



**Social Audit**

**Mission Australia – Employment Services**

**Social Accounts**

**2004 - 2005**

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# 1. Introduction

**For every company that has publicly committed to this path (sustainable development<sup>1</sup>), a dozen more are watching and studying. Their success, and every move they make toward sustainability, will greatly influence and determine the future of this planet. These lofty words are contrasted by the yeoman-like quality of the work that needs to be done...Work (that) consists of thousands of distinct tasks, daily changes in requisitions, constant alterations of specifications, the complete redesigning of products, and tens of thousands of hours learning, questioning and collaborating’.**

Paul Hawken, environmentalist and author. From The Cooperative Bank’s ‘Partnership Report...’

Mission Australia is committed to meaningfully accounting for its social and environmental performance and to improving that performance. This commitment has led to participation in a pilot program involving four of Mission Australia’s sites<sup>2</sup>. Those participating in the pilot program are; Café One on Wickham; Project Circuit Breaker, Kedron; Mission Australia Employment Services, Gympie and the Basic IT Enabling Skills program (BITES), Cooparoo. A variety of services are therefore represented, all of which are very busy with day-to-day operations and which vary in the resources available to them.

Employees at these sites would heartily agree with Paul Hawken’s reference to the quantity of work that is required. However sites now have a clear picture of their performance and the views of their stakeholders in relation to that performance. Examining a set of social accounts is very much like reading a personal biography; we invite you to explore the many facets of these services for yourselves.

## **1.1 Social and Environmental Accounting**

Social and environmental accounting is a framework that allows an organisation to build on existing documentation and reporting and develop a process whereby it can account for its social environmental performance, report on that performance, and draw up an action plan to improve on that performance. It is also a process through which an organisation can understand its impact on the community and be accountable to its key stakeholders. Organisations produce a set of social and environmental accounts that are audited by an independent Social Audit Panel led by a qualified Social Auditor. This gives the accounts and the organisation’s claims credibility.

A number of different social and environmental accounting models are available. The model chosen for this pilot program is known as The Scottish Model. This model is particularly suited to use in the community sector and is used extensively in the United Kingdom, as well as in New Zealand. More recently a number of other Australian community organisations have chosen to adopt this model – these include Streetwize Communications, Maleny Credit Union and Bundaberg Skills Centre. In Australia accounting for an organisation’s social performance can be aptly described as a newly emerging phenomenon. Community organisations in India, the Phillipines,

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable development – Article 9 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights states that all people ‘should promote sustainable development all over the world to assure dignity, freedom, security and justice for all people’. ‘Sustainable development entails the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives...’.from Oxford Reference Online – A Dictionary of Geography

<sup>2</sup> A site refers to a service offered by Mission Australia

South Africa, Canada and the US are amongst many others now experimenting with similar forms of social and environmental accounting.

The Scottish Model was tested in the early 1990's by John Pearce of Community Enterprise Consultancy and Research. This model evolved from an earlier model developed by the London based New Economics Foundation<sup>3</sup>. It is compatible with Account Ability's AA1000 standard<sup>4</sup> for social accounting and reporting. The Model consists of five stages; Introducing Social Accounting, The Foundations, the nuts and bolts – Social Book-Keeping, Preparing and Using the Social Accounts and The Social Audit. This can be broken down into three steps; Social and Environmental Planning, Social and Environmental Accounting and Social and Environmental Reporting and Audit. Of the four sites preparing social and environmental accounts three completed all steps required in the accounting process while one completed the first step of planning.

Initial three-day training occurred in October, 2004 and was followed by three one-day mentoring sessions spread over the ensuing months. A manager and administrator from each site attended these sessions and they were provided with a manual to guide the process. In addition, on-going mentoring was available as required. The consultant social accountant and auditor, Marcelle Holdaway, worked closely with Brian Coffey, Mission Australia's State Administration Manager, Queensland and Northern Territory.

### **Terminology**

'Social audit' is commonly used as a generic term for the *whole* social and environmental accounting process. Social auditing can therefore represent integral dimensions required for the triple bottom line approach to accounting auditing and reporting. The other dimension not included in social accounts, per se, is that of the financial bottom line.

## **1.2 The Pilot Program**

Initial three-day training occurred in October, 2004 and was followed by three one-day mentoring sessions spread over the ensuing months. A team of two from each of the four sites, manager and administrator, attended these sessions and they were provided with a manual to guide them through the process. In addition, on-going mentoring was available as required. The consultant social accountant and auditor, Marcelle Holdaway, worked closely with Brian Coffey, Mission Australia's State Administration Manager, Queensland and Northern Territory.

Of the four sites preparing social and environmental accounts three completed all steps required in the accounting process while one completed the first step of planning.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)

<sup>4</sup> [www.accountability.org.uk](http://www.accountability.org.uk)

## 2. History and Background

### 2.1 The Organisation

For more than 140 years, Mission Australia's vision has been helping the nation's most disadvantaged individuals and communities out of crisis and into security. Sydney City Mission was established in 1862 as a response to the poverty that existed in Sydney at that time. In 1859 Brisbane City Mission had been independently established and Adelaide City Mission followed in 1867.

In 1989 the 'missions' decided to work out ways in which they could work together and a separate organisation, called Mission Australia was created. In 2000 the 'mission family' officially came together as a single, unified organisation to provide an integrated approach to meet Australia's changing social needs.

Mission Australia is a Christian community organisation dedicated to helping people to help themselves through the provision of a variety of services. It is independent of any church structure and ethics is at the heart of our Christian heritage.

Mission Australia is one of the nation's leading not-for-profit community service organisations. In the year ending June 2004 we helped over 220,000 Australians from a network of 280 community locations. Our programs inspire self-confidence and hope by helping people to tap their own resources, overcome disadvantage and pursue more positive, independent lives.

Now, at a time when many Australians and their communities are facing a new set of social problems, Mission Australia is continually developing contemporary services to help people address these emerging issues.

As a non-denominational Christian organisation we work throughout metropolitan, rural and regional Australia. Our individual, family and community services include:

- personal and social skills development
- alternative education and training
- emergency refuge and supported accommodation
- job readiness, search and transition assistance, and
- community networking and capacity building

Our services are centred on;

- Family support initiatives for families and children in need
- Youth initiatives for disadvantaged young people
- Housing support initiatives for the long-term unemployed, and
- Community building initiatives that help strengthen and empower entire communities.
- Employment initiatives for the long term unemployed and disadvantaged

## **2.2 Mission Australia Employment Services Gympie**

The Gympie office operates in a regional labour market, outside of the greater Brisbane metropolitan labour market in the state of Queensland and is located in the south east portion of the state.

The business delivers employment services in the Gympie Employment Service Area (ESA), under the Commonwealth Government Job Network Member (JNM), Employment Services Contract three (ESC3). The ESA is a vast area and performance is measured across the two regional centres of Gympie and Kingaroy with eight competing JNM businesses. Performance under contract is reviewed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), and is measured at six monthly intervals during the three year term of the contract. Each of the JNM businesses is awarded a Star Rating at each of the six month milestones as an indication of comparative performance in the delivery of contracted services. The Star Rating is awarded out of a possible five stars, five stars representing the highest performance in the ESA while one star or less represents the poorest performance.

The team in Gympie have managed to consistently deliver high quality services under the current contract since 1 July 2003; this is reflected in the Star Ratings awarded to the site. The Gympie office is currently rated at a four and a half Star Rating, and has maintained the number one JNM status across a majority of Key Performance Indicators since the commencement of the contract. Performance by all eight JNM members varies greatly across the ESA, ranging from one and a half stars through to four and a half Stars.

The range of site activities can be summarised as below:

- Jobseeker placement into employment
- Job searching
- Job search training
- Participatory Jobseeker assessment and planning
- Jobseeker financial assistance
- Jobseeker advocacy
- Jobseeker marketing
- Employer marketing
- Supported job placement for both jobseekers and employers
- Work for the Dole projects
- Literacy and Numeracy

### 3. Vision, Mission, Values, Objectives and Activities

The Vision, Mission and Values are those of the wider Mission Australia organisation of which Mission Australia Employment Services Gympie is a part. The Objectives and Activities are specifically those of Mission Australia Employment Services Gympie – but are derived, or at least linked to the various Mission Australia corporate values.

#### 3.1 Mission Australia Vision

Mission Australia's vision is to spread the love of God and meet human need. In meeting human need, we not only provide short-term relief to people in crisis situations, but strive to empower people through counselling, training and rehabilitation to become self – sufficient and economically independent. We want to help Australians achieve real, lasting change. Strong people contribute to a solid community to create a strong society.

#### 3.2 Mission Australia Mission Statement

As a non-denominational Christian community service organisation motivated by the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are committed to identifying and responding to the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of people.

