Recognising Ability: Business and the Employment of People with Disability



Business Council of Australia

Contents

A report on the disability employment approaches of BCA members	3
Introduction – the importance of participation	4
PART 1: SURVEY FINDINGS	6
Summary of survey findings	6
Key findings	6
Survey respondents	7
Disability employment activities	7
Recruitment and retention	11
Drivers and benefits	13
Barriers	15
Advice and use of services or providers	16
PART 2: CASE STUDIES AND WHAT WORKS	19
Building the business case	19
Partnerships to source talent	20
Whole-of-business commitment	21
Adopt a holistic focus to inclusion	22
Workplace adjustment	23
Creating entry points and pathways into work for young people with disability	24
Services and supports business can access	25
Recommendations for better practice and reform	28

About the Business Council of Australia

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) is a forum for the chief executives of Australia's largest companies to promote economic and social progress in the national interest.

Acknowledgements

The Business Council of Australia would like to thank the members of the expert reference group who provided guidance and advice in the development of this report:

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A report on the disability employment approaches of BCA members

This report summarises the results of a survey conducted by the Business Council aimed at generating baseline data and insights about disability employment practices and experiences among member companies. This is the first time the Business Council has conducted a survey on approaches to disability employment.

Part One of the report outlines the survey results. **Part Two** profiles successful initiatives and good practice and **Part Three** identifies steps to help increase the employment of people with disability.

Introduction – the importance of participation

For people with disability, employment is not just about jobs. It's about being valued, useful and included.

For business, it's important to have access to diverse talent and a workforce that's inclusive of the community.

For Australia, national prosperity is about helping create the context for everyone to participate and contribute.

Australia has participation and productivity challenges that need to be addressed to achieve the growth required to underpin Australia's long-term prosperity and social wellbeing.

People with disability are disproportionately low participants in the workforce – many want to work, or work more, but can face barriers. Many of these barriers are attitudinal and historical, and they can be overcome through new thinking from both government and business.

Boosting the active participation of people with disability will deliver individual, social and economic returns, including reducing the rate of spending growth in some areas. Benefits will flow to productivity through a diversified workforce and the inclusion of new ideas and perspectives.

"Building long-term opportunities for people with disability goes hand-in-hand with business and government goals to boost participation, productivity and strengthen the capacity for human innovation." – Mike Smith, CEO, ANZ

The BCA wants to lead by identifying good practice among its members and encouraging wider business adoption of successful initiatives.

Our first survey shows that, while a cohort of businesses are leading in efforts to employ and retain people with disability, there is more we could be doing to take full advantage of the contributions that people with disability can make to business and the economy.

Disability and employment – at a glance

- A disability is defined as having one or more impairments that impact on daily life and last for six months or longer.¹
- The most common disability group is physical restriction, affecting 67.5% of working-age people with disability. Other groups include people with psychological disability (21.7%) or sensory and speech disability (20.4%).
- 15% of our working age population have a disability 2.2 million people.
- 18.5% of the population have a disability 4.2 million people.
- Working age people with disability have lower participation (53%) and higher unemployment rates (9.4%) than people without disability (83% and 4.9% respectively).
- In 2012, nearly half (47.3%) of all working-age people with disability were not in the labour force.
- Disability rates increase with age: 18.0% of 45–54 year olds and 29.0% of 55–64 year olds live with disability.
- Almost 20% of people with disability who are not in the labour force have no employment restriction, meaning it's not their disability preventing them from working.
- Last year there were 814,000 Australians receiving the Disability Support Pension, costing \$17 billion.
- People with disability aged 15 years and over are more likely to live in a household in the lowest two household income quintiles than those without disability (48% compared with 22%).
- According to Australian Network on Disability analysis of ABS data, the disability employment rate in the private sector is 9.2%, and in the government sector 9.4%.

¹ The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has a more specific definition of disability https://www.humanrights.gov.au/dda-guide-who-does-dda-protect

PART 1: SURVEY FINDINGS

Summary of survey findings

Key findings

- Seventy-five per cent of companies have a plan or strategy regarding employing people with disability, mostly (60%) included in their overall diversity strategy.
- One-third of respondents actively seek to employ people with disability (meaning purposefully sourcing applicants with disability or adapting their application process to make it accessible).
- Companies with large workforces (over 20,000 people) are more likely to actively seek applicants with disability and have a dedicated role in HR.
- Respondents that had a major retail presence, such as a shop front, were more likely to actively seek to employ people with disability than respondents without a retail presence.
- Ninety-three per cent of companies surveyed had a strategy to recognise and support mental health issues in the workplace.

