



MEDIA RELEASE

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Workplace achiever hits new heights to take out national award

Australia's employment services sector is celebrating the outstanding achievement against the odds of Adelaide man and commercial roofer, Joseph Paley, who has taken out the 2023 National Employment Services Association (NESAs) Award for Achiever of the Year.

Twelve months ago, Joseph Paley was unemployed and sleeping rough, having just been released from prison and estranged from his support network. After one freezing night huddled up next to a wall at a train station, Joseph decided things had to change and walked to the nearest office of employment services provider, Workskil Australia, where staff found him waiting the next morning.

'I remembered the support WorkSkil Australia had given me in prison and I made the decision then and there to turn my life around,' Mr Paley said.

NESA Chief Executive, Kathryn Mandla said the award recognises a former job seeker who has received employment assistance and who has overcome extraordinary challenges to secure a job.

'Joseph is a clear example of someone facing multiple barriers to employment – homelessness, a criminal history, no support network – who persevered and made the most of the employment assistance Workskil offered,' said Ms Mandla.

Workskil Australia Chief Executive, Nicole Dwyer, said Mr Paley's previous trade qualification as a fitter demonstrated his potential, but it was critical to address the other challenges he was facing to secure ongoing employment.

'Within 24 hours, Workskil Australia had connected Joseph to temporary accommodation, equipped him with a new set of clothes and resume, and organized an interview with a supportive employer to get him off the street as soon as possible,' said Ms Dwyer.

From a casual job on a building site, Mr Paley continued his training and development with Workskil Australia to several tickets and licenses, eventually earning a permanent role as a commercial building roofer.

'Today, my life is dramatically different – I have a car, I've moved from shared housing into a stable home and I love coming home knowing I've done a good days' work. I'm in the best financial, physical and mental position of my life,' Mr Paley said.

NESA Chief Executive, Kathryn Mandla, said the 2023 Award winners and finalists across all three categories - Champion Employer of the Year, Achiever of the Year and Employment Consultant of the Year – represented an incredible range of professional and personal achievement.

'The record number of award nominations this year is testament to the strong partnership between Australia's employment services providers, the dedication and commitment of their frontline staff and those employers committed to an inclusive and diverse workforce,' said Ms Mandla.

‘My sincere congratulations to all award winners and finalists, and the thousands of dedicated employment services professionals who support more than 500,000 job seekers in this sector,’ said Ms Mandla.

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2023 NESAs Awards for Excellence:

Achiever of the Year | Joseph Paley (nominated by Workskil Australia)

This Award recognises a former participant who has overcome extraordinary disadvantage to achieve employment.

Award sponsored by Jobs Bank

Finalists: Nathan Bell (nominated by Sureway Employment and Training)
Thomas Wright (nominated by ASURIA)

Employment Consultant of the Year | Hafez Zamani (nominated by APM)

This Award recognises employment services professionals who demonstrate excellence in helping disadvantaged Australians achieve employment inclusion.

Award sponsored by Aware Super

Finalists: Amanda Baker (nominated by CoAct Connect + Youth Projects Werribee)
Kirsty Campbell (nominated by IntoJobs)

Champion Employer of the Year | Fruit2Work (nominated by WISE Employment)

This Award recognises employers who demonstrate excellence in employment inclusion of disadvantaged participants.

Award sponsored by Readytech

Finalists: Acciona and Ferrovia Joint Venture (AFJV) (nominated by Global Skills)
WorkControl Pty Ltd (nominated by Sureway Employment and Training)

Read all [Award winners' and finalists' profiles](#)

[About NESAs](#)

The National Employment Services Association (NESAs) is the peak body for the Australian employment services sector. Our member organisations support more than 500,000 Australians facing barriers to work to find sustainable, ongoing employment through tailored labour assistance programs, vocational education and training, and wrap-around social and health services. Through partnerships with respected national and international research institutes, NESAs works with government, not-for-profit organisations and the private sector to support design and delivery of effective labour market assistance and social policy. We advocate for an inclusive Australian workforce that offers employment opportunities for all Australians who can and want to work.