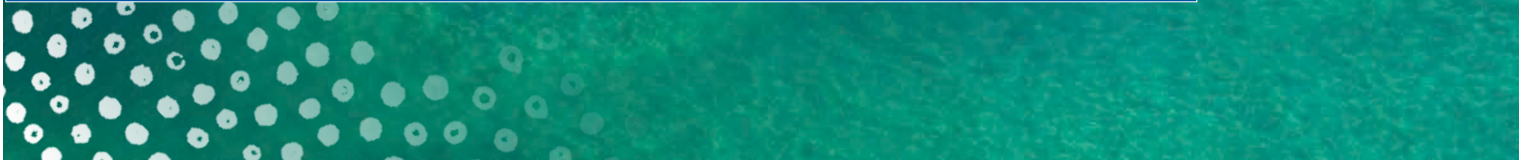




BUSY Ability Tourism Opportunity Navigator
Employer Resource Pack





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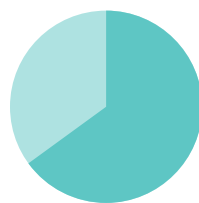
Employment Restrictions

People with disability may experience employment restrictions because of their disability (such as restrictions around the type of job or number of hours they can work or a need for special equipment). In 2018, the following groups with disability had an employment restriction:



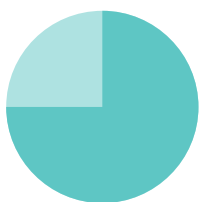
47.5%

Almost half of those working full-time.



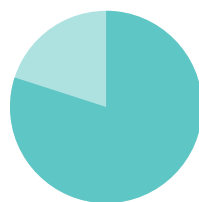
64.5%

Two thirds of those working part-time.



73.7%

Almost three-quarters of those who were unemployed.



80.5%

The majority of those not in the labour force (771,399); and of these, 515,200 were permanently able to work.

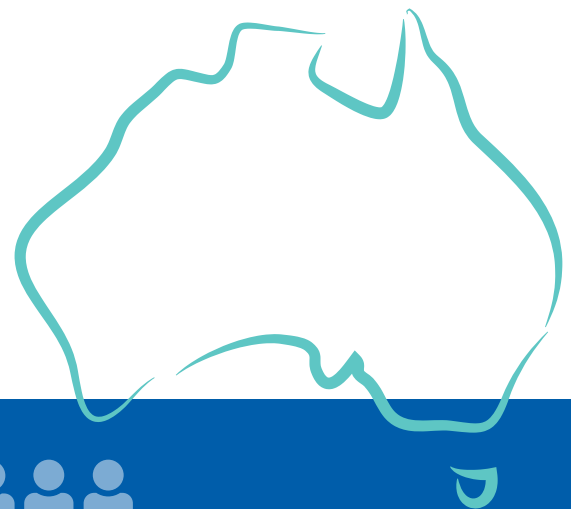
NDIS Participants

Of the active NDIS participants at 30 June 2021:

- the top 5 primary disability groups were:
 - autism (32% or around 151,000 people; males accounted for around 73% of participants reported with autism)
 - intellectual disability (20%, 91,300 people)
 - psychosocial disability (10%, 48,500 people)
 - developmental delay (8.1%, 37,700 people)
 - hearing impairment (4.8%, 22,400 people)
- 6.9% of participants were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- 9.5% of participants identified as culturally and linguistically diverse
- 49% (around 229,000) were aged 18 or under, 25% (around 119,000) were aged 19–44, and 26% (around 119,000) were aged 45 and over (only 3.6% were aged 65 and over)
- 62% (around 288,000) were male.
- 68% were located in major cities (based on the Modified Monash Model of remoteness)

Types of Disability

- Only 4.4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair.
- 1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are approximately 30,000 Deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss
- Vision Australia estimates there are currently 357,000 people in Australia who are blind or have low vision. They project that the number of Australians who are blind or have low vision will grow to 564,000 by 2030. (Refractive error not included).
- 45% of Australians aged 16–85 years, experience a mental health condition during their lifetime.
- 3 million Australians live with depression or anxiety.
- Research shows job or financial loss can increase a person's risk of health problems, such as depression and anxiety.
- Over three-quarters (76.8%) of people with disability reported a physical disorder as their main condition. The most common physical disorder was musculoskeletal disorder (29.6%) including arthritis and related disorders (12.7%) and back problems (12.6%).



18%



1 in 6 people in Australia have a disability (about 4.4 million people).

Adjustments to the Workplace

Employment for people with a disability can provide various economic, health, and social improvements and can also increase the likelihood of the individual obtaining secure housing (IDES, 2019). However, they can also face barriers within the workplace. For example, access to buildings and facilities, the need for assistive technology, and flexible work arrangements. If you are looking to hire person with disability in your workplace you have made an excellent choice! A person with disability are known to have higher work retention rates, better attendance, provide a diverse range of skills and talents, and have few occupational health and safety incidents (Graffam, Shinkfeld, Smith & Polzin, 2002). However, if you do employ a person with disability, you may be required to make some modifications or adjustments to be able to accommodate your employee (Disability Support Guide, 2023a).

