Create A DisabilityDiverse Workplace



Create A Disability

Diverse Workplace

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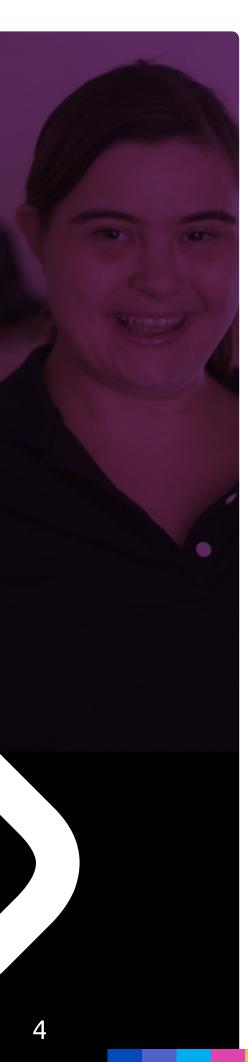
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Executive Summary

The resources and toolkit for "Create a Disability Diverse Workplace" were developed by Crest NT with the aim to assist small to medium businesses across the Northern Territory.

The intent was to provide businesses with access to tools and resources about creating a disability diverse workplace and some of the benefits available.

The resources include information about disability and the community, benefits to business, financial aspects, legislative support and many practical tips on how to prepare or adapt the workplace to ensure it's accessible.

The resources and toolkit include a series of short films that showcase real stories from businesses and employees. These films not only highlight the benefits of employing someone with disability but also build awareness about developing a "Disability Diverse Workplace"

Having people with disabilities as employees just should be part of the workplace landscape everywhere. If the person has got the inherent skills and abilities to do the job, you just employ them".

Liz Reid Executive Officer YouthWorX NT

What is a disability?

People can be affected by more than one type of disability and therefore be classified into one or more disability groups. Of the five main disability groups, the most common in 2012 was physical restriction, which affected two-thirds (67.5%) of working-age people with disability. This was much higher than the proportion of people with psychological disability (21.7%) or sensory and speech disability (20.4%).

The type of disability that an individual has can affect their likelihood of participating in the labour market. People with sensory or speech impairment had the best labour market outcomes with a participation rate of 56.2% and an unemployment rate of 7.7%. People with a physical restriction had the next highest participation rate of 47.4% and an unemployment rate of 8.2%.

The disability group with the lowest participation rate (29.1%) and the highest unemployment rate (20.4%) was people with a psychological disability. People with sensory, speech, physical impairment may be able to benefit from assistive technologies, but this is not the case for people with psychological disability such as mental illness.

People with mental illness may experience disruption to their work attendance and career due to the episodic nature of their disability.

Disability severity

The severity of disability is an indication of a person's limitations in the core activities of communication, mobility and self-care. Of people aged 15-64 years with disability, one-quarter (24.8%) had profound or severe disability, while nearly half (47.9%) had moderate or mild disability. Just over one-quarter (27.4%) of people with disability did not have a core activity limitation, yet they may have had a schooling or employment restriction.

As with disability type, the severity of a person's disability is reflected in their ability to participate in the labour force. Generally, labour force participation decreases as the severity of disability increases. In 2012, those aged 15-64 years with moderate or mild disability had a participation rate of 52.5%, while those with profound or severe disability had a labour force participation rate of 29.7%.

This pattern was evident across all types of disability. For example, the participation rate of those with moderate or mild physical restriction was 48.8%, while those with profound or severe physical restriction had a participation rate of 26.3%.

To see a pattern in unemployment rates, severity and type of disability need to be analysed together. For example, the unemployment rate for people with intellectual disability or psychological disability was high in comparison with other disability groups, regardless of severity.

Those with moderate or mild intellectual disability (34.9%) or psychological disability (24.7%), had a higher unemployment rate than those with moderate or mild physical disability (8.1%) or sensory & speech disability (7.6%). This may partly reflect the unique barriers that people with intellectual disability or psychological disability face in accessing education and work.

Demographics

One in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3 per cent or 4.3 million people)

- 18 per cent of men and 18.6 per cent of women lived with disability
- Almost one-third of people with disability had a profound or severe disability
- 43 per cent of people aged 55 and over had one or more disabilities
- 1 million Australians of working age (15–64 years) lived with disability

People with disability were twice as likely to be in the bottom 20 per cent of gross household incomes.

4 million (15 per cent) Australians had a physical disability

One in six Australians were affected by hearing loss, which included approximately 30,000 Deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss

Vision Australia estimated there were 357,000 people in Australia who were blind or had low vision

According to Dyslexia Australia, an estimated 10 per cent – or two million people – had dyslexia

SANE Australia estimated that 45 per cent of the population would experience a mental health disorder during their lifetime

- Every week, five Australians sustained a spinal cord injury
- Every week 10–15 Australians sustained a severe brain injury
- Every 15 hours, a child was born with cerebral palsy
- Every seven hours, a child was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder
- Every two hours, a child was diagnosed with an intellectual disability

Employment of people with disability

In 2015, the unemployment rate for people with disability was 10 per cent, compared to 5.3 per cent for people without disability

- 1 million Australians of working age (15–64 years) lived with disability
- One million people with disability were employed and another 114,900 were looking for work
- 4 per cent of people with a disability aged 15–64 years participated in the workforce, compared to 83.2 per cent of people without a disability
- 6 per cent of people with disability were not in the labour force, compared to 16.8 per cent of people without disability
- 27 per cent of people with disability worked fulltime, while 21 per cent of people with disability worked part-time

Almost half of people with disability were not in the labour force (46.6 per cent), compared to 16.8 per cent of people without disability

28 per cent of jobseekers with disability who registered with Disability Employment Services (DES) reached a 26-week outcome

36 per cent of people with a severe or profound disability participated in the workforce

One in seven unemployed people with disability needed support or special arrangements at work

Australia ranked 21 out of the 29 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries for labour force participation of people with a disability

Disability and Education

36 per cent of people with a disability aged 18–64 had completed Year 12, compared to 60 per cent of those without a disability

25 per cent of people with a profound or severe disability aged 15–64 had completed Year 12

Disability and the Community

5 per cent of Australians with disability lived in households

5 per cent of Australians with disability lived in cared accommodation such as hospitals, nursing homes and aged care hostels

4 million people with disability living in households (60 per cent) needed assistance with at least one broad area of activity

Disability and financial circumstance

45 per cent of people with a disability in Australia were living either near or below the poverty line – more than double the OECD average of 22 per cent

People with a disability in Australia were 2.5 times more likely to be at risk of poverty, compared to the other OECD countries

Benefits of employment to individuals

Improving employment outcomes for people with disability will provide significant benefits to workplaces, the economy, the community and individuals themselves.