We provide an environment which encourages individuals to maximise their potential through the development and delivery of a range of services relevant to a changing society.

Our services are accessible to all and are delivered by a team of caring staff and volunteers in an innovative and professional manner.

Our relationships with the wider community are cooperative, accountable and demonstrate our desire to work in partnership towards a fair and just society.

#### 3.3 Mission Australia Values

##### **Leadership**

We acknowledge the example of Jesus Christ, and find in him the inspiration for our work. His compassion, commitment to justice, his strength, humility, courage and integrity, and his gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation inspire and lead us in the transforming power of god's love.

##### **Relationships**

Mission Australia challenges the barriers to just, caring and compassionate relationships and seeks to foster a spirit of community and participation.

##### **Advocacy**

In a society where division and injustice exists, Mission Australia will be a strong advocate for the disadvantaged people and communities with whom we work, and will strive for a just and fair society

## **Service**

In the teaching and work of Jesus, especially in his compassion for the poor and outcast, we recognise the example of service, which we seek to follow. Through our work we seek to demonstrate the love of God in a practical way and assist people transform their lives.

## **Dignity**

Mission Australia respects the dignity of each individual regardless of personal circumstances. As we plan and deliver the services of Mission Australia, we will always seek to respect the dignity of the individual with whom we work and serve.

## **Empowerment**

Mission Australia believes that in order to provide optimum service to those we serve we need at all times to seek ways of encouraging self – determination and independence.

## **Accountability**

In the various works we undertake we recognise a strong sense of responsibility and accountability to the people and communities we serve. Our donors, our supporters, government, each other and ultimately to God for what we do, how we do it and the results we achieve.

## **Quality**

As we seek to fulfil our mission, we are committed to providing high quality services that are based on a philosophy of continuous improvement.

### **3.4 Mission Australia Employment Services Gympie Objectives**

#### **1. To help the unemployed and other disadvantaged people become active in the local economy.**

**Reflecting the values of “DIGNITY, EMPOWERMENT, RELATIONSHIPS, ADVOCACY”**

- By placing job seekers into suitable employment
- By running daily Supported Job Search sessions (SJS) (Resumes, interview techniques, counselling, canvassing etc.)
- By linking people with suitable training other than contractual obligation
- Develop and undertake Work for The Dole projects for targeted community groups

#### **2. To be a good employer.**

**Reflecting the values of “DIGNITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP, RELATIONSHIPS”**

- Providing opportunities for relevant learning and professional development
- Operate an effective appraisal system
- Empowering staff to develop relevant new ideas
- Maintaining a healthy and safe work environment
- Encourage work force diversity – Definition of work place diversity:  
*Diversity includes, but is not limited to gender, language, cultural background, different tertiary educational qualifications of the*

*service team, their socio-economic background, personality and personal profiles*

- Encourage staff to join community and sporting organisations by office paying for membership

### **3. To provide a family friendly work place.**

**Reflecting the values of “RELATIONSHIP, QUALITY, ADVOCACY, EMPOWERMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY”**

- Introducing flexible work hours
- Providing regular social activities for the staff and their families
- Promotion and awareness of the Employee Assistance Program ( EAP)

### **4. To provide excellence in service delivery to key stakeholders.**

**Reflecting the values of “QUALITY, DIGNITY, SERVICE, RELATIONSHIPS, EMPOWERMENT”**

- Respond to identified job seeker needs
- Ensuring staff are up to date with all new processes
- Meeting employer needs
- Improving communications with Centre Link

### **5. To use environmentally sustainable practices**

**Reflecting the values of “QUALITY, ACCOUNTABILITY”**

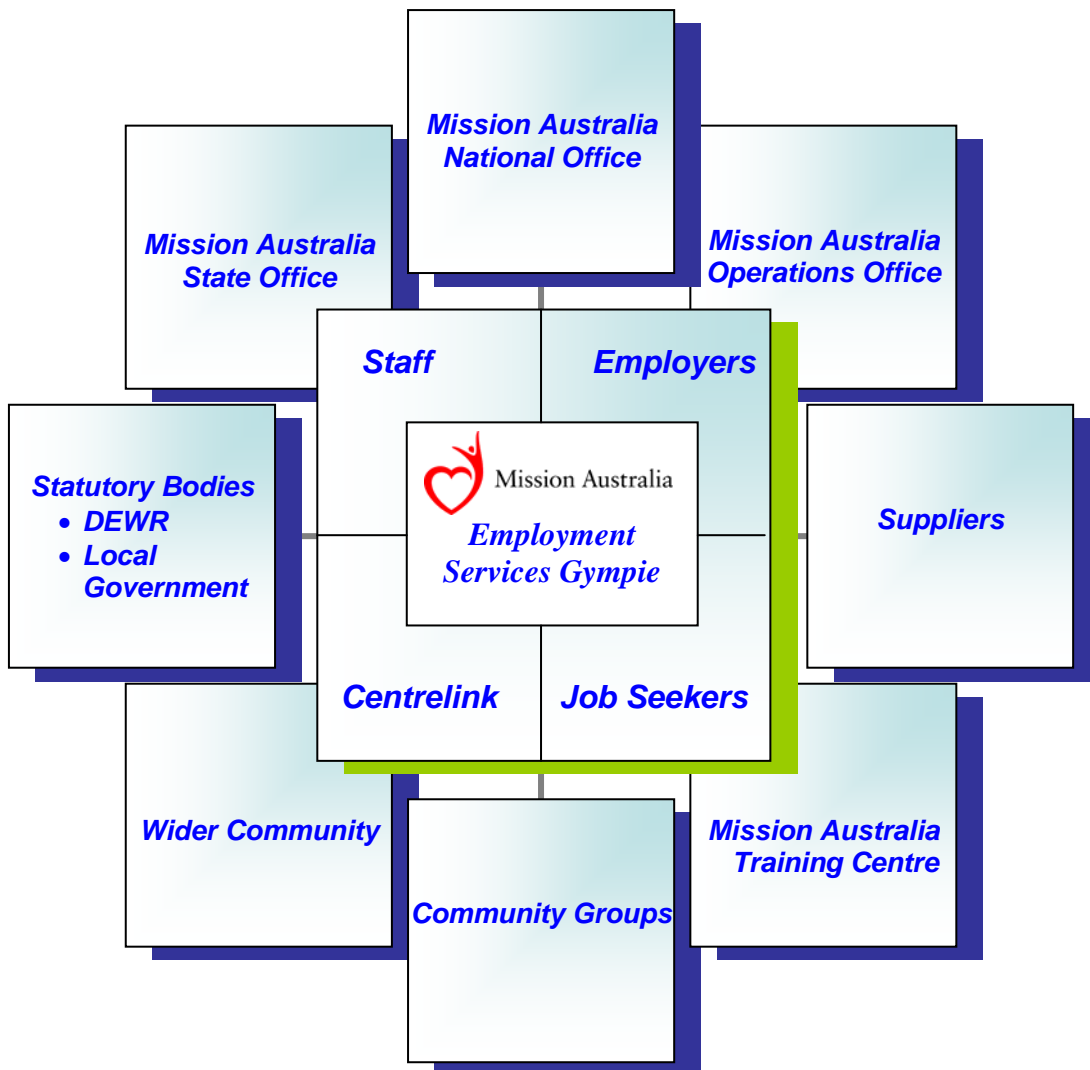
- Reducing consumption of stationary, electricity and fuel
- Recycling commodities
- Develop & undertake Work for The Dole projects targeted at the environment

## 4. Stakeholders

### 4.1 The Stakeholder Map

The stakeholder map was developed by Terri Melville in response to project requirements, which best illustrates the range of partners and their relevant influence on the project. There is just one key variable at work in the diagram, namely the proximity of the stakeholder box to the Mission Australia logo in the centre of the page.

The four stakeholders located closest to the centre represent our key stakeholders for the purpose of these the pilot social accounts, as they are also closest to our organisation and are more likely to be more aware of its internal workings and overall social performance. It is worth noting that this map does not necessarily reflect the day to day importance of the particular group of partners during the project period. For example, community groups such as Cooloola Aboriginal Services remains a significant partner in our business who allow us to work collaboratively in engaging the highly disadvantaged indigenous community to fulfil our mission and thus make a difference in their lives through sustainable employment.



In consultation with the project co-ordinator and Social Accounting Consultant during the planning process, Gympie project team members identified an exhaustive list of stakeholders directly and indirectly associated with the business. For the purpose of the pilot project and the concept of exploring 'un chartered waters' it was decided to focus on just four key stakeholders identified as having a major impact on our day to day operations. That is, those most likely to engage and benefit from the way we interact on a day to day basis. Ideally, engaging all stakeholders and surveying them for their responses was preferable however, the allocation of limited resources to the project did not allow for this ideal to be achieved.

