



hamlet

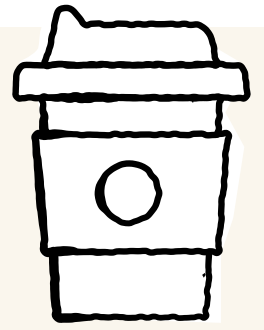
2021/22



## Tackling Tasmanian unemployment the tasty way!



Hamlet is a registered charity that delivers targeted training and work readiness skills to tackle the barriers, which prevent disadvantaged Tasmanians from participating in work and community life.



### Mission:

To empower people to live meaningful lives in their community

Vision:

An inclusive Tasmania where everyone's contribution is valued





# A note from our CEO

Hamlet is a registered charity that exists to empower Tasmanian jobseekers. We operate a number of social enterprises in order to help us achieve this goal – a café in Hobart, a catering business and a line of condiments.

So how did it all begin...

When I was in my early 20s my brother Jarrod told me about an idea he had to start a social enterprise café- back then I didn't really even know what a social enterprise was. I was keen to learn more about how a business could do more than just put money in pockets. Jarrod's idea was to start a café that would redirect it's profits to charity's they were partnering with.

It made sense to me: I loved the idea that you could allow people to create social change without changing their daily routine. People were simply buying a cup of coffee, but by buying that cup of coffee at that café they could help create lasting change in their community.

Kinfolk opened in Melbourne in 2010 and I worked there for almost 4 years, starting as a volunteer to help out on the kitchen and working my way up to head chef.

While I was working at Kinfolk we also developed a volunteer training program for people who were wanting to reconnect with their community. We worked with mums who were struggling to reengage with the workforce, recently released prisoners and community members with mixed abilities who were keen to try their hand at working in a café.

In 2014, I was offered a job as a chef in Hobart so I packed up my life and moved here.

I thought I might be here for 6 months. And then, I fell in love with Tasmania and I started to fall out of love with my job – I loved working as a chef but I guess after working at Kinfolk I was becoming a bit disillusioned with the idea that the food I was making served the sole purpose of being instagramable and that's where the work ended.

I felt like I needed to be doing more.

As I was building a life in Hobart, I started to learn more and more about the issue of unemployment in Tasmania and I kept hearing about the skills shortage that existed in the Tourism and Hospitality industry. It sort of lined up to me – there were high levels of unemployment combined with skills shortages in a key growth industry that had relatively low barriers to entry. I began to wonder if an enterprise similar to Kinfolk could work here focussing on assisting people to build the skills they needed so they could get their foot in the door of the industry I loved.

This is usually the part where I skip forward to all the amazing work we have achieved but I thought I would tell you a bit more about how we actually got Hamlet off the ground.

So, I had this idea and no real knowledge of how to make it happen, I also had a very small network in Hobart. I started talking about this idea to everyone I met and I learnt that word travels fast in the Hobart Hospitality scene.

I got pretty mixed responses. Some people just couldn't understand it, whilst others were excited by the concept. A friend introduced me to Millie, an equally passionate hospitality professional who had a "we got this" attitude, and the two of us started looking for a space.

We were young and pretty naïve and we didn't know what we didn't know.

So the thinking was open a café, sell things, do good. I guess the naivety around the financial side of running an organisation actually allowed us to open the doors.

With the knowledge I have now, I might not have been quite so quick to hand over all the money I had to secure a lease.

I'm not going to lie – the first year was hard work! We were open 7 days a week and I was probably a bit unrealistic about how much I could take on, back then I was working as one of the full-time chefs, but had actually rostered myself on 7 days a week and I was attempting to manage the organisation in my "spare-time". It definitely wasn't sustainable but there was something about watching people changing day by day that I found incredibly energising and I didn't want to miss out on anything.



When we first opened the doors to Hamlet we were offering training to people who were long term unemployed and those with low levels of English language.

After we had been operating for about 4 months we were approached by a lady who had a daughter with downs syndrome. She believed her daughter would benefit from our training program.

At the time I thought we could offer a valuable experience to Alex, upon reflection it would be a turning point for Hamlet. During Alex's first few shifts I noticed the way customers were interacting with her and I couldn't stop thinking about my cousin. I grew up with a cousin who has Down syndrome and I had witnessed her mother fight incredibly hard helping her become independent. It was while watching Alex in the café that I realised that whilst I had spent a lot of time with my cousin and her friends I had never actually seen someone with down syndrome working in a café.