Employment can provide people with disability with increased income, and with this, higher living standards and financial independence. Employment can contribute to a sense of identity and self-worth and have positive health impacts for some people with disability. Improved employment outcomes for people with disability can also reduce demand on welfare systems.

Businesses who employ people with disability benefit from the diverse range of skills, talents and qualifications that people with disability have to offer. Research has shown that workers with disability have higher rates of retention, better attendance, and fewer occupational health and safety incidents than those without a disability.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data have long demonstrated that people with disabilities are less likely to be employed, more likely to be dependent on income support, and more likely to live below the poverty line.

These stark statistics were heartbreakingly illustrated by a large number of submissions that detailed the grim reality of life on the Disability Support Pension. Resented by some in the community for their reliance on the pension, yet unable to access the support required to move off it, many people with disabilities find themselves trapped in a poverty cycle of high cost and low income.

More than 37 per cent of submissions highlighted the difficulties involved in juggling the high cost of living with disabilities and the low level of income support available.

Meaningful employment is essential not only to an individual's economic security, but also their physical and mental health, personal wellbeing, and sense of identity.

What most lack is not ability but opportunity!

Unfortunately, too few people with disabilities appear able to access meaningful employment. More than 33 per cent of submissions identified difficulties with employment, ranging from active and open employer discrimination, to misconceptions and misunderstandings about the needs of people with disabilities. What was clear from the submissions was that people with disabilities want to work. Submissions to the Department of Social Services detailed difficulties in seeking, obtaining, and retaining employment

By far the biggest barrier identified was employer attitudes.

These ranged from entrenched discrimination to misconceptions about the adjustments required for some people with disabilities. Discrimination occurred in those cases where otherwise qualified candidates for jobs were screened out or overlooked, simply because of their disability.

Some employers and recruitment agencies are using medical tests to 'screen out' candidates with disabilities which are irrelevant to their ability to perform the job. This occurs particularly when the tests are used in a generic rather than job specific manner.

Others reported that discrimination and negative attitudes had a more subtle impact on their experience of employment.

There is a perception of employment as viewed as charity, which also has a negative impact on people with disabilities. The concept of 'giving someone a break' fails to recognise the important economic benefits of ensuring skilled individuals are able to participate fully in the economy. Greater independence also produces long-term benefits by enabling people to become less reliant on government income support.

There is considerable misunderstanding in the community about the cost of workplace adjustments. The need for expensive adjustments is often cited by employers as a reason for not employing more people with disabilities. But the cost is often considerably overestimated. As the following case study illustrates, the benefits of employing a skilled individual far outweigh the often-small costs of modification.

An organisation was looking for an administrative officer. One of the requirements of the position was the transcription of lengthy taped material. For a long time, the organisation had been unable to find a cost-effective method of transcription; the employer commented that it had become a lost art.

Through an organisation specialising in assisting people with a disability to find employment, the employer located a young woman with vision impairment who had the right set of skills. The only workplace modification required was the installation of a computer program to verbalise word documents and a dual headset to enable her to listen to the tapes.

Productivity in the area increased considerably after the young woman joined the administrative team. The employer was delighted with the change and commented that 'by investing in the right person you will reap the benefits'.

"I just look at in terms of employing people with disabilities: I think get rid of the stigma of the old days, there is no room for it anymore. There are people out there with great potential that can make massive contributions to teams and organisations".

Liz Reid Executive Officer YouthWorX NT As a number of submissions noted, workplace modifications are not always necessary. As the following case study suggests, what is sometimes required is additional support or a more flexible approach to working hours or leave. Such an approach benefits all employees in the organisation.

Injuries sustained in a serious car accident left one woman unable to continue in her current occupation. Searching for alternative employment, she applied for job after job, but was never offered an interview.

Determined to be fair and honest, she disclosed her medical history in her applications. She believes her decision to be frank was behind her constant rejections. She finally responded to a position within the Australian Public Service and was successful.

The flexible working arrangements offered to all employees allowed her to keep her medical appointments without requiring additional leave. After constant rejection, she was delighted to find a workplace committed to being more inclusive.

Lack of employment has resulted in high levels of unemployment and underemployment among people with disabilities compared to the rest of the Australian population—Australian Bureau of Statistics data demonstrate that labour force participation for people with disabilities is 53 per cent, compared to 81 per cent for people without disabilities.

These figures do not, however, capture the extent and impact of underemployment. As one submission noted, a recent study by Vision Australia found that 63 per cent of people who are blind or vision impaired are underemployed or unemployed.

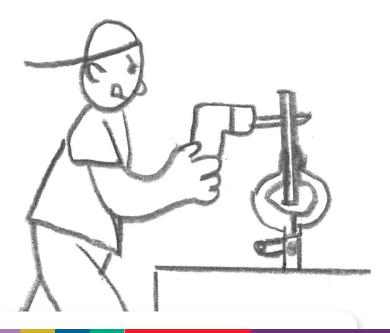
Many people with disabilities and their families are therefore forced to rely on government assistance and find themselves trapped in a poverty cycle of low income and high costs. A number of submissions said that the inflexibility of the Disability Support Pension acts as a disincentive to employment and recommended a review. The loss of health care benefits was seen as a particular difficulty.

Gaps in the service system mean that many people with disabilities and their families, friends and carers, are forced to meet the cost of essential services and support themselves. As many noted, this leaves little discretionary income to meet basic living costs. As a result, families caring for a member with a disability also find themselves caught in the poverty trap. Many said they were forced to fund private services that were unavailable elsewhere, which put a significant dent in the family budget.

Generally, people with disability who were employed were more likely than people without disability to work part-time (39.8% and 29.6% respectively). The number of hours usually worked by people with disability was associated with the severity and the type of their disability.

People with profound or severe disability who worked were more likely to work part-time hours than those with less severe disability. Nevertheless, almost half (48.2%) of those with profound or severe disability who were working, worked full-time.

Among the five disability groups, psychological and intellectual disability have greater association with fewer working hours. Almost one-third (32.9%) of people with psychological disability who worked, usually worked no more than 15 hours, followed by people with intellectual disability (30.7%). In contrast, about two-thirds of employed people with sensory or speech disability (65.3%) or physical disability (59.3%) worked full-time.



"It's hard for me to think about having to change the perception of employing someone with disability as we should not still be having this discussion, but we do need to change the perception of some employers. Because I've lived and breathed it every day, I don't see a difference, and I hope that we get to a place where we can increase the employment of Territorians with disabilities and that it is just standard practice".

