Inclusion Australia

Equal Pay, Equal Rights.

Disability Royal Commission submission on inclusive employment for people with an intellectual disability

Submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Written and prepared by Inclusion Australia, with funding contributions from philanthropy and People with Disability Australia.

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Table of Contents

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inclusion Australia

For decades, people with an intellectual disability have been shut out of employment, segregated by a system that says they can't work. We want this system to change, and it needs to change now.

Successive governments have made assumptions about people with an intellectual disability, and then designed systems and structures around those assumptions.

From legislation to funding, from rules to regulations, from policies to programs, from attitudes to prejudice; Every part of the employment system has barriers that push people with an intellectual disability onto the path to a segregated life, away from the rest of the community.

People with an intellectual disability, other people with disability, families, friends, supporters, disability advocacy organisations, disability service providers, philanthropy and academics have come together to outline each of the barriers, and to propose a set of solutions to tear down these walls to clear the path to employment.

It is time to make some big changes. It is time to treat people with an intellectual disability as equal citizens, and design systems built on inclusion.

People with an intellectual disability who worked on this submission were very clear about what needs to change for themselves and their peers.

Now it is time for the Disability Royal Commission to listen to what they say and end the system of segregation.

A segregation system

People with an intellectual disability are excluded from the same opportunities as other Australians because of a system of segregation. They are expected to learn, live, work and play with only other people with an intellectual disability, again, separate from the rest of the community.

People with an intellectual disability are systemically kept apart, kept away, kept from working in the community, from earning a decent income, and from being equal citizens.

This segregation system means that experiences of exclusion, of access barriers, of discrimination, of low pay, are all too common for people with an intellectual disability. These experiences are built into all parts of the disability and employment systems.

Everywhere they turn, trying to get a job, they are blocked by the system, structures and attitudes that assume they can't work, stop them from being paid fairly and don't value the work they do.

This system is embedded into the rules and regulations, into the forgetting and the exclusion, into every part of the employment system, built on decades of discrimination, segregation and prejudice.

There are rules, laws and conventions that only apply to people with an intellectual disability. These are what makes segregation systemic, and the solution to that segregation is also systemic.

Programs and projects aimed at fixing the barriers to employment for people with an intellectual disability have not focused on fixing this segregation system. Instead, they have been focused on building the capacity of people with an intellectual disability and their families or employers, and while this is important, without the systems changes, segregation remains in place.

To end segregation, we must end the segregation system.

An inclusion system

People with an intellectual disability who worked on this project, and those who have talking about employment issues for many years, identified the biggest issues they faced when getting and keeping a job. These included:

- Low wages
- Hard to find a job outside an ADE
- Getting the right support
- Dealing with complex systems
- Expectations and attitudes

This submission has been designed around these issues, examining experiences and evidence and mapping the segregation system across all of these areas.

The changes proposed in this submission centre on the needs and experiences of people with an intellectual disability, not those of the institutions or structures they work in.

Sonia Hume, the project officer for this submission said that changes need to happen so that the systems "make things clearer like tasks and talk in a way we can understand properly. And give us time to learn. And give job interviews easier for people with a disability like easy read and pictures. And also give the employer information about how to work with people with a disability. And make sure they understand us."

People with an intellectual disability and their families have a great deal of experience and expertise in navigating this segregation system, and they have thought long and hard about what changes need to be made.

The key recommendations in this submission directly address how to change the segregation system and ensure more people with an intellectual disability can get and keep a job with a fair income.

What is happening?

Right now, people with an intellectual disability are excluded from employment, with 60% not in the workforce at all. For those that do work, many work in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) for below minimum wages because of the huge barriers to other jobs. This low paid work means they live in poverty their whole lives.

People with an intellectual disability and their families experience a polished pathway towards work in an ADE and a lifetime of poverty. At each stage in a person's life, there are barriers to an equal life that make it very hard to be included in the community.

A person with an intellectual disability looking for work needs to navigate multiple related, complex, and largely inaccessible, systems: Disability Employment Services (DES), the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Centrelink – as well as the education system for young people looking to transition from school to employment.

People with an intellectual disability can encounter low expectations about their capacity throughout their lives, and do not have access to the same kinds of options and choices as their non-disabled peers. Changing these expectations starts for people with an intellectual disability from when they are in school, through to entry into employment and reducing the barriers that get in their way.

We know that moving away from narrow work options with low pay in an ADE, is possible because this has been done well in other places. Australia can learn from successful transitions for people with an intellectual disability and become a leader on employment for people with disability.

Working in ADEs

People with an intellectual disability have been told for decades that the only place they can get a job is in an ADE working for below the minimum wage.

This is one of the clearest examples of the segregation system, where rules, laws and conventions only apply to people with an intellectual disability, such as below minimum wages and working only with other people with an intellectual disability.

Sonia said "just because we have a disability doesn't mean we can't work and work hard."

Sonia has worked in a wide range of jobs, says that she:

> "had no choice to work in an ADE because I didn't have any qualifications and I didn't like it. I felt like I was being under pressure to work hard and didn't feel like I wanted to be there because of the pay. I didn't feel like getting out of bed to attend work and the pay didn't cover the cost of the bus that I had to catch to get to work."

Larry Simpson, another project officer, has also worked in an ADE. He says "people with a disability have a right to have a better pay and treated with respect". Larry hopes that this submission can lead to "better pay in ADE and fair work conditions" and says that "my previous employer treated me like dirt and the pay wasn't any better it was so poor, and I got picked on".

When Sonia talked to Tim, a person with an intellectual disability who had worked in an ADE, she asked him how that felt. Tim replied "I guess I was a bit down. I felt a bit down. And I wanted to get out."

Gavin, a person with an intellectual disability, said about his time working in an ADE that "I was not happy. I was trying to look for other jobs while I was there. It was hard because I got pushed back and got told, you know you won't be successful in life. That you have to stay here - and they were very forceful."

Each of these people with an intellectual disability have experienced the segregation system, finding it hard to get work outside an ADE, despite wanting different kinds of work. Each of these people with an intellectual disability now works in other employment, paid a fair wage for their skills and experience.

We know it is possible for people with an intellectual disability to work outside an ADE because it is happening right now. Employers are learning how to give the right support, workers with disability are attending staff meetings with other workers, and people with an intellectual disability are taking home a decent wage.

These changes are happening even though the segregation system is stacked against that change. This shows how much people with an intellectual disability want more, want different choices, want a different life. They and their families are fighting so hard for a different future, and now the system needs to stop fighting them.

About the submission

A group of people with an intellectual disability and others have worked to develop this submission, built on decades of knowledge and experience, for the Disability Royal Commission. It looks at what looks at what is in the way of getting and keeping a job, and how to make it easier.

More than eighty people with an intellectual disability and their families, who have worked in Australian Disability Enterprises and other places, shared their experiences of what was good and what was not about those jobs. They have talked about the kinds of supports that are important at work. Each of these contributors has talked about how difficult each separate part of the system is, and then how difficult they are when combined.

Two project officers, Sonia Hume and Larry Simpson, talked to people with an intellectual disability who have worked in an ADE, including developing the questions and interviewing them. Both Sonia and Larry are people with an intellectual disability who have worked in a variety of places, including in an ADE.

A project advisory group, made up of people with an intellectual disability, other people with disability, representatives from advocacy organisations, unions and disability providers, met and discussed how to lift wages and where people with an intellectual disability could find more jobs.

Surveys, including in Easy Read, were distributed for people with an intellectual disability and their families to add their voices on a wide range of employment issues. Full analysis of this engagement work will be available on the Inclusion Australia website in 2023.

This submission also looks at the experience internationally of other people with an intellectual disability and their families, as they grapple with the same issues.

This submission commissioned work from the Centre for Social Impact and Impact Economics to inform policy findings and recommendations.

This submission examined all the Australian employment policy frameworks and strategies and found people with an intellectual disability weren't included.

This submission highlights the wide range of barriers people with an intellectual disability face, and how we can solve them to make sure everyone who wants a job can get one, with the right support.

This submission is built on the expertise and experiences of people with an intellectual disability and their families, who have generously shared their real-life encounters with trying to navigate systems that don't believe people have the right to work.

The work to deliver this submission was made possible with funding from People with Disability Australia and philanthropy.

Inclusion Australia staff, Board and state members - particularly Speak Out Tasmania and the South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability (SACID) - all contributed hugely to this submission.

Where did this submission come from?

Background

Inclusion Australia has a long history of advocacy for inclusive employment for people with an intellectual disability, developing multiple comprehensive submissions about evidence-based practice. We pay tribute to our former CEO Paul Cain for his passion and expertise in this area.

Inclusion Australia has participated in the Disability Employment Services working groups throughout 2021, alongside many other people with disability, disability organisations and DES providers, to advocate for strong reforms for people with an intellectual disability. In 2021 we also ran the What Works workshops, led by people with an intellectual disability, focused on public sector leaders across multiple departments and agencies, exploring the polished pathway and the barriers to open employment.

We have also completed a project, Everyone Can Work, which developed and provided resources for people with an intellectual disability and their families about accessing and sustaining open and self-employment.

Inclusion Australia member organisations have very significant expertise and experience in evidence-based employment for people with an intellectual disability.

In the last 18 months, Inclusion Australia has appeared four times as a witness at the Disability Royal Commission.

- Public Hearing 9: Pathways and barriers to open employment for people with disability
- Public Hearing 12: The experiences of people with disability in the context of the Australian Governments approach to the COVID-19 vaccine rollout
- Public Hearing 24: The experience of people with disability working in Australian Disability Enterprises, and
- Public Hearing 25: The experience of children and young people with disability in different education settings.

At each of these hearings (with the exception of the COVID-19 vaccination hearing) we have talked about the 'polished pathway' to a lifetime of segregation for many people with a disability which starts in specialist schools. When we separate out disabled from non-disabled people, we are again reinforcing these ideas of difference. We set different expectations, some of which people take a lifetime to shake off.

The polished pathway describes the way our systems have been smoothed towards increased segregation over the years. In particular it describes how segregated education, the Disability Support Pension process, and NDIS supports interface (or don't interface) with Disability Employment Services – the program that is supposed to support people with significant disability into open employment.

Inclusion Australia has led the public and policy debate about changing wages in ADEs and getting more people with an intellectual disability into open, inclusive employment. We worked with other national disability peak organisations to support our bold policy vision at the Disability Royal Commission hearing 24, and developed a strong Federal Election platform about employment that has influenced the new Federal Government.

Inclusion Australia participated in the 2022 NDIS Jobs and Skills forum, with people with an intellectual disability speaking on the main panel, and directly to key decision makers including Minister Shorten. Inclusion Australia contributed to the response from the floor delivered by PWDA's Deputy CEO at the National Jobs and Skills Summit as well as participating in other Ministerial Roundtables during the Summit's lead up.

This project

Since Public Hearing 24, Inclusion Australia has continued to lead and push the agenda around inclusive employment forward. We have met with a very wide range of stakeholders and, in October 2022, were successful in gaining funding to complete further engagement and analysis for this submission.

In the last three months we have done the following:

- Built a project team - people with an intellectual disability, families, people with disability, staff from Inclusion Australia, SpeakOut, SACID, PWDA
- Stakeholder engagement - people with an intellectual disability (interviews and survey); families (interviews and survey)
- Project Advisory group meetings
- Meetings with key organisations - National Disability Services, ACTU, Australian Local Government Association
- Commissioned new research - Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University
- Commissioned new economic modelling - Impact Economics
- Researched international inclusive employment models
- Analysed rights frameworks and a variety of existing employment policy frameworks

In addition, we have explored, in detail, the variety of barriers facing people with an intellectual disability, alongside proposed solutions for those barriers.

This detailed work has shown how complex and intersecting the barriers to work are, and so are the solutions.

Inclusion Australia has also participated in the Vision Roundtable, led by National Disability Services and had extensive discussion with the Department of Social Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency.

People with Disability Australia, who contributed funding to this project, also has a long history in advocating for changes to supported wages and to ADEs, particularly through the BSWAT case, and the Fair Work Commission.

Barriers and solutions

What are the barriers?

People with an intellectual disability learn, live and work in a system that separates or segregates them from the rest of the community, from their peers, from other people with disability. Each element of this system acts to preserve this separation, to keep people with an intellectual disability away from everyone else.

This isn't fair and it isn't ok. It is time for this system to change.

People with an intellectual disability are treated differently from other people, and from other people with disability, in every part of this system. At each stage of their lives, people with an intellectual disability face exclusion and difference, even left out of systems meant to support people with disability.

There have been big changes to the way people with disability live in the last 10, 20 and 30 years in Australia, with broader understanding of rights and a commitment to inclusion, particularly through the implementation of the NDIS.

But people with an intellectual disability are still stuck in a system that perpetuates their separation and exclusion from the community, still expected to learn, live and work away from everyone else, including other people with disability.

This system imposes rules and experiences on people with an intellectual disability that do not apply to anyone else, including to other people with disability.

People with an intellectual disability have productivity assessments, and have their wages cut as a result. This doesn't happen to anyone else.

People with an intellectual disability are told they can only have support to live their lives in groups. This doesn't happen to anyone else.

People with an intellectual disability don't get to make decisions and choices about their lives. This doesn't happen to anyone else.

To change the system, there needs to be understanding of how the system works, and what the barriers are in that system.

Right now, most people with an intellectual disability are excluded from employment, with 60% not in the workforce at all. For those that do work, many work in ADEs for less than the minimum wage because the system doesn't support work in other jobs. This low paid work means they live in poverty for their whole lives.

A person with an intellectual disability and their families who want to get or keep a job have to navigate multiple related, complex, and largely inaccessible, systems that all have barriers to an included life - Disability Employment Services, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Centrelink – as well as the education system for young people looking to transition from school to employment.

This section is a snapshot of the complex range of barriers that people with an intellectual disability and their families face when trying to do anything outside the system of separation and segregation. At every turn, they are faced with structures that push them on to the polished pathway to a life apart from the community.

For people with an intellectual disability, the impact of these barriers is cumulative - no barrier exists in isolation, and so can't be removed in isolation. This whole system has to work differently.

In their research[1], the Centre for Social Impact identified three kinds of supports that are grounded both in evidence and in the identified needs of people with disability. These are supply side (focusing on the person with an intellectual disability), demand side (focusing on employer/workplace) and societal change interventions. Their research shows the focus to date on supply and demand side interventions, with little focus on how to change and fix the system.

This leaves people with an intellectual disability and their families trying to solve these huge barriers individually, when there needs to be a change to all of them.

1 See Appendix A, Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support

What are the solutions?

People with an intellectual disability and their families have waited a long time for change and reform, and there have been many promises made that have come to nothing. It is time to do something different, something big, something ambitious, something complicated and connected and simple all at the same time.

People with an intellectual disability, their families, organisations, supporters, other people with disability and academics know what works and what needs to change. Decades of research and evidence have made this clear, alongside lived expertise of the people who have never been given a fair go.

The Disability Royal Commission is a once in a lifetime opportunity to take a holistic look at the barriers and solutions to getting and keeping a job and recommend the changes that will work to tear them down.

People with an intellectual disability can and do work, with the right support. Now we need our systems and structures to change to allow that to happen.

Research commissioned for this report from the Centre for Social Impact made several key findings about what is needed to facilitate employment for people with an intellectual disability. These are:

- A non-segregated employment support system: equal access to all employment services.
- Employment supports and services that directly address the full range of barriers to employment.
- Evidence based and effective employment supports for people with intellectual disability.
- Re-focusing the contribution of ADEs.
- The funding of employment of supports.[2]

Each of these elements is important, and changes are needed across the disability, income support and employment systems, as well as in the job market.

We believe that these ambitious, evidence-based changes can be implemented over the next five years, leading to a widespread shift in both attitudes towards and employment of people with an intellectual disability.

We will be seen as equal when we are equal.

Each one of the barriers above has a corresponding solution, backed by evidence and research.

2 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J. & Campbell, P. (2022). The Logic for Reform: Employment for People with Intellectual Disability in Australia, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusion Australia

This submission is a five year reform blueprint that will deliver higher incomes and more jobs for people with an intellectual disability, in a wider range of jobs with the right support.

These recommendations are grounded in the expertise of people with an intellectual disability and their families, as well as academic research and independent economic modelling.

The key changes in this submission include:

An inclusion system built around:

- Higher incomes
- More jobs
- Coordination and accountability
- Employment supports, based on evidence
- Fixing system pathways
- Getting ready for work

An inclusion system

To end the current segregation system, we need to build inclusion into the laws, rules and conventions across government.

Disability Services Act 1986

The current segregation system is built into legislation, so to change that system, the legislation needs to change.

The Disability Services Act 1986 divided employment services for people with disability into two, with people with an intellectual disability expected to use "supported employment services, developed to assist people for whom competitive employment at award wages is not a realistic option. Typical models of supported employment include enclaves, specialised businesses, mobile work crews and individual supported jobs."[1]

This separation has remained during a variety of reviews of the DSA.

The Department of Social Services is currently undertaking a major review and revision of the DSA[2], which is an opportunity to end this segregation system, and to ensure that people with an intellectual disability can access mainstream disability employment systems and supports. This will also facilitate the transition of Australian Disability Enterprises from their current form.

Recommendation:

- That the current review of the Disability Services Act 1986 includes explicit measures to end systemic segregation in the employment system.

Supported decision making framework

People with an intellectual disability, like everyone else, have the right to make decisions about their own lives, and the right to support in making decisions if they wish. This is covered by Articles 3, 4 and 12 of the UN CPRD.

Many people with an intellectual disability will use supported decision-making (SDM) across some or all aspects of their lives. Every organisation, agency and government department that works with people with an intellectual disability must understand SDM and ensure they embed a supported decision-making approach across their work.

To make sure that support for decision-making is coordinated across government, an overarching strategy and implementation framework needs to be developed consistent with Australia's Disability Strategy.

Recommendation:

- DSS develop an overarching supported decision-making framework for use across all government policies and programs by end 2023.

1 https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fprspub%2FZAV20%22
2 https://engage.dss.gov.au/a-new-act-to-replace-the-disability-services-act-1986/

Higher incomes

People with an intellectual disability say that the most important issue they want fixed about employment is to be earning more for their work.

Very low wages have been paid to people with an intellectual disability for decades, while everyone else around them is on at least the minimum wage.

People with an intellectual disability say when they earn a decent income for their work, they feel respected and valued.

Background

People with an intellectual disability live a lifetime in poverty, shut out of employment, or when they can get a job, earning very low wages.

People with an intellectual disability can legally be paid a percentage of ordinary wages, through the Supported Employment Services Award and the Supported Wage System. This can be as little as 12.5% of the relevant minimum hourly rate of pay.

These low wages mean people with an intellectual disability also receive income from the Disability Support Pension, but the combination of earnings and income support remains less than the minimum wage.

Workers with disability who are paid these below minimum wages mostly work in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs), but can also work in other jobs. It is estimated that this impacts about 20,000 people.

The size of the gap between the minimum wage and the DSP, plus SES/SWS wages, varies depending on how many hours people work and how much they earn per hour.

Changing the whole employment system for people with an intellectual disability will take time, but should take no longer than five years. People with an intellectual disability can't continue to wait for fair wages, or be expected to continue to live in poverty while working.

There needs to be a subsidy introduced, paid by the Australian Government, so that people with an intellectual disability can have higher incomes and move out of poverty now. This subsidy needs to be the first step in wider employment reform.

Incomes can be increased in a number of ways. These will include a combination of:

- A wage subsidy to bring incomes to at least the minimum wage
- Changing the Disability Support Pension
- Raising wages over time for people earning subminimum wages

Economic modelling shows that a wage subsidy for the approximately 20,000 workers with an intellectual disability currently earning below sub-minimum wages in a variety of jobs, would cost between $3,569 and $5,704 per year per worker for the first year, tapering down to zero after five years.

Over the five year reform period, wages for people with an intellectual disability should rise, until they are paid full minimum wages.

Recommendation:

- The Australian Government invest in a wage subsidy to ensure that people with an intellectual disability on supported wages receive an income equivalent to the minimum wage. The total wage subsidy, depending on any other changes to incomes, will begin at between $75m-$121m per year, tapering to between zero after five years when full minimum wages are paid. [**See Appendix B for full modelling details.**]

More jobs

People with an intellectual disability need more choice about the kinds of jobs they can do, with the right support, just like everyone else.

For workers with disability in ADEs, changes to the employment system have to include creating more jobs in a wide range of occupations and settings, particularly in regional areas.

Background

Most people with an intellectual disability aren't in employment at all, with much lower rates of employment than non-disabled people or other people with disability.

Employment rates of people with profound or severe disability, which includes many people with an intellectual disability, are going down[3].

The 2020 NDIS report on employment showed that people with an intellectual disability were much more likely to be working in an ADE than in open employment[4]. Only 29% of people with intellectual disability who get NDIS supports were in paid employment when they entered the NDIS.

Of the 29% of people who are working:

- 29.9% were in open employment
- 16.6% were in open employment but below the minimum wage and
- 45% were employed in an ADE.[5]

ADEs are currently one of the few places where people with an intellectual disability can get employment, with specialist support, but workers with disability earn well below the minimum wage and rarely have a choice about where they work or what they do.

Right now, there are many organisations and sectors that are looking for new staff, and people with an intellectual disability are looking for jobs. By building the capacity of employers and the community, and making sure the right supports are easy to access, people with an intellectual disability will be more included in the workforce.

The public and disability sectors are where the initial jobs need to come from, with both well-positioned to implement evidence-based supports and with a wide variety of jobs available.

In the private sector, the hospitality, catering and travel industries have been identified as having high potential, due to severe staff shortages, existing training programs and pilots underway.

Targeted programs for people with an intellectual disability need to be introduced in each of these industries and sectors. These include:

- Disability service providers
- Disability Employment Services
- The public sector - federal, state and territory, local
- Travel
- Hospitality and catering

If people with an intellectual disability aren't specifically included, they are often left out from programs to target people with disability. There need to be specific targets and programs for people with an intellectual disability, alongside evidence-based support.

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3 Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, https://public.tableau.com/views/2022_f_15_servicesforpeoplewithdisability/9_Labourforceparticipationandemploymentofpeoplewithdisability?:embed=y&:tabs=n&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link

4 https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/outcomes-and-goals/employment-outcomes-participants-their-families-and-carers

5 as above

As more people with an intellectual disability are employed across the community in these industries and sectors, their employment will be more routine, their supports more well understood, and they will be more included.

Recommendations:

- Specific targets are set for the employment of people with disability, including with an intellectual disability across a wide range of sectors and industries, for organisations over 100 employees.
- All disability employment strategies to include specific targets and measures to include people with an intellectual disability.

Coordination and accountability

There have been more than three decades or more of strategies, programs and investment in trying to get more people with disability into employment, with little success. It is time to do things differently, including requiring changes from employers.

The five years of reforms needed to drive the big changes needed, outlined in this submission are across a wide range of agencies and departments, and include the private sector. There needs to be one place that is coordinating and ensuring the reform progresses.

To measure if the reform is successful, there needs to be accountability about how many people with an intellectual disability, and other people with disability, are in employment and what they are earning.

To do this coordination, evaluation, monitoring and accountability, a Workplace Disability Equality Agency (WDEA) needs to be established that will create a powerful independent organisation that can drive change.

The WDEA will cover all people with disability, but begin their work with the key reforms for people with an intellectual disability, who are the most marginalised from employment.

Background

Data and reporting

There is currently poor data about employment for people with an intellectual disability, and other people with disability. How many are in work, for how many hours, what are they being paid, what supports are they using, which industries do they work in, which employers are hiring and not hiring, how long are they employed for?

Some data is collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and some by other agencies, but there isn't coordinated data or reporting on specific employment information.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency[6] requires companies over 100 employees to report on gender equality, and this influences government contracts. There is no such reporting or accountability for disability. This is a key role that the WDEA could also play.

This lack of data extends to how many people with an intellectual disability are being paid under the SWS outside of ADEs, or who are in training programs for extended periods of time without transitioning to work.

6 https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/reporting

Fixing complexity

A person with an intellectual disability who wants to get or keep a job, and their familiy, have to navigate multiple related, complex, and largely inaccessible, systems that all have barriers. These include Disability Employment Services (DES), the NDIS, the DSP and Centrelink as well as the education system for young people looking to transition from school to employment.

Solving this complexity, so that people with an intellectual disability and their families have a seamless, simple interface with these systems, is a vital part of this reform. The WDEA will play a key role in bringing different agencies and departments together to fix systems.

Accountability

Without a central agency driving changes that will remove barriers to employment for people with an intellectual disability, there is little incentive to take on the responsibility for reform.

Each agency, department and level of government will continue to work in siloed ways, proposing and implementing reforms that continue to be ineffective and conflicted.

The National Disability Insurance Agency, DES, Services Australia, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Centrelink, Australia's Disability Strategy, Fair Work Commission, state, territory departments and agencies, local government - how can each of these separate organisations and entities work on a coherent and coordinated change to ensure people with an intellectual disability get a fair go? They can't.

In a similar fashion to the Workplace Gender Equality Act, the WDEA will require organisations over a certain size, as well as in specific industries (such as NDIS and DES providers) to report on the numbers of people with disability, including people with an intellectual disability, in employment.

This will include reporting on:

- other diversity characteristics
- salary or wages
- nature of work
- whether full-time, part-time or casual work is undertaken
- level of seniority
- duration employed with the employer.

The WDEA will also impose quotas on organisations that do not meet employment standards, as well as set rules for procurement that incentivises employment of people with disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability.

A National Agency focused on diversity in employment was also a key recommendation from the Australian Human Rights Commission's Willing to Work inquiry in 2016. The Inquiry recommended that "An expanded and adequately resourced agency would, over time, collect data, publicly report on progress against voluntary targets, and engage collaboratively with employers and business to reduce employment discrimination. This expanded role would be incorporated into the agency's supporting legislation."[7]

Information

When people with an intellectual disability want to get into a job, there is nowhere to turn to find out where to start. Information about how to get and keep a job, including where to get support, is complicated, confusing, not independent of service provision and not accessible for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

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7 https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/willing-work-national-inquiry-employment-discrimination

The WDEA will host a Knowledge Hub that provides resources and evidence about what works to support a person with an intellectual disability in employment in a range of formats for people with an intellectual disability, families, disability services, employment agencies and employers.

There is a large body of evidence about how to support a person with an intellectual disability at work, yet that information is not widely available, nor utilised in existing disability employment information sources.

This will include developing inclusive practice guides for employers, including ADEs, about how to ensure that people with an intellectual disability are equally included in all aspects of their workplace.

Recommendations:

- A Workplace Disability Equality Agency is established, with clear responsibilities, powers and resources to report on and hold accountable, employers about employing people with disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability.

Evidence based supports

The evidence about what works to support people with an intellectual disability at work is clear, but isn't reflected in much of the disability employment system, including DES and NDIS. This needs to be fixed, and there needs to be a central source of information.

Background

People with an intellectual disability, their families and academics have worked for decades to discover, compile and evaluate the right kinds of support for employment.

The evidence says that people with an intellectual disability need:

- Job discovery
- On the job training (also called place and train)
- Job matching
- Job customisation/carving
- Ongoing support

Currently, there is a lack of independent information about what good evidence based supports are, and how to deliver them.

Addressing this gap is an essential part of ensuring that people with an intellectual disability and their families can access the right support. A key way to do this is to establish a Knowledge Hub, within the Workplace Disability Equality Agency, about the best ways to support open and self-employment of people with intellectual disability.

Within the DES system, evidence based support could also be rolled out through specialist DES providers available to all people with an intellectual disability in their state and territory. They would work with the Knowledge Hub, and model evidence-based practice by employing people with an intellectual disability.

Employers would have access to high quality information about how to support a person with an intellectual disability in the workplace, as would families.

The Hub will:

- Provide best practice evidence-based information about employment for people with an intellectual disability.
- Design training and evidence-based resources.
- Deliver capacity building for employers about evidence based employment.
- Provide resources and support for specialist DES providers.

Self-employment

Many people with an intellectual disability want to and will run their own business. The Knowledge Hub and Specialist DES services will develop a body of evidence, real-life examples and a peer-support program for people with an intellectual disability and their families working in their own business.

Support for decision making

The Knowledge Hub will provide resources about supported decision-making expertise and to provide ongoing training and expertise about SDM.

Recommendation:

- Establish a Knowledge Hub in the Workplace Disability Equality Agency, and specialist DES services in each state and territory.

Fixing pathways to work

Too many structures, programs and systems are in the way of people with an intellectual disability finding and keeping a job because they assume people with an intellectual disability can't work. This isn't true, but the systems haven't changed to reflect this.

At every turn, they are faced with structures that push them on to the polished pathway to a life apart from the community.

For people with an intellectual disability, the impact of these barriers is cumulative - no barrier exists in isolation, and so can't be removed in isolation. This whole system has to work differently.

This leaves people with an intellectual disability and their families trying to solve these huge barriers individually, when there needs to be a change to all of them.

Background

This polished pathway is an incremental journey to poorly paid, segregated, and congregated work. The pathway is shaped by low community expectations and supported by interlinking systems.

The connections between these systems, from early childhood intervention to Centrelink, from the NDIS to DES, and especially from school to work, are so smooth that families don't even see they are heading towards this predetermined destination until the last minute.

For people with an intellectual disability, once they are in these systems, they don't leave. They will not enter mainstream employment or live in the community or have the same kinds of choices and experiences as other people with disability or the wider community.

People with an intellectual disability want more than this, and deserve to be fully included in all parts of their lives.

Different systems, such as Disability Employment Services, Centrelink, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, JobAccess and more, all have different ways of making it hard for a person with intellectual disability to get a job, particularly outside of ADEs, closing the door to opportunity.

An essential part of this five year reform is to make sure that these doors start to open.

In the barriers section of the submission, there is a comprehensive review of the detail of each of these programs, and lists of how they aren't working.

The path towards working in a wide range of jobs, for a decent wage, needs to be made smooth, with any complexity dealt with by government.

The solution for this complexity should lie with government, not with people with an intellectual disability and their families. Government needs to take on this problem, and find solutions that create a simple public interface for the wide range of services and supports people with an intellectual disability will engage with over their life.

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency can play a lead role in working with other parts of government that are working on reducing complexity and setting a proactive workplan for reform across government. This can also form part of the next round of Targeted Action Plans under Australia's Disability Strategy.

Recommendation

- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency works to develop a blueprint for reform of complexity across government to support employment for people with an intellectual disability.

Getting ready for work

Many people with an intellectual disability, who have never worked, will need structured work readiness program to ensure they have the skills and the training to thrive at work.

Background

There are two main groups of people with an intellectual disability who will need such a program. They are people with an intellectual disability who:

- are leaving school and moving into work for the first time
- are moving into work for the first time

Decades of evidence shows that work readiness programs, when designed properly, can be a critical element to increasing successful employment for people with an intellectual disability.

There is currently a limited work readiness program available through the NDIS (School Leavers Employment Support or SLES) that is available for school leavers only, and to date has not used evidence to guide what is funded, nor achieved the expected outcomes.

The SLES program also is not available for other people with an intellectual disability who want to enter employment, but need a structured period of training.

A three year, work traineeship program needs to be introduced, using evidence to guide the curriculum and with access to formal vocational training.

People with an intellectual disability who go into this program will receive a traineeship wage that is increased the longer they are in the program, with a maximum time of three years to be spent in this program.

Current mainstream traineeships require the completion of a certificate level of qualification. This should also apply to this work traineeship program. People with an intellectual disability can and do complete vocational training, and this will significantly boost their chances of gaining employment.

During the program, everyone will complete some general elements, then, depending on their preference, move into the area of employment interest. There will be specific streams for business development, small business support, public sector, working in business and industry specific training.

The full details of this kind of program need to be further explored, particularly the safeguards against exploitation, as in other traineeship programs.

Recommendation:

- A three year work readiness traineeship program, that is evidence based and leads to qualifications and employment, is developed and established for people with an intellectual disability.

Five year reform plan - Mapping the key recommendations

Year	An inclusion system	Higher incomes	More jobs	Coordination and accountability	Employment supports, based on evidence	Fixing system pathways	Getting ready for work
2023	New Disability Services Act to integrate employment support systems	Design of wage subsidy system	Increased targets for employment of people with an intellectual disability	Legislation for the creation of the Workplace Disability Equality Agency	Specialist DES program developed		Work readiness traineeship program developed
	Consultation on a whole-of-government supported decision-making framework		Targets included in key government strategies	WDEA established			
2024	Implementation of integrated employment systems	Implementation of wage subsidy program	WDEA reporting begins for public sector	WDEA reporting begins for public sector	Knowledge Hub established		Work readiness traineeship program begins
	Introduction of whole of-government of supported decision-making framework				Specialist DES established		
	Whole-of-government of supported decision-making framework included in all government strategies and plans						
2025	Supported decision-making framework introduced and embedded across government		WDEA reporting begins for private sector	WDEA reporting begins for private sector	Evidence based employment support information published	Reducing complexity blueprint launched	
2026			Annual report on disability employment, including people with an intellectual disability	Annual report on disability employment, including people with an intellectual disability	Evidence based supports widely used	Complexity reforms initiatives delivered	Work readiness traineeship program evaluated
2027						Complexity reduced	Work readiness traineeship program revised as needed
Post 2027 outcome	People with an intellectual disability can access high quality support for decision making in all parts of government.	People with an intellectual disability have an income equivalent to at least the minimum wage	More people with an intellectual disability are employed in a wide range of jobs	Coordinated reform across multiple systems and agencies has occurred, to support employment of people with an intellectual disability.	Information about evidence based employment supports is widely used.	People with an intellectual disability and their families find all government systems easy to use.	People with an intellectual disability have high quality work readiness training that leads to employment.

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

THE RIGHT TO WORK

Inclusion Australia

People with an intellectual disability have the right to work under Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)[1], alongside all the other rights they have under the Convention.

No Article from the CPRD exists in isolation, but rather is part of the complete rights that all people with disability have, including the right to accessibility (Article 9)[2], the right to freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (Article 16)[3], the right to live independently and be included in the community (Article 19)[4], and the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28).

Australia ratified the CRPD in 2009, and have developed a national strategy that outlines how the Convention is being implemented, known as Australia's Disability Strategy.

The Convention says in Article 27 that people with disability have the right "to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities."[5]

The 2019 review of Australia's work to realise the rights of people with disability through the CRPD raised concerns about the unemployment rates of people with disability, and the 'ongoing practice of segregated employment through Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) with sub-minimum wage payment".

The UN Committee recommended reform to DES, as well "a comprehensive review of ADEs to adhere to Article 27 of the Convention and provide services to transition of persons with disabilities from sheltered employment into open inclusive and accessible forms of employment, ensuring equal remuneration for work for equal value."[6]

This right is explored further in General Comment 8[7], which specifies the right to work in an open employment setting for fair wages. The CRPD Committee drew on the wider human rights frameworks, as well as the CRPD, to develop this revised paper, saying that they had "drawn upon its own jurisprudence, and that of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other human rights treaty bodies, to develop the present general comment."

The Comment is clear about what is behind the assumptions that the exclusion of people with an intellectual disability from employment and underpin sub-minimum wages. The Committee says:

> "Ableism is the foundation of the medical and charity models of disability that leads to social prejudice, inequality and discrimination against persons with disabilities, as it underpins legislation, policies and practices such as segregated employment, for example "sheltered workshops" and can result in involuntary participation in the informal economy."

The general obligations of the CRPD (Article 4[8]) say that countries that ratify the Convention, such as Australia, must act on this discrimination, caused by ableism, against people with disability, including people with an intellectual disability, by taking all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against persons with disabilities'.

1 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html
2 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-9-accessibility.html
3 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-16-freedom-from-exploitation-violence-and-abuse.html
4 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-19-living-independently-and-being-included-in-the-community.html
5 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-27-work-and-employment.html
6 https://www.afdo.org.au/un-report-on-australias-review-of-crpd/
7 https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/crpdcgc8-general-comment-no-8-2022-right-person
8 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-4-general-obligations.html

In addition, General Comment 8[9] explicitly recognises the need to end segregated work, based on disability. The CRPD Committee says:

> "Discrimination, such as denial of reasonable accommodation, inaccessible workplaces and harassment pose further obstacles to employment in an open labour market and work environment, leading to a false choice of employment in a closed workplace on the basis of disability."

They go on to outline what segregated employment is, and what characteristics it has, and say that:

> "Segregated employment, such as sheltered workshops, for persons with disabilities is not to be considered as a measure of progressive realisation of the right to work, which is evidenced only by freely chosen or accepted employment in an open and inclusive labour market."

As a signatory to the CRPD, Australia is obligated to develop policies and practices that uphold the rights of people with disability, including people with an intellectual disability.

9 Full document, Word download, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/crpdcgc8-general-comment-no-8-2022-right-persons

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Inclusion Australia

KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

There are a range of policy documents and frameworks about employment for people with disability. But they do not contain specific measures to address the barriers or supports that people with an intellectual disability experience or use.

A cornerstone of this policy environment is Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, which represents the national commitment to disability rights and inclusion.

The Strategy's stated goals are to:

- provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability
- guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability
- drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability
- engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

A large part of the main Strategy document consists of high-level commitments and intentions without specific information about their implementation.

Under the Strategy, Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) feature concrete plans over one to three years to improve outcomes in specific areas, while Associated Plans show how particular government departments or initiatives support the Strategy over three to ten years. New TAPs and Associated Plans can be developed over the life of the Strategy.

Other disability policy initiatives are understood to fall under or be guided by the Strategy and its related Plans.

So what does this policy framework have to say about employment for people with intellectual disability?

Australia's Disability Strategy

The Intersectionality and Diversity section on page 36 of the Strategy begins "The diversity of people with disability needs to be understood, acknowledged and celebrated. Part of this involves an understanding of the concept of 'intersectionality'." Despite describing it as one 'part' of diversity, the rest of the section focuses on intersectionality exclusively, without mentioning any other cohorts of people with disability that face specific barriers and need specific support to address their increased marginalisation.

An illustrative example in this section describes groups of people with disability whose employment outcomes are significantly worse than average. It accurately includes women, First Nations, young people and CALD people with disability, but does not list people with intellectual disability, whose participation in employment is known to be the lowest.

Employ My Ability

The Department of Social Services has produced a Disability Employment Strategy known as Employ My Ability. This Associated Plan of Australia's Disability Strategy 'provides a guiding framework for governments, employers and the broader community to increase employment outcomes for people with disability'.

Employ My Ability says 'we all have a role to play', including suggestions and links to online resources for employers, 'parents and carers', and 'teachers and career practitioners'. Online resources provided for employers, families and schools do include some that are specific to intellectual disability. Very few of the online resources provided for jobseekers include Easy Read.

When it comes to government actions, like the main Strategy document, Employ My Ability is focused on broad commitments, guidelines and intentions (such as 'Seek to ensure disability and mainstream employment services and supports have a focus on Providing tailored supports that meet the needs of people with disability' and 'Develop new approaches to support young people in their transition from school to work'), but light on specific plans that could focus on particular cohorts in need of specific support. It says that government actions to implement this framework are outlined in two of the five Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) that have been published so far: the Employment TAP and Community Attitudes TAP.

Community Attitudes

The Community Attitudes TAP is designed to drive progress under the Community Attitudes Outcome Area of Australia's Disability Strategy.

Two objectives of this TAP are relevant to employment policy:

- Objective 1: Employers value the contribution people with disability make to the workforce, and recognise the benefits of employing people with disability.
- Objective 3: Increase representation of people with disability in leadership roles.

However, specifics relevant to people with intellectual disability are largely absent.

In Objective 3.1 the federal government promises to invest $800,000 through 2024 to link skilled young people with disability and employers to develop their leadership and progress their career aspirations, but does not specifically target people with an intellectual disability.

The South Australian state government promises in Objective 1.1 to 'identify opportunities to purchase goods and services from Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) and from organisations who have strong inclusive employment practices and provide employment to people living with disability'. It does not make a distinction between organisations that pay at least the minimum wage and others, and the state government's criteria for identifying strong inclusive employment practices are not reported.

Employment

The Employment TAP is designed to drive progress under the Employment and Financial Security Outcome Area of Australia's Disability Strategy.

The objectives of this TAP are:

1. Increase employment of people with disability
2. Improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.

Key federal government actions under this TAP are:

- Implementing the New Employment Services Model (NESM) and reforming Disability Employment Services (DES), which includes:
  - expanding the Transition to Work program of tailored support for young people at risk of long-term unemployment, to add more participants with 'complex non-vocational barriers' such as disability
  - conducting several pilot programs involving recruitment and work placement in limited areas
- Implementing specific strategies:
  - NDIS Participant Employment Strategy
  - The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25
- Improving the motivation and capability of employers to attract, recruit and retain employees with disability

Very few of these directly address barriers to employment for people with an intellectual disability. The most attention that seems to have been paid to people with intellectual disability is in the area of improving employer motivation and capability. Even there, most of the resources provided include minimal advice about specific support that people with intellectual disability need, if any.

IncludeAbility is the only part that explicitly advocates for inclusive employment in an open context and paid at the minimum wage. It also features information about customised employment (in somewhat more detail than JobAccess), and at least one of its Ambassadors is a person with intellectual disability.

New Employment Services Model (NESM)

NESM has a clear agenda to maximise the number of 'digital self-managed' jobseekers, as opposed to those using Enhanced Services like DES. No information has been published so far about specific plans to support people with intellectual disability in the new DES system.

There is also no information about the inclusion of people with an intellectual disability in any of the pilot programs, or the use of evidence-based practice to allow these programs to effectively support participants with intellectual disability.

The Transition to Work program, which provides access to specialist consultants, case managers, and health and disability specialists, is referred to as 'the dedicated youth employment service' within NESM, but the program's consultation paper FAQ says they want to 'improve' the eligibility criteria to include 'only those young people who have the most impactful disadvantage and are unable to participate in self-service'. It is unclear whether another youth-appropriate Enhanced Service is available to young people who fall just short of these criteria.

NDIS participant employment strategy

The NDIS participant employment strategy's vision is that 'NDIS participants have the same opportunities to work as other Australians, and the confidence, support and skills to take advantage of those opportunities.'

The strategy's goal is for 30 percent of participants of working age to be in paid work by 30 June 2023.

The Strategy's 2020 progress report shows two actions specific to intellectual disability:

- Under focus area 2, the NDIA conducted research on pathways to employment for participants with intellectual disability, autism or psychosocial disability.
- Under focus area 4, $32.7 million was distributed to 28 grant recipients through the second Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Economic Participation grant round, funding activities to provide people with disability pathways to meaningful employment. $3,565,713.58 of these grants went to four projects focused on people with intellectual disability, as well as another $3,300,000.00 for one focused on 'developmental disability' which is likely to include intellectual disability as well as others.

Several initiatives relevant to people with intellectual disability have been introduced in the strategy's Employment action plan 2021-22, as detailed in the 2021 Progress Report:

- In Action 4, a review of School Leaver Employment Supports included research on barriers, pathways and interventions to support economic participation and employment for people with intellectual disability, on the autism spectrum and with psychosocial disability.
- Actions 1 and 10 of the plan involve the transition of "supports in employment" funding, delivered through ADEs, to a more flexible model allowing participants to use this funding in open employment.

Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy

The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25 aims to increase the disability employment rate within the Australian Public Service from its current 4% to 7% by 2025. No cohort-specific measures are outlined in the Strategy. Even the one reference to intersectionality simply informs us that the Public Service also has strategies to address the employment of other marginalised groups, which ignores the main point of intersectionality as a concept - that people at the intersections of two such groups have a unique experience which is informed by both identities in a way that is more complex than simple addition.

It is clear that some APS agencies are ahead of others in inclusive employment. For example, a case study in the Strategy describes a Questacon job customisation practice. But there is no information so far on the inter-agency collaboration described in Action 16 of the Strategy so that the experience of better-performing agencies can help others catch up. The APSC annual report says that the Commission is responsible for delivering seven of the actions promised in the Strategy, of which six actions have started or have been completed and one is yet to start. Neither the 2022 State of the Service report nor the Strategy's promised 2022 evaluation have been published yet.

Additionally, the Australian Public Service Commission does not collect data on type of disability, so it is unknown how many people with intellectual disability have been supported by these programs. There is no Easy Read content on either the general APS jobs website or the Recruitability scheme, implying that any APS agencies which intend to recruit people with intellectual disability must broadly rely on partnerships with disability employment service providers to do so.

Recommendation:

- All disability employment policies are revised to include specific measures to include people with an intellectual disability, based in evidence and assuming capacity to work in a wide range of jobs with the right support.

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

BARRIERS

Inclusion Australia

Introduction

People with an intellectual disability learn, live and work in a system that separates or segregates them from the rest of the community, from their peers, from other people with disability. Each element of this system acts to preserve this separation, to keep people with an intellectual disability away from everyone else.

This isn't fair, and isn't ok and it is time for this system to change.

People with an intellectual disability are treated differently from other people, and from other people with disability, in every part of this system. At each stage of their lives, people with an intellectual disability face exclusion and difference, left out even of systems meant to support people with disability.

There have been big changes to the way people with disability live in the last ten, twenty and thirty years in Australia, with broader understanding of rights and a commitment to inclusion, particularly through the implementation of the NDIS.

But people with an intellectual disability are still stuck in a system that perpetuates their separation and exclusion from the community, still expected to learn, live and work away from everyone else, including other people with disability.

This system imposes rules and experiences on people with an intellectual disability that do not apply to anyone else, including to other people with disability.

People with an intellectual disability have productivity assessments, and have their wages cut as a result. This doesn't happen to anyone else.

People with an intellectual disability are told they can only have support to live their lives in groups. This doesn't happen to anyone else.

People with an intellectual disability don't get to make decisions and choices about their lives. This doesn't happen to anyone else.

To change the system, there needs to be understanding of how the system works, and what the barriers are in that system.

Right now, most people with an intellectual disability are excluded from employment, with 60% not in the workforce at all. For those that do work, many work in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) for less than the minimum wage because the system doesn't support work in other jobs. This low paid work means they live in poverty for their whole lives.

A person with an intellectual disability and their families who want to get or keep a job have to navigate multiple related, complex, and largely inaccessible, systems that all have barriers to an included life - Disability Employment Services (DES), the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Centrelink – as well as the education system for young people looking to transition from school to employment.

About this section

This section is a snapshot of the complex range of barriers that people with an intellectual disability and their families face when trying to do anything outside the system of separation and segregation. At every turn, they are faced with structures that push them on to the polished pathway to a life apart from the community.

For people with an intellectual disability, the impact of these barriers is cumulative - no barrier exists in isolation, and so can't be removed in isolation. This whole system has to work differently.

In their research[1], the Centre for Social Impact identified three kinds of supports that are grounded both in evidence and in the identified needs of people with disability. These are supply side (focusing on the person with an intellectual disability), demand side (focusing on employer/workplace) and societal change interventions. Their research shows the focus to date on supply and demand side interventions, with little focus on how to change and fix the system.

This leaves people with an intellectual disability and their families trying to solve these huge barriers individually, when there needs to be a change to all of them.

1 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

The polished pathway

People with an intellectual disability and their families often experience what is called the polished pathway[2] into a lifetime of exclusion from the community. The complexity of the support system, and the pressures on families to manage the enormous competing time pressures of work and care, can make real choice and inclusion very difficult.

For the families of people with an intellectual disability, the polished pathway is one that starts with small decisions in childhood. Families make what feel like 'safe' parental choices during those early tricky school years when everything feels overwhelming and tiring. Families are not told about the long-term implications of these 'choices', and are often presented with only one real choice.

Families are told in early childhood intervention: "Your child will never cope in mainstream school, and they will never cope with her", so they "choose" special school.

Over the next few years, the advantages of this separate system, like dedicated transport and specialised holiday programs makes it easier to stay, as they take the administrative and care work from families.

In high school generally the only employment information students with an intellectual disability and their families are given is about Australian Disability Enterprises (or ADEs), a form of separate work with very low pay. Career planning supports for students with disability are limited.

Fewer than one in five students with disability represented in a 2019 survey by peak body Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) reported receiving assistance in understanding their strengths and skills for the post-school transition[3]. Independent information about a wide range of available choices and supports is typically not available, and navigating those choices and supports is very difficult.

Work experience opportunities are not provided in the same way as for non-disabled students in mainstream schools[4]. Instead, for many students with disability, in Year 10, the special school arranges group work experience at a local ADE. Students with an intellectual disability are not offered work experience or after schoolwork in mainstream employment in the same way as other students.

During Year 12, the school holds an expo for all the local ADE and day program providers.

People with an intellectual disability and their families find out that signing up means a smooth transition from school.

These exclusionary support options, that ease the complex administrative burden on families, also can protect the employment of families. This must not be the choice any longer.

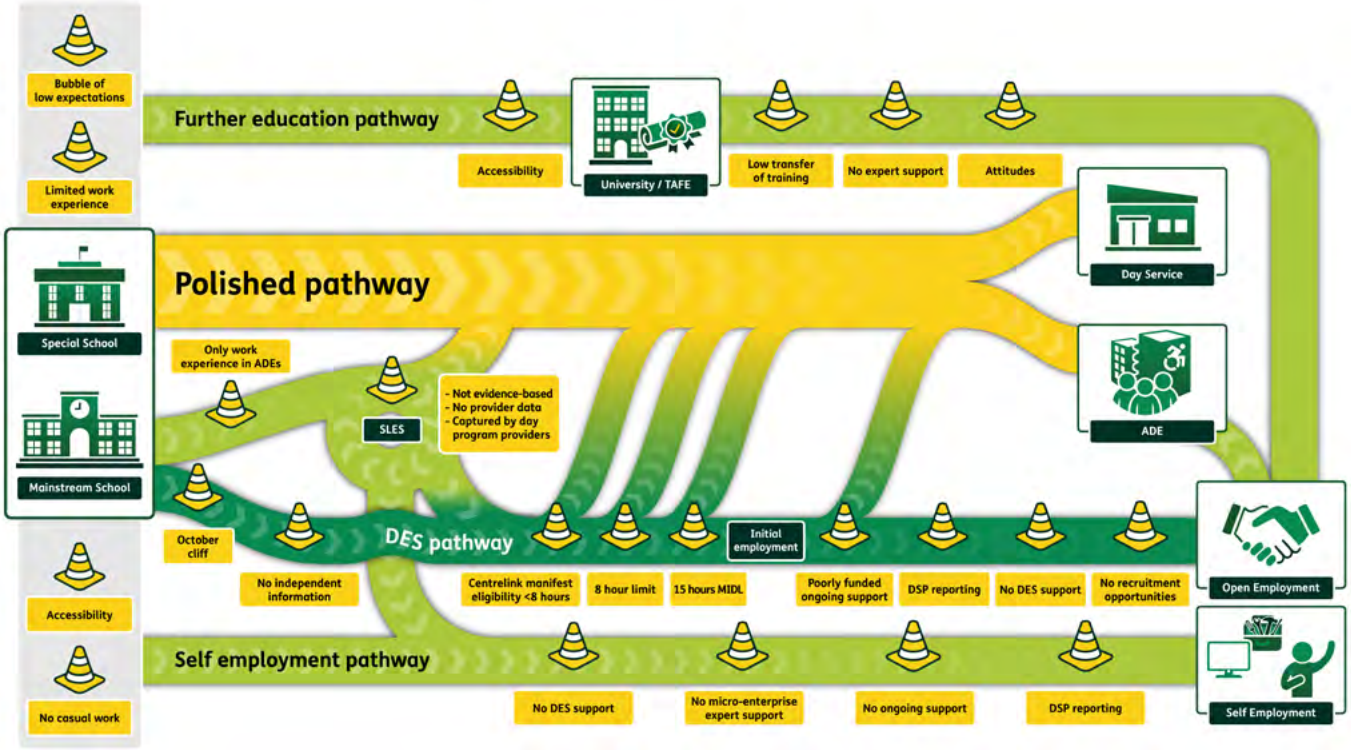
This polished pathway is an incremental journey to poorly paid, segregated, and congregated work. The pathway is shaped by low community expectations and supported by interlinking systems.

The connections between these systems, from early childhood intervention to Centrelink, from the NDIS to DES, and especially from school to work, are so smooth that families don't even see they are heading towards this predetermined destination until the last minute.

2 Terminology from people with an intellectual disability and families in consultation with Inclusion Australia.
3 CYDA, "Submission to the review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training", 2020, https://www.cyda.org.au/resources/details/64/the-review-of-senior-secondary-pathways-into-work-further-education-and-training.
4 as above

For people with an intellectual disability, once they are in these systems, they don't leave. They will not enter mainstream employment or live in the community or have the same kinds of choices and experiences as other people with disability or the wider community.

People with an intellectual disability want more than this, and deserve to be fully included in all parts of their lives.



WHAT IS HAPPENING?

No jobs

Most people with an intellectual disability don't work, shut out of employment and facing huge barriers to even get in the door. Those who do work mostly work in an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE), or in open employment for wages well below the minimum wage.

Very few people with an intellectual disability work in open employment for at least the minimum wage, or work in their own business.

What does the data say?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) says that:

> 'In 2018, of half a million people (503,800) aged 15-64 with profound or severe disability - just over one quarter (27.2% or 137,200 people) were participating in the labour force, compared with just over half of all people aged 15-65 years (55.0% or 530,800 people) with moderate or mild disability.'[5]

People with an intellectual disability are generally classified as having a profound or severe disability and included in this figure.

Leading academics utilise a figure of 1.86% of the Australian population, which currently would equal 483,600 people with an intellectual disability, with roughly 0.99% requiring 'assistance with three basic daily living activities: self care, mobility, verbal communication', or 257,400 people[6].

The NDIS reports on employment, with the latest Quarterly Report[7] showing that younger people with disability are increasingly getting work, but older people with disability less likely to be working.

The 2020 report on employment showed that people with an intellectual disability were much more likely to be working in an ADE than in open employment[8]. Only 29% of people with intellectual disability who get NDIS supports were in paid employment when they entered the NDIS.

Of those people:

- 29.9% were in open employment
- 16.6% were in open employment but below the minimum wage and
- 45% were employed in an ADE.[9]

Employment rates of people with profound or severe disability are going down.[10]

5 https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/disability-and-labour-force
6 https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/1bf76f42-a3d0-4ebc-bc30-b10cd59b092e/dpida-c00.pdf.aspx
7 https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports
8 https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/outcomes-and-goals/employment-outcomes-participants-their-families-and-carers
9 as above
10 Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, https://public.tableau.com/views/2022_f_15_servicesforpeoplewithdisability/9_Labourforceparticipationandemploymentofpeoplewithdisability?:embed=y&:tabs=n&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link

Low wages

People with an intellectual disability live a lifetime in poverty, shut out of employment, or earning very low wages.

People with an intellectual disability can be paid a percentage of ordinary wages, through the Supported Employment Services (SES) Award and the Supported Wage System. This can be as little as 12.5% of the relevant minimum hourly rate of pay.

The SES Award is used for workers with disability in ADEs, and the Supported Wage System is used for workers with disability in other jobs. Both mean that people with an intellectual disability earn well below the minimum wage.

Employers must now also pay superannuation contributions for employees with a disability. The rate is either 9.5% of their ordinary time earnings or $15 per week, whichever is the greater.

Many people with an intellectual disability earning wages under the Supported Wage System are paid just enough, per fortnight, so as not to affect the earning threshold of Disability Support Pension. This is currently $190 a fortnight.

The combination of earnings and the DSP is less than the minimum wage.

Workers with disability who are paid these below minimum wages mostly work in ADEs, but can also work in other jobs.

Workers with disability under this Award are assessed for their productivity, and their competence, and then paid below the minimum wage according to that assessment. Wages start at 12.5% of the minimum wage.

The Fair Work Commission is currently reviewing the SES Award, and made a draft determination to introduce two new grades (A and B) to the Award, that are less than the minimum wage.

This continues several years of work in the Commission and other jurisdictions to change these sub-minimum wages[11].

In 2012, one assessment tool, called the Business Services Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT), was found by the Federal Court of Australia to be discriminatory against people with disability[12]. This case had been brought by two people with an intellectual disability, Gordon Prior and Michael Nojin, and led to the BSWAT being phased out and compensation and backpay given to workers with disability through a class action[13].

11 "Supported Employment Services Award review (AM2014/286)." in Fair Work Commission, <https://www.fwc.gov.au/hearings-decisions/major-cases/4-yearly-review/awards-under-review/supported-employment-services>.

12 https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2014/August/Concerns_raised_over_Government_disability_payments_scheme

13 https://formerministers.dss.gov.au/18121/thousands-of-people-with-intellectual-impairment-to-benefit-from-settlement-of-bswat-class-action/

Attitudes

Prejudice and bias against people with an intellectual disability are significant barriers to getting and keeping a job.

The Australian Government Disability Employment Strategy, Employ My Ability, says that barriers to employment include "negative attitudes in the community, including that people with disability can't work, or don't want to work, and that employing people with disability would be costly or risky."[14]

Researchers found "that negative attitudes, along with misconceptions and lack of awareness, present barriers to social inclusion in various life domains such as education, employment and community participation."[15]

The same study found that "that negative attitudes and misconceptions among employers prove an important barrier to inclusion, as does the general tendency in society to equate social recognition with paid employment."[16]

A more recent study found that "when disabilities are perceived as more severe, stigmatising attitudes, anxiety and discomfort are also more likely to emerge" and "people with an intellectual disability are also often perceived as less capable than they actually are."[17]

People with an intellectual disability have experienced generations of exclusion, often expected to learn, live and work away from the community. Many people with an intellectual disability lived in large residential centres, often for their entire lives.

While some attitudes towards people with an intellectual disability have started to change, and people with an intellectual disability and their families have advocated hard for their inclusion across the community, there remain structural barriers to being full equal citizens, including employment.

People with intellectual disability told academics that:

> "unlike other disabilities, employers lack an understanding of what intellectual disability is, which makes them less likely to hire someone with an intellectual disability as compared to a person with a physical or sensory disability, which the participants felt were more widely understood."[18]

When talking to people with an intellectual disability and their families, researchers found:

> "Across all three self-advocate focus groups, they reported that they believe employers do not want to hire them because employers feel that their value or productivity would not be worth more than their wages would cost the employer. Similarly, family members reported that when people with intellectual disabilities are hired, the belief that they are likely to be unproductive employees impacts how their employer interacts with them."[19]

14 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2021/final-employ-my-ability.pdf
15 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/39_community_attitudes_to_disability_accessible.pdf
16 As above
17 Changing community attitudes toward greater inclusion of people with disabilities - A Rapid Literature Review, Dr Melanie Randle and Dr Samantha Reis, NSW Department of Communities and Justice
18 https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jid.3659
19 as above

Family and friends

Research from the Centre for Social Impact (CSI) at Swinburne University found that there are limits placed on people with an intellectual disability and their families when thinking about tertiary education and employment[20]. If people with an intellectual disability and their families are only told that little is possible, how would they know any different?

CSI also found that "these low expectations, coupled with poor transition planning, lead to decision making that is focused on reducing risk, often resulting in choices that have a non-vocational focus"[21] and "failure to explore the world of work also reinforces low expectations"[22].

There is a strong relationship between parent expectations and student outcomes for all students (both with and without disability)[23].

Parent expectations have been found to influence:

- Student outcomes
- School graduation rates
- Employment after secondary school
- Participation in post-secondary education and training.

Systems and structures, such as the NDIS and DES, can influence the attitudes and expectations of family and friends about people with an intellectual disability.

20 ACIL Allen Consulting. (2017). National disability coordination officer program evaluation. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ndco_evaluation_final_report.pdf; Chambers, C. R., Hughes, C., & Carter, E. W. (2004). Parent and sibling perspectives on the transition to adulthood. Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 39(2), 79-94.

21 (Hetherington et al., 2010; Redgrove et al., 2016; Gilson et al., 2018; Noel et al., 2017)

22 (Bellman et al., 2014; Blustein et al., 2016; Carter et al., 2017; Chambers et al., 2004; Luecking & Luecking, 2015; Lysaght et al., 2017)

23 Zhang, Y., Haddad, E., Torres, B., & Chen, C. (2011). The reciprocal relationships among parents' expectations, adolescents' expectations, and adolescents' achievement: A two-wave longitudinal analysis of the NELS data. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40(4), 479-489. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9568-8

Australian Disability Enterprises

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) are currently one of the few places where people with an intellectual disability can get employment, with specialist support, but workers with disability earn well below the minimum wage and rarely have a choice about where they work or what they do.

ADEs were started as an alternative to institutions for people with an intellectual disability, at a time when expectations and understandings about intellectual disability were very limited. As people with an intellectual disability have advocated, these expectations today are very different, yet our structures and systems are still stuck in the past.

ADEs are part of this separate system that only applies to people with an intellectual disability, who are also excluded from accessing other employment. This system segregates people with an intellectual disability from other people with disability and from non-disabled people.

When a person with an intellectual disability is employed in an ADE, the system imposes rules on them that don't apply to any other worker in Australia. These are:

- competency and productivity assessments that set their wages
- low expectations and attitudes about the work they do
- being legally paid very low wages, as little as 12.5% of the minimum wage

In addition, supports in employment that should be found in a wide range of settings, are often only found in ADEs for people with an intellectual disability. People with an intellectual disability also often only get group employment supports in their plans, rather than the individualised supports the NDIS promised. The system dictates that people with an intellectual disability work, live and play in group settings. This does not apply to other people with disability who get NDIS supports.

ADEs now

For people with an intellectual disability who have employment, most of them are working in ADEs.

More people with an intellectual disability who use NDIS supports, who are aged 25 years and over and are employed, have employment in ADEs (70%), with only 15% having a job in open employment on a full wage, and a further 13% having a job in open employment on a below-minimum wage[24]. Younger people with an intellectual disability who use the NDIS (aged 15-24) are more likely to be in open employment (on both below minimum and ordinary wages) than employed by an ADE.[25]

There is evidence that early placement of young people with an intellectual disability into segregated day programs and sheltered employment options reduces their later economic participation.[26] There is strong evidence that once in segregated employment settings, such as ADEs, few transition out into open employment.

In 2014, less than 1% of those employed in an ADE transitioned to employment in the mainstream labour market[27] [28].

Similarly, National Disability Services suggests that less than 5% of people with disability transition to open employment from day services or supported employment settings in Australia.[29]

Some studies have demonstrated that there are few structured skill development opportunities within sheltered and segregated employment settings and that time spent working in such settings does not promote later employment in open employment.[30] Similar issues have been found with day services or community access programs.[31]

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24 "People with an intellectual disability in the NDIS," in NDIS, <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/participant-groups/people-intellectual-disability-ndis> [accessed 6 September 2022].

25 As above

26 Cocks, E. & Harvey, T.(2008). Employment/Day Options Interface Research Project. Final Report, Perth, Curtin University of Technology, School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work., https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/43977/135257_18935_Employment%20Day%20Options%20Final%20Report.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

27 Australian Government, DSS (2017). Discussion paper: Ensuring a strong future for supported employment https://engage.dss.gov.au/the-future-of-supported-employment/a-strong-future-for-supported-employment-discussion-paper/

28 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (2018). AFDO – Position paper on the future of supported employment. https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/AFDO-Future-of-Supported-Employment-Paper-2018-03-FINAL.pdf

29 National Disability Services. (2017). Submission to the inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools. https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/eejsc/Career_Advice_Activities/Submission_69_-_National_Disability_Services_15122017.pdf

30 Akkerman, A., Janssen, C. G. C., Kef, S., & Meininger, H. P. (2016). Job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment: An exploration of the literature. Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 13(3), 205-216. https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12168; Cimera, R. E., Wehman, P., West, M., & Burgess, S. (2011). Do sheltered workshops enhance employment outcomes for adults with autism spectrum disorder? Autism, 16(1), 87-94. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361311408129; Dague, B. (2012). Sheltered employment, sheltered lives: Family perspectives of conversion to community-based employment. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 37(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-2012-0595; Hemphill, E., & Kulik, C. T. (2017). The tyranny of fit: Yet another barrier to mainstream employment for disabled people in sheltered employment. Social Policy & Administration, 51(7), 1119-1134. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12220; Soeker, M. S., De Jongh, J. C., Diedericks, A., Matthys, K., Swart, N., & van der Pol, P. (2018). The experiences and perceptions of persons with disabilities regarding work skills development in sheltered and protective workshops. Work, 59(2), 303-314. https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-172674

31 Thoresen, S. H., Thomson, A., Jackson, R., & Cocks, E. (2018). Meaningful social and economic inclusion through small business enterprise models of employment for adults with intellectual disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 49(2), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-180962

History of ADEs

ADEs, or sheltered workshops as they were known, were developed by families over 60 years ago to give people with an intellectual disability employment, at a time when most people with an intellectual disability were expected to live their entire lives in institutions.

Sheltered workshops were a revolution for that time, and started the journey towards community inclusion for people with an intellectual disability and a path out of institutional living.

Research from the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University into ADEs has detailed the history and policy, outlined below.

History of supported employment in Australia

'Sheltered Workshops' in the 1960's to 70's

According to Cheng et al. (2018), sheltered workshops were originally developed in the 1950's by families to offer employment for people with intellectual disability. In 1967, the Commonwealth government commenced funding of them, continuing in the 1970's with the funding of work preparation centres to provide vocational training for school leavers with intellectual disability. However, critique of sheltered workshops emerged through the 1970s and 1980s alongside a growing international inclusion movement.

'Supported Employment Services' established in 1980's

In 1986, the Disability Services Act (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987) established two broad types of employment services, open and supported employment services, essentially enshrining a bifurcated model where only some people with disability were supported into open employment. Within the Act, 'supported employment services' were for those people who are 'unlikely' to gain competitive employment at or above the award wage and 'need substantial ongoing support to obtain or retain paid employment' (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987, Part 11, Div 1, 7.) (see Paper 1).