As Alex progressed through the training program I started to notice 2 things

The first was that Alex was incredibly capable of doing the tasks at hand. She had a personality that was made for the hospitality industry – she remembered customers and was able to build a beautiful rapport with our regulars. She was a great team player – everyone looked forward to Alex coming through the door.

The second thing that I noticed was the way customers were interacting with her, I noticed how some customers would take an extra moment to engage with Alex in a meaningful way.

While others would attempt to help by assuming she was unable to do the task at hand- this might be subtle like trying to take coffees off her tray or very obvious like taking the notepad out of her hand and writing down their own order.

We reacted by giving Alex the dialogue to respond to these situations – she would look people in the eye and say 'I can do this job' and she can.

Alex works out at Mona now.

Over 65% of participants who are engaged in our training program identify that having a disability impacts their chances of securing a job.

It's important to acknowledge that these are often hidden – they can't be identified when you come through the door. Many of the participants we work with have psychosocial disabilities or they struggle with anxiety and their mental health.

The thing that I have come to realise over the years is that it is usually not the presence of a disability that impacts someone's chances of finding employment – it is the perception of it and what we as employers subconsciously believe this means.

It's our ability to see the value of inclusion.

I think it is very important for me to acknowledge that I can't speak on behalf of our participants as I have not had their experiences but I can talk to the experience of supporting them.

Hamlet has seen first-hand the benefits of being an inclusive workplace.

Our staff are more creative in their approach to problem solving – an example of this was when we recently started working with a participant who is vision impaired, she only has 6% vision in one eye and was keen to undertake our kitchen training program.

I asked Cam, our head chef, if he thought this could work and he said 'if she's keen I am'.

We made a few adjustments to the way we were working in the kitchen for her shifts and she's progressing beautifully.

Last week she made macarons from scratch.

Our staff are brought together by the collective experience of watching people succeed.

This could be seeing someone tick something off in their program or noticing that a participant seems to be standing a little straighter, you can tell they feel more confident in themselves.

Our staff all feel connected to the progress our participants are making and they celebrate this all the time, often our weekly meetings run over simply because staff are chatting about the progress participants are making and discussing how we can continue to improve the way we are supporting them.

When we started, I believed Hamlet could be a space for people to build some basic job ready skills and gain confidence to improve their chances of securing employment.

I have learnt that there is a lot more to it than that.

There are factors that compound someone's inability to secure work including the subconscious biases that employers have about what the 'right' employee looks and sounds like.

I can see now that Hamlet is about a lot more than training.

It's about creating a space for people to become confident and about being a space to help change community perceptions about what people might be able to achieve.

As Hamlet has grown, we have continued to look for ways that we can introduce the work we are doing to a wider audience. Following on from the COVID-19 Pandemic and the impacts this has had on staffing we decided we wanted to do something to change the way the industry was thinking about employing staff.

Earlier this year we launched the Mentor Series – a project aimed at connecting Industry leaders with our participants and our training program.

The idea was to ask chefs who had built reputations as industry leaders to come along and put on a Sunday lunch at Hamlet.

We could see that this would be a fantastic opportunity for our participants to continue to build skills in the industry but we also saw it as a real opportunity to expose our industry to working with a diverse group of jobseekers they may have previously overlooked. We wanted to create a situation where industry leaders might start to rethink some of the staffing issues they've faced and make an active choice to do things differently in the future.