These adjustments are required by law according to The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) (Australian Government, 2022a); however, they must also be considered reasonable adjustments for the employer to implement and not cause them “unjustifiable hardship” (e.g., extreme financial hardship or significant technical restrictions). More information regarding unjustifiable hardships can be found on the Australian Human Rights Commission website Unjustifiable Hardship (humanrights.gov.au). The individual that requires the adjustment should put their proposal to you in writing, detailing their request and stating if it is a deviation from your standard practices and policies (Disability Support Guide, 2023). The complete DDA can be found by clicking on this link: [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(legislation.gov.au\)](http://Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (legislation.gov.au))

Employers that are required to make workplace adjustments can access government funding to assist with implementing them. One of these schemes is the JobAccess Employment Assistance FUND (EAF) Funding for changes to the workplace | Job Access. The EAF is accessible to an eligible person with disability that are currently working, about to start new employment, or are self-employed (Australian Government, 2022b) Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) | Job Access.

The eligibility requirements for your employee are as follows:

- Must be an Australian Resident according to EAF Guidelines.
- In employment that is expected to continue for at least 13 weeks or more.
- The employee must work a minimum of eight hours per week.
- The employee is earning the National Minimum Wage.
- The disability has been ongoing or has last two years and limits the employee’s ability to work.

The EAF Guidelines offer detailed information which can be found at Employment Assistance Fund Guidelines | Job Access. Online application instructions can be found at [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\) Online Application – Instructions | Job Access](http://Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) Online Application – Instructions | Job Access).

There are also free workplace assessments available called Workplace Modification Assessment (WMA), which assist to decide what kind of adjustments may be required to support the individual. Once you submit your application it will be assessed, and you will be advised if a WMA is required. If the WMA is not needed, then you can purchase the approved goods/services and the cost will be reimbursed to you. If a WMA is needed, then the assessment will occur, and the required workplace changes will be confirmed.

Once this process is approved, then once again, the goods/services can be purchased, and the cost reimbursed. Applications can be made through the JobAccess online portal by clicking on this link [JobAccess Secure | JAS | JobAccess Secure \(ecsn.gov.au\)](http://JobAccess Secure | JAS | JobAccess Secure (ecsn.gov.au)) (Department of Social Services, 2023b).

Common types of adjustments include:

- Flexible working arrangements (e.g., flexible hours, working from home)
- Communication of information
- Braille signage in communal locations
- Modification of building and bathroom access.
- Assistive technology (e.g., screen readers, voice recognitions, closed captioning).

Mitigating Biases

Attitudes toward a person with disability have evolved in practice over the preceding decades; however, there is still evidence that a person with disability remains stigmatized and can experience bias, particularly in the workplace (Draper, 2012). A stigma is when the impairment is not a barrier to job performance; however, it is perceived as such (e.g., a runway model having a stutter). Stigmatization can result in labelling, loss of status, and insinuates a power differential, which can make it difficult for the individual to realise their potential. This could have emotional and financial impacts on the person with disability, which could lead to mental health challenges (Draper, 2012).

A person with disability can also experience implicit or unconscious bias; this is when the judging person automatically makes stereotypical decisions on their behalf, without consultation (e.g., offering unrequested supports). Furthermore, as disabilities are categories as either physical, sensory, or emotional, there are different stereotypes associated with each of the types of disability (e.g., an individual with an intellectual disability will take longer to train) (Carvalho-Freitas, & Stathi, 2017). Whereas those living with a disability are functionally diverse as they have had to find different methods to address the challenges of everyday life (Carvalho-Freitas et al., 2017).

Some strategies that you as an employer can implement are to undertake disability awareness training (see section on Education and Training for more information). This training aims to empower the employer to build a more diverse team by providing them with practical strategies. Also, ensure that you make decisions based on data and fact, rather than opinion. To ascertain if bias has crept in reflect on the rationale behind your original decision and establish if all the facts have been considered. Another tool would be to standardise your interview process to focus the factors relevant to then role, otherwise there is a tendency to preference those with similar demographics to yourself. Encourage more women with a disability into the workforce by removing gendered wording and gender specific job titles from

job vacancy advertisements. Involve more team members in your interview panel, as this can be helpful in preventing each other's unconscious bias. Finally, conduct blind interviews, where you remove identifying information from the applications (e.g., name, age, gender, disabilities, schooling) and instead only focus on experience, skills, and abilities in your decision-making process (Disability Support Guide, 2023b).

There are also things you can do to reduce your unconscious bias, these include:

- Learn more - take The Implicit Association Test to become more aware of your own unconscious biases. Take a Test ([harvard.edu](https://www.harvard.edu))
- Be aware of your own bias – notice your first impressions/reactions when you meet a person with disability, observe how the person with disability are portrayed in movies and TV shows that may reinforce unconscious bias.
- Speak up when you notice actions that might be unintentionally biased.
- Empower people in your business by calling out any observed unconscious bias.
- Train your management to recognise unconscious bias.
- Apologize when you get it wrong! Everyone makes mistakes sometimes, acknowledge your error and make the correction.