As described by DSS (2017), 'supported employment' has referred to both 'different employment settings and employment supports available to people with disability to enable them to participate in work, or to build capacity for work' (p.6, italics added). Across this period, supported employment services were known as 'disability business services' or 'business enterprises'.

Supported employment in the early 2000's

Until recently, supported employment services have been predominantly provided via 'sheltered workshops, enclaves or work crews' (Cheng et al., 2018, p. 318).

In 2005/6 there were 397 supported employment outlets across Australia (FaCSIA, 2007). Roughly half of these were located in major cities. Between 2005 and 2010, the number of supported employment service users fluctuated between 21-23,000. Approximately 70% of these had an intellectual disability, 2% were Indigenous, and most service users (around 65%) were male. Around 30% worked full time hours (See Appendix 1 for details of data 2005/6 -2009/10).

Data has been patchy since 2010, with limited user data reported publicly and detailed data on the scale and characteristics of supported employment services unavailable after the Australian Government Disability Services Census ceased. When the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set ceased in 2019 (Productivity Commission, 2021), national data collection and publication on supported employment services have become unavailable.

The impact on and experiences of people with an intellectual disability working in ADEs

People with an intellectual disability want to work for the same reasons as other people; the social benefits of being with other people, to learn skills and get job satisfaction, and to earn a wage.

A large study[32] of the views of people with an intellectual disability about employment made some key findings. These findings included:

- Some people with intellectual disability had no choice about where they would work.
- Successful work depended on support available.
- People seeking work in open employment experienced many more barriers to finding work than people looking to work in supported employment or social enterprises.
- People working in open employment experienced more barriers to maintaining their employment than people working in ADEs or social enterprises.
- Many people with an intellectual disability don't often change jobs.
- People with an intellectual disability generally work in low skill jobs, and are affected by labour market changes.
- Relationships and getting paid are really important to people with an intellectual disability.
- People with an intellectual disability face a trade off between pay and support when comparing open and supported employment.
- People with an intellectual disability are clear about what they value about work, what they want to change and the differences between working in ADEs and in other jobs.

Meltzer et al asked workers in different kinds of employment settings what they liked and disliked about their job. People had very similar likes, regardless of the work setting. Those in an ADE said they liked the relationships with other people, getting paid, having something to do and that they enjoy the work tasks[33].

When it came to dislikes about their job, people in ADEs said that they disliked conflicts with colleagues or with staff/managers, and physical discomfort when they are working. Another dislike was boredom. People said they need more of a challenge and want more variety of work.[34]

32 Meltzer, A., Bates, S., Robinson, S., Kayess, R. Fisher, K.R. and Katz, I. (2016). What do people with intellectual disability think about their jobs and the support they receive at work? A comparative study of three employment support models: Final report (SPRC Report 16/16). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia.

33 as above

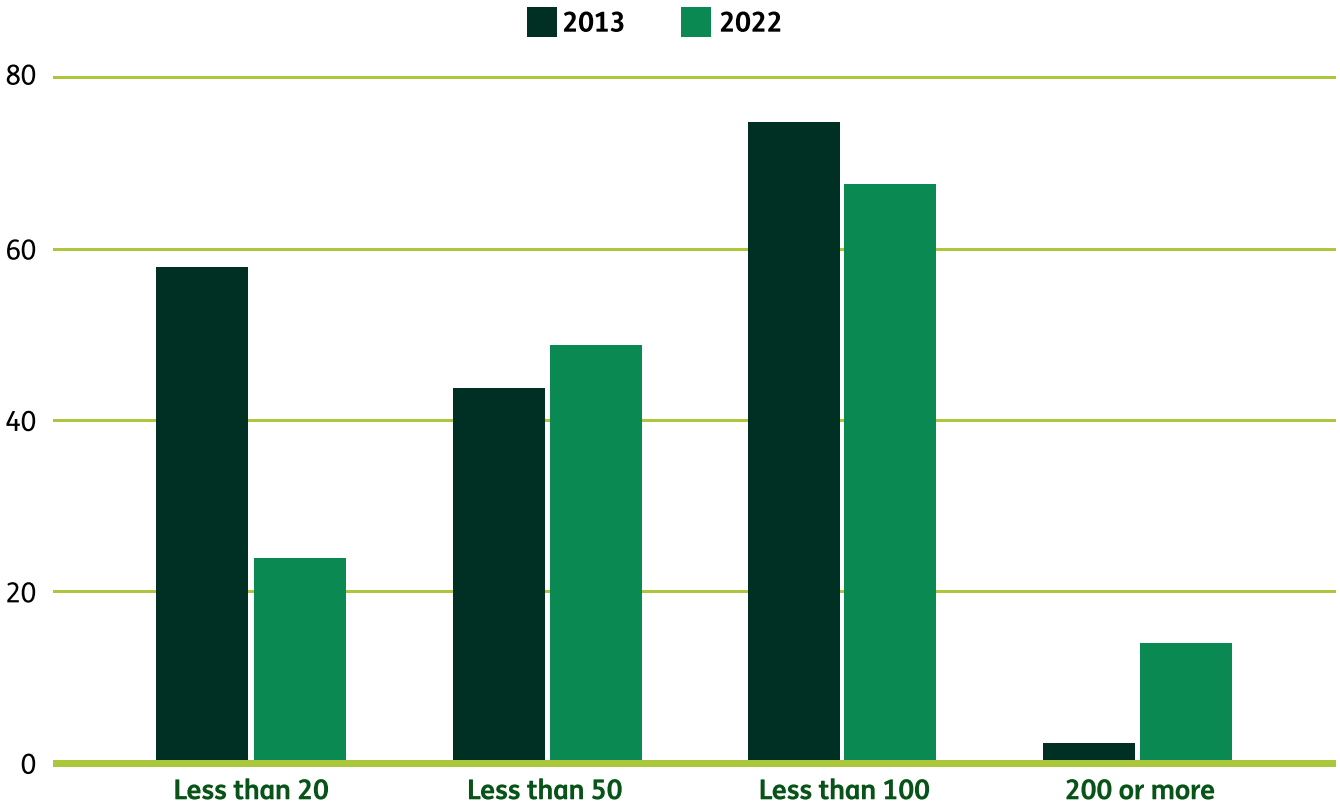
34 Meltzer, A., Bates, S., Robinson, S., Kayess, R. Fisher, K.R. and Katz, I. (2016). What do people with intellectual disability think about their jobs and the support they receive at work? A comparative study of three employment support models: Final report (SPRC Report 16/16). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia.

About ADEs

Data and research[35] about the current ADE landscape was commissioned for this report from the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University, who worked with National Disability Services and NDIA data to build a picture of the industry.

Overall, there are fewer ADEs (477), run by 147 providers. This is less than there were ten years ago, but many have increased in size and in the numbers of workers with disability employed there. There is an average of 111 workers with disability in each ADE, with ADEs ranging in size between less than 20 and over 200.

There are more large ADEs, and fewer small ones, now than there were a decade ago.



People with an intellectual disability are working in ADEs across a wide range of industries. These include:

- Landscaping, Gardening & Horticulture (18%),
- Packaging & Repackaging (16%)
- Light Manufacturing (14%)
- Cleaning & Recycling (11%)
- Food & Hospitality (8%)
- Mail & Document Management (5%)
- Laundry (5%)
- Other (9%)[36]

See Appendix A: The ADE Snapshot for the full data about ADEs.

35 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Cutroni, L.; Campbell, P.; Crosbie, J. & Kelly, J. (2022). The ADE Snapshot, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

36 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Cutroni, L.; Campbell, P.; Crosbie, J. & Kelly, J. (2022). The ADE Snapshot, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Discrimination and abuse

People with an intellectual disability report negative experiences in all kinds of jobs, including in ADEs (Simplican et al., 2014, citing Hall, 2009; Meltzer et al., 2016), though negative experiences are also reported in ADE settings (Meltzer et al., 2016).

The Disability Royal Commission Interim Report[37] said that:

> People with disability have told us about their experiences of violence and abuse in open and in segregated employment. They have described being physically, verbally and sexually abused by colleagues and managers in the workplace. This includes experiences of violence and abuse in some Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs), or 'sheltered workshops'. We have heard that in some instances, when these issues have been raised with ADE service providers, they have been ignored or not addressed. We have also heard about the lack of meaningful work in ADEs and of poor workplace conditions, as well as of difficulties in transitioning to open employment.

Social benefits

Many people find social benefits from being at work, including people with an intellectual disability. Many people with disability also experience higher rates of loneliness and disconnection from community, particularly people with an intellectual disability.[38]

In addition, people with an intellectual disability are often isolated and separated from the community in other parts of their life, so being at work may be their only opportunity to see other people, and to make friends.

People with an intellectual disability report that the relationships they form at work are the main factor that attaches them to their ADE and is the primary reason they want to stay.[39]

Families often raise concerns that their son or daughter with a disability will be socially isolated if they work in another job away from an ADE.

Employment support

ADEs offer a range of employment and other supports for people with an intellectual disability. However, according to the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University, "more work is needed to better understand the employment supports offered by ADES and their potential to also offer supports for people in open employment settings."[40]

Research shows that evidence based support isn't always used to support people with an intellectual disability who work in ADEs to learn new skills. One study found that "from the multiple different strategies staff are taught to train people with intellectual disability, only two strategies were utilised by all staff regularly. They mostly relied on the "show-and-tell" method, where the trainer shows and tells the employee what to do, then watches and corrects by repeating the showing, telling, and correcting until the task is learnt." These techniques were not found to be effective.[41]

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37 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/interim-report
38 https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/social-support/social-inclusion
39 Meltzer, A., Bates, S., Robinson, S., Kayess, R. Fisher, K.R. and Katz, I. (2016). What do people with intellectual disability think about their jobs and the support they receive at work? A comparative study of three employment support models: Final report (SPRC Report 16/16). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia.
40 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.
41 https://asid.asn.au/on-the-job-training-failing-employees-with-intellectual-disability/

The Centre for Social Impact outlined the range of employment supports that are provided by ADEs that particularly focus on direct supports for people with an intellectual disability.[42] These particularly fall into the 'supply side' of employment support interventions or on people with an intellectual disability, with a few also focused on the 'demand side' or employers. It is unclear where these range of direct employment supports are available to support work outside ADEs.

Government contracts

Government procurement often includes non-market measures, known as social procurement. This can include 'social benefits, particularly around the creation of jobs, often targeted at those disadvantaged in the labour market, the stimulation of local industries, and the encouragement of environmental sustainability.'[43]

Current government social procurement settings are used by ADEs, and government contracts represent a significant revenue stream for many of these organisations.

National Disability Services, the peak body for disability service providers, including many ADEs, established the BuyAbility network to facilitate access to government contracts[44].

For example, in NSW, ADEs can contract for government services 'with a single quote and no contract value limits'.[45] In West Australia, 'State agencies may engage with Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) directly, without undertaking a competitive process.'[46] In Victoria, ADEs qualify under the social procurement framework.[47]

The Federal Government procurement rules provide exemptions for ADEs from criteria applied to other businesses and organisations.[48]

In a survey of 72 ADEs, National Disability Services reported a total of $88,773,278 in procurement revenue across local, state and federal governments.

Currently, government contracts do not cover any income increases for workers with disability in ADEs, and do not provide incentives to encourage employment of workers with an intellectual disability in other jobs.

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42 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

43 https://government.unimelb.edu.au/research/regulation-and-design/Home/Maximising-the-Potential-of-Social-Procurement

44 https://buyability.org.au/

45 "Australian disability enterprises," in buy.nsw, , 2021,https://buy.nsw.gov.au/buyer-guidance/source/select-suppliers/australian-disability-enterprises; [accessed 13 September 2022].

46 "Purchase from an Aboriginal Business or Australian Disability Enterprise Guideline," <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/multi-step-guides/procurement-guidelines/procurement-planning-individual-purchases-guidelines/purchase-aboriginal-business-or-australian-disability-enterprise-guideline> [accessed 13 September 2022].

47 "Detailed guidance for opportunities for Victorians with disability," in Buying for Victoria, <https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/detailed-guidance-opportunities-victorians-disability> [accessed 13 September 2022].

48 "Appendix A: Exemptions," in Department of Finance, <https://www.finance.gov.au/government/procurement/commonwealth-procurement-rules/appendix-exemptions> [accessed 13 September 2022].

Accountability

There have been plans and policies and reforms and changes over many decades, with very little results in terms of people with an intellectual disability moving into decent work at fair wages.

A key missing element has been accountability and measuring progress. It is very hard to find out what is working, and to replicate that, if there is no one being held accountable for action.

Billions of dollars are spent on disability employment and support programs without the necessary mechanisms to ensure that people with an intellectual disability can actually see benefits in their lives.

Accountability needs to be baked into contracts and deliverables, with real world consequences for not achieving the outcomes that people with an intellectual disability want to happen.

Getting jobs

There is currently poor data about employment for people with an intellectual disability, and other people with disability. How many are in work, for how many hours, what are they being paid, what supports are they using, which industries do they work in, which employers are hiring and not hiring, how long are they employed for?

Some data is collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and some by other agencies, but there isn't coordinated data or reporting on specific employment information.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency[49] requires companies over 100 employees to report on gender equality, and this influences government contracts. There is no such reporting or accountability for disability.

This lack of data extends to how many people with an intellectual disability are being paid under the SWS outside of ADEs, or who are in training programs for extended periods of time without transitioning to work.

Data and measurement

To measure where we are, and where we are going, we need to have accurate, up to date data, that is collected in an ethical way with involvement from people with disability.

The development of the National Disability Data Asset is a good beginning, but it is not funded adequately to properly account or measure data, or direct change in data collection across governments.

Australia's Disability Strategy has an Outcomes Framework[50], and published progress reports. However, the dashboard showing progress, or not, has not yet been published. The Outcomes Framework however only shows those outcomes that have been agreed, and many of those omit specific measurement for people with an intellectual disability.

For example, in the Employment Targeted Action Plan, which is reported on in the Outcomes Framework, there are only two small state based programs even listed that support employment for people with an intellectual disability. So it is no surprise that there is not a single mention of people with an intellectual disability in the Outcomes Framework.

49 https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/reporting
50 https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/1816-outcomes-framework.pdf

Who is in charge?

Without a central agency driving changes that will remove barriers to employment for people with an intellectual disability, there is little incentive to take on the responsibility for reform.

Each agency, department and level of government continues to work in siloed ways, proposing and implementing reforms that continue to be ineffective and conflicted.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme, Disability Employment Services, Services Australia, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Centrelink, Australia's Disability Strategy, Fair Work Commission, state, territory departments and agencies, local government - how can each of these separate organisations and entities work on a coherent and coordinated change to ensure people with an intellectual disability get a fair go? They can't.

SYSTEMS

There are a range of systems and structures that could support a person with an intellectual disability into work, but instead close that door at every opportunity.

When a person with an intellectual disability and their families go to get advice, support and expertise, they are instead met with outdated attitudes, conflicting systemic barriers and complex, confusing bureaucracy.

Research from the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University has outlined what is needed for a successful system, and analysised the barriers. They found that people with an intellectual disability have been systemically marginalised from the mainstream disability employment system for decades, with the support they only available in ADEs.

Understanding the barriers that are faced by people with an intellectual disability and their families is essential to knowing how to dismantle them.

This section looks at the key systemic barriers that exist in mainstream disability services, as well as the specific supports that are used by people with an intellectual disability.

Disability Employment Services

DES is the main Commonwealth program to support people with disability seeking employment, and is of significant size and scope. There were more than 100 DES providers supporting more than 310,000 people across more than 3700 sites and 6500 outlets in Australia in 2021 – costing taxpayers $1.4 billion per annum.[51]

According to the Department of Social Services, the purpose of DES is to help people with disability prepare for employment, find a job and keep the job. However Disability Employment Services (DES) are a barrier to work for people with an intellectual disability.

By the DSS's stated measure, DES is failing people with an intellectual disability. Fewer than 10,000 people (3.1% of the DES caseload)[52] supported by DES are people with an intellectual disability, and very little evidence based support is available in the DES system.

DES was reviewed over the last two years, and people with an intellectual disability and their organisations have made substantial submissions[53] and participated in working groups and consultation to raise the barriers in DES.

In 2022, the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Minister Rishworth, announced that there would be a two year extension to the existing DES program and further funding[54] to allow for reform to be made.

The current DES system has barriers for people with an intellectual disability that include:

- Lack of use of evidence based supports
- Entry threshold
- Lack of ongoing support funding
- Lack of training or understanding in current workforce

Getting in the DES door

People with an intellectual disability can't get in the DES door. Currently, if a person with intellectual disability is assessed, through a Job Capacity Assessment at Centrelink, as being able to work less than eight hours per week, they are not automatically eligible for DES supports.

People with an intellectual disability also have to be assessed as being able to get to eight hours per week within two years.

For people who don't meet these criteria, they are shut out of using disability employment services, with the only pathway in being a complicated and unsupported self-referral process, for which there is little accessible information.

This eligibility threshold acts as a significant initial barrier to even getting in the door to get help to get a job. The current minimum of eight hours work per week required for support from DES does not recognise that some people with an intellectual disability can only work a few hours per week initially, but work more hours over time.

Organisations that carve out jobs specifically for people with an intellectual disability may also have fluctuating needs for that employee (for example, 3 hours one week and 11 hours the next). The door to getting into the system is not flexible enough to accommodate this level of variation from week to week.

51 'Inclusive. Accessible. Diverse. Shaping your new disability employment support program: Consultation Paper,' Department of Social Services, 2021. P5.
52 Labour Market Information Portal DES Data February 2022
53 https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/submission/disability-employment-system-reform-submission/
54 https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/9521

DES at school

Employment supports through DES are difficult to access for essential work readiness programs such as work experience, as well as for after-school paid work. **See page p83 for details.**

Starting a new job

People with an intellectual disability need a variety of supports when starting a new job. These typically include:

- Getting to work
- Accessible induction and orientation
- Support from co-workers
- Support for families

DES providers and systems don't acknowledge or meet the specific needs of people with an intellectual disability as they move into a new job. This could be the first time people have worked, or it could be a different job.

Induction and orientation processes are often inaccessible for people with an intellectual disability including work, health and safety information, and workplace rules and expectations.

DES has a role in ensuring that induction and orientation is done in an accessible way, including to support employers in improving the accessibility of their induction and orientation processes and to support people with an intellectual disability in being familiar with the material.

A study of people with an intellectual disability in three Australian hotels found that 'Buddy Systems' are an effective technique to provide initial support to workers with disabilities.'[55] Support from colleagues and flexible work are also useful, as well as the need for ongoing support from their manager, as important for learning about the job and feeling included.

Currently, DES rarely provides these essential supports for people with an intellectual disability. Many older people with an intellectual disability want to enter employment, or leave ADEs to enter open employment, for the first time. This group is not eligible for any kind of specialist transition to work funding, such as through the NDIS. DES plays an important role in ensuring everyone who wants a job can get one.

Staying at work, ongoing support

People with an intellectual disability need ongoing support to stay in their jobs but the current DES settings provide limited ongoing support and may not be at the level of support that people with an intellectual disability need. In addition, there is a lack of clarity between what NDIS and DES will fund.

People with an intellectual disability, like other workers, require varying amounts of support at different times over their working lives. These variations can significantly affect the level of support required at key stages of a person's employment and cannot always be predicted. There is little in the current DES system to allow for this flexibility and variation in support funding.

55 Hannah Meacham, Jillian Cavanagh, Amie Shaw, Timothy Bartram, (2017) "HRM practices that support the employment and social inclusion of workers with an intellectual disability", Personnel Review, Vol. 46 Issue: 8, pp.1475-1492, https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2016-0105

Flexible ongoing support

Both DES and NDIS funding settings need to have the flexibility to respond to real-world changes in the lives of people with an intellectual disability and their families – moving out of home, getting married, changes in the workplace, changes in available support. This flexibility needs to be built into the system from the beginning, so that managing change isn't made more difficult. Any complexity in administration must be borne by governments and those delivering services, not by people with an intellectual disability and their families.

The current DES policy effectively strips the funding available for an individual if they have had a period of 'low' support requirements in the period leading up to an Ongoing Support Audit. In this case, the review may decrease the level of funding such that there is a shortfall when the situation changes, and the person needs more intensive support to keep their job.

This policy does not support the reality that, at any point in time for a group of workers with an intellectual disability there is a high probability that some of them need less support than usual, while others may require more than usual. Previously providers working with multiple DES participants in receipt of ongoing support were able to shift 'pooled' resources according to actual need. The current requirements do not have the flexibility to provide the support people with an intellectual disability need, and instead prioritise a predictable fixed number of contacts regardless of circumstances.

People with an intellectual disability need to work an average of eight hours per week for a year in order to access ongoing support. These threshold rules act as a barrier to accessing ongoing support as, for example, if a person with an intellectual disability, working eight hours per week, takes several weeks annual leave, they become ineligible for ongoing support, as leave isn't counted.

There is a need for significant expertise, skill and training of staff working in DES to provide effective ongoing support to people with an intellectual disability. The current DES outcomes for people with an intellectual disability clearly show the skewed levels of expertise, with very few DES providers successfully getting people into work and keeping them there.

Payments such as the Moderate Intellectual Disability Payment recognise the importance of ongoing support for people with an intellectual disability, and are an important part of DES. They also need to be more flexible and available for people who can work fewer than 15 hours per week.

Workforce development and retention

DES providers need to have more expertise or experience to address the employment needs of people with an intellectual disability and their families. There is a lack of training or understanding of evidence-based practice for people with an intellectual disability to assist in getting people into open and self-employment.

DES does not deliver evidence-based supports that would get more people with an intellectual disability into open and self-employment. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) mid-term review of DES found that "Participants and employers provided negative feedback on several aspects of service quality, including that providers lack specialist skills and professionalism."[56]

In addition, many DES staff do not have the relevant expertise and training to understand the evidence-based best practice for working with people with an intellectual disability. There is a high turnover of DES staff, making it very difficult to do the relationship building work in the community that is essential for job placement of people with an intellectual disability.

56 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2021/des-mid-term-review-august-2020-v2.pdf

The Disability Royal Commission received responses to their employment issues paper that said "most DES providers do not require their consultants to have disability-specific qualifications. Some responses spoke about DES providers having high caseloads, being under-resourced and having high staff turnover rates."[57]

A review of evidence about best practice for employment for people with an intellectual disability found that "staff training programs on the key components of the open employment model and the provision of ongoing technical assistance to providers resulted in significantly improved placement rates, higher wages, and more hours worked per week for clients. Staff providing employment services should be fluent in the overall process for implementing the multiple stages of OE, along with knowledge of instructional training techniques that are supported by empirical research, such as individualised assessment and training strategies based on learning theory principles."[58]

DES workforce development and retention

DES providers need to have more expertise or experience to address the employment needs of people with an intellectual disability and their families. There is a lack of training or understanding of evidence-based practice for people with an intellectual disability to support them into work, or help them keep a job.

The BCG mid-term review of DES found that "participants and employers provided negative feedback on several aspects of service quality, including that providers lack specialist skills and professionalism."[59]

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The evidence-based strategies of job customisation/carving, job coaching, job matching and on going support aren't commonly found in the DES system, nor incentivised through funding.

57 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2021-03/Overview%20of%20responses%20to%20the%20Employment%20Issues%20paper.pdf
58 https://cds.org.au/download/Jobsupport-Evidence-Based-Practices-Review-Final_.pdf
59 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2021/des-mid-term-review-august-2020-v2.pdf
60 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2021-03/Overview%20of%20responses%20to%20the%20Employment%20Issues%20paper.pdf
61 https://cds.org.au/download/Jobsupport-Evidence-Based-Practices-Review-Final_.pdf

National Disability Insurance Scheme

People with an intellectual disability aren't getting the support they need to choose, gain and keep a job through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS is a system of individualised supports for people with disability, delivered through a range of non-government services. People with disability receive a plan that outlines the supports they are funded for.

The pathways to an included life for people with an intellectual disability are filled with obstacles, including what the NDIS will fund and how complicated the Scheme is to navigate.

The key barriers are:

- Lack of secure, individual, flexible, ongoing employment supports
- Not using evidence to delivery supports
- Lack of independent information
- Lack of support for innovative employment initiatives

Many people need customised supports as they begin their working life. Work experience, traineeships and apprenticeship programs are all designed to support young people into employment, through structured, evidence-based programs. But these are largely inaccessible for people with an intellectual disability.

Who is working?

In the 2020/21 financial year, 88,762* (35%) of people with disability in the NDIS had an employment goal in their plans, with 14% getting employment supports, and 7% working in ADEs. [62]

The latest NDIS Quarterly Report shows that people with disability with NDIS plans aged 15-24 are increasingly in paid work with a ten percentage point increase from 11% to 21% for people aged 15-24 years, significant increasing over time in the Scheme[63].

However, for people with disability over 25, employment is decreasing, with most decreases as people age with 27.5% of people aged 25-44, 23.3% of people aged 45-54 and 11.6% of people over 55 in work.[64]

The NDIS does not report the numbers of people with disability working in open or self-employment, or ADE, nor on the wages they receive.

The majority of people with an intellectual disability are not in employment. Those who do have a job mostly work at below minimum wages.

What support does the NDIS deliver?

Theoretically, the NDIS provides a range of employment supports including:

- on-the-job assessments related to the impact of a person's disability on their ability to work
- job customisation
- on-the-job training and intermittent support with daily work tasks
- direct supervision and/or group-based support to enable meaningful participation at work
- supports to manage disability-related behaviour or complex needs at work
- non-face-to-face activities that are directly related to supporting a participant's employment, taking into account a participant's disability.[65]

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62 Disability Royal Commission, "Witness Statement of Gerrie Mitra PSM, General Manager, Provider and Market Development Division, NDIA," in Disability Royal Commission Exhibit, 2022, <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/exhibit/STAT.0523.0002.0001.pdf>

63 NDIS Quarterly Report - https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports

64 "Quarterly Reports," in NDIS, <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports> [accessed 13 September 2022].

65 NDIA, "Supports in employment provider handbook," in NDIS, <https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/supports-employment>.

The NDIS provides both individual and group employment supports, with group supports overwhelmingly used to support workers with disability in ADEs.

There have been changes to how ADEs are funding, with funding now going directly to people with an intellectual disability. Research into the current funding model found that 'the change in the NDIS pricing methodology is likely to result in a significant increase in the amount claimed from supported employee's plans for supports in employment.'[66]

Evidence presented to the Disability Royal Commission found that the NDIS contributes $295,615,902 in employment supports to ADEs, an average of $17,155 per worker.[67]

People with an intellectual disability can use their employment supports for a variety of employment, but generally they are mostly used for work in ADEs.

Employment supports in the NDIS

There are several employment related support categories across Core and Capacity Building, available for people with an intellectual disability and their families to use in their NDIS plans. However, information about how to use these supports including what to ask for in plans, and several other changes are needed to ensure that people are supported into open or self-employment.

Planners also do not always expect to include employment goals or supports in the plans of people with an intellectual disability of working age. The NDIA also expects quotations for delivery of employment supports to be found before agreeing to fund employment supports. This is the wrong way around, and employment supports must be funded first, then providers can be sought to deliver them. By requiring quotations, this pushes people with an intellectual disability and their families to a narrow range of employment support options, such as ADEs.

Currently these supports are overwhelmingly used by people with an intellectual disability to work in supported employment in ADEs.

- **Specialised Supported Employment** – this is currently only used to support people with an intellectual disability in ADEs, but has potential to work with DES to support people in open and self-employment. The 2021-2022 price guide says "These supports have typically been available in an Australian Disability Enterprise. They can also be used in a range of employment settings including private, government or not for profit organisations; a social enterprise or similar environment; self-employment or a micro-business; or a family run business." However, there is little evidence that these supports are being used for anything other than an ADE.
- **Employment Related Assessment and Counselling** – available for assessment or counselling to obtain employment.
- **Workplace assistance** – this can be used to transition out of ADEs, or into DES

66 Keogh Bay, Supported Employment Pricing Transition Project Project Report, 10 December 2020, <https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/2986/download?attachment>.

67 Disability Royal Commission, "Witness Statement of Gerrie Mitra PSM, General Manager, Provider and Market Development Division, NDIA," in Disability Royal Commission Exhibit, 2022, <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/exhibit/STAT.0523.0002.0001.pdf>.

Work readiness program

There is currently only one work readiness program, the School Leavers Employment Supports (SLES) program, which is a specific funding stream to bridge the transition between school and work. There is no other program for people with an intellectual disability who want a structured program to get ready for work.

There are significant problems with the current SLES program, which does not work effectively to provide real choice to young people with an intellectual disability and their families, and often leads them to ADEs and day programs instead of to Disability Employment Services and open or self-employment.

The minimum eligibility for DES is being able to work more than 8 hours per week without ongoing support. Many people with an intellectual disability will need time and support to work more than 8 hours a week, and need ongoing support, but do not currently have access to the employment supports to build up that capacity through DES. This makes referrals from the SLES program to DES problematic, and excludes people with an intellectual disability who need more support to work[68].

The most recent reports about the effectiveness of SLES, from both people with disability and providers, show significant gaps in the program.

The School leaver participant survey[69] report found that:

- less than half reported that the supports helped them find a job.
- 27% (20% open and 7% supported) had a job when finishing SLES, and 40% (33% open and 7% supported) had two years later.
- most got their information about what supports they could use from providers.
- less than half had work experience, and of that percentage, over 40% didn't get enough or any support while doing that work experience

Of the people who found work, according to the SLES Provider Quarterly Report for 2021, only 10% were in a job in the open labour market at full award wages. Another 10% were in the open labour market at supported wages, and 6% were in an ADE[70].

Most people were working in part-time or casual jobs, with 4% self-employed.

Both reports show that people with disability don't have information about evidence-based employment supports, in accessible formats provided directly to them. Information came mostly from parents or schools. Disability service providers are also providing information about the programs they deliver. It can be difficult to find independent information.

SLES is most commonly offered as a two-year program. If that program is run by disability service providers that provide other services, it can lead to 'client capture' into the ADE or day program run by the same provider. This leaves people with an intellectual disability and their families with very few options if they do not want to work in an ADE or go to a day program.

In addition, some day programs are misrepresented as 'transition to work' programs, when they contain little evidence based work related activity. Instead, they are centre based group activity programs, whilst there is a role for such programs, but they should not be called training programs if they are not delivering training in a structured, evidence-based program.

The way that SLES has been designed means there is a financial penalty for providing a successful transition to open employment if this occurs in less than two years. The kind of individualised support, connected to vocational education and work place learning, that evidence and research shows is effective isn't rewarded, especially if this happens quickly (as in, less than 2 years).

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68 Appendix A: Paper 1 Understanding the employment ecosystem for people with disability, CSI Swinburne
69 https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/finding-keeping-and-changing-jobs/leaving-school#school-leaver-participant-survey-report
70 https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/school-leaver-employment-supports#provider-quarterly-report-school-leaver-employment

Lack of information

There is no independent information about where to find SLES support for open or self-employment. There is also little transparency about the conflicts of interest that many current SLES providers have, with ADE and day program providers being registered to provide SLES supports, and then 'support' that young people to use those same ADEs and day programs.

This lack of independent information also extends to knowing what to ask for in an NDIS plan. Employment supports, in addition to SLES, need to be offered in all NDIS plans for people aged 15 and over, and discussed at planning meetings.

SLES provides little information about or opportunity to develop self-employment, including with long term support for people with an intellectual disability and families.

Evidence-based support

The NDIA also needs to prioritise funding supports that are backed by strong evidence for SLES and other employment supports. Evidence strongly shows that people with an intellectual disability find on-the-job (place and train) learning much more accessible and effective than classroom-based work training.

Work-based learning is a combination of two proven strategies for increasing employment of people with disability: work experience and vocational training. This type of learning is much more relevant and useful to people with an intellectual disability than classroom-based learning. Unfortunately, many SLES programs use group-based classroom learning in their transition to work programs.

Various researchers have argued that work-based learning, or 'place then train', is preferable to, and more successful than, the 'train then place' model, which is based on the idea that job seekers have to slowly acquire skills through a sequence of preparatory then vocational courses and prove their work 'readiness'[71]

The work-based training model is particularly useful for people with autism and an intellectual disability where generic skills development is not easily transferred from the classroom and into the workplace. Many young people with an intellectual disability learn better through practical, hands-on experience. With this in mind, resources can be better utilised by training the person in the specific role, for a specific employer and on-the-job; rather than spending years 'waiting' for someone to becoming 'work ready'.[72]

In addition, there is little evidence that classroom-based pre-vocational training and vocational education alone will lead to high quality outcomes for people with an intellectual disability.[73]

71 Cocks, E., & Thoresen, S. H. (2013). Barriers and facilitators affecting course completions by apprentices and trainees with disabilities. Research report. National Centre for Vocational Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0017/9332/barriers-and-facilitators-2597.pdf

72 Wakeford, M. & Waugh, F. (2014). Transitions to employment of Australian young people with disability and the ticket to work initiative. National Ticket to Work Network. https://tickettowork.org.au/resource/93/

73 https://cds.org.au/download/Jobsupport-Evidence-Based-Practices-Review-Final_.pdf

Lack of support for innovation

People with disability, including people with an intellectual disability, 'have a much higher rate of self-employment or entrepreneurship (13.1%) than the Australian average (9.2%)'.[74]

Research into a variety of programs aimed at supporting people with disability to start and maintain their own business shows the value of this support. However, they are often funded through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grants program and are not widely available or promoted through the NDIS.[75]

One program, the Micro Enterprise Project (MEP), works to support people with intellectual and neurological disability to set up their own small business. They have found that 'A large gap exists between NDIS expressed aspirations of economic participation for people with intellectual and other disability, and current systems to support this. Persistent stereotypes limit people's capacity to work and contribute to society.'[76]

74 Darcy, S., J. Collins, and M. Stronach, Australia's Disability Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Experiences of People with Disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship. 2020.

75 Entrepreneurs with Disability in Australia: Experiences of People with Disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship. Report 2: Policy and Organisational Level Initiatives, Entrepreneurs with Disability in Australia, January 2021, Professor Simon Darcy, Professor Jock Collins, Dr Megan Stronach, University of Technology Sydney

76 https://asidconference.com.au/2183

Centrelink and Services Australia

Complexity

Centrelink and Services Australia have many rules and processes that are complex and difficult to understand and access.

When a person with an intellectual disability starts working, and receives the Disability Support Pension, they need to report each fortnight what they earn.

This is a complicated and difficult process, that can fall on families to complete, and if it isn't done correctly, people with an intellectual disability can receive a debt.

When people with an intellectual disability work in an ADE, often this reporting process is done by the employer. This removes a barrier to work, but isn't available for other kinds of employment.

It can also be complex to understand the myriad of rules and regulations about when employment may affect eligibility for the DSP.

Services Australia's protocol for engaging with people with disability[77] makes no mention of people with an intellectual disability or this complexity. There are no commitments to material in Easy Read or other accessible formats.

Assessments

People with an intellectual disability face a range of assessments all through their working lives – there is assessment to access the DSP and the NDIS, assessment to measure their work capacity, assessment for ongoing support, and many more. At each stage, these assessments can be a barrier to continuing with open and self-employment, and their purpose is unclear.

People with an intellectual disability communicate in many different ways. Many people can only be understood by people who know them well. Real communication with people with an intellectual disability takes time, understanding and expertise.

The Centrelink impairment table assessment process, for example (and other Centrelink assessments such as Job Capacity Assessments), don't take into account people who don't use speech to communicate (or people from different cultural backgrounds), and there is no opportunity to spend time to get to know the person.

People may also be anxious or fearful of the assessments and of 'failing' them. Assessors also don't understand that acquiescence[78] is common; that is, many people with an intellectual disability will tend to go along with what is asked or suggested, or say what they think the person wants to hear.

Job capacity testing, before a person with an intellectual disability has been in the workplace and received any training, is likely to give an inaccurate result and exclude them from open and self-employment assistance. The research shows that reversing these steps, on the job training and placement, then testing, results in higher rates of open employment.[79]

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77 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/protocol-for-engaging-people-with-disability?context=1

78 The Speak Out resource, Communication – it's not a spectator sport describes acquiescence as follows: "Many people with an intellectual disability say 'yes' to questions or accept and agree with things, regardless of what has been asked, and often without really wanting to. This is called acquiescence. People with an intellectual disability often mask their communication difficulties to avoid the stigma of being labelled as having a disability. It is very common for people to adopt a passive communication style, allowing the more powerful person to control the conversation."

79 Nisbet, J. & Cllahan, M. (1987). Assisting Persons with Severe Disabilities to Achieve Success in Integrated Workplaces: Critical Elements. In Taylor, S, Bilken, D, & Knoll, J (Eds). Community Integration for People with Severe Disabilities. New York: Teachers College Press.

Assessments do not measure the impact of trauma, which many people with an intellectual disability experience, due to the nature of the segregated environments they often live, work and play in from an early age. Measuring IQ alone will not pick up much of the intersectional nature of the barriers people will experience, such as if the person has other disability, including psychosocial disability, whether they have lived in an institution including a group home, and if they are an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person, or a culturally and linguistically diverse person.

This use of job capacity testing shuts the door to accessing employment services and supports, such as DES.

Digital environment

Much of Centrelink and Services Australia services have moved to a digital only environment. But people with an intellectual disability face significant barriers to accessing services this way. These include:

- Lack of accessible information and formats. This is more than the availability of Easy Read resources and includes the ease of navigation to find information and resources
- Lack of up-to-date equipment and devices
- Lack of training on how to use devices and navigate online services
- Lack of affordable internet connectivity
- Accessibility barriers with devices
- Relying on ageing carers who face their own set of barriers to digital and online environments

Good Things Foundation says that there has been no improvement in digital inclusion since 2014, with people with disability significantly disadvantaged[80]. Their report said that "recent research has found that people with disability are more likely to be lower users of digital media, use social media less, and have lower levels of interest in emerging technologies than people without a disability in Australia."[81] Research from the NSW Council of Social Services found that "A quarter of respondents with a disability have no data allowance on their mobile phones and 27% of people relying on government payments have no data allowance."[82]

80 Good Things Foundation Digital Nation 2021 report, https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au/news/digital-nation-australia-2021/
81 Notley, T Chambers, S Park, S Dezuanni, M (2021) Adult Media Literacy in Australia: Attitudes, Experiences and Needs, WSU, QUT and University of Canberra
82 https://www.ncoss.org.au/2020/04/disconnected-new-research-reveals-digital-divide-facing-australians-in-isolation/

Disability Support Pension

The Disability Support Pension (DSP) is an important income support payment for many people with an intellectual disability, including those who work in ADEs.

Young people with an intellectual or learning disability are nearly half of DSP recipients, dropping to 20% of people aged 25-54, and 5.8% of people over 55.[83] This reflects the reduced life expectancy of people with an intellectual disability of between 25 and 30 years, compared to people without disability[84] [85] and the increasing prevalence of disability as people age.

People with an intellectual disability have 'manifest eligibility' for the DSP if they have an IQ below 70[86]. This eligibility reduces the requirements to gain access to the DSP, and is often based on assessments conducted for children with an intellectual disability at school[87]. Many people with an intellectual disability will rely on the DSP for their whole adult lives.

The DSP provides an income for single people with disability of $936.80 per fortnight, with additional pension supplement ($75.60) and energy supplement ($14.10) per fortnight[88]. For people living in private rental and community housing, including some disability accommodation, they will also be eligible for rent assistance of up to $151.60[89].

People with an intellectual disability report that the DSP doesn't cover the basics, such as a place to live and food on the table, let alone the additional expenses due to disability.

Any wages that people with an intellectual disability earn can impact on the amount they receive from the DSP.

This means that most people with an intellectual disability live close to the poverty line. The latest Henderson's measure[90] shows that $414.98 is the poverty line, excluding housing costs, for a single person. The DSP is $468 per week.

People with disability face a higher cost of living, and research shows that "current poverty measures do not take into account disability, therefore, they fail to consider substantial differences in poverty rates between people with and without a disability."[91] Another study found that "living with a disability may cost an additional several thousand dollars per year"[92].

DSP eligibility also includes access to a Pension Card which enables a range of valuable concessions, such as healthcare, pharmaceutical costs, utility concessions, transport concessions and a variety of disability and other program eligibility[93].

Remaining eligible for these important concessions and programs is vital for people with an intellectual disability and their families, and potentially losing that eligibility is a disincentive to take on more hours or to work outside an ADE.

83 https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/income-and-finance/income-support
84 https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/health/why-people-intellectual-disability-experience-lower-life-expectancy-study
85 https://cid.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Research-Analysis-Health-Status-of-People-With-Intellectual-Disability.pdf
86 https://guides.dss.gov.au/social-security-guide/3/6/2/20
87 https://guides.dss.gov.au/social-security-guide/3/6/2/50
88 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/payment-rates-for-disability-support-pension?context=22276
89 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-much-rent-assistance-you-can-get?context=22206
90 https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/4288661/Poverty-Lines-Australia-June-2022.pdf
91 https://healtheconomicsreview.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13561-020-00264-1
92 https://theconversation.com/the-hidden-extra-costs-of-living-with-a-disability-78001
93 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/pensioner-concession-card

The DSP and employment

For people with disability who do not meet the manifest eligibility rules, such as people with an intellectual disability with an IQ of more than 70 and less than 85, they must not be able to work more than 15 hours per week in the next two years[94]. For people with manifest eligibility, there are no minimum or maximum work requirements.

When people with an intellectual disability who receive the DSP earn an income, the amount of DSP they receive changes. For income over the $190 per fortnight threshold, the DSP is reduced by 50c for each dollar earned, known as the taper rate. If a person who receives the DSP earns over $2,243.00 per fortnight, they will receive no DSP income for that fortnight[95]. Both the threshold and the taper rate act as a significant disincentive to work.

People may also be eligible for working credits when starting a job[96]. People may also remain eligible to keep their Pension Concession Card for up to 12 months after starting a job with an income that reduces their DSP to $0[97].

Any income that a person with disability earns must be reported each fortnight to Services Australia. This is not an accessible or easy process. However, if a person works in an ADE, the ADE will support them to report their income.

People with intellectual disabilities find the reporting processes very difficult. Parents and supporters said that:

> "There are often online system technical issues and long wait times on the phone reporting line."
>
> "For many, literacy and numeracy levels are low. Centrelink is seen as an authority figure and it is frightening and intimidating receiving correspondence from them. Correspondence is not written in Easy English and it is not easy for people to access support to have these letters explained in a manner that they understand."[98]

When people on the DSP are earning wages that are not consistent, they must report fortnightly to Centrelink, and they also receive letters that are difficult to understand.

> "Reporting any hours worked is a nightmare. Keep in mind it's the primary carer of the person with an intellectual disability who usually has to report on their behalf, and there is ALWAYS an issue."
>
> "People with ID require support to submit this information and are reliant on their family or carers to do this and navigate the Centrelink system that is difficult for anyone, let alone people with a disability."[99]

Families of people with an intellectual disability who are working can't do this complex reporting and administrative work to support a person with an intellectual disability with Centrelink requirements.

94 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/general-medical-rules-for-disability-support-pension?context=22276
95 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/income-test-for-pensions?context=22276
96 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/working-credit?context=22276
97 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/pensioner-concession-card-if-you-get-disability-support-pension?context=22276
98 "Submission to the DSP Senate Inquiry – Inclusion Australia," https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/submission/submission-to-the-dsp-senate-inquiry
99 as above

DSP Senate Inquiry

In 2021, the Senate Community Affairs Committee held an inquiry into the DSP. Many people with disability, their families and organisations made detailed submissions about the barriers in the DSP system, including barriers to work.

Inclusion Australia made a detailed submission and consulted with a range of people with an intellectual disability and their families about their experiences with the DSP[100] and gave evidence to the Committee. Catherine McAlpine, CEO of Inclusion Australia, said:

> "The DSP system does not understand intellectual disability. For people with intellectual disability—a lifelong, permanent condition—eligibility requirements to get the DSP are unnecessarily repetitive, difficult and costly. We have many reports that Centrelink staff frequently don't understand intellectual disability, and this affects decisions about eligibility. One quote is this: 'They suggested that intellectual disability doesn't impact certain areas of life, such as mobility and personal care.'
>
> DSP systems are inaccessible for people with intellectual disability. The DSP is complex, difficult and emotionally stressful to navigate for people with intellectual disability, and most depend on families or other supporters, including service providers—who may have a conflict of interest—to help them. Information is complex and the language is inaccessible. This discriminates against and disadvantages people who are unable to navigate the system."[101]

People with Disability Australia (PWDA), with the Anti-Poverty Centre, also made a submission and gave evidence at the Committee's public hearing. PWDA said:

> "The DSP can only be adequate when it does at least three things: firstly, provide guaranteed lifelong income to keep every person with disability out of poverty; secondly, act as a gateway to greater supports that allow us to self-determine how we live our lives to the greatest extent possible; and thirdly, it is not treated as an unemployment payment and must be a well designed payment that will provide us with what we need to find suitable paid work on our own terms."[102]

The Senate Inquiry reported in February 2022 and made some key recommendations for change. These included a recommendation that:

- the Australian Government considers reforming the income test for recipients of the Disability Support Pension to better support individuals facing structural barriers to participating in the workforce, and to better recognise the fluctuating nature of a person's ability to participate in paid employment due to their impairment.
- such reforms could, amongst other things, raise the income thresholds at which the Disability Support Pension payment is reduced, and lower the rate which it is reduced once this threshold is reached.[103]

100 as above
101 https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=COMMITTEES;id=committees%2Fcommsen%2F5034c390-2c7c-42a3-8630-af52fbc449b7%2F0004;query=Id%3A%22committees%2Fcommsen%2F5034c390-2c7c-42a3-8630-af52fbc449b7%2F0000%22
102 https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=COMMITTEES;id=committees%2Fcommsen%2F5034c390-2c7c-42a3-8630-af52fbc449b7%2F0003;query=Id%3A%22committees%2Fcommsen%2F5034c390-2c7c-42a3-8630-af52fbc449b7%2F0000%22
103 https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/DisabilitySupportPensio/Report/section?id=committees%2freportsen%2f024728%2f77015

Information

When people with an intellectual disability want to get into a job, there is nowhere to turn to find out where to start. Information about how to get and keep a job, including where to get support, is complicated, confusing, not independent and not accessible for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Research from the Centre for Social Impact notes that this complexity is a barrier to people with an intellectual disability and their families.

There is consistent reference in the research from multiple countries, and in Australia, to the problem of the complexity of the employment and education systems[104]. This creates difficulties for people with disability, their families and also for service providers in navigating this complex landscape, for which there is "currently no guide"[105]. International research has highlighted concerns, echoed by Australian research[106], in regard to:

> the difficulty students and their parents face navigating services across different programs during the transition to adult life, limited coordination across agencies, and a lack of information about the full range of service options available to young adults with disabilities[107].

NDIS

The NDIS is supposed to offer choice and control for people with disability, but that requires knowing that choice is possible and that there are different choices to make.

In their research about administrative burden and the NDIS, Carey et al 'uncovered recurrent experiences of people being unaware of particular supports or services until they had engaged an advocate'[108]. They found that 'skills in framing disability-based needs, social networks, and time and financial resources to gain access to advocates or supportive family/friends appear to play an important role in how successfully individuals are able to navigate (and in turn gain benefit from) the NDIS.'[109]

Research from the NDIA into the barriers for people with an intellectual disability in accessing the community found that 'clear and accessible information about what is available is also required to help participants navigate opportunities in the wider community.'[110]

The same research found that 'for parents of young people with similar disabilities, word of mouth (from other parents) was an important source of information about community participation activities and identifying opportunities for their school aged children. Social media groups helped facilitate these conversations and information seeking.'[111]

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104 ACIL Allen Consulting. (2017). National disability coordination officer program evaluation. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ndco_evaluation_final_report.pdf; Foley, K.-R., Jacoby, P., Girdler, S., Bourke, J., Pikora, T., Lennox, N., Einfeld, S., Llewellyn, G., Parmenter, T.R., & Leonard, H. (2013). Functioning and post-school transition outcomes for young people with Down syndrome. Child: Care, Health and Development, 39(6), 789-800.

105 ACIL Allen Consulting. (2017). National disability coordination officer program evaluation. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ndco_evaluation_final_report.pdf;.

106 as above

107 Hall, A. C., Butterworth, J., Winsor, J., Kramer, J., Nye-Lengerman, K., & Timmons, J. (2018). Building an evidence-based, holistic approach to advancing integrated employment. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 43(3), 207-218.

108 https://assets.csi.edu.au/assets/research/Administering-Inequality-The-National-Disability-Insurance-Scheme-and-Administrative-Burdens-on-Individuals.pdf

109 as above

110 National Disability Insurance Agency 2021. 'Getting out into the world': pathways to community participation and connectedness for NDIS participants with intellectual disability, on the autism spectrum and/or with psychosocial disability. Australia. Prepared by L Smith, M Bennett, B Gardner, R Morello, https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/4440/download?attachment

111 as above

Many submissions to the 2019 Tune Review of the NDIS highlighted the lack of independent information. Every Australian Counts said that:

> 'The NDIS relies heavily on people finding their own way to the door. That is not easy for a whole range of people – people who have multiple forms of disadvantage, people who come from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, people who come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. Then there are those who have very good reason to fear government services. We need to use trusted networks and organisations to reach these people – and then give them a hand to work their way through the maze.'[112]

Information advocacy service IDEAS told the Tune Review that:

> 'currently, there is no defined policy or program space for people to get independent information before pre planning, before planning, before attending planning meetings. This compounds people with disability's difficulties in engaging with the agency. It compounds a break in trust before any relationship is developed, de-facto providers of information e.g. service providers are filling the gaps (this is a very poor outcome for people with disability as it is conflicted).'[113]

When the Tune Review was released, it found that:

> 'delays in decision-making and a lack of information are two of the most regular complaints about the NDIS'[114]. The Review also heard that ' it appears that support coordinators have only directed participants towards supports provided by their own organisation, meaning they have been held 'captive' and prevented from exercising free choice and control over their other funded supports.'[115]

When it comes to employment supports, people with an intellectual disability and their families do not have access to independent information about what to ask for in their plans, and then what they can use for support. Often, the only information they are offered are from disability service providers promoting their services.

There is little to no information or referral about supports for different kinds of employment, including self-employment, microenterprises and circles of support.

There is no independent information about where to find School Leaver Employment Service (SLES) support for open or self-employment. There is also little transparency about the conflicts of interest that many current SLES providers may have, with ADE and day program providers being registered to provide SLES supports, and then 'support' that young people to use those same ADEs and day programs.

This lack of independent information also extends to knowing what to ask for in an NDIS plan.

SLES provides little information about or opportunity to develop self-employment, including with long term support for people with an intellectual disability and families. There needs to be market intervention by the NDIA to support the development of independent information, as well as evidence-based programs about self-employment.

112 https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Every-Australian-Counts-EAC.pdf
113 https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IDEAS.pdf
114 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2020/ndis-act-review-final-accessibility-and-prepared-publishing1.pdf
115 as above

DES

People with an intellectual disability and their families can find it hard to get independent information about Disability Employment Services (DES). Currently, if a person with intellectual disability is assessed, through a Centrelink Job Capacity Assessment, as being able to work less than eight hours per week, they are not automatically eligible for DES supports. The only pathway in is a complicated and unsupported self-referral process, for which there is little accessible information.

Centrelink also does not provide any information proactively about how to manage this self-referral to DES.

A recent review of the DES program found that "stakeholders believe DES program processes, information, and incentive structures are not transparent. Providers and participants express confusion around features of program design, from star ratings to risk-adjusted funding tool updates."[116]

At key stages of a person with an intellectual disability's life, independent information about the full range of employment options and support is very difficult to find. This includes when at school, transitioning between school and work, finding a first job and changing job.

Decisions that young people with an intellectual disability and their families make during this time can have ramifications for the rest of their lives, particularly if they want to choose other options than ADEs and day programs.

If people with an intellectual disability and their families want an alternative to ADEs and day programs, there is very little information about other options. There is also little to no information about open and self-employment for people with an intellectual disability.

There is also a lack of information about what supports the NDIS and DES are each responsible for and will provide.

116 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2021/des-mid-term-review-august-2020-v2.pdf

Support for decision making

People with disabilities have rights to make their own decisions. This is covered by Article 3, Article 4 and Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD)[117].

Australia has signed the UNCRPD and the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC)[118] has suggested ways to make these rights part of Australian law.

The ALRC National Decision-Making Principles are:

1. All adults have an equal right to make decisions that affect their lives and to have those decisions respected.
2. Persons who require support in decision-making must be provided with access to the support necessary for them to make, communicate and participate in decisions that affect their lives.
3. The will, preferences and rights of persons who may require decision-making support must direct decisions that affect their lives.
4. Laws and legal frameworks must contain appropriate and effective safeguards in relation to interventions for persons who may require decision-making support, including to prevent abuse and undue influence.[119]

People with an intellectual disability often need support for decision making when making choices and engaging with the community, but they often don't get it.

People with an intellectual disability often felt their employment choices were constrained, or that other people made decisions about work for them. Some ended up working in the first place where they did work experience, regardless of whether they liked it.[120]

People with an intellectual disability with complex communication support needs require ongoing capacity building opportunities to develop the different ways that they communicate – through their natural language as well as through the use of alternative and augmentative communication strategies, including at work.

It is essential too, that people with complex communication support needs, regardless of their age, receive ongoing capacity building to develop the skills of those that support them at work, both paid support and their colleagues, in observing, recognising, understanding and supporting the continued development of the person's expressive communication.

There is little formal support for decision making in the following agencies or organisations

- NDIA, NDIS providers
- DES providers
- Centrelink, Workforce Australia, Services Australia

In addition, at key life stages, there is not enough support for decision making, such as:

- At school
- Transitioning from school to work
- Choosing a job
- Changing jobs

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117 "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities.

118 https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/equality-capacity-and-disability-in-commonwealth-laws-alrc-report-124/2-conceptual-landscape-the-context-for-reform-2/supported-and-substitute-decision-making/

119 as above

120 eltzer, A., Bates, S., Robinson, S., Kayess, R. Fisher, K.R. and Katz, I. (2016). What do people with intellectual disability think about their jobs and the support they receive at work? A comparative study of three employment support models: Final report (SPRC Report 16/16). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia.

There are few places where people with an intellectual disability and their families can go to find out more about supported decision-making, find resources they can share, or get training.

A range of agencies and organisations in this system also push people with an intellectual disability and their families towards using substitute decision making, without independent support for decision making, where people with an intellectual disability are assumed not to have the capacity to make their own decisions and choices.

The Disability Royal Commission heard at Public Hearing 30[121] from people with an intellectual disability about how their will and preference was ignored and overridden. The hearing also heard ideas about how to support people with an intellectual disability to make their own decisions.

A review of a wide range of supported decision making resources was done by people with an intellectual disability by Inclusion Australia for the Making Decisions Real project. They found gaps in knowledge and understanding of supported decision making for people with an intellectual disability and their families and supporters.

The review of existing materials and resources found that:

- Most resources were not people with intellectual disability-centred
- The resources contained a lot of useful information about supported decision making but it was not generally presented in an engaging or easy-to understand manner
- The resources often had too much academic wording
- Most of the resources were too long for time-poor supporters
- Most of the resources came across as risk-averse and did not encourage risk enablement.

NDIS

People with an intellectual disability often do not have a say about their lives, including about the NDIS disability supports that they use. For many people with an intellectual disability, someone else makes decisions for them, including under formal mechanisms like guardianship or as a nominee under the NDIS. This is known as substitute decision making.

The NDIS promises that people with disability will have access to person-centred disability supports that are individually tailored to their needs. This is not how the NDIS works for many people with an intellectual disability who do not have a say about their supports.

In 2021, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) undertook a consultation process[122] to explore how they could implement supported decision making across the Agency and Scheme.

People with an intellectual disability told the NDIA that they liked that the consultation talked about people with disability making their own decisions and having support when they need it. They liked that decision supporters would have information about how to support decision making.

People with an intellectual disability also have the right to change their mind. NDIS supports are often so rigid that NDIS participants cannot change their mind about the most mundane decisions in life.

121 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/rounds/public-hearing-30-guardianship-substituted-and-supported-decision-making
122 https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/submission/submission-to-the-ndia-on-support-for-decision-making/

Researchers have recommended that:

> "Some form of mandated supported decision making and an explicit onus on NDIS staff to enquire into the nature of the decision support would help to set expectations about the quality of informal support, build the capacity of decision supporters for a rights-based approach, and provide criteria to assist in accountability of their practice. Such measures will be important in increasing the chances of adults with intellectual disabilities in realising the Scheme objectives of greater choice and control."[123]

However, this is not currently in place which means that a person with an intellectual disability's right to make decisions about their lives may not be upheld.

The NDIS has an opportunity to set a benchmark for how it engages with people with an intellectual disability and other people with disability who need support for decision making. If the NDIS is a person-centred Scheme, then support for decision making must be embedded in all NDIA practices and policies, such as planning, choosing supports and reviews.

When it comes to employment, the vital elements that need significant support for decision making include:

- understanding what work is,
- understanding the connection between work and income,
- how earning an income connects to independence and choices.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

The Commission plays an important role in regulation of the NDIS, including of disability support providers and disability support workers. They administer provider and worker registration, and investigate complaints about violence and abuse of people with disability.

Currently, the Quality and Safeguards Commission has some discussion of supported decision making in the Code of Conduct that all providers and workers must abide by. The Commission says that:

> NDIS providers should encourage workers to engage directly with people on any choices or decisions that affect them. They should consult them about who, if anyone, they want to involve in decisions and discussions about their services and supports, or other aspects of their lives.[124]

This is inadequate, and does not require workers or providers to utilise supported decision-making frameworks in what they do. This means that the people with an intellectual disability they work with will not have the right support to make decisions and choices about their lives, including about employment.

DES

Disability Employment Services (DES) have no inbuilt supported decision making (SDM) support and frameworks for people with an intellectual disability to have support to make decisions about the kinds of employment they want to do, and how they will do that work.

This creates another barrier in the system, with DES being inaccessible for many people with an intellectual disability who need support for decision making.

123 Christine Bigby, "Dedifferentiation and People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Australian National Disability Insurance Scheme: Bringing Research, Politics and Policy Together," *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability* 45, no. 4 (June 24, 2020): 309–19, https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2020.1776852.

124 https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-code-conduct

People with an intellectual disability need this framework to work through the wide range of employment decisions they need to make at a DES. These include:

- understanding what mainstream employment is and what it means for them
- how to get to and from work, how to behave at work, how to do their job
- how a DES works and what their obligations and opportunities are
- where to get help and support from.

The DES SDM framework needs to embed the skills and expertise about supporting all decisions for people with an intellectual disability through their experiences using DES and at work. Most information about DES for people with an intellectual disability is aimed at families, not at people with an intellectual disability, showing clearly the current lack of capacity in DES providers.

PATHWAYS TO WORK

Everyone needs support to start work, and to build the skills in our jobs. But people with an intellectual disability are often shut out of these key building blocks to employment, making it hard to get and keep a job.

Having a business

Starting and sustaining a business can be challenging for anyone, but for people with an intellectual disability, they face additional barriers.

Research has found that people with an intellectual disability had lower 'rates of entrepreneurship amongst PwD (9.0%) but this is only slightly below the average rate of entrepreneurship in Australia (9.2%)[125].

Research from Professor Simon Darcy found that entrepreneurs with disability 'experienced challenges in obtaining start-up funding or loans, which is substantially different to non-disabled entrepreneurs engaging through the mainstream entrepreneurial ecosystem. Individuals were sometimes unable to locate suitable schemes through which to find adequate information and/or support regarding their start-ups.'[126]

Professor Darcy's study also found that people with an intellectual disability had lower 'rates of entrepreneurship amongst PwD (9.0%) but this is only slightly below the average rate of entrepreneurship in Australia (9.2%). People from all other disability types have a higher rate of entrepreneurship than average: Sensory and speech (10.9%), Head injury, stroke or brain damage (15%), Physical/mobility (15.3%) Psychological (16.2%) and Other (15%).' This demonstrates the barriers that are specifically in place for people with an intellectual disability.

The second tranche of Professor Darcy's work examined programs that work to support people with disability in setting up and sustaining a business. He found that 'more systematic funding of entrepreneurship programs for PwD is a necessary—though not sufficient—part of any future strategy to improve the engagement of PwD in the Australian economy.' These programs were often time limited, and ended when the project funding finished.

People with an intellectual disability reported that they found the time limitations in conventional business or entrepreneurial programs difficult, and would often need on-going support which was very difficult to find.[127]

The research also found that concerns about access to the Disability Support Pension was a barrier to both starting and growing any business.[128]

There are a range of federal, state and territory government business advice and support services but none are available in accessible formats for people with an intellectual disability, nor have information about using the NDIS to assist, or have specific programs for people with disability, despite the large numbers of people with disability running their own business.

Self-employment to refer to a wide variety of employment options for people with an intellectual disability including being a sole trader, operating a business, micro-enterprises, employment circles of support and more.

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125 Australia's Disability Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Experiences of People with Disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship. March 2020 Report written by Professor Simon Darcy, Professor Jock Collins, and Dr Megan Stronach Management Discipline Group UTS Business School University of Technology Sydney

126 Australia's Disability Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Experiences of People with Disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship. March 2020 Report written by Professor Simon Darcy, Professor Jock Collins, and Dr Megan Stronach Management Discipline Group UTS Business School University of Technology Sydney

127 Entrepreneurs with Disability in Australia: Experiences of People with Disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship. Report 2: Policy and Organisational Level Initiatives January 202. Report written by Professor Simon Darcy, Professor Jock Collins, and Dr Megan Stronach Management Discipline Group UTS Business School University of Technology Sydney

128 as above

The evidence that self-employment works for people with an intellectual disability and their families is strong, but current DES, DSP and NDIS settings don't work well enough to support this model.

The benefits of self-employment for people with disability have been described as:

- including types of work not found in existing job opportunities
- offering a high degree of control and self-reliance which is attractive to some people
- offering a way to control how much personal income is drawn from a business and therefore manage the impact on government benefits and income support
- enabling the accumulation of assets (in a way not possible via income support)
- enabling control over the workplace and job tasks so that they match the needs of the individual
- offering capacity to schedule work around own needs
- potentially overcoming barriers to employment such as lack of transportation, workplace discrimination etc[129].

Both kinds of employment supports, DES and NDIS, provide little information or pathways to explore self-employment for people with an intellectual disability and their families. In addition, there is no support to access mainstream community connections which can be essential to successful self-employment.

Microenterprises

Microenterprises are a form of creating self-employment and are sometimes called small business enterprises (SBE) or micro-businesses. One definition is of businesses which employ 10 or fewer employees including the micro-entrepreneur, often rely on a very small amount of start-up costs[130] and may or may not make enough money to support an individual[131].

A recent Australian study described microenterprises as:

> a very small business that is simple to start, with minimal capital needed. They can have a vital purpose in improving people's quality of life and may give PwD a role in their local community providing a service or goods. They are highly individual - able to happen at a scale, stamina and schedule that suits an individual.[132]

Microenterprises are emerging as an employment option for people with an intellectual disability, including those who have high support needs. They are:

> highly individualised, person-centred, and are built around the skills, strengths, and interests of the focal person. SBEs draw on a range of funding sources and paid and unpaid supports are instrumental in their development and continuation.[133]

129 Hagner, D., & Davies, T. (2002). "Doing my own thing": Supported self-employment for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 17(2), 65-74; Ouimette, M., & Rammler, L. H. (2017). Entrepreneurship as a means to employment first: How can it work? Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 46(3), 333-339. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-170870

130 Conroy, J. W., Ferris, C. S., & Irvine, R. (2010). Microenterprise options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An outcome evaluation. Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 7(4), 269-277. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-1130.2010.00276.x

131 Reddington, T., & Fitzsimons, J. (2013). People with learning disabilities and microenterprise. Tizard Learning Disability Review, 18(3), 124-131. https://doi.org/10.1108/TLDR-02-2013-0013

132 Darcy, S., Collins, J., & Stronach, M. (2020). Australia's disability entrepreneurial ecosystem: Experiences of people with disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship. UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney. https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/article/downloads/Australias%20Disability%20Entrepreneurial%20Ecosystem%20Report%201%20%28Accessible%29.pdf

133 Thoresen, S. H., Thomson, A., Jackson, R., & Cocks, E. (2018). Meaningful social and economic inclusion through small business enterprise models of employment for adults with intellectual disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 49(2), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-180962

Microenterprises involving people with an intellectual disability have some common ingredients including:

- individualisation, that is, "connected to genuine interests and talents of each individual"[134], and "designed around [the person]... his likes, strengths, and support needs...[and] underpinned by a clear vision for his life".[135] As described "the microenterprise should be wholly built around the person who is the 'boss', with outcomes that suit that person"[136]
- generating some form of income for the individual or business
- the business is genuine: "offering a real service that is reliable and fulfils a specific need for the clients", even if with high levels of support from others[137]
- strong leadership
- strength-based approaches
- an emphasis on social inclusion
- some degree of control by the person with intellectual disability and/or their supporters. Some examples document the role of support workers in actively working to support this[138]
- often supported by individual funding arrangements, such as the NDIS
- have a range of supports in place, "formal [i.e. disability and business supports] and informal [i.e. family and friends] ... [which are] flexible and creative in the way they function"[139]

The Community Living Project was funded through the NDIS to deliver a project about micro-enterprises[140]. They used a consultant to work with each person with disability for up to six months, to understand their interests and capacities, how many hours they wanted to work and what they wanted to do. The person used their NDIS supports to have a personal assistant for their business, and they also had a circle of support from community members.

A wide variety of micro-enterprises have been established, however it's not clear what the long-term viability of the support used for them will be with the project funding ends.[141]

The Valued Lives project provides a list of current microenterprises[142] and resources for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

However, there are no permanent and secure resources about self-employment, funded as core business of the NDIS and DES, to ensure that this knowledge is widely known and remembered.