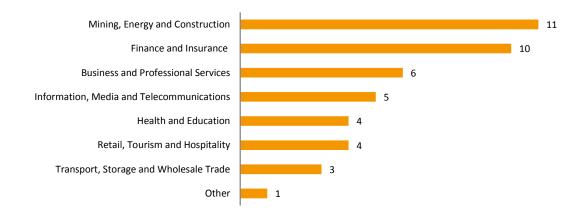
What works	
	 having a targeted recruitment strategy
	dedicated resources
	 external partnerships with specialist organisations to source talent
	 being seen as an 'Employer of Choice' for people with disability
	 articulating a purpose and being clear about your goals
	 developing a business case for your company or industry
	 encouraging whole-of-business buy-in
	skill-matching jobs
	 building confidence in your managers to manage people with disability
Barriers	 lack of dedicated resources
	diversity focus on another area
	 a complex employment services sector not matched to the needs of large businesses
	 fear of seeming discriminatory when asking applicants or recruits to disclose if they have disability

Drivers	• gaining access to a broader talent pool
	 reflecting the company's communities of operation
	 introducing innovative ideas and thinking into the business
	changing lives and doing the right thing
Benefits	access to talent
	increased staff engagement and morale
	innovation

Survey respondents

There were 37 responses to the BCA disability employment survey; this represents about a third of BCA member companies. The collective workforce of respondents is 664,000 people.

Figure 1: Industries of respondents



Source: BCA survey (note: some companies selected more than one industry)

Disability employment activities

The respondents can be grouped into three general categories:

- companies with an active focus on disability
- companies with a focus on disability
- companies with no specific disability focus.

A focus on disability is:

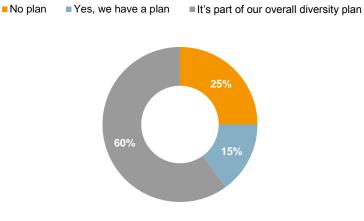
- having a plan or strategy specifically regarding the recruitment of people with disability (such as a disability action plan) or having disability included in the company's diversity plan
- specific initiatives that seek to increase the recruitment and retention of people with disability; or
- having a dedicated role or part role in the diversity/HR team focusing on employing people with disability.

Companies with an active focus are companies that:

- actively source applicants with disability; or
- adapt their recruitment focus to make it as accessible as possible.

Most respondents include their plan or strategy regarding the recruitment of people with disability in their overall diversity plan (Figure 2).

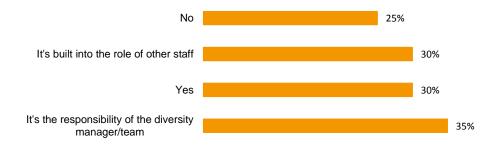
Figure 2: Company plan or strategy regarding the recruitment of people with disability



Source: BCA survey

Figure 3 shows that most companies have some focus on disability in their HR team, with roughly a third having a dedicated role. Companies with a dedicated role in HR were highly likely to be involved in partnerships with external organisations to source applicants with disability.

Figure 3: Dedicated role in the diversity/HR team focusing on people with disability



Source: BCA survey (note: companies can select more than one response)

Industry and focus on disability

Information, media and technology was the industry with the highest proportion of respondents with a focus on disability (100%) followed by retail, tourism and hospitality, with 75 per cent.

Table 1: Number of respondents with a focus on disability, by industry				
	Industry	Respondents	Focus on disability	Proportion with a focus on disability (per cent)

Industry	Respondents	Focus on disability	Proportion with a focus on disability (per cent)
Information, Media and Telecommunications	5	5	100
Retail, Tourism and Hospitality	4	3	75
Transport, Storage and Wholesale Trade	3	2	67
Finance and Insurance	10	6	60
Mining, Energy and Construction	11	5	45
Business and Professional Services	6	2	33
Health and Education	4	1	25

Source: BCA survey (note: some companies selected more than one industry)

What's effective? "Building an inclusive culture ... where accessibility is embedded into business as usual."