(University of Washington. 2022)

21%

of people aged 15-64 who acquired disability before 15 left school before age 16 (8.9% without disability)..

How to Address Microaggression and Discrimination

Have you ever unintentionally said something that upset an employer or an employee? It could have been related to the language used when you communicated with them. It is important to use correct language and terms, as even well-intentioned statements can be perceived as ableist or microaggression. But what is ableism and microaggression?

Ableism is a form of discrimination based on the belief that a person with a disability is inferior and less valuable than non-disabled individuals. Some examples of ableism include using a disabled bathroom when you do not require specialised assistance or designing buildings that do not include appropriate accessibility. It can exist on different levels within our society, such as institutional (i.e., medical assumption that the person requires “fixing”), interpersonal (i.e., a parent wanting to “cure” the disability instead of accepting it), and on an internal level (i.e., believing harmful messages about disabilities). Ableism can also come in different forms; they can be hostile (i.e., open aggression and bullying), benevolent (i.e., view that a person with disability is weak), or ambivalent (i.e., a combination of hostility and benevolence, patronizing a person with disability, then being hostile when they object) (Sullivan, 2021).

Some examples of ableist statements can include:

- “What is wrong with you?”
- “You don’t look disabled!”
- “The fact that you can work is so inspiring.”

What are microaggressions? Microaggressions are statements, assumptions and questions aimed at groups that are traditionally marginalized (Washington, 2022). They can be verbal or non-verbal expressions, gestures, or slights that may intentionally or unintentionally feel hostile, or offensive. Although there are criticisms that society today has become “hypersensitive” and such statements are being blown out of proportion, imagine being asked most days of your life “What’s actually wrong with you?” or “Life must be so difficult for you, how do you cope?”. Persistently hearing these types of statements can impact on the individuals mental and general health, their sense of belonging, and how the person with disability experiences the world (Washington, 2022). Additionally, referring to yourself or another person as having a condition that is not formally diagnosed can also be considered a form of microaggression. For example, “I am so OCD about my desk”, “They are definitely on the spectrum”, or “I am so dyslexic today”.

Some strategies for addressing ableism and microaggression within your workplace can include:

- Judge if the current situation and consider if the conversation is best addressed in the moment and perhaps in front of others (e.g., ensure that everyone is being considerate in a meeting,





before continuing, without calling out any individual person), or wait for a more private one-on-one situation to address the colleague in a safer environment.

- Consider your relationship with the employee that made the comment. If you have more of a personal relationship with them then you might be able to address the situation with a simple comment like “Hey you said something earlier that did not sit right with me”. If you are required to reflect on what you know about your employee’s personality (e.g., possibly combative), then you may consider allowing them a support person when addressing the issue.
- Be honest with your level of knowledge on the topic and consider learning more prior to talking with an individual that may be more familiar with the subject.
- Remind employees of the difference between what they intended to say and the possible impact of the statement. For example, “I understand that you might have intended your remark to come off as ..., however it was received as....”

What if I, as the employer, said something considered to be microaggression?

- Pause for a moment – we can get defensive when called out so take some deep breaths, remember we all make mistakes sometimes. Next, reflect on your chance to develop a more respectful style of communication.
- Ask for clarification - If you are unsure if you caused offence, request more information, by inviting further dialogue, e.g., “Can you please tell me more about what you meant?”
- Acknowledge and apologise – Acknowledge that you caused offence and sincerely apologise, e.g., “I understand better now where I went wrong, and will work towards becoming more aware of ...”
- Create a safe follow-up space – Provide a time in the future to continue the conversation and allow your employee the opportunity to follow-up. (Washington, 2022).

You can find free training courses on microaggression for you and your staff on the EdApp website by clicking on this link: [10 Microaggressions Training Courses | EdApp Microlearning Programs](#)

82%

of employed working-age people with disability do not need time off from work because of their disability.

Workplace Flexibility, Support and Action Plan

Providing flexible workplace practices within your business for a person with disability is their human right and can also support their wellbeing, provides them with a more positive experience, and improves productivity (Disability Support Guide 2023c).

Flexible workplace practices may include:

- Flexible work hours (e.g., alternate start, finish, and breaks times).
- The place they work from (e.g., work from home).
- Flexible start and finish times so they may attend regular appointments.
- The way they work (e.g., standup desk or use of voice to text technology).

Even though it is within their rights to request these changes after they have been working with the same employer for more than a year, research has found that one in five workers with disability are reluctant to request such adjustments. Requests for flexible work must be responded to without discrimination and within 21 days of the proposal in writing. (Disability Support Guide 2023c). For more information on how an employee with a disability would request such changes please see the section on Workplace Adjustments within this booklet.