## 5. Scope of the Social Audit

### 5.1 Social book-keeping

#### Reporting Period

The Social Audit pilot commenced October 2004 with an audit conducted on the first set of accounts 9<sup>th</sup> August 2005

#### Methodology

The methodology for this Social Audit was conducted in line with the social book-keeping system framework as outlined in the Social Accounting and Audit manual and was heavily influenced by the fact that this was a pilot project with limited resources., alternate or additional methods of sourcing stakeholder feedback may have been used however, while careful consideration was given to the advantages of alternatives, project team members preferred to employ a 'questionnaire' strategy as the single method of obtaining feedback on this occasion.

#### Questionnaire Design

Survey questionnaires were developed through directly linking questions with objectives and activities in the Social Accounting Plan. These objectives and activities were in turn linked to MA values. This helped ensure that the process was values driven.

A template for the questionnaires was provided by external consultant, Trevor Harrison, principal of Harrison Marketing. Mr Harrison also analysed the surveys. Some of the statements in the questionnaires were reversed so that responses were linked to the other side of the agree/disagree scale, thus limiting the potential for 'automatic' responses.

#### New and Modified Record Keeping

A number of documents have been either modified or developed as a result of undertaking the pilot project. Key areas of development include new tracking spreadsheets and modified corporate reporting documents. These include but not limited to the following:

New tracking documents;

- Paper consumption
- Printer usage
- Cartridge usage
- Paper recycling bin usage
- User pay message
- Month to date/year to date summary of employment outcomes

Modified documents;

- Application for leave
- Staff training register

It should be noted, that while it was desirable to modify a selection of corporate documents to assist in collecting social accounting evidence, most documents are write protected and require corporate approval for modification.

### 5.2 Stakeholder consultations

The project team laboured long and hard in arriving at the decision to employ a single 'questionnaire' strategy in soliciting and collecting stakeholder feedback, this was heavily

influenced by a lack of experience in marketing research at a site level and limited resources available in this the pilot Social Accounting project.

During the planning process an analysis of total stakeholder group's numbers was used as a base for an arbitrary forecast of surveys to be distributed and returned. The project team agreed on the following targets.

It is important to note that data relating to Mission Australia clients and employers are commercial in confidence and therefore not referenced in this segment

Stakeholders were surveyed through questionnaires using the following methods:

- Job seekers – all those people referred to Mission Australia from Centrelink who have been assessed as eligible to receive Job Network Intensive Support services. All jobseekers targeted for completion of the Jobseeker questionnaire were those current in Intensive Support who are required under their obligation with the Commonwealth Government for receipt of a welfare payment and who are required to attend the Mission Australia Gympie office to undertake job search activities on at least one day per week. The sample size of the target audience is commercial in confidence; however 94 surveys were completed and returned for inclusion in the project. While the target audience surveyed attended Mission Australia to undertake Jobsearch activities, their personal situations vary enormously, nonetheless they all receive Intensive Support services. The target group surveyed excluded all jobseekers who are voluntarily registered with Mission Australia and those referred to Mission Australia from Centrelink but not eligible to receive Intensive Support services. The questionnaires were distributed to Jobseekers attending the office by a staff member facilitating Jobsearch activities and completion was voluntary.
- Employees – 3 separate surveys were undertaken with employees, they were;
  - Employee Questionnaire surveying employee attitudes and experiences in their work environment
  - Employee and Family Social Event Questionnaire
  - Employee Training Questionnaire (Self Completion post training event)

The total employee population at the time of the project was 21. Of the 21 employees 17 were employed as permanent fulltime, 1 permanent part time employee and 3 employed on fixed term contracts.

The **Employee Questionnaire** was distributed to all staff present on site for self completion over a two week period in May 2005. 17 employees voluntarily completed the survey.

The **Employee and Family Social Event Questionnaire** was distributed to all staff and their partners for self completion over a two week period in May 2005. Feedback was sought from employees and their partners who had attended organised social events including but not limited to;

- Christmas Party River Cruise
- Theatre Restaurant
- Employee Birthdays
- Employee Farewell

A total of 43 surveys were completed and returned for inclusion in the project.

The **Employee Training Questionnaire** was distributed to all staff for self completion who had undertaken training during the period of the project. A total of 9 employees completed and returned the survey which was conducted during the month of May 2005.

- **Employers** – 72 employer phone interviews were conducted by Mission Australia’s Gympie office staff. Employers were randomly selected by employees from an employer database containing details of employers who currently use Mission Australia’s services or have done in the past.
- **Centrelink** – A questionnaire was developed for self completion and planned to be distributed to a target audience within the Centrelink Gympie office who dealt with Mission Australia on a day to day basis. Unfortunately, the questionnaire was unable to be distributed on advice from an authorised Centrelink staffer. As a result Centrelink was excluded from the project.

A template for the questionnaires was provided by external consultant, Trevor Harrison. Mr Harrison also analysed the surveys and provided the project team with a report on his analysis. Some of the statements in the questionnaires were reversed so that responses were linked to the other side of the agree/disagree scale, thus limiting the potential for ‘automatic’ responses.

The table below indicates which stakeholders were given questionnaires and the actual return rates. Note, that for the Jobseekers stakeholder group, questionnaires were given to Jobseekers while on site and returned that same day therefore, returns recorded are high. As for Employers, staff either talked directly with employers by telephone or face to face resulting in high return rates. The key challenge experienced in this project was the allocation of resources to the process, particularly the time of staff in the two week period of survey activity. An improved ‘out’ rate may have been achieved with an independent dedicated resource, a strategy worth consideration in subsequent Social Accounting periods.

Stakeholder Group	Out	Returned	%
Jobseeker	96	96	100%
Employee	21	16	76.2%
Employer	77	77	100%
Centrelink	10	0	0%
Employee and Family Social Event	130	44	33.8%
Employee Strand/Training Evaluation	9	9	100%

On review of the planning and survey processes, it was evident that the number of surveys planned to be distributed fell short of the targeted numbers. Clearly, given the limited resources allocated to the project the target numbers were overly ambitious, particularly those relating to Jobseekers. This situation can be addressed in future as presented above.

Further to these findings, it was noted that not all surveys sought a response to how Mission Australia was delivering on it’s values. While the employee survey included feedback on this point

the opportunity was missed to include a response from all stakeholders. Additionally, the opportunity was missed to have staff respond and comment on all of the stated Mission Australia values. This oversight occurred early in the planning stage (not planned), and was not picked up until the survey results were in however, the ensuing experience by the project team will see this matter resolved in the next period.

Pre-testing questionnaires was not carried out with all stakeholders however; both the Jobseeker and Employee questionnaires were pre-tested resulting in some minor modifications to the documents before final implementation.

### **5.3 Omissions**

Four key stakeholders were identified for inclusion in this the first step into the Triple Bottom Line Accounting Pilot Project. Of the four stakeholders just one was unable to be consulted as planned, that was key staff at Centrelink. On approach by Mission Australia, Centrelink management advised that policy excluded staff from participating in Job Network Member surveys. As a result of this outcome it has been agreed that the issue would be escalated to senior management within Mission Australia to seek a resolution for future participation by Centrelink staff in Mission Australia Social Accounting activities.

A number of stakeholders were identified during the planning period as important to our business and would ideally be surveyed for input into our business. These stakeholders have been identified and are illustrated in the Stakeholder Map on the periphery to the four key stakeholders illustrated in the central boxes of the model.

## 6. Analysis of the Social Accounts

### 6.1 'Mission Australia lives up to its values in relation to'

#### *Dignity, Empowerment, Accountability, Leadership and Advocacy*

While it is desirable to survey all stakeholders on whether or not Mission Australia lives up to its values the decision was made by the project team to survey just the employee stakeholder group for the purpose of the pilot project.

There is room in this section of the Social Accounting process for improvement, particularly in relation to expanding the survey to all eight values across all key stakeholder groups.

The significance and importance of living up to espoused corporate values became increasingly clearer as the project progressed and the need for feedback from all stakeholders. This was most noticeable in the collation of this report when the efforts of the past twelve months came together.

All site staff was given the opportunity to participate and complete an employee survey covering broad ranging aspects of the business. Key amongst questions posed for comment and response was how staff viewed Mission Australia as living up to its values.

#### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

In summary, a significant number of staff responded by agreeing that Mission Australia did live up to its values.

While given the opportunity in the survey document, staff responding to the survey has not commented in the space provided.

#### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to its values?

