



fitted for work

Media Kit

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Background

Fitted for Work is an independent not-for-profit organisation working to help women experiencing disadvantage get and keep sustainable work.

Fitted for Work was established in 2005 by two women, Marion Webster and Renata Singer, who came upon the idea of creating a not for profit organisation that would profoundly change the lives of women.

Fitted for Work became the first organisation of its kind in Australia and stands apart with its unique, free pre and post work employment services.

Since 2005, our services have expanded to further assist women in building important workplace skills and achieving financial independence. Through our employment services clients develop their self-esteem and confidence, allowing them to thrive in the workplace.

Our programs assist women from a range of diverse backgrounds. These women all have one factor in common. They want to work.

We are proud to say that over 64% of clients get work within just 4 months of accessing our services.

We believe every woman has the right to economic security. When a woman achieves economic security and builds social connectedness within the community, results are transformational. This not only benefits the woman and her family, but also the Australian economy.

With no recurrent government funding, a limited number of staff and a body of volunteers, our services are made possible through generous philanthropic donations, corporate partnerships and the donation of high-quality pre-loved business clothing.



Services

Fitted for Work offers a unique range of workforce development programs grounded in education. Our core services include:

Personal Outfitting and Interview Service

Fitted for Work's Boutique service provides women with interview appropriate clothing and accessories. Clients have access to advice on grooming and presentation to assist in the first step to getting work.

Our trained and dedicated volunteers help transform clients from head to toe. All clients leave with several interview and work appropriate outfit options.

"It was pretty tough...I had to sell our home because I couldn't afford the mortgage...the suit I received from Fitted for Work changed my life. It represented a transition into a different world and was like putting a magic cloak on, because I looked the part. I got the job I wanted in that suit, despite my nerves" – Anna, previous client



WomanKind

WomanKind is a year-long integrated and holistic pre-employment program for women who require more intensive support. The program supports women experiencing disadvantage to overcome barriers by focusing on their overall wellbeing.

The program consists of:

- woman to woman training
- mentor support
- modules addressing nutrition, health, finance and goal setting
- work-related experience with one of Fitted for Work's partnering organisation

This suite of services creates a tailored program that inspires and supports women through their job search journey.

Face to Face and Online Mentoring

Fitted for Work clients are carefully matched with specialist trained volunteer mentors. Mentors provide six to twelve months of one-on-one support, aimed at helping clients secure sustainable employment.

Mentoring provides a positive role model that enables mentees to:

- prepare resumes and job applications
- practice job interviews
- develop skills
- establish long term career goals

The main initiative of the Online Mentoring Program is to provide support for women who have not been able to access current Fitted for Work programs due to geographical, financial or other factors. These women will have access to one-on-one online mentoring, tailored materials as well as a private online support group.

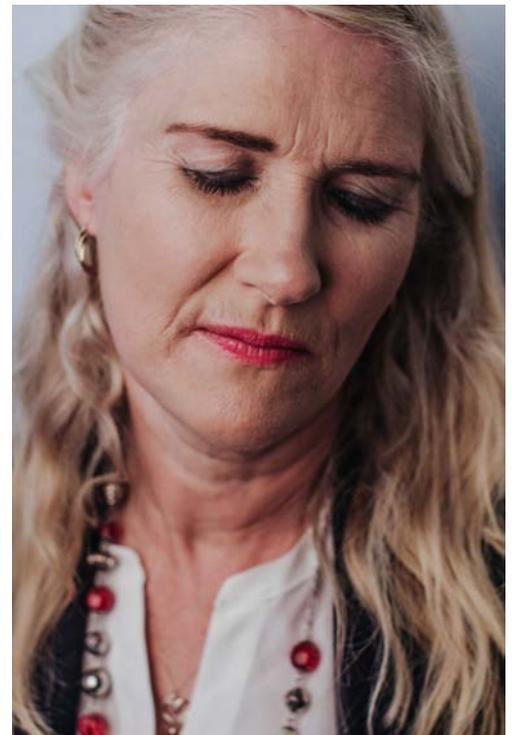
Resume Hub

The Resume Hub assists women with writing professional resumes, cover letters and addressing job application selection criteria. The Hub also provides a place where clients can meet other women facing similar challenges.

Clients receive tailored one-on-one support from experienced volunteers and are welcome to attend the Hub as often as they need throughout their pre and post-employment journey.

In addition to the Resume Hub, clients also have access to a number of free workshops. These workshops include:

- job preparation workshops run by professionals who share their knowledge and provide participants with new skills such as interpreting job ads and understanding the interview process
- presentation and make-up workshops that assist women in achieving techniques aimed at conveying confidence and making a good first impression.



SheWorks

SheWorks is a social enterprise that provides placement and post-placement support services that link Fitted for Work clients directly with employers. Specialist employment advisors work with our clients to match skilled and trained job seekers to employers' business needs.