Once reasonable adjustments have been identified and negotiated the next steps in ensuring that your workplace is supportive for a person with disability include:

- Creating a supportive culture, which may involve reviewing your current culture and identifying areas for improvement (see section on Workplace Culture).

- Provide your workers access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for both employment and personal related matters.
- Respect the person with disability rights to privacy and ensure that personal information is not revealed to other employees without their express consent.
- Provide training and technology to educate workers on the needs of the person with disability so they don't set up a meeting in an inappropriate location, fail to use assistive technology, or use inappropriate language etc.
- Run inclusive work events such as social or offsite events so the person feels valued.
- Obtain expert advice and support which will assist both the employer and employee. For example, The Altius Group provides free support to eligible employers through Australian Government funding. More information can be found by clicking on this link: Disability Employment Services (DES) Provider | Altius Group (altius-group.com.au)
- Meet with your employee with disability regularly to discuss possible problems or potential upgrades that may be required. (Stephans, 2021).

It is important that your business protects the rights of your employee with disability by working towards removing discrimination within the workplace and



23%

of people with disability aged 15-24 are more likely to be unemployed than those aged 25-64.

promoting a more inclusive community. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 requires business to actively reduce the barriers that people with disability face when accessing work. This is more than just ensuring physical accessibility, it also includes considering behaviours, systems, and attitudes within the workplace. An effective way to achieve this is to develop a Disability Action Plan (DAP). A DAP presents a blueprint on how to review current practices that might result in discrimination and then strategically plan on how change can be implemented to promote the rights of people with disabilities. It includes identifying how a workplace, its products and services are accessible to people with disabilities and informs the public of their commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Once developed a DAP is submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission to be published on the Disability Action Plan Register. The purpose of the register is so that you can benefit from the work and experience of other organisations and allows people with disability to review the businesses commitments, and then contribute to implementing any improvements. The register can be found by clicking on this link: [Register of Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans | Australian Human Rights Commission](#) (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021).

As one in five of your potential customers have a disability, developing a DAP can also ensure that your business is inclusive and accessible to broad customer base, which can potentially positively impact your earnings. A UK study revealed that businesses were losing “approximately £2 billion per month by ignoring the needs of people with disability” (Human Rights Commission, 2021, p 14). The first step in developing your plan is to review how your current business practices may result in adverse treatment of people with disabilities.

The next steps include:

- Defining the problem
- Brainstorming solutions
- Consulting with people with disabilities
- Prioritising your policies and programs
- Allocating a budget and resources
- Aligning with your DAP with existing planning and reporting documentation.

A guide on how to develop your DAP can be downloaded from the Australian Human Commission website by clicking on this link: [Disability Action Plan Guide \(2021\) | Australian Human Rights Commission](#) (Human Rights Commission, 2021).

Furthermore, linking the DAP to your company website can inform customers and employees that your business respects diversity and inclusivity. Another easy way of promoting your support can include displaying the disability flag in your email signature or in a window of your premises. The symbols on the flag represent the following:

- Parallel lines are for solidarity.
- Black for both mourning and resistance.
- Green for sensory disabilities.
- Blue for mental health.
- White for invisible, or undiagnosed disabilities.
- Yellow for neurodiversity
- Red for physical disability.

The story of the flag is interesting as it is also about working together to overcome challenges. You can read the story about the flags conception and purchase merchandise buy clicking on the following link: [About the disability pride flag – Disability Pride Sydney](#)





Communication

Communication is a basic human right, and in today's society we communicate with people multiple times a day using a variety of different platforms (e.g., face-to-face, technological devices such as phone and computers, or in writing). People with disability have a right to express their feelings and needs in a manner that is understood and be able to effectively understand the communication of others (Queensland Government, 2018).

It is important that the language we use when communicating with people with disability is respectful and considerate, as this impacts the social narrative of how they are perceived by the public and how they feel about themselves (PWDA, 2021). A guide has been developed by People with Disability Australia (PWDA) to assist the general public and media outlets with the appropriate language that should be used when reporting on or communicating with a person with disability (PWDA, 2021). The guide promotes respectful and inclusive language and highlights the importance of the “meaning behind the words that are used when, referring to, or working with people with disability” (PWDA, 2021. p.3). The guide can be found by clicking on this link: [PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability](#).

The PWDA guide recognises that the terms “people with disability” and “disabled people” are both used in Australia. As people with a disability generally have a strong preference for one it is best to follow the lead

of the individual or to ask. If you happen to slip up simply acknowledge this and apologise. They do not support the use of euphemisms such as “differently-abled” or “special needs” as these are considered ableist and condescending. Terms such as “suffers from”, “victim of” “wheelchair bound”, “intellectually challenged”, “low functioning/high functioning” and many others are also considered inappropriate. The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (2023) highlights the need to use person-first language, emphasising the person not the disability (e.g., “John lives with a disability” or “John has a disability”). However, some communities, such as the Autistic and Deaf, may embrace identity-first language and say, “I am Deaf” or “I am Autistic”. The PWDA Language Guide has a “Commonly used phrases” section that provides examples of offensive language and appropriate alternatives (PWDA, 2021, p 12-20). However, if you remain unsure, then politely ask the individual their preference.