In addition, there is a lack of recognition of the specific nature of micro-enterprises for people with an intellectual disability by existing business structures, such as the Australian Tax Office.

134 Hagner, D., & Davies, T. (2002). "Doing my own thing": Supported self-employment for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 17(2), 65-74

135 Thoresen, S. H., Thomson, A., Jackson, R., & Cocks, E. (2018). Meaningful social and economic inclusion through small business enterprise models of employment for adults with intellectual disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 49(2), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-180962

136 Reddington, T., & Fitzsimons, J. (2013). People with learning disabilities and microenterprise. Tizard Learning Disability Review, 18(3), 124-131. https://doi.org/10.1108/TLDR-02-2013-0013

137 Thoresen, S. H., Thomson, A., Jackson, R., & Cocks, E. (2018). Meaningful social and economic inclusion through small business enterprise models of employment for adults with intellectual disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 49(2), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-180962; Bates, K. (2009). In business: Developing the self employment option for people with learning disabilities. Programme Report. Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED542388.pdf

138 Hagner, D., & Davies, T. (2002). "Doing my own thing": Supported self-employment for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 17(2), 65-74

139 Thoresen, S. H., Thomson, A., Jackson, R., & Cocks, E. (2018). Meaningful social and economic inclusion through small business enterprise models of employment for adults with intellectual disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 49(2), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-180962

140 https://communitylivingproject.org.au/starting-a-business-as-a-disabled-person/

141 https://communitylivingproject.org.au/category/microenterpriseproject+articles/

142 https://microenterprises.valuedlives.org.au/national-micro-enterprise-directory/

Getting to work

People with an intellectual disability can frequently find transport a barrier to getting and keeping a job. Most people with an intellectual disability will never drive a car, and will rely on public transport, taxis, or other people driving them to their destination. In addition, the cost of transport, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas, can be a significant barrier to employment.

A US study[143] found that "this limitation in accessing transportation poses a barrier to individuals with an I/DD [intellectual/developmental disability], as it severely limits opportunities for employment, medical care, as well as community inclusion."

In 2009, the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that:

> "The mode of transport a person with a disability used reflected the level of independence their disability allows them (Graph 53). Just over 580,000 (54%) people with a profound or severe core activity limitation were a passenger in a motor vehicle for their last journey prior to interview, compared to 24% of those with a moderate core activity limitation; 716,000 (59%) people with a mild core activity limitation were the driver of a motor vehicle compared to 25% of those with a profound core activity limitation. Those with profound or severe core activity limitations were the least likely to have walked or used public transport for their last journey."

The ABS indicator of profound or severe core activity limitation is a reliable indicator for intellectual disability.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Disability Report found that of all people with disability, 21% needed help with using transport, but for those who need help in more than one area, which includes people with an intellectual disability, that increases to 35%.

Public transport

Public transport can be inaccessible for people with an intellectual disability who often rely heavily on this form of transport. The ABS says that "1 in 9 [people with disability] (11% or 458,000) need help or supervision to use public transport"

Information about public transport can be inaccessible. People with an intellectual disability can "have difficulty navigating websites, caused by the plethora of information displayed on screens, as well as difficulty in comprehending complex sentences, syntax and unfamiliar jargon."[144]

Access to public transport, particularly in regional areas, can be a significant barrier for young people with disability, research found.[145]

People with disability reported in a survey[146] that they are "accused of being intoxicated, particularly those with intellectual disability or an Acquired Brain Injury, when seeking assistance" from staff when using public transport.

Wayfinding

People with an intellectual disability can find signage and information difficult to access. The recent transport standards consultation found that "good wayfinding cues are also important for people with intellectual or cognitive disability, people who have difficulty orienting themselves in unfamiliar environments and people who may not read or understand English."[147]

143 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283548061_Transportation_for_Adults_with_an_Intellectual_andor_Developmental_Disability
144 https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/decision-ris-disability-transport-reforms.pdf
145 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/exhibit/ISS.001.00355.pdf
146 https://drc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/drc0001-transport-report-online.pdf
147 as above

Transport support

Part of starting a new job is working out the best ways to get there and home again, which might mean learning how to catch public transport, learn a new public transport route, catching a taxi, or ride sharing. People with an intellectual disability often use supports to familiarise themselves with different transport options. Research has found that:

> "The complexity of public transport systems and their rushed environments make people with [intellectual disability] more reliant on support and people spend a high proportion of individual support packages on transport costs, mostly in the form of taxis and support staff."[148]

Access to support for transport to work, as well as the complexity of accessing that support across multiple levels of government, is a significant barrier to and facilitator of workforce participation. It cannot be accepted as a barrier to starting a new job or keeping an existing one, particularly if the worker with disability or the workplace changes location.

Transport support needs to recognise the need for ongoing support for person with an intellectual disability to use public transport, particularly when there are changes in their travel routine. This can be called travel training, and is not something that is only delivered once, but needs to be embedded as an integral ongoing support.

For people with an intellectual disability who live in regional, rural or remote areas, they face additional barriers about the frequency and availability of public transport.

The NDIS funds three levels of transport. These are:

- **Level 1:** the NDIS will provide up to $1,606 per year for participants who are not working, studying or attending day programs but are seeking to enhance their community access.
- **Level 2:** the NDIS will provide up to $2,472 per year for participants who are currently working or studying part-time (up to 15 hours per week), participating in day programs and for other social, recreational, or leisure activities.
- **Level 3:** the NDIS will provide up to $3,456 per year for participants who are currently working, looking for work, or studying, at least 15 hours per week, and are unable to use public transport because of their disability[149].

However, this funding is inadequate to cover travel costs, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas.

148 National Disability Services. 2018. "Getting Transport on Track." https://www.nds.org.au/images/news/Getting_transport_on_track-May2018.pdf
149 https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/operational-guidelines/including-specific-types-supports-plans-operational-guideline/including-specific-types-supports-plans-operational-guideline-transport#12

BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Work experience and after-school jobs

People with an intellectual disability often miss out on the first steps towards employment, such as unpaid work experience and paid after-school employment.

People with an intellectual disability often learn in separate ways to their peers at school, setting up the expectation that they are to be excluded throughout their life, including from employment. Only 58% of students with an intellectual disability attend mainstream schools in integrated classes[150] setting them on the pathway to exclusion.

This exclusion also includes other school community activities, such as out of school hours care, excursions and camps, as well as community sports. Each of these activities normalises the exclusion of people with an intellectual disability from ordinary activities and community connections which can be vital to getting and keeping a job.

Work experience with the right support is an excellent way for a person with an intellectual disability to develop job readiness and the skills necessary to succeed, just as it is for other young people. Early work experience opportunities enable them to try a variety of work sites, industries, and roles to see what they like and don't like and build necessary skills and confidence along the way.

People with disability often miss out on early opportunities to gain paid work or unpaid work experience, for example, when they are at school[151] and many people with an intellectual disability have had little or no work experience by the time they finish school[152]. One Queensland study of students with intellectual disability found that nearly one third of students had not received unpaid work experience whilst in school[153].

Research also shows that "there are fewer opportunities available for people with disability to gain work experience.[154]" A work transition program from National Disability Services, Ticket to Work, found that access to work experience increased the likelihood a person with an intellectual disability would participate in the program on go on to find work.[155] The Swinburne Centre for Social Impact found a range of studies from Australia and overseas, showing that people with an intellectual disability miss out on work experience, and that impacts on their future work prospects[156].

Students with intellectual disability also often miss out on accessing paid work, such as after-school jobs, in the same way their non-disabled peers. This kind of part-time and casual work provides essential early opportunities to develop work readiness skills.

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150 https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/aec210e2-98e7-457d-9826-59ab29c97dec/aihw-dis-72-2022-educational-engagement.xlsx.aspx

151 ARTD Consultants. (2019). Ticket to work post school outcomes. Report for National Disability Services, final report. https://tickettowork.org.au/media/uploads/2020/03/03/ticket-to-work-post-school-outcomes-final-2019.pdf; Carter, E. W., McMillan, E., & Willis, W. (2017). The TennesseeWorks partnership: Elevating employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 47(3), 365-378. https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-170909; Honey, A., Kariuki, M., Emerson, E., & Llewellyn, G. (2014). Employment status transitions among young adults, with and without disability. Australian Journal of Social Issues, 49(2), 151-170. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1839-4655.2014.tb00306.x; Luecking, D. M., & Luecking, R. G. (2006). A descriptive study of customizing the employment process for job seekers with significant disabilities. Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 37(4), 14-21. https://doi.org/10.1891/0047-2220.37.4.14

152 ARTD Consultants. (2019). Ticket to work post school outcomes. Report for National Disability Services, final report. https://tickettowork.org.au/media/uploads/2020/03/03/ticket-to-work-post-school-outcomes-final-2019.pdf; Brown, M., Harry, M., & Mahoney, K. (2018). "It's like two roles we're playing": Parent perspectives on navigating self-directed service programs with adult children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 15(4), 350-358. https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12270

153 Davies, M. D., & Beamish, W. (2009). Transitions from school for young adults with intellectual disability: Parental perspectives on "life as an adjustment". Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 34(3), 248-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668250903103676

154 Wakeford, M. & Waugh, F. (2014). Transitions to employment of Australian young people with disability and the ticket to work initiative. National Ticket to Work Network. https://tickettowork.org.au/resource/93/ cited in Fostering employment of people with intellectual disability; the evidence to date, Swinburne University Centre for Social Impact

155 https://tickettowork.org.au/media/uploads/2020/03/03/ticket-to-work-post-school-outcomes-final-2019.pdf

156 https://www.everyonecanwork.org.au/resources/evidence/

An Australian study looking at what happened to students with intellectual disability leaving secondary school in QLD found that 53% of students at mainstream schools were in paid employment (18% were in ADEs), compared to 44% (8% in ADEs) of students exiting special education units, and 15% (14% in ADEs) of students from special schools[157].

Employment supports for work readiness

The current Disability Employment Services settings aren't working to support people with an intellectual disability with work experience or paid after school employment. The same barriers to accessing DES, **outlined on page 57**, exist for people with an intellectual disability at school.

NDIS Employment Supports are not easily accessible at school, and employment goals not often included in plans while students with an intellectual disability are in education.

In addition, states and territories often don't include supports for students with an intellectual disability in their work experience programs at school, making it hard to access. This includes access to individualised supports, as well as to transport to access work experience.

Students with an intellectual disability and their families do not have access to independent information about what is possible, including the evidence about the link between work experience and post-school employment.

DES and the NDIS also do not support people with an intellectual disability and their families to explore self-employment options, including micro-enterprises, in all school environments.

Other systems, such as state and territory education systems, do not facilitate work experience, particularly for students with an intellectual disability in special or specialist schools, or in separate learning units in mainstream schools. Work experience programs are designed for students without disability, and schools have few resources to customise the supports that students with an intellectual disability require to succeed.

Employers also do not often have the resources or expertise to support students with an intellectual disability in a work experience setting or to access paid after-school jobs.

157 Davies, M. D., & Beamish, W. (2009). Transitions from school for young adults with intellectual disability: Parental perspectives on "life as an adjustment". Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 34(3), 248-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668250903103676

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

SOLUTIONS

Inclusion Australia

INTRODUCTION

People with an intellectual disability and their families have waited a long time for change and reform, and there have been many promises made that have come to nothing. It is time to do something different, something big, something ambitious, something complicated and connected and simple all at the same time.

People with an intellectual disability, their families, organisations, supporters, other people with disability and academics know what works and what needs to change. Decades of research and evidence have made this clear, alongside lived expertise of the people who have never been given a fair go.

The Disability Royal Commission is a once in a lifetime opportunity to take a holistic look at the solutions that will tear down the barriers to getting and keeping a job.

People with an intellectual disability can and do work, with the right support. Now we need our systems and structures to change to allow that to happen.

Research commissioned for this report from the Centre for Social Impact made several key findings about what is needed to facilitate employment for people with an intellectual disability. These are:

- A non-segregated employment support system: equal access to all employment services.
- Employment supports and services that directly address the full range of (biopsychosocial) barriers to employment.
- Evidence based and effective employment supports for people with intellectual disability.
- Re-focusing the contribution of ADEs.
- The funding of employment of supports.[1]

Each of these elements is important, and changes are needed across the disability, income support and employment systems, as well as in the job market.

We believe that these ambitious, evidence-based changes can be implemented over the next five years, leading to a widespread shift in both attitudes towards and employment of people with an intellectual disability.

We will be seen as equal when we are equal.

1 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J. & Campbell, P. (2022). The Logic for Reform: Employment for People with Intellectual Disability in Australia, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

BUILDING A SYSTEM OF INCLUSION

Higher wages

People with an intellectual disability say that the low wages they get are unfair and a big barrier to being equal and included.

There are several groups of people with an intellectual disability who don't have access to the benefits of a decent income, including from employment. These are:

- People who are not working at all
- People who are not working as many hours as they would like
- People earning below minimum wages in ADEs (through the Supported Employment Services Award - SES Award)
- People earning below minimum wages in other jobs (through the Supported Wage System - SWS)

People with an intellectual disability who are working need to get a decent income for that work. Many people with an intellectual disability will also use the DSP for part of their income for most of their lives. Modelling from Impact Economics[2] shows that people with an intellectual disability will always be better off if they earn a higher income.

For each of these groups, change is needed to deliver:

- Higher incomes
- More jobs
- Changes to the DSP

So how do we do this?

2 Appendix B: Economic Modelling

Higher incomes

People with an intellectual disability who are on below minimum wages need the system to change so they receive at least a minimum wage income.

This change to the incomes of people with an intellectual disability can be delivered in a variety of ways. These include:

- More jobs for ordinary award wages
- Reform to the DSP so people keep more of what they earn
- Increase both SES Award and SWS wages to minimum wage over five years
- Provide income subsidy to bridge the gap between current income and equivalent minimum wage income
- A combination of any or all of the above

There needs to be more detailed modelling of all of these scenarios, using data and resourcing that the Australian Government has, including testing different ideas, and developing resources for individual ADEs to test the impact of a wage increase over time.

Recommendation:

- The Australian Government commit to the abolition of sub-minimum wages within 5 years
- The Australian Government commission detailed modelling of wage increases, subsidies and impacts on individual ADEs to inform business decisions.

Income subsidy

People with an intellectual disability who are working usually get the Disability Support Pension as well.

For people earning a wage under the SWS or the SES Award, they also receive the DSP. But this wage, plus the DSP does not currently add up to an income equivalent to the minimum wage.

There is a gap between the total of the DSP plus a sub-minimum wage, and the equivalent of the national minimum wage. The size of this gap varies depending on how many hours people work and how much they earn per hour.

Changing this system will take time, up to five years. People with an intellectual disability can't continue to wait for fair wages or be expected to continue to live in poverty while working.

There needs to be a subsidy introduced, paid by the Australian Government, so that people with an intellectual disability can have higher incomes and move out of poverty now. This subsidy needs to be the first step in wider employment reform.

At Public Hearing 22 of the Disability Royal Commission[3], looking at the experiences of people with disability working in ADEs, Inclusion Australia presented very preliminary modelling about a wage subsidy of $9,000. This was modelled on the lowest possible wage paid under the SWS.

Modelling was commissioned for this report from economists at Impact Economics who looked at a variety of data and information. A number of scenarios were modelled and are contained in Appendix B.

The model includes three income scenarios, taken from the Supported Employment Services Award, which are higher than the lowest wage under the Supported Wage System (SWS), but still well below the minimum wage. The model also includes up to nine cohorts, based on different incomes and hours worked. These were averaged out on a weighted basis with available data as detailed in Appendix B. The model includes all people with disability who work in ADEs and who work in other jobs under the SWS.

The overall picture the model gives is that, under all scenarios, a worker with disability is better off with an increase to their wage.

3 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings/public-hearing-22

The scenario zero, which all the other scenarios are based on, is where a worker with disability earns the minimum wage, and includes the income support they would remain eligible for.

Scenario three shows the expected subsidy per person on average is $4,650 per year, growing to $4,838, if subminimum wages remain the same (but with CPI increase), and the DSP has an increased threshold for earnings, via a Work Bank.

Scenario five (and 5B) shows the expected subsidy per person on average is $3,569 if the person gets the full DSP and Commonwealth Rent Assistance amount for the first two years, as wages increase, then tapers as per usual. The end subsidy after five years is zero.

Estimated value of additional payment/income required to bring supported worker income up to at least as much as minimum wage in open employment.

Average per supported worker

	2023-24	2023-25	2023-26	2023-27	2023-28
Scenario 1: BAU wages with standard income support taper	$5,704	$5,775	$5,847	$5,922	$6,002
Scenario 2: BAU wages with full DSP and CRA payments (i.e. no taper)	$3,569	$3,603	$3,638	$3,674	$3,711
Scenario 3: BAU wages with Work Bonus taper for DSP	$4,650	$4,694	$4,740	$4,786	$4,838
Scenario 4: Wages increase towards minimum wage with standard income support taper	$5,704	$3,834	$2,568	$1,241	$0
Scenario 5: Wages increase towards minimum wage, full DSP and CRA payments for first 2 years, then standard taper	$3,569	$1,001	$2,568	$1,241	$0
Scenario 5B: Wages increase towards minimum wage, full DSP and CRA payments for first 2 years, then Work Bonus taper	$3,569	$1,001	$647	$0	$0
Scenario 6: Wages increase towards minimum wage with Work Bonus taper for DSP	$4,650	$2,209	$647	$0	$0

Source: Impact Economics and Policy December 2022, Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

Estimated value of additional payment/income required to bring supported worker income up to at least as much as minimum wage in open employment

Total for the whole supported worker population

	2023-24	2023-25	2023-26	2023-27	2023-28
Scenario 1	$121,104,019	$122,607,329	$124,148,220	$125,727,635	$127,435,565
Scenario 2	$75,770,280	$76,500,013	$77,247,989	$78,014,665	$78,800,507
Scenario 3	$98,718,956	$99,662,639	$100,629,913	$101,621,370	$102,726,644
Scenario 4	$121,104,019	$81,407,960	$54,532,805	$26,355,523	$0
Scenario 5	$75,770,280	$21,259,356	$54,532,805	$26,355,523	$0
Scenario 5B	$75,770,280	$21,259,356	$13,731,978	$0	$0
Scenario 6	$98,718,956	$46,905,045	$13,731,978	$0	$0

Source: Impact Economics and Policy December 2022, Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

The total costs of these subsidies will depend on the model adopted but will cost between $121,104,019 and $75,770,280 per year for the first year, and between $127,435,565 and $0 in the fifth year.

See Appendix B for detail about the model and discussion.

Recommendation:

- The Australian Government introduces a wage subsidy for people earning income under both the SWS and the SES Award, to bring them up to the level of the minimum wage when combined with the DSP.
- The wage subsidy is for the five-year period of employment systems reform.
- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency (WDEA) monitors the implementation of the wage subsidy for all supported employees.
- At the end of the five-year period, there is a review of the subsidy to ensure that no workers are earning under a minimum wage equivalent income beyond this time.

DSP changes

Changes through transition

To give people with an intellectual disability the most certainty through this transition, it is worth considering a one-off, two-year freeze to the taper rate and threshold of the Disability Support Pension as wages start to rise, and other changes are implemented. This would ensure security during the first two years of the transition process.

Lifetime eligibility

People with an intellectual disability say that the Disability Support Pension is important, for the amount of money it provides, but also because of the range of supports that the pension card unlocks, including some disability and community supports. People with an intellectual disability will need many of the resources that the pension card gives for the rest of their lives, no matter what they earn.

People with an intellectual disability are likely to always work part-time, so will always have some income from the DSP. People with an intellectual disability also experience very significant health inequalities, and can die 25 to 30 years younger than other people. This means they may never be eligible for the aged pension.

Many people with an intellectual disability meet the manifest eligibility requirements for the DSP, and this should mean they have lifetime eligibility. Their intellectual disability will never change, but by providing a secure safety net, their chances to get out of poverty can change.

A lifetime eligibility would mean they would never have to reapply for the DSP again, no matter how much they earn, and instead would remain eligible, with access to the pension card, even if their income was over the current threshold of $2,243.00 per fortnight and they received no income support payments.

As more people with an intellectual disability move into employment, it is vital that the safety and security of the DSP remains, no matter what people earn.

For people who earn below minimum wages, the DSP is a significant part of their income. Changes are needed to how the DSP works to make the transition to minimum wage incomes fair.

Changes to taper rates and threshold levels

- Both the current income threshold, and taper rates, are significant barriers to work, particularly to part-time work.
- An increased threshold via a Work Bank is vital, as well as a reduction in the taper rate.
- See the Centrelink section for a wider discussion about solving other barriers people experience.

Recommendations

- People who are manifestly eligible for the DSP have lifetime eligibility, no matter how high their incomes go, including lifetime access to the pension card and other concessions.
- The Work Bank is extended to the DSP at an amount of $11,800, similar to the age and veterans pensions.[4]
- The taper rate is changed to 25c in the dollar for income over the Work Bank total.
- People on below minimum wages keep more of their DSP over the first two years of the transition, as incomes change.

More jobs

Most people with an intellectual disability are shut out of employment, and that needs to change. Right now, Australia is experiencing very low unemployment, and employers are actively looking for more workers.

Despite this, research from Anglicare Australia found that:

> "the number of people with barriers to work has barely budged. Even with a resurgence in the number of entry-level job vacancies, people with the greatest barriers to work aren't getting them. They are competing with 27 jobseekers for each one of these roles."[5]

This shows that more targeted measures are needed to ensure that people with an intellectual disability get a fair chance at getting and keeping a job.

People with an intellectual disability also deserve to have choice about what they do and where they work. To achieve this, more jobs need to be created across a wide range of sectors, along with the right support for people with an intellectual disability and employers.

There are several areas of the economy that could showcase employment for people with an intellectual disability.

These include:

- Disability service providers
- Disability Employment Service providers
- The public sector - federal, state and territory, local
- Travel
- Hospitality and catering

The Australian Government commissioned research that showed that smaller sized business were "most risk averse and likely to show poor understanding, bias and prejudice in their attitudes towards people with disability"[6].

By focusing on larger employers and the public sector, more employers will see people with an intellectual disability successfully working in the community, potentially reducing some of this bias. The research found that "large businesses are more likely to have structures and mechanisms – such as policies and resources – to promote diversity and, in theory, facilitate the employment of people with disability."[7]

4 https://www.pm.gov.au/media/giving-older-australians-option-work-and-earn-more
5 https://www.anglicare.asn.au/publications/jobs-availability-snapshot-2021/
6 https://web.archive.org/web/20200805161739/https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/07_2018/building_employer_demand_research_report.pdf
7 as above

Disability Service Providers

The NDIS has increased spending on disability services and created 270,000 jobs[8], but people with an intellectual disability have not yet received the same opportunities, including in employment.

At the same time, there is a significant workforce shortage for disability support workers across the industry.

Disability service providers, particularly large organisations who work with people with an intellectual disability, are well positioned to employ people with an intellectual disability in a wide range of jobs, including support work. They have the internal capacity and knowledge to implement evidence-based support, as well as connections with people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Recommendations:

- Disability Services Providers, in order to be registered as an NDIS provider, must set an employment target for all people with disability of 15% and within that, a target of 3% for people with an intellectual disability, to be met by 2027 and reported on via Australia's Disability Strategy outcomes framework and through the Workplace Disability Equality Agency.
- Deliver an industry pilot, co-designed and co-implemented with people with an intellectual disability, of accessible training and qualifications for people with an intellectual disability to work as disability support workers.

Disability Employment Service providers

DES providers are an important element in the proposed employment pathway for people with an intellectual disability, including as employers of people with an intellectual disability.

It is vital for DES to have access to expertise and knowledge about employment supports for people with an intellectual disability. The best way to learn these skills is on the job training by employing people with an intellectual disability.

Generalist DES would have access to the proposed Knowledge Hub and specialist DES in each state and territory, along with the resources of the Workplace Disability Equality Agency and would share this information with local employers in their region. **[See Systems, Disability Employment Services section for more about specialist DES services.]**

Recommendation:

- All DES, as a condition of their funding, set and meet an employment target for all people with disability of 15% and within that, a target of 3% for people with an intellectual disability, to be met by 2027 and reported on via Australia's Disability Strategy outcomes framework and through the Workplace Disability Equality Agency.

Public sector

All levels of government need to play a key role in opening employment to people with an intellectual disability and providing and modelling the right support.

The Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy[9] sets a target of 7% for people with disability but makes no mention of people with an intellectual disability, nor sets specific targets.

8 https://teamwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Per_Capita_Report_teamworks.pdf
9 https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/australian-public-service-disability-employment-strategy-2020-25

The NSW public service has a target of 5.6% for people with disability[10], but no target for people with an intellectual disability. Their public information about recruitment of people with disability has no information about evidence-based supports for people with an intellectual disability[11].

Local governments, particularly in regional areas, are large and diverse employers with a wide range of job types. They have offices and facilities in central areas in many regional and rural towns. They also often have some training and development roles, including formal traineeship and apprenticeship programs.

The Brotherhood of St Lawrence use a framework to explore employment of people with disability in Victorian local government and say that the following are necessary components:

- rules: to establish a supportive policy environment
- resources: to enable policy compliance
- relationships: to allow multi stakeholder collaboration[12]

Local government, working with local DES and NDIS services, are well placed to grow employment for people with an intellectual disability. Many have plans for disability inclusion that could explicitly talk about employing more people with an intellectual disability. Local government will play a particular role in regional communities to provide employment of people with an intellectual disability.

Local government peak roles could also be resourced to provide evidence-based information and resources to councils about employing people with an intellectual disability.

NSW Council for Intellectual Disability is working with local government to develop programs and practices to encourage employment of people with an intellectual disability[13].

Recommendations:

- Each level of government set a target for employment of people with an intellectual disability in their public sector disability employment strategies.
- Government departments and agencies, such as the NDIS, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Department of Social Services at the federal level, that directly work with people with disability set higher targets for employment of people with disability, including specific targets for people with an intellectual disability.
- The Australian Government provides funding to local government, starting in regional areas, to facilitate the employment of people with an intellectual disability.
- DES work with local government and NDIS providers in regional areas to facilitate employment, particularly to meet the new employment targets.
- Local government include a target for employment of people with an intellectual disability in disability action or inclusion plans.
- Local government peak bodies in each state and territory, along with the Australian Local Government Association, have a new role to provide information and resources for councils about employment of people with an intellectual disability.

10 https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/culture-and-inclusion/disability-employment
11 as above
12 https://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/11884/4/Mupanemunda_Councils_as_employers_of_choice_2020.pdf
13 Inclusion in government sector employment

Private sector

Many large private sector employers are actively looking at employing more people with disability to address workforce shortages.

The Australian Human Rights Commission IncludeAbility Network has engaged with some of Australia's largest private and public sector organisations[14] and developed specific information and resources about employing people with disability. Each of these organisations could be encouraged to set a specific target for employing people with an intellectual disability and using evidence-based support to ensure they thrive at work.

Recommendations:

- The IncludeAbility Network develop specific resources about employing people with an intellectual disability.
- People with an intellectual disability make presentations to the IncludeAbility Network of employers about the benefits of employing people with an intellectual disability.

Travel, hospitality, and catering

More people with an intellectual disability are working in the hospitality, travel and catering sectors of the economy but there is significant capacity for expansion as this sector is strongly seeking workers.

THRIVE 2030 is the main national strategy for the travel and tourism industry. The strategy identifies the need to:

> Increase workforce participation from under-participating cohorts including mature workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, youth, and women, especially in regional areas[15].

And that they will:

> Conduct pilot program to facilitate people with disability into the visitor economy workforce[16].

The Australian Government recently announced funding[17] for this pilot, which needs to include people with an intellectual disability.

In the hospitality and catering industry, there are a number of pilot programs, and structured traineeships underway, focused on the needs of people with an intellectual disability. However, it is unclear how many jobs for standard wages are the result of these trials and training.

Research from the Australian Government found that:

> "the majority (79 per cent) of Australian employers across these industries are open to hiring people with disability. While these numbers are encouraging, there is room for improvement as only 58 per cent are currently employing someone with disability."[18]

Recommendations:

- Visitor Economy pilot to include people with an intellectual disability
- Mapping and evaluation of hospitality and catering training and traineeship programs for people with an intellectual disability by the Workplace Disability Equality Agency
- Specific industry information about employment of people with an intellectual disability, including evidence-based supports and available resources.

14 https://includeability.gov.au/meet-includeability-employer-network
15 https://www.austrade.gov.au/news/publications/thrive-2030-strategy
16 as above
17 https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/9011
18 https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2018/food-service_1.pdf

Attitudes

The attitudes of families, friends, employers and community members play an important role in supporting people with an intellectual disability with their choices about employment.

Employers

There is good research about changing employer attitudes. A literature review found that:

> "approaches to changing employers' attitudes include: leadership from the top; government support to employers in the form of information, resources and recognition; credible and reliable sources of information and awareness training to share best practice; and networks for recruitment and support. Workplaces where managers had personal experience of disability or retaining people with disability were the most accommodating towards recruiting people with disability. Initiatives to change co-workers' attitudes include information and training.[19]"

Community inclusion of people with an intellectual disability, through inclusive learning, living and work, will ensure that employers see people with an intellectual disability as part of the community, and therefore, potentially part of the workforce.

So how can we facilitate this? Mainstream employment programs often don't include people with an intellectual disability, nor their specific access needs. Awareness campaigns and research about employment can emphasise that people with disability don't need workplace changes[20], which isn't accurate for people with an intellectual disability, and many other people with disability.

The Australian Government Disability Employment Strategy, Employ My Ability, lists a range of resources for employers that don't include people with an intellectual disability, such as DES.[21]

Inclusion in mainstream services, specific information and evidence-based supports are what research strongly shows as critical to improving employment outcomes for people with an intellectual disability.

To improve attitudes, each of these need to be tackled. Employers need:

- Mainstream disability employment programs to include information and support for people with an intellectual disability
- Access to specialist information and supports for people with an intellectual disability
- Information about what works to support a person with an intellectual disability in the workplace.[22]

The JobAccess program[23] needs to include access needs of people with an intellectual disability in all employment. Currently, the program only has information, that people with an intellectual disability can't access directly because it isn't in accessible formats like Easy Read, non-accessible information about accessing employment in an ADE. Information for employers is out of date, isn't specific to the support needs of people with an intellectual disability and doesn't use evidence to guide recommendations.

The JobAccess Employment Assistance Fund needs to be extended to include the supports that people with an intellectual disability need at work, including job coaching.

The Australian Network on Disability, which runs employer confidence training and accreditation, does not have specific information about supporting people with an intellectual disability at work. There is currently no information at all about people with an intellectual disability on their website.[24]

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19 (Anthony 1972; Haney & Rabin 1984; Krahé & Altwasser 2006; Wallace 2004; Waterhouse et al. 2010)
20 https://www.accenture.com/t20181108t081959z__w__/us-en/_acnmedia/pdf-89/accenture-disability-inclusion-research-report.pdf
21 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2021/final-employ-my-ability.pdf
22 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J. & Campbell, P. (2022). The Logic for Reform: Employment for People with Intellectual Disability in Australia, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.
23 https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/
24 https://www.and.org.au/?s=intellectual+disability

Both of these organisations are often where employers start when looking to hire a person with disability. There needs to be an urgent update of both organisations' information to include accurate, evidence-based and up to date material about employing people with an intellectual disability.

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency, the Knowledge Hub and specialist DES can fill a significant specialist and evidence-based information gap for employers. See the DES and Workplace Disability Equality Agency sections for more information

Recommendations:

- Accurate, evidence-based and up to date material about employing people with an intellectual disability is available on all disability employment websites that receive any public funding.

Family and friends

A large body of research demonstrates that family expectations and support are predictors of employment for people with an intellectual disability[25]. In three international studies:

> family expectations of the student with I/DD [intellectual and developmental disability] securing competitive employment upon completion of high school were significantly associated with post-secondary competitive employment[26].

Analysis from the Centre for Social Impact detailed a range of high-quality research that demonstrates how important attitudes and expectations of families are for predicting if a person with an intellectual disability will go on to employment.

> Longitudinal studies have found that high parent expectations (along with hands-on, authentic work experiences) are the key factors associated with employment two years post high school for students with intellectual and severe disability[27]. Early modelling of work roles by parents and family members are powerful ingredients for the child in shaping the vision of their future life[28]
>
> One US study reported that students with intellectual disability 'whose parents expected they would be employed upon graduation of high school are '58 times more likely to be employed up to 2 years out of high school and 50 times more likely to be employed between 2 and 4 years out of high school than youth whose parents did not expect they would be employed'[29].

So what resources and information will support families to know more about supporting a person with an intellectual disability into employment? And where are they?

The Centre for Social Impact outlines three key areas that need to change - inclusion in mainstream information, specialist information about people with an intellectual disability and evidence-based support.[30]

Mainstream information about education and transitions to work, including about work experience, must include students with an intellectual disability.

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25 Francis, G., Gross, J. M. S., Turnbull, R., & Parent-Johnson, W. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of the family employment awareness training in Kansas: A pilot study. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 38(1), 44-57. https://doi.org/10.2511/027494813807046953; Gilson, C. B., Carter, E. W., Bumble, J. L., & McMillan, E. D. (2018). Family perspectives on integrated employment for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 43(1), 20-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/1540796917751134; Nicholas, D. B., Mitchell, W., Dudley, C., Clarke, M., & Zulla, R. (2018). An ecosystem approach to employment and autism spectrum disorder. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 48(1), 264-275. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3351-6

26 Southward, J. D., & Kyzar, K. (2017). Predictors of competitive employment for students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 52(1), 26-37

27 Carter, E. W., Austin, D., & Trainor, A. A. (2012). Predictors of postschool employment outcomes for young adults with severe disabilities. Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 23(1), 50-63. https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207311414680

28 Hall, A. C., Butterworth, J., Winsor, J., Kramer, J., Nye-Lengerman, K., & Timmons, J. (2018). Building an evidence-based, holistic approach to advancing integrated employment. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 43(3), 207-218. https://doi.org/10.1177/1540796918787503

29 Papay, C. K., & Bambara, L. M. (2014). Best practices in transition to adult life for youth with intellectual disabilities. Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, 37(3), 136-148. https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143413486693

30 Appendix A: The Blueprint for employment for people with intellectual disability in Australia

Mainstream parenting information websites need to include information and support for people with an intellectual disability.

Parents, families and supporters need access to independent evidence-based information, separate from the disability support system. This material needs to be designed by people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Specific information about the range of employment options available for people with an intellectual disability, including accessing supports, is also vital.

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency, and the Knowledge Hub, will play a very important role in providing this independent, high quality, evidence-based information.

The Centre for Social Impact also identified the key role of the community, including social networks, in expanding employment options. They found that:

> In an Australian study of people with an intellectual disability, participants frequently reported that they found their current employment:
>
> > via a personal connection through family and friends. In supported employment in ADEs, people generally spoke about their family or friends finding the job for them or recommending it to them. In open employment people were more likely to comment on family or friends passing on an advertisement; making a potential connection with an employer, which they then followed up themselves; or helping them to write job applications ... Other people who helped in the search for work included teachers, career advisors, and people working in the management of ADEs[31].

Recommendations:

- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency reviews all existing material, and consolidates independent, co-designed information about how families can facilitate employment options.
- Mainstream information sources about education and employment include information for parents and families of people with an intellectual disability about a range of employment options, and where to get support.

31 Meltzer, A., Bates, S., Robinson, S., Kayess, R., Fisher, K. R., & Katz, I. (2016). What do people with intellectual disability think about their jobs and the support they receive at work? A comparative study of three employment support models: Final report. Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia. https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/Comparative_study_of_three_employment_models.pdf

Reducing complexity

People with an intellectual disability and their families engage with and rely on a wide range of government systems and structures that are complex, difficult to navigate and often conflict.

Governments acknowledge the complexity of their systems and the need to streamline processes for many parts of the community, such as business, yet there is not a focus to date on doing the same for people with an intellectual disability.

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, for example, has a 'workplan to reduce the burden of overlapping regulations'[32], listing a wide range of programs to streamline government services.

The NSW Government has a 'Government Made Easy'[33] program through Services NSW across a wide range of government services and process, reducing complexity.

Neither of these programs, or any other government, has an agenda for reducing the complexity of services, or streamlining the approaches, for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

The NDIS, DES, Centrelink, Health and more all have different criteria, different rules, complex forms, archaic reporting requirements and very little accessible information.

All of this needs to change.

This complexity is part of what leads to the system of segregation that people with an intellectual disability experience. At every turn, they are faced with a system that pushes them in one direction, in this area, because of the complexity of going any other way.

People with an intellectual disability and their families spend their lives navigating around a myriad of conflicting and confusing systems that work to create only one way forward.

The solution for this complexity should lie with government, not with people with an intellectual disability and their families. Government needs to take on this problem and find solutions that create a simple public interface for the wide range of services and supports people with an intellectual disability will engage with over their life.

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency can play a lead role in working with the Deregulation Taskforce[34] in reducing complexity and setting a proactive workplan for reform across government. This can also form part of the next round of Targeted Action Plans under Australia's Disability Strategy.

Recommendation

- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency works with the Deregulation Taskforce to develop a blueprint for reform of complexity across government to support employment for people with an intellectual disability.
- The WDEA works with the Disability Gateway to improve resources and information for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

32 https://deregulation.pmc.gov.au/priorities/streamlining-overlapping-regulations/workplan
33 https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/government-made-easy
34 https://deregulation.pmc.gov.au/about

Australian Disability Enterprises

Employment for people with an intellectual disability will look very different in five years, with the range of reforms outlined in this report in place:

- Many more people with an intellectual disability will be in employment than today.
- People with an intellectual disability will be earning an income to at least the minimum wage.
- People with an intellectual disability will have a lot more choice about the kinds of jobs they do and what work they do each day.
- People with an intellectual disability will have enough evidence-based support to do the job they want.
- People with an intellectual disability will work alongside, and for the same pay, as people without disability and people with other disability.

The role for ADEs in this new employment environment for people with an intellectual disability is up to them but continuing as they are, isn't an option.

Research from the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University found that:

"The role and activities of ADEs can be re-imagined. ADEs can offer:

a. the creation of jobs that are designed to build and maximise the capacity of employees with moderate to significant disability, and of other groups
b. opportunities to trial/gain work experience in a range of industries and work settings including among integrated workforces and/or settings and
c. clear pathways to other employment opportunities beyond the enterprise."[35]

Their examination of the WISE-Ability[36] model showed there are clear existing elements that ADEs can use as they transition towards change. The key features of this model are that:

- "ADEs can draw on a range of organisational features that have been shown to create a supportive work environment and develop pathways to open and hybrid employment.
- Many of these features are already embedded in the organisational design of advanced ADEs.
- An explicit 'pathway to open employment' can be built.
- Opportunities for hybrid employment, part time ADE and part time open employment, appear to meet the needs of some supported employees.
- NDIS funding remains a barrier to employment transitions to open or hybrid employment
- Employer knowledge of how to recruit and support employees with significant disability remains a barrier
- Ongoing supports in the workplace are needed".[37]

ADEs have an opportunity to work with people with an intellectual disability and their families to ensure that more people with an intellectual disability can be in employment at fair wages, and will the right supports, fully included in the community.

ADEs need to have a plan for how they will meet each of the five changes above that are crucial to this reform.

35 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J. & Campbell, P. (2022). The Logic for Reform: Employment for People with Intellectual Disability in Australia, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series.* Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.
36 Appendix A: Campbell, P., Wilson, E.; Crosbie, J. & Qian-Khoo, J. (2022). The WISE-Ability Model, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series.* Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.
37 as above

End segregation

Segregation, the system of separating people with an intellectual disability from other people, via laws, rules and conventions, including other people with disability, must end, including at ADEs.

Right now, it is extremely difficult for people with an intellectual disability tot get into mainstream disability employment services through Disability Employment providers, and for many, the only path to a job is to one in an ADE.

The Disability Services Act 1986 codified this segregation in law, followed by decades and layers of rules and conventions that say that people with an intellectual disability can't work in a regular job. This is not true.

In addition, the congregation of people with an intellectual disability together as a group, with no other people, also needs to end because it has led to an unresolvable tension between low wages and the sustainability of ADEs.

A new sustainable future for ADEs is only possible if they are more open and have a more balanced group of people working together in their business.

Some ADEs have already begun this process, with people with an intellectual disability working in the community, alongside other people, but this is far from the norm.

Each ADE needs to begin planning on how they will end the congregation of people with an intellectual disability in their organisation. With people with an intellectual disability, they will examine the different structures in the organisation that perpetuate the separation of people with an intellectual disability from other people.

This will include an understanding of supported decision-making practice, as well as a recognition of the power imbalances that exist inside ADEs between people with an intellectual disability and other staff.

ADEs need to implement a comprehensive inclusive practice program that examines each part of the organisation. For example, do all staff meet together, socialise together, talk about how the organisation works together, do training together? Are work documents, such as policies and procedures, accessible to all workers? Do people with an intellectual disability have a say about their work? Is there the genuine, independent support for decision making for workers with disability?

This commitment to inclusion can also come from broadening the workforce in ADEs, amending recruitment processes, and moving towards a social enterprise model, including equal wages.

The WDEA will play a key role in developing key inclusion principles for all workplaces with people with an intellectual disability, including ADEs. Adherence to these principles will become mandatory for any workplace where NDIS and DES funding is used to support people with an intellectual disability, and other people with disability.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission will also play a role in working with people with an intellectual disability to ensure there is an accessible and easy to use complaints mechanism for adherence to these inclusion principles.

Recommendation:

- The Australian Government changes the Disability Services Act, and all associated policies, to end the segregation of people with an intellectual disability.
- All ADEs develop a plan to end congregation in their facilities and improve inclusive practice.
- The WDEA develop and implement key inclusion principles, reporting mechanisms and publish results.
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission develop and implement accessible employment complaints mechanism for breaches of inclusion principles.

Employment supports

People with an intellectual disability will often need ongoing and evidence-based support for the rest of their working lives. This support can be paid for from the NDIS and from DES, but the skills needed to understand what support works, and what is evidence based, will need to be further developed as more people with an intellectual disability enter the workforce.

Also, many people with an intellectual disability who have worked in ADEs have significant expertise about employment that can be utilised by their peers.

The role of employment specialists, also called job coaches, is a critical one in how other countries have increased the number of people with an intellectual disability in the mainstream workforce.

Staff without disability who work currently in ADEs could have their existing skills and experience recognised with new qualifications as disability employment specialists that are based in the evidence about supporting people with an intellectual disability at work.

Currently, much of the expertise about supporting people with an intellectual disability at work only exists in ADEs and isn't available to the rest of the community. ADEs have the opportunity to formalise this expertise and ensure that it is available more widely.

These employment specialists, also known as job coaches, have been a key part of employment transitions internationally, and need to be also widely available outside ADEs.

Much of the current employment funding models don't support the development of this expertise or the use of this in the wider community. When this changes, ADEs may be able to use their specialist expertise to support other workplaces.

Recommendation:

- A new qualification, disability employment specialist, is created, with appropriate training and accreditation for both people with an intellectual disability and other people.
- NDIS and DES funding is amended to support the new role of disability employment specialist

Social relationships

Many people form friendships at work, and people with an intellectual disability are no exception. But in many workplaces, people with an intellectual disability are not fully included, so often don't have the opportunity to form social connections with a wide range of people through everyday inclusion, such as sharing meals, at staff meetings or work events.

This, again, is a function of segregation and congregation.

As more people with an intellectual disability move into the workforce, social supports will be vital, both with other people with an intellectual disability and with other people in the community, including other people with disability.

NDIS planning needs to recognise, and fund, specific social participation supports outside of employment, so people with an intellectual disability have a choice about where they use their supports. These supports also need to be funded individually, not as a group. People with an intellectual disability often receive NDIS supports only in group settings, including social supports.

Inclusion of people with an intellectual disability in everyday activities needs to be a priority of the whole community and supported by both mainstream and specialist funding programs.

The end of the segregation system is a key part of how people with an intellectual disability will be more included. People with an intellectual disability will use mainstream disability employment services and work more in mainstream employment, becoming more visible and included in the community.

Recommendation:

- Employment specialists (job coaches) have responsibility to support social connections and inclusive practice in the workplace.
- WDEA and the Knowledge Hub provide resources about inclusive practice in the workplace
- People with an intellectual disability receive individualised social participation support in their NDIS plans.
- Funding is delivered by Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grants to increase community participation for people with an intellectual disability.

Government contracts

All levels of government buy goods, including from employers of people with an intellectual disability.

Up until now, the price they have paid for those goods has not covered a fair income for people with an intellectual disability and this needs to change.

Many contracts that governments to buy goods and services from employers of people with an intellectual disability cover many years. But they will all end over the next five years.

When these contracts end, and it is time for government to buy those goods or services again, they need to pay more money to make sure people with an intellectual disability get a fair income.

Governments can support employers of people with an intellectual disability to pay a fair wage. The Workplace Disability Equality Agency will help to set the rules about what good employment means.

Recommendations:

- All levels of government review procurement policies and contracts and adjust to increase incomes of people with an intellectual disability over next five years.
- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency sets standards for what good employment means.
- Procurement policies need to include incentives to purchase goods and services from disability-led organisations, including small businesses

Accountability

New agency

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency (WDEA) will act as the central agency responsible for:

- Data collection
- Data reporting
- Reform coordination and measurement

In a similar fashion to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, the WDEA will require organisations over a certain size, as well as in specific industries (such as NDIS providers) to report on the numbers of people with disability, including people with an intellectual disability, in employment.

This will include reporting on:

- other diversity characteristics
- salary or wages
- nature of work
- whether full-time, part-time, or casual work is undertaken
- level of seniority and
- duration employed with the employer[38].

This reporting will include all government departments and agencies, such as the NDIA, particularly those that work with people with disability.

The coordination work will be guided by the Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS), as well as driving significant work in the first two years of operation about reforming the system for people with an intellectual disability.

The WDEA can also impose quotas on organisations that do not meet employment standards, as well as set rules for procurement that incentivises employment of people with disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability.

The WDEA will act as a central coordination agency to lead and drive the diverse, complex changes needed to ensure that more people with an intellectual disability can get and keep a job and get the support they need.

Recommendation:

- A Workplace Disability Equality Agency is established, with clear responsibilities, powers and resources to report on and hold accountable, employers about employing people with disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability.
- The WDEA act as central coordinating agency in government about employment reform

38 From DES Reference Group final recommendations

National Disability Data Asset

Early findings from the work of the National Disability Data Asset clearly show how large the gaps are in the move from school to employment for students with disability, with those with more severe disability, which includes students with an intellectual disability, much less likely to be in employment[39].

This is exactly the work that needs to be expanded and built upon to provide a clear accountability framework to measure the progress made towards improvement. If we don't know where we are, how can we see how far we have come, or how far we still have to go?

The NDDA can work to assist the Workplace Disability Equality Agency in developing a data collection and reporting framework that will monitor and report on disability employment outcomes.

Recommendation:

- The National Disability Data Asset is adequately funded to deliver comprehensive data about employment outcomes for people with an intellectual disability, including at key life transitions, and to work with the Outcome Framework of Australia's Disability Strategy and the WDEA.

Australia's Disability Strategy

The ADS does not specifically identify people with an intellectual disability, particularly in the Employment Targeted Action Plan or the Outcome Framework, despite people with an intellectual disability being among the most marginalised people with disability in Australia. This needs to change. The ADS needs to urgently develop clear and measurable outcomes about employment for people with an intellectual disability, including in the Targeted Action Plans. If there are no targets or outcomes, how can we measure progress, or not?

[See Policy Frameworks section for more information]

Recommendation:

- The ADS reviews all documents and adds targets and outcomes to measure progress in employment and incomes for people with an intellectual disability.

NDIS Employment outcomes

The significant investment in the NDIS has not resulted in increased employment or income for people with an intellectual disability.

Disability service providers who receive funding for delivering NDIS supports need to be held to account about the outcomes for those services. This includes whether they employ people with disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission could play a key role in monitoring and sanctioning disability service providers for not achieving decent outcomes through their service provision. The Commission could also utilise much more strongly the data that the NDIS collects to analyse and publicly report on the performance of disability service providers.

39 https://ndda.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/13-Infographics-Education-to-employment.pdf

Recommendation

- The NDIS and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission publicly report on how many people with an intellectual disability are employed by disability service providers, alongside the Workplace Disability Equality Agency.
- The NDIS and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission publicly on the performance and outcomes of disability service providers that run employment programs in accessible and available and timely ways. The outcomes measures should include how many people with an intellectual disability are employed, what they earn, how many hours they work and what work they perform.

DES outcomes

Disability Employment Services need much more transparent outcomes measurements for with the employment supports they provide for people with an intellectual disability. DES providers need to have recognisable measures for implementing evidence-based supports, and working with employers on job carving and matching, as well as providing quality ongoing support.

Recommendation

- There is a transparent, up to date, public reporting system for DES providers that includes outcomes and specialisation in supports for people with an intellectual disability.

SYSTEMS

Disability Employment Services

DES outlets are present across Australia, providing a comprehensive network of potential services for people with an intellectual disability and their families, if they use evidence-based supports.

Research shows that a key element of effective employment supports is access to mainstream services for people with an intellectual disability[40], such as Disability Employment Services. Fixing the problems in the current DES system so it works for people with an intellectual disability is a key element of this reform.

DES needs to deliver employment supports for people with an intellectual disability that are specific to their needs, and to the barriers they face, and use evidence about what works.

Principles

Disability Employment Services should adhere, at minimum, with the principles[41] in Australia's Disability Strategy. These are:

- Principle 1: Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- Principle 2: Non-discrimination
- Principle 3: Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- Principle 4: Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Principle 5: Equality of opportunity
- Principle 6: Accessibility
- Principle 7: Equality of people
- Principle 8: Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

The current DES Code of Practice[42] needs to be amended to comply with and include these principles.

Recommendation:

- The DES Code of Practice is amended to include the ADS principles

Working at DES

People with an intellectual disability have a great deal of expertise about the barriers they face to getting and keeping a job. All DES should be prioritising the employment of people with an intellectual disability, with the right support, and embedding their expertise in their operations.

See the More Jobs section for more detail.

Recommendation:

- DES providers employ 15% of their workforce as people with disability, with 3% as people with an intellectual disability.

40 Appendix A: The Blueprint for employment for people with an intellectual disability in Australia, CSI Swinburne University
41 https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/3106
42 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/07_2018/des_code_of_practice.pdf

Getting in the door

Currently, people with an intellectual disability who are assessed as being able to work less than 8 hours per week, or more than 8 hours per week without support, are not automatically offered DES Support. While they can technically self-refer, this very rarely happens in practice (and no information is available on how to do this) – with the effective result being they can't access DES support. This needs to change. Only 3% of those that use DES are people with an intellectual disability despite having the some of the highest barriers to employment.

Getting in the door of DES needs to be the easiest part of starting to look for a job.

All people with an intellectual disability should be eligible for DES support as soon as they are 15, and for their entire working lives.

Recommendations:

- Everyone who wants employment support is eligible and referred for DES services, no matter how many hours they want to work.
- All people with an intellectual disability who use the NDIS should be automatically referred to DES if they want to work.
- Job Capacity Assessments should be replaced by a strengths-based evaluation that focuses on what the person wants to do and the supports they need to do that.
- Specific long term, DES support needs to be funded for older people with an intellectual disability who have either never worked in mainstream employment, have had long periods out of the workforce, or who want explore other work options after working in an ADE.

Evidence-based supports

The evidence about what works to support people with an intellectual disability at work is clear but isn't reflected in the current DES system.

The evidence says that people with an intellectual disability need:

- Job discovery
- Job coaching
- On the job training/Place and train
- Job matching
- Job customisation/carving
- Ongoing support

There is a lack of independent information about what good evidence-based supports are, and how to deliver them in the DES system.

Addressing this gap is an essential part of ensuring that people with an intellectual disability and their families can access the right support. A key way to do this is to establish a Knowledge =Hub, within the Workplace Disability Equality Agency, about the best ways to support open and self-employment of people with intellectual disability, and specialist DES services in each state and territory.

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.

Specialist DES providers would:

- Be open to all people with an intellectual disability regardless of location, utilising online tools.
- Implement evidence-based practice from the Knowledge Hub's work.
- Implement training of generalist DES providers.
- People with an intellectual disability are referred to the specialist DES providers from all agencies, including Centrelink, NDIS and other employment services.

Recommendations:

- Establish a Knowledge and Practice Hub in the Workplace Disability Equality Agency,
- Establish specialist DES services in each state and territory.

Specific supports

People with an intellectual disability face specific barriers to getting and keeping a job, and DES must play a key role in addressing them. Using the decades of robust evidence, as outlined above, DES must implement and fund the kinds of supports that work.

These include:

- Flexible, ongoing support for as long as it is needed.
- Job customisation or carving with employers
- Job matching with people with an intellectual disability
- Accessible independent information for people with an intellectual disability and their families, exploring a full range of employment options
- Support for people with an intellectual disability to run their own business.

DES funding must work for people with an intellectual disability and their support needs. For example, the Moderate Intellectual Disability Payment eligibility needs to be increased to include people with a moderate intellectual disability who can work fewer than 15 hours per week, and at the same time, payment structures are put in place to ensure incentives remain for people to have work of more than 15 hours per week.

The Knowledge Hub can deliver resources to assist mainstream DES to provide great quality services. The Hub will:

- Provide best practice evidence-based information about employment for people with an intellectual disability.
- Design training and evidence-based resources for generalist DES providers.
- Capacity building for other agencies, such as NDIS, about evidence-based employment.
- Resource and support specialist DES providers.

Self-employment

Many people with an intellectual disability want to and will run their own business. DES needs to support them, and make sure those supports are the right ones.

The Knowledge Hub and Specialist DES services will develop a body of evidence, real-life examples and a peer-support program for people with an intellectual disability and their families working in their own business.

Support for decision making

DES, as a key support for people with an intellectual disability in employment, must develop a supported decision-making (SDM) approach and implement in all DES providers, based on an overarching strategy. **[See Support for decision-making section for more information.]**

The SDM supports they develop must be available and independent from DES providers, and disability service providers.

The Knowledge Hub and specialist DES providers will provide resources about supported decision-making expertise and to provide ongoing training and expertise about SDM for all generalist DES providers.

DES workforce development and retention

The DES workforce is ideally placed to develop significant expertise in supporting people with an intellectual disability into and at work. Job carving or customisation, job matching and job coaching are all key evidence-based practices that DES workers could implement.

These specialist skills could be developed alongside mandatory disability awareness and inclusion training, with specialist DES providers achieving an advanced level of competency in the needs of people with an intellectual disability.

The Knowledge Hub and specialist DES will play a vital role in filling the skills gaps in the DES workforce and provide information and training about the evidence base for people with an intellectual disability.

Staff working in DES need to have a minimum level of qualifications, including employment specialisation, as well as access to ongoing professional development in evidence-based practice, from specialist DES providers.

There also needs to be a lifting of wages to reflect the development of these skills and to retain skilled and knowledgeable staff. It takes time to build relationships with people with an intellectual disability, and with the local employers in order to successful do job customisation and ongoing support.

Recommendations:

- Qualifications and training are developed and implemented by the Knowledge Hub and overseen by the Workplace Disability Equality Agency, designed and delivered by and with people with an intellectual disability.
- DES funding increases when staff have completed obtained these qualifications to cover higher wages.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

With the right support from the NDIS, more people with an intellectual disability can choose, gain and keep a job.

The NDIS has the transformational potential to provide evidence-based, individualised, innovative employment supports, that work in harmony with other systems, to support a person with an intellectual disability to be fully included in the community.

The key barriers are:

- Lack of secure, individual, flexible, ongoing employment supports
- Assumptions about capacity to work
- Not using evidence to deliver supports
- Lack of independent information
- Lack of support for innovative employment initiatives

People with an intellectual disability and families need:

- Equal access to the same employment services as everyone else,
- Access to specific and appropriate employment supports and services that directly address the barriers they face, and
- Access to evidence-based supports and services that are proved to be effective[43].

NDIS supports fall into the second and third categories and are not intended to replace or substitute for access to mainstream services, or mainstream disability services such as Disability Employment Services (DES).

All of these supports are needed to ensure that people with an intellectual disability can get and keep a job or run their own business.

What does good support look like?

The evidence is very clear about what works to support a person with an intellectual disability into sustainable employment. This includes:

- Personalised strengths-based assessment, including in job and community settings
- Job customisation and placement
- On the job training
- Ongoing support

Currently, job customisation, and personalised support, is very difficult to find outside of ADEs. The specialist knowledge about delivering this support is also often only found in ADEs. How can the NDIS facilitate an expansion of these supports to be used in employment across the community, and in a wide range of employment options, and for more people with an intellectual disability in a variety of jobs?

43 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J. & Campbell, P. (2022). The Logic for Reform: Employment for People with Intellectual Disability in Australia, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Secure, individualised, flexible and ongoing supports

NDIS employment supports need to be secure, individualised, flexible, easy to access and ongoing for people with an intellectual disability.

Starting from the first plan, all people with an intellectual disability over working age must have employment goals, and employment supports appropriate to their situation, included in their plan for the rest of their working life.

- For a person with an intellectual disability at school, this will include supports for work experience (in particular to support the mandatory one-week work experience at Year 10) and paid after-school employment.
- For a person with intellectual disability leaving school, this will include evidence-based traineeship and support programs (including some SLES), with clear transition to work outcomes.
- For people with an intellectual disability post-school, this will include ongoing support for employment in all plans for the rest of their working life for people not receiving this through a DES provider.

Most people with an intellectual disability will need support for work for the rest of their working lives. These support needs may fluctuate but need to be available forever. Currently, if a person with an intellectual disability does not use all their employment supports in a particular year, they can lose these supports, and then may lose their jobs if they need more support. Also, if a person with an intellectual disability is deemed to have 'increased capacity' because of the employment supports they receive, often these supports are then withdrawn, leading to a loss of employment.

Research shows that 'individual capacity is bolstered by supports and when this is rapidly removed, individual progress is undermined.'[44] Having secure supports is essential for people with an intellectual disability and their families to explore and sustain employment.

The current yearly planning cycle does not encourage this kind of secure, long-term support for employment. Research has found that this cycle, with reduced supports for increased capacity, can mean a 'marginalisation from both open employment and ADE settings. For many, the risks associated with attempting open employment is a disincentive to try.'[45]

NDIS supports must be flexible and responsive enough to meet people with an intellectual disability and their families where they are, and to respond to fluctuating support needs. As more people with an intellectual disability experience employment, there will be an increased need for this flexibility, including moving between different kinds of employment. The NDIS also needs to invest in employment specialisation about the supports needed for people with an intellectual disability.

Recommendations:

- All people with an intellectual disability of working age have employment goals and funded supports in their plans for the rest of their working life.
- Accessible, independent information is available for people with an intellectual disability and families about using employment supports. [See Information section]
- NDIS guidelines and training for planners reflect the importance of lifetime, ongoing, secure employment supports, including when employment capacity increases.
- Introduction of NDIS funding for evidence-based supports, such as employment specialist supports in job coaching, carving and self-employment.

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44 Appendix A: Campbell, P., Wilson, E.; Crosbie, J. & Qian-Khoo, J. (2022). The WISE-Ability Model, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series.* Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

45 as above

Work readiness program

The current School Leavers Employment Support (SLES) program is under review by the NDIS and should be replaced by a broad up to three year work readiness program that is based on evidence and open to any person with an intellectual disability that is looking for work.

A work readiness program must adhere to the following principles:

- Use evidence-based supports
- Be free of conflicts of interest
- Have an expectation of a paid employment outcome
- Be measurable and accountable
- Look long term

The evidence base is very clear about what works for people with an intellectual disability, particularly in the transition to work. Research from the CSI found that current programs, like the SLES does not get the same outcomes as those with evidence-based supports nor uses evidence about transition planning and practice[46]. The researchers believe that "re-modelling SLES to replicate evidence-based elements of employment support for people with intellectual disability would improve its outcomes and suitability."[47]

An up to three-year, work traineeship program needs to be introduced, using evidence to guide the curriculum and with access to formal vocational training.

People with an intellectual disability who go into this program would receive a traineeship wage that is increased the longer they are in the program, with a maximum time of three years to be spent in this program.

Current mainstream traineeships require the completion of a certificate level of qualification. This should also apply to this work traineeship program. People with an intellectual disability can and do complete vocational training, and this will significantly boost their chances of gaining employment.

The Centre for Social Impact found that "73.7% of students with disability who graduated from Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs in 2018 were employed or continued to further study. 45.5% of graduates from VET in 2018 who had a disability improved their employment status as a result of their VET studies. This includes getting a job when they previously did not have one, or getting a job benefit such as being promoted to a higher skill level job."[48]

They also found that "The retraining of learned skills and abilities for people with intellectual disability can be done though a VET Program" and "The confidence of people with intellectual disability can be increased by undertaking VET and employment."[49]

During the program, everyone will complete some general elements, then, depending on their preference, move into the area of employment interest. There will be specific streams for business development, small business support, public sector, working in business and industry specific training.

The full details of this kind of program need to be further explored, particularly the safeguards against exploitation, as exist for other traineeship programs.

People with an intellectual disability who undertake this work readiness traineeship will earn a reduced trainee wage while doing the three-year program, similar to other traineeships. This will be for only the period of the program, and will increase each year, as does other traineeship wages.

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46 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Crosbie, J.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 3: School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) – Reshaping the Approach, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.
47 as above
48 https://www.everyonecanwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Fostering-employment-for-people-with-intellectual-disability-Accessible.pdf
49 as above

People with an intellectual disability will only be able to do the traineeship once in their lifetime, and the programs must both lead to formal qualifications and to paid employment at least the minimum wage.

Students with an intellectual disability may begin this traineeship at school, in a similar way to other school-based VET programs.

Recommendations:

- An up-to-three year work readiness traineeship program, that is evidence based and leads to qualifications and employment, is developed and established for people with an intellectual disability.

Support for innovation

People with an intellectual disability and their families are innovative problem solvers, used to a world that often isn't designed for them. The NDIS needs to support this desire for innovation and allow for experimentation to find the right kind of employment supports.

The Information Linkages and Capacity Building program funded some short-term innovative programs and projects, but there has been no investment in sustaining the ones with good employment outcomes.

Research has found that ILC funded projects focused filling the gaps left by other mainstream employment support programs that largely excluded people with disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability. They found that 'it is problematic that gaps are only filled by precariously funded services that are not funded to scale and hence have limited geographic coverage.'[50]

The kinds of innovative programs that were funded by the ILC program need long term, secure funding to expand, evaluate and deliver robust, evidence-based supports for people with an intellectual disability and their families. The WDEA and the Knowledge Hub could ensure that successful programs that were delivered via the ILC program were widely known and understood.

NDIS funding for employment supports also needs to be much more flexible, with a wider definition of 'reasonable and necessary' when it comes to employment. For example, for a person with an intellectual disability who needs transport support, there needs to be funding for a wide range of options to secure their ongoing employment, depending on where they live, how often they work, the available supports in the area, mainstream services and much more. Another example is support to set up and sustain a micro-business.

In the long term, more people with an intellectual disability and their families in sustainable, long-term employment, supported by the NDIS, is what the Scheme was built for and needs to provide.

50 Appendix A: Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series.* Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Centrelink and Services Australia

People with an intellectual disability say that Centrelink and Services Australia make it hard to get and keep a job. That needs to change.

Complexity

Centrelink has many rules and processes that are complex and difficult to understand and access.

Reducing this complexity and making the system more accessible needs to be a significant priority for Services Australia and Centrelink, starting with their protocol for engaging with people with disability.[51]

The protocols make no mention of people with an intellectual disability, or their access and support needs. Easy Read, for example, is not mentioned in the accessible information section.

There is also no mention of the complexity of the system, and the role of Centrelink in reducing that for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

When a person with an intellectual disability starts working, and receive the Disability Support Pension, they may need to report each fortnight what they earn.

This is a complicated and difficult process, that can fall on families to complete, and if it isn't done correctly, people with an intellectual disability can receive a debt.

When people with an intellectual disability work in an ADE, often this reporting process is done by the employer. This removes a barrier to work but isn't available for other kinds of employment.

Reporting obligations need to be fairer, more accessible, easier and encourage rather than discourage people to work.

This includes for people who are working in their own business, such as a micro-business. Currently reporting requirements, to both Centrelink and the Australian Tax Office (ATO), are overly complex for the very low or no incomes being produced.

There needs to be provision for an easing of reporting requirements while people are earning below the income tax threshold to the ATO, and under the Work Bank increased threshold for the DSP.

The ATO also needs to provide more information and support to people with an intellectual disability and families about the tax reporting requirements and implications for micro-businesses which fall between a hobby and a business.

The Department of Social Services also need to work with the ATO to ensure that all reporting is accessible for people with an intellectual disability via accessible apps and Easy Read online material.

Single-touch payroll reforms, currently being rolled out by the ATO, are expected to have 95% of employers in the system by July 2023. Plans are underway to pre-fill income into DSP reporting forms, as well as existing work to ensure employer name and ABN are automatically included[52]. This work needs to continue, alongside accessible forms of disputing information when employers do not enter the right information.

51 ttps://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/protocol-for-engaging-people-with-disability?context=1
52 Information from Department of Social Services Payment Simplification team

Disability Employment Services (DES) could assist with this reporting requirement for people with an intellectual disability. In addition, for people earning under a proposed Work Bank amount, it is worth considering if reporting is required at all.

Recommendations:

- Services Australia's protocol to engage with people with disability is revised to include engaging with people with an intellectual disability.
- DSS continue work on single use payroll and payment reporting simplification, with particularly attention to the needs of people with an intellectual disability, including the need to report at all.
- DSS develop accessible ways for people with an intellectual disability to report necessary information to Centrelink
- DES services report income to Centrelink for people with an intellectual disability.
- ATO and DSS develop simplified reporting protocol for people with an intellectual disability with own business that earns net income under income tax threshold.

