



Inclusion Australia

Equal Pay, Equal Respect

Federal Election 2022 Platform



Acknowledgments

Inclusion Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which this publication was produced. We acknowledge the deep spiritual connection to this land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We extend our respects to community members and Elders past and present.

Inclusion Australia recognises the efforts of self-advocates who have courageously told their stories and worked tirelessly over the years for equality and human rights for all.

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Our Voice Committee

Our Voice is the subcommittee to Inclusion Australia's Board with 100% membership of people with an intellectual disability. Our Voice experts believe strongly that more people with an intellectual disability should have the opportunity to work in regular jobs, and earn money they can use in their lives.

Statement by Our Voice:

“People with disabilities have the right to work in the open job market like anyone else and get the training and support they need; this means no more sheltered employment.”



“If you don't have a job, you'll go stir crazy. You also won't have money to buy things... for Christmas or birthdays or for yourself. Last year I bought a house and wouldn't have been able to do that without a job”

ALLIE, person with intellectual disability

Introduction

Inclusion Australia's Our Voice committee have picked employment as the key policy area they want to campaign on for this Federal election.

Led by people with an intellectual disability, we have developed a range of policies that will reduce segregated employment, create more open and self-employment opportunities and make it easier to get and maintain open and self-employment for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Inclusion Australia wants to see a significant investment in tearing down the barriers people with an intellectual disability and their families experience when looking for open and self-employment.

People with an intellectual disability are excluded from open and self-employment, and their families face a significant workload to support them.

The current employment policies are not working for people with an intellectual disability and their families, and big changes are needed.

- 14 – 18% of people with intellectual disability aged 15 – 64 years were in full or part time employment and 60% were not in the labour market.
- 29% of people with an intellectual disability who are get National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports are in paid employment (over 25 years old) and 77% of those are employed in a sheltered workshop or Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE)

Inclusion Australia has talked with and listened to people with an intellectual disability, their families, academics, and disability employment service providers. We believe these linked proposals would create real change in the lives of people with an intellectual disability and their families.

There is also significant economic return to be gained by investing in inclusion.

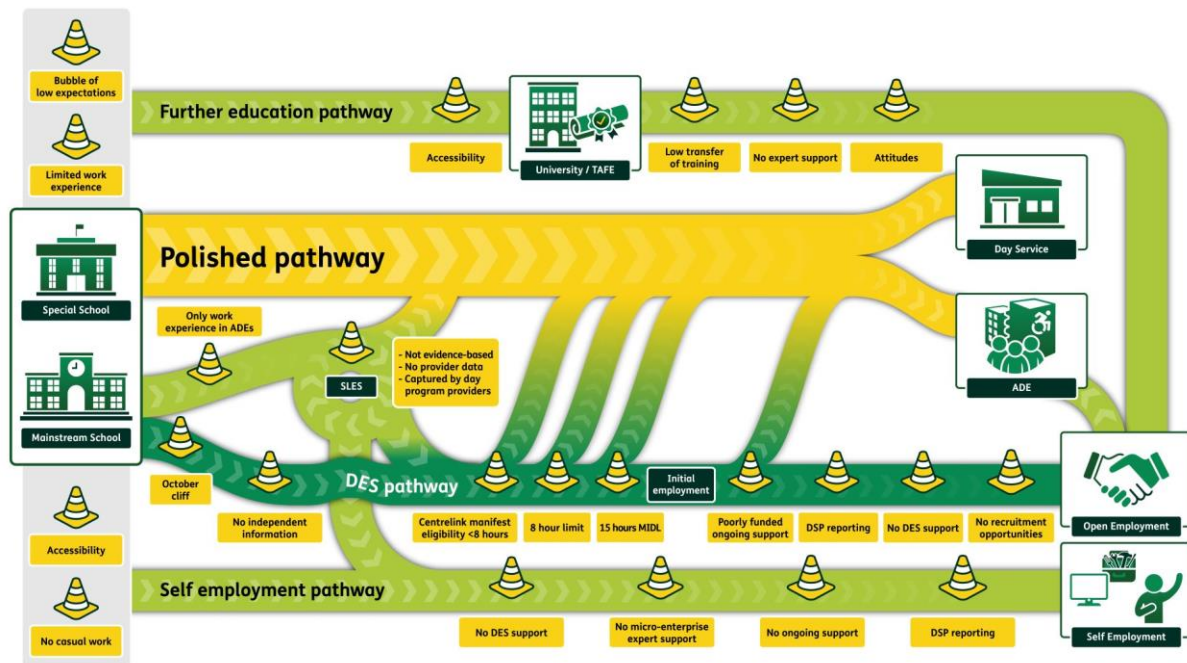
“Having a real job makes me feel like I am doing something meaningful and making a positive difference”

