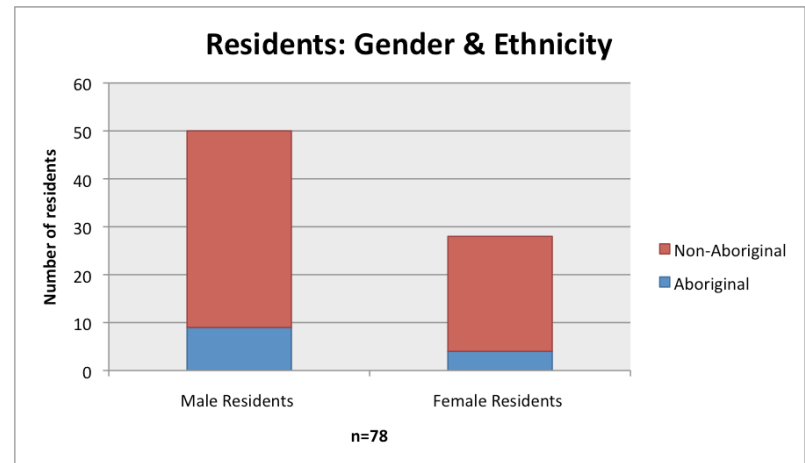
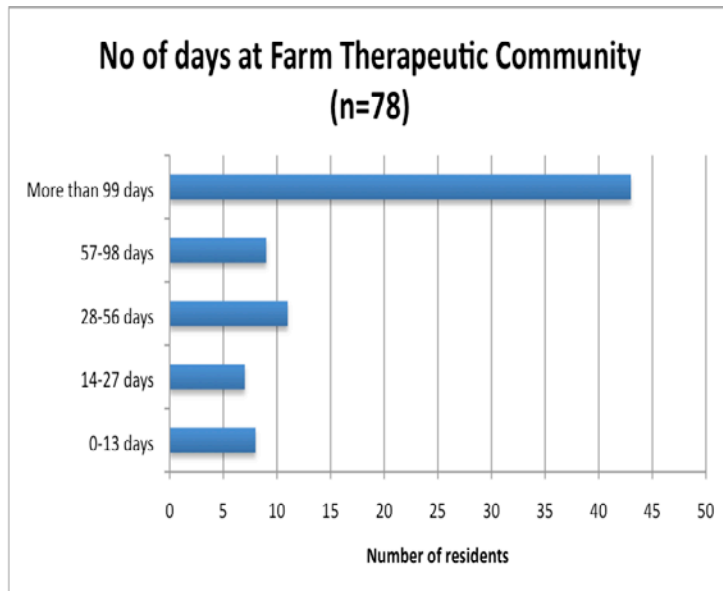
- Limited admin support with records of achievement
- Timing the training at TAFE with the Farm TC maintenance and garden program
- Staff shortages



Computer Studies

- Provided by local Job Search provider (RTO)
- Interface 1 & 2
- Basic Computer Skills
- Also skills assessment, career counselling, job readiness program
- Suited clients with high levels of literacy and numeracy

78 residents participated in the Farm Vocational program in 2010



How did the residents find the vocational program?

- Of those who stayed less than 14 weeks 83% were satisfied or very satisfied – 51% thought it would improve employment
- Of those who stayed longer than 14 weeks 100% were satisfied – 66% improve employment



What did they like?

- Being productive
- Eating their own organic vegies
- Learning about and caring for different types of plants
- Working with others



What didn't they like?

- Weeding
- Inability to use initiative, particularly during TAFE
- Routine “becomes a bit of a grind sometimes”



Improvements residents would like to see

- More choice
- More handyman skills
- More study
- Weed whackers



Recommendations from the independent evaluation

- **Continue with TAFE –**
- Who pays TAFE fees?
- Address communication/liaison problems
- Residents satisfied with TAFE but not able to complete Certificates
- **Train Farm TC staff to deliver horticulture and business studies**
- Staff already train/support residents
- Costs of releasing staff from their usual duties to conduct training & assessment?

Evaluation recommendation



- Form a partnership with local Job Search provider (RTO, wide range of training programs)
- Costs met through Newstart
- DEWR regulations on changing Job Search providers
- Flexibility to meet with individual needs and can continue if/when resident leaves TC