Assessments

People with an intellectual disability face a range of assessments all through their working lives – there is assessment to access the Disability Support Pension, NDIS supports, assessment to measure their work capacity, assessment for ongoing support, and many more. At each stage, these assessments can be a barrier to getting and keeping a job, and their purpose is unclear.

People with an intellectual disability communicate in many different ways. Many people can only be understood by people who know them well. Real communication with people with an intellectual disability takes time, understanding and expertise. The Centrelink impairment table assessment process and the Job Capacity Assessments don't take into account people who don't use speech to communicate or people from different cultural backgrounds, and there is no opportunity to spend time to get to know the person.

People may also be anxious or fearful of the assessments and of 'failing' them. Assessors also don't understand that acquiescence[53] is common; that is, many people with an intellectual disability will tend to go along with what is asked or suggested or say what they think the person wants to hear.

Job Capacity Assessments testing, before a person with an intellectual disability has been in the workplace and received any training, is likely to give an inaccurate result that excludes them from employment assistance. The research shows that reversing these steps, on the job training and placement, then testing, results in higher rates of open employment.[54]

Currently, if a person with intellectual disability is assessed, through a Job Capacity Assessment, as being able to work less than eight hours per week, they are not automatically eligible for DES supports. The only pathway in is a complicated and unsupported self-referral process, for which there is little accessible information.

Assessments should be replaced by a strengths-based evaluation that focuses on what the person wants to do and the supports they need to do that.

Recommendations:

Job Capacity Assessments should be replaced by a strengths-based evaluation that focuses on what the person wants to do and the supports they need to do that.

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53 The Speak Out resource, Communication – it's not a spectator sport describes acquiescence as follows: "Many people with an intellectual disability say 'yes' to questions or accept and agree with things, regardless of what has been asked, and often without really wanting to. This is called acquiescence. People with an intellectual disability often mask their communication difficulties to avoid the stigma of being labelled as having a disability. It is very common for people to adopt a passive communication style, allowing the more powerful person to control the conversation."

54 Nisbet, J. & Cllahan, M. (1987). Assisting Persons with Severe Disabilities to Achieve Success in Integrated Workplaces: Critical Elements. In Taylor, S, Bilken, D, & Knoll, J (Eds). Community Integration for People with Severe Disabilities. New York: Teachers College Press.

Digital services

All digital services for Centrelink and Services Australia need to be more accessible for people with an intellectual disability.

There needs to be urgent attention to how the increasing digitisation of government services will impact on people with an intellectual disability, and what the exemptions from a digital-first process will be, and the referral pathway to face-to-face services. There also needs to be significant capacity building measures, such as increasing digital literacy and support, as well as safeguards against being breached if people with an intellectual disability do not have support to engage as required.

The current Digital Government Strategy[55] makes no mention of people with disability, nor has any prioritisation about ensuring that services are accessible for people with an intellectual disability, including people with a borderline intellectual disability.

Recommendations:

- Disability Employment Services prioritise face to face engagement with people with an intellectual disability over digital services
- The Digital Transformation Agency develop an inclusive digital strategy and resources for people with an intellectual disability to engage digitally with government, including leading work with states and territories.
- There need to be mechanisms in all online systems to identify people with an intellectual disability and ensure they can access face to face services. This needs to be designed into frameworks and algorithms from the beginning of development as part of accessibility measures.

Disability Support Pension

See Higher Wages section

55 https://www.dta.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/Digital%20Government%20Strategy_web-ready_FA.pdf

Information

People with an intellectual disability and their families need access to accessible, independent, evidence-based information in a variety of settings, about employment.

This information needs to be in addition to mainstream and disability-specific information, often provided by government or disability service providers.

People with an intellectual disability and families have a great deal of expertise and knowledge about what works, how to use disability supports for employment and accessible formats.

In addition, there are a wide range of existing resources, developed through the NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity program and in disability advocacy organisations, that could be brought together in a single place and kept up to date.

Research into the ILC program found that "The consistently unreliable and outdated nature of online information about services demonstrates that the process of finding supports doesn't only require the means to locate the relevant information, but also additional time and effort to confirm whether the service is indeed available."[56]

Another review of the ILC program showed that there was a need for independent information[57] and again highlighted the issue with short term and poor targeting of information funding.

The ILC round that focused on information provision[58] did not fund a single project focused on employment for people with an intellectual disability, despite the stated strategies and goals of the NDIS and the Australian Government.

People with an intellectual disability and their families have also talked about how valuable it is to hear from other people with an intellectual disability and families about what has worked, and how to use evidence-based support.

There is an urgent need for adequate, secure funding to establish independent information for people with an intellectual disability and families through this reform, building on existing resources.

Recommendations:

- Inclusion Australia is funded to operate a peer support information and advice service through the next five years of significant reform, with option to renew for longer.
- Inclusion Australia is funded to update and maintain a library of online information and resources over the next five years, with option to renew for longer.

General employment information

The Centre for Social Impact found that research clearly shows that people with an intellectual disability and families need access to both mainstream services and specialist and evidence-based supports.

This translates that mainstream disability employment services need to include the needs of people with an intellectual disability, as well as having information about how to ensure their support needs are met. People with an intellectual disability need to be both included in mainstream services and have access to specialist supports.

Mainstream employment information needs to include people with an intellectual disability in variety of jobs, and with links to specialist supports. Currently, they often continue to assume that people with an intellectual disability are not workers.

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56 https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/4328508/FINAL-TIER-2-REPORT-ISBN.pdf
57 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/04_2022/summary_of_results_pdf.pdf
58 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2020/ndia-website-nip-successful-grant-recipients.pdf

Workforce Australia[59], the main Australian Government portal about employment, has no specific information about or for people with an intellectual disability. There is no information in Easy Read formats, and people with an intellectual disability aren't included as potential or actual workers.

Other mainstream disability employment support services also do not include information for or about employing people with an intellectual disability. Information is not available in Easy Read or other accessible formats, because there is an assumption that people with an intellectual disability will not be using their website or resources.

The JobAccess program[60] needs to include access needs of people with an intellectual disability in all employment. Currently, the program only has non-accessible information about accessing employment in an ADE. Information is out of date, isn't in accessible formats, isn't specific to the support needs of people with an intellectual disability and doesn't use evidence to guide recommendations. This information isn't available about how to use JobAccess services at jobs other than ADEs, including how to get the supports people with an intellectual disability need at work.

The Australian Network on Disability, which runs employer confidence training and accreditation, does not have specific information about supporting people with an intellectual disability at work. There is currently no information at all about people with an intellectual disability on their website.[61]

The Disability Gateway[62], funded to provide information for and about people with disability, has no information for or about the employment support needs of people with an intellectual disability, or to assist families with the complexity of the support system.

Recommendation:

- All mainstream employment and disability employment information includes material for and about employment for people with an intellectual disability.
- All mainstream employment and disability employment information develops accessible and evidence-based information for employers about supports for people with an intellectual disability at work.

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency will play a key role in providing high quality, independent, evidence-based information about employment and employment supports for people with an intellectual disability, their families, employers and others.

There is also a key role for disability-led organisations, through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building program of the NDIS, to continue successful information projects about employment, designed by and for people with an intellectual disability.

Recommendations:

- The WDEA develop high quality, independent, evidence-based information about employment and employment supports
- Disability-led organisations are funded to continue successful information projects about employment

59 https://www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/
60 https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/
61 https://www.and.org.au/?s=intellectual+disability
62 https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/

Disability Employment Services

Currently, there is no mechanism to determine whether a DES has experience with finding work for people with an intellectual disability, or how much success the DES has had in securing long-term, open employment at award wages. Transparency in this process would include reporting on outcomes individual DES providers have achieved, such as, the number of jobs at award wages for people, the length of time people kept their jobs, the type of disability and the industries the DES specialises in and how they go about or manage the matching process.

The Australian Government has announced a pilot to allow people with disability to rate DES providers[63]. Any rating system will need to include measures to assess outcomes for people with an intellectual disability.

As part of the current DES reform, it's essential that outcomes data is regularly published for each service, that includes individualised data about how long people with an intellectual disability are staying at in employment, their average wage, and what supports they are being offered.

There needs to be measurement of the employment of people with an intellectual disability, and reporting on statistics in the outcomes of Australia's Disability Strategy and the Employment Targeted Action plan, such as including people with an intellectual disability in disaggregated data as part of the new national Post-School Destinations Survey (PSDS).

There also needs to be information about navigating DES that is independent of the system, and co-designed with people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Recommendations:

- Disaggregated outcomes data about employment outcomes for people with an intellectual disability to be included in the ADS outcomes framework reporting
- DES star ratings to include measurements for people with an intellectual disability
- Independent Commission be established to monitor complaints and problems with DES
- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency produces independent information about navigating and accessing DES for people with an intellectual disability
- Specialist DES in each state and territory provide evidence-based information for people with an intellectual disability, their families, and generalist DES providers

63 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-25/disability-employment-service-changes-rate-job-providers/101690348

NDIS

There needs to be access to independent information about using employment supports for people with an intellectual disability and their families, as well as for planners and Local Area Coordinators. This information needs to emphasise evidence-based supports, point to a variety of employment options, and give consistent information about an included life.

There are a range of high-quality supports, programs, and research available, but it is fragmented and difficult to navigate. There are also a range of disability support providers that provide a wide range of services with a wide range of outcomes. How do people with an intellectual disability and their families find their way through this maze, and know what is credible information?

Consumers in a range of markets need access to independent information, reviews and resources to make important decisions, and people with an intellectual disability and their families are no different.

This includes information about all the different employment options, relevant to different stages of a person with an intellectual disability's life and experience. For example, information for older people with an intellectual disability about supports to enter employment for the first time or for person with an intellectual disability who wants to start a business or career advice for a person who wants to change jobs.

This information does not always need to come from disability specific organisations, although that is also important. Mainstream services, such as state and territory government small business support, need to be accessible and available for people with an intellectual disability and their families, including understanding how to utilise NDIS supports.

Independent information about NDIS employment supports needs to come from:

- Disability-led organisations that are not service providers, with a focus on peer expertise and individual advice
- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency, with a focus on evidence-based supports
- Specialist DES services
- State and territory departments and agencies with a focus on disability specific employment and business advice

Recommendations:

- Funding is provided to disability-led organisations to provide independent information about employment supports.
- Specialist DES services established
- WDEA is established
- State and territory delivery of accessible and appropriate information added to ADS Targeted Employment Action Plan, with timeframes for deliver by end 2024.

Support for decision making

People with an intellectual disability, like everyone else, have the right to make decisions about their own lives, and the right to support in making decisions if they wish. This is covered by Articles 3, 4 and 12 of the UN CPRD. Many people with an intellectual disability will use supported decision-making (SDM) across some or all aspects of their lives. Every organisation, agency and government department that works with people with an intellectual disability must understand SDM and ensure they embed a supported decision-making framework across their work.

In particular, the NDIA, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health, Services Australia, and the organisations they fund, need to invest in developing and rolling out a supported decision-making approach in all aspects of their work, within an overall framework.

This is vital to ensure that people with an intellectual disability have real choice about employment, opportunities to explore career options and a genuine say about their lives.

There is very good evidence and guidance about what support for decision-making is, the legal and regulatory environments needed, and how to implement this for people with an intellectual disability, including existing work from the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC)[64].

Supported decision making strategy

The Department of Social Services Australia's Disability Strategy branch needs to develop an overarching supported decision-making framework and implementation strategy for use across government with key principles based on the ALRC 2014 report[65].

This framework will be in line with Australia's Disability Strategy and apply to all policies and programs for people who need support for decision-making.

The Workplace Disability Equality Agency (WDEA) then needs to develop specific employment related supported decision-making information and resources to be used in a variety of settings. WDEA can be responsible for supporting and monitoring how this is implemented in employment settings and report on that with other employment reporting.

This will ensure that there is consistency and capacity building across government about how to implement supported decision making in practice. The WDEA will also have a key role in developing and sharing high quality, evidence-based resources about supported decision-making, particularly for use in employment, based on the overarching strategy. These resources will be used by employers, families and friends, as well as government departments and agencies to work with people with an intellectual disability in a respectful and accessible way.

The Knowledge Hub at WDEA also needs to ensure that there is information and resources available to build capacity across government around the diverse ways that people with an intellectual disability communicate about their will, preference and rights. Support for communication is an essential part of the decision-making process.

Recommendation:

- DSS develop an overarching supported decision-making framework for use across all government policies and programs by end 2023.
- WDEA develop specific employment supported decision making information and resources.
- WDEA monitor the implementation of supported decision making and report on that with other employment reporting.

64 https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/equality-capacity-and-disability-in-commonwealth-laws-alrc-report-124/2-conceptual-landscape-the-context-for-reform-2/supported-and-substitute-decision-making/

65 as above

Higher incomes

The goal of this reform is for more people with an intellectual disability to be in employment and earning a higher income. For many people, this will be the first time in their lives that they have had money to spend and to save. There needs to be support for decision making put in place, along with resources, to support people with an intellectual disability to make their own choices with their earnings.

Peer education, alongside a significant lift in supported decision-making capacity across governments and organisations, will be vital to support people with a new increase in income.

Recommendations

- WDEA's Knowledge Hub produces information about support for decision making for financial decisions.
- Organisations of people with an intellectual disability develop peer resources to support decision making and increase understanding and capacity about financial issues and decisions.

More jobs

The key sectors and industries that are being targeting for employment of people with an intellectual disability will need information and capacity building in supported decision making.

The WDEA and Knowledge Hub will play a key role in developing information and delivering accessible training about supported decision-making.

Support for job conversations

Many people with an intellectual disability will need support to talk about, and make decisions about, many aspects of finding a job, choosing a job and moving between jobs, including knowing what is possible, what they want to do, how to get there, and what they should expect.

This function will sit both in NDIS and DES, with other services such as JobAccess potentially playing a key role in job customisation, coaching and how to ensure that support for decision making is fundamental to how that is implemented. **See the DES and NDIS sections for more detail.**

Systems

NDIS and Quality and Safeguards Commission

The NDIS and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission play an important role in the employment supports of people with an intellectual disability, particularly in their choices around key life stages. Embedding a supported decision-making approach will ensure that the will, preference and rights of people with an intellectual disability is paramount.

The NDIS is developing a supported decision-making framework and implementation plan for use across the Agency, and Partners in the Community.

Inclusion Australia, and other disability advocacy organisations, have provided comprehensive reports to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and we strongly urge them to take up the reforms that people with disability have asked for, including the adoption of the ALRC principles.

In particular, support for decision making for people with disability must be independent from service providers and other NDIS roles, such as support coordinators, plan managers, and Local Area Coordinators, but each of these roles need to understand and use the principles of SDM in their work.

The NDIS can provide resources to planners about how to ensure people with an intellectual disability who need support for decision making have that funding in their plans, along with enough resources for building people's capacity and experience in decision making over time.

The work that the NDIS is doing on its framework already can feed directly into the proposed work of DSS and WDEA and can inform the development of their overarching SDM framework and resources.

Specifically about employment, the NDIS needs to include support for decision making for at least the following:

- Employment goals and supports in plans
- Work experience and first paid after school job
- School transition to work
- First adult job
- Changes in jobs
- Career conversations
- How to make choices, what options are there

People with an intellectual disability need to be supported through each of these decisions, with time and resources to genuinely have a choice about what they want to do for work.

The Commission also needs to invest in training models specifically about supported decision making, developed by and with people with an intellectual disability and people with complex communication needs. The Commission must oversee the use of these training materials across registered and unregistered providers to build a shared understanding of what supported decision making is, and how to embed it in everyday practice, including in specific employment settings.

Recommendations:

- The NDIA adopts a supported decision-making approach across all aspects of the Scheme and implements robust monitoring and evaluation to observe its uptake, in collaboration with WDEA.
- The NDIA develops specific resources for supported decision-making in employment.
- The NDIA adopts the recommendations outlined in Inclusion Australia's support for decision making submission.
- Independent support for decision making is made available for all people with an intellectual disability using the NDIS.
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission mandates the use of supported decision making in their Code of Conduct, and provides specific disability-led training material.

ADEs

ADEs need to utilise the supported decision-making resources from WDEA and implement in all of their practices, particularly as people with an intellectual disability move out of ADEs into other employment.

Employment specialists, the new role created as part of this reform, will receive significant training in supported decision-making practise as part of their qualifications.

Recommendation:

- WDEA and the Knowledge Hub develop specific information about implementing supported decision making.

Disability Employment Services

In addition to the overarching framework and implementation strategy developed by DSS and WDEA, all DES providers must ensure that people with an intellectual disability have genuine choices and a say in where they get their supports, as well as what work they want to do through providing support for decision-making.

This reform will lead to more people with an intellectual disability using DES services, so there needs to be investment in the capacity of DES providers and staff to understand and know how to utilise SDM.

Recommendations

- DES implement supported decision-making practices in all providers, within the DSS and WDEA framework and approach.
- Decision supporters must be available and independent from DES providers, and ADE or day program providers.
- The WDEA Knowledge Hub and specialist DES providers to include requirements for supported decision-making expertise and to provide ongoing training and expertise about SDM for all generalist DES providers.

Services Australia

Services Australia, including Centrelink, needs to have their own specific supported decision-making implementation, rolled out to all staff across Australia.

As people with an intellectual disability move into employment, they will have more interaction with Centrelink in particular, and there needs to be significant capacity building of staff and processes to ensure that people with an intellectual disability are making genuine choices.

Recommendations

- Services Australia implement supported decision-making practices across its workforce, within the DSS and WDEA framework and approach.

PATHWAYS TO WORK

Having a business

People with an intellectual disability who have a business, or wish to start one, need access to mainstream programs of support, just like everyone else, as well as the specific supports they need.

Research into entrepreneurs with disability, including people with an intellectual disability, found that few 'have drawn on existing, mainstream entrepreneurship start-up or business accelerator programs to assist them in setting up their own business. We have identified an important gap in the space of disability entrepreneurship start-up programs.'[66]

People with disability have described a range of barriers to accessing mainstream business and entrepreneur programs. These include 'transport, built environment and information communication technology, together with negative attitudes towards disability.'[67]

There have been a number of micro-enterprise and self-employment projects funded via the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building funding. Now, what is needed is ongoing, clear pathways to develop and maintain self-employment for people with an intellectual disability.

Mainstream supports

There are a wide range of government and private sector support and information for self-employment and small business, but very little, if any, of that is accessible or appropriate for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

There needs to be a systematic review of all government material about business, particularly self-employment, to ensure that it includes the general and specific needs of people with an intellectual disability. This includes:

- Links to relevant specialist supports
- Evidence based support
- Practical information about accessible business practice
- Showcasing innovation

Australia's Disability Strategy[68] is clear on the need for all levels of government to include people with disability, and to ensure their services are accessible and appropriate.

Programs, such as the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme[69], available for people wanting to start a business or to support existing micro-business, is not accessible or available for people with an intellectual disability. There needs to be support for a person with an intellectual disability to access the NEIS program, including through the new work readiness traineeship program.

Recommendations:

- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency leads a review of all mainstream government information about business, including self-employment, and makes recommendations for including the needs of people with an intellectual disability, and other people with disability.
- The Workplace Disability Equality Agency review all existing and previous disability business, entrepreneurship and self-employment programs, and publish findings.
- The next revision of the ADS Employment Targeted Action Plan contains specific actions by all levels of government to support self-employment, including reducing barriers such as transport and the built environment.

66 Creating my own job: Australian experiences of people with disability with microenterprises, self-employment and entrepreneurship, Simon Darcy, Jock Collins, and Megan Stronach, Research handbook on disability and entrepreneurship, forthcoming, supplied by author.
67 Entrepreneurs with disability: Australian insights through a social ecology lens, Simon Darcy, Jock Collins, and Megan Stronach, 2022
68 https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/1786-australias-disability.pdf
69 https://www.dewr.gov.au/new-business-assistance-neis

Mainstream disability supports

The mainstream disability employment support system needs to significantly improve the support for business, including self-employment for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Disability Employment Services

DES does little to support self-employment of people with an intellectual disability, and it is often unclear what is DES and what is NDIS funded, in terms of employment supports, particularly for self-employment. Running their own business is an opportunity for people with an intellectual disability to learn on the job, which is an evidence-based strategy for work readiness in a variety of settings.

The current DES reform process is an opportunity to develop and support people with an intellectual disability who want to run their own business, as well as the specialist skills to support them.

The Knowledge Hub, based in the Workplace Disability Equality Agency, along with specialist DES providers in each state and territory could deliver evidence-based information about:

- navigating mainstream supports
- navigating specialist supports
- real-life examples
- connecting with successful business incubation programs, funded through NDIS ILC program.

Recommendations:

- Specialist DES providers, with the WDEA Knowledge Hub, to develop a body of evidence, real-life examples and a peer-support program for people with an intellectual disability and their families working in self-employment.
- Specialist DES providers, with the WDEA Knowledge Hub, provide resources and information to generalist DES providers about how to support people with an intellectual disability and families to develop self-employment.
- NDIA and DES to work together to streamline process and reduce complexity for people with an intellectual disability and families to explore, develop and sustain self-employment.

Specific supports to break down barriers

NDIS

Research from CSI found that 'self-employment was the type of employment where NDIS participants felt least support in getting the supports needed on the job'[70] and that there needed to be more understanding of the supports required.

The NDIS needs to lay out a clear path to self-employment, and how to use NDIS supports to get there, that uses and funds evidence-based supports. The NDIA needs also to provide clear, public guidance to planners, LACs, support coordinators and plan managers about how people with an intellectual disability can use their employment supports to run a business.

These employment supports also need to be flexible and to respond to the needs of the person with an intellectual disability.

Recommendations:

- NDIS develop guidelines for people with an intellectual disability about how to use employment supports for self-employment.
- NDIS develop clear, public guidance for planners, LACs, support coordinators and plan managers about how people with an intellectual disability can use their employment supports for self-employment.
- NDIS create a new flexible employment support type specifically for use in self-employment.

The NDIS also needs provide long term funding of successful Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) projects about self-employment for people with an intellectual disability.

The Community Living Project was funded through the NDIS to deliver a project about micro-enterprises[71]. They used a consultant to work with each person with disability for up to six months, to understand their interests and capacities, how many hours they wanted to work and what they wanted to do. The person used their NDIS supports to have a personal assistant for their business, and they also had a circle of support from community members.

A wide variety of micro-enterprises have been established, however it's not clear what the long-term viability of the support used for them will be with the project funding ends.[72]

The Valued Lives project provides a list of current microenterprises[73] and resources for people with an intellectual disability and their families.

These are just two of the projects, mapped by CSI[74], that specifically address the barriers that people with an intellectual disability experience when starting or sustaining self-employment.

However, without permanent and secure resources about self-employment, the knowledge generated by these projects will not be widely known, utilised and remembered.

Recommendation:

- The NDIS, through Tier 2/ILC, funds long term secure projects with good outcomes for self-employment for people with an intellectual disability, based on projects with previous ILC funding.

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70 Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.
71 https://communitylivingproject.org.au/starting-a-business-as-a-disabled-person/
72 https://communitylivingproject.org.au/category/microenterpriseproject+articles/
73 https://microenterprises.valuedlives.org.au/national-micro-enterprise-directory/
74 Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Getting to work

Transport to and from work is a vital component in finding and keeping a job, but there are gaps in services and supports for people with an intellectual disability.

Accessible services

Many people with an intellectual disability rely on public transport to get to and from work. There are ways to make public transport more accessible for people with an intellectual disability. These include:

- Clearer, more consistent signage and information
- Staff training to support people with an intellectual disability
- Accessible maps and timetables, including in Easy Read
- Accessible and available information and guidance for timetable changes and interruptions
- Promotion of free transport cards for people who can travel independently, but find it hard to navigate the payment systems
- Access to support to use public transport through NDIS plans

Recommendation:

- State and territory transport systems work with people with an intellectual disability and their families to make public transport more accessible
- The next stage of the reform[75] to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 needs to include the access needs of people with an intellectual disability.

DES

When DES providers find a job for people with an intellectual disability, they need to ensure they are linked with support to travel to and from that job. This may include assisting with NDIS plans, but also may require flexible funding, particularly when starting a new job. DES providers could deliver:

Capacity building to use public transport, including for the first time, when public transport methods and routes change, and as needed.

Support to travel via public transport and to manage administrative barriers to access travel support in the NDIS (for public transport, including taxis and community transport.)

Flexible, individualised transport options, linking to mainstream and innovative local options.

Recommendations:

- DES have a flexible fund for transport options, including mainstream.

75 https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/transport-accessibility/stage-2-reforms

NDIS

Transport to and from work is a key facilitator of employment. At a day-to-day level, being able to manage small changes is critical. These might include temporary public transport changes (e.g. buses replacing trains) where either an short-term alternate plan is needed, or additional travel training support is needed, or bigger issues such as moving house, or local infrastructure changes that make road crossings less safe. It is disproportionate for people to have to go through an NDIS change-of-circumstances application when the additional travel supports are needed very quickly.

The NDIS has three levels of transport funding[76] that can be used to support getting to a job for people with an intellectual disability. But they often are not enough to cover transport costs, particularly in regional areas. The transport funding also needs to recognise support for changes to transport.

While there is an option for exceptional needs funding, there are not clear guidelines on when this applies.

Planners don't always include transport funding at all, or, enough transport funding, or transport funding in the right category so it can be used flexibly. There is an urgent need to ensure that all people with an intellectual disability with employment goals also have the maximum transport funding allocation.

Recommendations:

- All people with an intellectual disability get Level 3 transport funding, and flexible transport funding, in their plans when they have employment goals, no matter the hours they work.
- The NDIS consider a specific flexible work travel line item, in addition to other travel funding, to recognise the higher costs and greater challenges of regional, rural and remote travel.

76 https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/creating-your-plan/plan-budget-and-rules/transport-funding

PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Work experience and after-school work

People with an intellectual disability need the same access to the building blocks to employment as everyone else, but currently they face many barriers that must be removed.

The CSI framework for understanding the employment support needs for people with an intellectual disability says that the following three elements are needed.

- Equal access to mainstream and mainstream disability supports
- Access to specialist supports
- Use of evidence-based supports

To ensure that people with an intellectual disability can access work experience at school, they will need all three elements of support. This means equal access to the same work experience that other students with and without disability get, as well as the specialist, evidence based supports they need.

These supports need to be delivered by a wide range of agencies, departments, and organisations.

Access to work experience at school

State and territory education departments and schools play a key role in supporting students with an intellectual disability to gain vital work experience while at school.

Students with an intellectual disability need to have the same access to the Year 10 week of work experience as all other students, sharing that week with their peers. Supports need to be put in place well before that week to ensure that the experience is a success.

For students with an intellectual disability in Years 11 and 12, further work experiences will be important in developing work skills and exploring career options. Supports, both in in schools and via disability and employment support systems, need to be embedded to ensure these experiences are worthwhile.

For example, a Victorian program to support students with an intellectual disability into after-school jobs through National Disability Services, called *After School Jobs*, found that:

> 'All the young people enjoyed having a job which brought many of the new experiences they had anticipated, such as earning money, meeting new people, understanding more about their own preferences, developing skills and building confidence. They overcame challenges such as keeping pace with job demands and managing social interactions. The experience of having a job had helped some young people to understand better their own preferences about the type of work they wanted to do in the future.'[77]

The After School Jobs program linked students with employers, and delivered on the job support they needed, including from those employers. 'The experience of these young people point to the significance of support in the work-place from managers and co-workers to job success, which is a strong theme in the employment literature.[78]'

The Victorian Education Department has prepared a resource called *A Job Well Done*[79] to assist students with disability and their families and teachers get ready for work experience.

All schools need to ensure that students with an intellectual disability have the same access to work experience as other students. This includes making choices about what work they are interested in and having the same options as other students. Students with an intellectual disability need to be assumed to need work experience just as much as other students, and for that experience to happen in the community.

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77 https://tickettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/Final_After_School_Jobs_Report_27_April_2021_003.pdf
78 as above
79 https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/Pages/welldone.aspx

Schools also need to coordinate with the relevant disability supports to ensure that students with an intellectual disability have the right support to get to work experience and get the most out of the opportunity.

Recommendation:

- Schools are given more resources to develop materials and support students to engage with work experience, both in Year 10 with all other students, and in Years 11 and 12 in work readiness programs, including support for transport for students to their work experience.
- State and territory education departments develop best practice guides for schools, based on evidence, about supporting students with an intellectual disability in work experience, in collaboration with the Workplace Disability Equality Agency.
- State and territory education departments work with NDIS and DES to streamline complexity of supports, so the right supports are available in a seamless and timely experience for students with an intellectual disability and their families.
- NDIS participants to be able to access funding specifically to support their Year 10 work experience

Accessing employment supports at school

Both Disability Employment Services (DES) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) can and should provide supports for students with an intellectual disability to access paid work while at school.

For many students, an after-school job is their first paid work and provides essential work readiness skills. However, for students with an intellectual disability, they rarely have an opportunity to do these kinds of jobs.

Research shows that young people with an intellectual disability who did after school jobs:

> "anticipated new experiences and benefits but were also nervous about the unknown and anxious about failing. Previous work experiences were useful in knowing what to expect. Many of the students already had clear ideas about job preferences indicating the significance of preparatory work about employment by schools and parents."[80]

This research echoed other findings that:

> "work education and work placements might be embedded much earlier in school careers of students with intellectual disabilities to raise their expectations and provide grounded workplace experiences, as well as generate high expectations about the potential for future employment from their families and others in their social networks."[81]

DES eligibility and flexibility need to be changed so that students with an intellectual disability can access these mainstream disability supports while at school to get an after-school job. DES eligibility barrier of being assessed as able to do 8 hours work per week needs to be removed, and specialist DES could provide evidence-based information about what support looks like.

DES also plays a role as job coach and in job carving. This means working closely with a person with an intellectual disability to explore their interests and support needs, but also working directly with employers and the community to find jobs that suit young people with an intellectual disability and assisting employers to understand how to provide the right workplace support. These roles are vital for all people with an intellectual disability, including through school.

The NDIS has a role in providing the specific disability supports that a student with an intellectual disability needs, starting with ensuring that employment goals and supports are in their plans. All people with an intellectual disability from aged 15 should have employment goals in their plans, and the support to realise them.

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80 https://tickettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/Final_After_School_Jobs_Report_27_April_2021_003.pdf
81 https://tickettowork.org.au/media/download_resources/word/Final_After_School_Jobs_Report_27_April_2021_003.pdf

The NDIS and DES also need to work to clarify which organisation provides what supports, and to ensure that this demarcation does not mean that students with an intellectual disability either miss out on vital evidence-based supports or have to navigate through two complex systems. Support for employment must always centre the person with an intellectual disability, and systems and structures must take on the burden of complexity.

Recommendations:

- DES supports are available for everyone who wants support, and for work while at school
- DES develop job coaching and job carving expertise and has the funding support to deliver these evidence-based supports.
- DES quality measures reflect the use of evidence-based support for people with an intellectual disability
- Everyone who has NDIS supports has employment goals and supports in plan.
- NDIS and DES provide easy to access and use information about using employment supports.
- NDIS provides specific supports for Year 10 work experience, including travel training and all preparation needed.

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Inclusion Australia

Interviews

A range of structured interviews were conducted with people with an intellectual disability and their families.

The interviews with people with an intellectual disability were done by the project officers, Sonia Hume and Larry Simpson, and also by staff at SACID. The interviews with family members were done by Jackie Softly.

Ten interviews were done with people with an intellectual disability and fifteen with family members.

The questions for the interviews were developed by the interviewers and were across a wide range of issues. People were asked to talk about the barriers to employment they faced, and the specific measures that were good about employment and support. Families in particular were asked about the administrative load of navigating complex systems, which was a recurring theme.

Preliminary findings from the interviews have been factored into the development of the barriers and solutions sections, along with the key recommendations and executive summary sections of this submission. Full analysis of the interviews will be available on the Inclusion Australia website in 2023.

Surveys

Inclusion Australia released two online surveys for a two-week period from 27 November to 12 December 2022. One survey was designed to be completed by people with an intellectual disability and one to be completed by families.

The survey links were posted widely across orgs of people with an intellectual disability and families via a promotional page on Inclusion Australia's website.[1] Respondents were asked a range of questions about their experiences and their views on barriers and useful changes to systems such as the NDIS and the DSP.

In early 2023 the surveys will be reopened to collect further input before the report is finalised and launched, at which time full analysis of the survey results will be available on the Inclusion Australia website.

Survey for individuals

We received a total of 34 responses from people with an intellectual disability over the two-week period for which the survey was open.

The age of our respondents varied widely, from 15 to 79 years old, with a median age of 33.5 years. A considerable majority of respondents are NDIS participants and are on the Disability Support Pension.

Almost 30% of respondents are from Queensland, with an additional 24% from Western Australia. Over 15% of respondents are from Victoria and NSW respectively. We did not receive any responses from the Northern Territory or Australian Capital Territory, so this will be a focus for our second wave of recruitment in 2023.

Survey for families

We received a total of 22 responses from families during the survey period.

Most respondents indicated that their family members with an intellectual disability are in their twenties or thirties, with 59% between 21 and 30 years and 23% between 31 and 40 years. We had one respondent with a family member in their teens and one in their early forties.

Most respondents (41%) are from Western Australia, with just over a quarter from NSW (27%). We did not receive responses from families in the Northern Territory or Australian Capital Territory. Over two thirds of respondents (68%) live in a city or outer suburbs, with the remainder indicating they live in a regional area (27%). We did not receive any responses from families living in rural or remote areas. These will be areas of focus for our second wave of recruitment in 2023.

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1 https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/tell-us-what-you-think-about-employment-for-people-with-an-intellectual-disability/

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

OVERSEAS EXAMPLES

Inclusion Australia

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES AND EVIDENCE

Setting the scene

In many cases, the barriers that exclude people with intellectual disability from open employment in Australia are reflected overseas. Internationally, people with intellectual disability are chronically underrepresented in the open labour force and continue to face systemic exclusion from full economic participation, contributing to higher levels of economic disadvantage and poverty compared with the rest of the population.[1] In many countries, segregated employment in group or center-based services such as sheltered workshops continues to be the norm.

At the same time, access to equitable, accessible and meaningful employment is also increasingly recognised globally as a means of full social participation and a pathway out of poverty.[2] While this is yet to be fully realised around the world while people with intellectual disability continue to face systemic exclusion, there is a growing body of international case studies that demonstrate the efficacy of full economic participation and inclusion of people with intellectual disability in open employment, including the implementation of legislative and policy strategies to support the successful transition away from sheltered workshops. These case studies will be discussed later in this section.

Challenges to international comparisons

Data

Among the barriers preventing people with disability from full participation in open employment is the lack of data and evidence that are comparable across international contexts.

Two recommendations that emerged from the *World Report on Disability*, for example, addressed the need for improved data collection and enhanced research on employment indices.[3] Lysaght et al. also point out that there is a clear need for improved reporting of relevant data and indicators of progress to improve economic participation among people with intellectual disability.[4]

The lack of common metrics internationally means researchers are often unable to accurately assess the ways different cultural, political, or economic environments affect the employment of people with intellectual disability, which would help pave the way for better outcomes.[5] Finally, without strong data on labour market participation, it is difficult to estimate the cost of unemployment to families and communities.

1 World Health Organization, & World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability*. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland
2 Eric Emerson and Susan Parish, "Intellectual disability and poverty: Introduction to the special section", *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 35:4, 2010: 221-223, DOI: 10.3109/13668250.2010.525869
3 World Health Organization, & World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability*, 18.
4 Rosemary Lysaght, Jan Šiška, and Oliver Koenig. "International Employment Statistics for People With Intellectual Disability-The Case for Common Metrics." *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities* 12, no. 2 (April 29, 2015): 112–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12113.
5 Lysaght, "International Employment Statistics", 115.

Definitions

There is a lack of consistency of definitions for what constitutes work; intellectual disability; and even what constitutes a sheltered workshop itself in an international context.

Despite the prevalence of sheltered workshops globally, there are a number of differences in characteristics and practices across national and regional contexts, often arising from the varied understandings and intentions of the purpose of this form of employment.

As such, sheltered or segregated work occurs under a variety of names, ranging from 'Work Centre' in some states in the US to 'Occupational Activity Centre' in Portugal and 'Social Enterprise' in Kuala Lumpur. And because sheltered workshops tend to have evolved from religious or medical institutions with the objectives of charity or medical and therapeutic treatment, sheltered workshops around the world continue to be associated with this ethos. As May-Simera writes,

> "this hybrid of treatment, training and work interventions gives sheltered work settings a broad mandate and makes comparisons difficult and at times confusing".[6]

This can, May-Simera continues, lead to confusing legal statuses, making participants in these systems "eternal clients or patients"[7] rather than workers.[8]

Because of the common historical roots (medical, religious) of sheltered workshops globally, there are certain common indicators across international contexts that are useful to note. For example, as is the case in Australia, sheltered workshops overseas are 'sheltered' or separate from general, 'mainstream' work settings, very often geographically isolated from urban or central business districts, and provide work almost exclusively for people with disability alongside other disabled people.[9]

Most often they are run by non-governmental organisations, not-for-profit or other independent service providers, with the day-to-day organisation overseen by supervisors or trainers.

Work undertaken in sheltered workshops typically involves tasks ranging from "clerical activities..., assembling, packing, woodwork, manufacturing, servicing, sewing, or sheet metal work",[10] and there are several studies commenting on what is often the menial or meaningless nature of these tasks.[11]

Below, we apply a conceptual definition to the international context, borrowing that used by the International Labor Organisation and explained by May-Simera as being: "that act of placing predominantly people with intellectual disabilities in sheltered employment or work facilities where they are subject to atypical working conditions, for an extended period of time".[12]

The international examples in this section demonstrate how the transition to open employment is achievable and in many cases has been successful, creating far reaching benefits to both people with intellectual disability, the wider community and economy.

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6 Charlotte May-Simera, "Reconsidering Sheltered Workshops in Light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)." Laws 7, no. 1 (February 5, 2018): 4.
7 May-Simera, "Reconsidering Sheltered Workshops", 2.
8 Mallender, Jacqueline, Quentin Liger, Rory Tierney, Daniel Beresford, James Eager, Stefan Speckesser, and Vahé Nafilyan. "Reasonable Accommodation and Sheltered Workshops for People with Disabilities: Costs and Returns of Investments," 2015. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536295/IPOL_STU(2015)536295_EN.pdf.
9 May-Simera, "Reconsidering Sheltered Workshops", 2.
10 May-Simera, "Reconsidering Sheltered Workshops", 3-4. Alberto Miglioire, "Sheltered Workshops" in International Encyclopedia of Rehabilitation. Edited by John H. Stone and Maria Blouin. Buffalo: Centre of international Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange, Available online: http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/encyclopedia/en/article/136/ (accessed on 15 February 2016).
11 Alberto Migliore, Davi Mank, Tara Grossi, and Patricia Rogan. "Integrated Employment or Sheltered Workshops: Preference of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, their Families and Staff" Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 26. 2007: 5–19.
12 May-Simera, "Reconsidering Sheltered Workshops", 2;

The Supported Employment model

A note on terminology

In Australia, readers may be more familiar with Supported Employment as meaning employment in segregated or congregated disability-specific employment, which are largely couched in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs).

In this section, this is not what we mean by Supported Employment.

Supported Employment is used here to capture the range of practices and programs internationally, as it is consistent with the original theory and practices emerging in the US and applied in different parts of the world since the 1980s.

Therefore, Supported Employment is used here to refer to activities that promote the employment of people with intellectual disability in open employment.

Historical background to Supported Employment

Several of the case studies below discuss the successful transition away from sheltered workshops towards open employment through the model of Supported Employment (SE), which first emerged in the early 1980s to address the systemic exclusion of people with intellectual disability from the open workforce and put forward an alternative to segregated forms of employment.[13]

In its philosophy and applications in policy, SE reflects what is referred to as 'open employment' in Australia. In contrast to the ethos of sheltered workshops, SE involves a 'place then train' approach, where individuals are supported to receive training in everyday workplaces (referred to as Competitive Integrated Workplaces or CIE), develop relationships with employers and coworkers, and earn living wages.[14]

The basic principles of SE are:

- Personalised individual assessment to assist individuals to become confident in their ability to succeed in employment, refine their employment preferences, and identify the training and support needed for success;
- Individualised job development and placement by an employment specialist (usually called a job coach)
- Intensive job site training and support; and
- Ongoing support throughout the course of the individual's employment.[15]

Research on the SE model expanded during the 1980s and 90s. Despite initial criticism that reflected the low expectations of the employment potential of people with intellectual disability, the model was applied to various small case studies in the US before larger studies eventually began to shift policy and practice–particularly in the State of Vermont, which is discussed below.

The SE model is related to a number of theories and models around inclusive work, and social inclusion more broadly. For example, there are clear links to normalisation ideology that was the basis for de-institutionalisation in many countries and the Employment First model, which is used to inform policy in several States in the US.

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13 John Kregel, Wehman , P, , Taylor, J., Avellone, L, Riches, V., Rodrigues, R., & Taylor, D. A Comprehensive *Review of Evidence-Based Employment Practices for Youth and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities: Final report.* Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and Centre for Disability Studies, affiliated with the University of Sydney, Australia, 2-4. See also: Frank Rusch, *Competitive employment issues and strategies.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 1986; John Kregel, "Why It Pays to Hire Workers with Developmental Disabilities" Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 14(3), 1999: 130–132. https://doi.org/10.1177/108835769901400301; Paul Wehman, *Competitive employment: New horizons for severely disabled individuals.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes, 1981.

14 Kregel et al., *A Comprehensive Review of Evidence-Based Employment Practices*, 5.

15 Kregel et al., *A Comprehensive Review of Evidence-Based Employment Practices*, iii-iv.

It is useful to note that the applications of inclusive work in different international contexts tend to share the same fundamental principles originally put forward in SE, with only nuanced differences in their application around the world.

The services that have emerged internationally since the theoretical development of SE demonstrate effective and replicable alternatives to segregated forms of work. As Bryan Dague writes, they have been "developed from a philosophy that presumes competence and employability of everyone given the proper supports are provided".[16]

The policy changes brought about by SE internationally have raised expectations about the capabilities and competence of people with intellectual disability and "led to a paradigm shift from segregated employment to competitive integrated employment as the preferred outcome for all individuals",[17] employees and employers alike.

Markers of successful transitions toward open employment internationally

There is now a large body of evidence that demonstrates the efficacy of the SE model as a successful alternative to sheltered workshops. The attributes below, which show up in the international case studies, are markers of success that lead to increased employment for people with intellectual disability. They include:

- The presumption of employability among parents, educators, employment services and the wider community;
- A high level of job customisation to suit the needs and interests of the individual with intellectual disability and the employer, including job carving, job sharing and job creation;
- Proactively seeking job opportunities and connecting individual job-seekers to employers, instead of waiting for job vacancies to be advertised;
- On-the-job training or on-site training mixed with work experience;
- Time unlimited support in the workplace to continue to acquire work-related skills and capacity to independently access and maintain employment;
- The role of employment brokers or vocational specialists to work across disability support services, health services (such as mental health services), employment services, training organisations, schools, employers, families and jobseekers, based on evidence-based models of practice.

As Wilson and Campain summarised in their recent review of international evidence, successful transitions toward open employment involve:

> a combination of highly individualised strategies (focused on the unique attributes of the person with intellectual disability and their context) supported by programmatic structures that deliver a range of supported opportunities.[18]

16 Dague, Bryan. "There's No Sheltered Workshops in Vermont ." Voice , August 2018. Down Syndrome Australia. https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/voice/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/03/There-is-no-sheltered-workshops-in-Vermont-Voice-August-2018.pdf.

17 Kregel et al., *A Comprehensive Review of Evidence-Based Employment Practices*, 5.

18 Erin Wilson and Robert Campain, *Fostering employment for people with intellectual disability: the evidence to date*, Hawthorn, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology, 2020: 9.

Wage subsidised employment

Another attribute that is sometimes used alongside SE practices, especially in Scandinavian countries, is wage subsidised employment. This is where a certain type of tax-financed subsidy is provided to employers to incentivise the hiring and sustained employment of individuals, meaning the individual is hired and paid in normal conditions.

Subsidies tend to vary in size depending on assessments of the individual's capacity to work. They are generally given over a limited time period, and often have to be renegotiated annually or after a few years.

There are very few studies documenting the effects of such policies aimed at incentivising and enhancing the employment of people with disability–and in particular intellectual disability.[19]

A recent scoping review looking into the efficacy of wage subsidies to promote employment of people with disability (not specifically intellectual disability) found that while financial incentives are widely used in developed countries, "the current state of the literature is modest and insufficient to make strong statements about the evidence on how and when financial incentives work well or do not work well".[20]

Broadly speaking, financial incentives for employers are varied: they may be wage subsidies, tax credits or benefits, penalties for not achieving employment targets, reimbursement of costs associated with accommodation (that is, changes to working conditions or provision of support to increase accessibility). These different incentives still need to be distinguished in this policy arena.

Although it is difficult to substantiate, Irvin et al. note the varied perceptions among employers, disability advocates and people with disability about the use of wage subsidies. Some feel they are a critical policy lever to promote employment and retention of people with disability, particularly in small and medium sized workplaces with little experience in hiring people with disability and limited resources to do so. Others however feel they are merely used by employers to get cheap labour and may be an avenue for abuse and exploitation.[21]

Further, there is evidence that wage subsidies stimulate labour demand and create an incentive for employers, including by reducing employers' uncertainties about employing a person with an intellectual disability.[22] At the same time, wage subsidies have been shown to contribute to stigma by signalling a so-called 'poorer work capacity'.[23]

Sweden offers an interesting snapshot of the efficacy of a wage subsidy model. Because their system allocates wage subsidies to individuals through an assessment of 'reduced work capacity' through a coding system, the data available relates to people with disability as opposed to intellectual disability specifically.

The Swedish wage subsidy program (lönebidrag) was introduced in 1980 and remains the single largest labour market programs in the country. It can be accessed by employers for an initial run of one year, and can be extended for up to four years. This can be extended in some circumstances, but this needs to be renegotiated through the Public Employment Service (PES).[24]

In 2017, the ceiling for the subsidy was EUR1670 per month. This needs to be claimed by the employer on a monthly basis and is paid back in arrears.[25]

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19 Emma Irvin, Emile Tompa, Heather Johnston, Kathy Padkapayeva, Quenby Mahood, Dan Samosh, and Rebecca Gewurtz. "Financial Incentives to Promote Employment of Persons with Disabilities: A Scoping Review of when and how they Work Best" *Disability and Rehabilitation* ahead-of-print (2022): 1-15.

20 Irvin, "Financial Incentives to Promote Employment of Persons with Disabilities", 1.

21 Irvin, "Financial Incentives to Promote Employment of Persons with Disabilities", 2.

22 Nikolay Angelov and Marcus Eliason. "Wage Subsidies Targeted to Jobseekers with Disabilities: Subsequent Employment and Disability Retirement." *IZA Journal of Labor Policy* 7, no. 1 (December 2018). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40173-018-0105-9.

23 Stijn Baert, "Wage Subsidies and Hiring Chances for the Disabled: Some Causal Evidence" *The European Journal of Health Economics* 17 (1) 2016: 71-86.

24 Helena Taubner, Magnus Tideman and Carin Staland Nyman, "Employment Sustainability for People with Intellectual Disability: A Systematic Review." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 32, no. 3 (December 27, 2021): 353–64. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-021-10020-9.

25 Angelov and Eliason, "Wage Subsidies Targeted to Jobseekers with Disabilities: Subsequent Employment and Disability Retirement", 27.

It is estimated that about one in ten in the working-age population has a so-called 'reduced working capacity'. In a recent study, Angelov and Eliason analysed participants in the wage subsidy program over 19 years to assess future labour market outcomes. Particularly, the relationship between the wage subsidy, job retention and eventual non-subsidised employment.

The results were mixed. The study found that participants in the wage subsidy program were less likely to leave the labour market early through the disability insurance program. It also found that participants in the wage subsidy program experienced overall higher employment rates in the long term compared with non-participants. However, participants were less likely to have non-subsidised employment in the long-term.[26]

The authors note that the interpretation of this finding is complex: a pessimistic interpretation is that the program led to being 'locked in' to subsidised employment, which limited opportunities to transition to regular, non-subsidised employment. More optimistically, it could be argued that those individuals may not have been able to gain and retain employment without a subsidy.

This also leads the authors to question what the goal of a wage subsidy is: remaining employed, or becoming employed without a subsidy. This remains an open question.

International case studies on the transition away from sheltered workshops towards open employment

The case studies below are snapshots of the strategies outlined above in action. The countries and cities were chosen to provide a diversity of models and mechanisms.

While the different examples described are, in some cases, still in their infancy and marked by complex challenges, they demonstrate the ways in which different places around the world are moving away from segregated forms of work to ensure people with intellectual disability can access and maintain work in open employment.

Vermont, United States

In 1980, there were approximately 1400 individuals in sheltered workshops throughout Vermont. In 2002, Vermont's last sheltered workshop was closed. Currently, the rate of employment of people with intellectual disability in Vermont is twice the US national average. Unsurprisingly, Vermont is widely recognised internationally as setting the standard for the successful transition away from sheltered workshops towards supported employment in the open labour market.[27]

Influenced by the research and evidence on SE in the early 1980s, the University of Vermont piloted an integrated employment program in partnership with state disability service providers and advocacy organisations, called the S*upported Employment System Change Initiative*.

The program recruited workers from a sheltered workshop in Barre to participate, where they were supported to find community-based employment with on-the-job training provided by job coaches.[28]

The success of this pilot program was followed by a five-year federal systems change project to support the transition of people with intellectual disability to open employment.

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The state of Vermont supported the emerging SE services through continued funding, which included a range of state supported employment positions and a technical assistance program established at the University of Vermont, which came about to provide an avenue for higher education and training for people with intellectual disability. Vermont's business community also became a strong ally of the change by consistently hiring employees and supporting the principles of supported employment.

The funding model put forward by the state of Vermont appears to be key to the successful transition and gradual conversion of sheltered workshops. The *State System of Care Plan for Developmental Disability Services* emphasised integrated employment as a priority, and made budgetary plans to limit, and then over time eliminate, funding for sheltered workshops.[29]

An important part of Vermont's strategy was that it was collaborative. The State Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities worked with disability service providers who managed sheltered workshops to convert them before the funding changes came into effect.

As Sulewski notes, this avoided "pulling the rug out" from under providers and individuals who worked in sheltered workshops, as well as their families.[30] Vermont's state Division of Disability and Aging Services, with the University of Vermont and service providers of sheltered workshops, worked together to convert the remaining workshops to community-based options with individualised support, following the principles of SE.

Throughout the process, there was continued open communication with stakeholders: Vermont's state agencies and University worked with providers at each step to address their concerns and aid workshop conversion before eliminating funding. This collaboration between governmental departments, Self-Advocacy and Advocacy groups, service providers and the University of Vermont continues today.

The strength of Vermont's Self Advocates–people with intellectual disability campaigning and speaking up for their own rights–also appears to be a key driver of success. Green Mountain Self-Advocates are active across 18 regions of Vermont and were a strong voice in the push for change during the 1980s and 90s. Today, they continue to promote open employment by educating the public about the "strengths, rights, wants and needs of people with developmental disabilities".[31]

Today, Vermont's Supported Employment Program (SEP) is overseen by two State government divisions: Developmental Disability Services (DDS) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and is implemented across 16 not-for-profit agencies.

The program delivers a range of individualised SE services, including:

- person-centred planning;
- job search and matching;
- on-the-job training;
- follow-up services and support;
- equipment and transport where required; and
- career enhancement.

The annual budget is mainly provided by DDS (US$9-10 million) and partially by VR (US$1.3 million). The cumulative per-person costs of the SEP are dramatically less than the cost of sheltered workshops in Vermont, at US$6,618 compared to US$19,388 per person per year.[32]

A 2015 survey indicated that 90% of workers using the SEP enjoyed their current job and 52% felt they were able to work sufficient hours.

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29 Vermont Agency of Human Services and Department of Aging & Independent Living. "Vermont State System of Care Plan for Developmental Services: Three Year Plan 2005-2007," July 2004. https://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/VT_Plan_05-07.pdf

30 Jennifer Sulewski, "Shifting resources away from sheltered workshops in Vermont" Boston: University Massachusetts, Institute for Community Inclusion, 2007.

31 Max Burrows, "Equal Employment for Persons with Disabilities." Green Mountain Self-Advocates, June 26, 2020. https://gmsavt.org/resources/equal-employment-for-persons-with-disabilities.

32 Roy Gerstenberger, Jennie Masterson and Bryan Dague, "Long-term inclusion in the open labour market, state-wide", Zero Project, accessed 23 November 2022, https://zeroproject.org/view/project/bfb4b4e2-9f17-eb11-a813-0022489b3a6d

Oregon, United States

Following the legislative changes that took place in the US in the late 1990s and early 2000s–including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),[33] which led to a series of federal grants towards supported employment services–the state of Oregon underwent a series of policy changes that put forward an Employment First policy strategy, through which individualised support and employment in the open workforce was prioritised, marking the first move away from sheltered workshops.

In January 2012, a class action was filed by eight individual plaintiffs with intellectual or developmental disability, alongside the United Cerebral Palsy of Oregon and Southwest Washington, on behalf of the thousands of participants in Oregon's sheltered workshops.

This was the first class action that had ever challenged segregated forms of work that pay subminimum wages to people with intellectual and developmental disability in segregated environments. Lane v. Brown,[34] which was settled in 2015, charged state officials with violating the ADA by excluding people with disability from open employment and confining them to segregating settings where they were denied a living wage.

Among the significant outcomes of the action was the finding by US District Court Judge Janice M. Stewart that the integration mandate contained in the ADA applies not only to residential settings but to employment, meaning that people with intellectual disability must receive employment services in integrated settings in the open workforce.

The Settlement Agreement reached in 2015 determined that the state must provide 7,000 individuals with employment services. In summary, the state must:

- provide individualised support services–including career development planning and training–that lead to real jobs in the open workforce at equal pay for people in sheltered workshops;
- provide individualised services that lead to the employment of young people (aged 14-24) with intellectual disability in public schools;
- ensure people with intellectual disabilities can obtain the services they need to be able to work in open employment by implementing funding and building capacity among employment service providers; and
- Close all sheltered workshops by July 2022.[35]

An independent review of progress made on implementing the Agreement shows that since 2015, the State has:

- Closed all remaining sheltered workshops;
- eliminated the use of sub-minimum wages;
- increased access to supported employment services and access to CIE, meeting and surpassing the numerical goals set out in the Agreement (7,000 individuals);
- expanded evidence-based transition practices;
- developed the agency infrastructure across service providers to support the Agreement; and
- utilised enhanced federal and state funding to support access to CIE and create a statewide data system.[36]

The recent independent review noted that, as is the case in many countries across the world, Oregon lacks appropriate metrics for measuring success in creating access to CIE. It recommended developing new metrics for a range of data, as well as standards to assess compliance with the State's commitment to provide services that are genuinely individualised.

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33 Title I of *The Americans with Disabilities Act* prohibits discrimination again people with disability in employment and allows people to access necessary employment supports by legislating the right to ask for "any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way a job is done, or the work environment" that allows a person access to the necessary supports in the workplace. Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

34 This case was originally filed as Lane v. Kitzhaber.

35 Nicole Jowic, J.D. "Lane V. Brown: Final Report to the Court", Civil Action No. 3:12-cv-00138-ST., Independent Review, 2022.

36 Disability Rights Oregon. "Lane v. Brown — Disability Rights Oregon." Project Independence , January 26, 2012. https://www.droregon.org/litigation-resources/lane-v-brown..

Norway

It is estimated that 5.6% of people with intellectual disability in Norway are employed:[37] 2% are in open employment while approximately 10% participate in sheltered workshops.[38]

The first SE program to be piloted in Norway was completed in 1995, with mixed results. On the one hand, 74% of participants were able to secure a job in the private sector, nearly half of those in full-time positions. However, an evaluation in 2001 found that the number of people still working in those jobs had fallen to 11%.

The most significant learnings from this initial project was that success depends on the level of sustained contact and support from a job coach and extent to which support services are individualised. Further, the initial SE program was run through non-government sheltered workshop providers rather than, as happened later, the Public Employment Service (PES).

Through the early 2000s, the main challenges for Norway included the lack of common definitions of SE and the fact that employment support services were split between different non-governmental agencies. This meant that the country had several "SE-like programs"[39], but there was little evidence that these led to sustained jobs for people with intellectual disability, and many continued to be run by sheltered workshop providers.

In 2016, Norway committed to a Public Employment Service (PES) practice for SE as part of the European Commission's Employment Strategy. The scheme is run by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and focuses on the 183,000 young people who are registered as having "reduced working capacities", including young people with intellectual disability.

The scheme involved:

- the employment of "SE Specialists"--job coaches, counsellors and advocates;
- setting up interdisciplinary youth teams across the country;
- establishing contact with employers in the private sector;
- establishing guidelines within the PES office on inclusion competence and the principles of SE

By 2018, approximately 6000 young people had been supported to find employment. According to NAV, the program continues to successfully support the transition to CIE, demonstrating the markers below as key to its success:

- small caseloads of 12-20 job-seekers per job coach/counsellor;
- ongoing knowledge and capacity building on the principles of SE and inclusive practices;
- commitment from leaders in government, PES offices, case workers and social services; and
- including job seekers themselves in the design and development of support services.[40]

37 Sofie Wass, Mugula Chris Safari, Silje Haugland, and Hans Olav Omland. "Transitions from School to Sheltered Employment in Norway – Experiences of People with Intellectual Disabilities." *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 49, no. 3 (July 26, 2021): 373–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/bld.12414.

38 Øystein Spjelkavik,"Supported Employment in Norway and in the Other Nordic Countries." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 37, no. 3 (2012): 163–72. https://doi.org/10.3233/jvr-2012-0611

39 Wass, "Transitions from SChool to Sheltered Employment in Norway", 379

40 European Commission. "Norway: Supported Employment", PES Knowledge Centre - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, October 2021. Accessed November 23, 2022. PES Knowledge Centre - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu)

Sweden

Like Norway, Sweden also has a Public Employment Service (PES) practice for SE. While this program is not specifically directed at people with intellectual disability, but rather people with so-called 'reduced working capacity', people with intellectual disability can access support for open employment through this scheme.

The 'Special Introduction and Followup Support'[41] (SIUS) began in 1998 as an employment support service for job seekers in need of individual support for finding, retaining or returning to CIE. Support is provided both to the jobseeker and the employer by a SIUS consultant with specific expertise in inclusive practice and SE.

As a scheme managed by PES, it is funded by the government and involves the following elements:

- supporting individuals to find work related to their skills, preferences and interests;
- supporting the hiring process;
- work introduction and training with support through 3-6 month unpaid internships;
- employment with follow-up support at the workplace–this support can be accessed for up to 2 years after initial employment, and in certain cases may be extended beyond this.

In 2017, 912 SIUS consultants supported 9232 job seekers to secure work in CIE.[42] However, given SIUS has a broad mandate for work inclusion, people with intellectual disability do continue to work in sheltered workshops, and it does not appear that SIUS has been targeted at transitioning people away from segregated work.

A national survey analysing 12,269 former students with intellectual disability about their employment experiences after school showed that just 22% worked in CIE while 47% worked in sheltered workshops or day centres.[43]

At the same time, the existing SE infrastructure offers a potential pathway for participants of sheltered workshops to access open employment. This is further supported by Sweden's wage subsidy model, where employers of workers with disability are entitled to a subsidy of up to 80% of wage for up to four years, with possibilities for extension.[44]

A recent qualitative study focussing on experiences of SE services in Sweden found that inclusion in the open workforce led to a greater sense of belonging in one's wider community and a feeling of "being something to somebody" by being valued in the workplace.[45]

41 In Swedish, 'Särskild stödperson för introduktions-och uppföljningsstöd'.

42 European Commission. "Database of Labour Market Practices - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion", accessed 23 November, 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1080&langId=en&practiceId=69.; European Commission. "Mutual Learning Programme Database of National Labour Market Practices: Sweden - Special Introduction and Follow-up Support (SIUS)", April 2018, accessed 23 November 2022, MLP Practice (europa.eu)

43 Spjelkavik,"Supported Employment in Norway and in the Other Nordic Countries", 163.; See also Jessica Arvidsson, Stephen Widen and Magnus Tideman, "Post-school options for young adults with intellectual disabilities in Sweden" *Swedish Disability Research: What Lessons for Australia*? 2(2) 2015: 180-193. https://doi.org/10.1080/23297018.2015.1028090.

44 Johanna Gustafsson, Julia Peralta, and Berth Danermark. "Supported Employment and Social Inclusion – Experiences of Workers with Disabilities in Wage Subsidized Employment in Sweden." *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 20, no. 1 (2018): 26–36. https://doi.org/10.16993/sjdr.36.

45 Gustafsson, "Supported Employment", 28.

Bangladesh

In 2019, Bangladesh developed the National Disability Action Plan to promote the implementation of Article 27 of the UNCRPD. Activity 10 of the Action Plan sets targets related to the employment of people with disability in CIE, including the preservation of a quota system and "provision of reasonable accommodation", which enables people with disability to access support to secure and sustain employment.

However, these mandates are not specifically targeted towards people with intellectual disability, and legislation to protect the rights of people with intellectual disability is not sufficiently enforced. A recent report by Down Syndrome International (DSi) suggests that a range of structural barriers, together with entrenched community attitudes, work to exclude people with intellectual disability from the workforce.[46]

Despite this, a number of programs developed in the not-for-profit sector towards inclusive employment for people with disability have resulted in new partnerships and infrastructure to promote the employment of people with intellectual disability.

Education and training as a pathway to open employment

Since 2014, the PFDA Vocational Training Center (PFDA-VTC) has been supporting people with intellectual disability to gain open employment. Offering individualised vocational training programs, the PFDA-VTC facilitates job-matching with employers and ongoing support to employees, overseeing the employment conditions to ensure equal pay and benefits are being met.[47]

Although the PFDA-VTC also oversees a sheltered workshop, it reports more than 70% of its vocational training students have secured a job in open employment since 2014.

Connecting the business community with jobseekers

Responding to the lack of platforms to match companies with job-seekers with disability, employers from the private sector founded the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) and launched a series of job fairs to bring together employers, disability service providers, self-advocates and NGOs. Their aim was to share experiences and knowledge of inclusive employment, generate networking and provide an avenue for employers and job-seekers to find each other.[48]

The establishment of the BBDN has meant that disability service providers and other NGOs are no longer alone in coming up with solutions to enable greater inclusion in the workforce. The BBDN runs regular meetings and employer-trainings to discuss best practice for inclusive employment, and between 2017 and 2021 have run four job fairs in Dhaka, Chattogram and Sylhet.

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46 Ishaque Mia, "Case Study on Best Practices in the Inclusive Employment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Bangladesh." Edited by Nathan Rowe. Bangladesh: Down Syndrome International, September 2021. https://www.ds-int.org/inclusive-employment-case-study-and-webinars; Bialik, Kimber, and Manel Mhiri. "Barriers to Employment for People with Intellectual Disabilities in Low and Middle-income Countries: Self-advocate and Family Perspectives." *Journal of International Development* 34, no. 5 (June 14, 2022): 988–1001. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3659.

47 Zero Project. "PFDA - Vocational Training Center Trust." Accessed November 23, 2022. https://zeroproject.org/view/organization/c248b307-9304-eb11-a813-000d3ab9bc3d; PFDA - Vocational Training Center. "Our History." Accessed 23 November 2022. https://pfda-vtc.org/about-us/our-history/

48 Zero Project. "Establishment of Business and Disability Network to Facilitate Employment," January 2021, accessed 23 November 2022. https://zeroproject.org/view/project/f1defc32-ad12-eb11-a813-0022489b3a6d

Canary Islands

Since the first Spanish law to recognise the right to full social integration of people with disability was passed in 1982, a number of advocacy organisations and service providers have begun to manage SE models in the Canary Islands. The first SE model was set up in Tenerife in 1994 by the Island Council, with the objective of promoting access to open employment for people who had traditionally been employed in sheltered workshops, known as 'occupational centers'.[49]

Beginning by working with the tourism sector to support the training and employment of people with intellectual disabilities, the program's success saw its expansion to a permanent service with a permanent staff of job coaches. In the late 1990s, the program was entrusted to a public institution, Sinpromi, which is owned by the Council of Tenerife. Since then, Sinpromi has supported more than 700 individuals to access open employment.[50]

Although there are challenges associated with this and comparable projects in the Canary Islands– for example, job coaches and other supports included in the SE model are not recognised as professions in the *National Code of Occupations*, meaning supply does not meet demand–research suggests that such transition projects are successful, and are actively encouraging the employers "to highlight the values of inclusion, solidarity, and respect for diversity as strategic management elements that increase their value".[51]

Canada

Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is a government-funded national partnership of Inclusion Canada, Autism Alliance of Canada and their member organisations that began in 2014. The program aims to increase the participation of people with intellectual disability and those with ASD in open employment, who currently have an employment rate of about 20%.[52]

Primarily RWA does this through their 'employer-demand' strategy, which focuses on supporting employers to address labour shortages and build their capacity as inclusive workplaces. RWA is now active across all Canadian provinces and territories, and their employer network consists of 12 national private organisations across different industries, including Costco, PepsiCo and Deloitte.

They share expertise in inclusive practices to support workplaces in a number of different sectors and assess their labour needs to then match jobseekers with relevant skills and interests. Support is provided to both the employer and jobseeker through the hiring process, as well as during onboarding and beyond.