Customer-facing component and focus on disability

Respondents that had a major retail presence, such as a shop front, were more likely to have a focus on disability than respondents without a retail presence.

- Nine of 11 respondents with a retail presence had a focus on disability.
- There were 26 respondents that did not have a major retail presence, nine of which had a focus on disability.

Respondents with a major retail presence cited a desire to reflect the community in which they operate, as the major driver of their disability employment strategies.

Size of workforce and focus on disability

All companies with more than 20,000 employees had a focus on disability. As company size reduces, respondents were less likely to have a focus on disability.

Sixty-three per cent of all companies with more than 5000 employees had a focus on disability, whereas only 32 per cent of companies with less than 5000 employees had a focus on disability.

Size of company	No. of respondents who operate in this industry	No. with focus on disability	Proportion with a focus on disability (per cent)
More than 20,000 employees	8	8	100
More than 10,000 employees	12	10	85
More than 5,000 employees	19	12	65
5,000 employees or less	18	6	33
All companies	37	18	50

Active implementation of employment focus

Twelve companies surveyed – or one third of respondents – had an active focus on sourcing applicants with disability. Companies with an active focus on people with disability had an average workforce size of 38,000.

Those without an active focus had an average workforce of around 9,000.

Company size and resources influence the likelihood that a company will have an active focus on employment of people with disability.

Of companies without disability employment activities, limited resources and resources dedicated to another diversity area were nominated as the key barriers to implementing employment initiatives for people with disability. Figure 4 shows what these respondents identified as factors that could assist them in overcoming their barriers.

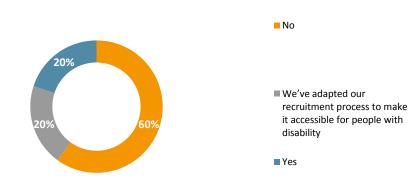


Figure 4: Overcoming barriers for companies without an active focus

Recruitment and retention

This section provides a summary of the responses relating to recruitment and retention and provides some data on *if* and *how* companies are recording the disability status of applicants and/or employees.

Figure 5: Does the business actively source applicants with disability?

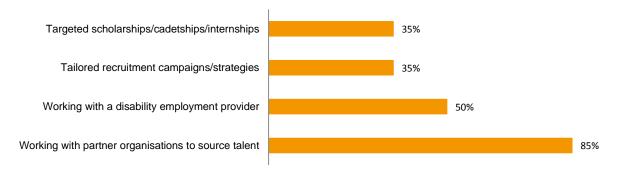


Source: BCA survey

Overwhelmingly, for companies that actively seek applicants, their process for sourcing is to work with providers and specialist partners.

What is your process for actively sourcing applicants with disability? "A combination of making our recruitment processes accessible as well as partnering with organisations that can help us source great talent."

Figure 6: Effective strategies in attracting staff with disability

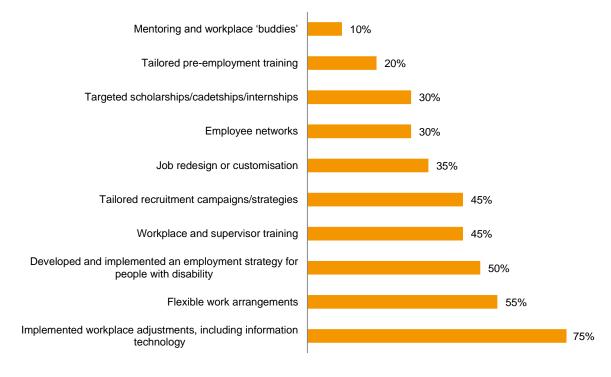


Source: BCA survey

Workplace adjustments and flexibility are the top initiatives implemented to increase the recruitment and retention of people with disability.

"Stereotypes still exist and we are actively working to build disability awareness and confidence in our managers and work colleagues."

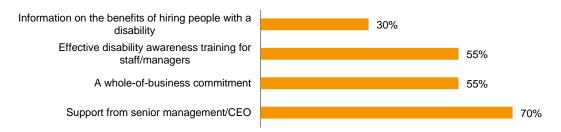
Figure 7: Initiatives companies have implemented to increase the recruitment and retention of people with disability



Source: BCA survey

High-level support alongside a whole-of-business commitment, and a strategy that is embedded across the business, are all factors seen as effective by companies in retaining staff with disability.