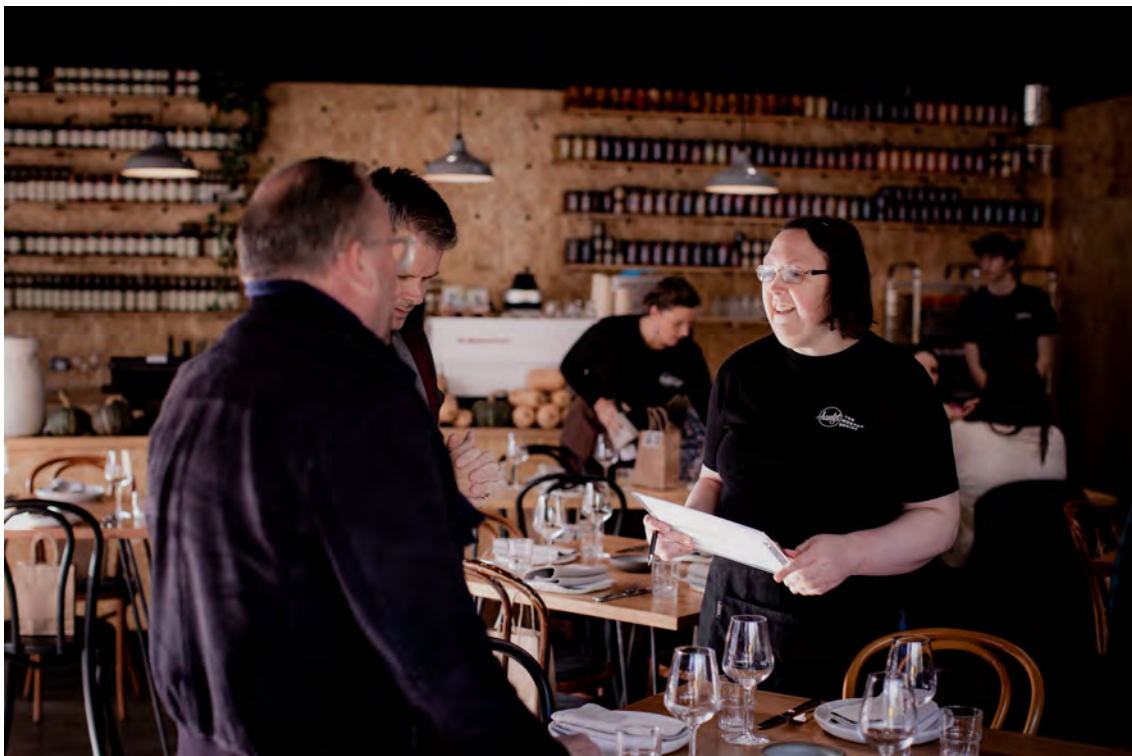
We never really realised how successful these events would be or how complex the conversations would get. During our event with Dave Verheul – executive chef of Embla in Melbourne - we spoke at length about mental health and the complexity of finding a work life balance – our participants came away from those chats feeling like they were not alone in their experiences. Dave said it 'had to be two of the most fulfilling days in his career'.

Tasmania has some of the highest rates of people living with a disability in the country and people with a disability are almost 3 times more likely to be unemployed. Recently you may have seen footage of Dylan Alcott speaking at the Jobs Summit – one of the things that struck me in his speech was the fact that the participation rate for people living with a disability has not changed in over 28 years. 28 years – that's almost (not quite) my whole life.

There's a lot of talk at the moment about unemployment being low but I think we need to recognise that these conversations do not represent everyone who lives in our community. Naivety can be a beautiful thing – it can allow you to do things that in hindsight you reflect on and know you probably wouldn't do again.

It can also allow things to continue on unchanged. We can be naïve to the experiences of people we live next door to or the person serving us in a café.

But once we know we know and I believe, we have a responsibility to do what we can to help change things.







# Our training program

We noticed a slight decrease in applications towards the end of 2021 as the state braced for the implications of opening our borders and we prepared for Covid infection numbers to rise. In January 2022 we put a hold on applications and our training program was paused whilst we rearranged the café and moved back to a takeaway only service to keep our staff, participants, and our community safe.

57 jobseekers engaged in our training program for the financial year and 80% of these participants completed all elements of their training programs in customer service or kitchen operations. We also had a 60% success rate of our graduates securing employment outcomes or continuing with further training.

We have seen an increase in the number of participants with disability accessing our services over the last 2 years. This financial year 62% of participants identified they have a disability. We have also seen dramatic increases to the number of participants who identify they are struggling with anxiety, roughly 68% of our participants have disclosed that anxiety is impacting their day-to-day life.

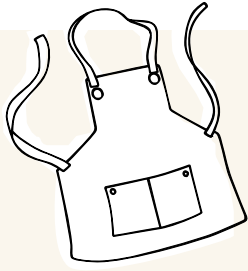
We provided over 3900 hours of training to participants and have restructured our programs to better support participants who are struggling to find transport options by altering our start and finish times to better support participants who need to access public transport.

