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## **MEDIA RELEASE: PARTNERSHIP TO EDUCATE EMPLOYERS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING NEURODIVERSE PEOPLE**

A Memorandum of Understanding recently signed between three organisations will improve employment outcomes for people with Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder and Dyslexia.

The three parties involved include Joblife Employment, a national disability employment service provider, Life Without Barriers, one of Australia's largest social purpose organisations, and Untapped Group, a neurodiversity specialist training and employment placement provider.

With more than 170,000 Australians on the autism spectrum, the partnership comes at a pivotal time in bridging the gap between neurodiverse and neurotypical people, particularly around education and employment.

Currently, only 40 per cent of people on the autism spectrum are employed and they are 4.5 times less likely to achieve an education beyond school than neurotypical people.

CEO of Joblife, Anthony Parsons, said the partnership would deliver enormous benefits for people with neurodiverse conditions.

"Our combined role will be to educate employers about the benefits of hiring a person on the spectrum and highlighting the significant potential they can bring to their business," he said.

"Life Without Barriers and Joblife have an extensive footprint across the country, and many of our clients are on the autism spectrum. Untapped Group has the knowledge, partners and experience of working with organisations to show them how someone with autism could meet their business needs," he said. "We're very excited about what that means for our clients."

Untapped Group Director, Andrew Eddy, referred to research that indicated that people on the autism spectrum can exceed employer's expectations.

"Research conducted on businesses who employ a neurodiverse team show a higher level of productivity. These teams sharpen the thought processes, provide creative solutions and ask questions that others haven't considered," he said.

"The opportunity for businesses to build high performing teams from talented individuals can be commercially compelling – and this is the message we want to spread," he said.

Chief Executive of Life Without Barriers, Claire Robbs said all three organisations were passionate about encouraging and facilitating diverse and inclusive workplaces that welcome neurodiverse individuals.

"We want more businesses to recognise that people with special abilities have a lot to offer and that diversity and inclusion in the workplace is a competitive advantage, not a drain on the bottom-line.

"This new partnership allows us to tap into each other's strengths, and together, we will advocate for more meaningful opportunities for people on the autism spectrum and educate employers on how best to leverage their unique combination of skills," Ms Robbs said.

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