Figure 8: Effective strategies in retaining staff with disability



Source: BCA survey

Respondents also noted that having a focus on customer accessibility helped with retention.

Drivers and benefits

Employment strategies for people with disability are driven by a range of factors, chief among them is the company's overall diversity strategy (Figure 9).

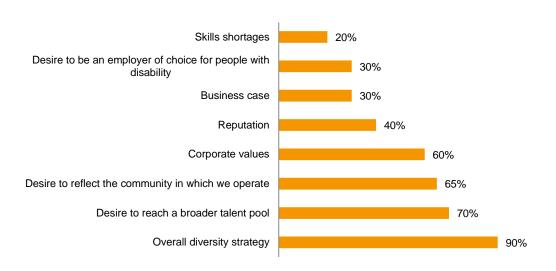
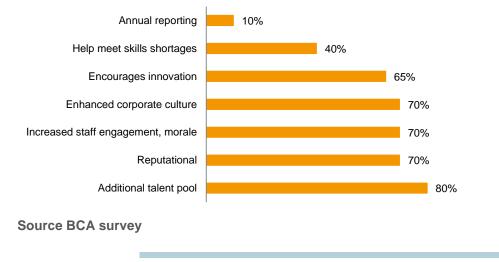


Figure 9: Main drivers of employment strategy for people with disability

Source: BCA survey

Companies see clear benefits from having a focus on employing people with disability.

Figure 10: What are the benefits of having a focus on employees with disability?



"An employee action group that is empowered and proactively advocates for the needs of employees with disability is a powerful way to show everyone that the organisation takes this agenda seriously."

Identifying disability status

54 per cent of companies had some method of recording the disability status of applicants or employees. Of this group, 78 per cent asked as part of an employee survey, and 64 per cent asked at recruitment stage.

44 per cent of companies had a method for recording the disability status of current employees on their people management/HR systems.

65 per cent of companies do not ask as part of their recruitment process whether the applicant has disability.

Nine respondents recorded the number of their employees with disability. These companies reported collectively employing 11,842 people with disability.

The highest reported proportion of employees with disability was 12 per cent and the lowest reported proportion was one per cent.

Recent analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data by the Australian Network on Disability has revealed a significant difference between reported (often based on selfidentification) levels of disability among employees, and levels recorded by the ABS. The results come from the Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers and they show 9.2 per cent employment rate in the private sector and 9.4 per cent in the government sector (Commonwealth, state and local).

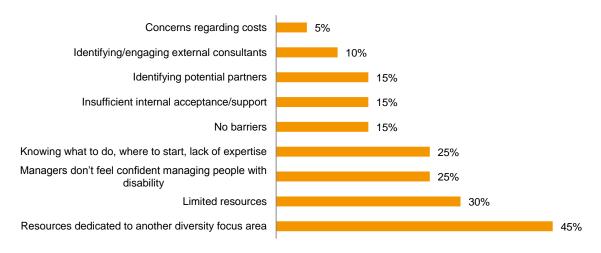
Concerns about seeming discriminatory, invading privacy, how to ask and lack of internal know-how were the top difficulties nominated by companies in seeking to identify the disability status of applicants or employees.

Barriers

Limited resources are the main barrier for companies in implementing employment initiatives for people with disability.

For many companies, a focus on disability is competing with other diversity focus areas – gender balance, Indigenous engagement – for resources. Confidence and knowing what to do and where to start are also challenges.

Figure 11: Barriers to implementing employment initiatives for people with disability



Source: BCA survey

Companies nominated opportunities to collaborate, information on good practice, and assistance in building the business case as the main areas requiring assistance to help them overcome their barriers.



Figure 12: Assistance in overcoming barriers

Source: BCA survey

Advice and use of services or providers

Almost half of respondents have used a Disability Employment Service (DES) to recruit staff or customise roles.

Figure 13: Use of a Disability Employment Service to recruit staff or customise roles



Source: BCA survey

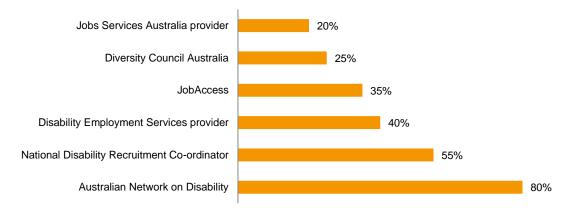
In their responses, some companies raised concerns about the difficulties of the current system. As large employers, often with centralised HR offices, they experienced a mismatch between their national focus and the regionalised DES network.

