



Ticket to Work response: National Disability Employment Strategy consultation paper

June 2021

Introduction

Work is a fundamental part of adult life. It gives us a sense of purpose and builds self-worth, shaping who we are and how we fit into our community.

Because it is so essential, young people with disabilities in their transition to adulthood, must not be deprived the opportunity to explore employment pathways, to build their capacity to work, and ultimately work within the general workforce in pursuit of health, wealth, and happiness.

Without appropriate and timely supports, transition to employment is extremely unlikely for many young people with disability, this is costly to government.

The imperative to improve school to open employment outcomes has been cited and highlighted in multiple Senate Inquiries, government reports, action plans, agreements and strategies, some are listed below:

- [Mid-term Review of the Disability Employment Services \(DES\) Program 2021](#)
- [Looking to the future: Review of senior school pathways 2020](#)
- [Unique Individuals, Broad Skills 2018](#)
- [National Disability Strategy Secondary implementation plan Driving Action 2016](#)
- [Willing to Work paper 2016](#)
- [NDIS Participant Employment Strategy 2019 – 2022](#)
- [National Disability Employment Framework Discussion Paper, DSS 2015](#)
- [Disability Care and Support Inquiry Report, Productivity Commission, 2011](#)
- [A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes DSS, 2015](#)
- [A Stronger Fairer Australia, Government of Australia, 2010](#)
- [WORKability II: National Inquiry into Employment and Disability, Australian Human Rights Australian Human Rights Commission, 2006](#)
- [National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 report to COAG 2012](#)
- [Laying the Groundwork 2011-2014, FaHCSIA 2012](#)
- [Shut Out Report, National People with Disabilities and Carers Council and FAHCSIA, 2009](#)
- [National Mental Health & Disability Employment Strategy, DEEWR, 2008](#)
- [The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions 2009](#)
- [Evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions 20014](#)

While improving the transition from school to work for young people with disability has been a mainstay of many inquiries in Australia, the delivery has fallen well short as is reflected in the poor outcomes. In spite of the substantial evidence as to what works, the process of post school transition has remained ill-defined and poorly supported.¹

1. Children with Disability Australia. (2015). Post school transition: The experiences of students with disability. https://www.cyda.org.au/images/pdf/post_school_transition.pdf

The consequence has been a steady decrease in the rate of economic and social participation for young people with disability in Australia.²

The National Disability Strategy identified the need for a high quality program designed to facilitate a smooth transition from education to employment.³ The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates that "Learners with disabilities receive the support to ensure the effective transition from learning at school to vocational and tertiary education, and finally to work."⁴

Many other nations have recognised a demonstrable need for policies explicitly directed towards improving school to work transition backed by adequate resources to increase employment participation for people with disability.^{5,6,7,8,9}

The Ticket to Work model was developed by combining various 'success factors' from research literature and related international experience to improve social and economic participation for young people with disability.

Specifically, this model:

- brings together disability-specific and mainstream representatives from a variety of sectors to work strategically and collaboratively;
- supports young people to gain access to early experiences of work that positively influence their views of themselves as workers;
- prepares students with disability for the workplace and gives them an employment pathway that is typical of other young adults;
- meets the needs of employers for enhanced staff retention, productivity and profitability.

-
2. Emerson, E., & Llewellyn, G. (2014). Left Behind 2014: Monitoring the Social Inclusion of Young Australians with Self Reported Long Term Health Conditions, Impairments or Disabilities 2001-2012 (2203-7381).
 3. Department of Social Services (DSS) (2016) National Disability Strategy Secondary implementation plan Driving Action 2015 – 2018 Australia
 4. UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 4 (2016) Article 24: Right to inclusive education, 2 September 2016, CRPD/C/GC/4, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/GC.aspx> [accessed 29 September 2016]
 5. Office of Disability Employment Policy Employment first viewed Nov 2016 www.dol.gov/odep/topics/employmentfirst.htm USA
 6. Eurofound (2012), Active inclusion of young people with disabilities or health problems, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
 7. National Advisory Group on Youth Transitions to Employment and Careers (2012) Putting employment first for youth with intellectual disabilities; Canadian Association for Community Living Toronto, Ontario
 8. Scheef A R (2016) Developing Partnerships with Businesses to Support Job Training for Youth with Disabilities in Singapore 1 Washington State University, Pullman, USA
 9. Nel, L; Van der Westhuyzen C; Uys, K (2007) Introducing a school-to-work transition model for youth with disabilities in South Africa.