Since 2014, RWA has supported the employment of 2,943 job seekers. All jobs filled were regular vacancies; no employer created additional or separate jobs.[53] Recently, RWA secured government funding to expand the program to 2025.[54]

RWA has recently launched an online toolkit for workplaces to build their capacity to hire and support people with intellectual disability and ASD, called *The Inclusive Workplace*.[55] This gives the program an ability to be translated across professional and international contexts.

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49 María Teresa Peña and Lidia Esther Santana-Vega. "Transition to the Employment of People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Canary Islands: Supported Employment." MLS Educational Research 4, no. 1 (April 4, 2020): 90–105. https://doi.org/10.29314/mlser.v4i1.321

50 Peña "Transition to the Employment of People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Canary Islands", 93.

51 María Teresa Peña-Quintana and Lidia E. Santana-Vega. "The Transition to Employment in Wales and the Canary Islands for People with Intellectual Disabilities: Supported Employment" *Education Sciences* 12, no. 11, 2022: 1-16. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12110796

52 Inclusion Canada and Ready Willing and Able . "Ready Willing and Able (RWA) Consideration for Party Platforms." Accessed November 23, 2022. https://inclusioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ready-Willing-and-Able-Platform-Brief-General.pdf.

53 Zero Project. "Canada's Ready Willing and Able Initiative of 2014-2017", accessed 23 November 2022. https://zeroproject.org/view/project/7b9a95b2-9f17-eb11-a813-0022489b3a6d

54 Ready Willing and Able, "Expansion of Ready, Willing and Able (RWA)", April 2022, accessed 23 November 2022. https://readywillingable.ca/about/expansion-2022/

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Brazil

The *Insituto Jô Clemente* (IJC) is a non-profit organisation based in São Paulo supporting the rights of people with intellectual disability. In 2013, IJC launched the Professional Inclusion program to promote the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in open employment.[56]

Based on the principles of SE, the program offers a 'place then train' approach where individuals are supported through job coaches (IJC staff) to identify employers based on their skills and interests, receiving training through the workplace and hired with equal pay and benefits.

Program participants also attend 'job clubs', weekly meet-ups with job coaches and other program participants. These meet-ups provide the opportunity for peer-support and further skills-development, including self-advocacy training.

In 2019, more than 500 people had secured a job in open employment through the program, in sectors such as retail, administration, hospitality and food production. IJC reports a 90% retention rate after the first year, and offers extended support to individuals and workplaces.

The program has been replicated in three other cities in Brazil, with the goal to expand across all main Brazilian cities by 2026.[57]

UK

In recent years, a business-led highschool transition model, Project SEARCH, has been implemented across the UK to facilitate a more supportive and seamless transition for students with intellectual disability from highschool to securing competitive employment in the open workforce.

Project SEARCH originated in the US, where in 1996 it was piloted by Erin Riehle and Susie Rutowski at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The project responded to the American College of Healthcare Executives' policy statement that:

> "healthcare executives must take the lead in their organisations to increase employment opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities and to advocate on behalf of their employment to other organisations in their communities".[58]

Project SEARCH was launched to provide skills training through workplace internships. In the US, the internships took place in healthcare settings but soon expanded to several different commercial businesses.

Individuals who undertake Project SEARCH are provided with individualised plans for job searching based on skills and interests before beginning a one-year internship program, which includes 3 rotations at different workplaces where individuals are supported throughout. Today, the program has been established across 300 sites, mostly in the US.[59]

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56 APAE São Paulo. "Instituto Jô Clemente", accessed 23 November 2022. https://ijc.org.br/pt-br/Paginas/default.aspx

57 Zero Project. "Professional Inclusion Brazil", accessed 23 November 2022. https://zeroproject.org/view/project/348119bc-8513-eb11-a813-000d3ab9b226

58 Cincinnati Children's Hospital . "Project SEARCH," 2021, accessed 23 November 2022. https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/careers/diverse-workforce/project-search

59 Paul Wehman, Carol Schall, Jennifer McDonough, Alissa Molinelli, Erin Riehle, Whitney Ham, and Weston R. Thiss. 2013. "Project SEARCH for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Increasing Competitive Employment on Transition from High School." *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* 15(3): 144-155. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300712459760

Employment rates for people with intellectual disability in the UK have remained stubbornly low, at around 7-12%, for the last two decades.[60] Young people with intellectual disability transitioning out of highschool face considerable challenges. One of the key issues in the UK is that services designed to support this transition are delivered by a range of independent agencies, often through partnerships between various organisations. There is a plethora of literature substantiating these challenges.[61]

Project SEARCH was launched in the UK in 2009 to explore how the model could better support this transition, particularly by encouraging participation and support from the business community to increase open employment opportunities for young people with intellectual disability.

Today, Project SEARCH has been implemented across more than 60 sites in the UK. The programs are set up as partnerships between local commercial businesses, the state vocational rehabilitation program, a local education agency, a local community rehabilitation program, disability service providers, and employment service organisations.

Evaluations on the model in both the US and more recently in the UK have demonstrated the high employment rates of individuals who take part. In the US, a five-year longitudinal study of sites in Upstate New York between 2009-2014 showed that 84% of graduating interns were able to get a paid job and maintain employment in a competitive integrated work environment.[62]

While the same longitudinal data is lacking in the UK, one evaluation of 2009-2013 found that across the UK's Project SEARCH sites, 315 interns (51.5%) secured a paid job.[63] Data collected by DFN Project SEARCH reports that between 2016 and 2020, around 62% of interns secure jobs after completing their internships, 80% of which being full time employment.[64]

Reflecting broader trends related to SE models, research shows that the key components of Project SEARCH are:

- the emphasis on collaboration between non-government support services, the business community, local authorities, state services and schools;
- the presumption of employability among the wider community;
- individualised assessment, job coaching and support; and
- ongoing support throughout internship placements.

60 Saeed Almalki, "A Qualitative Study of Supported Employment Practices in Project SEARCH." *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities* 67 (2) 2021: 140-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2019.1627793

61 S. Beyer & Kaehne A, "The transition of young people with learning disabilities to employment: what works?" *Journal on Developmental Disabilities* 14, 2009: 81– 90; R. Baer et al."Students with intellectual disabilities: predictors of transition outcomes. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals* 34, 2011: 132– 141.

62 J. Christensen, S. Hetherington, M. Daston and E. Riehle, "Longitudinal outcomes of Project SEARCH in upstate New York" *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 42 2015: 247–255.

63 Axel Kaehne, "Project SEARCH UK: Evaluating Its Employment Outcomes" *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 29(6) 2015: 519-530.

64 DFN Project SEARCH, Impact Report 2021, accessed 20 November 2022, https://www.dfnprojectsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DFN-Project-SEARCH-Impact-Report-2021

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

APPENDIX A

Inclusion Australia

EXPLAINING THE EVIDENCE FOR REFORM SERIES

The logic for reform: employment for people with intellectual disability in Australia

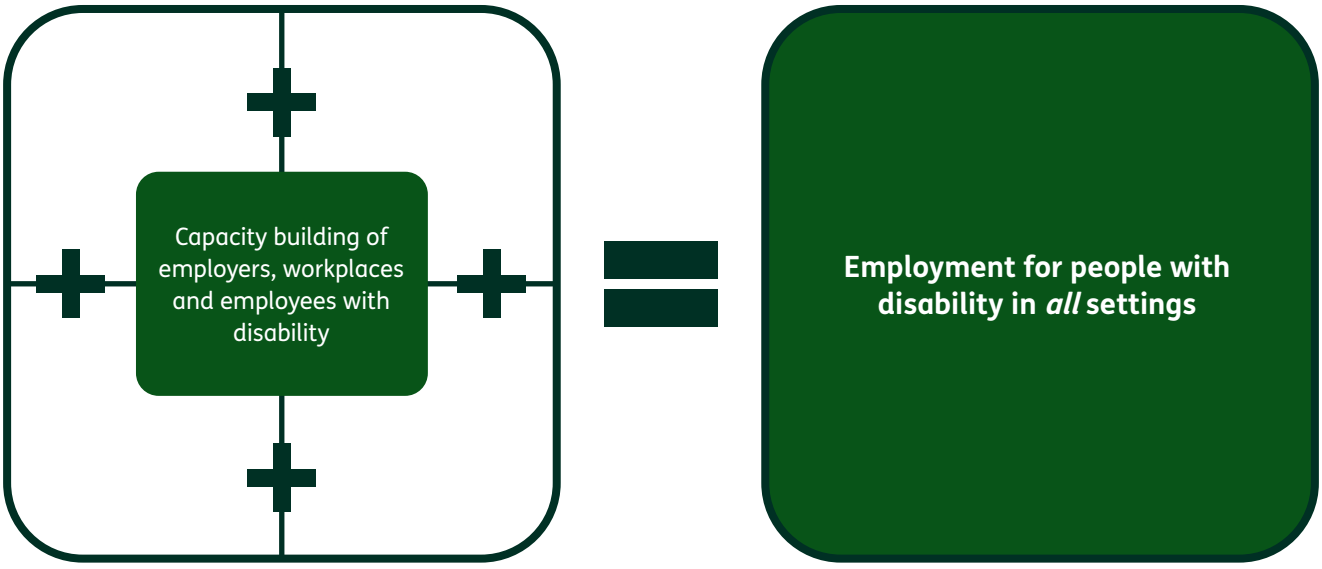
Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J. & Campbell, P. (2022). The Logic for Reform: Employment for People with Intellectual Disability in Australia, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

> People with an intellectual disability want to work for the same reasons as other people; the social benefits of being with other people, to learn skills and get job satisfaction, and to earn a wage (Inclusion Australia and People with Disability Australia, 2022, p.5).
>
> People with disability can work if given the right support (AFDO, 2018, p. 15).
>
> If people are willing to work, they should be supported to regardless of assessed capacity (Down Syndrome Australia, in DSS, 2018, p. 37).

The goals

Goal 1: All people with disability who want to work should have the opportunity to work in all employment settings.

This goal substantially shifts the way employment settings have been conceived of for people with significant disability. It potentially has ramifications for the *Disability Services Act, 1986*, and also for the *Disability Discrimination Act.*



Dismantling segregating policy

Current Commonwealth government policy is based on a binary division, established by the Disability Services Act 1987, between those who can work 'independently' and therefore entitled to support to access 'open employment' (i.e. competitive, integrated employment), and those that are assumed to be unable to work in open or competitive environments and therefore expected to work in 'supported employment' settings (ADEs).

Commonwealth government active labour market policy and programs have similarly offered employment supports linked to concepts of work capacity. This has resulted in a form of structural segregation where work capacity classifications unlock different levels and types of employment supports, leading some to be locked out of supports. Employment supports have largely been premised on bifurcated thinking: customised and ongoing supports are only offered to those relegated to 'supported employment' provided only in specialised settings (ADEs), while job vacancy matching and limited support are offered to those deemed capable of open employment. In the main, this approach has locked people with intellectual disability into ADEs.

Dismantling the existing models:

Currently	→	Required
Division between Open and Supported Employment i.e. only offer high level of ongoing support in Supported Employment settings	→	The provision of support (including high levels of ongoing support) to be offered in ANY employment setting.
Match to existing job vacancy as primary logic of employment services. Job customisation is not provided by ALMP providers including DES.	→	Job customisation is a core employment support widely available for use in all employment settings. Job 'creation' and identification is a core strategy alongside job vacancy matching offered by a range of employment service providers.
DES is only for people who are not already employed	→	DES is widely available for all people with disability seeking employment support to access employment, including people moving from employment in ADEs to other forms of employment. DES offers a wider range of employment supports.
Notion of 'independent' worker is a pre-requisite for open employment (and related employment support)	→	Remove notion of 'independence' as a worker, i.e. a worker does not need to be independent of supports to successfully gain and maintain employment in any setting. Instead, entitlement to supports, adjustments and environmental modifications are routinely recognised and there is access to funded supports 'beyond reasonable adjustment' in all employment settings.
Employment services focused on narrow band of employment support interventions	→	Wide focus of employment services aligned to addressing biopsychosocial barriers to employment targeting the job seeker, employer and workplace, and broader social and systemic contexts.
'Supported wages' that lock people into subminimum wage levels	→	If retained, 'Supported wages' explicitly require evidence of supports and adjustments that function to maximise productivity and employment opportunities

The frame for this policy shift is a commitment to the equal entitlement to employment in all settings for people with intellectual disability. Underpinning this is a dismantling of concepts of 'open' and 'supported employment', replacing these with a standard of high quality, inclusive employment that applies to all settings.

High quality, inclusive employment should be available in all settings and is characterised by:

- work that holds value for the employee with disability,
- relevant and adequate supports being provided, including funding for higher levels of job customisations and ongoing support ('supported employment')
- integrated workforces (of people with and without disability) and/or
- integrated work settings (where work is community-facing or located in non-disability specific settings and industry workplaces), and/or
- highly effective pathways to integrated or hybrid employment
- adequate remuneration.

Goal 2: People with disability receive an appropriate range and level of employment supports to enable them to perform at their best in a workplace that fully supports them to do so.

To achieve the first goal of employment in all settings, people with disability and employers need access to an appropriate range and level of employment supports.

This substantially shifts the way work capacity is understood where capacity is linked to the provision of appropriate supports and the removal/remediation of barriers to employment. In this context the focus shifts from work capacity to strategies and support for capacity building (of both the employer/workplace and the jobseeker/employee with disability). Suitable employment is dependent on:

a. reasonable adjustments being made by the employer (with the support of the Commonwealth government, for example via the Employment Assistance Fund or other mechanisms like tax rebates);

b. the provision of other employment supports (targeting the jobseeker and/or employer). Employment supports should be both universal and specialist supports, with entitlements to both;

c. the provision of additional highly specialised supports where 'beyond reasonable' adjustments and supports are required, such as high levels of job customisation, adaptations and on-going support (to both employer/workplace and employee).

A non-segregated employment support system: equal access to all employment services

The type and availability of employment supports should not be limited by the type of income support payment a person is entitled to nor the assessment of 'productivity' or 'work capacity'. All citizens should have the same right to access employment supports funded by Government. Assessments of additional barriers or need should unlock *additional* supports, not relegate individuals to a more limited form of employment supports and employment options. (See Paper 1.) Access to upgraded or specialised services should be available in addition to, work in collaboration with, and not replace the right of entitlement to, 'mainstream' or universal employment supports and services.

Employment supports and services that directly address the full range of (biopsychosocial) barriers to employment.

Employment supports and services need to be designed to be appropriate to the needs of job seekers with intellectual disability. This includes a re-design of existing active labour market programs to ensure they include all people with disability and supply relevant employment supports. Effective employment supports are those that address the barriers to employment for each individual across a wide range of focuses. Jobseekers with disability need to be able to select from the whole range of inclusive mainstream employment services and a specialised set of employment services, not be streamed into one or another. (See Paper 2.)

Evidence based and effective employment supports for people with intellectual disability.

There is international and domestic evidence about the design and delivery of effective employment supports and services for people with intellectual disability. These supports need substantial investment to upscale their availability in Australia to all people with intellectual disability and their employers regardless of their location. (See Papers 2 and 3).

Re-focusing the contribution of ADEs

The role and activities of ADEs can be re-imagined. ADEs can offer:

a. the creation of jobs that are designed to build and maximise the capacity of employees with moderate to significant disability, and of other groups;

b. opportunities to trial/gain work experience in a range of industries and work settings including among integrated workforces and/or settings; and

c. clear pathways to other employment opportunities beyond the enterprise.

In addition, there is a need to build the market of specialist employment service providers who have the expertise to provide employment supports in workplaces where 'beyond reasonable adjustments' are required. This typically requires high levels of job customisation and the provision of on-going employment support delivered to meet the needs of all employment settings (See Papers 4 and 5). This may be an additional area of commercial operation for some ADEs if they can be supported to re-work their business models to unlock their specialist expertise (and workforce) for use as employment specialists to support other workplaces.

The funding of employment of supports

Sufficient funding needs to be available to fund the full range of employment supports, for both jobseeker/employee and employer/workplace, as well as the wider societal supports around these (such as regional school leaver or employment networks). The NDIS has disrupted the exclusive funding of 'supported employment' to ADEs, enabling employment-related funding to be used in any employment setting. NDIS funding is now potentially a mechanism to ensure that all levels of job customisation, workplace adjustments and ongoing support (beyond those reasonably required by the *Disability Discrimination Act*) can be provided across all employment types. However, this funding has not been designed to cover a wide range of employment supports or ongoing capacity building needed to enable people with significant disability to perform at their best in a workplace that fully supports them to do so. Nor does it address the requirements of employers and workplaces for the level of capacity building required. Additionally, the market of suitable providers of the wide range of employment supports is inadequate (or non existent) and needs explicit investment and curation. Similarly, a mechanism to join-up or supplement employment supports and services in a wide range of systems and jurisdictions is required that addresses how to utilise individualised funding in inter-linked systems.

Explaining the evidence for reform series

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) has undertaken a range of research related to the employment needs of people with disability over several years, in addition to a substantial body of research related to social enterprise. The Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series draws on this research and synthesises its evidence. In addition, CSI researchers undertook a rapid review of evidence relating to the Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE) sector drawing on published studies, policies and reports; the publicly available aspects of the Buyability data set (managed by the National Disability Services); and a desktop review of ADEs.

Together, this research base was organised to present evidence in five papers, with this 'Logic for Reform' paper as an overview of the underpinning logic emerging from the research. The series includes:

Paper 1: Understanding the Employment Ecosystem for People with Intellectual Disability.

This paper provides an overview of the employment ecosystem which constructs access to employment supports for people with disability.

Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support.

This paper explains the range of employment supports that should be available, and the extent to which they are provided in the current system.

Paper 3: School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) – Reshaping the Approach.

This paper collates the existing data available on SLES, and on the experiences of young people with intellectual disability seeking school to work transition. It identifies employment support needs aligned to best practice evidence.

Paper 4: The ADE Snapshot.

This paper collates the existing data available about ADEs, adding new data to identify the current state of the ADE sector.

Paper 5: The WISE-Ability Model.

This paper presents a new model for ADEs: the WISE-Ability model. The model articulates the organisational elements that build capacity of employees including pathways to open employment. The paper also identifies data from research about the funding barriers to transitioning employees from ADEs to open employment.

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Paper 1: Understanding the employment ecosystem for people with intellectual disability

Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 1: Understanding the Employment Ecosystem for People with Intellectual Disability, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Headlines:

- A bifurcated system of 'open' and 'supported employment' has been established since 1986, via the Disability Services Act 1986, and has directed those with higher support needs to ADEs.
- Recent changes, via NDIS, mean high level supports (i.e. beyond reasonable adjustment) are now available in all workplaces, disrupting the segregated system of open and supported employment services.
- The current Commonwealth employment support system is based on criteria that restricts entry to employment supports based on' work capacity', i.e. number of hours able to be worked per week. This system means those most in need of employment support are routinely ineligible for it via a range of Commonwealth labour market programs.
- Work capacity is linked to notions of productivity and used to justify payment of sub minimum wages. It is not clear if adequate training, supports, adaptations and productivity have been provided, as required by law, to enable maximum productivity.
- The NDIS has altered the way supported employment is funded and where it can be funded, enabling all workplaces (not just ADEs) to offer supported employment.
- As an individualized funding mechanism, NDIS funding is not able to be used to compensate for the inaccessible design features of mainstream activities such as vocational training, secondary school work experience programs or active labour market programs, meaning these remain poorly designed or exclusionary for people with intellectual disability.
- The market of providers has not responded to a clear market gap by initiating evidence-based employment supports for people with intellectual disability.
- There are overlapping systems and services of employment-related supports including schools, TAFEs, Commonwealth labour market programs (such as DES), the NDIS, and other employment services. These largely do not offer relevant employment supports for people with intellectual disability.

Introduction

Policy has a significant impact on the experiences and outcomes of people with intellectual disability in relation to employment. The Department of Social Services, Supported Employment Consultations with stakeholders in 2017/2018 identified that

> Well-designed policy and processes were considered the most important element that supports or contributes to good employment outcomes in supported employment (DSS, 2018, p.33).

The following outlines some of the key components of the employment policy landscape relating to the employment of intellectual disability in Australia, and their impacts.

Overarching disability policy framework

Commonwealth and State policies since 2008 have broadly echoed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), and its assertion of the rights of people with disability to lives of inclusion on an equal basis with others, including in the area of employment (Article 27). The right to employment is available to all people with disability regardless of the nature or extent of disability. The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013,* likewise includes Objects and Principles that promote 'full inclusion' and participation in mainstream employment (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

However, these aspirations have not been enabled by more targeted policies and programs relating to the employment of people with disability which have been dubbed 'incoherent' and 'misaligned with the rights of people with disability' and the overarching policy objectives of full inclusion (AFDO, 2018, p.3).

The construction of a divided system of employment expectations and employment services for people with disability

In 1986, the *Disability Services Act* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987) established two broad types of employment services for people with disability, open and supported employment services, essentially enshrining a bifurcated model where only some people with disability were supported into open employment. As described by Cheng et al. (2018):

> Open employment services provide assistance for job seekers with disabilities to obtain and maintain their employment in the regular workforce through specialist support from outside of the employee's workplace (p. 318 citing Anderson, Psychogios, & Golley, 2000).

Open employment supports in Australia originally broadly aligned with approaches called 'supported employment' in international contexts, with the aim of a 'real job for regular wages in an integrated setting alongside employees without disability' (Cheng et al., 2018, p. 318) through the provision of a range of supports prior to and post employment. Open employment services for people with disability are now primarily delivered by Disability Employment Services, funded by the Commonwealth government and administered by the Department of Social Services. In recent decades, the narrowing of the types of supports funded within open employment services for people with disability has meant that they now compare poorly with international literature on 'supported employment' approaches for people with disability.

The *Disability Services Act* also established the second category of employment services, called 'supported employment services' for those people who are 'unlikely' to gain competitive employment at or above the award wage:

> *supported employment services* means services to support the paid employment of persons with disabilities, being persons:
>
> (a) for whom competitive employment at or above the relevant award wage is unlikely; and
>
> (b) who, because of their disabilities, need substantial ongoing support to obtain or retain paid employment (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987, Part 11, Div 1, 7.).

Unfortunately, this posits the view that people with high support needs will be unable to work in open employment and positions the provision of high levels of employment supports as only applied to those unlikely to gain competitive (open) employment and only available in specialist supported employment services (later called Australian Disability Enterprises [ADEs]).

Unintentionally, this definition has reinforced segregation rather than the inclusion and integration of people with disability envisaged within the Objects of the Act. Until recently, supported employment services have been provided in settings such as 'sheltered workshops, enclaves or work crews' (Cheng et al., 2018, p. 318), called Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) (since 2009), and funded by the Commonwealth government. Funding arrangements for ADEs have been changing since the advent of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) where funding has been shifting from 'case based' funding to ADEs to individualised funding to purchase employment supports within the funding packages of NDIS participants. Recent changes have enabled participants to utilise 'supports in employment' funding in services other than ADEs, though the market of service providers for this is yet to emerge. Further information about ADEs is available in Paper 4.

In 2012, the changes to be brought about by the NDIS were forecast by the Commonwealth government and an independent Advisory Council. In this context, it was proposed that 'supported employment' should be redefined simply as 'ongoing support' and that the 'barriers between the terms "open" and "supported" employment for people with disability who need ongoing support to find and maintain work' be removed (FaHCSIA, n.d., p.6).

Regardless of these changes to funding, current policy 'presumes that people with intellectual and multiple disabilities are largely unable to work in open employment settings' (AFDO, 2018, p. 13). Underpinning the design of employment services funded by the Commonwealth have been assumptions about 'independent workers' in open employment defined as needing only limited or short term supports (DSS, 2017).

Commonwealth employment services system

Australian Commonwealth governments have adopted Active Labour Market Programs (ALMPs) as the main mechanism of support to enter open employment for unemployed people receiving income supports. ALMPs target the jobseeker and largely focus on job search effectiveness, work readiness via work experience and on-the-job training, wage subsidies paid to employers or public sector job creation, and formal education and training (Borland, 2014). In Australia, employment services are administered by a range of different Commonwealth government departments (for example, Department of Social Services [DSS], Department of Education, Skills and Employment [DESE], and the National Indigenous Australians Agency [NIAA]) and delivered by a market of for-profit and not-for-profit providers (OECD, 2017). While people with disability are very likely to be part of the wider cohorts targeted by these services (Immervoll et al., 2019), the primary 'specialist' employment service for people with disability is the Disability Employment Service (DES), discussed later.

In addition to the suite of marketized employment services, since 2015/16 the Commonwealth government offers a centralised information hub for disability employment known as 'JobAccess'. The service comprises:

- The JobAccess Website (www.jobaccess.gov.au);
- the Telephone Advice line;
- the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF);
- the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS);
- the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline; and
- the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator (NDRC).

While the JobAccess service is valued by employers, employment service providers and job seekers, noted gaps have been identified in the delivery of accessible and relevant information to people with disability, supporting people with disability to find work, and supporting employers to create vacancies and actually hire people with disability (Colmar Brunton, 2019). There is no evidence that JobAccess has been designed to encompass the needs of people with intellectual disability or those who employ them.

Providers of employment services

The Commonwealth ALMP system is comprised of a national market of providers including: 39 for jobactive, 46 for the Community Development Program (CDP) and 110 for DES (two thirds of these are not for profit) (BCG, 2020a), with the largest five DES providers having 42% of market share (BCG, 2020b).

DES is the main 'specialist' employment service for people with disability seeking open employment, who have a work capacity of between 8 and 30 hours per week.

> Support offered by DES providers may include career advice, assistance to prepare resumes and job applications, job readiness skills training (e.g. interview skills, searching and applying for work), identifying appropriate education and training courses, as well as supporting employers and jobseekers to access wage subsidies or implement workplace modifications (Olney et al., 2022, p.167, quoting DSS, 2018).

DES has two service elements:

1. Disability Management Services (DMS) is for job seekers with disability, injury or health condition who need assistance to find a job and occasional support to keep a job; and
2. Employment Support Services (ESS) that provides assistance to people with permanent disability and who need regular, ongoing support to keep a job (Productivity Commission, 2020, p.15:41).

In 2020-21, 176,274 people with disability used the 'Disability Management Services' aspect of DES, and 223,607 used the Employment Support Services of DES, at a total cost of more than $786M for DES (Productivity Commission, 2022).

In the supported employment arena, the exact number of ADEs in Australia is difficult to determine since the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set ceased in 2019 (Productivity Commission, 2021), and the use of the term 'Australian Disability Enterprise' is no longer required since the cessation of funding from DSS. It is estimated that there are around 152 main organisational entities operating approximately 477 commercial outlets in Australia, formerly funded as ADEs (see Paper 4 for more details). In 2017, people with intellectual disability comprised 70-75% of the ADE workforce (DSS, 2018), and in 2020, the NDIA reported that NDIS participants with an intellectual disability over 25 years of age were predominantly employed in ADEs (70%) if employed (NDIA, 2020).

Overall, evidence has consistently indicated that the market system has not worked for people with disability. Disability Employment Services have seen a decrease in already poor outcomes between 2018 (when the last reforms were implemented) and 2020 (Devine et al., 2021; BCG, 2020b). The most recent review has attributed this poor performance to 'limited disability expertise and labour market specialisation of DES providers' as well as system complexity and the compliance and monitoring roles of DES within the income support system (Devine et al., 2021, p. 3). Recommendations from the DES review (BCG, 2020b) forecast further narrowing of access to DES by people with disability, thereby reducing options for employment support. This further alienates people with disability from relevant and appropriate employment supports, as those cast out of the DES system would be cast into the mainstream active labour market programs which remain poorly designed and ill-suited to the needs of people with disability, with evidence showing that 'job-seekers with disabilities feel less well-supported within the mainstream employment program' (Devine et al., 20121, p. 11) and mainstream programs not being designed to be accessible to people with disability (Wilson et al., 2021).

Wages, pensions and 'work capacity' assessment

Wage and pension arrangements, particularly for people with intellectual disability, have functioned to reinforce the bifurcated thinking about employment opportunities and supports. Within the Commonwealth labour market system there are usually two levels of eligibility, eligibility for income support and eligibility to employment supports, linked to income support type. The Commonwealth uses three types of eligibility testing and streaming for applicants entering employment services and supports:

- Job Seeking Classification Instrument (JSCI),
- Employment Services Assessment (ESAt),
- Job Capacity Assessment (JCA), i.e. number of hours able to be worked each week.

Based on these assessments, access to Commonwealth-funded employment supports is determined by a complex set of cascading eligibility criteria including:

- type of income support benefit (related to capacity to work, i.e. number of hours per week)
- mutual obligation requirements (applied variably depending on type of eligibility for Disability Support Pension)
- cohort factors specific to each type of active labour market program / employment service
- which employment service is then identified as the primary 'gateway' for the recipient, (such as jobactive), which then enables or closes off access to further employment services (Wilson et al., 2021).

The range and number of employment service types available via the Commonwealth diminishes with lower levels of assessed work capacity and is automatically narrowed by becoming a Disability Support Pension recipient (who, to be eligible, are unable to work more than 15 hours per week). Those assessed as able to work less than 8 hours per week are only eligible for ADE employment services or to fund other services from their NDIS package if they have employment related funding allocated. People working less than 8 hours per week, and employers who employ them, are also not eligible for the Commonwealth's Employment Assistance Fund (via JobAccess). Criteria that restricts entry to employment supports based on number of hours worked per week is likely to mean that those most in need of employment support are routinely ineligible for it.

As at June 2021, there were approximately 753,000 recipients of Disability Support Pension (Productivity Commission, 2022). People with intellectual disability are manifestly entitled to Disability Support Pension (DSP) as income support. While the 1991 Disability Reform Package enabled those receiving the DSP to supplement the pension with part time work (Cheng et al. 2018), work is currently capped at 30 hours per week and income support payments diminish on a pro rata basis commensurate with wage income. Critiques are frequently made of the way the DSP functions to disincentivise employment, particularly open or full wage employment. This is made more complex by different rules that apply to work in ADE settings.

Hours of work limits for DSP recipients are not applied to work in ADEs (and data shows that a substantial proportion of people on DSP working in ADEs work more than 30 hours per week though are paid a pro rata wage) and those on DSP are exempt from periodic eligibility reviews if working in an ADE or receiving a supported wage (NDIA, 2020).

Notions of work 'capacity' align with notions of 'competency' and 'productivity' leading to a system of legalised 'subminimum wages' (the term used in the United States) comprised of pro rata wages applied to people assessed as having reduced productivity. The Supported Wage System (SWS), established in 1994, is one of several pro rata or productivity based wage systems in operation, all based on diverse assessments of productivity and/or competency. The SWS 'allowed employers to pay a pro-rata wage to workers unable to work at full productivity, based on an independently assessed productivity rate' (Cheng et al., 2017, p. 318). Supported wages can be paid in both open and supported employment. The Supported Wage System (SWS) is the mechanism used in open employment, and

> applies to employees with disability and who have a reduced work capacity. If an employee is covered by an award or registered agreement, a supported wage can only be paid if the award or agreement has SWS provisions. Where an award or agreement has SWS provisions, an eligible employee is entitled to a percentage of the minimum pay rate for their classification, depending on their assessed work capacity (NDIA, 2020, p.4).

Where employees are not covered by an award or national agreement, the national minimum wage or a pro rate wage for assessed work capacity is paid. The wage floor in such circumstances is $95 per week (Fair Work Commission, n.d).

Pro rata wages have also been a feature of supported employment (ADEs). The Supported Employment Services Award (SESA) 2002 is the current award for supported employment,

> it covers most Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs). The Award allows ADEs to pay pro-rata wages to eligible workers with disability, calculated using an approved wage assessment tool (DSS, 2018, p. 40).

The SWS can also be used under the SESA under certain conditions (DES, 2021). DSS reported in 2018 that there were then 29 different wage assessment tools in the Award. The SESA provides a wage floor of 12.5% of the relevant minimum wage for the appropriate classification (Fair Work Commission, n.d). The Draft Determination of the Fair Work Commission (2022) in reviewing the SESA 2020, identifies the lowest hourly rate for the lowest pay grade to be $4.75, or for those subject to the Supported Wage System, $2.75 per hour (Fair Work Commission, 2022).

This significantly low level of wage has been an ongoing source of critique of ADEs, where pro rata wages are common. As noted by the Association for Employees with a Disability (AED) in its recent submission to the Fair Work Commission:

> Disabled ADE employees are the lowest paid in the modern award system, lower even than those covered by the second special national minimum wage … [which] reinforces a social status which is incompatible with the human rights of the employees… The outcome is an inferior form of workforce participation (AED, 2022, p. 9, 10).

Pro rate wages have largely been seen as being co-dependent on employees also being in receipt of DSP (though receipt of DSP is not a formal requirement of the SWS). In recent times, there has been discussion about different models to provide a 'living' or 'fair' wage linked to ideas such as universal basic income, and a restructuring of the DSP for workers with low 'productivity' to become a form of wage subsidy to support the payment of award or minimum wage levels (AFDO, 2018; DSS, 2018).

Any kind of allocation of wage, income support or employment service based on assessment of work capacity is underpinned by concepts of 'capacity', 'competency' and 'productivity'. These have received significant scholarly and legal debate. International literature related to efficacy of models to support the employment of people with disability has critiqued these approaches as aligned to a biomedical model of disability (based on decontextualised assessments of physical and cognitive function linked to diagnosis).

Internationally, and in Australia, there has been a level of critique of de-contextualised, predictive work capacity assessments (for example, AFDO, 2018; Dyson, Brown, Canobi, 2016). International commentators overwhelmingly endorse a biopsychosocial approach.

> This distinguishes between the impairment (i.e. the 'problem in body function or structure'), and the 'restrictions' to participation in employment that are the result of the combination of the impairment with other individual factors and broader environmental and social factors (WHO, 2002, p. 10) (Wilson et al., 2021, p.21).

The biopsychosocial approach focuses assessment on 'identifying the wide diversity of factors restricting work participation' (Wilson et al. 2021, p.21), rather than locating 'capacity' in the impairments of the individual. Using a human rights lens then requires the remediation of these barriers through provision of accommodations/adjustments and supports.

> Of importance in the CRPD, is that all people with disability, regardless of type and severity, have the same entitlements to employment and should be offered sufficient supports and adaptations to achieve it (Wilson et al., 2021, p. 21, citing Harpur et al., 2017).

The biopsychosocial approach fundamentally reshapes the way 'work capacity' is understood and requires a wide range of employment supports to be offered to all people with disability to best address the barriers to work experienced by the individual.

This focus on the provision of necessary adaptations and supports is consistent with Australia's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, which requires reasonable adjustments to be provided. The *Guide* for SWS identifies that provision of reasonable adjustments is required by law and that:

> Sometimes reasonable adjustments require more than modifications to the physical working environment. The manner in which reasonable adjustments are made will vary according to the needs of the employee with disability, the nature of the job, the physical setting, and the knowledge of people in the workplace. The provision of an appropriate modification to the workplace could mean the difference between a 60 per cent level of assessed productivity and an 80 per cent level (DES, 2021b., p. 16).

Similarly, an assessment of productivity should only occur after the worker with disability has received 'specialised on-the-job training' over a suitable period of time relevant to the learning needs of the individual (DES, 2021b). The assessment of productivity should also assess the adequacy of job/task customization to match the strengths of the individual (DES, 2021b). In this context, training, supports, adaptations and productivity are inextricably linked to ensure the worker with disability has the opportunity to maximise productivity (and salary scale) within the parameters of the inherent requirements of the job.

This has particular implications for the NDIS as the NDIS is now also a funder of various forms of employment and capacity building support. Case studies (presented in Paper 5) highlight the difficulty of obtaining timely and adequate levels of NDIS approved funding to enable the employee with disability to acquire competency and maximise productivity on-the-job. This potentially impacts, and limits, their assessed productivity and impacts their wages. In one instance, the employee with disability had been able to increase his level of assessed productivity following inclusion of NDIS funded supports, but these supports were not expected to be continuously funded, potentially affecting his ongoing wage level.

While supported wages have been a feature of supported employment in ADEs, they are also used in open employment. In practice, there is no public data about the number of supported wages approved in Australia each year, nor the extent to which the level of reasonable adjustments, support and training were adequate to maximise productivity. As discussed, numerous parties have responsibilities to ensure supports and adjustments have been provided including JobAccess (EAF), the employer, employment support providers (such as DES or ADEs), and NDIS, but there is no documentation about how these responsibilities co-exist or interact to best effect for the employee with disability.

Supported or pro rata wage systems have complex rationales, with an ill-defined and often invisible responsibility of all parties to build the maximum productivity of the employee with disability. It has been argued that a better targeting of policy response would be investment in the skill development and support of people with disability to attain work and be productive, rather than in managing sub minimum wage systems that reinforce discrimination based on negative assumptions about people with disability (Burchardt & McKnight, 2003). This has also been a policy position of the Commonwealth government in times past, when a purpose for specialised employment supports was envisaged as 'maximising wage outcomes' (FaHCSIA, n.d, p. 7).

Overlapping systems

While 'People with disability have the same right of access to mainstream services as all Australians, consistent with the goals of the new *Australia's Disability Strategy* (ADS)' (Productivity Commission, 2022), they are rarely well catered for within them. The biopsychosocial approach provides a useful frame to understand the important role of a wide array of service systems in the pathway of people with disability into employment. Even leaving aside systems associated with barriers to employment like health, housing or transport, a plethora of systems and services remain which provide noted complexity for people with disability and their supporters. For example, for young people with intellectual disability moving from school to post-school economic participation, the systems with which they engage include the income support system (DSP), the NDIS, state/territory-funded secondary education and TAFE, Commonwealth active labour market programs including DES, NDIS-funded service providers such as School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) providers and ADEs, and disability services (Crosbie, 2022).

NDIS

Because many people with intellectual disability are not eligible for Commonwealth ALMPs, they are reliant on NDIS funding to purchase employment supports. This places significant impost on both the scheme as well as on participants. Consultations highlight that many NDIS participants are not well equipped or informed to know what to ask for in their plans in relation to employment, nor do planners sufficiently prioritise employment. As a result, employment goals have been missing from plans, and there have been delays in having this rectified (DSS, 2018). These factors contribute to the poor record of NDIS in supporting employment outcomes of people with disability. As a result, the NDIS has instituted a target of 30% of participants of working age to gain meaningful employment (Olney et al., 2022). Currently, this target has not been met. As Table 1 shows, while young people under 25 experience somewhat increased employment outcomes for a period following engagement with NDIS, those over 25 experience diminishing employment outcomes over time.

Table 1: Employment status of NDIS participants entry vs 4 years as NDIS participant (NDIA, 2020)

TOTAL % of NDIS participants with a paid job on entry (of those entering 1 July 2016 – 31 Dec 2020)	**15-24 years**	**25+ years**
	17%	21%
Employment status categories (on entry)	**% of people with paid job (on entry to Scheme) in each category**	
In open employment, at full award wages	51%	47%
In open employment, at less than full award wages	12%	8%
In ADEs	27%	36%
In self-employment	1%	7%
Employment status change after 4 years in NDIS		
% of change in employment status	↑ 12%	↓ 4%

Within these results, people with intellectual disability comprise 19.6% of NDIS participants (and people with Autism, 32.5%), and employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability are largely within ADEs.

As an individualised funding system, the NDIS offers funding to support employment that can only be used by an individual to purchase employment supports from a market.

> The NDIS has significantly changed the way many employment interventions are funded and delivered by offering individualised funds to NDIS funded participants that they can choose to use at a range of providers. A review of the NDIS registered provider lists available through the NDIA's website shows several thousand providers registered to provide assistance to access and maintain employment or deliver specialised employment support (Brown and Mallet, 2021, p.22).

Despite this lengthy list of employment providers, there is little understanding of what supports are available to purchase and research identifies a gap in the availability of a market of employment support providers for people with intellectual disability (Crosbie, 2022) (see Paper 2).

The NDIS offers both 'core' and 'capacity building' funding in the area of employment supports. The NDIS has actively tried to influence the market of providers by both instituting a funding item for School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) and by changing the way 'supports in employment' (core) can be used. As described by Olney et al. (2022):

> the NDIA has adjusted how it funds employment-related supports. From July 2020, NDIS funding for core-funded employment supports became more flexible for participants requiring ongoing and/or frequent support to succeed at work, including on-site workplace support. These changes to the pricing model give NDIS participants scope to use supports to develop foundation skills for work, and to access supports in a wider range of employment settings, effectively bridging the long-standing divide between supported and open employment (NDIA, 2020a). NDIS participants can also access supports to build their capacity towards future employment from the age of 14 (NDIA, 2020a). It should be noted, however, that the NDIS does not fund skills development or workplace accommodations that would normally be funded by other government programs, employers, or DES (Olney et al., 2022, p.166).

Core supports in employment encompasses 'day-to-day assistance in the workplace to maintain employment', whereas Capacity Building employment supports include employment-related assessment and counselling; workplace assistance; and school leaver employment supports (NDIA, 2021, p.3). On face value, and in practice, the interface between NDIS funded employment supports and other employment supports with similar focus is unclear. For example, in the arena of employment-related assessment, this can potentially be supported via DES, ADEs, JobAccess and Employment Assistance Fund, and NDIS funded supports.

With the withdrawal of DSS block funding from ADEs, NDIS funding is the primary Commonwealth government income source (via ADE employees) for ADEs. As Olney et al. (2022) identify, enabling the use of 'supports in employment' funding by individuals in both open and supported workplaces, overcomes the divide between them as both then become environments into which employment supports can be delivered. The NDIA explains that participants can now

> use these supports in any workplace they choose, including government and non-government organisations, an ADE, social enterprises, micro-businesses, or in self-employment or a family run business (NDIA, https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/supports-funded-ndis/supports-employment).

In this sense, both open employment and historic ADE settings have the potential to be settings for 'supported employment'. This fundamental shift is yet to be reflected in legislation such as the Disability Services Act 1986, as now a much wider range of employment services can offer supports in employment in diverse settings, meaning that these settings all become venues of 'supported employment', as all workplaces should be to meet CRPD obligations.

In this context, NDIS employment support funding potentially pays for supports and adjustments beyond what is considered 'reasonable adjustment' within the Disability Discrimination Act, opening up a wider range of employment opportunities to people who 'need substantial ongoing support to obtain or retain paid employment' (Disability Services Act, Commonwealth of Australia, 1987, Part 11, Div 1, 7.). However, it is not clear which market of providers will offer this level and type of employment supports outside of ADE settings.

The NDIS has a complicated and complicating relationship with other systems and services that contribute to or support the goal of increased employment of people with disability, particularly DES. As discussed above, NDIS core 'supports in employment' provide funding that potentially bridges a gap in DES services, that is, by providing a level of ongoing support in the workplace beyond that which DES ESS can provide. Similarly, NDIS capacity building supports, including workplace assistance, has overlap with DES supports. While the policy intent is that there is no overlap between systems, in practice it is not clear to providers, employers or NDIS participants.

DES is also positioned by the NDIS as the end point of NDIS 'capacity building' employment supports (Olney et al, 2022). For example, DES is viewed by the NDIS as the main pathway beyond SLES (funded via NDIS capacity building employment support) and into which SLES feeds. This framing is particularly problematic for people with intellectual disability or high support needs, given the eligibility barrier for DES is a minimum work capacity of 8 hours per week and DES has been found to be largely inadequate for people with intellectual disability (BCG, 2020b; Inclusion Australia, 2022).

While the interface between DES and the NDIS is an especially obvious one, the role of NDIS in relation to other areas of employment support has also been noted (Crosbie, 2022). Individualised funding cannot easily be used to bridge or compensate for the inaccessible design features of mainstream activities such as vocational training, secondary school work experience programs or active labour market programs. Crosbie (2022) reports multiple informants identifying this as a barrier to employment for people with intellectual disability.

> Policy interface issues mean that these systems, including DES, could not be 'topped up' by specialised intellectual disability supports funded by the NDIS. For example, a support worker can easily be purchased to undertake an activity of daily living (using NDIS funding), but individualised funding cannot be used to top up the minimal supports available within the DES system by purchasing specialised intellectual disability supports. Essentially, the individualised funding of people with intellectual disability is of little use in existing government labour market programs. Overall, the available individualised funding cannot be used to mediate these systems and customise them to suit young people with intellectual disability (Crosbie, 2022, p.284).

Further, individualised funding cannot easily be converted into employer/workplace capacity building activities where effort is best collectivised across jobseekers and employers. It also cannot be used to support strategies to overcome structural barriers to employment, such as supporting regional networks of employers to enhance capacity for inclusive employment. As explained by one research participant, 'you can't use individualised funding to buy a job' (CEO of employer capacity building organisation) (Crosbie, 2022, p.295).

Overall, individualised funding is not a feature of the broader employment support ecosystem, and as such it is difficult to unlock its value in enhancing current inadequate employment services for the benefit of people with intellectual disability. The market of providers has not responded to a clear market gap by initiating evidence-based employment supports for people with intellectual disability, and the NDIS has, to date, not acted to compel or incentivise them to do so (BCG, 2020b; Crosbie, 2022).

States/Territories

The National Disability Agreement makes State and Territory governments responsible for the provision of specialist disability services (not transferred to the NDIS), except disability employment services (Productivity Commission, 2022). However, to a large extent, specialist disability services have been transferred from States and Territories to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Given this, the primary role of States and Territories in terms of supporting the employment of people with disability is via the provision of core services such as secondary schools and vocational education and training.

Schools have been shown to be the 'primary providers of early economic participation activities and transition supports in Australia' (Crosbie, 2022, p.293). Schools are responsible for both work experience programs and for early careers counselling, though have not delivered suitable supports and outcomes for young people with intellectual disability (Crosbie, 2022). Families and young people want increased employment support via schools including: careers counselling from age 14 (linked to a 'discovery' process); detailed and evolving school to work transition planning; expanded opportunities for work experience and paid work whilst at school; and expanded linkages into a wider range of economic participation options post school (DSS, 2018; Crosbie, 2022). However, the interfaces between these activities (provided to varying degrees in schools) with NDIS employment funding and DES have been a source of confusion.

In the main, young people with intellectual disability have not been well supported in relation to employment and transition planning whilst at school, and schools have reinforced pathways into ADEs or non-employment activities (Meltzer et al., 2016; Crosbie, 2022).

In their review of disability employment programs, Brown and Mallet identified 24 (16%) programs funded by State and Territory governments, with QLD and Victoria being the only states to operate state-based employment services that included people with disability. Of those run by Victoria, five programs targeted people with intellectual disability including an internship program (for university students), a micro enterprise program, a public service recruitment program, and two online vocational programs. In addition, Victoria funds a grants program (Jobs Victoria Innovation Fund) to enable innovation in employment support. Other States and Territories had a small set of programs, primarily focused on public service recruitment (Brown and Mallet, 2021).

While work integrated training programs have been a feature of evidence based employment supports for people with intellectual disability, delivery of these has been sporadic in Australia. Ticket to Work, a philanthropically funded program, works in partnership with schools, training providers and employers around Australia to deliver School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships to people with disability in some locations (Wakeford and Waugh, 2014). Similarly, there are several examples of TAFEs, employers and providers working together to deliver work-integrated learning opportunities such as the Integrated Practical Placement program between a TAFE, an employment provider (disability organisation), and a State-run children's hospital (White et al., 2019). However, while these programs highlight the potential to collaborate across State-based services (such as schools and TAFEs), these types of employment support programs are not common.

Community based

There is a wide range of activity in the provision of employment support programs funded by a variety of philanthropic, state/territory and Commonwealth government funding. A major source of funding has been the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program of the DSS (previously the NDIS), providing $ 36,014,589 between 2019 and 2021, to fund 54 economic participation programs for people with disability, largely created and delivered by the not for profit sector. Of the 54 ILC-funded projects, only 19% explicitly targeted people with intellectual disability (Qian-Khoo et al., 2021). These are further discussed in Paper 2.

Brown and Mallet (2021) identify an additional number of employment programs for people with disability funded by corporates or philanthropics including:

- Eight initiatives that were funded by private sector corporations, either as in-house programs (e.g. ANZ Spectrum program (AU_52), CrownAbility … or via a corporate partnership/donation (e.g. RACV, ANZ).
- Eight that operated a fee-for-service model (e.g. the Australian Network on Disability's (AND) initiatives …)
- Seven initiatives funded in part or wholly by philanthropic foundations (with the Paul Ramsay Foundation notable in the space for disability employment) (e.g. Ticket to Work …).
- Six initiatives funded via social enterprise revenue (either wholly or in part) (e.g. Vanguard Laundry Service…).
- Three initiatives were initially funded through research grants (e.g. Orygen's Individual Vocational and Educational Support Trial (INVEST) (Brown and Mallet, 2021, p.29).

While overall this suggests a range of activity, it is ad hoc, often short term, and with poor geographic and cohort coverage. Crosbie's research (2022) highlights that individuals with intellectual disability were often lucky to be located near an initiative or to hear about it through their networks.

Implications

The ecosystem of employment supports for people with disability is complex. It extends from early secondary school (at the age of 14) through transition from school, and then throughout life encompassing changing circumstances and individual choices. Multiple systems overlap though there is no coordinating mechanism across them.

People with intellectual disability have been largely locked out of Commonwealth funded labour market services due to work capacity assessments. The *Disability Services Act 1986* envisioned their primary support being provided through ADEs and this has largely occurred with most people with intellectual disability, if employed, being employed in this sector. The NDIS has recently disrupted this by enabling NDIS funded employment supports to be used in any employment setting. Linked to this has been the cessation of case-based funding to ADEs. Together, this offers opportunities for change.

While supports in employment can now be provided in any setting (via the NDIS), there remains a lack of employment services relevant to people with intellectual disability (to be discussed in Paper 2). The NDIS, as an individualised funding mechanism, is not easily utilised to access the sorts of employment supports people with intellectual disability need, in tandem with the systems in which other supports are provided. States and Territories have largely not provided these supports, and other sources of funding have not prioritised this group.

In order to realise the opportunities afforded by the changing notion of 'supported employment contexts', now applying also to open employment, legislative and policy change needs to align understandings of the right to employment of people with intellectual disability in all settings, linked to a similar right of access to all employment supports and services. In this reconceptualization, existing notions of 'work capacity' need to be replaced by assessments of supports and adjustments required, with funded mechanisms to link to appropriate support services to provide them. As described by AFDO:

> Supported employment recognises the capacity of people with disability to work with the right ongoing supports in a variety of settings that include open (mainstream) employment, mobile crews, social enterprises and small businesses (AFDO, 2018, p. 4).

The current employment ecosystem is not designed to deliver this to people with intellectual disability.

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Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support

Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Crosbie, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 2: Understanding the elements of employment support, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Headlines:

1. Employment supports have been narrowly defined. This has meant an extremely limited range of supports provided to people with intellectual disability.
2. Evidence shows that employment supports must be designed to address barriers to employment.
3. Employment support needs identified by people with disability do not appear to be matched by available employment supports.
4. There is substantial evidence about the employment supports that work for people with intellectual disability.

Introduction

The delivery of employment services and supports to enable people with a disability to be employed has a long history in Australia (Paper 1). The shape of these services and supports has shifted over time. For people with intellectual disability, the nature and extent of these supports has largely been shaped by:

- attitudes about the rights and work capacity of people with intellectual disability
- conceptualisation of the nature and breadth of employment support, linked to knowledge of evidence about them.

A fundamental feature of the contemporary delivery of employment supports in Australia is their marketisation. This includes government commissioned active labour market programs (such as Disability Employment Services) and supports funded by the NDIS directly to individuals, all of which are undertaken by a 'market' of providers (Paper 1).

In a market environment, Considine (2022) argues that the methods or approaches of service delivery are 'treated by government [as funders] as a black box... [meaning] there would be autonomy for the agents to use their own methods and to develop unique service approaches' (p. 6). While the intention of this kind of 'black box' commissioning was to foster a diverse market with a breadth of service offerings, when combined with narrow funding parameters (based on narrowly specified outcomes), the result for disability employment services has been a contraction of service types available (Considine, 2022).

It is in this context that this review summarises the evidence in relation to the way employment supports and services are understood in the research literature, alongside an analysis of the types of support currently available in Australia for people with intellectual disability.

What are employment services and supports?

Employment support interventions have previously been characterised as including those that 'focus on the employer, client [i.e. person with disability], healthcare provider or system more broadly' (Ho et al., 2017, p. 5, bracket added).

Multiple studies have characterised these as broadly being described as:

1. Supply side interventions (focusing on support to the job seeker/ worker), and
2. Demand side interventions (focusing on support to the employer/ workplace).

A range of evidence has also highlighted the importance of broader, community or societal level activities. For example, the literature in relation to school to work transition has evidenced the strong role of multi-agency collaboration and community or regional networks (see Paper 3). For this reason, Wilson et al. (2021) identified a third focus of employment supports:

3. Societal change interventions (to increase capacity to contribute to employment outcomes).

Employment support interventions can focus on delivering supports within any one or more of these areas.

What is the logic of employment services and supports – what are they designed to address?

Leaving aside the policy drivers that shape employment support design (discussed in Paper 1), research evidence is aligned in explaining the logic of employment supports as needing to be designed to address the barriers to employment for people with disability. Broadly, the international and Australian literature on employment supports identifies the range of barriers to work participation as being located across a diverse set of domains.

> Barriers to employment experienced by people with disability are often multifaceted, intertwining individual-level socio-demographic characteristics with vocational, non-vocational and structural barriers to gaining and maintaining work (Devine et al., 2021, p. 2).

The OECD (2018) proposes a focus on a holistic identification of barriers using a biopsychosocial lens and aligning appropriate interventions and supports.

Given that employment supports should be shaped to address barriers to employment, it is important to articulate these. A broad set of barriers to employment is explored in Table 1. As evidenced by Devine et al. (2021), the experience of 'multiple barriers across these domains can amplify challenges to gaining and maintaining employment' (p. 11).

Table 1. Barriers to work participation (adapted from Wilson et al., 2021, p.126)

Personal factors	e.g. age, gender, biopsychosocial health factors (including diagnosis, psychological dispositions such as motivation, recovery expectations, coping ability, beliefs about own ability to work, adjustment to injury, confidence), family and carer responsibilities, literacy and numeracy levels, socio-economic status, financial difficulties/debt, cultural factors, homelessness/housing; experiences of violence and abuse, lack of family or informal help or assistance.
Service factors	e.g. timely access to quality health and employment services, access to services and supports, timely and quality communication about services and entitlements, continuity of supports, design and culture of services/systems, administrative requirements, the work capacity certificate, engagement and coordination between stakeholders
Social factors	e.g. personal / family support, social networks
Vocational factors	e.g. appropriate skills and qualifications, level of education and training, access to training, level of prior work experience/history, job search skills, pre-injury employment status, length of unemployment
Job-related factors	e.g. type of occupation, availability of work customisation including modifications to tasks/duties, hours, duties and conditions, flexible working arrangements, range of suitable duties available
Workplace/ employer factors	e.g. employer size/industry, attitudes or employer (e.g. unconscious bias, perception of incapacity/ disability), employer track record, attitudes of colleagues, relationship with colleagues, skills/knowledge/resources of employer to support employment, inclusivity of workplace, availability of graduated RTW, availability of resources to support development of inclusive practice, relationship between worker and employer, organisational policies and procedures
Environmental factors	e.g. accessible infrastructure (transport) and communication, accessibility of the workplace
Societal factors	e.g. norms and attitudes, stigma, discrimination, cultural factors
Economic factors	e.g. market supply, financial incentives, labour market demand, income support policy and access; insufficient resourcing for people with disability to meet disability-related needs
(Cameron et al., 2020; Immervoll et al., 2019; Collie et al., 2020; Crosbie et al., 2019; Iles et al., 2018; Sampson et al., 2016; Devine et al., 2021).	

For people with intellectual disability, the interaction of intellectual disability with each of these barriers adds complexity. Given that people with intellectual disability have lifelong deficits in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) alongside individual strengths, addressing the above barriers in the context of intellectual disability requires the dual focus on 'the fit between the individual's capacities and the context within which the individual is to function' (Wehmeyer & Craig, 2013, p. 9).

Using this set of understandings about what constructs the barriers to employment, Wilson et al. (2021) propose that:

> Work participation is dependent on **inclusive environments** and provision of **adaptations and supports** (to mediate biopsychosocial factors), **available throughout the timespan** of injury/ illness/ impairment (p.22).

As explained in Paper 1, this understanding sits well with obligations under Australia's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

In this context, employment supports and services are necessarily diverse so as to address the range of barriers present. They can be highly individualised, designed to address the individual's barriers to employment (including supply, demand and societal level barriers), or they can be offered as an established 'program' of supports, where a predetermined set of components is identified as matching the needs of an identified cohort. In such cases, a programmed approach to replicable delivery (for example, the headspace Individual Placement and Support program) enables offering of a consistent intervention design at a local or even national scale.

Some researchers have noted that the poor performance of employment services, such as DES, in Australia can be at least partially attributed to a failure to 'address the complex array of vocational, non-vocational and structural barriers more commonly experienced by job-seekers with disabilities' through appropriate policy and program design (Devine et al., 2021, p. 14).

Understanding the menu of employment supports

Using the three focuses of employment supports- supply, demand and societal – A Typology of Employment Support Interventions, related to people with disability, illness or injury, has been developed to identify the 'menu' of employment supports that are either offered by programs, or that evidence identifies as having efficacy.

This 'menu' shifts the focus to selecting the suite of complementary (and sometimes sequential) supports required, rather than an overly narrow employment service focus on training and placement into existing job vacancies. This is consistent with the vision of the Department of Social Services (2017), writing about changes brought about by the NDIS, and forecasting 'employment supports as a flexible suite of services' (p.18).

The 'menu' or Typology is provided at Appendix 1. While there is room to further validate and expand the Typology, this approach offers a set of categories and descriptors, based on research literature and documentation of Australian disability employment interventions (Wilson et al., 2021). A summary of the categories of employment support from the Typology is provided at Table 2 below.

Table 2: Main categories of the Typology of Employment Support Interventions (Wilson et al., 2021)

Domain	Component focus of employment services/supports
Supply side interventions (focusing on support to job seeker/ worker)	
Addressing personal factors	Addressing personal context
	Addressing health context
	Integration of health, disability and employment supports
	Building capacity of informal (family) supports to support employment
	Building foundation skills and work expectations
Service access and information	Information provision (job seeker/worker)
	Referrals/ connecting to services
	Service co-ordination and navigation

Financial assistance and incentives	Financial support for personal factors
	Financial support for vocational training
	Financial support related to employment
Building and mobilising social capital (to link to employment	Building and mobilising peer support
	Building and mobilising professional/ employment networks
	Building and mobilising community networks
Planning and preparation for work	Developing soft skills
	Career guidance and planning
	Assessments of work 'capacity' and need for supports
	Transition to work activities (School/Education to work i.e. young people; ADE/day service to open employment; prison to reintegration)
Vocational skills development	Vocational training
	Work experience/ internships/ volunteering
Self-employment / entrepren-eurship	Business skills and development
	Access to capital and business resources
Job search	Job search information resources
	Job search skills building
	Job search matching and assistance
(Pre) Placement support	Job commencement/ RTW and customisation
	Workplace modifications, equipment and disclosure
Post-placement / on the job support	On the job / workplace-based training
	Post placement support (limited or fixed period)
	Ongoing assistance in the workplace (day to day)
Mass job creation	Employment-focused social enterprises
	Supported employment service (ADEs)
Demand side interventions (focusing on support to employer/ workplace)	
Information	Information provision/co-ordination (employer)
Financial assistance incentive	Financial assistance for wages
	Financial assistance for modifications
	Other financial support/incentives
Recruitment services and support	Recruitment services/support
	Connecting to target cohort
	Hosting work experience/ interns/ volunteers
Workplace / employer capacity building	Skill building, training, resources
	Inclusive workplaces capacity building
	Employer and stakeholder networks (to build inclusive workplace/ employer capacity)
Supports in the workplace	General support to employers
	New supports in the workplace
Societal change interventions (to increase capacity to contribute to employment outcomes)	
Service capacity building	DES/employment services capacity building
	Employment support services complaints handling
	Schools / education and training organisations capacity building
	Interagency collaboration

Community /regional capacity building	Development of local employment strategies
	Financial support to local employment outcomes
Structural/ macro change activities	Cross sectoral collaboration
	Policy interventions
	Government agencies to drive wholesale reform
	Job creation (public sector)

Thinking about the focus and activities of employment supports and services in this way, helps align the selected activities to the barriers to employment and enables tailoring of these to each individual. It also opens the 'black box' (Considine, 2022) of employment services to make transparent the activities that they provide. This is fundamental to service selection by people with disability, a core principle of disability policy in Australia, and particularly explicit in the NDIS.

What type of employment supports are currently provided?

There are four problems when trying to assess the adequacy of employment supports and services for people with disability in relation to the types of supports offered:

1. There is no comprehensive list that identifies the providers of employment services and supports for people with disability (beyond the active labour market programs of the Commonwealth government) so the size of the market is not known.
2. There is no agreed terminology or typology that describes the different supports and services, their focus or approach.
3. The 'black box' approach to the market of employment services means that there is little detail available about the services provided.
4. The supports provided within 'supported employment services' or Australian Disability Enterprises have largely been overlooked in the literature, and therefore inadequately understood.

Overall, this means that, even if a full list of providers was available, there is not an easy way to compare the services on offer and then to match these against either the demand for different types of support, or the evidence base for the efficacy of each.

Several recent studies have focused on capturing and classifying the types of employment support interventions delivered to people with disability in Australia (Wilson et al., 2021; Brown & Mallet, 2021). While the studies had slightly different parameters, where Brown and Mallet (2021) largely focused on Autism, Psychosocial and Intellectual disability, Wilson et al. (2021) included a focus on interventions for all people with disability and those experiencing work 'incapacity' through illness or injury. Both have used a version of a Supply/Demand typology to classify interventions, with Wilson et al. (2021) providing frequency analysis of employment supports at a more detailed level of support type, and Brown and Mallet (2021) extending their analysis to employment supports provided by State and Territory jurisdictions.

Taken together, the two studies provide a description of many employment services and supports available to people with disability in Australia, funded via the Commonwealth (labour market programs), the States and Territories (mapped in Brown and Mallet, 2021 only), and the non government (disability) sector.

Both studies have found that employment interventions are heavily weighted toward supply side interventions i.e. focused on jobseekers with disability, with far fewer focused on addressing barriers relating to employers and workplaces.

Wilson et al. (2021) used the limited descriptions of employment programs that were publicly available to estimate the relative frequency of employment support activities. This study compared 33 Commonwealth

labour market programs, including the DES program as specific to people with disability, with 54 employment programs for people with disability funded by the DSS Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grants program 2019-2021 (see Appendix 2 and 3 for details). Table 3 presents this analysis. The analysis uses a traffic light system to highlight in which categories of employment support is the delivery of services of high (green) or low (red) frequency.

The most frequent focus areas of Commonwealth labour market programs are:

- Service co-ordination and navigation, delivered by 45% of Commonwealth labour market programs, and
- Work experience / internships/ volunteering (36%).

Not all activities delivered by the Commonwealth labour market programs are delivered by DES (as the Commonwealth's flagship specialist disability service), which largely focuses on Service access and information; Job search; Pre and Post placement support.

By contrast, the most frequent focus areas of ILC employment projects are:

- Inclusive workplaces capacity building (for employers) delivered by 44% of ILC programs
- Building foundation skills and work expectations (41%), and
- Building and mobilising professional/employment networks (39%).

The analysis also shows that many areas of employment support are not currently provided by either of these two main sectors of employment services/supports for people with disability.

In the main, ILC employment funding is concentrated in areas where there are gaps or limited focus of Commonwealth labour market programs. For example, the domain of self employment and entrepreneurship is one that is supported by ILC employment projects with 20% supporting 'Business skills and development', where only 6% of Commonwealth programs do so. It should also be noted that Commonwealth programs in this area, until recently, had strict eligibility criteria that excluded many people with disability, particularly those able to only work part time, hence creating a noted gap to which some ILC-funded programs responded. Another example of 'gap' response is that of 'Building and mobilising professional/ employment networks' of jobseekers where 39% of ILC employment projects are focused, along with the related 'Building and mobilising peer support' where 19% of ILC employment projects are focused.

While this complementarity offers a mechanism to enhance the range of employment supports available to people with disability, it is problematic that gaps are only filled by precariously funded employment services that are not funded to scale, and hence have limited geographic coverage.

Finally, it should be noted that, of the 54 ILC-funded projects, only 19% explicitly targeted people with intellectual disability (Qian-Khoo et al., 2021), and none of the Commonwealth labour market programs did so, though DES has a small population (3%) of people with intellectual disability as participants. In the Brown and Mallet (2021) study, a small number of programs targeted people with intellectual disability, largely in the areas of customised employment, work integrated training, and micro-enterprise programs.