MARK, person with intellectual disability

The polished pathway

Inclusion Australia talks about the polished pathway for people with an intellectual disability into ADEs and day programs. The other pathway, into open and self-employment, is full of barriers and complexity, and we want this to change.

We want there to be a different polished pathway for people with an intellectual disability and their families.



My school didn't help me get ready for a job. They were going to put me in a day program and said I didn't have the ability to get a job. They treated me like a baby, and I didn't get to do work experience.

EMMA, person with intellectual disability

At end of school, supported education centre took families around a "career option tour" where they got on a bus and toured ADEs and everyone left traumatized or locked into the pathway. Came home crying, not a positive experience.

BRONWYN, family member

Equal pay, equal respect

Inclusion Australia wants the next Australian Government to:

- Immediately raise the wages of people with disability working in ADEs to at least the minimum wage, paid for by the Australian Government.
- Implement a five-year transition plan for all workers in ADEs to open and self-employment.

People with an intellectual disability who work in ADEs earn as low as \$2.50 per hour. We believe this needs to change right now to ensure that people earn at least the minimum wage.

Inclusion Australia believes the net cost to bring people with an intellectual disability's wages up to the minimum wage is approximately \$9,000 per full time role per year.

We want the Australian Government to pay this wage gap, until ADEs transition to open and self-employment for people with an intellectual disability.

We want a fully resourced five-year transition plan for workers in ADEs to open and self-employment, that is customised to each ADE and co-designed with people with an intellectual disability and their families. The transition plan will include specialist DES providers and the NDIA. The scope and cost of the transition plan will be co-designed with people with an intellectual disability, their families, organisations and all other stakeholders.

There is knowledge and expertise about supporting people with an intellectual disability at work in the existing ADE system that is important to keep. We believe that ADEs could transition into open employers of people with an intellectual disability. Some may be able to act as a community hub to support broader inclusive employment across their communities.

There is also work that needs to be done during this transition to make sure there are more jobs in open and self-employment for people with an intellectual disability, as well as the right kinds of support. The polished pathway into ADEs from school must be addressed, with clearer pathways and more options for people to explore open and self-employment.

The NDIS and the Disability Employment Services (DES) providers all have a role to play in making sure more people with an intellectual disability can work in open and self-employment.

At the ADE they would yell at you. When you finish the work they make up silly jobs for you to do. Like they make you sort out different parts and when you finish they mix them up again and make you do it all over again. I done it all and then they went away and mix them all up again.

GEORGE, person with intellectual disability

Reducing complexity and barriers

People with an intellectual disability and their families find it very hard to find their way to open and self-employment opportunities. There is a great deal of red-tape, conflict policies and administration needed.

There are much fewer barriers for people with an intellectual disability to go to work in a sheltered workshop, also known as an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE), than into other kinds of employment. We call this the polished pathway. We want this polished pathway to change, and to lead instead to open and self-employment opportunities.

Inclusion Australia wants the next Australian Government to:

- Set up a Knowledge and Practice Hub about open and self-employment for people with an intellectual disability for \$21.5m over 4.5 years.
- Set up Specialist Disability Employment Services (DES) in every state and territory as part of the current DES reforms.
- Establish a high-level taskforce dedicated to reducing complexity for people with an intellectual disability in engaging with government.
- Establish a way to coordinate whole of government policy for people with an intellectual disability, such as an Office of Disability.

Knowledge and Practice Hub and Specialist DES

Inclusion Australia has outlined a comprehensive, evidence-based Disability Employment Services (DES) Reform Blueprint that focuses on building the right supports for people with an intellectual disability and their families to succeed in open and self-employment.