Liz Reid Executive Officer YouthWorX NT

Business Benefits



Benefits to your business

One in five Australians lives with disability. This includes those living with mental health conditions. It's increasingly likely that, to fill job vacancies with quality candidates, your organisation will employ people with disability.

Here are some key facts about employing people with disability and why it makes good business sense to do so:

- People with disability generally take fewer days off, take less sick leave, and stay in jobs longer than other workers.
- Employment costs for people with disability can be as low as 13 per cent of the employment costs for other employees.
- Workers' compensation costs for people with disability are as low as 4 per cent of the workers' compensation costs for other employees.
- Once in the right job, people with disability perform as well as other employees.
- People with disability build strong connections with customers.
- People with disability boost staff morale and enhance a sense of teamwork.
- Hiring people with disability enhances a business's image within the community.

Australia's workforce is constantly changing to prepare for, and respond to, our future economic, environmental, and social goals. The population is ageing and people are staying in the workforce for longer.

Many industries are experiencing significant skill and labour shortages, especially in growth areas. Increasingly, employers need to consider accessing a diverse range of skilled and talented people and take advantage of Australia's untapped workforce to meet the needs of business.

Smart employers recruit and welcome talent with disability. In the vast majority of cases, people with disability are able to work and want to find a job. They simply need to be given the chance to show what they can do. We want to help your business thrive and give people with disability the opportunity to contribute to our economic future.

People with disability are often characterised by a high degree of dedication and commitment to their role. Employers can access valuable employees who are reliable, skilled, and have a great attitude and desire to work when they employ people with disability.

For employers, a major concern when recruiting staff is getting the right person for the job. Sometimes the

right person will be someone with disability. People with disability bring a range of skills, talents and abilities to the workplace. They work in all sorts of jobs and hold a range of tertiary and trade qualifications.

Some hold senior managerial positions, while others are employed in customer service, manual, or technical jobs.

The majority of employers who have hired someone with disability can testify to the benefits of doing so. However, if you have not recruited or worked with staff with disability, you might be unsure how to go about it.

Marketers depend heavily on consumer research to implement good business & sales strategies and, not surprisingly, consumers are telling them they want social responsibility from business.

Employing people with a disability can also ensure that your business best reflects the community in which it operates.

Ethical consumerism is buying products which were ethically produced and/or which are not harmful to the environment and society. Although not all of us consciously go out of our way to deal with ethical goods and services – consumers are more likely to look favourably upon companies that employ people with disabilities.

So, if given a choice, a consumer will almost always choose an ethical business. In the case of employing people with disabilities, this allows a consumer to feel they have contributed to keeping people with disability employed because being an ethical consumer feels good!

Change the way you look at a person's disability and see their ABILITY.

Instead of thinking 'why hire a person with a disability when I can hire a person without one', change your thinking to, 'I can hire someone with the appropriate skills to perform a given job and if that person happens to have a disability, so be it, but their disability is not the point.'

Existing evidence suggests that once employers overcome their fear of the unknown, hiring and working with people with disabilities becomes natural. When an employee's ability outshines their disability it becomes harder for the employer to see their disability. This is when you enable – not disable, a person with a disability.

Several studies reached a similar conclusion: the more exposure employers had to employing people with disabilities the more favourable they were towards continuing this trend. Some of the most successful multinational corporations that have inclusion policies recognise the positive effects of the inclusion of people with disabilities into their workforces.



The benefits of employing people with disability are immediate and measurable. An Australian Government review of research found that workers with disability are no more likely to be injured at work than other employees.

For further information please visit:

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/national-inquiry-employment-and-disability-issues-paper-1

Similarly, studies conducted in Australia and overseas have found no differences in performance and productivity and found that employees with disability actually have fewer scheduled absences as well as increased tenure. On average, employing people with disability does not cost any more than employing people without disability.

The Business benefits of employing someone with disability

Employing people with disability makes good business sense. There are significant business benefits when employing someone with disability, benefits beyond just filling a job.

Australian Safety & Compensation Council report "Are People with disability at Risk at work?"

- Productive once in the right job, people with disability perform equally as well as other employees.
- Affordable recruitment, insurance cover and compensation costs are lower. People with disability have fewer compensation incidents and accidents at work in comparison to other employees.
- Good for business people with disability build strong relationships with customers and boost staff morale and loyalty by helping to create a diverse workforce.

Real cost savings are realised through reduced turnover, recruitment and retraining costs. Hiring people with disability contributes to the organisation's overall diversity. It enhances the company's image among its staff, community and customers with positive benefits to the employer's brand.

"One in five Australians have a disability, which is an untapped workforce. The contributions and the skill set that these people can bring into a workforce is fantastic. There are literally millions of people with abilities out there, and I cannot encourage organisations enough to take the leap of faith to give them an opportunity, and you will find that you're not only supporting the person but your organisations culture, which will see the workers within your organisation thrive.

I really cannot encourage all employers enough to really think outside the box and you will not regret it. We certainly do not".

Susan Burns Project Lead, NDS



Financial support for employers & people with Disability.

Employee Assistance Fund (EAF)

gives financial help to eligible people with a disability and mental health condition, as well as employers to buy work-related modifications and services.

The EAF is available to people with disability who are about to start a job or who are currently working, as well as people who need help to find and prepare for a job. It is also available to people with disability who are self-employed, and jobseekers who need Auslan assistance, or special work equipment to look for and prepare for a job.

Disability Employment Services

are a national network of organisations funded by the Australian Government to help employers recruit and retain employees with disability. Disability Employment Services help job seekers with disability, injury or health conditions in around 2200 sites across Australia.

A key distinguishing feature of Disability Employment Services is their capacity to support and manage a person's condition in the workplace, along with providing ongoing support in the workplace for as long as it is required.

Disability Employment Services help job seekers with disability to access individually tailored employment services, with strong links to training and skills development, including in areas of skills shortages. Providers offer a range of free services to employers of people with disability, injury or health conditions, including:

- professional recruitment advice and job matching
- help with job design for employees with disability
- on-the-job or off-site support to ensure new employees with disability settle into their job
- ongoing support for as long as it is required, for employees and employers who require support to maintain their employment
- training information and awareness activities for employers and staff
- help for employees whose job may be in jeopardy as a result of their disability. Providers of Disability Employment Services are encouraged to work with employers to:
 - build local linkages to meet employer needs and enhance sustainable employment outcomes for people with disability

- meet their labour needs, including working with individual employers to identify job vacancies and matching suitable candidates to those vacancies while sustaining quality outcomes for people with disability
- Continually meet and adapt to their needs and the needs of and people with disability.
 Disability Employment Services can also help employers to access a range of financial support, such as workplace modifications, assistive technology, disability, deaf and mental health awareness training, Auslan interpreting and wage subsidies.