Table 3: Traffic light diagram of frequency of support types across systems

Key: % of services/supports offering the intervention focus

0-10%	11-33%	34-66%	67-100%

Group	Domain	Component focus of employment supports or services	ILC Economic Participation projects 2019-2021 % of projects (n=54)	Common-wealth labour market programs % of programs (n=33)
Supply side interventions (focusing on support to job seeker/ worker)	Addressing personal factors	Addressing personal context		0
		Addressing health context		9
		Integration of health, disability and employment supports		3
		Building capacity of informal (family) supports to support employment	4	0
		Building foundation skills and work expectations	41	15
	Service access and information	Information provision (job seeker/worker)		9
		Referrals/ connecting to services		27
		Service co-ordination and navigation		45
	Financial assistance and incentives	Financial support for personal factors		6
		Financial support for vocational training		6
		Financial support related to employment		24
	Building and mobilising social capital (to link to employment)	Building and mobilising peer support	19	3
		Building and mobilising professional/ employment networks	39	9
		Building and mobilising community networks	6	9
	Planning and preparation for work	Developing soft skills	35	24
		Career guidance and planning	33	18
		Assessments of work 'capacity' and need for supports		24
		Transition to work activities (School/Education to work i.e. young people; ADE/day service to open employment; prison to reintegration)	2	12
	Vocational skills development	Vocational training	11	24
		Work experience/ internships/ volunteering	28	36
	Self-employment / entrepreneurship	Business skills and development	20	6
		Access to capital and business resources	4	0
	Job search	Job search information resources	2	18
		Job search skills building	6	18
		Job search matching and assistance	4	21
	(Pre) Placement support	Job commencement/ RTW and customisation	4	12
		Workplace modifications, equipment and disclosure		9
	Post-placement / on the job support	On the job / workplace-based training	7	9
		Post placement support (limited or fixed period)	2	15
		Ongoing assistance in the workplace (day to day)		9
	Mass job creation	Employment-focused social enterprises		0
		Supported employment service (ADEs)		3

Demand side interventions (focusing on support to employer/ workplace)	Information	Information provision/co-ordination (employer)		9
	Financial assistance incentive	Financial assistance for wages		27
		Financial assistance for modifications		6
		Other financial support/incentives		9
	Recruitment services and support	Recruitment services/support	4	21
		Connecting to target cohort	9	9
		Hosting work experience/ interns/ volunteers	4	15
	Workplace / employer capacity building	Skill building, training, resources	11	9
		Inclusive workplaces capacity building	44	18
		Employer and stakeholder networks	2	12
	Supports in the workplace	General support to employers	17	9
		New supports in the workplace		0
Societal change interventions (to increase capacity to contribute to employment outcomes)	Service capacity building	DES/employment services capacity building		6
		Employment support services complaints handling		6
		Schools / education and training organisations capacity building		3
		Interagency collaboration		0
	Community / regional capacity building	Development of local employment strategies		6
		Financial support to local employment outcomes		6
	Structural/ macro change activities	Cross sectoral collaboration		3
		Policy interventions		0
		Government agencies to drive wholesale reform		0
		Job creation (in public sector)		0

In assessing the availability of different types of employment services and supports represented in the above table, it should also be remembered that NDIS individualized funding cannot be used to supplement access to Commonwealth labour market programs. In addition, many if not all the ILC activities listed were not functioning within the individualized funding market, having received limited term funding from the DSS to provide services.

Supports provided by ADE's

Supports provided by ADEs have not been included in the assessment above as there is very little available literature that documents the types of supports provided.

ADEs provide a range of employment supports. Their historical purpose has been job creation via commercial activity paired, in many cases, with training and vocational rehabilitation. More recently, an additional focus is on the transitioning of employees into open employment via a range of activities. Supports that have been identified via a small set of research activities[1] conducted by the Centre for Social Impact are captured in Table 4 below. This is only a sample set of employment supports and more work is needed to better understand the employment supports offered by ADEs, and their potential to also offer supports for people in open employment settings. Data from the NDIA (2020) identifies that NDIS participants have a higher level of satisfaction with on-the-job support provided in ADEs than that provided in open employment. NDIS participants reported that the 'support received in ADEs helped participants understand their work tasks and roles and provided reassurance' (NDIA, 2020, p.65).

1 Research activities include a one year research project to develop and document the WISE-Ability model (Cambell et al., 2022); case studies conducted by CSI for an extension of the WISE-Ability model, and desktop review of ADEs noting the descriptions of employment supports offered.

Table 4: ADE employment support activities discussed in case studies and desk top review:

Typology of Employment Support Interventions		ADE Employment support activities
Domain	Component of employment support or service	
Supply side		
Addressing personal factors	Integration of health, disability and employment supports	Welfare and behaviour support, mental health and emotional support
	Building capacity of informal (family) supports to support employment	Support families and carers
	Building foundational skills and work expectations	Support to gain drivers licence (to enable independent travel to work)
		Life skills coaching, social media training, cultural awareness training
		Personal health and hygiene, and communication training
Service access and information	Referrals / connecting to services	Service access and referrals
Planning and preparation for work	Developing soft skills	Support to set up superannuation
		Workplace expectations training
	Career guidance and planning	Discovery process
		Annual individual employment planning (and NDIS plan support)
		Identifying and costing clear employment goals
	Assessments of work 'capacity' and need for supports	Ongoing assessment of support needs built into NDIS plan
		Risk assessment
	Transition to work activities	Planning pathway to employment
		Employer networking and connecting
Vocational skills development	Vocational training	Specialised (accessible) technical skills training, Certified TAFE training
		Use and maintenance of industrial equipment; working with chemicals certificate
	Work experience/ internships/ volunteering	Offer range of work activities and fields to try or ongoing roster across different areas (within the ADE)
		Build work skills via experience
		Work trial set up with possible open employers (trials set up to suit individual eg stretched over multiple weeks with only a few days per week)
		Work with employers to set up 'job shadow' opportunities
Job Search	Job search matching and assistance	Job matching via employer visits
(Pre) placement support	Job commencement/ RTW and customisation	Tailors work opportunities
	Workplace modification, equipment and disclosure	On the job support via configured machinery / equipment customisation

Post-placement / on the job support	Post placement support	On the job support via process aids
		Visit to open employer worksite to check employee wellbeing
	Ongoing assistance in the workplace (day to day)	Post-placement support to employees in open employment
		Supportive and instructive supervision (for set number of hours per day) in ADE
		Intensive support on the job that tapers as skills build (within ADE)
Mass job creation	Supported employment service (ADEs)	Creation of tailored job opportunities
Demand side		
Recruitment services and supports	Connecting to target cohort	Job matching via employer visits, get to understand the role (to facilitate best match)
Supports in the workplace	General support to employers	ADE staff 'on call' to support open employer following recruitment of staff from ADE

Overall, one informant in CSI research summed up the focus of support provision for many ADEs:

> the whole purpose is about supporting that person to be able to learn the skills so they can do it more independently or quicker or whatever it might be (Helen, disability enterprise staff, interviewed October 2022).

This emphasises a fundamental underpinning of ADE employment support activities discussed by informants, that of ongoing capacity building. It should be noted however, that informants also reported difficulty in finding adequate funding in individual NDIS plans to offer an adequate range and intensity of employment supports via ADEs.

Evaluation of the Commonwealth funded disability employment programs

Two of the major Commonwealth government funded employment services for people with disability are Disability Employment Services and JobAccess (see Paper 1), both included in the analysis above. Both have been evaluated. Taken together, the relevance and effectiveness of these existing major employment services for people with intellectual disability is poor.

JobAccess

JobAccess is largely an information and resource service, offering a website and telephone advice line, access to the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) (to fund workplace modification and equipment), a complaints service and an abuse hotline, and an employer-facing service (the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator [NDRC]) to build the inclusion capacity of large businesses. A commissioned evaluation found that, overall:

> JobAccess is effective in helping people with disability maintain employment. However, it appears to be less effective in assisting people with disability to find work, in assisting employers to create vacancies for, and hire people with disability and in ensuring people with disability receive fair and just treatment (Colmar Brunton, 2019, p.11).

In particular, both the EAF and the telephone advice service were seen to be effective in supporting people with disability to maintain jobs and increase their productivity at work. However, while the NDRC did build skills and knowledge about disability inclusion, it was 'not felt to consistently result in specific job vacancies for people with disability or the employment of people with a disability' (Colmar Brunton, p.11).

There is no focus on the relevance of JobAccess to people with intellectual disability, or employers who employ them, in the JobAccess evaluation. The Employment Assistance Fund webpage does mention the potential to fund 'specialist support' for people with 'learning disorders' but, in general, descriptions of funding emphasise purchasable equipment or physical workplace modifications, though disability awareness training for the workplace is also included (https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/funding-changes-workplace). Eligibility criteria for EAF exclude anyone working less than 8 hours per week.

Disability Employment Services

Outcomes from DES have long been identified as needing improvement, particularly for some cohorts. A mid-term review in 2020 (BCG, 2020b) identified a range of ongoing problems including a lack of specialist skills and professionalism among DES providers; limitations on innovation and tailoring of supports to meet individual needs due to restrictive funding models; poor integration with NDIS and resulting confusion among participants and providers; and increasing costs not aligned with increased outcomes. Recommendations for reform included a focus on developing capacity for increased differentiation of services to better match cohort needs, and increased freedom for services to specialise by industry or disability type (BCG, 2020b). Additionally, Inclusion Australia (2022) have argued that DES reforms have resulted in funding cuts to services for people with intellectual disability, meaning that services are disincentivized from supporting people with higher support needs.

What do we know about the expressed employment support needs of people with intellectual disability in Australia?

People with intellectual disability have unique needs and the barriers they experience to employment are a complex intersection of personal characteristics, characteristics related to intellectual disability, and broader workplace and system barriers (as discussed above). Given that people with intellectual disability comprise a substantial proportion of NDIS participants, data relating to NDIS participants and employment provides a helpful insight into the experience of people with intellectual disability in Australia in relation to both their needs for and their experience of employment services.

Prevalence of part time work

It is common for people with intellectual disability to seek to work part time, or be assessed as having a low to very low 'capacity' of hours able to be worked per week. In 2020, only 13% of NDIS participants with intellectual disability, aged 15-24, who had employment in non ADE settings, worked 30 hours or more per week. Most (34.5%) worked 8-15 hours per week, followed by 29% who worked 0-8 hours per week. A similar pattern was evident for people with Down Syndrome and Autism (NDIA, 2020). This pattern changes in ADE settings where a higher proportion (27%) worked 30 hours or more per week (NDIA, 2020). NDIS participants with Intellectual Disability, Down syndrome and Autism are more likely to work 30 or more hours a week when working in an ADE than in open employment (NDIA, 2020).

Table 5: NDIS participants who work 30+ hours per week (NDIA,2020)

Disability	15-24yrs		25+ years	
	Non ADE employment	ADE employment	Non ADE employment	ADE employment
Intellectual disability	13%	27%	21%	35%
Autism	11%	19%	26%	27%
Down syndrome	5%	10%	9%	28%
All NDIS participants	18%	23%	45%	30%

A complicating factor in interpreting this data is the extent to which people with intellectual disability have been adequately supported to work the hours they wish to work, or even to consider employment as an option. NDIA (2020) data suggests that interest in getting a job (across all disability cohorts) decreases with the number of daily living activities that require support (and functional difficulties) and the decreasing size of the NDIS plan budget. However, there has been significant critique about the extent to which employment has been considered in the planning process involving people with significant disability. Crosbie (2022) argues that conceptualisation of people with intellectual disability as 'non workers' in Australia's income support regime (via DSP), sets up low expectations and cuts off formal supports to seek employment from an early age.

Overall, there are a range of reasons for the high prevalence of part time work among people with intellectual disability. Both Meltzer et al. (2016) and Crosbie (2022) identify issues with health and fatigue, as well as active engagement in other highly valued areas of life such as recreational and social activities, and volunteering. The need to meet DSP eligibility requirements has also been identified (which places limits on the number of hours that can be worked per week), as has an unmet need for increased work hours (Meltzer, 2016).

The implications of these patterns are that suitable employment supports for people with intellectual disability need to enable part time employment participation, and also need to ensure that the level of support provided is adequate to activate the level of participation in employment desired.

Adequacy of existing employment support for NDIS participants

In 2020, NDIS participants reported different levels of satisfaction with the pre-employment and on-the-job supports they received, with people over 25 years of age more likely to rate their employment supports as inadequate overall.

Of those aged 15-24 seeking work (pre employment), only around one third (35%) felt that they were being adequately assisted (37% of people with intellectual disability, 36% of people with Autism, and 19% with Down syndrome). Similarly, only 30% of those aged 25 and over felt adequately assisted (32% of people with intellectual disability or Down syndrome, 40% with Autism) (NDIA, 2020).

In addition, 26% of NDIS participants in 2020 aged 15-24 seeking work, said that the main reason they did not currently have a job was lack of support to get or keep a job (with 12% of over 25 year olds identifying this also). Between 14% (over 25 yrs) and 18% (under 25yrs) felt the main reason was they simply could not find a job. The percentage of NDIS participants 15-24 years who did not have a job but would like one was roughly consistent on entry to the Scheme and four years later (51%) (NDIA, 2020). Taken together, the data highlights substantial gaps in pre-employment support provision.

On entry to NDIS, only around a quarter to a third of participants working in ADEs could see a pathway from the ADE to open employment including 36% of 15-24 year olds and 25% of those 25 and older (NDIA, 2020).

Once people gained employment, in general, their satisfaction with the level of employment support provided was higher. Of NDIS participants with intellectual disability who had paid employment (where most were in ADEs), 81% of those aged 15-24, and 48% of those aged 25+ said they got the support they needed to do their job (on the job). The level of satisfaction with the adequacy of support provided in the job was less for people with Autism (72% felt they got the support they needed) (NDIA, 2020). This data is obscured by the combination of both ADE and non-ADE employment. As reported below, higher numbers of those working in ADEs felt they received the support they needed with 91% being most satisfied with the support they received on-the-job from ADEs (NDIA, 2020).

> Participants working in an ADE were more likely to say they get the support they need to do their job (within each disability type), whereas participants in open employment with full award wages were less likely. Participants most commonly received support to do their job from their employer (NDIA, 2020, p. 19).

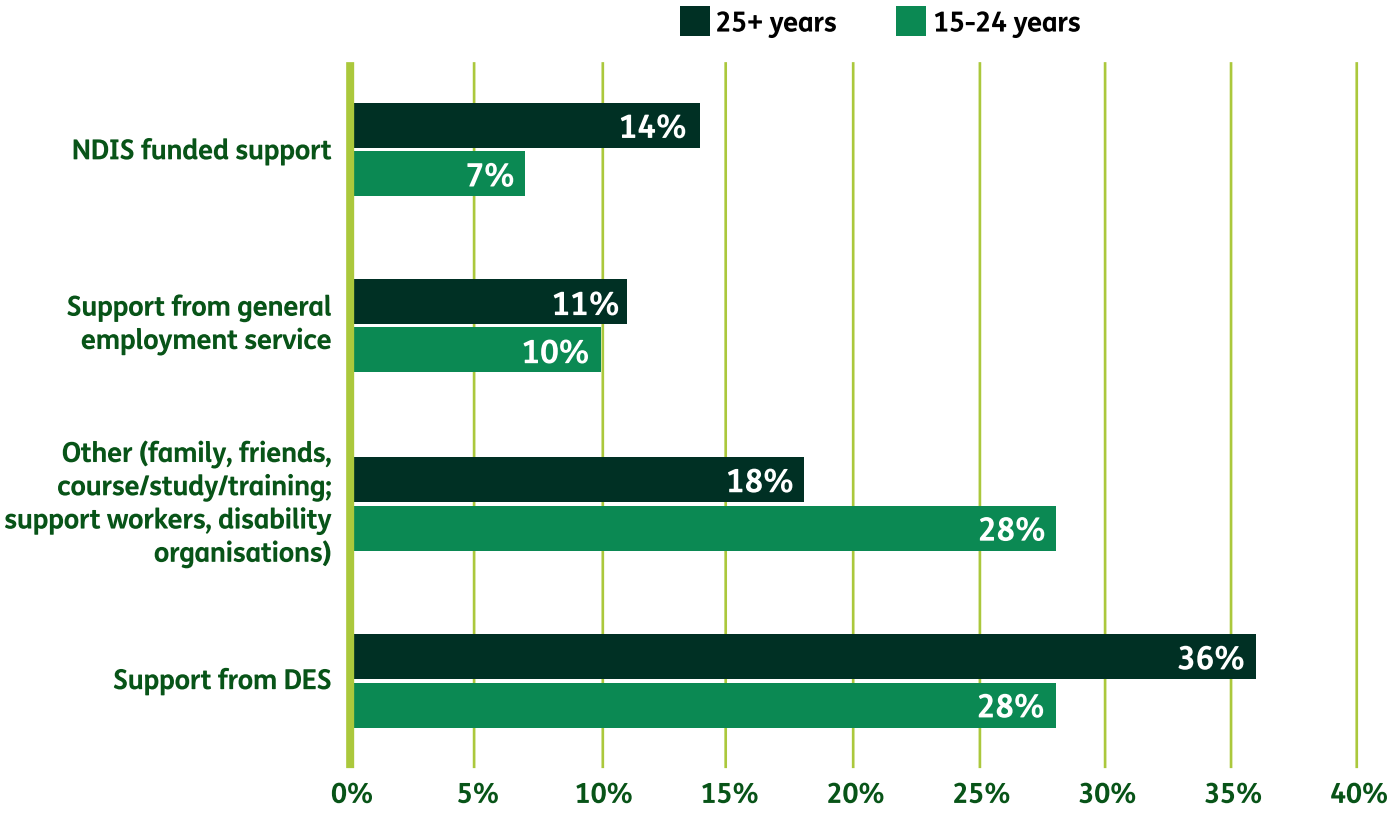
In general, the adequacy of support provided, both on-the-job and to seek a job, decreases over time with age (NDIA, 2020, p. 61), though this is not true for people with intellectual disability who have higher levels of satisfaction with the adequacy of their employment supports (NDIA, 2020), possibly because most are in ADEs where support is higher.

Who provides employment support to NDIS participants?

Pre employment/ job seeking

The most common employment support to seek work for NDIS participants was DES. However, despite being the most common support, only 36% of NDIS participants with a disability aged 15-24 were getting support from a DES (and 19% of people with Down syndrome) (NDIA, 2020). Only 10-11% of NDIS participants were receiving support to find a job via a general employment service.

Table 6: Source of employment supports to seek work (pre employment) at time of entry to NDIS (NDIA, 2020)



The levels of employment support increased after the first review of the NDIS plan after entering the NDIS. For participants who did not have a job but were being assisted to find one at first review:

- DES support lifted to around 42% of participants in each age category,
- NDIS funded support increased substantially to 24% for 15-24 year olds (possibly linked to SLES), and marginally to 16% for over 25's
- support from a general employment services provider increased marginally to 8% for young people and decreased substantially (by about 10%) to only 5% for over 25's (NDIA, 2020).

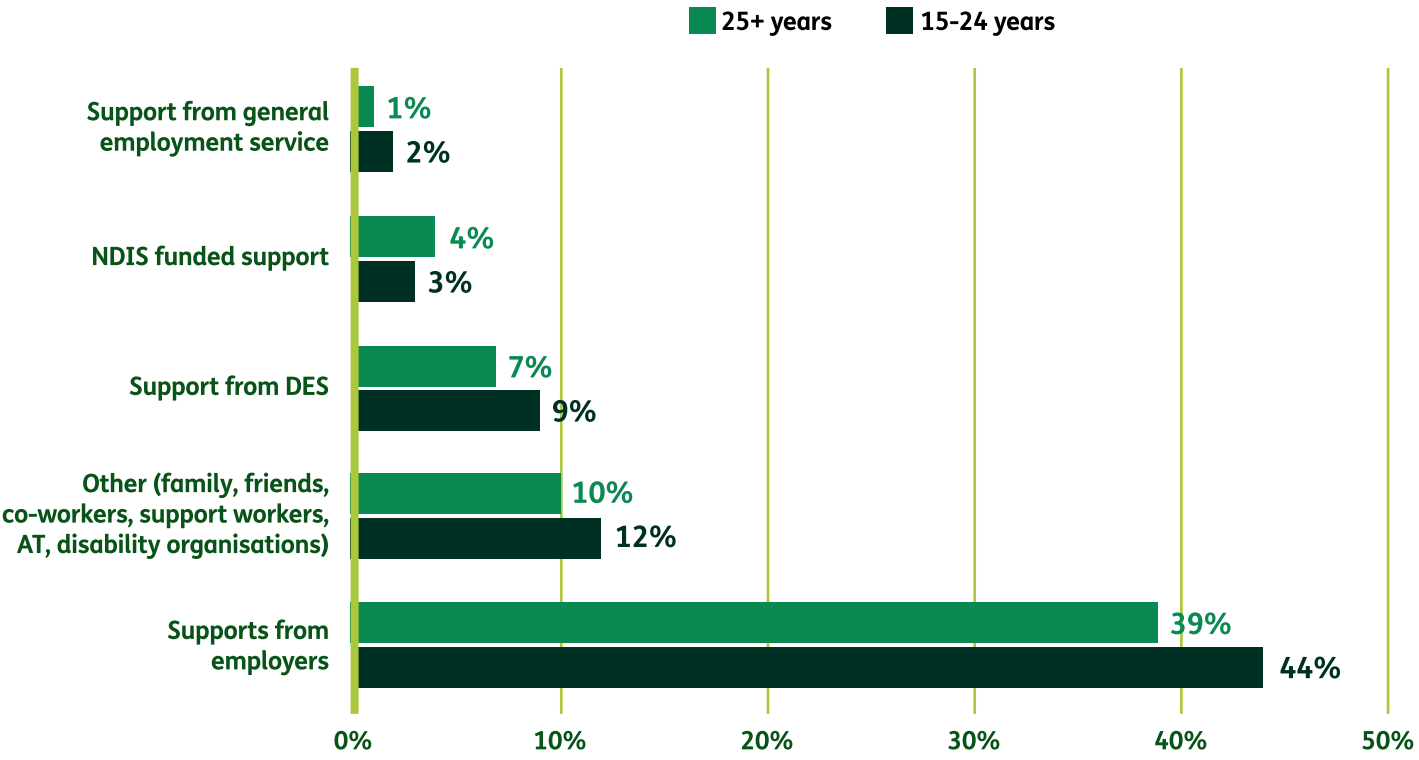
Notably, support from 'others' (family, friends etc) dropped by 6% for those over 25 years, after the point of first review. This is consistent with data from Crosbie (2022), specific to people with intellectual disability, where family members indicated their exhaustion in carrying the employment support in the absence of employment services, and began to withdraw support over time, accepting employment within ADEs or placement in a day service as a suitable solution.

Overall, even at its highest point in this data (i.e. post first review), less than half of NDIS participants who did not have a job but would like a job were receiving support from a DES, with far lower levels for other types of supports, leaving participants without adequate employment supports to find work. Given all other data about the exclusion from job seeking supports by people with intellectual disability, it is reasonable to assume the level of support for this group would be even lower.

Post employment

Once in employment, supports provided for participants to do their job, predominantly came from the employer, and from other sources, with both DES and NDIS funded supports being largely absent:

Table 7: Source of employment supports on the job (post employment) at time of entry to NDIS (NDIA, 2020)



Following the first NDIS review of plan after commencement as an NDIS participant, for those with a paid job who were receiving support, supports across all areas increased. Substantial increases were noted in regard to:

- support from employer (increasing to 60% in both age categories)
- NDIS funded support (increasing to 15% for 15-24 year olds, and 16% for over 25 years)
- support from DES (increasing to 26% for young people, and 18% for over 25 years) (NDIA, 2020).

This data does suggest that the needed, but absent, supports to those with paid work did increase following engagement with NDIS.

Types of employment support desired

As discussed above, employment supports are best framed in relation to identified barriers to employment. The NDIA participant data, identifies the barriers participants identified to employment.

In 2020, between 52-70% of NDIS participants cited the most frequent ongoing barriers to employment as a mix of highly contextualised factors, including:

- participant's disability or poor health
- anxiety
- lack of confidence
- difficulties with communication/language/comprehension
- difficulties with the interview process
- living in a remote or low employment area (NDIA, 2020, p. 20).

In addition, around 4% of NDIS participants in 2020 seeking work, identified the main barrier to employment as the difficulty of travel (NDIA, 2020).

The NDIA affirms that these findings align with other qualitative research conducted by the Agency,

> regarding the need to ensure base-level needs are met before participants have the ability to think about employment (NDIA, 2020, p. 75). x

In particular, the research found that for participants 25 and over,

> having supports to meet base level needs (such as daily living, stable accommodation, mental and physical health), person-centred supports to find a job, and strong social and informal networks ... [were] instrumental to gaining employment (NDIA, 2020, p. 128).

In 2021, NDIA also obtained qualitative data from participants and their supporters about barriers and enablers to employment, which identified the main barriers to be:

- A feeling that their disability and employment needs were not always well understood.
- A lack of clarity around what employment funding and supports were available.
- A lack of post-school training and education options appropriate for people with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, and/or psychosocial disability and a lack of clarity about what NDIS supports and services are available to undertake further education.
- A lack of self-confidence that they are employable people (NDIA, 2022b, p.4).

The 2020 data also provides insight into the types of support participants with disability most felt would assist them into employment. These included:

- getting work experience (51% of those aged 15-24, 22% for those over 25),
- more support from a DES provider (45% of those aged 15-24, 29% of those aged 25+),
- having a mentor (42% aged 15-24, 19% over 25)
- more support for further study/getting a qualification (26% 15-24 yrs, 23% of those aged 25+)
- educating employers (37% 15-24 yrs, 22% of those aged 25+)
- help with transport and travel (23% 15-24 yrs, 18% over 25)
- more support from family and support workers (22% 15-24 yrs, 14% over 25)
- more assistive technology (around 7%) (NDIA, 2020, p.72).

NDIA statistical modelling (NDIA, 2020) identified a range of employment support and employment-related activities that functioned as drivers that positively impacted on employment success, captured in Table 8.

Table 8: Employment support activities and factors related to employment success of NDIS participants

Drivers of employment success	Success factors by age group		Success by type of employment
	15-24 year olds	25 and over	Open employment
Job seeking or engaging in other informal employment activities	✓	✓	✓
Having received assistance to find a job	✓	✓	
Completing TAFE, obtaining a tertiary diploma or being a university graduate	✓	✓	✓
Having employment goals in NDIS plan	✓		✓
Working in an unpaid job	✓	✓	
Self employment			✓
Being involved in community, cultural or religious group in last 12 months			✓
Knowing people in the community			✓

Building on this, the NDIA notes that qualitative research has identified the need for:

- person centred planning to ensure employment options are better matched to participant skills and interests
- receiving individualised and person centred supports to build skills for work
- support to become empowered and support with navigating employment pathways
- family's and person's social networks to support development of self confidence and career aspirations
- building the capacity of employers, staff and employment service providers (NDIA, 2020).

Providing these kind of employment supports is frequently highly individualised, as explained by one parent of a teenager with Autism:

> Teaching how to deal with his disabilities in the work situation would be really helpful and then sort of being like being a translator between him and a prospective work place (NDIA, 2020,p.157).

This is consistent with specific employment supports identified by people with intellectual disability in a study by Meltzer et al. (2016). Specific employment supports that were desired or valued were identified to be:

- 'practical help in the workplace to learn how to do new tasks, complete tasks and gain assistance with difficult tasks' (Meltzer et al., 2016, p. 23), including enabling swapping tasks for variety or to gain new skills and experiences;
- having identified people in the workplace (for example, supervisor, colleagues or peers, sometimes as part of a formal 'buddy' system) to provide support and practical assistance, troubleshoot, and resolve issues with colleagues;
- personal development opportunities such as planning meetings (Meltzer et al., 2016).

While self employment has also been identified as a driver of success in open employment, only a small proportion of NDIS participants (around 1% of 15-24 year olds) identify it as an employment outcome (NDIA, 2022a, 2020). NDIA 2020 data identifies that common self employment fields of work for NDIS participants include:

- Business (6% 15-24 yrs; 4% for 25+ years)
- Dog walking (6% 15-24 yrs)
- Lawn mowing (5% 15-24 yrs)
- Cleaning (4% 15-24 yrs)
- Farming (4% 25+years)
- Health (3% 25+ years)
- Retail (3% 25+ years)
- Construction (2% 25+ years) (NDIA, 2020).

Self employment was the type of employment where NDIA participants felt least supported in getting the supports needed on the job. Around half of 15-24 year olds, and less for the over 25 year olds, felt support was inadequate (NDIA, 2020, p.64). Understanding more about the opportunities for self employment and the support required would better help shape the employment supports delivered.

Synthesising this data, Table 9 provides a list of identified employment support types, matching the needs of NDIS participants and people with intellectual disability discussed above.

Table 9: Synthesis of employment supports identified by NDIS participants across data linked to Typology categories

Domain	Component focus of employment supports or services	Identified employment supports for NDIS participants
Supply side interventions (focusing on support to job seeker/ worker)		
Addressing personal factors	Addressing personal context	Help with transport and travel Support for daily living, stable accommodation, mental and physical health Address difficulties with communication/ language/ comprehension Specialised support to address living in a remote or low employment area
	Addressing health context	Support for mental and physical health Address barrier of disability or poor health
	Integration of health, disability and employment supports	
	Building capacity of informal (family) supports to support employment	Family and person's social networks can support development of self confidence and career aspirations. Support from family and support workers
	Building foundation skills and work expectations	Support to become empowered Self-confidence that they are employable people Address anxiety or lack of confidence
Service access and information	Information provision (job seeker/worker)	Clarity around what employment funding and supports were available
	Referrals/ connecting to services	
	Service co-ordination and navigation	Support with navigating employment pathways
Financial assistance and incentives	Financial support for vocational training	Clarity about what NDIS supports and services are available to undertake further education
	Financial support related to employment	Clarity around what employment funding available

Building and mobilising social capital (to link to employment)	Building and mobilising peer support	Having a mentor
	Building and mobilising professional/ employment networks	
	Building and mobilising community networks	Involved in community, cultural or religious group. Knows people in the community Strong social and informal networks as instrumental to gaining employment
Planning and preparation for work	Developing soft skills	Individualised and person centred supports to build skills for work
	Career guidance and planning	Person centred planning to identify skills and interests matched to employment
	Assessments of work 'capacity' and need for supports	Employment goals in NDIS plan
	Transition to work activities (School/Education to work i.e. young people; ADE/day service to open employment; prison to reintegration)	
Vocational skills development	Vocational training	Support for further study/getting a qualification TAFE, tertiary diploma or university study. Post-school training and education options appropriate for people with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, and/or psychosocial disability Working in an unpaid job Getting work experience Changing tasks or sites within a workplace
	Work experience/ internships/ volunteering	
Self-employment / entrepreneurship	Business skills and development	Self employment
Job search	Job search matching and assistance	Job seeking Assistance to find a job
(Pre) Placement support	Job commencement/ RTW and customisation	Being a translator between worker with disability and a prospective work place
	Workplace modifications, equipment and disclosure	Assistive technology
Post-placement / on the job support	On the job / workplace-based training	Practical help in the workplace to learn or complete tasks Formal 'buddies' and supportive relationships to support and troubleshoot within the workplace
	Post placement support (limited or fixed period)	
	Ongoing assistance in the workplace (day to day)	
Demand side interventions (focusing on support to employer/ workplace)		
Recruitment services and support	Recruitment services/support	Being a translator between worker with disability and a prospective workplace
Workplace / employer capacity building	Skill building, training, resources	Educating employers Teaching how to deal with person's disabilities in the work situation
	Inclusive workplaces capacity building	Building the capacity of employers and staff

This range of employment supports covers a span well beyond the existing provision by DES, and highlights a need for an expanded access to a wider range of employment supports. It should be noted, however, that only a small portion of this data has been identified as specific to people with intellectual disability.

Research evidence about employment support types for people with intellectual disability

While people with intellectual disability benefit from employment supports addressing the full range of barriers to employment, research evidence highlights the efficacy of particular employment supports for people with intellectual disability.

In particular, evidence for the following employment supports is well established.

- Supported employment
- Customised employment
- Work integrated training.

Supported employment

Supported employment, as used in the US, has a strong evidence base for people with significant needs. Its four phases focus on getting to know the jobseeker; job development and matching; training and support; job retention and support (Schall et al., 2015; Wehman, 2012). Using a 'place then train' approach, supported employment requires the provision of training and support on job sites provided by employment specialists. These specialists need to:

know how to help identify meaningful consumer choice, arrange for funding, identify jobs in the community, approach employers, work with concerned parents, help with social security income (SSI) determination issues, arrange transportation, and—most importantly—effectively train clients to achieve required work standards (Wehman et al., 2018, p.133).

Importantly, specialists are trained within a supported employment model. The model includes fidelity elements that are not currently supported within the Australian system, including 'commensurate wages and benefits' based on 'emphasising capacity and capabilities' (Wehman et al., 2018, p. 133). These elements are achieved via a strong match between the strengths of the jobseeker and the needs of the business. Another feature not well supported in the Australian context is the level of ongoing support to address workplace changes and ongoing needs (Wehman et al., 2018).

Open employment outcomes for supported employment in the US are achieved at the level of 20% and 25% of people with intellectual and developmental disability (Wehmeyer et al., 2019).

Customised employment

Customised employment is an element of supported employment, focusing on direct negotiation with employers to unlock job opportunities through high levels of customising of job roles so that they are suitable to specific individuals (Inge et al., 2018). Customised employment is typically a lengthy process, commencing with a discovery phase identifying the individual jobseeker's strengths, interests and support needs. It develops job roles through job carving, negotiation and creation via deep understanding of each workplace, and through the use of microenterprises (Riesen et al., 2015). Customised employment also offers time unlimited support to both the individual with the disability and their employer (Wehman et al., 2018). Given the employment support is highly customised, and has been shown to be effective for people with significant disabliity, studies have shown that the mean duration from commencement of the customized employment process (at step 1 Discovery) to job placement is 128 days (range = 11 to 374 days) (Luecking and Luecking, 2006).

The Discovery process, the first step of customized employment, typically takes between 20-60 hours, but averages 30 (Smith, McVilly, McGillivray et al. 2018). (A fuller summary of the customized employment process and employment support activities can be found at Wilson & Campain, 2020).

Customised employment has been included as one component of other programs, including integrated work-learning programs such as ProjectSEARCH (Moore & Schelling, 2015) and, in Australia, Ticket to Work (Wakeford & Waugh, 2014).

Work integrated learning

Work-integrated learning incorporates a range of models and programs, including internships during school years (Daston et al., 2012; Wehman et al., 2018), school-based apprenticeships and traineeships (such as used in Ticket to Work in Australia), and the ProjectSEARCH model. ProjectSEARCH- style programs have been run in multiple countries and in Austalia and typically involve intensive work-site training, which may have some on-site classroom components with the majority of time spent in work-based learning where skills are learned and practiced in real workplace environments (Schall et al., 2015). Employees rotate through blocks of time in different work areas (or internships) for 10-12 weeks each, supported by teachers and employment specialists. The model has been successful with people with intellectual disability and those with significant needs (Wehman et al., 2018), with results in the UK attaining a 50% employment rate for people with intellectual disability (Kaehne, 2016).

Employer level interventions

Several studies have identified a lack of attention paid to employment supports targeting employers and workplaces in the context of increasing employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability.

> A key finding of this review is that the research has predominantly focused on individual level strategies to provide employment-related support rather than workplace environments. This is despite disability discrimination legislation and frameworks, such as the social model of disability, in which an individual's participation is considered a function of both individual and environmental factors (Bigby & Frawley, 2010). This finding is consistent with Ellenkamp et al.'s (2016) recent systematic review, which similarly concluded that little research in the past 20 years has investigated work environment-related factors that might enhance competitive employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities (Cheng et al., 2018, p.324).

In particular, Cheng et al. (2018) identify the need for interventions at 'the organisational level' that target tailored job design, and better fit between employer needs and the abilities of job seekers with intellectual disability (Cheng et al., 2018, p.325).

Implications

Employment supports for people with disability have been narrowly conceptualised and funded in Australia, with little attention paid to unpacking the activities and elements that comprise effective support. Most employment supports have been focused on supports for jobseekers, with few focused on supports for employers and workplaces. NDIS participants identify a need for a range of supports that span a wide array of categories related to supply, demand and societal interventions. However, there is a need for a strong focus on supports that match individual needs and barriers, and the design of supports to address barriers is considered international best practice.

There is ample evidence that people with intellectual disability benefit from employment supports that focus on employment customisation, teach work skills in situ, and offer ongoing support. As argued by Inclusion Australia:

> The evidence is very clear about what works. People with an intellectual disability need a system that delivers:
>
> - Personalised strengths-based assessment, including in job and community settings
> - Job customisation and placement
> - On the job training
> - Ongoing support
> - Workforce development
> - Reduction of system complexity (Inclusion Australia, 2022, p.7).

However, these employment supports do not appear to be readily available in Australia, aside from a few ad hoc programs.

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Appendix 1 Typology

Supply side interventions: focusing on support to job seeker/ worker		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Addressing personal factors	Addressing personal context	Strategies to support personal circumstances affecting employment, e.g. • Carer and parenting roles • Housing • Home modifications • Transport
	Addressing health context	Strategies to support factors affecting health, e.g. • Support to access health treatments • Health and wellbeing coaching
	Integration of health, disability and employment supports	• Collaboration between DES and mental health providers to support people through crisis times to stay in job • Planning for and capacity building re managing health/ disability conditions whilst at work • Identifying attendant care and additional supports required in the workplace. • Education on effective skills/strategies for coping and RTW • RTW planning integrated into medical assessments • Engagement with other professionals/providers to support employment goal to ensure consistency of approach and holistic service delivery
	Building capacity of informal (family) supports to support employment	• Building the skills and knowledge, changing attitudes and expectations of supporters of people seeking work (target supporters at various points of life course) • Engagement with family/carer to explore and support employment directions • Employment services and families working collaboratively to support the person to find work
	Building foundation skills and work expectations	• Skills building re language, literacy, numeracy, driver training, digital skills, computer literacy (non job or vocational specific) • Life skills e.g. independent travel skills, managing money/ income, personal hygiene and personal presentation • Interpersonal skills development, social and business communication • Building resilience • Building motivation and positive attitudes to work • Building expectations of person with disability about (open) employment at key points across life course (primary, secondary school and beyond) • Skills for independence: decision making, problem solving, planning and organising, self motivation and self determination, life skills and personal administration, flexibility, accountability • Working independently, time management and prioritising • Conflict resolution and negotiation skills

Supply side interventions: focusing on support to job seeker/ worker		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Service access and information	Information provision (job seeker/worker)	• Providing information e.g. via hub of employment related resources including rights and obligations (e.g. re RTW or workers compensation)
	Referrals/ connecting to services	• Referring to interventions such as psychological, pain management counselling, physiotherapy • Referring/connecting to Commonwealth/State government programs • Referring to community services and connecting/supporting access to non vocational services e.g. arranging financial support for childcare and study
	Service co-ordination and navigation	• Supporting access to and management of services such as via case management or support co-ordination
Financial assistance and incentives	Financial support for personal factors	• Financial assistance to overcome personal barriers to work e.g. $ to purchase clothing, pay for transport, subsidise childcare etc.
	Financial support for vocational training	• Financial assistance such as payment of course fees and associated costs
	Financial support related to employment	• Financial assistance such as to provide income support to return to work, e.g., to cover income loss when working on reduced hours • Financial assistance to purchase equipment/ modifications • Financial assistance to support job related relocation
Building and mobilising social capital (to link to employment)	Building and mobilising peer support	Build community connections (as link to jobs): • Putting peers in touch with each other • Expand / build 'buddy' and peer support • Mobilise networks to lead to jobs
	Building and mobilising professional/ employment networks	Professional networks (within chosen field) • Employer networking opportunities (including via employers/ business people as mentors, meeting events, local groups etc) • Business to business networking (for self-employment) • Local/regional jobs and skills coordination networks • Mobilise networks to lead to jobs
	Building and mobilising community networks	• Support community participation as a means to build networks (and other capacities) • Build /harness links to community members and groups • Employment circles of support (building informal local networks around the individual) • Mobilise networks to lead to jobs

Supply side interventions: focusing on support to job seeker/ worker		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Planning and preparation for work	Developing soft skills	• Workplace or 'core' work skills: teamwork, communication, reliability, workplace digital literacy, workplace norms, behaviours and expectations • Understanding rights and responsibilities in the workplace • Industry awareness: knowledge of work options, e.g. exposure to different employers, work types • Work readiness and motivation
	Career guidance and planning	• Identification of personal preferences, interests, skills etc. (e.g. Discovery) • Employment-related career assessment • Job readiness review/assessment and development • Career counselling • Identification/documentation of individual employment goals, individual's attributes, skills and qualifications, as well as any skills gaps • Developing a job/career plan (goals and steps) • Support to build and communicate a professional identity
	Assessments of work 'capacity' and need for supports	For example: • Assessment of employment barriers • Initial needs assessment • Job capacity assessment • Rehabilitation assessment • Vocational assessment • Workplace assessment • Certificate of capacity • Cognitive assessment • Driving assessment • Employment services assessment • Fitness for duty assessment • Functional assessment • Skills assessment
	Transition to work activities (School/ Education to work i.e. young people; ADE/ day service to open employment; prison to reintegration)	Transition activities (usually grouped as a package covering range of other components in Typology): • Transition plan/ plan of pathway to employment • Career guidance, including introducing/connecting employment consultants into education settings prior to school/course completion • Vocational training • Employer networking/connecting • Explore work options including 'try and test', work experience • Navigation support to access services, entitlements, employment options

Supply side interventions: focusing on support to job seeker/ worker		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Vocational skills development	Vocational training	• Formal training with the opportunity to gain qualifications, including pre vocational such as pre apprenticeships • Help to find a course or connect to training • On the job training, including apprenticeships and School Based Apprenticeships, work-integrated training etc.
	Work experience/ internships/ volunteering	Includes: • Work experience • Internships (paid/unpaid) • Work trials (paid/unpaid) • Industry awareness experiences • Support to find work experience/volunteering • Support to set up work experience including assisting to onboard the participant at the start of the work trial or on the job support throughout the work experience. • Volunteering, and support to build volunteering skills, provision of support to volunteers e.g. volunteer buddies • Support to convert work experience into employment roles
Self-employment / entrepreneurship	Business skills and development	• Small business and (micro) enterprise training, including skills in business planning and implementation, entrepreneurship skills • Skill building and support for business plan development • Coaching, mentoring and support in business enterprise • Provision of work experience in enterprises
	Access to capital and business resources	• Access to financial supports for business • Micro-franchising • Provision of back-of-house, administrative and other functions to support micro businesses of people with significant disability • Supporting access to business networks, markets and supply chains
Job search	Job search information resources	• Linking to job information via website/online, email etc. • Provision of an advice service re job search • Provision of job seeker resources (e.g. how to disclose disability)
	Job search skills building	• Building skills in job application, resume preparation and job search strategies • Building skills in interview preparation • Building skills for how job seeker can 'market' themselves and their unique service offering
	Job search matching and assistance	• Job search matching and assistance • Support via a Job Coach/coaching • Active marketing of job seekers to employers such as engaging different employers to discuss a participant and their unique skills and abilities, how they may be able to provide value to their workplace, and potentially securing opportunities for a work trial or work experience

Supply side interventions: focusing on support to job seeker/ worker		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
(Pre) Placement support	Job commencement/ RTW and customisation	• Mentoring following an employment preparation intervention (i.e. bridge from pre employment intervention through job search to finding employment) • Job matching • Negotiating specific employment opportunity with employer • Job carving and job identification/creation, including working with employer to identify potential opportunities or roles for a specific individual • Task analysis including developing process outlines for specific parts of the role • Customisation of job/modify work tasks or scheduling including ensuring that a role or tasks within a role are accessible and match individual's specific abilities and passions. • Planning and supporting graduated entry/re-entry to work • Negotiating RTW to same or different job with same employer • Support to complete recruitment paperwork • Support to prepare for first day at work and induction • Developing a RTW plan
	Workplace modifications, equipment and disclosure	• Provision of information about workplace modification etc. • Support to access EAF • Provision/assessment of equipment or modifications needed, including communication devices • Financial assistance to purchase equipment/ modifications and special equipment necessary to that workplace • Provision of / financial support for Auslan interpreting services • Support to communicate reasonable accommodation needs (e.g. via workplace adjustment passport) • Support/resources re disclosure of disability/injury • Modification and customisation of workstations, equipment, facilities (including training in use of these)

Supply side interventions: focusing on support to job seeker/ worker		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Post-placement / on the job support	On the job / workplace- based training	• Provision of or support access to workplace based training, formal or informal, including integrated training, apprenticeships etc. • On the job training
	Post placement support (limited or fixed period)	• Support to settle in to work • Support over initial period (e.g. 1st year) • Further job re-design • Support to make further workplace modifications • Support to meet employer expectations • Support to build work capacity (including graded increase in hours) • Work hardening activities, aimed at improving physical or psychological work tolerances
	Ongoing assistance in the workplace (day to day)	• On the job employment supports, such as intermittent support with daily • work tasks • Ongoing customisation to suit new tasks, skills development etc. • Continuous on the job training • Provision of direct supervision and/ or group based support to enable meaningful work participation • Provision of supports to manage disability related behaviour or complex needs at work (e.g. onsite job coach to support behaviour related to psychosocial disability) • Provision of non face to face activities that directly relate to supporting person's employment • Provision of physical assistance and personal care delivered in the workplace
Mass job creation	Employment-focused social enterprises	• Work integrated social enterprise (WISE): offers employment, skills training, work experience and other supports usually in non-segregated workplace environments paying award wages
	Supported employment service (ADEs)	• Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs): offers employment, skills training, work experience and other supports sometimes in segregated workplace environments and/or paying a supported wage

Demand side interventions: focusing on support to employer/ workplace		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Information	Information provision/ co-ordination (employer)	• Information hub of employment related resources • Phone advice service (e.g. navigating systems, financial incentives, obligations, strategies)
Financial assistance incentives	Financial assistance for wages	Support to identify and access financial incentives e.g. • Wage subsidies • Financial assistance to business to address added financial burden of supporting a person's return to work, for example by employing a casual worker to complete usual duties of person in additional to paying the person's wages while they recover at work • Financial assistance for work experience placements/ internships • Access to supported employee wage
	Financial assistance for modifications	• Access to Employment Assistance Fund (i.e. financial support) or other funds for workplace modifications
	Other financial support/ incentives	• Reduction or waiver of proportion of workers compensation premiums, exemption from increase in premium in workers compensation if worker is re-injured within set period
Recruitment services and support	Recruitment services/ support	• Support to recruit (e.g., screen and match workers to jobs) • Provision of professional recruitment services • Job vacancy service • Job analysis
	Connecting to target cohort	• Support to connect to people with disability/work restriction (via a range of strategies including direct introduction, networking and meeting events, employer roles in local employment support groups) • Highlighting/introducing potential employees and their unique skills and abilities, how they may be able to provide value to their workplace, and potentially securing opportunities for a work trial or work experience
	Hosting work experience/ interns/ volunteers	• Resources and support to host/connect to work experience, interns, trainees, volunteers • Help to set up and manage individual or group internships • Provision of support to convert volunteering/work experience into employment roles • Probation period (for people with intellectual disability who do not perform well at interviews)

Demand side interventions: focusing on support to employer/ workplace		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Workplace / employer capacity building	Skill building, training, resources	Training and resources in: • How to job carve and customise • Leadership skills re employment supports/ inclusive employment • Industry-specific skills and resources to support inclusive employment • Information and resources on how to support RTW • Develop or increase an employer's skills, knowledge and/or confidence to employ a person with a disability • Social Procurement practice and opportunities
	Inclusive workplaces capacity building	• Support to improve/review workplace policies and practices to accommodate people with disability / work restrictions • Awareness raising and training activities re disability (including specific disabilities such as Deafness or Autism awareness) • Mental health awareness and first aid training • Attitude and behavioural change re specific disabilities • Mentoring of employers (by people with disability and without), including two-way mentoring (i.e. employee with disability - employer) • Cultural awareness training and capacity building (e.g. re Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander with disability) • Direct practical coaching for employers to create mentally healthy workplaces
	Employer and stakeholder networks (to build inclusive workplace/ employer capacity)	Shared learning and support via: • Building local employer networks committed to supporting employment outcomes (includes vocational training providers, schools, services and others) • Collaborative and shared learning opportunities across employers • Networking events (e.g. employer and employment service provider breakfasts) • Inter-employer and agency collaboration on employment initiatives
Supports in the workplace	General support to employers	• Provision of ongoing workplace support, check in, problem solving • Provision of continual modification /upgrade of duties etc • Reviewing adequacy of supports • Monitoring employee's performance to ensure standards are maintained
	New supports in the workplace	• Identify and develop new supports as needed • Develop peer advocates/peer supports in workplace

Societal change interventions: to increase capacity to contribute to employment outcomes		
Domain	**Component focus**	**Elements /possible focus**
Service capacity building	DES/employment services capacity building	• Building skills and knowledge of staff relevant to specific disability, workplace adjustment and support strategies • Building collaboration between Disability Employment Services e.g. sharing vacancies they can't fill.
	Employment support services complaints handling	• Grievance procedures for users of employment support services • Investigation of complaints
	Schools / education and training organisations capacity building	• Building expectations about (open) employment throughout life course (primary, secondary school and further) – target teachers and key stakeholders
	Interagency collaboration	• Interagency forums and networks to plan and collaborate on employment support interventions
Community /regional capacity building	Development of local employment strategies	• Identifying local/regional employment needs, including areas of labour market shortage • Development of local/regional employment plans • Local/regional employment taskforce
	Financial support to local employment outcomes	• Fund to support activities in line with local employment needs • Access to a national or local funding pool to support regional employment initiatives
Structural/ macro change activities	Cross sectoral collaboration	• Inter-departmental/portfolio forums, networks, strategies within government to address structural barriers to employment, plan and collaborate on employment support interventions
	Policy interventions	• Strategies to encourage a) employers to employ and/or accommodate people with work restrictions or b) people with work restrictions to engage in or return to work. • Government-led behaviour change strategies (e.g. financial incentives, support for improving workplace accessibility, schemes to encourage employer involvement in RTW planning). • Procurement policy to favour suppliers who employ people with disability • National policy such as 'employment first' approaches
	Government agencies to drive wholesale reform	• Set up new agency to focus on employment of people with disability, and related barriers • Technical hubs to provide specialist advice on inclusive employment and employment supports
	Job creation (public sector)	• Job guarantee style program: guaranteed job, under-written by government, for target group. Usually rely on government and local government bodies to 'create' job opportunities • Public service employment targets for employees with disability

Appendix 2: Descriptive list of ILC EP Grants (2019-20, 2020-21)

Grant Title	Lead agency	Project/intervention	Target Cohort
BUSINESS MATTERS	AMES Australia	Enterprise and business training for Arabic speakers with a lived experience of disability through peer-support and an education program focussing on business development and entrepreneurship.	CALD Arabic speakers with a lived experience of disability
EMPLOYING THE AUTISM AND NEURODIVERSITY ADVANTAGE AT WORK	Specialisterne Centre Australia Limited	The project will build the capacity of employers to diversify their hiring processes and support more inclusive practices to ensure people with Autism and neurodiverse people can thrive at work.	Autistic and neurodiverse jobseekers
THE UPSTART PROGRAM	Star Health Group Limited	The project will develop inclusive pathways into employment in health, disability, local council and community organisations.	People with psychosocial and related disability with a focus on the CALD, LGBTQIA+ and ATSI communities in Bayside Peninsula and Southern Melbourne.
ANGLICARE SQ RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	The Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane	The project will continue to leverage of the success featured on the Employable Me segment and will support the employment of people with intellectual disabilities within the Residential Aged Care setting.	People with intellectual disability in the Toowoomba region
PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT	Aspergers Victoria Incorporated	Create long-term employment and social inclusion opportunities for teenagers with Autism through working with individuals, employers and industries to facilitate work experience opportunities with suitable employers.	Autistic teens at school
FROM SCHOOL TO WORK, CREATING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY	The Institute for Family Advocacy & Leadership Development Incorporated	Delivering webinars, workshops, resources, conferences, networking and support across the states and territory with the aim to inspire, increase confidence and motivate students with disability and their families to action so the outcome of obtaining meaningful employment can be realised.	Students with disabilities and their families across Australia
MORE THAN JUST A JOB 2.0	The New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability	Supporting people to develop skills and confidence to participate in the workforce through one-on-one programs and the development of peer groups of participants to share experiences and supportive relationships. The project will also work with large/mid-size employers to increase their capacity to employ people with intellectual disability into meaningful work.	People with intellectual disability
BREAKING OUT OF SILOS	The Onemda Association Inc.	The project will develop a collaborative model which builds stakeholder capacity to support young people with intellectual disabilities into paid & casual employment whilst at school.	Young people with intellectual disabilities
TEAMHEALTH TWO-WAY MENTORING FOR PSYCHO-SOCIAL DISABILITY	Top End Association For Mental Health Incorporated	The project will offer a two-way mentorship program to build workplace capacity through peer developed training modules and providing individual peer-led mentorship for people with a psychosocial disability.	People with psycho-social disability

INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM- PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT	Volunteering and Contact ACT Limited	Working with volunteer involving organisations in the Canberra Region, NSW and Tasmania to support those organisations to involve volunteers living with disability as a pathway to employment and support individuals to find appropriate volunteering roles.	PWD in Canberra, NSW and Tasmania
DISCOVER ME - MICRO ENTERPRISE, EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES.	Community Living Project Incorporated	Building knowledge around customised micro enterprise, design processes and supporting people through the discovery process. Done through peer support for PWD and their families living to discover and design their own customised micro enterprise, set up sustainable business mentoring & build their business management capacity.	People with disabilities and their families across SA
ASPIRE	Consumers of Mental Health WA (Inc).	Create new employment pathways for people with psychosocial disability to become peer support workers, through placement support and capacity building for peer workers and employers.	People with psychosocial disability in WA
'CHARGED UP FOR WORK'	Edge Employment Solutions Incorporated	Create individualised employment opportunities for high school students with disabilities not readily available through the Disability Employment Services or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) models.	High school students with disabilities in metropolitan Perth
THE VOLUNTEER & GROW PROGRAM	Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Limited	Promote economic participation by facilitating placements and providing support to PWD experiencing vulnerabilities to participate in meaningful volunteer roles in local community organisations and businesses.	PWD from vulnerable backgrounds
THE RED BUSINESS CLUB	Healthy Group of Companies Pty Ltd	Offer a range of back office, marketing, route to market, and business mentoring functions to enterprises that are run for or by entrepreneurs with a disability.	Entrepreneurs with disability
THE ROAD TO EMPLOYMENT	Julia Farr Association Incorporated	A series of workshops with families, teachers and PWD at key points in their lives, to raise their employment expectations and increase awareness of employment pathways, a mentoring program as well as working alongside employers to increase employer's capacity to work with people living with disability.	People/student with disability and their families
'THE CAMPAIGN'	Jewish Care (Victoria) Inc.	Development of an action plan that will increase the employment of people with a disability into small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through engagement, increased knowledge and awareness.	PWD in Victoria
Y CONNECT	YWCA Australia	Empower women living with a disability through building confidence, connections and professional development. It will assist participants in setting meaningful career goals and building their professional identity while engaging with a mainstream women's organisation.	Women with disability in the Toowoomba region
SHARED EXPERIENCE	The Personnel Group Limited	A pilot project designed to provide structured accredited training, work experience and casual and ongoing employment for PWD to support community services within Young, NSW. The training will provide a sustainable career pathway for PWD to train and work as Support Workers in the NDIS and other community services.	Young PWD aged 18-30 in Young, NSW

WESTERN SYDNEY BACKSWING PROGRAM	Sydwest Multicultural Services	A capacity building program with marketing projects delivered by CALD PWD in Western Sydney focusing on methods to change the perspective of employers with respect to PWD and with a view to simultaneously improving the work skills of PWD and connecting PWD to employers.	PWD from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Western Sydney
MENTORING PROGRAM TO ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS	Canberra Blind Society Inc	A community designed mentoring pilot program to be delivered to 10 government agencies and 5 commercial organisations to employ Vision Impaired Persons, with a range of activities designed to reduce stereotypes/preconceptions and increase employment opportunities for young people living with visual impairment.	PWD aged 18 – 64 years in the ACT
EMPLOYMENT CONNECTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME	Down Syndrome Australia	The project will develop and pilot a Work Readiness program for participants; develop a series of videos to be broadcast through a National awareness campaign and the creation of an Employment Connection program to support employers who are interested in employing a person with Down Syndrome. Creation of an Employment Connection for participants, with mentoring and a Website to provide information to people with Down Syndrome who are looking for work.	Young people with Down Syndrome in Australia
EMPLOY ME	Brain Injury Association of Tasmania Inc.	To increase capability and confidence, improve job readiness and employment related skills and access to skilled and networked employer groups and employment support. It will build knowledge and capability; improve recruitment and support of PWD; support job design, workplace assessments and reasonable adjustments for PWD.	PWD from 15-64 years, including young PWD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PWD and PWD living in rural and remote areas – Tas, SA and King Island
EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS	Empowering People in Communities (EPIC) Inc	Project to offer employment opportunities and skills development for PWD through the operation of a canteen.	PWD aged 15-64 in Kalgoorlie WA and the Pilbara/Goldfields regions in WA.
NATIONAL EXPANSION OF SCIA EMPLOYMENT SERVICE	Spinal Cord Injuries Australia	The national expansion of SCIA Employment Service through virtual platforms and local community connections for people with a spinal cord injury or other physical disabilities.	People with a spinal cord injury or other physical disabilities throughout Australia
IMPACT YOUNG PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION IN DERBY AND MOWANJUM	World Vision Australia	Weekly opportunities to come together to learn through carefully structured activities, develop skills and have fun to help build confidence and skills to participate in paid employment or start their own small businesses.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Psychological disability, Developmental delay disability and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum disorder in the age groups 7-30 years in the remote communities of Derby Town and Mowanjum Community, WA.
AIM HIGHER	Community Bridging Services (CBS) Incorporated	The Aim High Project (project) aims to deliver improved job readiness, employment related skills and knowledge to raise the job goals of young and/or Indigenous PWD living in remote and metropolitan areas. Will also support participants to increase the number of open employment work experience placements.	Young and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PWD aged 12-17 (Years 9-11) throughout SA
THE HOSPITALITY INCLUSIVE PROJECT	Community Bridging Services (CBS) Incorporated	The services provided through this pilot project will be provision of five Vocational Educational and Training (VET) hospitality units of competency including work placements.	PWD with low to moderate support needs, aged 14-24 years in Adelaide

UNLEASHED 2021	Youth Disability Advocacy Network Inc.	A job-readiness program which teaches skills and knowledge regarding employment. It will provide a two day training program including a networking and showcase event and an interactive online learning module.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD PWD and also those living in remote and very remote areas (MMM 6-7) aged 15-30 years in WA
SUNSHINE COAST INTENTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR EMPLOYMENT	Equity Works Assoc. Inc	Improve access to employment through person-centred action plans with workshops and training sessions to PWD/their supporters with access to person centred careers planning (action plans) and deliver workshops and training sessions to employers.	Young PWD in the Sunshine Coast, Queensland
NT PEER WORKFORCE	Top End Mental Health Consumers Organisation Inc	3 activities: mentoring and supporting 12 PWD (psychosocial disability) to complete Cert III/IV in community services fields of their choice; delivering workshops across the NT to build capacity of workplaces to hire and retain people with psychosocial disability; run networking events	People with psychosocial disability 18-50yrs; priority cohorts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, CALD and young people; LGBTIQA in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.
IGNITE ABILITY EDUCATE	Settlement Services International Limited	A project based program teaching the fundamental skills of entrepreneurship, developing comprehensive business skills and networking capacity.	Culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) and young people with a disability.
EMPLOY-ABILITY	People with Disabilities (W.A.)	Connect to potential employment opportunities in targeted sectors within the region while aiming to build capacity and confidence of small to medium-sized businesses to be more welcoming, confident and accessible to PWD (PWD).	Young PWD aged 15-30 years, Perth
MENTAL HEALTH, WORK AND YOU	Mental Health And Wellbeing Australia Limited	Develop and deliver a work ready program with two components: 1) coaching sessions for individuals with lived experience of mental ill health – designed to facilitate entry into the workforce 2) a coaching/ advisory service for employers.	CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PWD with psychosocial disabilities aged 18-50 throughout NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia
NGIYANI WORKING TOGETHER	Mirri Mirri Productions Pty Ltd	Deliver job readiness workshops in high schools with high proportions of Indigenous PWD and develop resources for employers.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PWD aged 15-30 in NSW
AUDIO ABILITY PROGRAM	Community Media Training Organisation Ltd	Audio Ability Program – provides free training, mentoring and work placement in media/creative skills as part of a blended learning/mentoring and professional development/work placement program.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, Cultural and Linguistically Diverse communities and young people with a disability in NSW, Queensland and Victoria
AUTISM EMPLOYABLE 2	Autism Queensland Limited	Inclusive participant-led autism-specific employment access programs. AQ will increase delivery of autism-awareness workshops to employers to increase awareness and understanding of the benefits of employing people with autism. Professional staff with autism expertise will work individually with participants with autism along with autistic mentors.	People with autism predominantly 17-30 years of age in SE Queensland
START UP WOLLOTUKA	Challenge Community Services	Delivery of a six module course delivered by Peer Facilitators and supported by Peer Mentors designed to develop self-employment opportunities, along with facilitated access to local businesses willing to employ PWD.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PWD and young PWD aged 15-30 years in Western Sydney, Newcastle and Tamworth, NSW

'MY CREATIVE ENTERPRISE' MICRO-ENTERPRISE INCUBATOR PILOT	Bedford Phoenix Incorporated	A pilot program to provide participants with business training and business-to-business networking opportunities. The program aims to develop self-employment opportunities for PWD.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PWD and young PWD in Panorama, Elizabeth and Port Lincoln, South Australia.
INCLUSIVE EMPLOYABILITY	Australian Refugee Association Incorporated	The project will provide: career planning and mentoring for the priority cohort with training courses and workshops with pre and early employment mentoring for the participants and employers.	CALD and refugee PWD aged 18-65 in Adelaide
PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	Vietnamese Community in Australia/ South Australia Chapter Incorporated	Pathways to Employment: a project designed to increase employment related skills/access to employer groups/support networks for the targeted cohort through a range of activities including workshops, job readiness programs, one-on-one coaching/mentoring and employer networking events	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse communities; young people with a disability; and communities living in remote/ very remote areas (aged 18-64 and drawn from the cohort of all disabilities) in SA
GROWING AND SUSTAINING THE INTEGRATED PRACTICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITY	Holmesglen Institute of TAFE	Expansion of existing Integrated Practical Placement (IPP) program, which provides YPWD work skills in a simulated workplace, to increase the employment opportunities of YPWD through the delivering of job readiness skills and meaningful employment opportunities.	YPWD (18-30 years old). The relevant disabilities are intellectual disability, developmental delay and Global Development Delay in Melbourne and regional Victoria
HERE 4 HOSPITALITY	Youth Projects Limited	An intensive industry target employment program focusing on pre-readiness skills and mentoring for participants including accredited hospitality skills training and support for employers to be able to support PWD in the workplace through accredited on the job traineeships.	Young PWD with intellectual disability (PID) and psychosocial disability aged 16-25 in Victoria
RUNNING WILD CONSERVATION CADETSHIPS	Running Wild...Youth Conservation Culture Inc.	A Cadetship will be delivered in partnership with four organisations, which will provide training and work placement in environmental activities.	PWD (aged 15-64 years) with priority cohorts those living in remote areas and young people with a disability in Southern Moreton Bay Islands (SMBI), Karragarra, Lamb, Russell, and Macleay, Queensland.
COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIPS – PHASE 2	Belonging Matters Inc.	Expand an existing Rotary Employment Partnership program established in 2019 with the University of Melbourne. The program will develop the job readiness skills of participants and will build 'open' employer networks to facilitate employment opportunities for participants.	Young PWD – focus on intellectual disability and developmental delay in Victoria
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK INTEGRATED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (WISE) MODEL	Swinburne University of Technology	A program working with Australia Disability Enterprise to implement the new WISE model to develop the job readiness of participants, deliver employer-networking opportunities, and improve employer attitudes. The program aims to provide participants a pathway to open employment.	Young PWD with the priority cohort those with intellectual disability, psychosocial disability, other neurological, development delay, 'other' physical disability and global developmental delay in Geelong
THE JOURNEY OF WORK	WISE Employment Ltd	The applicant will undertake a 12 month demonstration project that will build employment related skills includes components of the psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation (Employ Your Mind) program and the Optimal Health Program to manage mental, physical, social and spiritual health in the context of work.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Psychosocial disability aged 18-64 years in North-East Melbourne

EMPLOYMENT BUDDY PROGRAM	Avon Community Employment Support Centre	Aims to improve the job readiness of participants and improve employer attitudes. It will be achieved through participant and employee education and by enabling participants to 'sample' eight hours of work experience. The package will be delivered in a consortium arrangement.	PWD aged 15- 30 years in Perth, WA
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ACCESS CONSULTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	Accessible Arts	The applicant proposes a comprehensive package to deliver job readiness skills, professional networking and self-employment pathways in the art sector.	PWD (aged 18-64 years) targeting CALD in NSW and ACT
GENERATION AUSTRALIA JUNIOR WEB DEVELOPER	Generation Australia Ltd	Identifies vacancies prior to course commencement and curriculum development – specifically, the program is adapted/co-designed with each cohort and involves intensive training/ coaching/job placement support, custom build for the actual job roles in demand.	Young people with a disability (aged 18-30) in Vic and NSW
SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY	Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council	Collaborative workshops involving both participants and employers will develop the job readiness of participants, the capacity and attitudes of potential employers, and employment networking opportunities.	PWD aged 15-35 years' old from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, CALD, and communities living in remote and very remote areas in Coonabarabran, Bathurst, Gilgandra, and Orange
LIFE AFTER SCHOOL	The Northcott Society	A skills development program, empowering potential and employment opportunities. The project will run two programs concurrently. The first will be for students in Years 10-12 preparing to leave school. The second program is aimed at recent school leavers aged 16-18 who are seeking employment.	Young PWD (aged 15-18), not NDIS eligible, including high functioning individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Dyslexia and other social and emotional challenges in Sydney, Wollongong and Tamworth
AN EYE TO THE FUTURE 2.0	Blind Citizens Australia	Moving beyond changing perceptions to changing behaviours within the workplace: training and work-related supports for PWD; connecting & linking PWD to employers & employment networks; increasing the capacity of employers to employ PWD by delivering tailored remote working assistance applicable to people who are blind.	Youth with disability, specifically persons who are blind or vision impaired throughout Australia
LET'S GET WORKING	Centre for Participation Inc.	Let's Get Working: an initiative for PWD to gain work, employment and enterprise experience in the Farm to Table sector, including production, supply chains, ecommerce and hospitality.	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse communities, young PWD and communities living in remote/very remote areas (aged 15-64 and drawn from the all disabilities cohort) throughout Victorian Wimmera region.

