

Strategies & Statistics



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.’

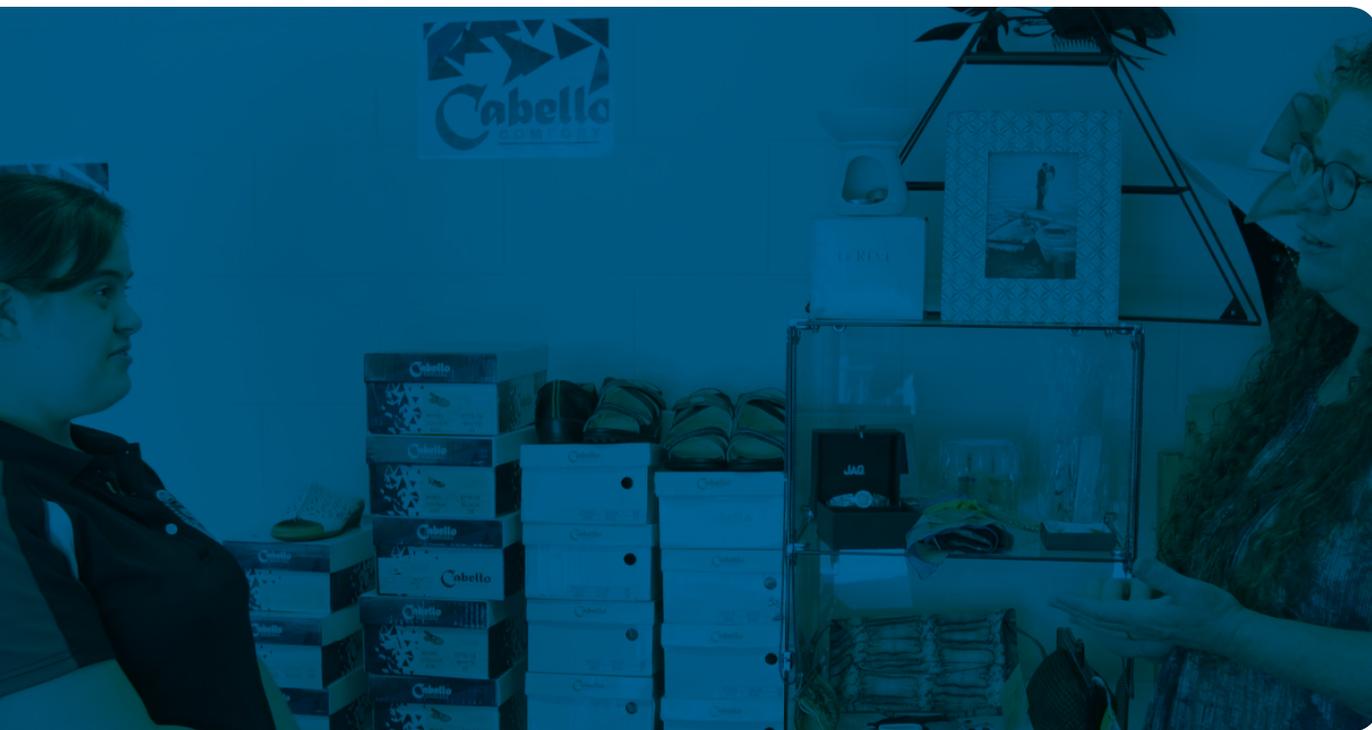
Employment can provide:

- **Financial independence**
- **A better standard of living**
- **Improved physical and mental health**
- **Provide individuals with increased confidence**
- **Expand individuals social network and social skills and**
- **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 anti-discrimination 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 olds 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 olds 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.

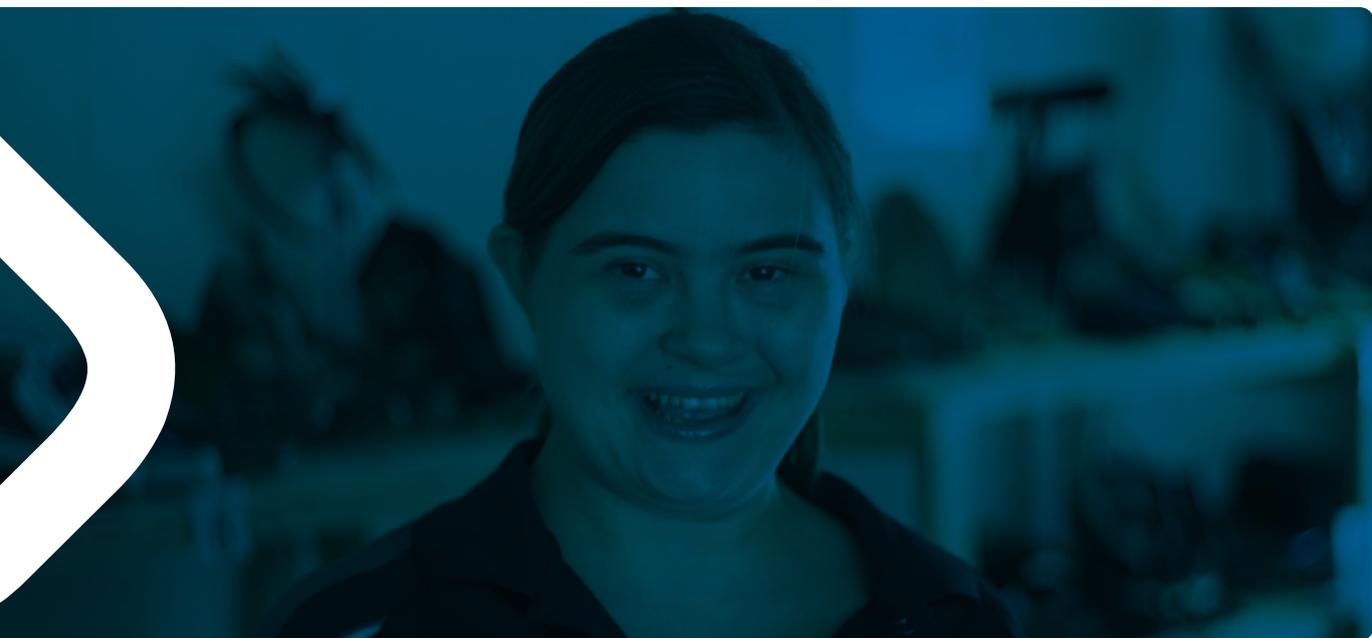
The Australian Government, through the National Disability Agreement, provides support to people with disability who wish to enter employment. Under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, federal, and state and territory governments are making a concerted effort to improve and increase employment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