The landscape of DES providers was characterised as difficult for employers to navigate.

Half of respondents have turned to an external organisation for advice or guidance on employing people with disability.

The Australian Network on Disability (AND) was the top organisation respondents had engaged with (Figure 14). AND is a not-for-profit, member-funded organisation that assists businesses to be inclusive of people with disability.

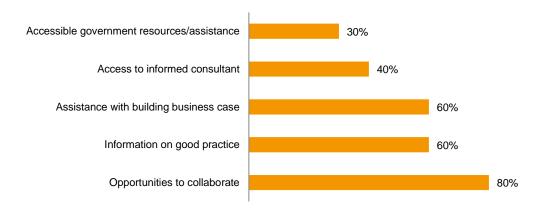




Source: BCA survey

For companies that haven't turned to an external organisation for advice, external support in the form of assistance in providing opportunities to collaborate, information on good practice, and assistance in building the business case were what they thought would help them in overcoming barriers to employing people with disability.

Figure 15: What would help remove barriers to disability employment activities



Source: BCA survey

There was a strong correlation between not having used organisations for advice and nominating lack of resources as a major barrier to implementing initiatives to employ people with disability.

Mental health

93 per cent of companies have a strategy to recognise and support mental health issues in the workplace.

"We have a whole process around our employee management to ensure we are proactively monitoring our people and their health. Balancing our people's need for privacy, we operate with a suite of offers and supports accessible directly by the employees that have identified their need. We actively coach our people managers to be alert and engaging with their directs about their health and well being." – survey respondent

PART 2: CASE STUDIES AND WHAT WORKS

This section draws out key success factors identified by survey respondents, using case studies to illustrate what leading companies are doing.

Important resources and organisations that successful companies use are also profiled.

Building the business case

"The business case for having an inclusive workforce is that you can tap into a talent pool that has traditionally been avoided."

A starting point for any company is to identify a clear business case for a focus on employment and accessibility, which will differ across industries and depend on company size.

Case study: ANZ

ANZ's Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (AIP) shows how a company can meaningfully weave a focus on inclusion throughout the business, underpinned by a clear purpose.

For ANZ, this means having insight into the consumer needs of an important customer base – people with disability, their carers and families. It also means drawing in a broad range of skills to introduce innovative thinking and product design.

"A good staff mix reflects the make-up of customers in the communities that we operate in," says Sue Jeffery, chair of the committee responsible for ANZ's AIP. People with disability or those who care for others with disability have insight into a wider variety of customer needs and can be better placed to deal with these customers.

We understand that disability is relevant to every aspect of our business – customers, employees, markets, communities, suppliers and key stakeholders. – ANZ 2013–15 Accessibility and Inclusion Plan

Hamish Mackenzie is a terrific example of how employees with disability give companies access to talent as well as an edge in designing innovative products and services.

As ANZ's Global Accessibility Manager, Hamish is responsible for ensuring more than 30 websites across ANZ, including internet banking, mobile applications and internal software, are all accessibility compliant, a key requirement under the ANZ AIP.

His role is one he is personally engaged in: Hamish has a vision impairment and comes to work with a guide dog. "We need to be disability confident", he says, a message that research demonstrates is more and more true for the corporate world.

Partnerships to source talent

Overwhelmingly, companies that actively seek applicants with disability source talent through Disability Employment Service (DES) providers and specialist partners.

Survey respondents reported that successful providers take the time to understand their business, build a relationship and support candidates before and after employment

"Our process for sourcing applicants with disability is a combination of making our recruitment processes accessible as well as partnering with organisations that can help us source great talent."

Case study: Compass Group

Compass Group is a leading provider of food and support services employing over 13,000 people across Australia. Compass aims to attract, develop and retain great people who are proud to work for the company.

Compass actively recruits people with disability and, to build confidence and awareness, have worked with the Australian Network on Disability to develop a guide for unit managers for employing people with disability.

Compass has found the following elements to be central to attracting staff with disability:

- employee networks
- job redesign or customisation
- workplace and supervisor training
- implementing workplace adjustments, including information technology.

To source talent, Compass entered into a partnership with Disability Works Australia (DWA) in 2008 that has seen many people with disability gain employment in the business.