*“ I wanted to volunteer and I wanted it to be a worthwhile experience, somewhere I could make a difference. I feel like I am doing that now. ”*

—Lesley



# Our outcomes in 2020-21



57

people started training at Hamlet

44

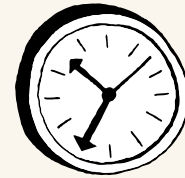
participants completed all aspects of our training program and graduated from Hamlet



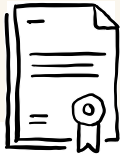
We provided over **1186** training shifts to people facing barriers to employment



that's more than **3900** hours of training



over **60%** of our graduates have gone on to secure paid employment



on average our participants show up to over **82%** of their rostered shifts



## HAMLET HEROES

Maddy



*“ I’ve been a bit scared to talk in English but I’m really excited to build my confidence and learn some new skills in the kitchen ”* —**Simran**

*“ I started in the front of house program and now I’ve just finished the kitchen program. My favourite thing has been the atmosphere and the comfortable learning environment. I’m really excited to start working in a kitchen now ”*

—**Maddy**





## ROWAN

Meet Rowan. Rowan completed our kitchen training program and is now working at Hamlet part-time and continuing to build skills in the hospitality industry. We know Rowan has a bright future ahead and we're so excited to have him as a member of the team.

"I heard about Hamlet while looking for employment in the hospitality industry. It seemed like a great opportunity to learn about the industry in a welcoming environment. At Hamlet I have gained new skills and knowledge as to how the kitchen runs as well as the skills, I need to find my way further into the industry"



## LUKE

Meet Luke. He has been doing an amazing job with our front of house/ customer service program and we are so excited to see how his hospitality journey continues.

"My sister told me about Hamlet and what type of support they offer. Since currently coming close to the end of my fine arts degree I wanted to get some experience and learn new skills. I decided to get involved with Hamlet to help build these skills and understand what it's like to work in a hospitality workplace. I feel really appreciative of Hamlet and the team, that have helped teach me to be part of a fun team environment and shown me hospitality skills. I feel that my confidence has improved, and I feel this is a great step and opportunity for me to secure a part-time job in the front of house when finishing uni."



## CHARLES

Charles began his training with Hamlet in December last year, learning on the job skills in the cafe and customer service program, gaining experience, knowledge and confidence along the way.

"I came to Hamlet to broaden my horizons and gain new skills. My sister told me about the Hamlet training program and recommended it to me, I am glad she did. I have gained confidence, new skills, learnt about customer service and made a couple of new friends. I was able to start a reading and writing program while at Hamlet to help me with my literacy and independence."

# Hamlet Café

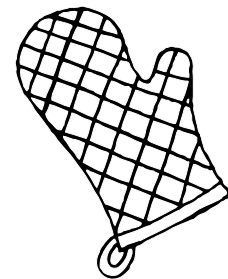
The café has undergone several changes in key areas such as staffing, menu and hours of operation. For several months, Cameron our Head Chef stepped into the role of Acting CEO as our CEO took maternity leave for the arrival of her baby girl Polly. Cameron did an amazing job and has since stepped into the role of General Manager.

We had a number of new staff join our team including a venue manager who has taken over a number of responsibilities that had been falling to the CEO. This will allow the CEO to fully immerse themselves in the role of CEO which was a strategic priority set out by the Board.

We also offered a kitchen attendant role to a graduate participant who has now started an apprenticeship with us.

We adjusted our operating hours to better serve our community and allow us to adjust staff schedules to allow for weekly staff meetings to discuss operations and improve our services to participants.

Our chefs worked incredibly hard building relationships with small scale local producers so that we can ensure that the majority of the produce we are using in the café is grown locally and we are supporting small Tasmanian businesses that are still feeling the impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns and closures. The team have also continued to build our condiments line- introducing a line of savoury chilli-based condiments that are now available in Launceston, Swansea and as far north as Sydney.



# Hamlet Catering Co.

Our Catering arm was still feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic this year as customers confidence remained low and there was a general uncertainty around booking in events or meetings.

For the year we achieved total sales for catering and functions of just over \$61,000.

We were in the second year of our Tasmanian Community Fund grant and whilst the sales for the year were not as high as hoped we were able to provide an additional 35 session to around 55 participants through our after-hours training programs.

