

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**JUNE 2009**

**INNOVATIVE JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM SET  
TO HELP EVEN MORE JOB SEEKERS**

Abbotsford Biscuits Kitchen is a Jesuit Social Services program that has been providing work placement and training opportunities for severely marginalised people since 2005. The Kitchen produces a range of bakery products and enjoys strong community support. Following a rigorous consultant review and market analysis in early 2009, Jesuit Social Services made the decision to grow the Kitchen to become a sustainable social enterprise and has recently learnt that its application for funding to the Federal Government's Innovation Fund has been successful. The Kitchen will now move to realise this dream over the coming years.

Participants in the program may never have been employed or been able to sustain employment for a significant period; come from broken homes, have had involvement in the youth justice system and battling mental illness. The Kitchen social enterprise will provide them with a safe space where they are treated with respect and dignity and are valued for their contribution and work effort.

The Innovation Fund is designed to address the needs of the most disadvantaged job seekers through funding projects that will foster innovative solutions to overcome barriers to employment which these job seekers face. The announcement means the Kitchen will be able to implement a staged redevelopment to become a viable social enterprise, providing work placement/experience and job pathways to people who are disconnected and alienated from mainstream projects and services.

This announcement recognises the hard work and dedication of the staff and volunteers who have supported the Kitchen since its inception and the ground breaking and committed approach which Jesuit Social Services has displayed in the area of social enterprise.

Jesuit Social Services originally established the Kitchen as part of its goal to provide a safe space for disadvantaged young people, to rekindle their social skills and develop employability skills. The Kitchen will now be able to continue to offer both work experience and registered training for disadvantaged young people as they help produce and package the products, alongside cooks and volunteers.

More announcements about the redevelopment of the Kitchen will be announced in coming months. To support the Kitchen please visit [www.abbotsfordbiscuits.com.au](http://www.abbotsfordbiscuits.com.au) or for more information please contact Jesuit Social Services on (03) 9427 7388.

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