Kevin has been highlighted as an exceptional employee after coming through DWA to gain employment at Medirest, which is Compass Group's dedicated sector brand for hospitals and senior living facilities.

Kevin Green was referred to DWA by the Short Stature Association. DWA worked with Kevin to identify suitable roles with employers looking for Kevin's skills. Kevin's previous experience in industrial cleaning, kitchen-hand work and gardening was a perfect fit for positions with Compass. DWA contacted Compass and Kevin was interviewed for a position as a cleaner with Medirest and commenced in the role four days later.

Glen Morley, Kevin's supervisor, is impressed with Kevin's performance on the job, saying that, "Kevin is truly a success and I will use DWA's services again. I really don't think about a person's disability; it's their ability to do the job that is important".

Whole-of-business commitment

70 per cent of respondents said having high-level support was effective in attracting and retaining staff with disability. 55 per cent said having a whole-of-business commitment made a difference.

Case study: Westpac

Westpac's success at boosting its employment levels of people with disability shows the value of high-level buy-in and ownership of a strategy throughout the business. Rather than going it alone or waiting for applicants, Westpac has been active in working with specialist partners to deliver on their ambitious goals, while at the same time building internal support and awareness.

In the 2012 survey of 17,000 employees, 12.1 per cent of Westpac employees reported that they had a disability or impairment. This is well above the Australian Bureau of Statistics' estimated 9.4 per cent workforce participation rate of people with disability.

Westpac's accessibility agenda is represented at the highest levels of the organisation: Westpac's Chief Operating Officer John Arthur is the Executive Sponsor for Accessibility.

Increasing disability confidence is also championed at the grassroots level. Five hundred of Westpac's staff make up the ABLE Employee Action Group whose key achievements include developing best practice accessibility guidelines and rolling out awareness training for customer-facing staff, people leaders and the wider business. These supplement a range of other resources for promoting inclusiveness, such as the 'Manager's Guide to Disability in the Workplace' and Unconscious Bias training.

Westpac has also partnered with organisations to create employment opportunities for people with disability. Westpac works with the Australian Network on Disability, which is a national body of employers that learn from each other and ultimately increase business confidence in welcoming people with disability as customers and employees. Through the Australian Network on Disability, Westpac has participated in the Stepping Into[™] program, which provides skilled university students with disability with paid work experience, and the PACE mentoring program, which matches jobseekers with disability to employees who provide career advice and build confidence.

Westpac has also worked with Mission Australia to increase direct employment of people with disability into the company, including into Customer Contact Centres in New South Wales and Group Services roles.

Adopt a holistic focus to inclusion

A significant survey finding was that some companies do not have an active focus on inclusion and accessibility because of limited resources or the targeting of resources to another diversity area.

Case study: Woolworths

For business, the diversity agenda is increasingly crowded, making it difficult to dedicate unique resources to each issue. For many companies with smaller workforces and human resources teams, dedicated resources in the form of standalone HR portfolios are not feasible.

Woolworths provides a good example of how to adopt a holistic focus on diversity. Their diversity plan outlines the importance of "providing opportunities that allow individuals to reach their full potential irrespective of individual background or difference."

The company then delivers on various facets of its agenda – gender, Indigenous Australians, people with disability – by working with partners and strengthening the capability of managers and staff.

In 2011 the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator was awarded an innovation grant to partner with Woolworths on streamlining the process for people with a disability obtaining work in Woolworths' stores in south-east Victoria. During the year of the project, the results included:

- 45 placements in south-east Victoria
- 101 managers attended disability awareness training
- job role competencies were reviewed to support disability placements
- a guide to disability employment was developed for all store managers nationally.

Woolworths adopted best practice from this initiative throughout the business, distributing the employment guide to all store managers across the brand.

The guide was very successful in helping Woolworths double the number of employees who identified themselves as having disability, and has supported both managers and recruitment teams.

Workplace adjustment

75 per cent of survey respondents had implemented a workplace adjustment for an employee with disability.

"Working with JobAccess helps us meet our commitments to providing an inclusive work environment for our employees." – Rebecca Holden, Head of Performance, Capability and Careers at Australia Post

JobAccess helps employers remove barriers they might see as limiting their ability to employ people with disability. Removing these is often easier than expected and cost neutral to the employer.