<b>"Value Dignity"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	4	7	4	1	-	11	1	3.88

<b>"Value Empowerment"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	6	6	1	1	8	2	3.44

<b>"Value Accountability"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	3	6	5	1	1	9	2	3.56

<b>“Value Leadership”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	3	7	5	1	-	10	1	3.75

<b>“Value Advocacy”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	5	9	-	-	7	-	3.56

**6.2 Objectives and Activities**

**Mission Australia Gympie  
Employment Services**

**Social Audit 2005**

**Section 6.2**

**Report on Objectives, Activities & Stakeholder Feedback:**

**Objective One**

**Activity 1.1**

**Activity 1.2**

**Activity 1.3**

**Activity 1.4**

***Objective 1: To help the unemployed and other disadvantaged people become active in the local economy.***

**Reflecting the values of “DIGNITY, EMPOWERMENT, RELATIONSHIPS, ADVOCACY”**

### ***1.1 By placing job seekers into suitable employment***



Mission Australia takes the view that actively engaging jobseekers in job seeking activities on a regular basis delivers multiple benefits to all stakeholders. Engaging jobseekers gives staff the opportunity to get to know jobseekers on an individual basis and understand their individual needs. This engagement leads to preparation and development to enable jobseekers to move closer or into employment, proven to be particularly successful with the long term unemployed and highly disadvantaged jobseekers.

At the same time, Jobseeker engagement has a positive spin-off for employers in as far as a ‘good match’ or ‘fit’ between jobseeker competencies and employer needs is maximised. Engagement maximises the potential of placing jobseekers into suitable employment. During the period of the pilot, in excess of 269 jobseekers moved into paid employment and although statistics were not kept on Jobseekers moving into unpaid voluntary work anecdotal evidence would indicate that this number is significant. It is planned that subsequent Jobseeker surveys will include feedback on this point as past experience would suggest that volunteer work prepares Jobseekers returning to the workplace which may lead to paid employment.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback- Job Seekers, Employees and Employers**

A significant majority of jobseekers surveyed who identified as currently employed either agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed the work they were doing and that they found their work satisfying. Yet a small but significant number of jobseekers felt that their job was merely a survival job.

A majority of staff surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that placing jobseekers in suitable employment helped them become active in the local economy and thereby making a difference in their lives.

Employers surveyed overwhelmingly responded that Mission Australia understood the needs of their business and that referrals made to their vacancies for staff met their needs. In fact, all but one respondent would use Mission Australia again when next they required staff. However, when asked to comment, a small yet significant number of employers indicated that we matched jobseekers to positions well.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia help the unemployed and other disadvantaged people become active in the local economy?**

<b><i>“By placing job seekers into suitable employment”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	4	10	2	1	-	14	1	4.00

<b><i>“I enjoy the work or course I am doing”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Jobseeker survey	13	19	5	2	-	32	2	4.10

<b><i>“My job or course is satisfying”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Jobseeker survey	11	18	8	1	-	29	1	4.03

<b><i>“MA understands the needs of your organisation”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employer survey	32	39	-	-	-	1	71	-	4.45

<b><i>“Referrals made to your vacancies by MA have met your needs”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employer survey	21	38	12	-	-	1	59	-	4.13

<b><i>“We would use MA again when we next require staff”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employer survey	27	41	3	-	-	1	68	-	4.34

**1.2 By running daily Supported Job Search sessions (SJS) (Resumes, interview techniques, counselling, canvassing etc.)**

Conducting Supported Job Search (SJS), sessions is an important strategy when engaging jobseekers. SJS offers an environment and the opportunity for staff and jobseekers to get to know each other and work together to build job search skills and assist in job search activities. For example, a long term unemployed and highly disadvantaged jobseeker who may have been unemployed for greater than five years may need significant assistance in very basic job search skills. Activities as simple as preparing a tailored resume for a specific job application, role playing a job interview or support and counselling to deal with the negative impact of long term unemployment on individual self esteem are just some of the services provided.

Attendance at daily run SJS sessions helps in breaking the unemployment cycle. Establishing a daily routine in line with employment requirements and the all important opportunity to socialise and become re-engaged with the community are just some of the benefits derived from SJS attendance. Self esteem is a marketable commodity, a Jobseeker with a positive view of ones self will often perform well at an interview.

**Stakeholder Feedback – Jobseeker and Employee**

A significant majority of jobseekers surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that SJS met their needs. Yet nearly half of all those who responded neither agree or disagree or disagreed that SJS met their needs. The opportunity presents itself to follow up on this result with jobseekers to better improve these sessions in meeting their needs.

A majority of staff surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that SJS activities reflected the needs of jobseekers. Again, the disparity in these results presents an opportunity as identified above.

It was noted that a significant number of Jobseekers responded as ‘neither’ agreeing nor disagreeing that attending SJS sessions would assist them in finding employment or become active in the community. An opportunity exists in future social audit cycles to implement methodology which will allow the exploration of such a response to better Improve service delivery in this area.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia help the unemployed and other disadvantaged people become active in the local economy by running Supported Job Search sessions?**

<b>“running daily Supported Job Search sessions”</b>	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree strongly</b>	<b>TOTAL AGREE</b>	<b>TOTAL DISAGREE</b>	<b>MEAN SCORE</b>
Jobseeker survey	14	27	24	8	7	41	15	3.41
Employee survey	6	9	1	1	-	15	1	4.18

### **1.3 By linking people with suitable training other than contractual obligation**



*Traffic Controllers course run at Mission Australia Gympie 19-1-05*

Mission Australia is contracted to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations under Employment Services Contract Three (ESC3), to provide specified training to jobseekers referred to the business. However, in order to prepare jobseekers for employment or indeed enhance competencies on the job and to meet the needs of individuals it is necessary, in fact essential that non contractual training be sourced and delivered accordingly.

Often when an opportunity arises for employment in an industry where a number of job vacancies become available there is the ability to source and organise training by suitably certified trainers external to Mission Australia to conduct training for several jobseekers at a time who would benefit from training, hence move them into or closer to employment. For example, early in 2005 an opportunity presented itself to have targeted jobseekers undertake 'Traffic Controller' training in order to certify to work on Queensland roads maintenance. The appropriate trainer was identified and engaged to deliver training in Mission Australia's training facilities.

During the period of the project a total of 206 Jobseekers commenced into vocational training, this was in addition to contractual requirements. Training undertaken included but was not limited to the following courses:

#### **Non contractual training undertaken**

##### **Jobseekers attended individual courses;**

- Senior first Aid
- Introduction to computers
- Microsoft Word and Excel
- Certificate III Home & Community Care
- Certificate II Adult General Education
- Certificate III Live Production, Theatre and Events
- Forklift license
- Pre-Apprenticeship- Automotive
- Certificate III Aged Care
- Certificate IV Business Administration
- Food Handler
- Construction Blue Card

##### **Courses attended by multiple jobseekers;**

- Future Direction vocational development
- Prepare Your Jobsearch for Success
- First Aid
- Responsible Service of Alcohol
- Traffic Controllers Course
- Customer Service
- Responsible Gambling Service

#### **Employment Services Contract three training undertaken**

Job Search Training – This is a modulated training program designed to improve the job search skills of jobseekers. The program is delivered over fifteen days to all eligible jobseekers. Modules include but are not limited to:

- Skills Analysis
- Resume Development

- Reality Checking/Fear Factor
- Values, Attitudes, Behaviours
- Open/Closed Job Market
- Canvassing
- Interpret Job Advertisements
- Application Letters and forms
- Telephone Technique
- Interview
- Conflict Resolution
- Problem Solving
- Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Employer Expectations
- Keeping the Job
- Business Cards (including NEIS info)

### Stakeholder Feedback – Jobseekers

While just four jobseekers responded that they were currently in training a significant number of jobseekers from all those surveyed responded affirmatively that they found the training they have undertaken had met their needs.

A small number of respondents commented that they would like more training but did not specify training required.

Meanwhile, a significant number of jobseekers responded that they had found their own training and or employment.

### Feedback from Jobseeker Questionnaires – are we delivering on this activity

<b>What respondents believe MA does well:</b>	<b>Total (94)</b>	<b>In work/training (39)</b>	<b>Yet to find employment (55)</b>	<b>With MA &lt; year (48)</b>	<b>With MA &gt; year (42)</b>
Understand my needs/high level advice/teaching	7	3	4	5	2

<b>What respondents believe MA could do better:</b>	<b>Total (94)</b>	<b>In work/training (39)</b>	<b>Yet to find employment (55)</b>	<b>With MA &lt; year (48)</b>	<b>With MA &gt; year (42)</b>
More understanding of needs/more 1 on 1/more training	8	6	2	4	4

<b>Located job/course through...:</b>	<b>Total (n = 39)</b>	<b>With MA &lt; year (n = 20)</b>	<b>With MA &gt; year (n = 19)</b>
Found own employment/course info.	12	5	7
<b>Course type:</b>			

Short vocational course	11	4	7
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<b>"the training undertaken meets my needs"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Jobseeker survey	10	14	14	1	-	24	1	3.82

<b>"the site facilities meet my needs"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Jobseeker survey	38	43	8	2	3	81	5	4.18

**1.4 Develop and undertake Work For the Dole projects for targeted community groups**

Work for the Dole (WFtD), is a Federal Government initiative in which a Job Network Members (JNM), such as Mission Australia can apply to conduct a twenty six week project that will benefit the community. In the reporting period Mission Australia has been active in hosting two WFtD projects specifically targeting two key areas of interest and in line with Social Accounting principles. Both projects have been run concurrently and have benefited both the indigenous community and the broader community.