As an employer, you can access a range of government tools and programs to help you employ people with disability. For example:

Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support is an incentive paid to employers who employ an eligible Australian Apprentice with disability.

Wage subsidies can help employers with paying wages and training costs in the first few months of employing a person with a disability.

Search Grants & Assistance for more government support for your business.

Applicable Legislation & Information

Australian Human Rights Commission gives advice about discrimination law and complaints. A Disability Action Plan is a strategy to help your organisation change business practices that could result in discrimination against people with disabilities. The Action Plan helps businesses to work out these practices and offers ways to change and showcase their commitment.

Workers with Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Managers provides managers with information on how to support workers with mental illness. It also provides managers with information about how to develop and promote a safe and healthy work environment for all workers.

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/workers_mental_illness_guide_0.pdf

If you have employees with disability who are not covered by an award or agreement, they are entitled to one of the special national minimum wages.

Get the full details on Special National Minimum Wages for employees with disability on the Fair Work Commission website.

https://www.fwc.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/minimum-wages-conditions/national-minimum-wage-orders

An Able Work Environment



Preparing an able work environment

If you're thinking about employing someone with disability, you may need to make changes to your workplace to ensure it's accessible.

Most people with disability won't need changes to the workplace, so it's a good idea to chat with your employees first.

Changes to your workplace could include:

- modifying the physical environment, such as special equipment
- accessible car parking
- accessible sanitary facilities, such as bathrooms and toilets
- accessible room requirements in accommodation buildings
- making work arrangements more flexible
- training your staff to ensure they feel comfortable with communicating and working with people with disability

A disability can lead to participation barriers or activity limitations, that are then impacted by participation barriers in the workplace, including:

- Social barriers group attitudes, workplace culture, exclusion
- Physical barriers accessibility, inadequate workplace personalisation
- Attitudinal barriers includes limitations that others perceive about the person with disability, stereotyping, stigma, prejudice and discrimination
- Practice and policy barriers includes failure to provide reasonable workplace personalisation, policies that do not provide equitable access and participation for employees with disability
- Communication barriers inaccessible information including technology deficiency, interpretation, technical jargon that is inaccessible to individuals with cognitive impairment.

Creating a disability-friendly workplace

- Adapting the workplace or the working environment
- Removing physical barriers
- Making some changes to how work is organised
- Ensuring that information is provided in accessible formats
- Modifying or acquiring equipment including assistive digital technology
- Offering specialist training and support
- Providing more flexible employment including part-time hours and a phased return to work.

"There are some thoughts that employing a person with a disability is a bit difficult, but if you take it back to the baseline, if they have got the inherent ability to do the job and they do have a disability, you just need to have a very gentle conversation around; is there anything that we need to do to reasonably accommodate you so you can do your job properly?".

> Liz Reid Executive Officer YouthWorX NT

Able workplace values

People with disability are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth, and the right to be treated fairly and with dignity.

People with disability have the same rights as other members of Australian society to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

People with disability have the same right as all Australians to pursue meaningful employment and a chosen career where their skills and talents can be developed, and their aspirations realised.

Able workplace leadership

It is highly likely that, as a manager, you will supervise a worker with mental illness at some point in your career – whether you know it or not. Mental illness is more prevalent than many people realise.

Around 45% of Australians aged between 16 and 85 will experience a mental illness at some point in their life, while one in five Australian adults will experience a mental illness in any given year.

A worker may develop mental illness prior to, or during employment. Most workers successfully manage their illness without it impacting on their work. Some may require workplace support for a short period of time, while a minority will require ongoing workplace strategies.

It is often presumed that a worker's mental illness develops outside of the workplace. However, an 'unhealthy' work environment or a workplace incident, can cause considerable stress and exacerbate, or contribute to, the development of mental illness.

Research from many number, of sources indicates that 'job stress and other work-related psychosocial hazards are emerging as the leading contributors to the burden of occupational disease and injury'.

It is clear that the cost of ignoring the problem is far greater than the cost of developing and implementing strategies to create a safe and healthy workplace.

Managers within an Able Work Environment should ensure they:

- Develop placement & employment opportunities for disability
- · Provide targeted training opportunities
- Develop inclusion & diversity toolkits, policies and procedures for all staff
- Adopt and promote best practice models on supporting disability within the work environment
- Utilise established feedback mechanisms for gauging employee satisfaction
- Monitor sector progress towards outcomes of the strategy through annual review of implementation plan
- Develop and implement initiatives to improve agency culture
- Participate in Disability Awareness events and engage in continuous improvement in relation to inclusion and diversity
- Provide flexibility for mental health days and support
- Include information on disability and services at workplace inductions

Workplace culture

- · Communicate definition of disability and work with staff, clients and stakeholders
- Invest in memberships with Disability Peak Bodies, Australian Network on Disability, Diversity Council of Australia
- Utilise specialist disability services for information and advice (e.g. job design, workplace personalisation etc.)
- Develop resources (inclusion and diversity toolkit) to support best practice approaches
- Provide networking opportunities through inclusion and diversity forums
- Building resources to support compliance in recruitment process
- Promote the use and processes for workplace personalisation, flexible work arrangements and other workplace design initiatives

Inclusive consultation and engagement

People with disability should have as much say about the planning and development of services and activities as other people in the community. When talking with stakeholders, it is important to include people with disability so that the views of the whole community are included.

Why is consultation and engagement important?

Organisations should aim to engage with, and get the views of stakeholders and the broader community to:

- generate ideas or get feedback on available options
- help with the planning and development of activities, policies and programs
- · understand what is working well, what needs to be improved, and how to make improvements
- find out how they feel about:
 - programs
 - services
 - facilities

Premises standards

Premises Standards set out the minimum requirements for building work to make sure that people with a disability can use the building in a dignified way.

The standards apply to new buildings and parts of existing buildings that are undergoing modifications, require building approval, and were lodged on or after 1 May 2011.

If this applies to the building your business operates out of, you should read more about how the Disability (Access to premises - Buildings) Standards 2010 applies to your business. Generally, private residences are not covered by the premises Standards.

What is inclusive consultation and engagement?

Inclusive consultation and engagement includes:

- · adopting flexible approaches for consultation to suit individuals and groups
- · taking into account a variety of access and communication requirements
- respecting people's differences
- giving people an equal opportunity to contribute

Support for workers with disability

As an employer, it's good to know that there's also support for workers with disability to help them adjust to their workplace. Here are a couple of examples:

Employment Assistance Fund provides financial help to buy work related modifications and services. This help is available for people with a disability who are about to start a job, who are currently working, or who need help finding and preparing for work.