SOME TIPS THAT CAN BE HELPFUL FOR GENERAL COMMUNICATION INCLUDE:

- Using a normal tone of voice (i.e., no need to raise your voice).
- Being patient and polite – do not rush the person when conversing.
- Speaking directly to the person with disability and not the individual with them.
- Request advice from a person with disability on their most appropriate methods of communication.
- If you do not understand, do not pretend that you do!
- Reword anything that is not understood, instead of repeating – be flexible!
- Only refer to the person’s disability if relevant or necessary to do so.
- Only assist if it appears necessary and respect their wishes if the offer is refused (Queensland Government, 2018).

We also need to be aware of non-verbal communication through our body language such as, facial expressions, gestures, personal space, eye rolling, crossing arms, or turning away from someone when talking. This type of communication is often unconscious and instinctive but can send a strong message to the person with disability. If it your body language contradicts your verbal communication, it can build tension and mistrust. Overcoming biases and misunderstandings about people with disabilities

can help ensure verbal and non-verbal communication is congruent, which enhances inclusion.

Employers are often concerned about appropriate questions within the interview process. You cannot ask questions about the general lifestyle of the person, their health or about their disability, such as how they acquired it. The Department of Social Services (2018) has a guide and some examples of how to appropriately frame question can outlined below:

NO	YES
Do you take a lot of medications?	Do you take any medications that might make it unsafe for you to do any of your tasks?
Do you think you will be able to cope?	Have you got any ideas about good ways to do your job?

More information can be found by clicking on this link: [Interviewing people with disability | Job Access](#) (Australian Government, 2018). Additionally, some people with disabilities may have more complex communication needs, which could be either developmental (e.g., intellectual disability) or acquired (e.g., traumatic brain injury). More information on complex communication need can be found by clicking on this link: [Complex Communication Needs Booklet Version 2, September 2018](#) (www.qld.gov.au)

People with a disability have no control over having a disability but by asking them about their personal choice of language we give them some control about how they are identified and demonstrate respect. Language is a powerful tool that can change stereotypes and attitudes and can make a big difference to the way an individual feels. Never forget that you are communicating with another person, and everyone is entitled to respect.



Workplace Culture

The second most important social unit in a person's life after family is this the workplace and socialisation with this setting indicates to an employee that they are important and valued (Hagner, Dague, & Phillips, 2015). When workplace culture is strong employees are more satisfied with their job, have a higher perception of fairness, and are more productive (Hagner et al., 2015). When people with disabilities feel included within the workplace, they have a higher chance of remaining successfully employed (Hagner et al., 2015).

When a person with a disability has negative experiences within the workplace it can have implications on job performance and cooperation between coworkers, meaning that all your employees may be unable to realise their full potential (Kulkarni, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). However, research has shown that when coworkers interact regularly with people with disability, provide them with mentoring, and do not have perceptions of preferential treatment they are less likely to be excluded (Kulkarni et al., 2011). Similarly, if supervisors' model positive behaviour toward people with disabilities, provide them with learning opportunities, and maintain high expectations of their employee they are more likely to be socially accepted and integrate better into the workplace (Kulkarni et al., 2011).

There are ways that you can create a safe and inclusive workplace culture that supports all your employees. It can be as simple as conversations within the staffroom (Wade, 2019), and requesting that your employees eat lunch as a group (Hagner et al., 2015), through to improving your organisational practices and onboarding processes (Kulkarni et al., 2011). The best method to improve your workplace culture is often to ask the person with disability themselves what adjustments would be suitable; however, there are steps that you can take to attract

candidates with disabilities to your business. Some general steps include:

- Educating yourself about the various types of disabilities (for more information please see section on Education and Training).
- Be aware of and acknowledge your own biases – we may have had personal life experiences that resulted in the formation of inaccurate assumptions about people with disabilities. To combat this, try recognising your biases by paying attention to the language used and your form of communication (for more information please see sections on How to address microaggression and discrimination and Communication).
- Ensure your workplace is physically accessible (for more information on how this can be achieved please see section on Workplace Adjustments).
- Be an advocate for people with disabilities by raising awareness within your business and assisting other companies to do the same (for more information please see section on Education and Training).
- Ensure that your business policies and practices are inclusive and welcoming (for more information please see sections on Workplace Flexibility, Support and Action Plan Training and Inclusive Practices).

Another way to improve your business and drive innovation is to celebrate cultural diversity.

Inclusive Practices

A person with disability has the right to participate in the community, follow their interests, and expect a standard of service that promotes meaningful involvement. Therefore, it is important that there are national standards, policies, and procedures to drive a consistent approach to improving the quality of the services provided. To recognise the role that services can contribute to the continual advancement of service delivery a National Standard for Disability Services has been developed.

