**WA Employment Pilot: A case study with Inclusion WA**



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One of the best predictors of employment post school is a casual or part-time job while still at school.

This month, NDS sat down with Jessica De Masi, Coordinator at Inclusion WA, to talk about the organisation’s involvement in a pilot that aims to give students the best opportunity to start their post-school lives with employment.

The School-To-Work Project - funded by the Disability Services Commission and partly-funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) WA - gives students in Years 10 and above access to 150 hours (approx. $8,300) of support focused on achieving open employment. Support was available to about 300 NDIS participants in the NDIS Perth Hills area and another 200 students when the trial site expanded from 1 January.

This evidence-based project is underpinned by [Ticket to Work](https://www.nds.org.au/resources/ticket-to-work), an initiative of National Disability Services (NDS) predicated on the notion of collaborative and locally-based multi-sectorial partnerships to improve outcomes for young people rather than working programmatically or discretely.

This pilot is founded on the belief that all people who wish to work can, if they are given the appropriate support.

A defining feature of the initiative is its [Customised Employment approach](http://www.griffinhammis.com/customizedemployment.html) and Discovery Process which involves gaining a comprehensive understanding of the student in all of their natural environments to discover which types of employment options and conditions will work best for them.

NDS in WA delivered training on the Customised Employment approach in 2016 to key stakeholders to establish a common framework and the knowledge, skills and resources for everyone to work together. This involved disability organisations, NDIS Planners, Department of Education staff, school staff and parents.

Inclusion WA has been embedding the Customised Employment approach in their organisation and undertaking the Discovery Process with each student and their circles of support. This includes family members, education staff (principal and education assistants), employment consultants from Disability Employment Services (DES) and/or Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE), and community members (e.g. sports team coaches).

Approximately 25 to 30 hours is dedicated to the Discovery Process to help students and their families to develop a broad perspective of what is desirable and what is possible. The process explores the students’:

* Individual strengths
* Unique interests and motivations
* Ideal type of work tasks
* Ideal type of work environment
* Ideal time of day
* Ideal way to receive work instructions

Here is an [example of the Discovery Process](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FPIeCubuPo).

Rather than competing in the labour market, this initiative supports students to create their own opportunities.

Inclusion WA has been supporting students to develop a Discovery Record that showcases the student’s competencies and interests. The organisation uses this to negotiate a match between what the job seeker has to offer and what the employer needs. The students are guided through interview preparation, cold calling, industry visits, work experiences, communication skills and negotiating job roles and employment conditions.

Inclusion WA has supported individuals to achieve employment outcomes, for example:

* A young person wanted a job at a food outlet. They couldn’t initially work eight hours, so Inclusion WA stepped in until this goal was reached.
* A young person had been working at a food outlet for two years in the same role and Inclusion WA stepped in to increase the individual’s skill development and their hours.
* A young person overcame significant anxiety on public transport through support from Inclusion WA. The individual is now confident to travel to work independently.

The Project is achieving broader positive outcomes including:

* Buy-in from all stakeholders
* Exploration and prioritisation of employment goals
* Development and implementation of employment pathways
* A more comprehensive and collaborative planning process
* Links to the local Ticket to Work network, which have fostered stronger collaboration with multi sectorial partnerships, for example:

            - Capitalising on DES expertise and connections. (This was not previously possible as it was considered ‘double dipping’.)

            - Drawing on the expertise of therapists to undertake job analysis

* The signature of a Memorandum of Understanding by some DES and SEE providers in order to strengthen their partnership
* Capacity building of mainstream services and systems to address the need of young people with disability through a collective impact framework

Increasingly, people are focusing on employment-related goals such as work experience, volunteer work or paid work.

When Inclusion WA analysed all of their clients’ goals, 44 per cent of their clients had employment aspirations.

Inclusion WA is focusing on the employment goals of their existing clients and plans to extend the service model from students transitioning from school to adults who want to work and people wanting to transition from supported employment to open employment.

For further information on Inclusion WA and their approaches, please contact:

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