Case study: Australia Post and JobAccess

For over 200 years, Australia Post has played a role in connecting communities. As an organisation that focuses on serving and contributing to the community – including the most vulnerable groups in the community – it makes sense that it proactively supports the participation of people with disability in the workplace.

Caroline Brown, who has been deaf since age four, applied for a job online through Australia Post's website, declaring her disability in her application, and was successful. That was seven years ago and she still has as much passion for the role today as when she started. "I ride a motorcycle to deliver the mail and I love the freedom of riding outdoors," she said.

The idea of being a motorbike postie with Australia Post appealed to Caroline. She grew up in the Cook Islands and loves the outdoors so she felt it would be a perfect fit – a job based outdoors that allows her to enjoy her passion of motorcycle riding.

Caroline encountered some initial frustration when she started the job. Relying on pen and paper communication meant she sometimes missed out on what was going on. To address this problem, Australia Post accessed an interpreter for her through the JobAccess Employment Assistance Fund. "My frustration disappeared by having the interpreters and it's definitely made me happier", says Caroline.

Across the country, Australia Post employs over 40 deaf staff, and JobAccess plays a big part in helping support these employees and their managers. Their consultants work closely with managers to find solutions that benefit both parties, including practical services such as arranging Auslan interpreters to improve communication in the workplace.

Creating entry points and pathways into work for young people with disability

Transitions between school, training, tertiary education and work are critical for all young people. For young people with disability, these transitions are particularly important and the costs of not making connections into work early are high.

"Australian young people with disability are not successfully transitioning from school into further training or employment; a factor that is an indicator of long-term, and often lifelong, disadvantage." – Ticket to Work

Case study: Telstra and 'Stepping Into'

For Telstra, the *Stepping Into* program, run by the Australian Network on Disability, forms an important part of accessibility and inclusive practices. The Australian Network on Disability is a not-for-profit organisation that helps employers develop the behaviours, attitudes, systems and knowledge to successfully engage people with disability as employees, customers and stakeholders.

The *Stepping Into* program is a paid internship program that has been running since 2005. It is designed specifically for university students with disability.

Telstra's Senior Diversity and Inclusion specialist, Alicia Mathews, who manages the program within Telstra, says the program supports the company's purpose and contributes to diversity and inclusion objectives.

"Our purpose at Telstra is to create a brilliant connected future for everyone – and we mean for everyone. At Telstra we value diversity and inclusion and commit to providing real business experience for students with disability", says Alicia.

One of the students, Luke Treveil, who joined the Global Contact Centre team during his internship, says: "The internship has been really beneficial as it's given me an opportunity to get experience and see if it really is the career path I'd like to go down. I have also been able to network and get my name out there".

Another student, Elena Atkinson, agrees: "My experience with Telstra really helped me find my professional confidence. I feel like it has helped me prepare for the challenges I will face heading into my career. It was a very rewarding experience."

Alicia says that Telstra will take 17 interns in the next summer program. Two students have secured permanent roles. Jenny Watts-Sampson, Program Manager at the Australian Network on Disability, says: "There is a real need for this program. University students with disability are consistently reported as less likely to participate in relevant work post-graduation.

"The *Stepping Into* program helps bridge this gap but also brings great value to the organisations that take interns. We really appreciate the support of Telstra and other members who make this such a successful program."

Services and supports business can access

Australia has a range of excellent employer-facing services and supports, including the Australian Network on Disability and key national government-funded services *JobAccess* and the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator.

Australian Network on Disability

The Australian Network on Disability (AND) is a not-for-profit organisation resourced by its members to advance the inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of business. AND works with organisations to welcome people with disability as employees, customers and suppliers.

Find out more at http://www.and.org.au/

JobAccess

The UN-award-winning *JobAccess* service provides free information, advice and assistance service on the employment of people with disability and mental illness.

Employment Assistance Fund

JobAccess manages the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) on behalf of the Australian Government, providing funding for reasonable workplace modifications to facilitate the employment of people with disability. This may take the form of equipment, awareness training for disability, mental health or deafness in the workplace, funding for Auslan, or on-the-job support like mentoring, coaching, counselling or alternative learning techniques.