It contains standards emphasising the importance of including people with disabilities in economic and community participation (Department of Social Services, 2012).

The indicators of practice relating specifically to employment state that:

2:3 “Staff understand, respect, and facilitate individual interest and preferences, in relation to work, learning, social activities and community connection over time”.

2:4 “Where appropriate, the service works with an individual’s family, friends, carer or advocate to promote community connection, inclusion and participation”. (Department of Social Services, 2012, p 14).

Furthermore, services must ensure that they managed effectively by complying “with workplace related legislation and regulation including Work Health Safety, human resource management and financial management” (Department of Social Services, 2012, p 12). The full National Standard for Disability Services can be found by clicking on this link: [National Standards for Disability Services \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/national-standards-for-disability-services).

The Australian Human Rights Commission also provides an outline relating to a legal and policy framework, which details the rights of people with disabilities in respect to employment. These rights include:

- The right to work on an equal basis to others.
- Their right to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working condition; and
- Their right to effective access to general technical and vocational training” (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023).

The legal framework refers to anti-discrimination legislation contained within the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). It states that discrimination can be both:

- Direct – “treating a person with disability less favourable than a person without disability in the same or similar circumstances”; and
- Indirect – “occurs when there is a rule or policy that is the same for everyone but has an unfair effect on people with a particular disability”.

The DDA Has three key objectives:

1. To eliminate “as far as possible” discrimination on the ground of disability.
2. To ensure “as far as practicable” equality before the law for people with disabilities.
3. To promote community acceptance of the rights of people with disabilities.



The DDA protects a person with disability by ensuring it is “unlawful for an employer to discriminate on the ground of a person’s disability:

- In offering employment, including the processes of determining who should be offered employment.
- In the terms or conditions of employment.
- By limiting opportunities for promotion, transfer, or training, or to other benefits.
- By dismissing the employee; or
- By subjecting the employee to any other detriment” (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023).

Additionally, The Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) (FWA) stated that an employer is not able to take adverse action against, dismiss, alter, or refuse a position to an employee or prospective employee because of a disability (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023).

The DDA also covers recruitment processes including advertising, application forms, interview arrangements; staff selection, conditions of employment including salary, duties, leave, superannuation, opportunities for training and promotion, dismissal, trade or professional registration, membership of unions and professional associations.

It also prevents harassment of employees with disability. Information about a person’s disability may involve sensitive personal information so it is important that you assure that these discussions

remain confidential. You need to get written permission to share information about their disability with other employees. A brief guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) can be found by clicking on this link: [A brief guide to the Disability Discrimination Act | Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

There are many Australian Government policies developed for people with disability participating in employment, which are outlined in Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031. This document outlines a ten-year plan for improving the lives of Australians with disability, their families, and their carers. Its success relies upon a whole-community response to improve inclusivity and accessibility. Each Australian state, territory and local government have committed to delivering the principals outlined in the Strategy (Department of Social Services, 2021). The three policies specific to Employment and Financial Security are as follows:

- Policy Priority 1- Increase employment of people with disability.
- Policy Priority 2 – Improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.
- Policy Priority 3 – Strengthen financial independence of people with disability.

A full guide to the Strategy can be found by clicking on this link: [Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031 \(disabilitygateway.gov.au\)](#); An easy read guide to the Strategy can be found by clicking on this link: [Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031: An Easy Read guide \(disabilitygateway.gov.au\)](#).

The following is a list of Government services are specifically aimed at increasing the number of people with disability within the workforce by supplying the employer with funding and/or support:

<p>Disability Employment Service (DES)</p>	<p>This is a network of services that assist people with disability to gain and maintain employment, train for specific roles, assist with resume writing, and training in interview skills. You can find more information about DES by clicking on this link: Disability Employment Services - Disability Support Pension - Services Australia</p>
<p>Australia Disability Enterprises (ADE)</p>	<p>ADE assists people with disability and that require significant support in employment. It is funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the service is most often used to support people with intellectual disabilities in open employment. Open employment is when people with disability are working in the regular job market. More information can be found on the Everyone can Work website by clicking on this link: Everyone Can Work.</p>
<p>Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)</p>	<p>EAF is Government funding that supports a range of workplace adjustments for example, vehicle modifications, Auslan interpreters, building modification, and awareness training. More information on how to apply for EAF can be found in the Workplace Adjustments section and by clicking on this link: Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) Job Access.</p>
<p>JobAccess</p>	<p>A service for employers, people with disability, and service providers. On this site you can find out about real-life stories of people with disability in the workforce, search for a service provider, and find out more about DES. This is also where you can find your closest CoAct/BUSY Ability service. You can access the website by clicking on this link: https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/home (Australian Government, 2023a).</p>
<p>National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)</p>	<p>NDIS is a national scheme that provides funding directly to eligible people with disability to improve their quality of life, provide greater independence, and allows them to increase their time with family and friends. It also connects them with their community including sporting clubs, doctors, community groups, and schools. They support “approximately 500,000 Australians with disability to access the service and supports they need” (NDIS, 2021a). There are funds available to support employment goals which are mostly delivered through Australia Disability Enterprises (ADE); however, they also can assist with employment related assessments, counselling, workplace assistance, and school leaver employment supports (NDIS, 2021b). You can find more information about NDIS by clicking on this link: National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); You can find the Support in Employment Provider Handbook by clicking on this link: PB Supports in Employment provider handbook PDF.pdf.</p>
<p>Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support program</p>	<p>Provides funding for employers who employ an eligible apprentice with disability that is undertaking a Certificate II or higher. It includes Australian apprentices that have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or an apprentice that may incur a disability during their apprenticeship. It can also incorporate off-the-job training and mentoring. You can find our more information, including how to apply, by clicking on this link: Employer Incentives Australian Apprenticeships. (Australian Apprenticeships, 2023)</p>
<p>Supported Wage System (SWS)</p>	<p>This service is designed for employees with disability that are unable to perform their work to the same capacity as other employees and is based on their productivity within the job. There are two versions, one for those in open employment and another under the Support Employment Services Award. The employer makes an application and a qualified assessor will observe the employee with disability on a regular work day to determine suitability for modifications. You can find more information including handbooks, learning modules, and application portals by clicking on this link: Supported Wage System (SWS) Job Access (Australian Government, 2023b).</p>



