**Study shows long-term benefits of supporting young Australians with disability to prepare for work**

Evidence shows that young people with disability are able to thrive in open employment when prepared and supported while at school through a coordinated approach.

A new evaluation report shows that Ticket to Work, an initiative of National Disability Services, is providing effective school-to-work transition supports for young people with disability.

The outcomes study by independent consultants, ARTD, compares past Ticket to Work participants with other young people with disability and shows impressive outcomes across a broad range of indicators including levels of job satisfaction, independence and social participation.

The Ticket to Work group also reported less reliance on disability support pensions and other government allowances with 86% working for award or above award wages.

Prior scoping research showed that young Australians with disability are not successfully transitioning from school into further training or employment; an indicator of long-term, often lifelong, disadvantage.

Australian young people with disability are more likely than their peers without disability to drop out of school and be socially isolated. By comparison, all of the Ticket to Work participants interviewed had completed their secondary education as well as additional post-school qualifications.

‘The evidence is clear: young people with disability aspire to work and can contribute positively to their workplaces with the right supports. We have an opportunity to support them at a critical transition period – during school as they and their peers plan for life in the real world.’ says Michelle Wakeford, National Ticket to Work Manager.

Ticket to Work brings together community-based organisations to prepare young people with disability for the world of work through a combination of transition-focused curriculum, career development, work preparation, work experience and Australian School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (ASBATs).

A national Ticket to Work office coordinates local Ticket to Work networks across the country to operate with a localised and person-centred approach.

Each young person is supported on the basis of their needs and employment aspirations: one young person and one employer with the appropriate supports at every stage.

Local Ticket to Work networks are made up of schools, Disability Employment Services (DES), National Disability Coordination Offices (NDCOs), registered training organisations, group training organisations and other community agencies.

The longitudinal outcomes study is the first of a series of evaluation pieces examining the results of Ticket to Work since its inception as a small pilot in 2012.

While the study’s sample size is relatively small, the results are promising and will be followed up with a larger cohort as further results become available over 2016.