



## LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

#EmploymentWithoutBarriers for people with disability

**With 20% of the Australian population living with disability, it's time our workplaces at all levels, from entry to Senior Executive and Board, to reflect the communities in which we live and work.**

Barriers to employment are complex and pose an often an invisible problem for people living with disability. Despite a relatively low unemployment rate of 3.4% (August 2022), the unemployment rate for people with disability is still twice that of the general population.

### What you need to know

- 4.4 million people in Australia have a disability. That's around 1 in 6 people.
- People with disability have a right to employment, that right is enshrined in law and in the Convention of the Rights of People with Disability (Article 27).
- The unemployment rate for people with disability is double that of working aged people without disability.
- More than 113,000 people with disability are currently unemployed and looking to work. However, this figure does not disclose how many people have given up looking for employment because of barriers they have faced.
- 18% of school leavers with disability do not enter the labour force for up to seven years after leaving school (compared to five per cent for people without disability).
- For 40% of employed working-age people with disability, their main source of discrimination came from an employer.
- Unconscious bias unfortunately remains an entrenched aspect of Australian workplace culture.

### What reforms are happening now?

Change is happening, over the past few years there has been an increasing focus on evolving the labour market to recognise the right of people with disability to be included in the workforce. Public policy for employment is largely a Commonwealth Government responsibility. Both the Federal Government and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) have released new ten-year strategies which include:

- Investing \$5.9billion over four years to develop Workforce Australia.
- A new disability employment support model to replace the current Disability Employment Services (DES) from 2023.
- The National Indigenous Australians Agency will pilot new jobs program from 2023
- Transition to Work has been identified as the specialist pre-employment service for young people within Workforce Australia.
- The NDIS remains committed to 30% of participants of working age in employment by 30 June 2023.

## **Life Without Barriers Commitment**

1 in 4 new jobs created in Australia today is in the community services sector. Our sector has a responsibility to ensure we are leading the way in hiring and promoting the benefits of employing people with disability. Life Without Barriers [Strategy 2025](#) includes our commitment to improving employment opportunities for people with disability. Over the next five years, we will invest significantly in relationships and partnerships that help disrupt workforce barriers and break open employment opportunities that many of us take for granted.

## **Life Without Barriers' Commitment:**

### **Accessibility, Inclusion Employment Plan**

- Our commitments in our Access, Inclusion and Employment Plan (AIEP) include a workforce that reflects the 20% of people with disability in our community.
- Offer meaningful careers to people with disability, including varying opportunities, diversity of experiences and significant pathways to senior roles.
- To assess and refine our recruitment processes so people with disability are confident in considering Life Without Barriers as an employer.
- To grow our *Disability Ability Wellness Network* (DAWN) which supports staff with disability to come together and share ideas across our organisation.

### **Young People Employment Pathways (YPEP)**

- Further develop models of employment support for young people with disability. This is done through our own Young People's Employment Pathways program.

### **Our Services – including NDIS Supports**

- Work with people we support to identify opportunities and funding streams to assist them with their employment goals, including School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) under the NDIS.
- Offer existing and potential new clients information and support to access employment opportunities through their NDIS Plans.
- Investigate and create opportunities in the development of social enterprises.

### **Disability Employment Services (DES)**

- Further develop the YPEP program to strengthen cross-referral opportunities and pathways with the DES system.
- Enhance our understanding and links with the DES system to promote seamless pathways between NDIS and other systems.

### **Influencing Social Policy**

- Partner further with the NDIA, government, community sector and suppliers to share knowledge and learnings from our experience.
- Contribute to sector and government discussions as a large employer and advocate for people with disability to ensure people with disability are at the table when policies are designed and considered.
- Show our support for Government initiatives including *EmployMyability* and share resources from AND and the Human Rights Commission.