Job Access has information for people with disability about finding work and being supported in the workplace.

International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD)

December 3rd is International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD). The day celebrates the achievements of people with a disability and aims to raise awareness and acceptance of all people.

IDPwD aims to:

- bring together businesses, governments and communities to recognise the contributions and celebrate the accomplishments of people with a disability
- promote the understanding of people with a disability
- encourage support for their dignity, rights and well-being

Learn how you can celebrate the day in your workplace on the International Day of People with Disability website.

Further information

Legislation

Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 2015

The Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act plays a crucial role in the human rights of people with disability. The Act promotes equality of opportunity for all people in the Territory and provides remedies for people who have suffered unlawful discrimination on the grounds outlined in the Act. The Act also prohibits direct discrimination, in the area of work, on the basis of disability.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

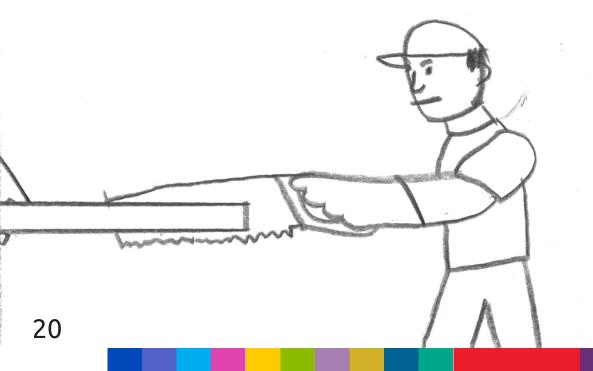
The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act makes disability discrimination unlawful and aims to promote equal opportunity and access for people with disability, including in relation to employment.

Disability Services Act 1986

The Commonwealth Disability Services Act aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to assisting people with disability to gain and maintain employment. The Act also provides a set of guiding standards for the delivery of quality services, known as Disability Service Standards.

National Disability Agreement 2012

The National Disability Agreement is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). It provides a strong commitment from the Australian Government, states and territories, to provide more opportunities for people with disability to participate and enjoy Australia's economic and social life



"Thinking of employing someone with a disability? Don't be shy, ask them anything, you can't offend them if they're going to work for you. You need to know what their needs are, what their difficulties are, and what their strengths are".

Paul McKenzie (Macca)



Communication with people with disabilities

Speak to a person with a disability as you would speak to anyone else. Speak in an age-appropriate tone and treat adults as adults.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by another person, such as a carer, you should still speak directly to the person with disability.

Put the person first, not their disability. For example, use the term 'a person with disability' rather than 'a disabled person'.

Try to avoid negative phrases such as 'suffers from' and 'crippled'.

Use the phrase 'people who use a wheelchair' rather than 'wheelchair bound'.

Communicating with people with physical disabilities

Remember that someone's personal space can include their wheelchair and crutches. Don't touch or push a person's wheelchair, and don't move their crutches or walking stick without their permission.

When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to find something to sit on to be at eye level with them.

Communicating with people with a vision impairment

When you meet people who have a vision impairment, always address them by name and introduce yourself.

Speak clearly and in a normal voice – there is no need to raise your voice.

Remember that people with vision impairment can't rely on the same visual cues as people without a vision impairment. Make sure you verbalise any thoughts or feelings.

If a person is accompanied by a guide dog, don't pat it, feed it or distract it while it's in a harness. A dog in a harness is working to support its owner.

When you enter or leave a room, say something to make sure that the person who has a vision impairment won't be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.

Communicating with people with a hearing impairment

Gain the person's attention before speaking. Try a gentle tap on the shoulder, a wave or some other visual signal to get the person's attention.

Face the person directly and maintain eye contact.

Make sure your mouth is visible – don't cover it with your hand or any other object as you talk.

Look directly at the person while speaking and don't speak too fast or too slow.

Don't exaggerate your mouth movements – this will only make it more difficult to lip-read.

Use short sentences.

Keep your volume at a natural level – don't shout.

Communicating with people with an intellectual disability

Make sure you have the person's attention before you start talking. Try using their name or making eye contact.

Keep your questions simple and your answers easy to understand.

Remember that your body language is important because people with an intellectual disability often rely on visual cues.

Be prepared to use visual information, or to get visual information, from people with an intellectual disability.

Be specific and direct. Avoid talking using abstracts, acronyms, metaphors or puns.



A JobAccess Adviser can help you with expert information on disability employment and can assist you with appropriate pathways for employment, training and assistance, and with accessing Australian Government funding.

General Enquiries 1800 464 800

https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/

Employer Hotline

If you would like more information about the services available for Employers, or to lodge a vacancy on the job active website.

Employer Hotline 13 17 15.

Financial support

Learn about workplace modifications and assessments, wage subsidies, productivity payments and workplace support.

What JobAccess Do

Disability employment services

Free help for people with disability, injury or health condition to find and keep a job. Also helps employers to recruit, support, and retain employees with disability.

Tools and resources

Tools, resources and services to help you employ people with disability, dedicated Employer awareness raising Seminars, information about the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator and more.

Developing strategies and plans

Advice on creating and maintaining disability employment strategies, action plans and employee support plans.

Connect with the disability employment sector

Connecting with providers of Disability Employment Services, peak bodies and other employers to promote workplace diversity.

Creating a flexible work environment

Information on understanding disability, managing mental health and creating a disability-confident workplace.

Recruiting and retaining the right people

Tips for finding candidates, interviewing people with disability, providing work experience and supporting staff with disability.

Finding jobseekers with disability

Advice on employment websites, using the jobactive website and the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator.



Key facts, strategies & stats

One of the priority outcomes of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 is to 'increase access to employment opportunities as a key to improving economic security and personal wellbeing for people with disability.'

Employment can provide:

- Financial independence
- A better standard of living
- · Improved physical and mental health
- · Provide individuals with increased confidence
- · Expand individuals social network and social skills
- Give opportunities to develop a career by gaining new work skills and knowledge

Recently, we have seen major developments towards achieving workplace equality for all Australians, including those with a disability. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) aims to protect people from discrimination because of their disability.

Following a Productivity Commission Review in 2004, the DDA was reformed to further protect the equality of opportunity for people with disability. In addition to legislative protection, since 2009 employment support has been provided through the National Disability Agreement (NDA).

Although there have been improvements in antidiscrimination legislation, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) data shows that people with a disability are still less likely to be participating in the labour force than other Australians. According to data from SDAC, there has been little change in the labour force participation rate for people with disability aged 15-64 years between 1993's 54.9% and 2012's 52.8%.