The Ticket to Work participants are mainly young people with development disability.

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

We draw on our extensive experience, the documented outcomes and substantial body of related evidence to consider relevant questions posed for consultation.

Employers

Question: Are there barriers or concerns for employers not covered in this consultation paper?

Our Key Messages:

- We need a demand-led approach that is clear and highly responsive to individual employers' business and recruitment needs. We encourage the implementation of a customised employment approach. See <https://tackettowork.org.au/customised-employment/>
- Employers are often risk adverse in their recruitment activities and therefore it is important to make more proactive use of work trials and placements, particularly work experience and after school work allowing employers to trial employees with a disability without ongoing obligations.
- Employers need local 'Trusted Brokers' who can help them address a particular workforce or operational need of the company, in addition to competent help from employment supports that addresses these needs.
- Strategies are needed which specifically address the engagement of local employers. It is clear that one approach does not work for all employers. We found a significant difference in motivation and the techniques used to successfully target businesses of different sizes.

Our Experience

Ticket to Work has worked with over 2,000 employers, exploring and evaluating their experience, in addition to reviewing the literature on what works.

We are concerned that the consultation paper's focus on information, resources and awareness-raising of people with disability as potential employees is not supported by the available evidence: indeed, many of the proposed interventions have previously been found to be ineffective and

sometimes counter-intuitive.^{10,11,12,13}

The most persuasive strategy for engaging employers demonstrates how applicants with disability address the 'bottom lines' of businesses. An Australian study found that more than 80 per cent of respondent employers endorsed this approach as the most valuable.¹⁴

See our webpage focus on employers
tickettowork.org.au/resources/employers

Hear from employers involved in Ticket to Work and what they feel works:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5I1GGncnQE

Read the research we commissioned that incorporates a literature review, interviews with Ticket to Work employers and recommendations:
tickettowork.org.au/media/submissions_researches_buttons/The_Employer_Experience_hiring_young_people_with_intellec_QU5NPvU.pdf

Consider the eLearning material we developed to support employers and employment coaches taking on young people with disability:
tickettowork.org.au/elearning/ticket-to-work-guide-for-employers/#/

Young people

Question: Are there barriers or concerns for young jobseekers with disability not covered in this consultation paper?

Our Key Messages:

- It is crucial for young people with disability to receive effective support to participate in the workforce as early as possible if we are to ensure effective long-term employment outcomes.
- A Work First approach is called for where employment is the expected outcome for all young people regardless of disability. Government

10. Fabian, E., Lucking, R., & Tilson, G., (1995). Employer and and rehabilitation personnel views on hiring persons with disabilities: Implications for job development. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 61, 4249

11. https://tickettowork.org.au/media/research_submissions_files/Ticket_to_work_policy_summary.pdf

12. Luecking, R (2010) Enough with the Employer Awareness Already! What Else Needs to Happen to Improve Access to Employment? TransCen, Inc. <https://www.apse.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/apseconxnov10.pdf>

13. Hoff, D (2011) National Employer Survey Concerns & Opportunities for Service Providers Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston

14. Waterhouse, P., Kimberley, H., Jonas, P., & Glover, J. (2010). What would it take? Employer perspectives on employing people with a disability. Adelaide, South Australia: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

policy should encourage every young person with disability to have the opportunity to follow an employment pathway.