We identified a key gap in understanding what works for people with an intellectual disability to get and sustain open and self-employment. That gap exists for employers, but also for people with an intellectual disability and their families. They do not have an independent, evidence-based information source to go to find out about open and self-employment. Many DES and NDIS providers also do not know what the evidence shows, or how to implement those findings.

We believe that addressing this gap is an essential part of this blueprint, and that this can be done by the creation of a Knowledge and Practice Hub about open and self-employment of people with intellectual disability, and specialist DES services in each state and territory.

We are asking for \$20m to deliver the Knowledge and Practice Hub over four years, and further \$1.5m as an immediate down payment to develop a detailed scoping plan.

The plan would be co-designed with people with an intellectual disability and their families, as well as Inclusion Australia and our members. The plan would include a variety of key government departments and agencies, such as the Department of Education, Skills and Education, the Department of Social Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency. The scoping plan would also have input from key academics and disability employment services with strong track records in supporting people with an intellectual disability in open and self-employment.

We are also asking for a commitment to setting up specialist DES services in every state and territory, that have expertise in employment supports for people with an intellectual disability and their families, in open and self-employment, as part of the current DES reforms.

Less than 4% of DES users are people with an intellectual disability and outcomes data shows how few DES get long term job placement or deliver the right support for people with an intellectual disability.

Currently, there are very few DES who have any expertise in supporting people with an intellectual disability at work, and the majority of DES deliver poor outcomes people with an intellectual disability. These specialist DES will be available to all people with an intellectual disability in their state and territory, work with the Knowledge Hub, and model evidence-based practice by employing people with an intellectual disability.

These specialist DES would be funded within the current total DES funding envelope.

Fixing red tape

We are calling for a high-level taskforce, closely tied to the Knowledge Hub, co-designed with people with an intellectual disability and their families, to focus and prioritise reducing the complexity of all the different systems.

We want to see harmonisation of these multiple frameworks and programs. The taskforce will complete their review in 12 months, and deliver a timetable for change in the following two years, including reporting in the Outcomes Framework for the Australian Disability Strategy.

Inclusion Australia also wants to see much more coordination of Federal Government policy and programs for people with an intellectual disability. Often the NDIS, Centrelink and employment programmes have different rules, outcomes and priorities. This all adds to the complexity and administrative burden for people with an intellectual disability and their families. This could be done by a new Office of Disability or some other mechanism.

Parents like us we now have 3 jobs: Our regular jobs, running the microenterprises and managing the NDIS flow on effects of that... plus other NDIS admin and caring responsibilities.

PAULINE and ANNA, family members

They got me champagne for my 60th birthday and sang happy birthday to me, it was lovely. That's what real people at real jobs do. At [the ADE] they never did anything like that. It's important to do things like that... "feeling like you belong"

GEORGE, person with intellectual disability

Creating job opportunities

For people with an intellectual disability to move into open and self-employment, it is important that the jobs are in place.

Current disability employment targets do not have specific targets for people with an intellectual disability, which means that they will often be left out.

Inclusion Australia wants the next Australian Government to implement:

- Public sector employment targets for people with an intellectual disability
- Private sector employment targets for people with an intellectual disability

We want to see specific targets for all levels of government for people with an intellectual disability. This includes federal, state and territory as well as local government.

The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy has a target of 7% for people with disability, but has no mention or target for people with an intellectual disability.

Inclusion Australia also wants to see the development of specific targets for the private sector, starting with business over a certain size, to employ people with an intellectual disability.

In many other countries, private sector targets for employment of people with disability are standard for business over 20-25 employees. Business who do not meet these target pay a penalty which is used to support other employment measures for people with disability.

We are proposing that a target be applied to business over 500 employees initially. This target would be start as voluntary, but if not met within five years, it would become mandatory, with attached penalties for not meeting the target.

Only employment at least minimum standard award wages, not supported wages, will be counted towards all targets.

The Knowledge and Practice Hub and the specialist DES providers will be a key avenue of information and support for employers to meet these targets.

“In a job that is going well I feel respected, valued, and listened to. I am treated well and feel like I am contributing to my workplace”

MARK, person with intellectual disability