

Herald Sun

North

Help for jobseekers in Moreland

- by: Kellie Cameron
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Tavale Ilalio from Bridgingworx with Nafa Nua Lua and Lenna Tutuaitu at Bridgingworx which has received \$17,000 grant.

Source: News Limited

COMMUNITY groups will share in \$314,000 for projects to boost disadvantaged locals' job prospects.

The funds are from Inner North Community Foundation, a philanthropic trust helping community groups in Moreland, Darebin and Yarra fund projects that break down employment barriers.

The foundation announced funding for 19 projects as part of its 2013-14 Pathways to Employment Grant Program, including 12 that will benefit Moreland residents.

Foundation chairman Kevin Breen said employment is the pathway to a better life.

"It is critical that people are assisted to increase their self-esteem, skills and job-readiness," he said.

"Funded organisations work across a range of areas, such as supporting people with disabilities, young asylum seekers and ex-offenders to develop employment skills, as well as mentor programs for young, disengaged youth and Aboriginal teenagers in foster care."

Among the beneficiaries will be young Moreland residents of Pacific and Maori descent, after community organisation Bridgingworx received \$17,000 to help them re-engage in education and employment.

Bridgingworx (<http://www.bridgingworx.org.au/>) founder Afoa Gus Gale said his group's program empowered participants.

"Through working with mentors one-on-one and in groups, the young people in the program will address their employment issues and set goals and progress towards a sense of personal confidence, esteem and inclusion in the community," he said.

Mr Gale said young people of Pacific and Maori background faced specific legislative challenges, with those who migrated to Australia from New Zealand after 2001 unable to access some benefits, including student loans.

He said more education and employment could lower the higher-than-average rate of people of Pacific and Maori backgrounds in the youth justice sector.