Appendix 3: Descriptive list of Commonwealth employment supports and services included in this analysis

Program	Lead agency	Providing supply side interventions	Providing demand side interventions	Providing societal changes interventions	Target Cohort
CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE	DESE	Yes	-	-	Job seekers aged 45 and over
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	NIAA	Yes	Yes	-	Job seekers living in remote Australia
COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION AND REFERRAL SERVICE	DSS	-	-	Yes	Users of DES, ADE, and/or Disability Advocacy services
DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	DSS	Yes	Yes	-	People with disability or health condition aged 14-66
DISABLED AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICE WAGE SUPPORT PROGRAM	Services Australia	Yes	Yes	-	Australian apprentices with disability or Australian apprentices who have acquired a disability during apprenticeship and their employers
EMPLOYER LIAISON OFFICERS	DESE	-	Yes	-	
EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FUND	DSS	Yes	Yes	-	People with disability
ENTREPRENEURSHIP FACILITATORS	DESE	Yes	-	-	Open to anyone wanting to start a business, with a focus on mature age and young Australians in selected regions
HARVEST TRAIL SERVICES	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	
INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT PROGRAM	DSS	Yes	-	Yes	Young people with mental illness aged up to 25
JOBACCESS	DSS	Yes	Yes	-	People with disability and carers
JOBACTIVE	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	
LAUNCH INTO WORK	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	Primarily focused on female job seekers, although men may be able to participate
LOCAL JOBS PROGRAM	DESE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Job seekers from 15 employment regions (expanded to 51 employment regions from 1 July 2021)
MATURE AGE HUB	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	People aged 45 and over

NATIONAL DISABILITY ABUSE AND NEGLECT HOTLINE	DSS	-	-	Yes	
NATIONAL DISABILITY COORDINATION OFFICER	DESE	-	-	Yes	
NATIONAL DISABILITY RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR	DSS	-	Yes	-	
NATIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	Job seekers aged 17 and over
NEW BUSINESS ASSISTANCE WITH NEIS	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	People aged 18 or older when starting a new business
NEW EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TRIAL	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	jobactive participants in Adelaide South (SA) and the Mid North Coast (NSW)
PARENTSNEXT	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	Parents/carers with a young child under 6 (new criteria in pace from 1 July 2021)
PATH EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING	DESE	Yes	-	-	Job seekers aged 15-24
PATH INDUSTRY PILOTS	DESE	Yes	-	-	
PATH INTERNSHIPS	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	Job seekers aged 17-24
PATHWAY TO WORK (PILOT)	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	Job seekers aged 45-70
REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT TRIALS	DESE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Job seekers living in one of the 10 RET regions; or looking to move to a RET region
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE TO TAKE UP A JOB	DESE	Yes	-	-	Job seekers relocating to take up ongoing work
SKILLS AND TRAINING INCENTIVE	DESE	Yes	-	-	People aged 45-70
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT	DSS & NDIA	Yes	Yes	-	NDIS participants (aged 7-64); DECoS participants
SUPPORTED WAGE SYSTEM	DSS	Yes	Yes	-	Employees with disability aged 15 or over
TIME TO WORK EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	DESE & NIAA	Yes	-	-	Indigenous prisoners aged 18 and over
TRANSITION TO WORK	DESE	Yes	Yes	-	Young people aged 14-24
NUMBER OF PROGRAMS (N=33)		28	22	6	

Paper 3: School leaver employment support (SLES) – reshaping the approach

Wilson, E.; Crosbie, J.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Campbell, P. (2022). Paper 3: School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) – Reshaping the Approach, Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact

Headlines:

- The employment outcomes for young people with intellectual disability aged 15-24 years are extremely low.
- SLES was introduced by the NDIA in 2016 to support employment readiness of school leavers with a disability.
- SLES is focused largely on preliminary jobseeker support for those leaving school and offers little support to employers.
- SLES has a mildly positive affect on outcomes, though participants identify high levels of inadequate support.
- The design of SLES activities does not reflect international evidence-based transition and employment support practice for young people with intellectual disability that emphasises early engagement in transition and employment planning (from age 14), paid and unpaid work experience, customised employment strategies, and work integrated learning opportunities.

The transition and employment situation of young people with disability 15-24 years

A range of data highlights that young people with disability experience significantly higher rates of unemployment than their non-disabled peers, with young people with intellectual disability being particularly marginalised from employment in community-based settings. NDIA data (2020) shows that NDIS participants aged 15-24 have vastly lower employment rates than the Australian norm for this age as evidenced in the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) (NDIA, 2020). 16% of NDIS participants in this age cohort had an intellectual disability, 17% with Down syndrome, and 14% with Autism (NDIA, 2020). NDIA data (2019) shows that only 18% of participants with an intellectual disability aged 15-24 have employment, rising to 25% in year 2 of participation in NDIS.

Only 45% of NDIS participants aged 15-24 had work-related goals in their NDIS plans as of 31 December 2020, though this is higher for people with intellectual disability and Down syndrome. The number with a work-related goal peaks at 18-20 years then declines (NDIA, 2020). Of those in this age group who had been in the scheme for two years, only 21% felt the NDIS had helped them find a job right for them, and this proportion decreased the longer they had been in the scheme.

Of those with paid employment, somewhat more than half were in open employment by year three in the scheme: 39% in open employment on full award wages, 24% in open employment on less than full award wages. A bit less than one third of those employed (31%) were in ADEs (NDIA, 2019). Once in ADEs, where the primary cohort is people with intellectual disability, there is little movement into open employment. 2020 data from the NDIS reports that only 4% of 15-24 year olds moved from ADEs to open employment over a one year period (NDIA, 2020, p. 109).

What are School Leaver Employment Supports

Since 2016, the NDIS has provided funding for up to two years to participants who are school leavers for 'school leaver employment supports' (SLES). These supports 'help participants move from school to work' (NDIA, 2022a, p.7). SLES is based on the NSW Transition to Work program that aimed to disrupt direct transition from school to segregated disability day and employment services. The framing of the SLES, in a policy sense, is as an 'early intervention support' aimed at

> bridging gaps in mainstream services by recognising that many NDIS participants require significant investment early to gain generic competencies needed for work (NDIA, 2022a, p. 7).

In this context it is seen as a precursor to and feeder into DES, though some support activities overlap.

Funding is available in the final years of school and directly after leaving school. As described by the NDIS:

> Providers who deliver school leaver employment supports help young people prepare, look for and gain employment. They provide meaningful, individualised capacity building activities so young people can achieve their employment goals (https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/school-leaver-employment-supports).

SLES can be delivered individually or as part of a group, or a combination of both. During 2021, on average, somewhat more time was spent in group based activity (49%) than one on one (40%), and the remainder of time spent in distance/online delivery, noting that incidence of COVID-19 affected delivery modality of SLES activities throughout this period (NDIA, 2022a).

While the selection of employment support activities is meant to be individually relevant, the NDIS provide several different descriptions of possible supports, outlined in Table 1. The NDIS SLES Provider Reporting tool requires providers to list progress and hours of delivery across a range of areas, which go beyond shorter explanations offered to providers on the main website.

Table 1: Focus of employment supports in SLES

NDIS SLES Provider Reporting tool https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/school-leaver-employment-supports	**For Providers: SLES webpage, 'How School Leaver Employment Supports work' section:** https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/school-leaver-employment-supports
Assessments (of individual's capabilities, goals, progress and support requirements)	• discovery activities
Planning and reviewing progress	
Exploring employment options (including via workplace visits)	
Engagement with family/carer to support employment directions	
Engagement with other professionals/ providers to support employment goals	
Building social, presentation and communication skills	• time management skills • communication skills • personal development skills
Travel training	• travel skills
Work skills training	• money handling skills • job ready skills
Employer engagement education and job customisation	
Work experience support of the participant (on the job)	• work experience
On the job support of participant (when initially employed)	

Using the terminology of the Typology of Employment Support Interventions presented in Paper 2, this list of supports largely sits in two domains: Building foundation skills; and Planning and preparation for work. Supports almost exclusively fall only on the supply side and have little engagement with building employer-jobseeker interactions or employer capacity.

Emerging issues with SLES design

NDIS report a range of SLES design issues that have emerged from consultation:

- There is tension between the programmatic appearance of SLES and the need to 'enable tailored supports based on individual needs and goals',
- The performance (skills, knowledge, experience, quality) of providers varies markedly and they need guidance on 'best practice milestones' so as to increase accountability to participants and their supporters, and for this to be linked to payment,
- 'Participants lack information to guide decision-making in selecting the right provider' and to navigate the complex disability employment system comprised of mainstream and NDIS employment supports,
- Support commences too late for some participants and needs to be available to all young people when they attain working age. Local Area Coordinators (LACs) and Planners need to support families and participants to connect to SLES providers (NDIA, 2022b, pp.4-5).

Additionally, given that SLES is positioned as preparatory for entrance to DES, problems with access to and relevance of DES have also been a noted problem for people with intellectual disability who are either not well supported within DES or are ineligible to access DES. Extremely low levels of transfer of SLES participants in the data reported below (2%) highlight this issue. In this context, NDIS participants exiting SLES are left unsupported to secure and maintain suitable employment.

Current SLES scope and performance

The NDIA's Provider data on SLES (NDIA, 2022a) shows 6,397 SLES participants throughout 2021, aged 15-24. Detailed data is available for only 4,530 of these, reported below.

Cohort

SLES participation appears to accurately reflect the NDIS participant cohort demographics for the age group 15-24 years. Most SLES recipients have Autism (51%) or intellectual disability (36%), and a further 3% with Down syndrome, with most being male (67%). Similarly, the proportions of those identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (6%) or as from a Culturally and Linguistically diverse community (7%) are roughly consistent with the overall numbers of NDIS participants from these categories in the 15-24 year old age group.

Most SLES participants are aged 18-20 (76%) (NDIA, 2022a), and most (89%) had completed year 12 (NDIA, 2022b).

SLES has higher participant numbers in the more populous states, with the lowest SLES participant numbers in the NT (less than 11) and ACT (70).

This data also highlights that, of those participants surveyed, the most common areas of functional impact in school settings were:

- learning (68%),
- mixing with people (65%),
- going out by myself (59%),
- managing emotions (59%),
- using money (58%)
- using public transport (53%)

- remembering things (52%)
- following instructions (51%)
- self care (32%)
- talking (32%) (NDIA, 2022b).

This is useful data as it forecasts potential barriers to employment requiring targeted supports. For example, as more than half of SLES participants identify cognitive functioning related to common employment skills such as following instructions and remembering things, then employment supports need to be provided that match and support the requirements of the individual's workplace.

Data from a limited sample of survey respondents for the period 2018,and 2019 shows\ that 26% who has SLES in their NDIS plan did not use their SLES funding, frequently related to having no explanation of purpose of funding, funding not being suitable or at right time, and a range of other factors (NDIA, 2022b).

How providers are selected

The 2016-18 data highlights that the most common means of selecting a SLES provider is through support from the participant's parents (40%), followed by support from the school (33%) and meetings with a provider (28%). This is consistent with a study by Crosbie (2022), where family members explained their key role in supporting the decision to access SLES, and the role of the school in linking them to providers. Only 15% were supported by a LAC (NDIA, 2022b). This is a considerable burden for families who have been forced to undertake a quasi-formal navigation and support coordination role to manage selection of and access to employment supports, with some family members not having adequate skills or resources to do so (Crosbie, 2022).

The type of support provided

Around half of SLES support delivery is spent in skills building and training, including social, presentation and communication skills (around 23%); and work skills (24%). Very minimal amounts of time are spent on employer education and job customisation (5%), evidencing the almost exclusive focus on the Supply side of employment support provision (NDIA, 2022a).

Table 2: Types of support provided by SLES (actual)

Support type provided (% of hours per participant)	Oct-Dec quarter 2021
Assessments	3%
Planning and reviewing progress	6%
Exploring employment options	**10%**
Engagement with family / carer to support employment directions	4%
Engagement with other professionals / providers to support employment goals	3%
Building social, presentation and communication skills	**23%**
Travel training	4%
Work skills training	**24%**
Employer engagement education and job customisation	5%
Work experience support (on the job)	**13%**
Other (Field 1)	3%
Other (Field 2)	1%

Table adapted from NDIA (2022a), p. 17.

While the 2021 data (NDIA, 2022a) in Table 2 identifies the proportion of support time spent on each activity for each participant, data from an earlier 2018 SLES cohort identifies the proportion of the cohort receiving specific types of support. This data suggests that only a proportion are receiving effective support in these areas:

- 44% of these participants reported that their SLES provider helped them arrange work experience in a role they were interested in (and a further 18% in a role they were not interested in);
- 57% said they were supported on the job by the SLES provider during work experience, with a further 35% reporting that while they were supported they needed more support than they were given, and 8% received no support. Support on the job is a potentially important element of SLES provision, given the wider context where NDIA participants aged 15-24 have identified that they are inadequately supported on the job when in open employment and are largely reliant on the employer to provide support (NDIA, 2020).
- 30% said that they were supported to undertake courses related to employment goals (NDIA, 2022b).

Around half of SLES participants are receiving support in relevant areas to their employment support needs.

Outcomes

Overall, the reported outcomes of SLES are moderate, with some elements echoing evidence from research, such as work experience as a predictor of employment outcomes (NDIA, 2022a). However, the modest SLES outcomes do not appear to have greatly impacted employment outcomes for this age cohort overall. NDIS data indicates that the rates of young people without work but wanting work remains consistent (at 51%) between entry and four years post SLES commencement (NDIA, 2020).

The NDIA reports that longitudinal data on employment supports from the NDIA Office of the Scheme Actuary, shows that of those receiving SLES at 2 years, 10% more are in paid employment than those in a matched comparison group (NDIA, 2022b). Similarly, modelling of NDIA data from 2020 shows that a higher proportion of NDIS participants who received SLES than those who did not were in non-ADE employment at end of the one year review period and fewer were in ADE employment (NDIA. 2020, p. 149). Almost double the proportion of SLES participants were in non ADE employment two years after SLES than a similar group who had not received SLES (15% vs 8%) (NDIA, 2020). While the proportion of SLES participants with such outcomes is small, these results appear to indicate a comparative benefit to SLES participation.

In 2021 (NDIA, 2022a), despite the majority of time being dedicated to skills training, progress was moderate. Across support areas, in the main, less than one third of participants achieved their goals or made significant progress. Around two thirds made 'some progress' at the reporting point at each quarter.

- For Social, presentation and communication skills: 1% fully achieved goals; 24% had significant progress; 69% had some progress; 5% had no progress.
- For Work skills: 5% fully achieved goals; 25% had significant progress; 64% had some progress; 6% had no progress.
- For Work experience: 3% fully achieved goals; 40% had significant progress; 52% had some progress; 5% had no progress.

This is echoed in earlier 2018 data that suggests that only 46% of SLES participants felt that all supports (23%) or most supports (23%) helped them in achieving employment goals, with 15% noting that no supports helped (NDIA, 2022b).

Of those who exited SLES in 2021:

- most (46%) did not have an employment outcome. **Non employment** outcomes included:
  - 4% entered education or further study (9% in 2018 data, NDIA, 2022b)
  - 10% undertook volunteering or other unpaid work experience (9% in 2018 data, NDIA, 2022b)
  - 2% of participants were referred to DES (12% in 2018 data, NDIA, 2022b)
  - 4% were referred to another provider (5% in 2018 data, NDIA, 2022b)
  - 26% exited SLES (no other data provided).

- whereas the 2018 data shows 20% employed exited to **open employment** (NDIA, 2022b), 2021 data shows 27% exited to open employment (5% full time, 43% part time, 34% casual, 4% self employed)
  - 16% on full award wage (6% of these with assistance from DES)
  - 10% on supported wage (7% of these with assistance from DES
  - 1% self-employed / micro enterprise (NDIA, 2022a).
- 6% exited to an **ADE/supported employment** (NDIA, 2022a). This is similar to 2018 data of 7% (NDIA, 2022b). Interestingly, this level of exit to an ADE is far less than the 23% of NDIS participants aged 15-24 having a job in an ADE (NDIA, 2020).
- the remainder are unknown (NDIA, 2022a).

However, other data shows an increase in employment outcomes over time since SLES exit, increasing to 33% in open employment, and 7% in ADEs across the subsequent two years post exit (NDIA, 2022b).

The majority of SLES participants worked 15-21 hours per week on exit. Hours worked by 2021 participants exiting SLES to employment were:

- 0-7/wk 11%
- 8-14/wk 24%
- 15-21/wk 36%
- 22+/wk 15% (NDIA, 2022a).

Most (29%) entered employed in hospitality and tourism, 19% in retail and consumer products, 16% in trades and services, and 9% in manufacturing and operation (NDIA, 2022a). This has some similarities with employment data for NDIS participants (including SLES and non SLES) aged 15-24 years, where 13% had employment in retail, 11% in hospitality (NDIA, 2022, p. 56), and around 1% had self employment, though the categories and figures are not easily comparable. A key question requiring more data is whether SLES offers a full scope of employment outcomes, or overly narrows fields and types of employment.

Of those moving into employment, only 18% of SLES participants think they will be using NDIS Supports in Employment (NDIA, 2022a).

There is somewhat contradictory data in relation to the employer use of supported wages, for SLES participants exiting to employment. While the employment data (above) shows 10% of participants moving into open employment on supported wages, with a further 6% moving into ADEs (potentially on supported wages), SLES providers report that 37% (nearly three times that number) of employers say they will use supported wages for the participants' employment (NDIA, 2022a). Data from the NDIA in 2020 across all NDIS participants aged 15-24 (including those using SLES) who are employed, shows 12% being employed in open employment on a supported wage. In this data, 15% are employed in retail, 11% in hospitality, 6% in food/fast food, 6% in packaging/packing and 4% in cleaning on supported wages (NDIA, 2020, p. 57). This data suggests that the use of supported wage in open employment is higher in the 15-24 year cohort than it is for 25 years and above cohort, where it is 8% less (NDIA, 2020). Overall, it would appear that the use of supported wage in open employment for SLES participants is somewhere between 10-37% of those exiting SLES.

Taken together, the moderate utilisation of supported wages in open employment and the low utilisation of NDIS funding for supports in employment, raises questions about the extent to which young people are being equipped with adequate employment supports to maximise their productivity, linked to the level of wages paid, in open employment.

Effective SLES activities (from NDIA data)

A range of NDIA data for SLES participants and for NDIS participants aged 15-24 identifies employment support activities that function as drivers of employment. Broadly these include:

- support to develop work skills (where participants showed significant progress toward or full achievement of their goals) (NDIA, 2022a)

- work experience and volunteering (NDIA, 2022a; NDIA, 2020)
- employer engagement and job customisation (NDIA, 2022a)
- higher levels of one to one support (NDIA, 2022a)
- receiving assistance to find a job
- early employment discussions and planning with young people and families
- post school educational attainment (NDIA, 2020).

This data has a high resonance with international research evidence about the factors influencing open employment outcomes for school leavers with disability.

Other data suggests that outcomes are related to providers who regularly (i.e. once a fortnight) undertake progress reviews and have very good understanding of participants' support needs (NDIA, 2022b).

Participants felt services could be improved by providers arranging more work experience (52%), providing more skill building opportunities (42%), and spending more time helping to identify work goals (35%) (NDIA, 2022b).

international Research evidence about transition from school to work for young people with disability

There is no information about the design principles of SLES as an NDIS funded program, nor about the design logic used by SLES providers in the selection and delivery of employment support interventions.

By contrast, there is substantial research evidence underpinning an internationally accepted best-practice model of school to work transition for young people with disability (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler & Coyle, 2016). Seven best practice elements of transition planning and support provision for young people with disability have been repeatedly identified in research internationally. A much smaller body of evidence explores the elements most effective for young people with intellectual disability, identifying a more limited set. These are captured in Table 3.

Table 3: Evidence based best practices for transition for young people with disability (based on Papay and Bambara, 2014)

Best practice elements of transition planning and support for young people, related to post school outcomes	
All disability	**Intellectual disability**
1. Youth involvement in transition planning / strategies to foster self determination	✓
2. Family involvement in transition planning	✓
3. Individualised transition planning	
4. Vocational education and work experiences	✓ (work experience)
5. Independent living preparation (life skills instruction and experiences)	✓
6. General education and inclusion activities with peers without disability	
7. Interagency involvement and collaboration	✓

As depicted in Table 3, the transition practices that have been found to be particularly predictive of post-school outcomes, including employment, independent living, and quality of life, for young people with intellectual disability are:

1. youth involvement in transition planning
2. family involvement in transition planning and implementation;
3. work experiences
4. life skills instruction and experience
5. inter-agency collaboration (Papay & Bambara, 2014).

There is a broad literature base to each of these elements, largely in the international context (US), that offers evidence about the types or ingredients of employment support practices related to these five broad areas.

Youth involvement in transition planning

Youth involvement in transition planning has been shown to have significant effect on post school employment outcomes (Papay & Bambara, 2014). Involvement includes individual education plans within secondary schools, commencing from age 14 (Kohler et al., 2017). Explicit teaching of self-determination skills when included in school curriculum has been correlated with post school outcomes (Benitez et al., 2005), and has been the focus of an evidence-based practice model in schools - the Self Determined Learning Model of Instruction. The model has been linked to higher employment and community participation outcomes for young people with intellectual disability (Shogren et al., 2019). Self-determination development has also been integrated within career design activities for people with intellectual disability, and extended into 'life designing' activities with good results (Wehmeyer et al., 2019).

Family involvement in transition planning

The expectations of families have been found to be one of the biggest factors affecting open employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability (Papay & Bambara, 2014). Likewise, family involvement in transition planning, including individual education plans and post-school goal setting, is a similarly positive factor. The involvement of families has been supported in a range of ways, discussed in the literature. This includes structured training, individualised planning sessions, follow up support to families of young people with Autism (Hagner et al., 2012); provision of training and information sessions, peer role models among families, and linking families to family support groups (Pleet-Odle et al., 2016).

Work experience

There is a wealth of evidence about the value of work experiences for people with intellectual disability as a predictor of employment outcomes (for example, Papay and Bambara, 2014; Ju et al., 2015). Work experience is not a narrow concept and has been evidenced to include: job-tasters, internships, work sampling, work integrated learning, paid and unpaid work. Paid work experience, such as after school jobs, is a predictor of postschool employment for people with intellectual disability (Wehman et al., 2014).

> Likewise, Luecking and Luecking (2013) found that while work experience was the single most important predictor of later work for students with intellectual disability, the impact doubled if they had paid work (Crosbie, 2022, p. 87).

Work experience plays an important role on many fronts. Not only does it provide opportunities for young people to learn about work and develop soft skills (e.g. independence) (Lindstrom et al., 2014), it also influences parental and employer expectations about employment for people with intellectual disability (for example, Blustein et al., 2016). Importantly, work experience provides an opportunity to identify the young person's strengths as well as need for workplace accommodations (Dean et al., 2018). There is some evidence that poorly structured or supported work experience, such as school-supported activities, will not function as a predictor of later employment outcomes (Daviso et al., 2016).

Life skills instruction and experience

A range of life skill areas have been found to influence later post school education and other outcomes (Papay and Bambara, 2014; Carter et al., 2011b). These include banking, food preparation and shopping, laundry skills, information technology skills, independent travel, self-care and communication skills.

Interagency collaboration

Much research has focused on the role of collaboration between agencies involved in school to work transition (e.g. schools and adult services) and in the structures that support this collaboration (Haber et al., 2016; Kohler et al., 2016; Meadows, 2019; Papay & Bambara, 2014; Sheppard et al., 2017). Evidence from the UK suggests that multi-agency/multi-stakeholder transition has increased outcomes for young people (e.g. Kaehne, 2013). In the US, collaborative transition models have brought together stakeholder groups via over-arching government 'employment first' approaches, for example through the development of consortia of key stakeholders, the provision of technical assistance to transition actors, and statewide employment targets (Molfenter et al., 2017). In Australia, Ticket to Work, (TTW) a transition program for young people with disability, incorporates local area networks of schools, employers, VET providers and others across Australia (ARTD Consultants, 2019). Data from TTW suggests increased employment and post school education outcomes (ARTD Consultants, 2016, 2019).

Research evidence about employment support for people with intellectual disability

Evidence about supported employment (as used in the US), customised employment, and work integrated learning is provided in Paper 2, as key approaches to the design of employment supports that foster employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability.

In addition to these approaches, University-based transition programs have evidence to support young people transitioning from school to work and independent living.

University based transition programs

The US has more than 305 colleges providing post secondary programs to more than 6,000 students with disability (Think College National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup, 2021), with evidence that this approch increases employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability (Grigal et al., 2011). Students might be enrolled in 'mainstream' programs, in hybrid programs (a mix of segregated amd inclusive activities), or in segregated programs offered on college campuses. In Australia, two programs have some evidence of positive social outcomes: the 'Up the Hill Project' delivered at Flinders University (Rillotta et al., 2020), and the 'Uni 2 beyond' program developed by Sydney University to include young people with intellectual disability in university (O'Brien et al., 2019).

Research evidence about the transition and employment support needs of Australian young people with intellectual disability

Crosbie (2022) recently undertook a study of young people with intellectual disability, their families and other stakeholders in the context of school to work transition in Australia. The barriers and enablers to school to work transition strongly align with the breadth of barriers to work (as described in Paper 2), and to the existing research evidence about best practice in transition and employment support (Papers 2 and 3).

In particular, young people and their families report a lack of transition planning, with a focus largely being on a decision about selecting the immediate post school activity. As evident in the NDIS data, schools and disability service providers were the main service providers discussing options with families, with families carrying the bulk of the workload for organising employment supports with little information. The focus on immediate 'transition' from one service environment (school) to another (largely SLES, disability services or ADEs) denied a focus on longer life course planning and long term employment aspirations within a context of 'emerging adulthood' over a much longer period (e.g 18-25).

Many young people in the study had utilised SLES, which was viewed, at least initially, as a positive option that offered the security of a structure whilst supporting development towards employment. However, families also reported frustration with poor communication about the goals of SLES and progress towards them, and extremely poor interfaces between SLES, DES and other supports. Many families felt a second transition 'cliff' looming as the SLES period drew to a close, with little sense of what would happen next or where to gain support. While some were connected to DES, others were not, and even where DES was an option, families noted that DES would not be providing a program of activities (as SLES had done) while a work placement was sought and the young person would potentially be at home doing nothing. DES was considered a poor option with little specialist knowledge of how to support people with intellectual disability, and insufficient time available to support individuals and businesses in the ongoing and intensive way needed. While SLES was considered a 'stepping stone' post school, the lack of employment outcomes at the end of the program meant that it was not clear what it was stepping to. Key informants reiterated family members' observations of the lack of appropriate employment services for people with intellectual disability in Australia, particularly customised employment.

Overall, families were left with the workload of investigating employment options, drawing on social networks to unlock opportunities or utilising information from other families about resources or programs available. Families and other stakeholders reported the difficulty and exhaustion of battling a system that assumed young people with intellectual disability would be 'non workers'. Families were identified as the primary employment support for young people, and requiring substantial resourcing and support themselves but with few, largely informal, avenues for obtaining this.

For young people with intellectual disability, their focus was firmly on normative, emerging adulthood roles, often modelled on their siblings, where employment and valued roles were an expected part of this future. In particular, young people emphasised the importance of meaningful work they liked doing, they felt valued in, and they felt had purpose. This was not necessarily associated with paid work, as many young people had unpaid or minimally paid roles they highly valued.

Implications for SLES and employment supports for young people with intellectual disability

SLES has gone some way to addressing a gap in employment supports for school leavers and young people with intellectual disability, though has a narrow focus on only the concluding and immediate post school years. Evidence-based best practice in transition highlights the need to commence employment-focused transition planning, at age 14, and to extend the process through a longer period of 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett, 2007). The conception of DES as the natural pathway beyond DES is flawed for people with intellectual disability for whom DES does not offer appropriate employment supports, and who may be ineligible for DES. While SLES has some modest outcomes, they are not of the order of other evidence-based employment supports such as customised employment, supported employment, and work-integrated learning, nor does SLES draw on the evidence related to transition planning and practice. Re-modelling SLES to replicate evidence-based elements of employment support for people with intellectual disability would improve its outcomes and suitability. A wider range of employment supports need to be systematically available to people with intellectual disability. SLES appears to provide virtually no employer-facing employment supports to meet the needs of young people with intellectual disability. By contrast, international evidence highlights that supported employment models from the US provide substantial time-unlimited support to employers, and significant work with employers to unlock work opportunities through job carving and customisation (Paper 2). Finally, families are shown to be the major employment support for young people with intellectual disability and need to be resourced and supported in this role.

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The ADE snapshot

Wilson, E.; Qian-Khoo, J.; Cutroni, L.; Campbell, P.; Crosbie, J. & Kelly, J. (2022). The ADE Snapshot, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

Headlines

- ADEs create employment for approximately 16,000 people with disability in Australia.
- They have been the main employment setting for people requiring significant supports and customisation in employment.
- Pro rata wages have been an area of long standing critique and tension as these are seen as fundamental to the business model by the sector.
- The cessation of the DSS funded 'Australian Disability Enterprise Services' in 2021, and the new funding arrangements under NDIS, have potential to change the ADE model.
- Some ADEs now offer integrated work settings or workforces, and pathways to employment beyond ADEs.
- Transition to employment out of ADEs remains extremely low.
- The lack of available data means there is little knowledge about the barriers to desegregation, fair wages, financial sustainability and employment pathways for ADEs.

Supporting those with significant disability to gain and maintain employment

In 2017, the Commonwealth of Australia reiterated its commitments, consistent with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to address the significant employment gap for people with significant disability:

> in 2015 .... only 25 per cent of people with a profound or severe core activity limitation were active participants in the labour market. This means that over a million Australians of working age with disability were outside the workforce and there is significant scope to support more people with disability into employment ... DSS estimates around 237,000 Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipients of working age may be eligible for employment assistance, and are not participating in employment, education or an employment assistance program (DSS, 2017, p. 6).

It is in this context of significant employment exclusion that supported employment in Australia is explored in this paper.

History of supported employment in australia

'Sheltered Workshops' in the 1960's to 70's

According to Cheng et al. (2018), sheltered workshops were originally developed in the 1950's by families to offer employment for people with intellectual disability. In 1967, the Commonwealth government commenced funding of them, continuing in the 1970's with the funding of work preparation centres to provide vocational training for school leavers with intellectual disability. However, critique of sheltered workshops emerged through the 1970s and 1980s alongside a growing international inclusion movement.

‘Supported Employment Services’ established in 1980’s

In 1986, the *Disability Services Act* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987) established two broad types of employment services, open and supported employment services, essentially enshrining a bifurcated model where only some people with disability were supported into open employment. Within the Act, ‘supported employment services’ were for those people who are ‘unlikely’ to gain competitive employment at or above the award wage and ‘need substantial ongoing support to obtain or retain paid employment’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 1987, Part 11, Div 1, 7.) (see Paper 1). As described by DSS (2017), ‘supported employment’ has referred to both ‘different *employment settings* and e*mployment supports* available to people with disability to enable them to participate in work, or to build capacity for work’ (p.6, italics added). Across this period, supported employment services were known as ‘disability business services’ or ‘business enterprises’.

Supported employment in the early 2000’s

Until recently, supported employment services have been predominantly provided via ‘sheltered workshops, enclaves or work crews’ (Cheng et al., 2018, p. 318).

In 2005/6 there were 397 supported employment outlets across Australia (FaCSIA, 2007). Roughly half of these were located in major cities.

Between 2005 and 2010, the number of supported employment service users fluctuated between 21-23,000. Approximately 70% of these had an intellectual disability, 2% were Indigenous, and most service users (around 65%) were male. Around 30% worked full time hours (See Appendix 1 for details of data 2005/6 -2009/10).

Data has been patchy since 2010, with limited user data reported publicly and detailed data on the scale and characteristics of supported employment services unavailable after the Australian Government Disability Services Census ceased. When the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set ceased in 2019 (Productivity Commission, 2021), national data collection and publication on supported employment services have become unavailable.

Supported employment and supported wage

As discussed in Paper 1, pro rata or productivity based wages have been a feature of the supported employment sector, though have been used in open employment also (being initiated in the open employment sector in the 1990’s [Health Outcomes International, 2001]). To determine the amount of wages paid, assessments of competency or productivity are undertaken, using one of many assessment methodologies.

There has been ongoing critique about the low hourly rates paid, and tension between what the supported employment services see as commercial imperatives requiring pro rata wages (reflecting productivity losses and higher costs of support) versus calls for fair or equal wages. An early review of pro rata wages in the sector in 2001 noted largely arbitrary and historical processes used in supported employment settings, identifying that ‘the financial viability of Business Services is the main determinant of wage levels’ (Health Outcomes International, 2001, p. vi). Even at this time, critique focused on the need for fair and appropriate wages. This was echoed, in 2008, when the then Minister, Bill Shorten, emphasised supported employment settings as offering ‘the same conditions as any other workplace, including the payment of fair wages’ (Shorten, 2008).

In 2012, the Federal Court judged that one wage assessment tool - the Business Service Wages Assessment Tool (BSWAT) - was discriminatory against two workers with intellectual disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The BSWAT was the most used wage assessment tool by the supported employment sector until then and was abandoned from 2015. The decision from the Federal Court required the Government and the supported employment sector to consider future wage setting arrangements and

several national scale research projects were commissioned by the Government and a peak body to look into business models and business viability of ADEs (e.g., ConNetica, 2013; KPMG, 2015). These studies have confirmed, as found in 2001, that while supported employment services desired

> to pay the highest wages possible to their employees, but most recognised that increasing wage costs would significantly influence financial viability of the organisation (Health Outcomes International, 2001, p.17).

Similarly, the KPMG (2015) report found a 'direct relationship between supported employee wage costs and organisational profitability' (p.2).

'Australian Disability Enterprises' and the vision for supported employment

In 2008, supported employment services were badged Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) and funded by the Commonwealth government (FaCSIA then DSS) (Shorten, 2008).

In 2012, the Commonwealth government outlined an agenda for change of ADEs: *Inclusive Employment 2012-2022. A vision for supported employment* (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FaHCSIA], n.d). In this, it was envisaged that the forthcoming decade of change, driven by the CRPD and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), would generate an ADE sector characterised by being an employer of choice as well as offering employment supports that people with disability would choose to purchase (with NDIS funding). In 2012, the vision for the future was articulated as:

> In 2022, Australian Disability Enterprises will look different to what they do today. Organisations will have adapted to a new environment, where people with disability choose where they work, who provides their employment support, and how. Australian Disability Enterprises will have changed the way they operate, and the supports they offer, to attract people with disability as purchasers of employment support from their organisation (FaHCSIA, n.d., p.4).

In 2012, the Commonwealth government envisaged a future for supported employment services as 'specialised organisations' where such specialised supports were able to 'deliver mainstream inclusion wherever possible' (FaHCSIA, n.d., p.4. & p.6).

There were 194 not for profit organisations operating ADEs in 2013, employing about 20,000 people among whom most had an intellectual disability (FaHCSIA, 2013).

The ADE model was reiterated in 2017, focusing on the characteristics of work-focused social enterprise, where the majority of the workforce was people with disability:

> Supported employment generally refers to employment in enterprises that have as their primary purpose employment of people with disability, and where the majority of employees have disability. There are often mixed industries within enterprises to cater for their employees, and there are higher levels of job customisation (DSS. 2017, p.7).

Supported employment in ADEs was characterised by high levels of customisation and support:

> ADEs create employment opportunities through designing jobs around the individual abilities of people with disability. ADEs provide significant workplace modifications to accommodate the abilities of their workforce … A supported employee will often receive daily access to employment and personal care supports by support staff embedded within (and employed by) the ADE. This allows for a greater intensity and frequency of support than can be provided to individuals (DSS, 2017, p.16).

This vision articulated a threefold focus for ADEs:

1. the creation of jobs via government funding and commercial activities
2. the provision of a high level of employment supports, including job customisation, within these training-integrated workplaces
3. enabling either ongoing work in the ADE or transition into open employment (DSS, 2017).

In this context, government funding has subsidised the additional costs of making this level of adjustments and providing significant supports to enable the employment of people with significant, or 'moderate to severe' disability (DSS, 2017, p.16).

ADE's transition to the NDIS

More operationally, in 2017, the Department of Social Services proposed a range of 'reform' directions for ADEs to change their operational parameters, in the context of NDIS. These included:

- creating labour hire arrangements where groups of supported employees are placed in open employment businesses
- leveraging social procurement
- offering non-employment services as a NDIS provider
- specialising as employment support providers working to support employees in open employment
- business closure (DSS, 2017).

Between 2015/16 and 2019/20 the Commonwealth government provided $1.3 billion in funding to supported employment (DSS, 2017). In the same period, over $180 million was provided through transitional funding support to assist the supported employment sector to adjust to higher wages and conduct business planning in preparation and transition to the NDIS. In 2017, the average cost of employment support from the Commonwealth Government per supported employee was $11,800 with an additional $2,500 for transitional support (DSS, 2017).

Today, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA, 2020) defines an ADE as:

> generally not-for-profit organisations that provide employment for people with moderate to severe disability who need significant support to work. ADEs provide a wide range of employment opportunities including packaging, assembly, production, recycling, screen printing, plant nursery, garden maintenance and landscaping, cleaning services, laundry services and food services (NDIA, 2020, p. 4).

There were over 14,000 NDIS participants working in ADEs by the end of 2020 (NDIA, 2020). See Appendix 2 for details of data 2009 – 2019.

New funding model introduced by NDIS expanding providers of employment supports beyond ADE's

Funding arrangements for ADEs have been changing since the advent of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Funding has shifted from 'case-based funding' (for a capped number of employees) made to ADEs (DSS, 2017), to individualised funding to purchase employment supports within the funding packages of NDIS participants (in this context, ADE employees).

In 2017, the Department of Social Services anticipated that, by full Scheme, the number of people receiving employment supports in their plan would 'grow significantly beyond the existing cohort of 20,000 supported employees' (DSS, 2017, p.5). DSS also saw this an opportunity for 'market expansion' for ADEs, who would be 'well positioned to attract more employees' (DSS, 2017, p.11) though there would also be 'stronger pathways' between open and supported employment (DSS, 2017, p.17):

> Some businesses may choose to explore the provision of more seamless service transition between supported and open employment, as a person's capacity to work improves (DSS, 2017, p. 18).

The latest NDIS pricing arrangements have articulated that supports traditionally provided by ADEs can be purchased from a wider range of employment providers and for different employment settings:

> While some participants, with supports offered through DES or employer reasonable adjustment, will successfully maintain work, others will need higher intensity, often daily, support delivered in the workplace to maintain employment. These supports have typically been available in an Australian Disability Enterprise. They can also be used in a range of employment settings including: private, government or not for profit organisations; a social enterprise or similar environment; self-employment or a micro-business; or a family run business (NDIA, 2022, pp. 61-62).

These changes to the way employment supports are funded by NDIS have enabled participants to utilise 'supports in employment' funding in services other than ADEs, and the NDIS has emphasised this opportunity for individuals to select supports and the type of employment outcome they seek. Currently, funded employment supports are available within the NDIS in both Core and Capacity Building areas of plans, but confusion remains among providers, planners and individuals about the parameters and focus of each (as identified in CSI research with stakeholders, see Paper 5). In particular, there are concerns about different pricing levels for similar employment support activities funded in Core or Capacity Building, or in Supported Employment settings (ADEs) vs Open Employment settings. There are also concerns that NDIS employment funding does not cover all the employment support necessary to create or attain and retain employment, including capacity building and support to employers, and ongoing capacity building for employees with disability (see Paper 5).

In this context of change, the 'market' of employment support providers within the NDIS is yet to fully emerge. In 2017, the DSS anticipated that this would take 10 years to evolve (DSS, 2017).

Previously under the case-base funding, ADEs operated with capped places. It was envisaged that under the NDIS funding model supported employment places will no longer be capped and there will be increased employment opportunities for both businesses and participants, with new providers to offer employment and employment supports (DSS, 2017).

The changing landscape

The Australian Disability Enterprise Services formally ceased operation as a DSS program on 31 March 2021 (Productivity Commission, 2021), which then enabled ADE organisations to identify new denominations for their organisational entities and activities. In this context, over recent years, some former ADEs have been evolving their organisational and business models, with some seeking formal certification as Social Enterprises (i.e. 'Social Traders Certified Social Enterprise'), others using the term 'social enterprise' but without formal certification, and others using different nomenclature, such as 'business enterprises'. Encompassed in this evolution has been an expansion of the beneficiary groups targeted (for example, some organisations have expanded to include a focus on marginalised groups without disability), and of operational activities for some, but not all, former ADEs.

In this changing landscape, it is difficult to distinguish these organisational types and identify those included in what was formerly the ADE sector. To some extent, it is the historical funding arrangements that define the cluster of former ADE organisations.

Glossary of terms

Given the changing landscape of ADEs/supported employment organisations, and the lack of official data sources utilising common terminology, a glossary of terms has been created below.

Table 1: Glossary of terms

ADE outlet	This is the enterprise level unit used for ADEs. Usually this is site specific, but some ADEs may operate across multiple sites or operate multiple, distinct commercial enterprises on a single site. When ADE statistics are collected/reported, unless it is otherwise specified, data is at the outlet level.
ADE provider	Host organisation (usually, but not always, a disability service provider) that is the overarching organisational entity usually offering a level of core administrative functions, such as payroll, insurance etc. Frequently this organisation offers a range of disability services and is an NDIS registered provider. Multiple ADE commercial enterprise types and/or enterprise sites may operate under the ADE provider organisation umbrella.
ADE sector	The sector of provider organisations and outlets that have previously been funded under Australian Disability Enterprise Services funding, prior to its cessation. It is noted that new terminology will be needed in future to encompass the shape of a sector that includes new entrants and the exit/closure of previously included organisations.
Certified Social Enterprise	Launched in 2018, Social Traders provides the only social enterprise certification in Australia. The certification criteria require that a social enterprise exists to create impact through trade by: 'having a defined primary social, cultural or environmental purpose consistent with a public or community benefit; deriving a substantial portion of income from trade; investing efforts and resources into their purpose such that public/community benefit outweighs private benefit' (Social Traders, n.d.).
Integrated workforce	An integrated workforce consists of not only people with disability but also people without disability.
Open employment	(For the purpose of DSP) Open employment is employment in the open labour market, and at relevant minimum wages or above.
Pro rata wage	A form of productivity-based wage where the level of assessed productivity and/or competence is correlated with payment of a pro rata proportion of a full wage. There are 22 wage assessment tools approved under the Supported Employment Services Award 2020. (Not all supported employees within ADEs will receive a pro rata wage, some will receive full Award wages.)
Supported employee workforce	All employees with disability who receive employment supports (of any funding type) from an ADE to support their employment within the ADE. (Some/most may also be receiving some form of pro rata wage.)

What does the ADE sector look like now?

Data for a National scan of the sector

Limited data is available to piece together a current picture of the supported employment/ ADE sector. There is currently no national data provided by the Government on supported employment outlets/ADEs. Limited data on service users working in ADEs were published in the annual Report on Government Services (RoGs) by the Productivity Commission, but recent data has been incomplete due to NDIS transition arrangements[1].

1 The DSS was reported as starting to collect annual data on a range of disability services funded by DSS including supported employment services/ ADEs, since 2018. However, this data feeds into the RoGs and no data is available on the DSS website. The RoGS published in 2021 has data on 'Users of supported employment services/ADEs aged 15-64 years (by sex); from 2010 to 2019' (Table 15A.58). However, NDIS roll out affects data in the later years of this data set. See Appendix 2.

To develop a current snapshot of the ADE sector we have drawn on:

Buyability ADE Directory data (October 2022), collected by National Disability Services and made available on a national website and analysed by the Centre for Social Impact as part of this report. This dataset provides information at both organisational (ADE provider) and outlet (enterprise) level, and the enterprises listed used to be in the Australian Disability Enterprise Service program under DSS.

Data from a national survey of ADEs distributed by FaHCSIA (ConNectica, 2013). This survey collected responses from 139 organisations out of 194 organisations running ADEs (often with multiple outlets), representing 71% of the ADE sector at that time.

Data from a national survey of ADE providers distributed by National Disability Services (KPMG, 2015). The survey collected responses from 85 organisations operating ADEs and employing over 11,000 supported employees.

Data from a national survey of ADEs distributed by National Disability Services, called the Vision Survey 2020-21. This data captures only 71 organisations.

Data from the NDIA in relation to scheme participants using ADEs (NDIA, 2019a, 2019b, 2020).

In addition, CSI has conducted a desktop study of ADE organisations and outlets identified by the Buyability Directory (November 2022) to update and expand this information (see Appendix 3 for detailed methodology).

No single data source provides an adequate capture of the characteristics of ADEs currently and, even collectively, many gaps in data remain.

Summary of the sector in 2022

ADE organisations and outlets

Overall, there are currently 477 ADEs in operation (at outlet level), among which 110 are Certified Social Enterprises by Social Traders. These ADEs are run by 147 ADE providers. Data shows that while the number of ADEs and ADE providers have declined in comparison to ten years ago, the scale of the ADE providers might have increased when measured by the number of ADE outlets operated per ADE provider and the average number of supported employees in each organisation (Table 2).

Figure 1: ADEs and ADE Providers, 2013 vs 2022

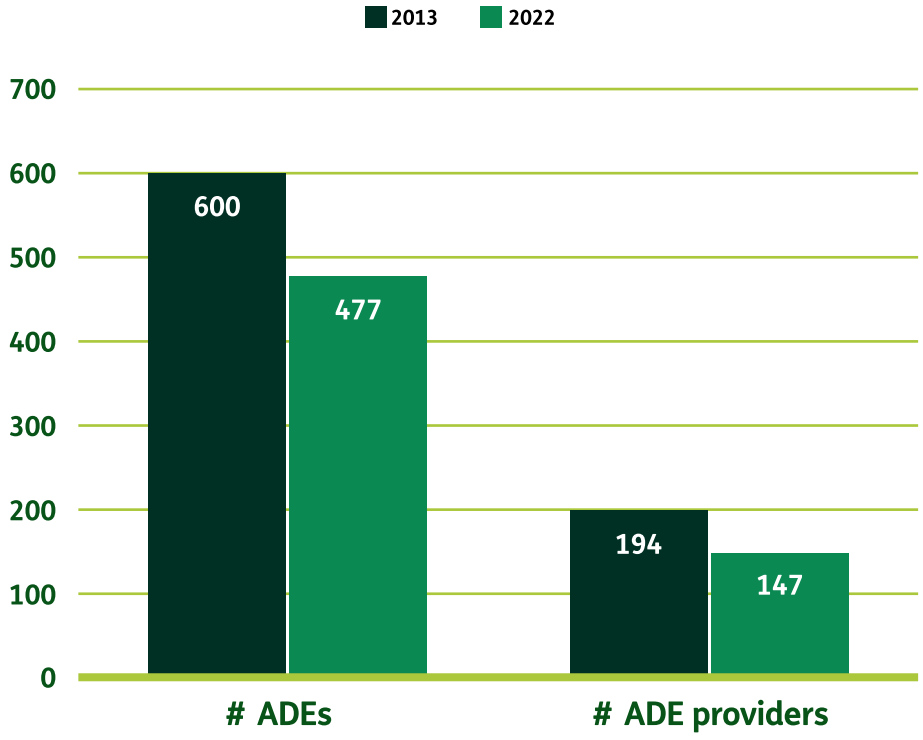

Table 2 highlights that, currently, somewhat more than half (60%) of organisations run more than 1 ADE outlet. Around half have less than 50 supported employees across the ADE provider (across outlets) and almost two thirds of ADE providers have less than 100. The vast majority of ADEs are located in NSW and Victoria. In 2013 and 2015, a bit less than half of ADEs were considered profit making (ConNetica, 2013; KPMG, 2015).

Table 2: ADE organisation and outlet characteristics

# ADEs	2013 (and other before 2020)	2022
	600 *Source: 2* • 54% indicated they formed part of a larger organisation, • 41% not linked to larger organisations *Source: 7*	477 *Source: 1*
# ADE providers, i.e. Organisations Running ADEs	194 *Source: 2*	147 *Source: 1*
# ADEs as certified social enterprise by Social Traders		110 *Source 1, 3*
ADE scale	Each ADE provider ran 2.7 ADEs on average • 46% operate only one ADE • 12% operate more than 5 ADEs S*ource: 2*	Each ADE provider runs 3.2 ADEs on average • 40% operate only one ADE • 24% operate 5 ADEs or more • 16% operate more than 5 ADEs *Source: 1*
Workforce Composition	On average: 77% supported employees 23% other employees, *Source 2*	
Size of Supported employee workforce	An average 100 supported employees in each ADE provider # (number) supported employees across ADEs in the ADE provider • 58% have less than 20 • 44% had less than 50 • 75% had less than 100 • 2% had 200 or more 1 in two had less than 50 supported employees across the ADE provider *Source: 2*	An average 111 supported employees in each ADE provider # (number) supported employees across ADEs in the ADE provider • 24% have less than 20 • 49% have less than 50 • 68% have less than 100 • 14% have 200 or more *Source: 1*
# ADEs by State		NSW: 189 VIC: 136 QLD: 42 WA: 29 SA: 59 TAS: 13 ACT: 4 NT: 4 *Source: 1*
Remoteness Area of Supported Employment Services (ADEs)	• 46% in major cities • 51% in regional areas • 2% In remote areas *Source: 4*	
Age of Organisations	Most ADE providers had been in operation for at least 20 years, 1 in two ADE provider had operated for over 40 years *Source: 2*	

Types of Goods and Services Offered by ADEs	Landscaping, Gardening & Horticulture (18%), Packaging & Repackaging (16%) Light Manufacturing (14%) Cleaning & Recycling (11%) Food & Hospitality (8%) Mail & Document Management (5%) Laundry (5%) Other (9%) *Source: 2*	
Enterprise Profitability	• 44% considered profitable, • 32% unprofitable, • 24% 'too close to call' *Source: 2* • 42% profit making, which hired 56% of supported employees; • 56% loss making, which hired 41% of supported employees *Source: 7*	
% Income from Commercial Activities	• 16% earned 30% or less of total income from commercial activities, • 28% had commercial income between 31-50% of total income, • 43% earned between 51-80% of total income from commercial activities, • 13% earned more than 81% from commercial activities *Source: 2*	
Income Scale	• 62% earned less than $10 million, • 1 in three earned less than $2 million *Source: 2*	
Expenditure Scale	Level of expenditure: • 12% spent over $10 M • 28% spent between $1 -$2M • 12% spent between $0 and $0.5 *Source: 7*	

Sources:

1. BuyAbility and desktop review Dated as: Nov 2022
2. ConNetica (2013) Dated as: 2013
3. Social Enterprise Finder (national directory of Certified Social Enterprises, by Social Traders) Dated as: Nov 2022
4. Australian Disability Services, 2009-10 (DSS, 2010) Dated as: 2010
5. NDIA (2020)
6. DSS (2017)
7. KPMG (2015) Dates as: 2014/15

Supported employee characteristics in ADEs

There remain approximately 16,000 supported employees in the ADE sector in 2022. Most (a bit less than half) work 15-30 hours, with a small percentage 3-5% working less than 8 hours (NDIA, 2020). This low proportion of very few hours per week, and the high proportion of those working over 30 hours per week (23-31%) speaks to the higher levels of work hours that supported employees work within ADE settings, possibly aided by different DSP conditions when working in an ADE. The NDIA reports that around 34% of Scheme participants with a paid job (on entry) are working in ADEs, and slightly more participants move into ADEs each year than move out of them into open employment (NDIA, 2020). NDIA data suggests that of participants working in ADEs, around 70% of over 25 year olds have an intellectual disability and 45% of 15-24 year olds (NDIA, 2020). ADEs are also targeting beneficiary groups without disabilities including a range of disadvantaged groups such as migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers.

Table 3: Supported employee characteristics

Total number of supported employees	2013 (and other before 2020)	2022
	Approximately 19,000 *Source: 2*	Approximately 16,000 16,256 *Source: 1*
Total # NDIS participants in ADEs		14,247 as at 31 Dec 2020 *Source: 5*
Total % NDIS participants (with paid job) in ADE		34% of NDIS participants with a paid job (on entry) are in ADEs *Source: 5*
NDIS participants in ADEs by age and cohort		15-24 year olds (who are NDIS participants in ADE) as at 31 Dec 2020 • 45% have Intellectual disability • 53% have Down syndrome* 25+ year olds (who are NDIS participants in ADE) as at 31 Dec 2020 • 36% of those with work on entry to NDIS are in ADE. Of these: • 71% have Intellectual disability • 72% have Down syndrome* * includes double counting where individuals report both *Source: 5*
% NDIS Participants Working in ADEs Receiving the DSP		96% *Source: 5*
Average Age of Supported Employees	41 *Source: 6*	
Beneficiary groups (employees)		• People with disability • Disadvantaged men and women • People with mental illness • Young people • People experiencing family violence • Long term unemployed • Mature aged unemployed • Migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers *Source: 1*
Average Hours Worked by Supported Employees	23 hours per week *Source: 6*	
Weekly hours worked by supported employees in ADEs	Median hours 20-24 hr/ week *Source: 7*	Weekly hours worked by NDIS participants in ADEs Participants in an ADE aged between 15-24: • 0-8 hours: 5% • 8-15 hours: 28% • 15-30 hours: 45% • 30+ hours: 23% Participants in an ADE aged 25 and over: • 0-8 hours: 3% • 8-15 hours: 22% • 15-30 hours: 44% • 30+ hours: 31% People with intellectual disability are the most likely of all cohorts to work more than 30 hours per week. *Source: 5*
Wage Earned by Supported Employees	The average weekly wage was $121.72 The average hourly rate was $5.61, ranging from $1.00 per hour to full award wage *Source: 6*	

<table>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status and Transitions (after 1 year of NDIS participation)</td>
<td>Movement between ADE's and open employment (at yr 1)
(This data compares employment status on entry to scheme and at end of year 1)
<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Employment Status</td><td colspan="2">Age cohort</td></tr>
<tr><td>On entry</td><td>End of Year 1</td><td>15-24 yrs</td><td>25+ yrs</td></tr>
<tr><td>ADE</td><td>Open Employment</td><td>4%</td><td>1%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Open employment</td><td>ADE</td><td>3%</td><td>3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>No job but seeking work</td><td>ADE</td><td>2%</td><td>1%</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Source:
1. BuyAbility and desktop review Dated as: Nov 2022
2. ConNetica (2013) Dated as: 2013
3. Social Enterprise Finder (national directory of Certified Social Enterprises, by Social Traders) Dated as: Nov 2022
4. Australian Disability Services, 2009-10 (DSS, 2010) Dated as: 2010
5. NDIA (2020)
6. DSS (2017)
7. KPMG (2015) Dates as: 2014/15

Provision of other community/disability support

Based on NDIS provider information, 34 service areas out of 36 areas are offered by ADE providers. While all ADE providers offer 'specialised supported employment', most also offer 'Assistance to access and maintain employment or higher education'. Some organisations mention supports or services to create opportunities in open employment, although very limited information for detailed offering is provided through the websites. Where some information is available, the work is mostly focused on skills building through training programs, except one organisation that highlights mentoring support and post-placement support to assist transition to open employment.

In addition, the following service areas are provided by more than half of the ADE providers:

- high intensity daily personal activities,
- participation in community, social and civic activities,
- group and centre based activities,
- therapeutic support,
- daily personal activities,
- assistance with daily life tasks in a group or shared living arrangement,
- assistance with travel/transport arrangements,
- household tasks,
- assistance in coordinating or managing life stages/transitions and supports,
- development of daily living and life skills.

A small proportion (25%) have access to behaviour support planning within their ADE provider organisation, and a handful have access to other potentially employment-supporting services such as specialised driver training or vehicle modification.

There is potential to consider to what extent the nesting of ADEs alongside other services within a wider service organisation offers potential to lever in additional supports and services to mediate barriers to employment (Paper 2). For example, more purposeful development of community networks and social capital is a key aspect of customised employment as a mechanism to build in relationships and interests to unlock work opportunities. However, there is no evidence available to identify whether the presence of other NDIS services within the ADE provider organisation is of benefit to supported employees or contributes to capacity building toward employment.

Organisational identity

Of the 147 ADE providers, 63 (43%) providers still clearly identify their business as an ADE, while 35 (24%) have taken up the 'social enterprise' badge, with three organisations referring to themselves as both ADEs and social enterprises on their websites.

Community-facing elements of ADEs

ADEs are active in a diverse range of industries and undertake work both on the ADE business premises as well as onsite in other businesses or in community. Examples include commercial property maintenance undertaken on the grounds of other businesses; household garden maintenance; mobile document shredding that visits businesses; mobile work crews that can be deployed to a business setting to undertake specific tasks; e-waste pick up; commercial cleaning; arts and performance.

Many ADEs also have retail enterprises directly engaging with the community. Retail activities include cafes and food, second hand/recycled goods, costume hire, horticulture, pottery, among others.

In addition, a wide range of work is undertaken within the ADE premises, with a predominance of packaging and manufacturing.

Some ADEs also offer an integrated workforce comprised of people with and without disability. For example, Outlook Victoria (now a social enterprise) aims to employ from a set of 'priority employment groups' and one outlet/enterprise has a diverse workforce including people with disability (4%), mature age workers (33%), long term unemployed (33%), young people and people with experience of family violence (9%), migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (21%) (https://www.outlookaust.org.au/melton-case-study).

The social enterprise sector

In Australia, social enterprises are defined by three key features: being led by a social mission that creates public or community benefit; deriving a majority of income from trade; and re-investing the majority of profit or surplus to social mission (Barraket et al., 2016). Employment-focused social enterprises are a type of social enterprise where the social mission focuses on creating employment or employment pathways for people at risk of exclusion from the mainstream labour market, or facing barriers entering mainstream employment (Kong et al., 2018).

There are two main types of employment-focused social enterprises. The first, often called 'intermediate labour market', typically operates with a transitional model that provides training or temporary employment with the goal of assisting trainees/employees to gain employment in mainstream businesses (Nockolds, 2012). Transitional work-integrated social enterprise (WISE) are a specific model that aim to transition people out into open employment. They may not be the best match for everyone and some WISE scholars note the importance of creating employment opportunities that are secure and provide regular work (Williams, Fossey & Harvey 2012). The second type of social enterprise, offers permanent employment and on-going training either within the enterprise or through placement (Spear & Bidet, 2005). There are also enterprises that adopt both models.

It is estimated that there are 20,000 social enterprises in Australia and nearly 7,000 of these have explicit focus to create meaningful employment for people experiencing disadvantage (Barraket et al., 2016). Australian social enterprises predominantly operate in small businesses (73%) with less than 5% in large businesses (Barraket et al., 2016). Social enterprises were cited within all industries in Australia, where Retail Trading (25%) and Health and Social Assistance (22%) were the two most frequently identified industry categories.

While research on employment-focused social enterprises provides evidence that well-run social enterprises can be effective, efficient and financially sustainable, it also identifies key challenges faced by employment-focused social enterprises, such as lack of consistent public policy for social enterprise development, the change in the future work environment (work to be less labour-intensive), costs associated with high-

level flexibility and personalisation, and access to appropriate finance (Barraket et al., 2019). Additionally, researchers have also identified the financial challenges facing social enterprises where social purpose may be prioritised over economic returns, and the additional costs of delivering social purpose necessarily affects the financial trajectory of the organisation (Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014). Commonly, social enterprises are considered hybrid organisations and as such rely on a mix of revenue including commercial revenue, grants, donations and other forms of finance and may not be expected to be fully self-sustaining via commercial revenue alone (Doherty, Haugh & Lyon, 2014).

ADEs are a type of employment-focused social enterprise. This is echoed by the desktop study finding that 110 ADEs out of 477 are certified social enterprises by Social Traders. Many ADEs have been operating their social businesses for decades and have gained expertise in providing personalised employment supports. The continuously growing and maturing social enterprise sector could bring new ideas, opportunities, and operational models to ADEs as well as mainstream employers, in a collective mission to create more meaningful jobs for people experiencing employment barriers.

Implications for reform

ADEs continue to create jobs for 16,000 people with significant disability around Australia, in a range of industries. They have substantial experience and expertise in creating employment that is highly customised and the provision of suitable supports to enable employment.

With the cessation of the Australian Disability Enterprises Services, there is no clear nomenclature for this sector. Organisations will evolve differently and align with different organisational and employment service models, including those in the social enterprise sector.

The two main critiques of ADEs have been the segregated nature of their work settings and workforce (including the lack of transition opportunities to work beyond the ADE), and the payment of low wages. Many ADEs have shown progress on the former by offering work in integrated industry and community settings and, some, through increasing the diversity of their workforce, largely through an additional focus on other marginalised groups. Some ADEs now advertise linked 'employment pathways' beyond the ADE, though the outcomes of transition remain miniscule.

The payment of low wages remains an area of concern for all parties. It has been considered, by the sector, the necessary price of sustaining the social mission of job creation for people with significant employment barriers. The changes in funding brought about by the NDIS may further disrupt the financial sustainability of the sector. Already some ADEs have closed and the sector has contracted. Given the history in the social enterprise sector, it is likely that the true costs of the social mission of the ADE sector have never been adequately understood nor supported, resulting in employees bearing the impost of the financial viability of the organisation through low wages. While some industries or some workforce structures (for example, the Outlook Victoria workforce where only a small proportion of workforce has a disability) might offer greater profitability, these may not be feasible or desirable for all ADEs. It is not clear if NDIS funding has been designed to address the true costs of specialised employment support via job creation in organisations where 75% of their employees are people with significant disability. Nor is it clear, due to an absence of data, whether earlier government investment in the sector has had any effect in lifting wages and increasing profitability.

The lack of available data relating to ADEs highlights an ongoing issue: the lack of detailed understanding (beyond the ADE sector) of the activities, the business models, and the associated costs, along with the barriers that remain to desgregration. It is difficult to design reform with so little information.

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Appendix 1: historical Data 2005/6 - 2009/10

Data sources:

- Australian Disability Services, 2009-10 (DSS, 2009 and 2010)
- Australian Government Disability Services Census, 2006-2008 (FaHCSIA, 2006- 2008)

	# Supported employment service outlets	**# Total supported employment service users**
2009-10	327, of which: 46% in major cities; 51% in regional areas; 2% in remote areas	22,020, of which: *68% had an ID;* *82% had a profound or severe core activity limitation* *35% were females;* *2% were Indigenous* *32% were in regional & remote areas* *91% received DSP*
2008-09	397, of which: 51% in major cities; 45% in regional areas; 2% in remote areas	22,898, of which: *66% had an ID* *80% had a profound or severe core activity limitation* *35% were females;* *2% were Indigenous* *32% were in regional & remote areas* *92% received DSP*
2007-08	413, of which: 57% in major cities; 41% in regional areas; 2% in remote areas	22,167, of which: *70% had an ID* *72% had a profound or severe core activity limitation* *36% were females* *2% were Indigenous* *32% were in regional & remote areas* *98% received DSP* *29% worked full-time hours* *26 hours worked per week (average)* *$3.74 gross hourly wage rate (average)*
2006-07	415, of which: 56% in major cities; 43% in regional areas; 2% in remote areas	21,933, of which: *70% had an ID;* *74% had a profound or severe core activity limitation* *36% were females;* *2% were Indigenous* *33% were in regional & remote areas* *91% received DSP* *32% worked full-time hours* *26 hours worked per week (average)* *$3.03 gross hourly wage rate (average*)
2005-06	397, of which: 55% in major cities; 42% in regional areas;	21,249, of which: *71% had an ID;*
	2% in remote areas	*36% were females;* *2% were Indigenous;* *91% received DSP* *34% worked full-time hours*

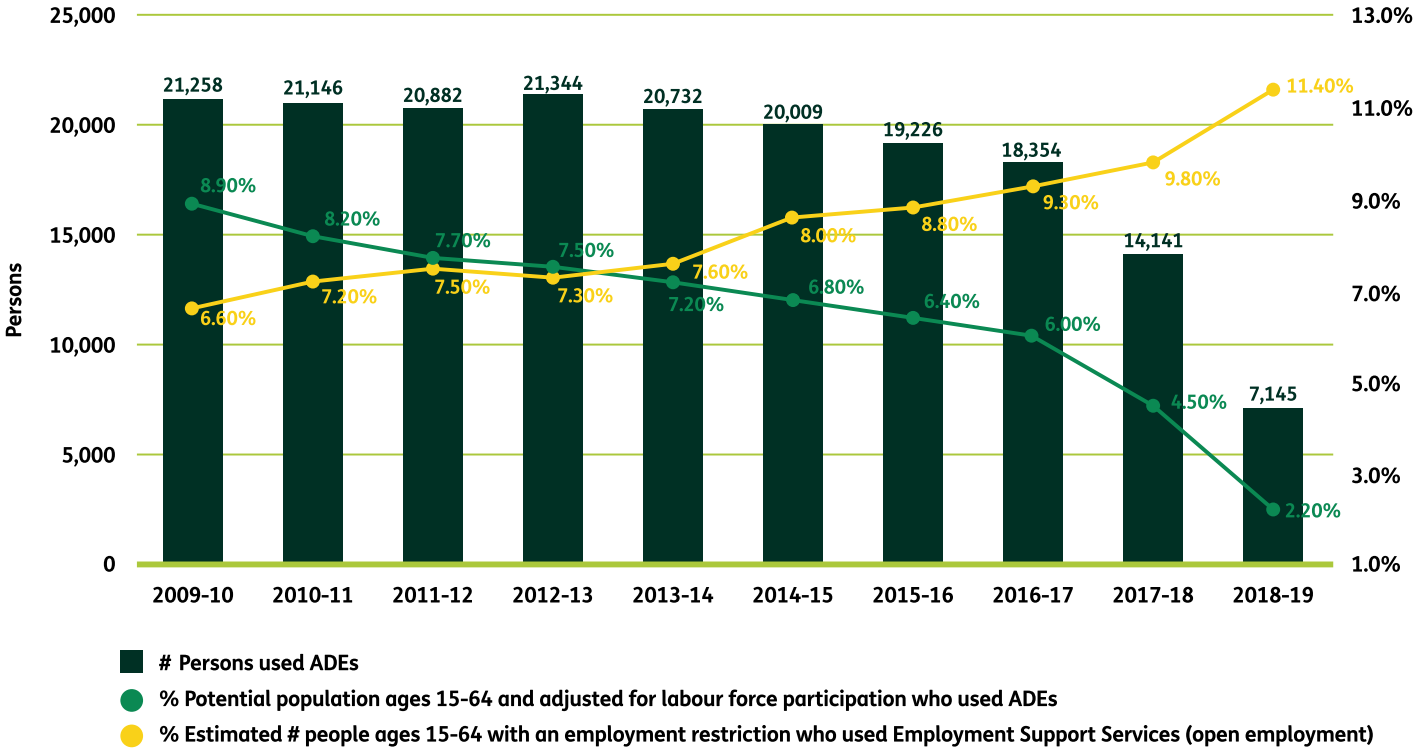
Note: Prior to 2005, disability employment service outlets had a third category for 'dual open/supported' employment and data were collected and reported across three categories. The census data earlier than 2005 was not included here due to different data collection approaches used.