*Indigenous News Magazine Volume 7  
April 2005-07-27*

The first project titled 'Indigenous Views' is the publication of a monthly magazine that is distributed to both the indigenous and broader communities. While the magazine has articles and other contributions largely sourced and contributed by the indigenous community interestingly, the majority of WFtD participants have been non-indigenous. While this unique situation has not been by design the outcome has been unexpected. This has allowed non-indigenous participants to build relationships with key indigenous community members and enhanced the cultural awareness with all those associated with the project. A positive spin-off from the project has been the improved ability of Mission Australia to better engage with the indigenous community and to be better able to deliver JNM services, ultimately leading to improved employment outcomes for this cohort.

The second of the WFtD projects undertaken in the reporting period was specifically targeted at environmentally sustainable building practices. 'Settlers Pack' or rather the Rural Residential Settlers' Pack project will produce and deliver both a Booklet and CD-Rom for distribution by Cooloola Shire Council for interested parties in sustainable building and for those residents seeking building approvals in the shire.

Both projects had been approved and conducted prior to the current reporting period. Due to their success the appropriate bodies approved these projects to roll over into an additional twenty six week period.

### **Stakeholder Feedback**

Note, participants in this target group either did not respond to jobseeker survey or did not identify in the comments section of the survey.  
The opportunity exists in future jobseeker research to specifically provide opportunities for this cohort to identify and to comment on WFtD activities

### **Commentary and Action Issues**

- There is broad approval that Mission Australia is currently meeting this objective, through engagement and employment practices.
- Feedback from key stakeholders surveyed indicated that job seekers were being placed into suitable work through the activities undertaken by the team at the Gympie office.
- An opportunity exists to employ a focus group strategy to seek more detailed feedback on the delivery of Supported Job Search sessions to better meet the needs of Jobseekers. The Jobseeker questionnaire did not allow Jobseekers to adequately detail the 'HOW' and 'WHAT' Mission Australia could do differently to better provide sessions that met their job search needs.
- The Jobseeker questionnaire proved inadequate in the area of delineation between those Jobseekers in work and those in training. The structure of future questionnaires would best be laid out if one section of the questionnaire was allocated to those Jobseekers in work while the other section allocated for those Jobseekers in training and not combined as was the case in the current Jobseeker questionnaire this may have resulted in the significant number of Jobseekers who responded 'neither' in the survey.

**Section 6.2**

**Report on Objectives, Activities & Stakeholder Feedback:**

**Objective Two**

**Activity 2.1**

**Activity 2.2**

**Activity 2.3**

**Activity 2.4**

**Activity 2.5**

**Activity 2.6**

***Objective 2: To be a good employer.***

***Reflecting the values of "DIGNITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, EMPOWERMENT, LEADERSHIP, RELATIONSHIPS"***

***2.1 Providing opportunities for relevant learning and professional development***



Mission Australia provides the opportunity for all staff to undertake relevant learning and professional development and this is supported through Mission Australia’s Human Resource and Training Policies and Procedures.

All staff have the opportunity to development by attending quarterly state based ‘strands’. Strands relate to the function of the individual in the business and therefore gather staff in similar functional roles together for the opportunity to further develop in their roles and to establish a network of colleagues across the state for a sharing of best practices and support.

**Stakeholder Feedback - Employees**

A significant number of respondents commented in the space provided in the questionnaire that more and improved training is desired at a site level.

Results would indicate that there exists an opportunity to enhance the work life of staff through a greater focus in this area. Providing more site based training may be a strategy to improve opportunities to staff.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to being a good employer?**

<b><i>“providing opportunities for relevant learning and professional development”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	1	5	5	3	2	6	5	3.00

**2.2 Operate an effective appraisal system**

The overriding goal of Mission Australia’s Performance Management system is to manage employee performance in a way that ensures all employees are fully supported and developed. Such an environment maximises the learning opportunities and develops a culture where performance and learning is valued. Mission Australia’s formal Performance and Development Plan and Review System is intended to supplement the ongoing informal process of effective and regular discussions between the manager and employee.

**Stakeholder Feedback - Employee**

A significant number of staff responding to the survey either disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed that the appraisal system was effective. Results would indicate that there exists an opportunity to enhance staff work life through a greater focus in this area.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to being a good employer?**

<b>“operate an effective appraisal system”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	-	1	9	3	3	1	6	2.50

**2.3 Empowering staff to develop relevant new ideas**

In Queensland, Mission Australia has an ‘Ideas’ email address which staff are encouraged to use to put forward new and innovation ways of doing business. These ideas are formally discussed at the monthly Queensland State Management Group Meeting, and staff are acknowledged for the input.

In Mission Australia Gympie, an environment exists where staff are empowered to offer up new ideas in a variety of ways, and can be assured that someone will listen, explore, and if viable, implement.

**Stakeholder Feedback - Employee**

A significant number of staff felt that they were empowered to develop new ideas Likewise, those responding as neither agree nor disagree was high. Overall, it would appear staff generally feel empowered to develop new ideas.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to being a good employer?**

<b>“empowering staff to develop new ideas”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	1	7	6	1	1	8	2	3.38

## 2.4 Maintaining a healthy and safe work environment

Mission Australia has Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), policy and procedures to support this aim, they are readily available to all staff via the Mission Australia intranet site. There also exists an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Officer on site who is the first point of contact for all relevant issues. All staff are educated about these policies when they commence employment. OHS policy and procedure is a key component of the induction process and is carried out on site for all.

In line with policy, any OHS issues identified and or raised by staff are formally reported and resolved in a timely manner. The site manager and OHS Officer are supported by both a Queensland State and National structure and reporting system.

### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

While given the opportunity in the survey document, staff responding to the survey has not commented in the space provided.

A significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that a healthy and safe work environment was maintained though a significant minority were ambivalent.

### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to being a good employer?

<b>“maintaining a healthy and safe work environment”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	7	6	-	1	9	1	3.58

## 2.5: Encourage work force diversity

### Work Place Diversity defined:

***Diversity includes, but is not limited to gender, language, cultural background, different tertiary educational qualifications of the service team, their socio-economic background, personality and personal profiles***

Mission Australia has policy and procedures that comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation at both Federal and State levels. Mission Australia takes pride in being an equal opportunity employer. This is strongly promoted in our recruitment process and with existing staff.

At the site level it is the aim of management to recruit and promote the best person for the job while having a desire to ensure that we grow our business through diversity and enhancing our workplace culture. This is has been achieved through engaging community groups from a broader range in our community.



For example, engaging the indigenous community through Work For the Dole (WFtD), projects and literacy and numeracy projects has helped in developing working relationships with indigenous organisations such as Cooloola Aboriginal Services, community elders and Queensland Education.

Through these activities Mission Australia has been able to attract applications from this community for consideration in the recruiting process. This has resulted in the recruitment of an indigenous person to the role of an employment consultant.

Additionally, engaging with Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services led to the opportunity to assist and develop one of their clients who gained employment resulting from his voluntary experience with Mission Australia. Likewise, engaging with Wide Bay Volunteers and having the opportunity to have volunteers from all walks of life and in varying circumstances in their lives work with the Mission Australia team enriched and continues to impact on the culture of our business.

### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

A significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that we do encourage workplace diversity though the same number are ambivalent.

Of note in the survey results is the diversity in age and experience of the target group. While there is a good spread of staff aged between thirty and over fifty, there exists an opportunity to use the experience of existing staff to consider the recruitment and development for those under thirty years of age. The response from the survey indicates a significant number of respondents have been employed by Mission Australia for more than one year with a high proportion employed in excess of three years.

### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to being a good employer?

<b>“encourage work force diversity”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	5	7	1	1	7	2	3.38

<b><u>Employee sample demographics:</u></b>	<b>Total (n = 17)</b>
<b>Male</b>	5
<b>Female</b>	12
<b>30 to 39 years</b>	3
<b>30 to 49</b>	10
<b>Over 50</b>	4

Half the employee sample has been with the organization for more than three years.