- There is a lack of youth specific employment support for young people with disability. It has been identified that employment services designed for adults do not meet the employment and transition needs of young people.
- There is a need to learn from overseas and Australian experience, including Ticket to Work, regarding evidence based practice.
- Improving employment participation requires a collaborative approach enabling students with disability to connect to the world of work while still at school.

Our Experience

An unsuccessful transition from school into further training or employment is often indicative of long term, even often life-long, disadvantage. Young people with disability are more likely to drop out of school early, face exclusion from the labour market, obtain fewer educational qualifications with the consequence that they are more likely to experience poverty and be socially isolated.

Ticket to Work has shown that young people with disability can thrive in open employment when prepared for work and supported whilst at school through a coordinated approach. It has been shown that young people that received those opportunities while at school were:

- Three times as likely to be in open employment post school
- Twice as likely to finish school
- Twice as likely to feel they have 'about the right level of independence'
- Half as likely to be disengaged from work or study

Hear from Dr Richard Luecking from the Center for Transition and Career Innovation for Youth with Disabilities in the USA on effective transitions to work: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlxQsps7m6Y&t=1s

Hear from previous students of Berendale School, 6 years later and their experience of having work opportunities while at school: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtqv0mvmaZU

Read our research and submissions exploring what works for the employment of young people with disability: tickettowork.org.au/research/
tickettowork.org.au/submissions/

We would like to draw your attention to these two papers:

Valuation of Ticket to Work outcomes: https://tickettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/Ticket_to_Work_valuation_of_key_outcomes_2021_kZJsJSS.pdf

Rapid review: research to action guide. School to work transition: tickettwork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/A_Rapid_Review.pdf

Consider the guide for practice leaders on evidence based practice: tickettwork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/Guide_for_PracticeLeaders.pdf

Families

Our key message:

- Ensure employment models acknowledge and encourage family support as family involvement is an essential component of the transition to employment process.
- Parents must receive the necessary support, training and advice required to support their child in transitioning successfully into employment and adult life.
- Ensure government policies encourage high expectations for young people with disability from families and commonwealth employment policies and related initiatives.
- Support programs that build connections with families while their young people are at school.

Our Experience

It is important to note that in order to improve employment participation, we need to acknowledge that young people with disability are part of families and communities.

In Australia, it has been found that young people with disability and their parents encounter a range of problems when they are leaving school. Due to this, many give up hope of achieving meaningful and competitive employment in a post-school work environment.¹⁵

Having supportive family and social relationships is one of the main factors associated with a successful transition from school or vocational education and training to employment for individuals with a disability.¹⁶ A longitudinal study found high parent expectations, along with hands-on authentic work experience are key factors associated with employment two years post high school.¹⁷

15. Winn, S., & Hay, I. (2009). Transition from School for Youths with a Disability: Issues and Challenges. *Disability & Society*, 24(1), 103-115. doi:10.1080/09687590802535725

16. Gilson CB, Carter EW, Bumble JL, McMillan ED. Family Perspectives on Integrated Employment for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*. 2018;43(1):20-37. doi: HYPERLINK <https://doi.org/10.1177/1540796917751134> 10.1177/1540796917751134

17. Carter, E. W., Austin, D., & Trainor, A. A. (2012). Predictors of Post-school Employment Outcomes for Young Adults with Severe Disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 23(1), 50-63. doi:10.1177/1044207311414680

For further information pertaining to the families' role in school to work transition for young people with disabilities visit tickettowork.org.au/resources/parents/.

Hear from families about their experiences:

<https://tickettowork.org.au/resources/parents>

Read our research on parent engagement in school to work transition for their child with disability (2020):

tickettowork.org.au/media/submissions_researches_buttons/Parent_engagement_in_school_to_work_transition_for_their_Q2fDoxd.pdf

Watch for our short Golden Rules videos:

1. Golden rules <https://youtu.be/fXIYWNyEN38>
2. Vision for future <https://youtu.be/Kq90stSs9Uo>
3. Here to there <https://youtu.be/-4RpAIEdg9o>

Consider our e learning materials:

https://tickettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/index_lxl3Nq7.html