Small Business Information Booklet Intro

There are approximately 4.4 million people with disability in Australia; however, the way they are represented in the media, television and other various platforms is often inaccurate and deeming. The use of terms such as “victim” or “sufferer” imply discontent with their lives, and they have a desire to be “normal”; however, this is inaccurate (PWDA, 2021). People with disability experience negative attitudes, difficulties accessing services, and often have physical barriers in the community meaning

Did you know that the income for people with disability in Australia ranks one of the lowest amongst OECD (Country/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in the world?

Additionally, rates of participation within the workforce for people with disabilities is only 54% compared with 83% for those living without disability, and they are more likely to be employed part-time. Of those that do participate in the workforce, nearly half have reported unfair treatment or discrimination because of their

disability within a twelve-month period (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021b). These seem like shocking statistics for a country as developed as Australia!

In reality, employing a person with disability brings a range of advantages to your business. The aim of this booklet is to provide a guide on how you can successfully employ people with disability so that you too can enjoy the benefits that bring.

11%

of employed working-age people with disability experienced disability discrimination in the previous year.

Celebrating and Respective Cultural Diversity

The globalization of the world has resulted in differences in race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and languages being represented within the one community, which is known as cultural diversity. Fostering inclusivity in the workplace beings with hiring multiple individuals from various backgrounds within your business. This includes not only people with disabilities, but individuals from different cultures, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, and gender identifications.

This diversity within the workplace brings an increase of differing opinions, beliefs, customs, norms, values, trends, and traditions, which can have both positive and negative impacts. This can include conflict due to differing belief systems and possible miscommunication; however, it can also endorse the creation of new ideas and discovery of unique solutions to common workplace issues (Martin, 2014).

Darby (2023) suggests that cultural diversity is not just a trend, it is the future of business and research suggests that diverse businesses show an increase in profits, productivity, unique perspectives, and talents within the workplace. However, cultural diversity is not achieved within your business by simply hiring people from various backgrounds. Your employees need to feel respected and comfortable within the workplace to foster engagement and success (Pappas, 2023). Celebrating different identities supports a sense of belonging, solidarity (ConnectAbility Australia, 2023), reduces absenteeism, and increases your customer base (VicHealth, 2013).

Additionally, workplaces that protect employees from discrimination and harassment could possibly save substantial financial costs by reducing the number of complaints and grievances being lodged through formal processes Most importantly, promoting diversity within your workplace can prevent acts of discrimination impacting the mental and physical health of your employees (VicHealth, 2013).

There are various ways that your business can celebrate cultural diversity and it starts with recognising the different individuals within your workplace and learning what this looks like. This can be done in by:

- Conducting surveys or informal conversations, while always remembering employee privacy by ensuring the secure storage of information.
- Creating bulletin boards and/or newsletters – this is a space where your employees can share information about their background, culture, lifestyle, and upcoming holidays.

Support the comfort of your employees by acknowledge and promoting their specific cultural

requirements or needs, such as differing:

- Clothing and dress (e.g., headscarves, turbans).
- Religious practices (e.g., prayer times and religious events).
- Social customs (e.g., politics, sexual behaviours, work ethics).
- Customs (e.g., specific foods and drinks).
- Family obligations (e.g., commitments that conflict with work).
- Non-verbal behaviour (e.g., eye contact, hand gestures). (VicHealth, 2013).