Appendix 2: historical Data 2009/10 – 2018/19

Data source:

Report on Government Services, 15 Services for People with Disability (Productivity Commission, 2021)

Figure 1: Overview of people used ADEs and open employment, 2009-2019 (Data source: RoGS 2021)



APPENDIX 3: METHODOLOGY FOR DESKTOP REVIEW OF ADE'S

The National Disability Services (NDS) maintains the Buyability Directory of ADEs: https://buyability.org.au/directory/. This is currently the most comprehensive list of ADEs publicly available and is based on ADEs formerly funded by the Department of Social Services under the Australian Disability Enterprise Services program before it ceased. With assistance from NDS, CSI was able to access the public data on which the website is based in an excel format.

The Buyability list was used as a base to undertake a desktop review to compare other data against. The Buyability list was first cleaned and organised to collate all ADE outlets with their ADE provider, and to code them by size of supported employee workforce. Data was then compared with the list of Disability Social Enterprises Signatories coordinated by the Endeavour Foundation, which provided supported employee counts for 38 ADE organisations (last updated on 11 October 2022).

A desktop review then added data from each of the websites, and related documents, from each ADE provider and/or outlet. This data included, where available:

- the number of supported employees
- target beneficiaries (employees) when other than people with disability
- the terminology used by the organisation to describe its ADE activity (for example, was the term ADE still in use, was the term 'social enterprise' used, or other?)
- pathways to employment, including open employment, identified on the website.

In addition, all ADE outlets/ providers were checked for certification as a social enterprise by Social Traders by checking the Social Traders national directory of certified social enterprises.

Finally, ADE providers were also checked on the NDIS provider finder to establish the range of NDIS services the ADE providers offered, if any, in addition to supported employment.

Decisions were then made about the data fields where sufficient data was available to support analysis. Where possible, results were compared across sources (including comparisons with publicly available historical data).

Due to the short timeframe of the project, not all data fields were able to be fully populated. It is the intention of the research team to continue to expand this data set, subject to resources.

The WISE-Ability model

Campbell, P., Wilson, E.; Crosbie, J. & Qian-Khoo, J. (2022). The WISE-Ability Model, *Explaining the Evidence for Reform Series*. Hawthorn: Centre for Social Impact.

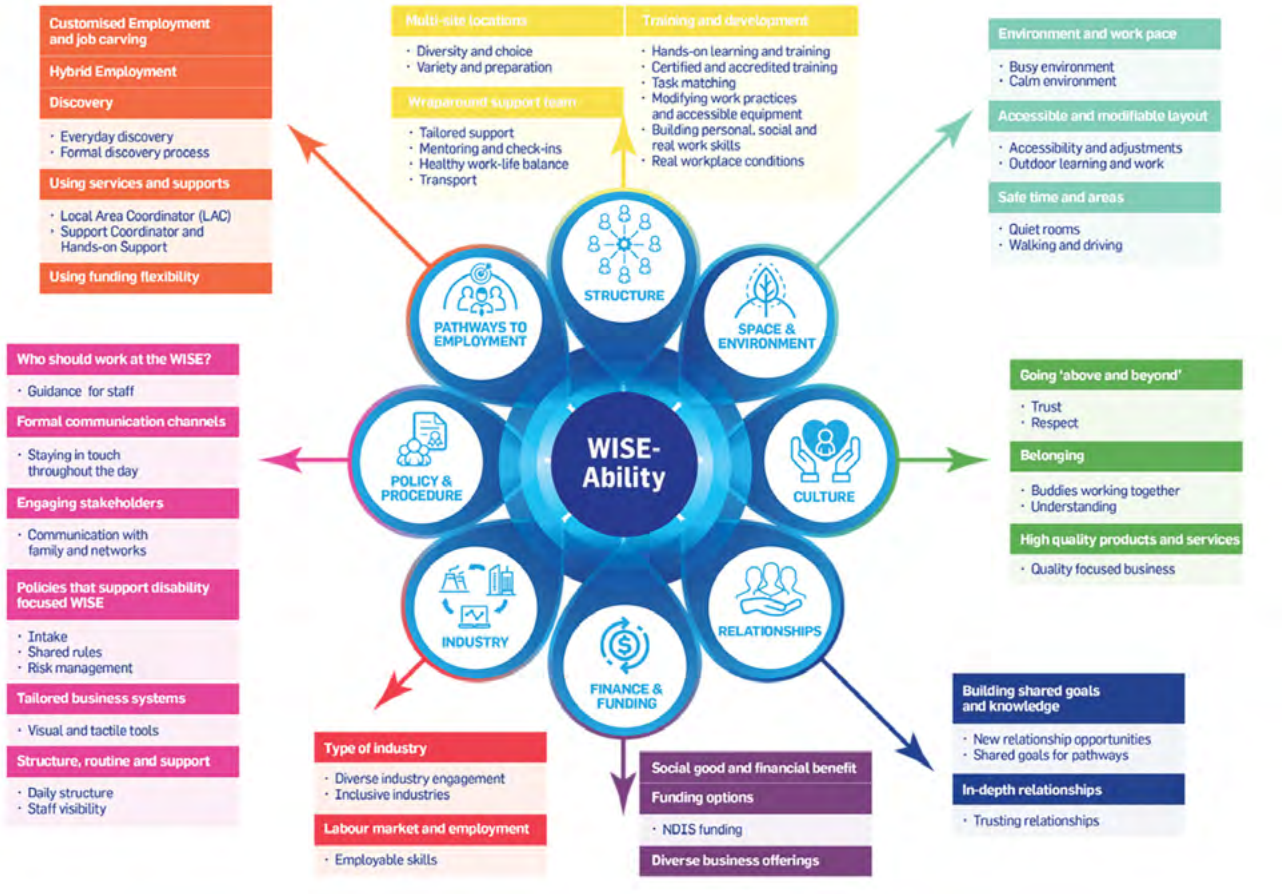
Headlines

- ADEs can draw on a range of organisational features that have been shown to create a supportive work environment and develop pathways to open and hybrid employment.
- Many of these features are already embedded in the organisational design of advanced ADEs.
- An explicit 'pathway to open employment' can be built.
- Opportunities for hybrid employment, part time ADE and part time open employment, appear to meet the needs of some supported employees.
- NDIS funding remains a barrier to employment transitions to open or hybrid employment
- Employer knowledge of how to recruit and support employees with significant disability remains a barrier
- Ongoing supports in the workplace are needed.

The WISE-ability model

The WISE-Ability model captures social enterprise organisational design elements which support the wellbeing and employment pathways of people with a disability. The model combines elements that support individuals with a disability (for example, wraparound support, learning opportunities, safe spaces, and elements that support WISE organisations), with organisational elements that WISE require (for example, strong structure, good partnerships, stable funding). The WISE-Ability model captures eight organisational design elements. Figure 1 shows the WISE-Ability model.

Figure 1: The WISE-Ability model overview



Purpose

The purpose of the WISE-Ability model is to show how Australian Disability Enterprises and Social Enterprises (ADEs) can design their organisation to create a supportive work environment and develop pathways out of this supportive environment into appropriate forms of employment for people with a disability.

The model offers an organisational 'blueprint' to ADEs and disability-focused social enterprises, to guide the development and utilisation of organisational features to underpin employment outcomes.

Method of development

The project team worked collaboratively with project partner genU and a variety of stakeholders in the Barwon region to develop and implement the Work Integration Social Enterprise 'WISE' model to improve Supported Employees' work readiness and their transitions to hybrid employment (working in both a supported employment setting and in open employment) or open employment. Project partner genU provided an example of both an ADE setting as well as other employment support activities beyond the ADE. Two branches of genU were involved: Business Enterprises (ADE) and Employment Pathways (using NDIS funding related to capacity building supports to assist with employment). Business enterprises provide employment and support to more than 200 people with a disability across the Geelong region. Supports for Business enterprise employees include: training, life skills coaching, welfare and behaviour support, mental health and emotional support, as well guidance for NDIS funding, service access and referrals. Employment Pathways work with people with a disability building and tailoring employment in the open labour market. Individuals work with Pathways Coordinators to develop employment plans that align with their personal interests, skills and goals (Campbell et al., 2022: 5).

The following research questions guided the project:

- What are the barriers to open employment from ADE/business enterprise settings?
- What facilitates movement into open employment?
- How can the WISE model be adapted to support open employment pathways in WISE/ADE contexts?

The project utilised a WISE model developed in an earlier project (Barraket et al., 2019). This model had identified 7 organisational elements that supported the wellbeing and employment capacity building of targeted employees in social enterprises.

This model was used as a base to compare information from the genU setting. The research team conducted interviews, Action Learning and Steering Committee meetings to gather data with genU and other stakeholders. This included a total of 27 interviews, 4 Action Learning workshops, and 5 Steering Committee meetings held with different groups of stakeholders (including staff, supported employees, open employers and others) between November 2021 and March 2022. Via these methods, each element of the WISE model was examined to determine how it supports the needs of people with a disability in ADE settings. Participants discussed how model elements, like having customised employment pathways, would assist people with a disability to learn hard and soft skills and maintain a job in open employment. Participants identified a range of employment barriers, supports and tools.

The WISE-Ability model (related to supporting employees with disability) was adapted by first identifying the level of organisational alignment to WISE model elements, based on analysis of coded data. New WISE model categories and sub-categories were identified from coding interview data and then cross-checked with the Action Learning Group data and through discussions in Steering Committee meetings.

All categories of the original WISE model were found to be relevant to the disability sector. The adapted model identifies one new category 'Pathways to Hybrid and Open Employment'. There are also an additional 41 categories of information that were not included in the original WISE model, and that directly address the needs of people with disability.

THE key features of the WISE-ability model: a blueprint for transitions from ade's to open employment

The WISE-Ability model captures eight organisational design elements. Each is briefly described below and further described in Campbell et al. (2021). There are opportunities for ADEs to more explicitly utilise these design elements to better maximise the employment and wellbeing outcomes of their employees.

1. Structure

The structure of an organisation can support or impede supportive and inclusive work environments for people with disability. Many ADEs have multi-site or multi-enterprise structures, which open up a range of opportunities for employees with disability, acting to counter otherwise limited opportunities people with disability may have had to explore a variety of employment settings and industry types. Diversity and choice enables people to explore interests, strengths and preferences, including the type of work environments they like and work best in. In addition to the multi-site/enterprise structure of many ADEs, is the way the workforce is structured. This includes the provision of a team of employment support staff, attending to the biopsychosocial needs of employees, and providing training, support and mentoring on-site in the workplace. The structure of training and learning opportunities is particularly important, being based on hands-on learning, appropriately modified to be accessible, and enabling real work experience in industry conditions.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Offering different work types, tasks and work environments/settings
- Allowing time for employees to prepare to change environments
- Identifying a staff person as buddy or mentor
- Linking a support worker with each person to build in-depth understanding
- Identifying accessible equipment requirements
- Using hands-on learning and documenting interests and skills, linked to work goals
- Supporting a healthy work-life balance.

2. Space and environment

The use of physical space can improve or undermine participation. A range of workspaces, offering both busy and calm environments, with work at different paces, supports appropriate job matches and regulates stress and negative behaviours. Some people thrive in outdoor settings and others in indoor work roles. Workplaces can actively utilise space to manage stress and de-escalate tensions or challenging behaviours through the use of calm spaces, or places that enable walking and physical movement. ADEs have particular strengths in offering accessible layouts with appropriately modified fittings and equipment.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Providing calm spaces and active spaces by sectioning off tasks and work areas
- Providing quiet and safe times of day for employees to talk freely with peers and trusted staff
- Creating access to outdoor environments
- Creating accessible environments
- Providing options for time-out when people are not feeling mentally or physically well.

3. Culture

Organisational culture is actively created and curated by the people within the workplace and is key in supporting wellbeing. Features of positive culture include: a non-institutional feel, an understanding and inclusive environment where employees' abilities are valued, a sense of belonging and a culture of support in the workplace (sometime via formal 'buddy' systems), and a focus on high quality products and services delivered by the enterprise of which employees can be proud.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Establishing a culture of understanding and support by having a buddy or go-to person
- Creating opportunity for employee voices and feedback
- Establishing a common goal of high quality services and products to enable pride in work.

4. Relationships

While 'Culture' focuses on relationships among workers within the organisation, there are also important relationships that the organisation has and can foster externally. These external relationships with commercial, community and other partners provide important avenues to lever ongoing commercial opportunities (that create jobs in the ADE) and also pathways to employment and training for employees beyond the ADE, along with providing other forms of support.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Identifying other organisations linked to the ADE and building shared employment goals
- Supporting partners and stakeholders to build inclusive work environment (opening up opportunities for transition of supported employees, including through work trials etc.)
- Building strong knowledge of partners' interests and capabilities to help leverage opportunities for new work and training projects together.

5. Finance and funding

Financial sustainability is often a challenge for ADEs and WISEs. The business model will include grants, government funding, NDIS and commercial income (often across diverse commercial enterprises), among other sources. A key WISE challenge to be built into the organisational model is balancing the support needs of employees, building and maintaining commercial operations, while transitioning supported employees both into and out of the ADE.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Drawing on a range of NDIS funding to support employees
- Drawing on social procurement policy and incentives for commercial businesses to work with ADEs.
- Considering diverse business offerings.

6. Industry

The choice of industry/ies in which the ADE operates not only affects costs and income but also links to opportunities for employment pathways for supported employees. Ideally, the industries within which the ADE enterprises are nested are inclusive and supportive of transitioning supported employees into their workplaces, and the ADE has developed appropriate and relevant employable skill sets in these employees.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Considering operating across multiple industries
- Understanding what skills are in demand in the labour market and linking to skills development of employees
- Prioritising inclusive industries that offer supportive workplaces that will make good employment pathways.

7. Policy, procedure and process

Policies and procedures support the social mission of the organisation. Clear procedures are particularly important when WISE support staff bring industry skills but may need guidance on how to best support diverse people with disability. Ways of working have often been modified to best match employee needs, and procedures for key tasks can be communicated on the 'shopfloor' via things like visual and tactile tools. Communication across the workforce enables all teams to stay in touch, and supported employees feel safe to air feedback and to be part of organisational decisions and feedback. One example is the development of a guide on workplace behaviour developed by supported employees in an ADE. WISE-Ability organisations also recognise the importance of having processes to connect to diverse stakeholders including family and friends of employees, who are instrumental in informing and supporting employment pathways. Daily structures, routines and support can be important processes to embed for many supported employees.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Providing guidance for employment support staff on how best to provide support.
- Keeping family networks informed
- Having policy and procedures to support in-take and exit of employees to keep the workforce balanced
- Using visual and tactile tools to support communication of procedures and work tasks (and sharing these accessible procedural supports with open employers in the employment pathway).

8. Pathways to employment

The transition to open employment is often not linear and may involve hybrid employment (working in both ADE and open employment settings), and movement between open and ADE settings. Informal and formal 'discovery' processes that identify and document the employees' strengths, interests and supports needed are essential to identifying the right match of employment to employee. ADEs can be very effective in understanding job carving and customised employment, and this can be transferred into open employment settings. Putting in place the relevant funding (e.g. NDIS), services and supports is a critical element of the employment pathway.

Key activities that support employment capacity building are:

- Creating pathways to outside work experience (e.g. trials, job shadowing) and jobs
- Drawing on individual's networks to link to potential employers
- Drawing on established relationships between ADE and commercial partners to identify work opportunities
- Supporting careful planning of employment pathway
- Customising and carving employment opportunities (and using these skills to support open employers to identify employment opportunities).

One example of a focus on employment pathways was provided by genU:

> The model reflects the genU organisational structure at moments in time when Business Enterprises[ADE] and Employment Pathways are working more closely together to generate formal pathways to Hybrid and Open Employment for Business Enterprises clients. This involves supporting pathways into and out of Business Enterprises. The aim is for formal pathways to begin in Business Enterprises guided by a structure, policy and process around the individual Supported Employee. This requires a formalised relationship and processes linking Business Enterprises and Employment Pathways to document the interests and skills of the Supported Employee, their professional development, their potential for matched or carved employment outside of genU, all via a pathway that is aligned to their NDIS supports (Campbell et al., 2022: 11).

Overall, ADEs offer many of the elements of the WISE-Ability model. In particular, the work to establish and test the model has identified that there are opportunities to further leverage these design elements to provide meaningful employment for supported employees that connects with employment pathways and opportunities beyond the ADE.

A WISE-Ability Training Guide, and an Employer Toolkit is available to support implementation.

Challenges to the WISE-Ability model and pathways to employment

The first phase of the development of the WISE-Ability model (Campbell et al., 2021) identified six core barriers to open employment for supported employees. In the second phase of the research (currently underway), the research team has worked with three additional ADE organisations to map the WISE-Ability model against their organisational design and practice. In addition, further work has been conducted to develop case studies which capture the employment journeys of two Supported Employees to better understand the inhibiting and enabling factors. This second round of data has, to date, focused in depth on understanding the NDIS interface as a barrier to open employment transitions.

In the following section, we draw on the data from both research stages to understand the barriers to employment and how these can be addressed. Barriers largely centre around:

- NDIS funding
- Employer knowledge and provision of supports.

NDIS funding

A range of issues have been identified in relation to the inflexibility or unsuitability of NDIS funding which acts as a barrier to transitions from ADE to open employment or hybrid employment.

The inflexible annual nature of NDIS planning prevents people from attempting open employment

Presently, NDIS plans cannot be changed more than once a year. An NDIS plan review may be requested but this is usually only in exceptional circumstances and is a lengthy, resource intensive, drawn out process. Needing to plan so far in advance is a disincentive to attempting open employment since prediction is needed around when someone living with a disability will be ready and a suitable opportunity identified.

Individual needs and goals change frequently and so must individual NDIS plans. The NDIS plan review process requires greater flexibility so that individuals are able to adjust their plans more frequently to meet their changing support and employment needs. Without this flexibility individuals may have to wait before they can pursue their goals.

> I got a job trial … and was offered a place in that, but I had to sort out my NDIS funding for it, and then that was start of November last year. Of course, I would have had to have a plan review … [but was told], "We won't do it until next year." (Supported Employee 3, in Campbell et al., 2022, p. 16).

> They go back to the planner or to the LAC, and it can sit there for six months until they get a plan review. And so that's a real barrier to people being able to start and get some real meaningful employment outcomes. (genU Staff 10, in Campbell et al., 2022, p. 15).

Individuals can also be supported to undertake hybrid working arrangements, especially as they move between supported and open employment. This also requires adjustment to their plans:

> This person needs to continue to work at business enterprises [ADE], but they're going to be there Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, but on Thursdays, they're going to start working with Employment Pathways [employment service] to look at that transition out. They're going to do both. They're going to keep working [in the ADE], they're going to start building on their skills to transition out [to open employment] (Helen, disability enterprise staff, interviewed October 2022).

Reduced support and funding in open employment has negative outcomes for individuals

Individuals who enter open employment may demonstrate increased capacity and upon plan review may be assessed as requiring less support in their NDIS plan. However, informants highlight that the underpinning logic for decreased funding is incorrect. Individual capacity is bolstered by supports and when this is rapidly removed individual progress is undermined.

The Case Study below shows how one Individual (Connor) worked at an ADE before transitioning to open employment. Connor was required to self-fund his own transport to a new job because his NDIS plan review was delayed. In the initial phase of open employment, this additional financial burden acts as a barrier for individuals.

Case Study 1 – Connor

Connor is 38. He started working with an ADE following an after school program which he undertook for one year. Connor commenced at the ADE in the land care department. He built up his skills for his land care role, including chemical use certificates, occupational health and safety, how to use a ride-on mower and whipper snipper, and maintenance of equipment.

Connor worked at the ADE for 18 years and received on the job training. Once the NDIS commenced, Connor identified employment goals in his NDIS plan. Connor was then transitioned into open employment. This pathway was established by the ADE via a relationship with the Employer. The Employer is keen to create an inclusive workplace by ensuring their workforce is diverse and supports people with a disability, and many of their staff have experience supporting people with disability.

Connor is now earning a full wage in a job he loves. However, his NDIS plan is holding him back:

- Connor has requested money in his NDIS plan to get taxis to work in winter (due to the wetness, early onset of darkness, and the danger with catching buses in the dark. He was previously car-pooling to work at the ADE which is no longer possible in open employment)
- He is awaiting a response from the LAC.
- Connor currently pays for his own taxis from a limited wage.

He no longer has funded 'employment support' from the ADE because he is working in open employment. Connor's former ADE support worker is still providing him with unpaid/unfunded support and checks in on Connor to track his progress. The support worker has noted that Connor's verbal skills, especially on the phone, have deteriorated somewhat since beginning open employment, but there are no current supports to address this, nor anyone funded to identify ongoing needs.

Where previously, the ADE also provided some informal support coordination assistance, Connor now does not have this support. A support coordinator would inquire into his NDIS plan delay regarding taxi funding.

Case study 1 highlights that many support activities, both directly and indirectly related to employment, were previously provided by the ADE. These supports have not been identified and funded in Connor's plan prior to taking up open employment, leaving him without adequate support.

Without a support coordinator even simple needs may not be met, such as gaining funding to cover transport costs to work. Without adequate funding Connor must self-fund his own travel to his new job even when he had not yet started receiving pay.

Not only underpinning or indirect employment supports are necessary, but it is also essential to identify sufficient supports required in employment settings to be able to increase and maintain productivity. Case study 2 explores how on-the-job employment supports were critical to both productivity and a level of supported wage for James (below).

Case Study 2 - James

James is a young man working in open employment and has minimal funding for supports. James lives at home with his family. He currently works five days a week and is practically full-time in his combined roles at two different Bakeries. He is a quietly confident young man who has worked steadily towards gaining his independence over the past 15 years with the support of an employment-focused disability service provider. His main goal is to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship in baking to continue this employment pathway and hone his skills.

James started off in open employment in a bakery but decided to seek a role that allowed for on-the-job skill development that better supported his needs. James did a job trial in an ADE, but he was too skilled and found the work limiting. He moved on to an open employment café after this experience. James had more success there as he undertook paid worked while receiving training, and this was something James 'really required; a supportive environment while developing the skills'.

- On some days, as part of James' wraparound supports, a support worker joins him in his workplace and they perform tasks together.
- A mentor works with James for 2 hours once a week.

Since working with a mentor James' work capacity has developed. He was assessed under the supported wage, productivity-based system. He was initially assessed at 20% capacity in his open employment role, and a year after being provided with a mentor that had risen to 25%. More recently he has been assessed at 45% capacity. The mentor was essential for lifting James' capacity, confidence and helping him understand the expectations of what needs to be completed.

The mentor is expected to be provided for 6 months. After this time the mentor may no longer be funded. This lack of funding risks reducing supports and undermining or stalling James' progress in the role. Decreases in productivity also potentially affect the level of wage paid.

The risk of being locked into open employment and locked out of Supported Employment

It may be difficult to leave open employment once it has been commenced, even if the work conditions are poor. The option to return to a Supported Work environment is a necessary component of the transition to open employment. The barrier to hybrid work options is affected by the:

a. 12 month NDIS planning cycle which delays movement of the individual;
b. NDIA assessment logic: If an individual has demonstrated that they are able to work in open employment they may be assessed as requiring less support in their NDIS plan and provided with a level of funding that is not adequate to enter into /return to an ADE.

The risk here is marginalisation from both open employment and ADE settings. For many, the risks associated with attempting open employment work is a disincentive to try.

Increased capacity should not trigger a reduction of supports but be accompanied by a continuation of funded supports until the person is stable in the workplace. Individuals should be supported by their NDIS Plan to try open employment knowing they will be able to return to a Supported Work environment/ADE should they wish to, and that their funding will revert to levels that makes this possible. The delays inherent in annualised plan reviews or requests for review, mean that operationally there is little flexibility and support to change workplace arrangements.

Supporting hybrid arrangements may be a suitable solution for some people, or to manage longer timeframes of transition. Core funding can be used to allow individuals to work in both open and ADE employment, in a 'hybrid' employment arrangement:

> we have two people at the moment completing that hybrid model. So, we're just finalising a position in a mainstream restaurant. That person will actually stay employed at [ADE] for two days a week and commence employment with the mainstream provider for two days a week. So that's quite common now within our team (Mary, disability support staff in employment service, interviewed October 2022).

However, hybrid arrangements are not supported by all NDIS planners/LACs: 'We do have challenges where an LAC will say, "No, you pick one or the other"' (Helen, disability enterprise staff, interviewed October 2022).

NDIS funding shortfall in individual plans for supporting pathways into open employment

If 'employment' is not a nominated goal in an individual NDIS plan, then funding for employment can be drawn from a flexible element of 'core' funding. However, core funding is a lower amount. The amount is not considered adequate to cover the resources and support required to establish and support a pathway into open employment.

Demonstrating Capacity and using Capacity Building funding is difficult in the ADE setting

Some ADEs in this study have reported that they do not use Capacity Building line items because the employment supports provided are not deemed as building capacity by the NDIA. The definition of Capacity Building strips ADEs of funding they might otherwise receive to bridge the support gap that individuals like Connor experience between ADE and open employment. For instance, the Capacity Building funding could be used for an ADE support worker to check-in on Connor.

Drawing from Capacity Building funding for an ADE is theoretically possible, but difficult in reality. As described by informants, this is because:

- As an ADE, if claiming Core for everyday supports at work, this contradicts the logic that training is also being provided.
- As an ADE if supported employees are spending their time working then funding parameters state that they are not in training or developing other skills such as relationship building skills. However, supported employees learn hands-on and develop new skills on the job, i.e. building capacity.
- The funding challenge is that the Core funding is enough to cover everyday living and work supports, but not Certified training programs (integrated into the workplace) which would require greater on-site support from trainers in the ADE. ADEs find it difficult to offer Certified training with the funding available, and unable to demonstrate that they are able to offer this.

The evidence for Capacity Building is therefore hard to establish and fund via NDIA in some ADE contexts. This is a pattern that is hard to break from. Ultimately, providing training and supports that are unfunded affects the financial sustainability of ADEs.

Employer knowledge and provision of supports

A range of barriers to transitioning supported employees into open employment sit with the employer and open employment workplace.

<u>A lack of employer knowledge about and confidence in recruiting supported employees</u>

In general, employers express uncertainty when contemplating employment of people with significant disability:

> Some employers believe they lack the required knowledge to adequately support people with a disability and, as a result, feel uncertain when recruiting workers who require support (Campbell et al., 2021, p. 16).

This is paired with significant social stigma related to work 'capacity' in relation to supported employees moving into open employment.

Employers were concerned about risk and liability in employing supported employees. To some extent, this was mitigated when employers had previous relationships with an employment support provider (such as genU) where these issues were addressed through the provision of information about each individual's needs, how they can be addressed and financially supported in the workplace (i.e. by drawing on Individual NDIS support).

Employers in the study also explained that their existing workforce is not trained to deal with the provision of adaptations and supports, or in supporting particular needs such as mental health. Employers reported a lack of resources to guide them.

> The biggest downfall is employers not having a toolkit ready, and that toolkit can simply mean "people to call out to". It's not just "a book". It can be a phone number, … It can be just information tools. A personalised toolkit … to help the employer support the person in their workplace (genU Staff 3, in Campbell et al., 2021, p. 16).

Problems in providing adequate support to people when they move into open employment.

There is concern that supports on-the-job are far less in open employment than in supported employment. While some of this is related to problems with NDIS funding discussed above, some relates to employer knowledge of what supports are needed or how to provide them.

> Do Supported Employees know when to take breaks? Do they have access to food and water? Will their needs be met and their rights upheld? Who can they speak to if they are not well or comfortable? (genU Staff 2 in Campbell et al., 2021, p. 17).

ADEs and employment support providers have a role to prepare employers with a strong knowledge of both the employment goals of individuals and also their support needs, and how these can be met within the workplace.

A level of ongoing work customization might also be required, otherwise there is the risk that employers will not adequately tailor work. This requires work with employers to embrace work customisation, including job carving, to create/identify suitable jobs for supported employees.

To some extent these issues can be dealt with via the provision of intensive supports to employers and employees, however these are often time-limited.

> Our supported employees moving into open employment and their new employer often require intensive supports, and within the workplace, particularly at the start. This is often outside of the scope of what a DES provider can assist with (genU Staff 12, in Campbell et al., 2021, p. 17).

Employers expressed their desire for ongoing on-the-job supports, in recognition of the ongoing nature of the support they need to provide to supported employees.

> That would make a world of difference… a real game changer to the point … we would definitely employ someone if they had someone that could help out, could supervise, could make sure that they were safe (Stakeholder 4 in Campbell et al., 2021, p.20).

Ultimately, employers need to embed supports into the workplace and be supported to build an ongoing inclusive culture for supported employees:

> Managers that invest in training programs, promote inclusive practices, and seek to offer meaningful support will see the most benefits from hiring Supported Employees. This will help create a culture where a worker's strengths are valued (Campbell et al., 2021, p. 17).

Implications for ADE reform

There are substantial opportunities for ADEs to play a significant role in not only the ongoing creation/ provision of highly supported employment within their own commercial enterprises, but to create and embed pathways between ADEs and open employment. ADEs already have a range of organisational features that correlate to the WISE-Ability model, or that can be enhanced, to support these outcomes.

The WISE-Ability model identifies the need for explicit organisational design in relation to pathways to open employment. It is in this area particularly that this research highlights some of the opportunities and tensions.

1. **ADE'S HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GENERATE CUSTOMISED PATHWAYS WITH EMPLOYERS IN THE OPEN LABOUR MARKET**

The WISE-Ability model highlights the importance of external relationships as a base for employment pathway development. These relationships not only offer opportunity to identify employment opportunities but to build capacity building and support relationships between the ADE and employers (if funded to undertake these roles).

Using these existing relationships, there is opportunity to use ADE expertise in customised employment and job carving, to unlock jobs and to train employers. Job opportunities might include the relocation of some work tasks into the workplaces of other businesses, where individuals are supported to perform work tasks that would usually be outsourced to ADEs back into open employment settings.

2. **FUNDING FOR OPEN EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS NEEDS GREATER CLARITY AND ALIGNMENT**

The effect of decreased NDIS funding for individuals means inadequate supports are in place for individuals to transition to open employment. While ADEs can establish pathways to open employment for individuals they need adequate funding to support employees to transition and build capacity in open employment. In addition, ADEs need a business model and related funding to offer capacity building to employers to a level that would ensure individuals with a disability have a positive work experience in open employment and don't seek to return to the ADE setting as a result of a negative experience.

3. **HYBRID EMPLOYMENT REQUIRES MORE ATTENTION IN FUNDING AND IN EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROVISION.**

NDIS funding plans need to evolve to better incorporate more hybrid forms of employment – simultaneously working in open employment and disability enterprises; or cycles of trial and testing in open employment and return to ADEs, followed by re-trial. Guidance is required for all parties (ADEs, LACs/planners, supported employees) about the employment supports required to link capacity building and other goals across work settings, and to provide adequate (and flexible) levels of support.

4. **FUNDING FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN ADES TO BETTER SUPPORT THE PATHWAY INTO EMPLOYMENT**

If ADEs are to have a role in building employment capacity (both to maximise the productivity of supported employees within ADEs), and as part of building the pathway to other forms of employment, then this role needs clearer funding mechanisms within NDIS. This needs to encompass the dual and often simultaneous activity of direct supports on-the-job, on-the-job training, and the provision of ongoing adjustments. Possibly one mechanism of funding accountability might be using a measure of increased productivity linked to supported wage assessment.

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EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

APPENDIX B

Inclusion Australia

Summary of Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

Developed by Impact Economics and Policy for Inclusion Australia
December 2022

Impact Economics and Policy was engaged by Inclusion Australia in late-2022, to develop independent economic modelling for the purpose of informing Inclusion Australia's work and submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Impact Economics and Policy has developed a model designed to estimate income outcomes of people with disability who are employed and being paid under the Supported Employment Services Award 2020[1] and/or the Supported Wage System[2]. For the purposes of the model and this document, these workers are referred to as "supported workers".

The majority (more than 80%) of supported workers in Australia work at an Assisted Disability Enterprise (ADE), but some also work in what is referred to as open employment i.e. employment that is open to all workers and is not necessarily designed to employ people with disability. Of people working in open employment, the Supported Worker Wages Transition Model only includes those with disability who are being paid under the Supported Employment Services Award 2020 and/or the Supported Wage System.

Under the Supported Employment Services Award 2020 and the Supported Wage System, supported workers tend to earn sub-minimum wages. That is an hourly rate of pay that is lower than the national minimum wage, which as of 1 July 2022 was $21.38 per hour.[3]

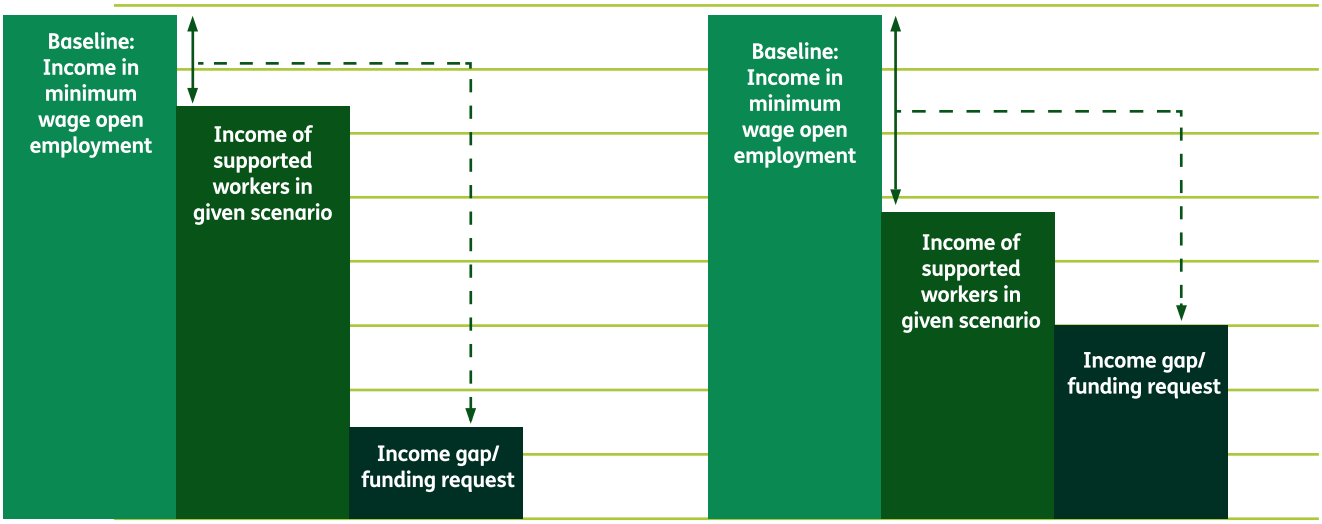
The Supported Worker Wages Transition Model (the model) estimates expected income outcomes of supported workers under multiple scenarios on an annual basis over the five forward financial years, 2023-24 to 2027-28. It incorporates income taxes as well as the interactions between employment income and the Disability Support Pension (DSP), as well as Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), in order to estimate take home incomes. Take home incomes are the incomes that workers are left with after accounting for all relevant taxes and income supports.

The estimated income outcomes are used in the model to estimate differences in the take home incomes of supported workers (under multiple scenarios) from take home incomes that would be earned if they were paid the minimum wage in open employment. The scenario where workers are paid the minimum wage in open employment is referred to as Scenario 0, as it is the scenario against which all others are compared.

For scenarios where the estimated take home incomes of supported workers are lower than the incomes they would earn in Scenario 0 (minimum wage open employment), the gap in incomes represents the amount of funding that would be required to provide supported workers with the equivalent of at least minimum wage open employment income. This is illustrated below in Figure 1.

1 Fair Work Ombudsman, Supported Employment Services Award 2020, https://awardviewer.fwo.gov.au/award/show/MA000103
2 Department of Social Services 2021, Supported Wage System, https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/supported-wage-system-sws
3 Fair Work Ombudsman 2022, Minimum Wages, https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/minimum-wages

Figure 1: Illustrative examples of the estimation the funding required for supported workers to receive the same income as they would in minimum wage open employment



Illustrative Scenario A **Illustrative Scenario B**

The focus of the model results summarised in this document is on the value of funding that would be required to increase the take home income of supported workers (accounting for DSP and CRA payments as well as the income from their wages) to at least the value of income they would earn in open employment getting paid the minimum wage i.e. the dark blue bars in Figure 1.

This document also provides the methodology and assumptions underpinning the model and its estimated results.

Model Results

The first results presented from the model in Table 1 are the estimated income results under Scenario 0. This provides estimates of income outcomes for supported workers if instead of working under the Supported Employment Services Award 2020 or the Supported Wage System, they were paid the minimum wage in an open employment setting.

These Scenario 0 results provide an important context, because they are the income outcomes against which all other income outcomes for supported workers are compared to in the model. The Scenario 0 results assume that workers would be working the same number of hours per week as they currently do in supported employment. Most supported workers do not work full-time, so the model results are based on part-time working hours (more detail on this can be found in the method and assumptions sections of this document).

Table 1: Estimated annual income outcomes for the average supported worker if they were paid the minimum wage in open employment (Scenario 0 income estimates)

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Gross wage income	$24,375	$24,984	$25,609	$26,249	$26,905
Net (post-tax) wage income	$23,111	$23,610	$24,121	$24,644	$25,181
Disability Support Pension (DSP)	$16,261	$16,667	$17,084	$17,511	$17,949
Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Take home net income	**$39,372**	**$40,277**	**$41,204**	**$42,155**	**$43,130**

Source: Impact Economics and Policy December 2022, Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

Table 1 shows that if supported workers were earning in the minimum wage in an open employment setting, on average they would earn a take home income of $39,372 in 2023-24 which would grow slightly each year as the minimum wage increases.

The model estimates that almost 60% of the average take home income amount under Scenario 0 would be coming from post-tax employment income, while the remaining 40% would come from DSP payments. The estimated amount of income coming from the DSP under Scenario 0 is less than the full amount of the annual DSP (which would be more than $25,000), because DSP payments taper as income grows. The estimated annual amount of rent assistance in Table 1 are all $0 because average annual wages income is estimated to be higher than the level at which rent assistance payments taper to 0.

The model results presented later in this section, are estimates of the amount of additional payment/income that supported workers would need to be paid to bring their take home income each year up to the same amount as presented in Table 1 for Scenario 0.

To compare against take home incomes under Scenario 0, the model estimates the income outcomes of supported workers under each of the scenarios described in Table 2.

Table 2: Scenario descriptions

Scenario	Description
Scenario 1	Supported workers continue to receive current Business As Usual (**BAU**) **wages** and their Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Rent Assistance (CRA) payments **taper** as income grows.
Scenario 2	Supported workers continue to receive current **BAU wages** and they also receive **full** DSP and CRA payments (i.e. there is no taper to income support as income grows).
Scenario 3	Supported workers continue to receive current **BAU wages** and their DSP and CRA payments taper but under a higher than usual threshold due to the implementation of a **Work Bonus**.
Scenario 4	Supported workers' wages **increase** over 5 years to equal the minimum wage by 2027-28. Their DSP and CRA payments **taper** as income grows.
Scenario 5	Supported workers' wages **increase** over 5 years to equal the minimum wage by 2027-28. They receive full DSP and CRA payments for the **first two years** after which payments **taper** as income grows.
Scenario 5B	Supported workers' wages **increase** over 5 years to equal the minimum wage by 2027-28. They receive full DSP and CRA payments for the **first two year**s. After the first two years, DSP and CRA payments **taper** but under a higher than usual threshold due to a **Work Bonus**.
Scenario 6	Supported workers' wages **increase** over 5 years to equal the minimum wage by 2027-28. Their DSP and CRA payments **taper** but under a higher than usual threshold due to the implementation of a **Work Bonus**.

To explain some of the concepts used to define each scenario in Table 2:

- **Wages growth:**

  BAU wages: Scenarios 1 to 3 assume that wages paid to supported workers remain at current levels i.e. Business As Usual (BAU). The only growth in wages paid to supported workers in BAU wages scenarios come from growing at the same pace as annual growth in the minimum wage.

  Increasing wages: Scenarios 4 to 6 assume that wages paid to supported workers transition over the course of five years, to become equivalent to the minimum wage. In these scenarios, wages paid to supported workers are assumed to remain at current levels in the first year of the model, and then grow by a constant amount each year until reaching equivalency with the minimum wage in the fifth year of the model.

- **Income support (DSP and CRA):**

  Full amount: Scenarios 2, 5 and 5B are scenarios where supported workers receive the full amounts of DSP and CRA (at least for the first two years of the model), even if their income from employment surpasses the level at which income support payments would typically start to reduce.

Taper: In typical settings, when a person earns above a specified threshold of fortnightly income, the amount of DSP and CRA they are eligible for starts to reduce (taper) by a specified amount for every $1 of income earned above the threshold.

- **Work Bonus:** A Work Bonus policy has recently been implemented for Australia's Age and Veterans Pensioners.[4] The Work Bonus effectively increases the threshold of income able to be earned before the value of pension payments starts to taper. Consistent with the current Work Bonus applied to Age and Veterans Pensioners[5] the Work Bonus assumed to apply in Scenarios 3, 5B and 6, allows for an additional $4,000 of income to be earned over a financial year before the value of the DSP starts to taper.

Table 3 and Table 4 (overleaf) present the estimated results from the model of the value of additional payment/income that would be required under each scenario and in each year to bring the incomes of supported workers up to at least as much as their incomes would be if earning the minimum wage in open employment.

Table 3 provides these results in terms of the average value per supported worker, and Table 4 provides the total values for the whole supported worker cohort.

This means that the values in Table 3 represent the value of additional payment/income that the average supported worker would need to receive each year, to bring their total take home income up to the same amounts as presented for Scenario 0 in Table 1.

It is estimated that in 2023-24, the average supported worker would require between $3,569 and $5,704 (depending on the scenario) in additional payment/income, in order to bring their total take home income up to a value of $39,372 (what it would be in minimum wage open employment).

Table 4 shows that a total value of between about $75.8 million and $121.1 million (depending on the scenario) would be required to bring the take home income of all supported workers up to at least that of minimum wage open employment.

In Scenarios 1 to 3, there is a persistent gap in incomes (relative to Scenario 0 outcomes) because the wages paid to supported workers are assumed to remain at current BAU levels throughout the five years. While BAU supported worker wages and the minimum wage are both assumed to grow at the same rate each year, this results in a slightly larger dollar value increase in the higher minimum wage relative to BAU supported worker wages each year. This is what leads to the slight widening of the estimated income gaps from Scenario 0, for each of Scenarios 1 to 3.

Table 3: Estimated value of additional payment/income required to bring supported worker income up to at least as much as under minimum wage open employment. Average per supported worker.

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Scenario 1: BAU wages with standard income support taper	$5,704	$5,775	$5,847	$5,922	$6,002
Scenario 2: BAU wages with full DSP and CRA payments (i.e. no taper)	$3,569	$3,603	$3,638	$3,674	$3,711
Scenario 3: BAU wages with Work Bonus taper for DSP	$4,650	$4,694	$4,740	$4,786	$4,838
Scenario 4: Wages increase towards minimum wage with standard income support taper	$5,704	$3,834	$2,568	$1,241	$0
Scenario 5: Wages increase towards minimum wage, full DSP and CRA payments for first 2 years, then standard taper	$3,569	$1,001	$2,568	$1,241	$0
Scenario 5B: Wages increase towards minimum wage, full DSP and CRA payments for first 2 years, then Work Bonus taper	$3,569	$1,001	$647	$0	$0
Scenario 6: Wages increase towards minimum wage with Work Bonus taper for DSP	$4,650	$2,209	$647	$0	$0

Source: Impact Economics and Policy December 2022, Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

4 Department of Social Services 2022, Work Bonus, https://www.dss.gov.au/seniors/programmes-services/work-bonus
5 Prime Minister of Australia September 2022, Giving older Australians the option to work and earn more, https://www.pm.gov.au/media/giving-older-australians-option-work-and-earn-more

Table 4: Estimated value of additional payment/income required to bring supported worker income up to at least as much as under minimum wage open employment. Total for the whole supported worker population.

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Scenario 1	$121,104,019	$122,607,329	$124,148,220	$125,727,635	$127,435,565
Scenario 2	$75,770,280	$76,500,013	$77,247,989	$78,014,665	$78,800,507
Scenario 3	$98,718,956	$99,662,639	$100,629,913	$101,621,370	$102,726,644
Scenario 4	$121,104,019	$81,407,960	$54,532,805	$26,355,523	$0
Scenario 5	$75,770,280	$21,259,356	$54,532,805	$26,355,523	$0
Scenario 5B	$75,770,280	$21,259,356	$13,731,978	$0	$0
Scenario 6	$98,718,956	$46,905,045	$13,731,978	$0	$0

Source: Impact Economics and Policy December 2022, Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

Under Scenarios 4 to 6, the estimated gap in incomes relative to minimum wage open employment shrinks over time and completely closes (i.e. the estimated values required to boost supported workers' wages reach $0) by at least 2027-28. This is because each of these scenarios assume annual increases in the wages paid to supported workers such that by 2027-28 their wages and resulting incomes are equal to those earned in minimum wage open employment.

The results demonstrate that a Work Bonus policy reduces the gap between supported worker incomes and those earned in minimum wage open employment by about $1,000 per person, by allowing employment income to reach a higher level before DSP payments taper than under the standard taper system.

The scenarios under which supported workers are permitted to receive the full amount of the DSP (and CRA for those eligible) for at least the first two years, reduce the gap between supported worker incomes and minimum wage open employment incomes by more than $2,000 per person, on average. In these cases, slightly higher values of the DSP (and to a lesser extent the CRA) able to be retained fill part of the gap with minimum wage open employment incomes, leaving less of a gap for an additional payment/income to fill.

Scenario 5 provides a slightly unusual result. While the estimated income gap falls to zero over the course of the five years, there is a blip where the gap increases in 2025-26. This occurs due to moving from receiving the full amount of DSP (and CRA for eligible workers) in 2024-25 to DSP and CRA payments then becoming tapered (under the standard income taper threshold) in 2025-26.

Another finding from the model, is that under settings where DSP payments taper as income grows (be it under the standard income taper threshold or a higher Work Bonus taper system) there is no hourly wage value below the minimum wage level at which take home incomes are as much as minimum wage take home incomes. At the levels of income being modelled, the value that ends up in take home income out of a higher hourly wage, outweighs the impacts of slightly higher income tax and slightly tapered income support payments.

Methodology

Rather than model supported workers as one homogenous group, the Supported Worker Wages Transition Model builds up to the final results by modelling income outcomes for 9 different cohorts of supported workers. The characteristics used to differentiate each cohort are their average hours worked per week and their average hourly wage rate.

Each cohort contains a different number of supported workers. The size of each cohort is determined by first estimating the number of total supported workers in Australia. This is estimated at 21,232 which is a combination of 17,232 people with disability working at ADEs with 4,000 people with disability working in open employment under the Supported Wage System. These values come from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the Department of Social Services, as detailed in the assumptions and sources section of this document.

The number of supported workers captured by each cohort is estimated by applying their assumed share of the total supported worker population to the 21,232 size of the total population. See Assumptions and sources for detail underpinning each cohort's share of the supported worker population.

Table 5 provides a summary of each of the model's 9 cohorts, including their estimated size and defining hours worked and hourly wage characteristics.

Table 5: Descriptions and defining characteristics of each cohort included in the model

Cohort	Description	% of total supported workers	Number of people	Average hours worked per week	Average hourly wage*
Cohort 1	Average wage and average hours worked	12%	2,543	19.6	$7.75
Cohort 2	Average wage, fewer than average hours worked	15%	3,279	12.0	$7.75
Cohort 3	Average wage, slightly more than average hours worked	10%	2,053	27.0	$7.75
Cohort 4	Average wage, close to full time hours worked	12%	2,625	35.4	$7.75
Cohort 5	Lower than average wage, fewer than average hours worked	17%	3,629	12.0	$4.12
Cohort 6	Lower than average wage, average hours worked	13%	2,798	19.6	$4.12
Cohort 7	Higher than average wage, average hours worked	7%	1,499	19.6	$14.01
Cohort 8	Higher than average wage, slightly more than average hours worked	6%	1,269	27.0	$14.01
Cohort 9	Higher than average wage, close to full time hours worked	7%	1,537	35.4	$14.01

**Average hourly wages are provided in 2022-23 dollars*
Source: Impact Economics and Policy December 2022, Supported Worker Wages Transition Model

For each of the 9 cohorts of supported workers, the model estimates the following income outcomes for an average person in the given cohort, on an annual basis from 2023-24 to 2027-28:

- Gross (pre-tax) income from employment (this is simply a combination of hourly wage rates with assumed hours worked per week).
- Income tax paid, including accounting for the Low Income Tax Offset (LITO), the Medicare levy, and the Medicare levy exemption for low-income earners.
- Net (post-tax) income from employment
- Value of DSP received
- Value of rent assistance received
- Take home income (this is equal to net employment income plus DSP plus rent assistance)

These income outcomes are estimated for each of the 9 cohorts and for each of the scenarios described in Model Results. This means the model estimates a total of 72 sets of income outcomes (9 cohorts multiplied by 8 scenarios – including scenario 0).

Within each cohort, the estimated take home incomes under scenarios 1 to 6 are compared to those for that cohort under scenario 0. This provides the estimated income gap relative to minimum wage open employment for each cohort in each scenario. Note that the estimated income outcomes under scenario 0 vary by cohort. Even though everyone in scenario 0 is assumed to be receiving the minimum hourly wage regardless of their cohort, assumed hours worked per week still vary, as provided in Table 5.

For each scenario, the estimated take home income gap from minimum wage open employment is aggregated across all of the cohorts, being weighted by the share of the total supported worker population that each cohort represents. This provides final model results that are representative of the full population of supported workers.

Assumptions and Sources

This section details the assumptions and sources of information underpinning the model. These are grouped depending on the part of the model they relate to.

Population and cohorts

Total supported worker population

As provided in Methodology, the total population of support workers in Australia is assumed to be 21,232 people. This is a combination of:

- 17,232 people with disability working at ADEs as provided in item 19c of witness statement STAT.0523.0002.0001 made to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability on behalf of the NDIA in April 2022.[6]
- 4,000 people with disability working in open employment but under the Supported Wage System, as provided in item 9a of submission made to the Fair Work Commissions by the Department of Social Services.[7]

As the following section demonstrates, data relating to supported workers employed at ADEs is used as the basis for the distribution of supported workers from the total population into the different cohorts as well as for the hours worked and hourly wages used to define each cohort.

Thus, by grouping the 4,000 supported workers in open employment working under the Supported Wage System into the total supported worker population and then splitting out cohorts from there, the model assumes that these 4,000 workers share the same working hour and hourly wage rate characteristics as supported workers employed at ADEs.

The total population of supported workers (is not assumed to grow over time, meaning the model provides estimated results for a total population of 21,232 people in every year. This is based on Exhibit 22-007.07 provided to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability by National Disability Services (NDS).[8] This exhibit demonstrates that the number of supported workers employed at ADEs (by a sample of 73 surveyed ADEs), did not grow between 2020 and 2021 and if fact very slightly contracted.

6 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/exhibit/STAT.0523.0002.0001.pdf
7 https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/sites/awardsmodernfouryr/am2014286-sub-dss-220422.pdf
8 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/exhibit/NDS.9999.0001.0036.pdf

Cohorts

The data and information used to determine the sizes and characteristics of all cohorts included in the model has been drawn from the following two sources:

- NDS Survey: NDS provided analysis of the results of its 2020-21 Vision Survey of Supported Employment Services in Exhibit 22-007.07 to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.[9] This survey provides responses from 73 ADEs employing more than 7,000 supported workers, with data current as at 2020-21.
- ARTD Report: Following a decision by the Fair Work Commission, ARTD Consultants conducted a trial and evaluation of a new wage assessment structure for ADEs and the supported workers they employ. The Fair Work Commission has published the report produced by ARTD Consultants detailing the trial and evaluation results.[10] This report includes data relating to the 379 supported workers included in the trial, with the data believed to be current at 2020-21.

The NDS Survey covers a much larger number of supported workers than the ARTD Report, so is used as the preferred source of data regarding average outcomes of supported workers (in terms of hours worked and hourly wages). However, the ARTD Report provides a greater level of information relating to the distribution of supported workers, as opposed to single point averages.

The following outlines how Impact Economics and Policy combined data available from these two sources to reach the set of cohorts used in the model.

Hours worked per week

The NDS Survey suggests that supported employees work for an average of 19.6 hours per week.

Data from Table A35 of the ARTD Report, provides the following:

- 33% of supported employees work fewer than the average hours per week
- 24% of supported employees work about the average number of hours per week
- 18% of supported employees work a bit more than the average number of hours per week
- 25% of supported employees work close to or at full time hours

Using the distribution of supported workers across different categories of hours worked, and centring it around the average 19.6 hours worked as reported in the NDS Survey, provided Impact Economics and Policy with the splits presented in Table 6 of the supported worker population by hours worked.

Table 6: Split of supported worker population based on hours worked per week

Share of supported workers	Average hours worker per week
33%	12.0
24%	19.6
18%	27.0
25%	35.4

Hourly wages

The NDS Survey suggests that supported employees earned an average wage of $7.19 per hour in 2020-21.

Data from Table A37 of the ARTD Report, implies the following:

- 22% of supported employees earn substantially less than the average hourly wage
- 43% of supported employees earn about the average hourly wage or less
- 17% of supported employees earn about the average hourly wage or a small amount more
- 18% of supported employees earn substantially more than the average hourly wage

9 https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/exhibit/NDS.9999.0001.0036.pdf
10 https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/sites/awardsmodernfouryr/am2014286-report-dss-241121.pdf

Condensing this distribution of supported workers across different categories of hourly wages down from four groups into three (to avoid over complicating and over specifying), and centring it around the average $7.19 hours worked as reported in the NDS Survey, provided Impact Economics and Policy with slits of the supported worker population into three different groups of hourly wage levels.

The average hourly wages for each group were inflated from 2020-21 dollars into 2022-23 dollars using the 7.8% growth that has occurred over that period in the national minimum wage. The resulting groupings of supported workers by hourly wages are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Split of supported worker population based on hourly wage level

Share of supported workers	Average hourly wage, 2022-23
44%	$4.12
39%	$7.75
18%	$14.01

Combining hours worked and hourly wages to develop model cohorts

No information or data suggesting how hourly wages and the number of hours worked per week correlate for supported workers was available at the time of model development. Thus, it cannot necessarily be assumed that the 18% of supported workers in the $14 hourly wage group (Table 7) are the same 18% in the 27 hours worked per week group (Table 6). Nor could it be assumed that all 33% of supported workers in the fewer than average hours worked group also fall into the group of 44% of supported workers earning the lower than average hourly wage.

Table 8 combines the split of supported workers across the four groups of hours worked with the split across the three groups of hourly wages. This combination provides the share of supported workers in each group representing all possible combinations of hours worked and hourly wage levels. This assumes no relationship between hours worked and hourly wage rates.

Table 8: Initial cohort shares of total supported employment

		Split of employees by average hours worked			
Split of employees by average hourly wage		**12.0**	**19.6**	**27.0**	**35.4**
		33%	**24%**	**18%**	**25%**
$4.12	**44%**	14.4%	10.4%	7.8%	10.9%
$7.75	**39%**	12.7%	9.2%	6.9%	9.6%
$14.01	**18%**	5.9%	4.3%	3.2%	4.5%

However, while there is no firm data to inform the precise relationship between supported workers' hourly wage rate and their hours worked, there are still some assumptions that can reasonably be made:

- Supported workers who are earning a lower than average hourly wage are unlikely to be working more than the average number of hours per week.
- Supported workers who are earning a higher than average hourly wage are most likely to be working more than the average hours per week.

Making these two assumptions informs to a slightly condensed set of cohorts, each assigned shares of the total supported worker population as per Table 9.

Table 9: Initial cohort shares of total supported employment

Split of employees by average hourly wage		Split of employees by average hours worked			
		12.0	**19.6**	**27.0**	**35.4**
		33%	**24%**	**18%**	**25%**
$4.12	**44%**	17.1%	13.2%		
$7.75	**39%**	15.4%	12.0%	9.7%	12.4%
$14.01	**18%**		7.1%	6.0%	7.2%

The set of 9 cohorts that results from the combinations and population shares presented in Table 9 are described in Table 5w within the Methodology section.

Nature of employment

The nature of employment for supported workers is assumed to be permanent, which includes full-time and part-time workers. The alternative to permanent employment is casual employment. Hours worked under casual employment come with a 25% loading onto the base hourly wage. In the Support Worker Wages Transition Model, if all supported workers are assumed to be casual workers rather than permanent, the average impact of the estimated results is a 7% increase in the value of additional payments/income required.

The model assumes that each cohort's average weekly hours worked are consistent throughout each financial year. It does not incorporate potential extended and unpaid breaks from employment.

Growth and indexation

The model covers a period of 5 years, from 2023-24 to 2027-28. Over this period, the national minimum wage is assumed to grow annually by 2.5% each year. Under scenarios in the model where hourly wages of supported workers are assumed to remain at current levels, they are still assumed to grow at the same rate as the national minimum wage each year.

A separate indexation rate is applied in the model to the following:

- Maximum values of DSP payments
- The fortnightly income threshold at which DSP begin to taper
- The fortnightly income threshold at which DSP payments would begin to taper under a Work Bonus policy
- Maximum values of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) payments
- The annual income threshold at which the Medicare levy exemption for low-income earners applies

Informed by Federal Government Budget Papers, and information from the Department of Social Services, the rate of indexation applied to the model elements listed above is assumed to be 3.5% for 2023-24, reverting to 2.5% per year thereafter.

Indexation has not been applied to the following:

- Income tax brackets
- Income thresholds for the Low Income Tax Offset (LITO)

Calculating taxation

Income tax amounts for each cohort under each scenario are calculated by applying income tax brackets and rates to the estimated income earned from employment by supported workers. For the first year of the model (2023-24), current income tax brackets and rates provided by the ATO[11] are assumed to apply. For 2024-25 onwards, new tax thresholds often referred to as the 'stage 3 tax cuts'[12] are assumed to apply, given these changes are currently planned Federal Government policy.

The income tax calculations in the model incorporate the Low-Income Tax Offset (LITO), as currently described by the ATO.[13] The 2% Medicare levy[14] is also applied, as is the Medicare levy exemption for low-income earners.[15] As described above in Growth and indexation, the income threshold below which the Medicare levy exemption applies is assumed to increase each year in line with indexation.

While the Medicare levy *exemption* for low-income earners is applied in the model, it does not incorporate the Medicare levy *reduction* for low-income earners. It is assumed that the inclusion of the Medicare levy reduction for low-income earners would not have a significant impact on the model's estimated results.

Calculating DSP and rent assistance payments

Values of full DSP and rent assistance payments

Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) amounts vary depending on age (younger than 21 versus 21 and older) and partnership status. There are two main ways in which the differences in these rates based on demographics could be incorporated into the model:

- **Additional cohorts:** The differences in DSP and CRA payments for people of varying ages and partnership status could be incorporated by splitting out additional demographic-based cohorts in the model, and then for the calculations in each cohort just apply the full DSP and rent assistance payments relevant to the given demographic group.

  However, the demographic cohorts would need to be overlayed on top of the existing 9 cohorts based on working hours and wages. This means each one additional demographic group would require an additional 9 cohorts to be added to the model.

  Further, data from the ARTD Report[16] suggests that hourly wages of supported workers do not vary significantly by age group. This means there would be no reason other than the differences in available DSP and CRA payments to split out cohorts by demographic characteristics in the model.

  Therefore, this method is not used in the model.

- **Weighted averaging:** The other method for applying differences in DSP and CRA payments based on age and partnership status within the context of the model is to take a weighted average of the payment levels available to each demographic group. Rather than taking a simply average giving equal weight to each demographic group, the weighted average accounts for the shares of the supported worker population falling into each demographic group. This method provides larger weightings to the values of payments available to people in the demographic cohorts that make up the largest shares of the supported worker population.

  The one resulting weighted average value of DSP payment (or CRA payment) can then be used in the income support calculations for all cohorts in the model.

11 https://www.ato.gov.au/rates/individual-income-tax-rates/
12 https://archive.budget.gov.au/2018-19/factsheets/lower-simpler-fairer-taxes.pdf
13 https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Income-and-deductions/Offsets-and-rebates/Low-and-middle-income-earner-tax-offsets/
14 https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Medicare-and-private-health-insurance/Medicare-levy/
15 https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Medicare-and-private-health-insurance/Medicare-levy/Medicare-levy-reduction-for-low-income-earners/
16 https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/sites/awardsmodernfouryr/am2014286-report-dss-241121.pdf

This is the method used in the model.

The weights used to construct the weighted average values of the DSP and the CRA, are based on data capturing the demographic profile of DSP recipients as at June 2022.[17] This data provides that 2.82% of all DSP recipients are under the age of 21, and 20.6% are 'partnered' in terms of marital status.

The application of the weighted averaging method as opposed to the additional cohorts method means that calculated values of income support payments will not necessarily represent a specific individual of a certain age and partnership status. However, calculated values will still be representative of the average and when added up for the whole supported worker cohort.

As per the Growth and indexation section, the weighted average value of DSP and CRA payments are assumed to grow each year in line with indexation.

Eligibility

The model assumes that all supported workers meet the medical rule eligibility requirements for receiving the DSP. The following section, Tapering with income, describes how non-medical eligibility rules are applied in the model.

In the case of CRA payments, not everyone receiving the DSP automatically receives rent assistance. Data from the Department of Social Services provides that in June 2022, 35.3% of all DSP recipients also received CRA.[18]

Therefore, when calculations are applied in the model to estimate the value of CRA received by each cohort under each scenario, the estimated value of CRA is multiplied by 35.3% to weight it for the share of the population assumed to be receiving it.

Tapering with income

The non-medical requirements for receiving DSP payments relate to age (recipients must be at least 15 years and 9 months old), Australian residency and income and asset tests. The model assumes that all supported workers meet the age and residency requirements.

The income test is accounted for in the model by applying DSP income taper thresholds and rates, described in further detail below. In the absence of information about the value of assets owned by supported workers, the assets test is unable to be incorporated in the model. This is deemed to be a viable omission given Department of Social Services data for June 2022 shows that only 1.2% of all DSP recipients receive a partial rate of the DSP as a result of the assets test.[19]

Therefore, DSP payments are calculated in the model for each cohort by assuming the full value as a starting point and then applying the rules of the income test for pensions.[20] These rules provide that DSP recipients can receive the full value of DSP payments until their income exceeds $190 per week, after which their fortnightly DSP payment is reduced by 50 cents for each dollar above $190 they are earning.

In the model, this income test rule is applied to the estimates of gross (pre-tax) income from employment for each cohort under each scenario, except in scenarios where supported workers are enabled to receive full DSP payments irrespective of their income. For scenarios where a Work Bonus is assumed to be implemented, the same taper rate (50 cents for every additional dollar of income) is assumed to apply to DSP payments, but the income threshold at which this taper begins is a higher one (enabled by the value of the Work Bonus).

For both the standard income text threshold and the higher threshold under the Work Bonus, income thresholds are assumed to increase each year in line with indexation.

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17 Department of Social Services, DSS Demographics – June 2022, https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data/resource/1188c950-542a-4ca6-9e3e-9f91f53d9314
18 https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data/resource/1188c950-542a-4ca6-9e3e-9f91f53d9314
19 https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data/resource/1188c950-542a-4ca6-9e3e-9f91f53d9314
20 https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/income-test-for-pensions?context=22526

CRA payments are also subject to an income test, but in the absence of reliable data about how CRA payments taper as income grows, the model assumes that the same income test rules that apply to DSP payments also apply to CRA payments.

Under the model scenarios involving a Work Bonus, the impact of the Work Bonus on lifting the income threshold at which income support payments start tapering is assumed to apply only to DSP payments and not to CRA payments. As such, estimated CRA payments are unaffected by Work Bonus scenarios.

The way in which the model calculates DSP and CRA payments assumes that supported workers have no sources of income beyond that which they derive from employment and income support payments.

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL RIGHTS

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