Organisations are able to access Government subsidies for eligible candidates. Fitted for Work clients make up a diverse pool of candidates including:

- newly arrived migrants and refugees
- indigenous Australians
- women with a disability
- mature age women
- young women who are new to the workforce

SheWorks helps us fund and scale our programs. Buying from a social enterprise is a simple and effective way for organisations to generate social value and break the cycle of disadvantage. Organisations that work with us will receive quality employment services while demonstrating leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility.

Candidates accessing the SheWorks program will also receive further job mentoring through the Staying Employed program, ensuring candidates stay in their role and progress in the workplace.

Staying Employed

The Fitted for Work Staying Employed program assists women who have recently entered new employment. The program provides support during the first twelve months of a client's work.

Clients build career resilience, allowing them to develop and self-manage their own career plans. The unique program consists of:

- workshops
- one-on-one mentor services
- online support materials
- personal outfitting session

The program has a focus on practical workplace skills to assist women experiencing disadvantage deal with the challenges of being newly employed. The program aims to build each woman's confidence as she progresses in the workplace. Women develop long-term career goals and aspirations, setting them up for lifelong employability.

The Statistics

Despite recent progress towards achieving gender equality in workplaces, women continue to experience disadvantage in many important parts of their lives.



Women make up **45.9%** of all employees

Full time weekly earning for women are **17.9%** less than for men



Only **15.4%** of Australian companies have a female CEO

42% of women aged 20 – 29 have a bachelor degree or above compared to **30.6%** of men the same age



Clients

Disadvantage can happen to a woman at any time of her life. We see women from all walks of life. Broadly, we can place our clients into six key categories. However, due to the complex nature of some women's experience, some will overlap into two or more categories:

Survivors of Domestic Violence

Many women who make contact with Fitted for Work are on the first steps to leaving an abusive relationship. These women can often feel fragile and overwhelmed in figuring out how to care for themselves and their family.

Low self-esteem can be common and Fitted for Work is dedicated in providing support through a number of services. The aim for these women is a sense of renewed hope and knowing they never have to go back to a life of abuse.

“When I realised my kids and I were going to be homeless, I felt desperate...I started Googling things like, 'How do you live being homeless?' and 'How can my kids and I live on the street'...Having work changes everything. With regular money coming in, I can now plan for our future. I can be a positive role model to my children. I will never forget what Fitted for Work did for me” – Nicole, survivor of domestic violence, who we helped find work and later enrolled in on our Staying Employed Program

Single Parent

Single mothers often struggle to find suitable work that offers a good wage. They also require the flexibility to respond to both their children's needs and career advancement opportunities.

When first arriving at Fitted for Work, these women are often struggling financially and unable to pay for the necessities.

Women with a Disability

Women with a disability often struggle to find a workplace willing to give them a chance. They are often very aware of their capabilities and what they can contribute to the workforce.

These women often have a wide range of work experience, mostly volunteer positions. They often also hold a number of tertiary qualifications. These women often find a purpose in being involved with Fitted for Work.

Mature-Aged Women

These days a mature aged woman is considered 45 and above. These women often have little to no superannuation when coming to Fitted for Work. They can also be newly single, separated or divorced and need to become financially independent in order to support themselves.

Mature aged women can struggle if they feel like their skills are outdated and can be overwhelmed to re-enter the workforce.

Young Women

This is usually women under 25. While these women have work experience in casual jobs, they struggle to find full time employment. These young women may also be facing homelessness and have difficult relationships with family.

They may feel disconnected from society and overwhelmed by the job-seeking task. Fitted for Work helps these women understand expectations of the workforce.

Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Women

Typically, these women are new to Australia. English may not be their first language and they may not have a recognised qualification. These women are lacking in professional networks to assist them in finding work. They may also have to undertake further study.

These women often feel isolated and require assistance in understanding a new environment.



38% of clients are currently looking for work

32% have been looking for over twelve months



58% of clients were born overseas



24% of clients have a disability



59% of clients are looking for a new area of work



24% of clients are single mothers

Where does the clothing come from?

Fitted For Work has clothes donated by many generous people from all walks of life, delivering small or large donations to our Melbourne or Parramatta boutiques from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

What type of clothing does Fitted for Work accept?

We accept interview appropriate, professional clothing, shoes and accessories to give to our clients as part of our outfitting service. Other clothing donations are accepted to be sold in our *Conscious Closet* pop-up shop, with proceeds assisting to fund the services at Fitted for Work.

How do clients find Fitted for Work?

Our clients are referred to us by a wide range of services, including job service agencies, disability employment services, migrant or refugee settlement services, prisons and domestic violence and homeless services. We have wide eligibility criteria for our services and appreciate the 'want' for work in all our clients.

How do corporate partnerships work?

We base all our corporate partnerships on shared value principles, designing mutually beneficial outcomes to meet our shared goals.

What are the volunteering opportunities?

Our hardworking volunteers help Fitted for Work to continue to grow and assist women on their journeys. There are volunteer opportunities in the outfitting service, administration support, assisting the *Conscious Closet* and to be a mentor to our clients, among others. Specific details on the many positions available and how to apply on our website.

How can I donate?