Trying to gain employment can be overwhelming for most of us, but for a person living with a disability, it can be incredibly overwhelming and limiting. Some people with a disability experience employment restrictions, such as being restricted in the type of job they can do or the number of hours they can work, or needing special assistance in the workplace.

People with disability who had an employment restriction were far less likely to be participating in the labour force (44.0%) than those without an employment restriction (71.3%).

The likelihood of living with disability increases with age. In 2012, the disability rate among 15-24-year old's was 7.9% but the rate was higher for successively older age groups, with 18.0% of 45-54 year olds, and 29.0% of 55-64 year old's living with disability in 2012. The type of disability influences whether assistance is needed in the workplace, and the kind of assistance required.

Employed people with an intellectual or psychological disability are likely to require special working arrangements, with nearly one-quarter (24.7% and 20.3% respectively) receiving assistance, such as a support person to assist or train them on the job.

People with a physical disability who were working were less likely to require special working arrangements, with around one in ten (11.2%) receiving special working arrangements. For this disability group, assistance provided took the form of special equipment (37.4%).

The severity of disability also influenced whether a person required any special work arrangements, with 8.5% of employed people with moderate or mild disability needing special work arrangements, compared with over one-quarter (28.0%) of those with profound or severe disability.

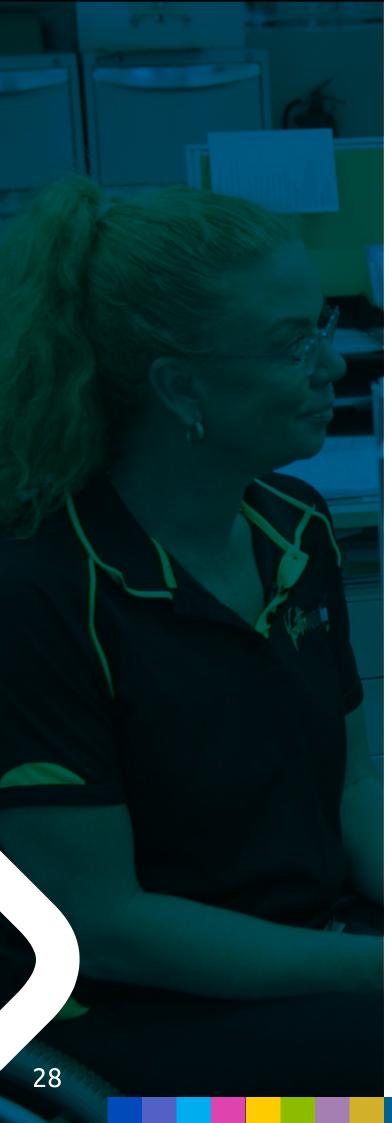
In 2012, the labour force participation rate was higher for people with profound or severe limitations at 29.7 per cent.

Other key 2015 figures for Australians of working age include:

- The unemployment rate for people with disability was 10 per cent, compared to people without disability at 5.3 per cent.
- Just over one-quarter (27 per cent) of people with disability were working full-time, compared with more than half (53.8 per cent) of those without disability.
- Almost half of people with disability were not in the labour force (46.6 per cent), compared to 16.8 per cent of those without disability.
- There was an increase in the number of people with disability working part-time, from 19 per cent in 2012 to 21.1 per cent in 2015.Labour force participation rates provide a measure of the proportion of the population who are either employed or actively looking for work.

The participation rate for people with disability peaked in the 25-34 year age group while for those without disability, participation peaked at 45-54 years. People aged 55-64 years with disability had the lowest participation rate (40.9%) of all the age groups. Their lower participation rate may partly reflect the desire for retirement, or difficulties experienced by mature-age job seekers, which can discourage some from looking for work.

There were differences in labour force participation between working-age men and women among those with disability, with women (49.0%) less likely to participate than men (56.6%). This was also true for people without disability (76.5% and 88.5% respectively).



The Northern Territory

In the NT, People with disability represent 11.3% of the population, which is significantly lower than the national average (18.3%). This is possibly related to the younger demographic of the NT.

Labour Force participation rates were highest in the ACT and lowest in Tasmania, compared with those without a disability where NT had the highest participation rates and NSW has the lowest.

The Northern Territory Government Public Sector (NTPS) aims to become an employer of choice for people with disability. The overall goals of the EmployAbility Strategy are to:

- Increase the attraction and retention rates for people with disability
- Improve career opportunities in the NTPS for people with disability
- Raise awareness of the value that people with disability may bring to the workplace and increase disability confidence
- Create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

The EmployAbility Strategy is designed to improve the participation of people with disability in the Northern Territory Public Sector. It gives agencies the tools, information, and resources to help people with disability fulfil their potential in the workforce.

This strategy focuses on four key focus areas:

- · nurturing an inclusive workplace culture
- · supporting attraction and retention practices
- supporting skills acquisition and career development
- · promoting accessibility

Percentage of NT population with disability by working age 15-64 years of age

Australia

In 2015, there were 2.1 million Australians of working age with disability. Of these, one million were employed and another 114,900 were looking for work. This means that 53.4 per cent of working age people with disability were in the labour force, compared to 83.2 per cent of people without a disability.

A link can be made between the number of people with disability who are working and the severity of their limitation. In 2015, 25 per cent of people with a profound or severe limitation were working, compared with 58.9 per cent of those with a mild limitation.

The Australian Government, through the National Disability Agreement, provides support to people with disability who wish to enter employment. Under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, federal, and state and territory governments are making a concerted effort

to improve and increase employment services for people with disability.

In addition, reforms to the Australian welfare support system, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, aim to create increased opportunities for people with disability to enter and maintain employment. Increases in labour force participation may improve both financial security and personal wellbeing for people with disability.

The NDIS will be responsible for funding supports that assist people with disability prepare for, and take part in, work where the person has work capacity but needs some more support before receiving ongoing employment support through existing systems.

Employment services and programs, including both disability-targeted and open employment services, will continue to be responsible for providing advice and support to:

People with disability to prepare for, find, and maintain jobs; Encourage employers to hire and be inclusive of people with disability in the workplace (e.g. support, training and resources, funding assistance to help employers make reasonable adjustments, and incentives for hiring people with disability, such as wage subsidies).

Underemployment

Not only were people with disability more likely to be employed part-time, they were also more likely to be underemployed. Almost one-third of the people with disability (32.4%) who were working part-time wanted to work more hours, compared with just over one-

quarter of people without disability (27.1%).

The level of underemployment varied with the severity of the disability, ranging from 22.0% of those with a profound core activity limitation, to 38.2% of those with an educational or employment restriction only.

The level of underemployment also varied depending on the type of disability a person had - people with an intellectual or psychological disability were more likely to be underemployed (38.8% and 36.2% respectively) than people with a physical restriction (29.4%).