Improving systems and services for jobseekers and employers:

Our key message:

- There needs to be a collaborative approach, bringing all stakeholders such as potential employees, parents and support services together.
- A collaborative approach reduces duplication and ensures effective service systems and delivery in a community.
- To enable collaboration, effective coordination is needed. We need intermediaries who align and broker multiple services across institutional and funding sources. Intermediaries in other countries play a critical role in improving employment outcomes for young people with disability and support the blending and braiding of supports.
- There is a need for a Technical Assistance Centre or other Hub of knowledge support and training. In Australia there is a lack of skills and knowledge in supporting the participation of people with disability in employment. There is no 'go to place' to find evidence based practices whether it be customised employment or building parental expectations.
- The combined effect of services, across institutional and funding sources, play a critical role in improving employment outcomes for young people with disability.

Our Experience

In the Australian context, the transition from school for individuals with a disability is complicated by a disparate and fragmented group of service

agencies providing a range of services, along with, at times, a deep-seated prejudice towards people with disabilities in the marketplace.¹⁸ There is a 'siloining' of sectors and programmes which is a barrier to effective employment outcomes. Siloining creates fragmentation, duplication and inadequate levels of support for young people with disability.^{19,20}

We need the education, training and employment sector working in concert to improve employment outcomes as no single system or program alone – not a school, employment service or community service – can pay for and provide the array of support needed to effectively meet the needs of youth with disabilities in transition to employment. However, when collectively coordinated and scaffolded, these resources can produce positive (and cost effective) outcomes for young people with disability, well beyond the scope of what any single system can hope to mobilise on its own.²¹

In the research literature from Kohler [1993] to the present, collaboration between schools and agencies providing access to employment, and employers preparing people with disabilities for the world of work has been recognised as a key evidence-based component in creating employment opportunities.²²

There is a need for further measures to ensure all sectors, schools, employment providers and NDIS service providers have access to evidence-based practice, transparent data, and training and support to possess the knowledge and skills necessary to support young people into work. There is a need for workforce development. In countries comparable to ours this has been achieved by the use of Technical Assistance Centres. Technical Assistance Center blends research and evidence with the development of practical resources, support and training to assist state education agencies, employment and service providers to ensure students with disability, including those with significant disabilities, make successful post-school transitions. This is recommended in the recent Shergold review.²³

18. Winn, S., & Hay, I. (2009). Transition from School for Youths with a Disability: Issues and Challenges. *Disability & Society*, 24(1), 103-115. doi:10.1080/09687590802535725

19. Sitlington, P. L., & Clark, G. M. (2006). Transition education and services for students with disabilities (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Sitlington, P. L., & Clark, G. M. (2006). Transition education and services for students with disabilities (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

20. Winn, S., & Hay, I. (2009). Transition from School for Youths with a Disability: Issues and Challenges. *Disability & Society*, 24(1), 103-115. doi:10.1080/09687590802535725

21. National Governors' Association Center for Best Practice. (2004). Early lessons from states to promote youth development'. Washington, DC.

22. Meadows, D (2019) Collaboration – the key to unlocking a successful future for young people with disability.

23. Panel for the Education Council Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training 2020, Looking to the future: report of the Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training [Shergold review], Education Council, Carlton South, viewed 14 May 2021, <[https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/pathways/Final report - 18 June.pdf](https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/pathways/Final%20report%20-%2018%20June.pdf)

See our collaboration webpage:

<https://tackettowork.org.au/collaboration/>

Hear from young people and others around the collaborative Ticket to Work approach and what works:

<https://youtu.be/5BmRZ7mSfsE>

Read our two research papers on collaboration:

https://tackettowork.org.au/media/submissions_researches_buttons/Collaboration-the-key-to-unlocking-a-successful-future-for-4.pdf

[https://tackettowork.org.au/media/submissions_researches_buttons/Ticket To Work network anaylsis_survey.pdf](https://tackettowork.org.au/media/submissions_researches_buttons/Ticket_To_Work_network_anaylsis_survey.pdf)

Consider our guide to collaboration:

[https://tackettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/pdf/Collaboration Guide.pdf](https://tackettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/pdf/Collaboration_Guide.pdf)

Reporting and Measuring

Question: How should we report against the Employment Strategy and measure success of the Employment Strategy?