<b><u>Employee Mission Australia experience:</u></b>	<b>Total (n = 17)</b>
<b>Under 6 months</b>	3
<b>7 to 12 months</b>	2
<b>One to two years</b>	3
<b>2 to 3 years</b>	1
<b>Over 3 years</b>	8

***2.6 Encourage staff to join community & sporting organisations by office pay membership***



The involvement of Mission Australia staff in the community is a most important aspect of our business. Through involvement and participation in the community there exists the opportunity to achieve significant outcomes and affording benefits to both staff and community organisations. Through participation comes engagement, staff can get a sense of worth an appreciation from the broader community for the work they do while at the same time meaningfully contribute to their chosen organisation.

Through this activity, Mission Australia has engaged both jobseekers and employers resulting in job outcomes that may not have otherwise been possible.

### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

A significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that it was encouraged that they join a community or sporting organisation and that membership would be paid by Mission Australia. Unfortunately, it was unable to be determined from the response whether this was seen as a benefit to both individuals and their families.

### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to being a good employer?

<b><i>“encourage staff to join community and sporting organisations by office pay membership”</i></b>	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree strongly</b>	<b>TOTAL AGREE</b>	<b>TOTAL DISAGREE</b>	<b>MEAN SCORE</b>
Employee survey	5	5	3	1	2	10	3	3.63

### Employee Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide feedback in space provided in the employee questionnaire. Three questions were put to participants and they were;

- ‘What do you believe Mission Australia does well’
- ‘What do you believe Mission Australia could do better’
- ‘Please add any further suggestions you may wish to make about other objectives you should be tackling; operational practices; or anything else which might help us improve our social benefit performance’

It was noted on review that the questions may have been ambiguous and not targeting site specific feedback. A number of respondents commented on broader Mission Australia issues. However, while responses were broad ranging there was some common themes. Feedback suggests that ‘teamwork’ was done well at a site level.

### Commentary and Action Issues

- Of concern was apparent trends in Employee surveys for respondents to mark a response as ‘neither’ agree or disagree. This combined with a trend not to comment in the space provided in the questionnaire document would indicate that an alternate method of surveying these key stakeholder partners may lead to more detailed and constructive feedback.
- Mission Australia is developing and extending their existing training services which will extend their programs to include Diploma courses for staff. This is a great opportunity for some staff to develop tertiary level skills to enable them to seek further opportunities within Mission Australia.

- The Performance Review and Development System is in place but was not able to be completed with all staff during the project period. Responses from employees indicate a need to review current practices and make changes at a site level.
- More feedback and suggestions are needed from staff for this objective to better target the needs of our staff. Surveying employees for the purpose of the project has been a good 'first step' in better understanding staff needs. However, a better method of surveying needs to be identified in the next period to solicit feedback on how this can be achieved.

**Mission Australia Gympie  
Employment Services**

**Social Audit 2005**

**Section 6.2**

**Report on Objectives, Activities & Stakeholder Feedback:**

**Objective Three**

**Activity 3.1**

**Activity 3.2**

**Activity 3.3**

**Objective 3: To provide a family friendly work place.**

Reflecting the values of “RELATIONSHIP, QUALITY, ADVOCACY, EMPOWERMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY”

**3.1 Introducing flexible work hours**

It is understood that all staff will have occasion to attend to family and private matters from time to time, while circumstances for others will only allow for participation in the workplace which may stretch outside what is considered normal work hours.

In recognition of these needs and the needs of the business staff have the ability to accumulate time saved during their allocated one hour lunch break to be taken as one days leave once a month to attend to personal matters. It is possible and in fact practiced, that staff will negotiate with their manager flexible work hours on a case by case basis as the need arises.

Administration staff has modified the leave application request document to identify leave authorised and taken as family leave. For example, of leave authorised in the period October 2004 to June 2005 there was recorded 33.4 hours of family leave taken.

**Stakeholder Feedback – Employee**

A significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that introducing flexible work hours would help in providing a family friendly workplace. Equally, a similar number disagreed. It is not clear if respondents were responding to current flexibility or the concept.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to providing a family friendly workplace?**

<b>“introducing flexible work hours”</b>	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree strongly</b>	<b>TOTAL AGREE</b>	<b>TOTAL DISAGREE</b>	<b>MEAN SCORE</b>
Employee survey	2	5	4	4	2	7	6	3.06

**3.2 Providing regular social activities for the staff & family**

Recognition of the importance and contribution that staff families play in the health and success of the business can not be underestimated. It is of the utmost importance that family members have the opportunity to participate at a social level with the colleagues of their partners and their respective families. The ability to get to know the broader staff and hear first hand the contribution and respect commanded by individuals in the team has positive benefits.

**At the Queensland State level, the contribution by staff and their families is formally recognised each year at a function organised by Queensland State Chaplains and a team of staff. There is**

also an annual City v's Country cricket match for staff and their families in addition to a Thanksgiving Church Service, staff are welcome to attend in July each year.



*Staff Christmas Party in the Office December 2004*

At the site level opportunities are regularly being identified to bring staff and their families together. During the reporting period a feedback document was developed to be distributed to staff and their families after each function in a bid to ensure organised social events continue to remain relevant and meet the needs of participants. For example, a recent social event was organised by staff for staff and their families at a theatre restaurant outside work hours.

Additionally, more informal opportunities present themselves during work hours where the whole team is involved. For example, the birthday of an individual is celebrated with a cake or alternately, the achievement of an individual or the team will be celebrated in a similar manner.

**Stakeholder Feedback – Employee and Family**

While given the opportunity in the ‘employees’ survey document, staff responding to the survey have not commented in the space provided specifically on this activity. However, in a separate survey, the ‘social event’ survey conducted with staff and their families following a social event comments on what respondents believed was done well were made. This included the good choice of venue, a well planned and organised event and excellent entertainment.

A significant number of staff responding to the ‘employees’ survey agreed that providing regular social activities for staff and families help to provide a family friendly workplace.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to providing a family friendly workplace?**

“providing regular social activities for staff and families”	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	7	4	2	3	-	11	3	3.75

<b><u>What respondents believe was done well:</u></b>	<b><i>Total</i> (n = 17)</b>
Well-planned/organised/good choice of venue/'Fawlty Towers'	5
Entertainment was excellent (denied chance to 'talk shop')	4
Games/activities/'Top Shots'	5
Food high quality/variety/acceptable	3
Spouses well-accepted	2
Everything fine	2
Exceeded expectations	1
People came with a good attitude	1
No answer	2

<b><u>What respondents believe could be done better:</u></b>	<b><i>Total</i> (n = 17)</b>
Choice of meals/vegetarian options/dietary requirements	3
State MA Christmas party too distant	1
Nothing	6
No answer	7

**3.3 Promotion and awareness of Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Mission Australia nationally provides a program designed to provide support to staff and their immediate families. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is provided free of charge to staff

across the business. Professional counselling services can be anomalously accessed by staff and families or alternately, staff may be discretely referred to EAP services by managers as the need may arise.

Access to the service and services provided by EAP are confidential and can only be disclosed on the authority of the recipient of the service. It is therefore difficult to report on usage and the benefits accrued by those accessing the service. However, from time to time a small number of staff has advised that they have accessed the services of EAP and found the program worthwhile and helpful.

### Stakeholder Feedback – Employee and Family

The survey results do not indicate the level of usage of the program but do indicate a high level of awareness. A significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that promotion and awareness of EAP provides a family friendly workplace.

### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia live up to providing a family friendly workplace?

<b>“promotion and awareness of EAP”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	7	5	2	-	9	2	3.56

<b>Awareness of EAP and conditions of use: Employee and Family</b>	<b>Total (n = 17)</b>
Yes	15
No	1
No answer	1

### Commentary and Action Issues

- Employee responses to flexible work hours need further investigation and more detailed feedback from the team. Clarification as to the high ‘disagree’ and ‘neither’ response rates is an area of focus in the next period.
- More feedback and suggestions are needed from staff for this objective to better target the needs of our staff. Surveying employees for the purpose of the project has been a good ‘first step’ in better understanding staff needs. However, a better method of surveying needs to be identified in the next period to solicit feedback on how this can be achieved.
- A strong response to organised staff and family social activities, particularly the comments section indicates this strategy is on track. Assessing the benefits to staff and family will need to be included in the next period survey to further improve delivery of this activity.

**Mission Australia Gympie  
Employment Services**

**Social Audit 2005**

**Section 6.2**

**Report on Objectives, Activities & Stakeholder Feedback:**

**Objective Four**

**Activity 4.1**

**Activity 4.2**

**Activity 4.3**

**Activity 4.4**

**Objective 4: To provide excellence in service delivery to key stakeholders.**

**Reflecting the values of “QUALITY, DIGNITY, SERVICE, RELATIONSHIPS, EMPOWERMENT”**

**4.1 Respond to identified job seeker needs**

In a competitive industry where all eight competitors in the region exist and operate under the terms of the Commonwealth Government Employment Services Contract, the defining aspect of a business that will determine the success of the business is the way in which employment services are delivered. Simply, the competitive advantage in the market is in the excellence of delivery of those services to all stakeholders interacting with the business.