You can encourage your employees to celebrate and recognise cultural diversity by implementing the following strategies:

- Creating an anti-discrimination policy and incorporating it into your businesses mission, vision, and values statements.
- Creating policies and procedures for responding to discrimination within the workplace (for more information please see section on Inclusive Practices).
- Establish a diversity and inclusion committee to organise events, promote training or even offer coaching sessions.
- Create a cultural calendar that recognises cultural holidays from around the world and national and international days of recognition (e.g., Hanukkah, IDAHOBIT, Sorry Day). Additionally, inform your HR team so they can organise celebrations, promote recognition, or allow time off without the need for discussion.
- Diversify your hiring process by ensuring that job advertisements and recruitment procedures are fair and accessible to people from various backgrounds (for more information please see section on Workplace Adjustments).
- Provide your employees with diversity, inclusion, and equity training (for more information please see section on Education and Training).
- Encourage employee feedback (i.e., implementing anonymous questionnaires or survey boxes).
- Create inclusive events for your employees outside of work hours to encourage socialisation. (Pappas, 2023; FECCA, 2015; VicHealth, 2013)

Education and Training

Creating a safe and inclusive workplace environment could involve changing the mindset of your employees and management by instilling the right attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors (Australian Network on Disability, 2023). Although many businesses believe that it is important for the workforce to reflect the diversity in the community there are perceived barriers when attempting to integrate into the workforce, including a lack of awareness and understanding (Department of Social Services, 2018b).

Providing your staff with disability and cultural diversity awareness education and training can create an insight of how stigma and discrimination impacts people, promoting change in social attributes (Disability Awareness, 2023), and ensures there is an understanding of both legal and social obligations within the workplace. Incorporating these types of training into your business improves your workplace culture and promotes a diverse workforce (for more information please see sections on Workplace Culture and Celebrating and Respective Cultural Diversity).

Disability is not solely a medical condition, but also a social construct shaped by the interaction between individuals and their environment. An individual is considered to have a disability “if they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities and can also include episodic conditions if they are likely to reoccur” (Australian Public Service Commission, 2019).

Disabilities can also be:

- Hidden or invisible (e.g., mental illness, neurological functioning, or epilepsy).
- Present at birth, acquired with age, or through an accident.
- Permanent or temporary.
- Range from moderate to severe.

Although there are many types of disabilities, which impact everyone differently, they are generally categorised into the following domains:

- Sensory (i.e., loss of vision or hearing or speech difficulties).
- Intellectual (i.e., challenges with learning and/or understanding).

- Physical (i.e., chronic pain, physical restrictions, disfigurement, incomplete use of limbs, seizures, breathing difficulties).
- Psychosocial (i.e., social, or behavioural challenges, mental illness, nervous or emotional conditions, memory difficulties or periods of confusion).
- Acquired Brain Injury (i.e., head injury, stroke).
- Other (i.e., long-term health conditions that restrict everyday activities).

(Australian Public Service Commission, 2019).

Strategies for education and training can be varied:

- Structured and unstructured.
- One off and ongoing.
- Face-to-face, eLearning, online training, or on the spot (e.g., reminding an employee that when they are giving a presentation, they need to ensure assistive technology is available).

Primary training for employers should focus on legal obligations so that you are aware of how to protect the rights of both you and your employees (for more information please see the section on Inclusive Practices). Your onboarding process is a great way to provide disability and cultural diversity awareness training for all new staff. This could be something your company develops as very specific to your needs, or it could be general. It is also important to conduct mandatory training with existing employees to guarantee that relevant information is provided to ensure they do not breach any codes of conduct or discrimination laws.

Below is a list of various types of disability and cultural diversity education and training programs that you can provide within your business, including links to the relevant websites:

- **Australian Government** - JobAccess Awareness courses for management and staff | Job Access
- **Australian Network on Disability** Our learning solutions - Australian Network on Disability (and.org.au)
- **Beyond Blue** – Our work in improving workplace mental health (e.g., Heads Up) Our work in improving workplace mental health - Beyond Blue
- **Disability Awareness Home** - Disability Awareness
- **Disability and Diversity Awareness Training with atWork Australia** Diversity Webinar Series | atWork Australia
- **Diversity Australia** – Disability Awareness Disability Awareness Programs – Diversity Australia
- **Diversity Australia** – Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness Training Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness Training – 4 Hour Program- Live Virtual / Face to Face Delivery – Diversity Australia
- **EdApp** – 10 Microaggressions Training Courses 10 Microaggressions Training Courses | EdApp Microlearning Programs
- **eTrainu** – Diversity and Inclusion Training Diversity and Inclusion Training | etrainu
- **Expression Australia** – Deaf Awareness, Hearing Awareness, and LGBTIQAP+ Training Deaf Awareness Training | Expression Australia
- **LGBTIQAP+ Health Australia** – Workplace Training Workplace Training - LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
- **Mental health First Aid Homepage** | Mental Health First Aid (mhfa.com.au)
- **Sign Language Australia** – Deaf Awareness Training Deafness Awareness Training (DAT) - Sign Language Australia
- **Vison Australia** – Team and Business Training Team and Business Training | Vision Australia. Blindness and low vision services

34%

of people aged 20 and over with disability have completed Year 12 (66% without disability).

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