All new participants are now engaging in 2 after-hours small group training session prior to beginning work in the café. This was initially offered to participants with disabilities who we had identified may struggle with the stress of starting their first shift in a busy café. Following from the success of this and the recognition that it alleviated stress for both participants and staff by allowing new participants to build skills in a calmer environment and ensured they felt comfortable in the space we decided to expand the offering for all participants, and we are seeing great results.

We have noticed that this allows all participants to develop a deeper connection with our trainers, gain a better understanding of the café and how it runs and allows participants to build friendships with one another prior to starting in the café.



# Hamlet Food Relief Program

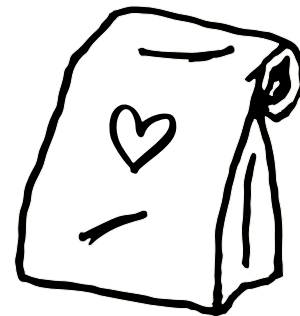
We have continued to work with Hobart City Mission and the Safe Space Project and have been supplying them with meals for the Safe Night Space and the City Mission emergency food relief programs.

Last Financial year we provided 15,300 meals to Hobart City Mission bringing overall total to 37,681 meals.

We organised for all our staff to visit the Safe Space so we can get a better understanding of how the program works and everyone found it very eye opening. It allowed everyone to have a better insight into how important these meals are and the way the space works for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

We have continued to work with the team at Safe Space to ensure that the meals we are providing are suitable for their clients and are now looking for ways that we might be able to offer a warm meal that can be served up by staff so that clients do not need to eat from a plastic container.

This project has continued to allow us to provide a different opportunity for training our participants as we have introduced a relevant home cooking component to our training for those participants who are interested in become more independent and develop their skills to prepare meals at home.





# The Mentor Series

Cameron and Peter, our chefs developed the idea for the Mentor series towards the end of 2021 with a number of strategic goals in mind.

The concept was to approach chefs and people working in the hospitality industry who had built a reputation as industry leaders to come to Hobart and put on a Sunday lunch at Hamlet.

This would allow us to offer additional training opportunities to our participants and allow them to further develop their skills and confidence working with industry professionals. It would also allow us to continue exposing the industry to a wide range of jobseekers they may have previously overlooked. It would also allow industry leaders to work with our participants who have disability who are incredibly underrepresented in the Tourism and Hospitality industry and gain a better understanding of how this could work in their venues.

Our first two mentor series were huge successes. The first mentor we hosted was Dave Verhuel, executive chef of Embla restaurant in Melbourne and the second was Guy Grossi executive chef of Grossi Florentino in Melbourne. Both events sold out, the second in less than an hour.

Participants worked with the mentors on the Saturday preparing for Sunday and also enjoyed a meal where they were able to ask questions about working in the industry and gain a better understanding of hospitality as a career.

We are excited to continue expanding this project and have now fostered a relationship with Crowne Plaza and the Marriot group who are sponsoring accommodation for our mentors.







Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the top shelf, including labels like 'Peach', 'Yellow Peach', and 'Peach + Lemon + Thyme'.

Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the second shelf, including labels like 'Apricot + Rosemary' and 'Apricot + Cardamom'.

Stacked cardboard boxes on the third shelf, likely containing gift sets or bulk orders of the products.

A wooden box containing several jars of products, displayed on the third shelf.

Small, tied fabric bags hanging from the side of the shelving unit, possibly containing dried herbs or spices.

Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the fourth shelf, including labels like 'Peach + Cardamom' and 'Peach + Vanilla'.

Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the fifth shelf, including labels like 'Peach + Orange' and 'Peach + Vanilla'.

Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the bottom shelf, including labels like 'Peach + Vanilla' and 'Peach + Cinnamon'.

Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the top shelf of the adjacent unit, including labels like 'Blackberry Jam'.

A black bag with a logo and the text 'TATTOOED MIN' on the second shelf of the adjacent unit.

A sign with the text 'hamper hamper hamper' on the third shelf of the adjacent unit.

Assorted jars of jams and preserves on the fourth shelf of the adjacent unit.

Stacked cardboard boxes on the bottom shelf of the adjacent unit.



— PHOTOS BY ROSIE HASTIE —

We pay respect to the traditional and original owners of the land on which Hamlet stands, the muwinina people, we pay respect to those that have passed before us and acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal people who are the custodians of this land.



To support Hamlet make a donation: [Hamlet.org.au/donate](https://Hamlet.org.au/donate) 40 Mollie St