Industry

Almost one-fifth (19.9%) of working-age people with disability who were employed in 2012 worked as professionals, followed by labourers (15.2%) and clerical and administrative workers (14.1%).

The distribution of people across different occupations is similar for people with or without disability, with the exception of Labourers, who had a significantly higher proportion of people with disability (15.2%) compared with those without (9.0%).

However, there was some variation of occupations according to the type of disability. For example, almost one-half (44.3%) of employed people with intellectual disability were working as labourers, such as packers and product assemblers or cleaners and laundry workers in 2012, while one-fifth (20.4%) of employed people with a physical disability were in professional occupations, such as school teachers or midwifery and nursing professionals.

Both people with and without disability had similar distributions across industry groups. Some industries



had a higher than average (9.3%) disability prevalence rate, particularly Agriculture, forestry and fishing (15.0%), Administrative and Support Services (12.7%) and Health care and social assistance (12.3%).

People with disability who were working were more likely to run their own business (11.6%), and/or work from home (33.7%), than employed people without disability (8.8% and 28.4% respectively). Such situations may enhance the flexibility of working arrangements, making it easier for people with disability to participate in the labour force.

The unemployment rates of men and women with disability were not significantly different (9.5% and 9.3% respectively).

As with the labour force participation rate, the unemployment rate varied among disability groups and the severity of a person's disability. People with sensory or speech disability had the lowest unemployment rate (7.7%). Conversely, people living with psychological or intellectual disability had the highest unemployment rates (20.4% and 20.0% respectively). People with a profound core activity limitation also had a higher unemployment rate (10.3%) than those with a mild core activity limitation (9.5%).

The amount of time unemployed people with disability had been looking for work was longer than people without disability. People with disability were significantly more likely to still be looking for a job 13 weeks or longer after they first started (65.5%) compared with those without disability (56.1%). The disability group with the highest proportion of people still looking for work for 13 weeks or longer was people with head injury, stroke or brain damage (80.5%).

Two-thirds of unemployed people with a profound or severe core activity limitation (68.5%) reported their condition was the main reason they were having difficulty finding work. More than half the unemployed people with a head injury, stroke or brain damage or psychological disability (57.7% and 57.0% respectively) also reported this as the main difficulty they experienced in their job seeking attempts.

One in seven unemployed people with disability reported they will need support or special arrangements at work. The most commonly reported support arrangements needed for this population were being allocated different duties (5.6%) and training/retraining (4.8%).

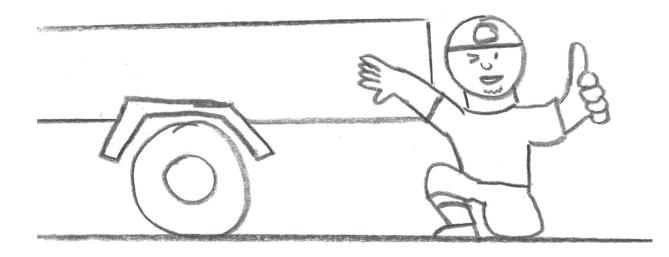
In 2012, of people aged 15-64 years with disability, 47.3% were not in the labour force, that is, they were neither employed nor actively looking for work. This is significantly higher than people without disability (17.5%).

Of all people with disability who were not in the labour force, more than half were women (55.0%). In comparison, over two-thirds (66.8%) of people without disability who were not in the labour force were women. Nearly half (42.7%) of people with disability who were not in the labour force were aged 55-64 years. Of people aged 55-64 years with disability and not in the labour force, one-fifth (20.2%) reported long-term illness or injury as a reason for not wanting to work, much higher than for people of the same age without disability (2.3%).

Being permanently unable to work was reported by one-third (33.6%) of those with disability who were not in the labour force as the main reason for not wanting, or not being able to work. Other main reasons for not being in the labour force were having a long-term illness or disability (16.5%) or being satisfied with their current arrangements/retired (for now) (5.8%). Of people with disability who were not in the labour force, the majority found it difficult to find a job due to their illness or disability.

People aged 15-64 years with a more severe disability, were less likely to be in the labour force, with 80.0% of those with a profound core activity limitation not participating in the labour force, compared with 35.1% of those restricted in schooling or employment.

People with a psychological disability were less likely to be in the labour force (29.1%) than people with sensory or speech impairment (56.2%).



"It is important that when you open the doors of your workplace, and you open your ideas to hiring somebody who has a disability, you also open your eyes to the potential benefits that can be accrued for everybody. You do need to consider your whole work place and say, well perhaps we can improve in lots of areas just by the very nature of having someone with a disability on our team."

Rachel Kroes Executive Officer Down Syndrome Association NT



Q: Do I have to hire someone with a disability?

A: While an employer is not obligated by legislation to specifically hire a person with a disability, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone in the workplace because they have, or are assumed to have, a disability. Employees are protected from discrimination at all stages of employment including recruitment, workplace terms and conditions, and dismissal.

Q: Does someone with a disability take more sick leave than other employees?

A: No, in fact research shows that people with disabilities take less than those without disability.

Q: Are disabled employees reliable?

A: Once in the right job, people with disability perform equally as well as other employees.

Q: Will it be more expensive for my business to hire a disabled person?

A: Recruitment, insurance cover and compensation costs are lower. People with disability have fewer compensation incidents and accidents at work in comparison to other employees. Specialised services are available at no cost to support businesses with the employment of a disabled person.

Q: Will a person's disability affect my business image negatively?

A: people with disability build strong relationships with customers and boost staff morale and loyalty by helping to create a diverse workforce.

Q: What are supported employment services?

A: Supported employment services refers to provisions wherein people with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, mental health, and traumatic brain injury, among others, are assisted with obtaining and maintaining employment by a specialised employment service.

My Pathway is an example of a service provider registered with Disability Employment Services (DES).

For more information: https://www.mpath.com.au/

Q: What is Open Employment?

A: Open employment means doing a job which can be done by any person. You do the same job as your co-workers and are paid the same wages.

Q: What is a Workplace Disability Champion?