There are links on our website to make a monetary donation to Fitted for Work. We accept all donations including private donations, bequests and fundraising event opportunities. Details can be found in the 'Get Involved' tab on our website.

Testimonials

Deepti - former client and now volunteer



Deepti, a new migrant to Australia, was seeking employment and actively applying for jobs every day. After some time, Deepti secured an interview for a perspective position and found that she needed advice on how to prepare.

“I really needed some help with practice interviews and also the fitting services because I saw the Australian standards; the way you dress is a bit different to my country.”

Deepti found that the overall process of applying for a job was very different than in her home country. She needed assistance with understanding and adapting to the recruitment process in Australia.

Fitted for Work provided Deepti with interview appropriate clothes. Having never had an interview overseas before, Deepti received assistance with preparation and practice from mentors and volunteers at Fitted for Work.

Deepti has now spent a year working as a talent management and sourcing specialist with 100 Mums in the Sydney CBD, 3 days a week.

“It’s been a year now and I enjoy my work. I really wanted to give back so now I’m volunteering as well. It’s been an amazing journey.”

Deepti found that confidence was a key factor in the job seeking process. Fitted for Work helped her achieve this confidence about the role she was applying for. Deepti is now a recruiter and says that her experience at Fitted for Work has given her a new perspective on the kind of challenges women face when seeking employment. Now volunteering at Fitted for Work, she hopes to help other women overcome such challenges.

“I feel really good about being a part of this particular organisation. I talk about it to people and refer clients. What we do is fabulous.”

Fatu – former client



Fatu first found out about Fitted for Work at the International Women's Day celebration at the RSL club in Blacktown in 2014. Fatu expressed her interest in joining Fitted for Work and attended a training session.

Following the group training session, Fatu was assigned a one-on-one mentor, Nikki. Nikki provided Fatu with support on resume writing and job searching skills.

Fatu had previously joined a number of Job Agencies and was still struggling to secure work. She wasn't optimistic that she would gain employment through the program.

"Nikki upgraded my resume and continued to push me to go around to meet different agencies and enquire if there were any vacancies."

Fatu kept in constant contact with her mentor throughout her job search. Nikki encouraged Fatu to seek volunteer experience and widen her skill base.

"When I got the job, I was so excited and I immediately called Nikki and informed her that I had succeeded."

Fatu was provided with outfits for her interview and first day of work. She also benefitted from training sessions and the opportunity to meet women experiencing similar challenges.

Fatu now works with Uniting Age Care as Westmead. In 2015, Fatu was awarded a gift at the Uniting Care Christmas party for being one of the best hardworking staff.

"I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Fitted for Work and a special thanks goes to Dawn and Liz who encouraged me to join the organisation."

Key People

Donna de Zwart – CEO



Donna de Zwart took over the role of Fitted for Work Chief Executive Officer in February 2015. Donna is a highly motivated leader with over twenty years' experience in consulting and the education sector.

Donna has worked in a range of higher education and commercial organisations, including many of Australia's top 100 companies.

She understands the importance of a woman being valued in the workplace and how employment impacts family and the wider community.

Donna's interest in the not for profit sector came from her personal values and desire to help those around her. By providing women with the right resources, they can overcome obstacles getting in the way of them reaching their full potential.

Donna is inspired by women leaders around her. Women that lead by example in how they work. Such leadership is what Fitted for Work wants to provide their clients.

A typical day as Fitted for Work CEO might involve working on strategy around social enterprise, liaising with politicians and getting involved with clients at a grassroots level.

Mary Crooks AO – Chair



Mary has been the Chair of Fitted for Work since February 2014. She is held in high regard for her commitment to public policy, feminism and social justice.

She is a leader in the advocacy of women's rights, with several decades of dedication to upholding women's rights with the aim of gender equality.

Since November 1996 Mary has been the Executive Director of the Victorian Women's Trust.

In 2012 she was appointed as an Officer in the General Division of the Queen's Birthday Honours (AO) for her "distinguished service to the community through contributions to public policy, particularly in the areas of social cohesion and water sustainability, and as an advocate for the advancement of women."

Ben - volunteer



Ben, who was a one-time 'Face of' Mac Cosmetics, volunteers his time to conduct make-up workshops at Fitted for Work. Ben is passionate about helping women in need.

Ben wanted to get involved with Fitted for Work due to his strong beliefs about the benefits of empowering women.

"I knew that I would be able to offer a lot. I also thought that if there were women that had been in bad situations, that some may have had a male involved. This would be the perfect place to have a male be kind and good to them and give them something great."

Being slightly nervous on his first day, Ben found that he easily adjusted to the environment at Fitted for Work. Ben uses his workshops to help women find the power within themselves and achieve a new level of self-confidence.

"When it comes to my attitude, the make-up is almost secondary. It's about starting a conversation"

Ben is extremely passionate about gender equality and playing a positive role in helping women experiencing disadvantage achieve their full potential.

"My major goal is to change the world and I get laughed at all the time. I think that Fitted for Work is going to get bigger and I want to be part of it".

Contact

For further information please contact:

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