Workplace Adjustment Tool

This is a database of ideas on how to adjust or modify the workplace to suit people with disability and includes links to local suppliers. Many people with disability do not require workplace modifications and, for many others, accommodations can be quite simple. Employers are often surprised when they realise adjustments that they may need can end up being cost-neutral. The tool can be accessed at http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/home

National Disability Recruitment Coordinator

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator (NDRC) partners with large Australian employers to build disability knowledge and confidence, and to help businesses ensure their employment practices are inclusive.

The service is funded by the Australian Government and achieves its results through a practical mix of training and resources, tailored advice and targeted recruitment strategies.

The NDRC helps build large employers' confidence in order for them to offer more opportunities to candidates with disability. For the NDRC, the source of candidates is Disability Employment Services, so part of its brief is also to help build relationships between large employers and this national network of supports. This is an important feature of the program, as knowing how and with whom to partner remains an ongoing challenge for many employers, in particular larger employers.

Over the course of 12 months the NDRC can support large employers, at no cost, to:

- develop recruitment and employment practices that support the employment of people with disability
- develop vacancies for people with disability
- advertise vacancies to Disability Employment Services
- deliver disability awareness training to HR teams, recruiters, hiring managers and others
- provide information about other Australian Government assistance
- connect with Disability Employment Services to source potential employees
- provide confidential trouble-shooting support.

Lessons learnt by the NDRC team have informed the development of a new guide for employers called the *Getting to Yes Employer ToolKit*, accessible at http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/ndrc

Job customisation

Job customisation is where a role is tailored for an employee or candidate with disability to fit their abilities or changed circumstances.

In some cases, it's an adjustment for an employee who can do some role duties in a particular role but not others. In other cases it's a role specially designed for a particular candidate.

Of BCA companies implementing an active approach to inclusion and accessibility, about a third had redesigned or customised a job for a person with disability.

Job customisation involves working with the employer to identify and solve routine task problems. This includes addressing high staff turnover positions, task avoidance and the underutilisation of skilled staff. The customised role meets a genuine need for the employer and suits the person with an intellectual disability.

Employers report the business benefits of customisation as:

- skilled staff are able to focus on the higher end duties
- high staff turnover positions are reduced
- routine tasks are no longer avoided

Jobsupport is one government-funded organisation with a focus on customised jobs. They place, train and support people with a significant intellectual disability in quality work opportunities. They currently support over 600 people with intellectual disability in Sydney and Melbourne and further information is available at http://jobsupport.org.au/main/

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a national initiative, bringing together schools, disability employment agencies, training organisations, youth services and employers with the goal of ensuring

all Australian young people with disability have the opportunity to become work-ready and transition from school into a life of personal and financial independence.

The program actively supports young people with disability to complete their secondary education and undertake work experience and accredited vocational training while still at school. This helps these young people to build belief in themselves and recognise their capacity to be active workers in the future.

Ticket to Work uses a 'demand-led approach', which identifies specific workforce needs in a business and matches students with relevant interests. Further information is available at http://www.tickettowork.org.au/

Recommendations for better practice and reform

The recommendations outlined below suggest ways to address some of the barriers to improving employment outcomes for people with disability.

Improve links between employment supply and demand to make it easy for employers

- The government and other relevant organisations need to work with industry to design a user-friendly single entry point website for employers to receive advice and assistance, and access information about the performance of DES providers. This should include twelve month retention data.
- When designing the DES 2018 contracts, the government should work closely with employers and clients to shape a more demand-focused system.
- Make all employers aware of the services and supports they can access by expanding the promotion of *JobAccess* and the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator.

Improve employment services systems and information about service quality

- Use the 2018 DES contract development process to design and implement significant structural reform. The reform process should look at:
 - dramatically reducing the compliance burden to shift the majority of resources to client and employer engagement
 - supporting young people into work experience and training opportunities matched to their career aspirations
 - incentivising innovations, such as the establishment of social enterprises
 - building and facilitating employer demand.

Create more entry points and pathways into work for young people with disability

- The government should reinstate the after-school work eligibility pathway to allow DES providers to support school-age people in casual work.
- Businesses should explore ways they can partner with employment providers to adapt intern, holiday work or cadetship programs they run to include young people with disability.
- Governments should look to implementing a national approach to work experience, drawing from successful initiatives like *Ticket to Work* and the successful New South Wales *Transition to Work* program.
- Employers can introduce new practices that 'level the playing field' for applicants with disability, like having a guaranteed interview for applicants with disability who meet skill requirements.

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