In order to better define and understand how key stakeholders viewed service delivery in Gympie the project team felt it was extremely important to develop questionnaires reaching across all participating stakeholders in sufficient detail to capture their invaluable feedback.

**Stakeholder Feedback – Employee and Jobseeker**

While given the opportunity in the survey document, staff responding to the survey have not commented in the space provided.

A significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that responding to jobseeker needs is essential in providing excellent service delivery. There is evidence to suggest that a strong correlation exists between staff responses and jobseekers responses when it comes to meeting jobseekers needs. In fact, an overwhelming number of Jobseekers agreed that their needs were being met.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia provide excellence in service delivery to key stakeholders?**

<b>“respond to identified jobseeker needs”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	5	8	3	1	-	13	1	4.00

<b>“staff clearly understand my needs”</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Jobseeker survey	34	45	10	3	2	79	5	4.13

<b>"site facilities meet my needs"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Jobseeker survey	38	43	8	2	3	81	5	4.18

#### **4.2 Ensuring staff are up to date with all new processes**



In an ever changing environment where changes are made to the processes in the way we deliver contracted services to our jobseekers the importance of ensuring staff are up to date with new processes is paramount in order to deliver excellent service. Often changes are reactive leaving little or no time for staff to train prior to implementation.

Through daily operational meetings to disseminate changes in policy and process and in conjunction with on the job training and strands, staffs endeavour to remain up to date.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback - Employee**

Overall, a significant number of staff responding to the survey agreed that ensuring staff are up to date with all new processes will further assist in the delivery of excellent service.

While given the opportunity in the survey document, not all staff responding to the survey has commented in the space provided. However, a significant portion of those who did respond indicated that delivery of more and improved training continuously was desired at a site level.

Unfortunately, it was unable to be determined from the responses whether this was currently the case or if staff 'felt' that training was required in this most important area.

#### **Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia provide excellence in service delivery to key stakeholders?**

<b>"ensuring staff are up to date with all new processes"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	6	6	2	1	8	3	3.63

### 4.3 Meeting employer needs

Meeting the needs of employers is essential and non negotiable. Excellent service delivery to this key stakeholder group and partner defines the level of competitive advantage we may enjoy in the market.

Through a combined strategy of post placement support with both jobseekers and employers and reverse marketing with staff competent in relationship marketing, the site enjoys the luxury of ensuring that ever changing employer needs are constantly reviewed, supported and met.

Survey results would support this view and clearly indicate a high level of repeat business.

#### Stakeholder Feedback - Employer

Overwhelmingly, employers surveyed agreed that not only did MA understand their needs that MA met their staffing needs. Likewise, employers agreed that they would use MA again when recruiting for staff.

#### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia provide excellence in service delivery to key stakeholders?

<b>"MA understands the needs of my business"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employer survey	28	37	6	-	-	65	-	4.31

<b>"referrals made to my vacancies by MA have met my needs"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employer survey	21	38	12	-	-	59	-	4.13

<b>"we would use MA again when next we require staff"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employer survey	27	43	1	-	-	70	-	4.37

### 4.4 Improving communications with Centre Link

Unfortunately, on approach by Mission Australia, Centrelink management advised that policy excluded staff from participating in Job Network Member surveys. As a result of this outcome it has been agreed that the issue would be escalated to senior management within Mission Australia to seek a resolution for future participation by Centrelink staff in Mission Australia Social Accounting activities.

## **Commentary and Action Issues**

- Alternate survey methods need to be identified in the next period. A lack of commentary from Employees would indicate a need for a different approach to solicit more meaningful feedback and in order to address the significant 'neither' response rate.
- While the high number of employer and Jobseeker responses overwhelmingly agreed that Mission Australia was meeting their needs the Gympie team needs to be mindful of complacency. Consideration needs to be given to alternative survey methods to better define and assess improving on this business strength.
- Future stakeholder survey would benefit by senior Mission Australia staff at an executive level meeting with Centrelink representatives in order to invite that organisation to participate in future Social Accounting research. Centrelink is a key stakeholder to the Mission Australia business. Improving service delivery to this key partner will benefit all key stakeholders.

**Section 6.2**

**Report on Objectives, Activities & Stakeholder Feedback:**

**Objective Five**

**Activity 5.1**

**Activity 5.2**

**Activity 5.3**

**Objective 5: To use environmentally sustainable practices**

**Reflecting the values of "QUALITY, ACCOUNTABILITY"**

**5.1 Reducing consumption of stationary, electricity and fuel**

The starting point in this project has been to set in place systems to effectively record and monitor consumption in targeted areas of the business as none previously existed.

The administration team has developed a number of electronic tracking sheets in excel format to monitor consumption in the following areas:

- Paper usage for both A4 and A3 standards
- Kyocera copier fax and printer usage
- Paper recycling bins

Each report tracks consumption by month and makes provision to report on excessive usage for that period.

While it would be desirable to monitor and track electricity consumption current metering arrangements make it impossible to do so as the building has shared electricity metres with another business occupying the same building. The cost is borne by the landlord and reflected in the rental cost per metre squared. Approaches have been made to the landlord to have separate metres to enable better control over managing electricity consumption.



The office has undertaken double sided printing of documents where possible since the commencement of the pilot project. Unfortunately, it is hard to report on the success of this activity until we have paper consumption data collected and analysed. As there has been no system of tracking paper usage in place to date it will be hard to determine the contribution of this strategy to any future reductions.

### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

Staff surveyed overwhelmingly supported the use of environmentally sustainable practices. A significant number of respondents agreed to reducing the consumption of stationary, electricity and fuel while the same was true for recycling commodities.

### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia use environmentally sustainable practices?

“reducing consumption of stationary, electricity and fuel”	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	2	8	4	2	-	10	2	3.63

### 5.2 Recycling commodities

The starting point has been to set in place systems to effectively record and monitor consumption in targeted areas of the business as none previously existed.

The administration team has developed a number of electronic tracking sheets in excel format to monitor recycling in the following areas:

- Paper recycling bins
- Toner cartridge

Paper recycling is a well established practice in the Gympie office. Red Cross paper recycling bins are used in the office with bin usage tracked on a monthly basis. In the current Social Audit cycle a total of twelve recycle bins have been used. Data collected would indicate a reduction in the number of bins used in the second half of the Social Audit cycle compared to the first half.

All printer toner/cartridges are recycled in the local community. On average, toner/cartridges are purchased monthly with a total of nine being recycled during this Social Audit cycle.

### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

Staff surveyed overwhelmingly supported the use of environmentally sustainable practices. A significant number of respondents agreed to recycling commodities.

### Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia use environmentally sustainable practices?

<b>"recycling commodities"</b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	1	9	2	4	-	10	4	3.44

### 5.3 Develop & undertake Work for The Dole projects targeted at the environment

Work for the Dole (WFtD), is a Federal Government initiative in which Job Network Members (JNM), such as Mission Australia can apply to conduct a twenty six week project that will benefit the community. In the reporting period Mission Australia has been active in hosting two WFtD projects specifically targeting two key areas of interest and in line with Social Accounting principles. Both projects have been run concurrently and have benefited both the indigenous community and the broader community.

Most significant to this activity is the second of the WFtD projects undertaken in the reporting period, specifically targeted at environmentally sustainable building practices. 'Settlers Pack' or rather the 'Rural Residential Settlers Pack' project will produce and deliver both a Booklet and CD-Rom for distribution by Cooloola Shire Council to those residents seeking building approvals in the shire and other parties interested in sustainable building.

Both projects had been approved and conducted prior to the current reporting period. Due to their success the appropriate bodies approved these projects to roll over into an additional twenty six week period.

Additionally, employing the expertise of a WFtD supervisor with experience and credentials in sustainable environmental practices has had an unexpected flow on to the core business. Guidance and support has been afforded to staff as they explore options and strategies to comply with this activity.

### Stakeholder Feedback - Employee

Note, participants in this target group either did not respond to the jobseeker survey or did not identify in the comments section of the survey.

The opportunity exists in future jobseeker research to specifically provide opportunities for this cohort to identify and to comment on WFtD activities.

However, staff again responded overwhelmingly by agreeing that developing and undertaking WFtD projects targeted at the environment would assist in the use of environmentally sustainable practices.