A: A Workplace Disability Champion is a role within the workplace that requires the person to:

- champion equal access and inclusion for people with disability in the business
- advocate good practice relating to employment policies and processes
- provide leadership to drive disability-related employment initiatives and organisational change to create workplaces that value and support people with disability
- commit to understanding the barriers and representing the rights of employees with disability across the business more broadly

Resources





NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2018 - 2022

The NTPS Employability Strategy 2018-2022 Implementation Plan The NTPS Employability Strategy 2018-2022 Evaluation Framework OCPE Strategic Plan (2017-2020) Disability Employment Program Guidelines

https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf_file/0006/246255/NTPS-EmployAbility-Strategy-2018-2022-Booklet-nohands-web.pdf

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) developed and endorsed a 10-year National Disability Strategy designed to inform and focus policy development at all levels of government and to provide national leadership toward greater inclusion of people with disability.

https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/policy-research/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05 2012/national disability strategy 2010 2020.pdf

Willing to Work

Willing to work is a national Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability link provides a 2016 Good practice examples from 2016

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/willing-work-good-practice-examples-employers-2016

Employment Under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/employment supports the ndis will fund.pdf

JobAccess

https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/accessabilityday

Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act:

The Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act plays a crucial role in this human rights framework. The Act promotes equality of opportunity for all people in the Territory and provides remedies for people who have suffered unlawful discrimination on the grounds outlined in the Act. The Act also prohibits direct discrimination, in the area of work, on the basis of disability.

Section 24 deals with workplace personalisations (accommodation of special needs).

Section 57 makes provision for special measures to promote equality of opportunity for groups of people who are disadvantaged or who have special needs.

Disability Discrimination Act 199212

https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/ANTIDISCRIMINATION-ACT

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act:

Aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to assisting people with disability to gain and maintain employment. The Act also provides a set of guiding standards for the delivery of quality services, known as Disability Service Standards.

National Disability Agreement 201214

The National Disability Agreement is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). It provides a strong commitment from the Australian Government, states and territories to provide more opportunities for people with disability to participate and enjoy Australia's economic and social life.

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act

Australian Bureau of Statistics

This link provides information from the 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC). It follows the release of the First Results in April 2016, which are also included in this publication.

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4430.0

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4430.0Main%20Features202015



Government

Office of Disability NT

Phone: 1800 139 656

Email: <u>topendintake.ths@nt.gov.au</u> or <u>centralaustraliaintake.ths@nt.gov.au</u>

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Phone: 1800 800 110 www.ndis.gov.au

Department Of Social Services

Phone: 1300 653 227 www.dss.gov.au

Department Of Business NT - Workforcent

Phone: (08) 8935 7708

Email: WorkforceNT.dtbi@nt.gov.au

www.business.nt.gov.au

Worksafe NT

Employment, Education & Training Services

Job Access

General Enquiries 1800 464 800 Employer Hotline 13 17 15 www.jobaccess.gov.au

Disability Employment and Training Hardship and Emergency Relief

Phone: (08) 8948 9999 Email: info@dsds.org.au www.dsds.org.au

Youth Employment and Training Disability

Phone: (08) 8981 8870 Email: info@ywnt.com.au www.ywnt.com.au

HPA - Helping People Achieve

Phone: (08) 8947 0681 Email: inspire@hpa.net.au

www.helpingpeopleachieve.com.au

NT Friendship & Support Inc.

Phone: Katherine (08) 89710027 Alice Springs (08) 8971 0027 Email: admin@ntfriendship.org.au

www.ntfriendship.org.au

Support Services

ParaQuad NT & BrightSky Australia

Phone: (08) 8914 8940

Email: info@paraquadnt.org.au

www.paraquad.org.au

Autism Northern Territory

Phone: (08) 8948 4424

Email: autismnt@autismnt.org.au

www.autismnt.org.au

Carers NT

Phone: (08) 8953 1669

Email: carersnt@carersnt.asn.au

www.carersnt.asn.au

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society of South Australia & Northern Territory

Phone: 1800 812 311 Email: info@ms.asn.au

www.ms.asn.au

Guide Dogs SA/NT

Phone: (08) 8995 2222

www.guidedogs.org.au/northern-territory

Dementia Australia NT

Phone: 1800 100 500

Email: nt.admin.d@dementia.org.au

www.dementia.org.au

Down Syndrome Association of the NT

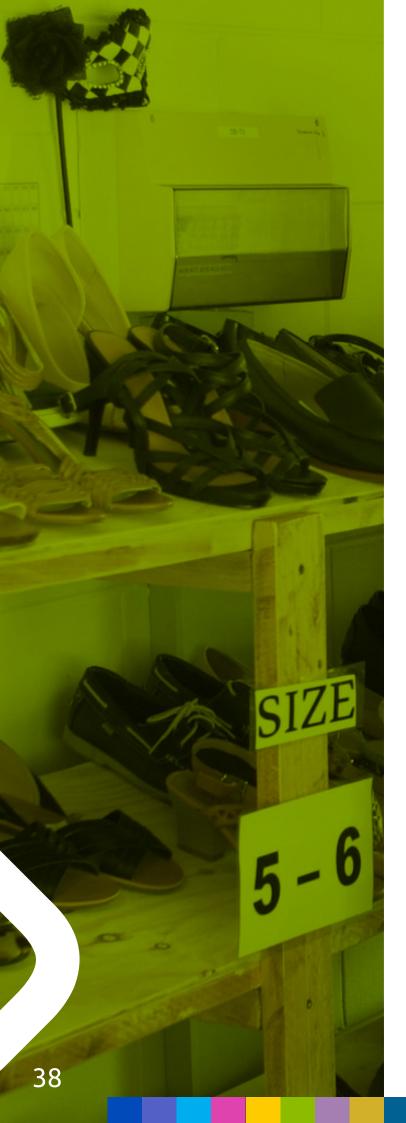
Phone: (08) 8985 6222

Email: admin@downsyndroment.com.au

www.downsyndroment.com.au

Territory Care & Support Services (TCASS)

Phone: (08) 8927 3060 Email: tcass@bigpond.com.au www.tcassdarwin.com.au



Advocacy

National Disability Services (NDS) Northern Territory

Phone: (08) 8941 0634 Email: ndsnt@nds.org.au

/www.nds.org.au

Integrated Disability Action (IDA)

Phone: (08) 8948 5400 Email: office@idainc.org.au

www.idainc.org.au

Disability Advocacy Service

Phone: (08) 8953 1422 Email: manager@das.org.au

www.das.org.au

Social & Community

Disabled Sports Association

Phone: (08) 8945 4800

Email: disabledsportnt@bigpond.com

Total Recreation NT

Phone: (08) 8981 3686

Email; admin@totalrecreation.org.au

www.totalrecreation.org.au

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4430.0

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4430.0Main%20Features202015

NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2018 - 2022

https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0006/246255/NTPS-EmployAbility-Strategy-2018-2022-Booklet-nohands-web.pdf

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05 2012/national disability strategy 2010 2020.pdf

Willing to Work

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/WTW 2016 Full Report AHRC ac.pdf

Employment Under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/employment supports the ndis will fund.pdf

Job Access

https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/accessabilityday

Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act:

https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/ANTIDISCRIMINATION-ACT

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act:

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act