Key Messages:

- The educational performance and school-to-work progress of students with disability need to be accurately measured to support accountability and ensure the development of evidence-based policy.
- There is a need for longitudinal data to determine the effectiveness of school to work transition.
- A strategy is only as good as its outcomes. Without clear goals, actions and transparent reporting, a new National Disability Strategy risks being ineffective. Essential elements the Strategy should include are clear links between data, outcomes and reporting.

Our Experience

Governments need accurate quantitative data to measure school to work transition outcomes for young people with disability. However, in Australia there is limited consolidated data regarding the experiences and transition outcomes (past, present and projected) of young people with disability.

The 'Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)' is considered the foremost research program tracking young people as they move from school to post-school options. Since 2007, LSAY collected data on students with disability in mainstream schools but not those in specialist disability schools.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) identifies the number of school students with disability and

their level of reasonable adjustment. However, this data does not consider educational accomplishments, post-school outcomes or longitudinal progress; therefore, it is difficult to determine if these adjustments lead to better post-school outcomes and improved quality of life for these young people.

Australia also participates in International Assessment Programs providing researchers and policy makers with information to guide planning and facilitate comparisons with other nations.²⁴ Unfortunately, these assessments also exclude students with disability, which led Schuelka (2012) to conclude: ‘this exclusionary discourse establishes that students with disability do not belong in a culture of achievement and educational evaluation, which has an impact on policies concerning educational equity and maintains the oppression of low expectations.’²⁵

The incomplete collection of data on students with disability collections sends a regrettable message to policy makers that the attainment of students with disability and, by implication, their post school destination and employment participation are not important.

Stakeholders need to evaluate whether the data they collect is adequate to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts to transition young people with disability from school to employment. Potentially, their failure to collect data reflects the pervasive culture of low expectations that this group of young people do not belong in the workforce.

In other countries when government report monthly employment data they include specific data on people with disability. We believe there is an opportunity for the ABS to include this data collection.²⁶

Further areas

Further areas we are keen to raise are self employment, customised employment, the changing world of work and support for after school work.

Read our article on the changing world of work and young people with disability:

tackettowork.org.au/news/the-changing-world-of-work-and-young-people-with-d/

Watch our video and stories on customised employment and Kyal’s story regarding Microenterprise:

<https://tackettowork.org.au/stories/?category=customised-employment-and-micro-business>

24. Heldsinger, S., & Humphry, S. (2010). Using the method of pairwise comparison to obtain reliable teacher assessments.(Report). Australian Educational Researcher, 37(2), 1. doi:10.1007/BF03216919

25. Schuelka, M. J. (2012). Excluding students with disabilities from the culture of achievement: the case of the TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA. Journal of Education Policy, 28(2), 1-15.

26. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>

See our Customised Employment page:

<https://tickettowork.org.au/customised-employment/>

After school work

Gaining a first 'paid' job is often a big moment for young people as they approach the transition to adulthood. Today over 60% of secondary students have an after school job, yet many students with disability miss out on this opportunity. There needs to be support for young people to gain after school work especially as few employers consider hiring someone without work experience.²⁷

See our after school job page including research, stories, podcast and guide:

<https://tickettowork.org.au/after-school-jobs/>

We also have a youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV1W9ScViO6uE83VQJ7rg9g>

and podcast:

<https://player.whooshkaa.com/shows/ticket-to-work-podcast>

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our findings in more detail and to answer any questions you might have.

Contact

Michelle Wakeford

National Ticket to Work Manager

Email: Michelle@tickettowork.org.au

27. Department of Education, Skills & Employment, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences: 2018 Data Report. Jan 2020