**Feedback from Questionnaires – Does Mission Australia use environmentally sustainable practices?**

<b><i>“develop and undertake WFtD projects targeted at the environment”</i></b>	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE	MEAN SCORE
Employee survey	4	7	3	1	1	11	2	3.75

**Commentary and Action Issues**

- The development of appropriate tracking tools to monitor consumption and the recycling of office commodities was a significant outcome of the project. This will assist in the next period in how to best manage consumption and recycling, in fact measure the success of new found strategies and practices.
- Follow up on electricity metering with the landlord to enable tracking and management of electricity consumption.
- Short term results in recycling are encouraging and a decrease in the usage of recycling bins can be viewed as a good start to Social Accounting.
- Future survey methods need to ensure Jobseekers participating in WFtD projects are identified and given the opportunity to comment on activities relating to the environment.

## 7. Other Views of Stakeholders

Informal employee feedback would indicate a significant number of staff would like to be more involved in the Social Accounting project, particularly in the planning stage. Unfortunately, the demands of the business accompanied by limited resource issues during the project period meant that this desire could not be fully realised.

Feedback from a significant number of Jobseekers attending the office has provided feedback via a corporate response card located in the reception area of the office. While it is a requirement that Jobseeker feedback is recorded and action taken where necessary for the purpose of process improvement, the data collected has not been analysed or included in stakeholder feedback for the purpose of this project. However, it is noteworthy that a significant majority of responses have been positive and made in relation to the delivery of customer service by staff in the Gympie office. For those complaints received and logged it can be demonstrated that they have been effectively handled in a timely manner while offering the site an opportunity to improve on service delivery and processes as the need arose.

Anecdotally, family members of staff have commented on the worth of including families in staff functions. In particular, a greater appreciation and recognition of the contribution individuals make to both the business and their colleagues.

## 8. Environmental Impact

The key area of environmental impact during the pilot has been a new awareness and focus by the team on the ability to make a difference in protecting our environment. Albeit, initially in a small way as the team comes to terms with something as simple as double sided printing. While at a site level in a corporate structure we have control over limited opportunities to implement and undertake sustainable environmental activities it is possible to contribute in a meaningful way. As we progress and explore additional ways to help our environment there remains an opportunity to address our environmental impact at a national level.



The opportunity exists to further develop environmental impact practices and policies. As the new cycle of social book keeping begins the Gympie office will further develop the environmental focus. This will begin by more accurately tracking and monitoring consumption and recycling of commodities in the office. All this in an endeavour to identify opportunities for process improvement and the implementation of additional and or alternate strategies.

## 9. Compliance

Mission Australia operates under a contemporary national corporate structure and as such has clearly defined and articulated policies and procedures. Of significance, required statutory policies are present including but not limited to;

- anti discrimination legislation
- employment and equal opportunity legislation
- workplace health and safety legislation

In addition to statutory requirements, the deliveries of Mission Australia's Employment Services are required to be delivered under the terms and conditions of the Commonwealth Government

Employment Services Contract. This clearly sets down policy and procedure in delivering specified services. This includes but is not limited to;

- Code of conduct
- Handling stakeholder feedback
- Public money spending and accountability
- Compliance and auditing

Mission Australia is a values based organisation whose values provide a basis that determines the standard of the delivery of services and by which staff operate on a day to day basis, very much considered our competitive advantage in the Gympie market.

## **10. Main Issues, Conclusions and Reflections**

- A clear need exists to review the methodology for surveying key stakeholders. Qualitative feedback was limited partly due to the structure of the questionnaires and partly due to an inability to solicit comments from respondents through dialogue. Comments made by respondents to the employee questionnaire were broad ranging with a tendency to comment on broader Mission Australia issues and not necessarily those site specific. Additionally, a high number of respondents to the employee survey responded as neither agreeing or disagreeing to the statement posed. An opportunity exists in future social audit cycles to implement methodology which will allow the exploration of such a response. Jobseeker survey results were in part skewed as a clear delineation between Jobseekers in work and those in training was not made.
- The Performance Review and Development System is in place but was not able to be completed with all staff during the project period. Responses from employees indicate a need to review current practices and make changes at a site level.
- Employee responses to flexible work hours need further investigation and more detailed feedback from the team. Clarification as to the high 'disagree' and 'neither' response rates is an area of focus in the next period.
- A strong response to organised staff and family social activities, particularly the comments section indicates this strategy is on track. Assessing the benefits to staff and family will need to be included in the next period survey to further improve delivery of this activity.
- While the high number of employer and Jobseeker responses overwhelmingly agreed that Mission Australia was meeting their needs the Gympie team needs to be mindful of complacency. Consideration needs to be given to alternative survey methods to better define and assess improving on this our business strength.
- Future stakeholder survey would benefit by senior Mission Australia staff at an executive level meeting with Centrelink representatives in order to invite that organisation to participate in future Social Accounting research. Centrelink is a key stakeholder to the Mission Australia business. Improving service delivery to this key partner will benefit all key stakeholders.
- The development of appropriate tracking tools to monitor consumption and the recycling of office commodities was a significant outcome of the project. This will assist in the next period, particularly in how best to manage consumption and recycling, in fact measure the success of new found strategies and practices.
- Follow up on electricity metering with the landlord to enable tracking and management of electricity consumption.

- Short term results in recycling are encouraging; a decrease in the usage of recycling bins can be viewed as a good start to Social Accounting.
- Future survey methods need to ensure Jobseekers participating in WFtD projects are identified and given the opportunity to comment on activities relating to the environment.

## **11. Reflections on the Social Audit Process**

Although the Gympie project team struggled with the allocation of scarce resources to the Social Audit project they did manage to get off to a good start in the planning process through the development of a comprehensive Social Audit Plan. The direction and assistance given by Accounting for Life consultant Marcel Holdaway at all stages in the process made the task less complex.

On reflection, the comprehensive plan may have been somewhat ambitious given that this was a pilot project requiring the development and implementation of a whole new structure in our business. Although it was possible to capture existing practices and documentation to assist in achieving project objectives there remained an overwhelming demand on scarce resources at critical times to meet project deadlines.

Unfortunately, the opportunity was missed to involve a majority of the Gympie Team in a meaningful way in the project. This occurred as a consequence of the demands of the core business and employment services current position in the lifecycle of the Employment Services Contract, thus resulting in minimal availability of scarce resources.

The pilot project was a 'bottom up' initiative at a Queensland State level. Given resource issues across all participants in the project group it may have been an option to consider a 'top down' approach to the project from a national office level. The advantage of a national approach would see economy of scale apply to the project and therefore be in a position to afford a more adequate allocation of resources to the project.

Despite the challenges, significant benefits accrued to the site during the Social Accounting cycle which will assist the Gympie team improve the delivery of services to their key stakeholders. Through the development, implementation and analysis of stakeholder surveys opportunities have presented themselves by better understanding the needs of our key partners. The Gympie team has the ability to further explore and develop methodologies in soliciting feedback from this group and step further ahead in the market in the delivery of excellent customer services, our competitive advantage.

## **12. Future Plans**

### ***12.1 Dissemination and Dialogue***

#### **Dissemination on a National Level**

This project is consistent with the directions outlined in the Mission Australia Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007 "Creating the Future". The Strategic Plan has identified ensuring sustainability as a key strategic theme and within this theme has set an objective of developing a globally recognised reporting and benchmarking platform for sustainability throughout the organisation.

Work has commenced on benchmarking Mission Australia's business practices against the Business in the Community Corporate Responsibility Index. MA's first sustainability report for the 2005 - 2006 financial year will report on organisational targets and objectives.

### **Dissemination on a State Level**

A report on this pilot project will be compiled in September for dissemination within Queensland.

### **Dissemination on a Local Level**

The outcomes of Mission Australia Gympie Social Audit process will be made available to all of our stakeholders via a multitude of sources, such as print material mailed and available in the office, face to face meetings with key stakeholders and intranet version for staff throughout the organisation.

## ***12.2 Follow-up Action***

The staff members involved in the pilot of Mission Australia's Social Accounting Plan will meet to discuss appropriate actions to follow up in a consistent manner, with a view to sharing our objectives, outcomes and actions with the rest of the organisation. Due to the nature of a "pilot", the more our processes are transparent and fully documented the easier it may be to implement Social Accounting on a larger scale in the future.

Site level changes come under the control of the Gympie team and can be relatively easily implemented. The future of Corporate Social Accounting will come from the direction of the executive at a national level and beyond the immediate control of the Gympie site.

## ***12.3 The Next Social Audit Cycle***

The decision to continue social accounting and audit will be made at a national level as Mission Australia moves to implement social accounting on a national scale.

It would be useful for those embarking on a social accounting strategy to consider a staged approach in rolling out such a strategy. Start up stage, development and implementation of a simple yet relevant plan to be audited over a two year cycle. This could reduce to a twelve month audit cycle in subsequent stages dependant on the future development of objectives and activities.