



# An employer's guide

to creating an inclusive workplace

Hi there!

Ready to transform your workplace?

BUSY Ability's Guide to inclusive employment is all you need to get started!

No matter what industry you're in, it can be a challenging finding good staff.

That's right! Navigating workplace diversity and inclusion doesn't need to be complicated. We can help point you in the right direction with topics including:

- Understanding disability including hidden disabilities
- Breaking stereotypes
- Benefits of hiring people with disability
- Creating and retaining an inclusive workplace
- Steps to help you employ someone with a disability
- Support and resources

We will help you:



## Understanding Disability

21% 

**1 in 5 people in Australia have a disability (about 4.4 million people).**

Experiencing a disability varies from person to person; there's no one-size-fits-all. Even individuals with the same disability can be affected differently.

**Diverse Challenges:** Disability covers a wide range of conditions, from physical to 'invisible' ones like mental health issues or learning difficulties.

**Everyday Barriers:** Disability isn't just about health; it includes challenges from societal barriers and prejudices. We're moving from a medical focus to a more social approach.

**Empowering Change:** Recognising disability as a societal issue requires a shift in the way we do things, to empower and support people with disabilities.

**At Work:** About 66% of people with disabilities have mild to moderate challenges. Many can work effectively with little or no extra help.

**Inspiring Stories:** Check out inspiring stories of people with disabilities thriving at work on [BUSY Ability](<https://busyability.org.au/category/busy-ability-news/>). Use the QR code for quick access!



# Breaking stereotypes

Misconceptions around disability can lead to unfounded assumptions about an employee's work performance. However, contrary to stereotypes, a diverse range of abilities and strengths significantly enriches the workplace and enhances productivity.

## Fact Check #1



**Employing staff with disability is expensive.**

**FALSE** - Accommodating employees with disability often costs no more than it does for others and can benefit the entire workforce.

## Fact Check #2

**Employees with disability have a high turnover rate.**

**FALSE** - Inclusion programs actually lead to lower staff turnover rates—up to 30%. Employees with disability often stay longer in their roles than other employees.

## Fact Check #3



**Productivity for people with disability is lower.**

**FALSE** - Many employers report that employees with disability are just as productive as their peers, contributing equally to the workplace.

## Fact Check #4

**There is a higher risk of injury for employees with disability.**



**FALSE** - Several recent studies show that employing staff with disability actually improved workplace safety. People with disability have 34% fewer accidents than other employees.

Source: The compelling case for disability employment in Australia – the unrivalled benefits of an underutilised labour market Job Access



# Advantage You!



In Australia, a staggering **93% of individuals with disabilities who are unemployed** experience difficulties finding work.

**Inclusive employers play a vital role in creating new and meaningful opportunities for people with disability. In fact, for many people with disability, having a job means much more than a pay cheque—it's about finding a purpose and leading a fulfilling and independent life.**

Adding people with disabilities to your team, plays to your advantage – it offers a variety of social and economic benefits that can have a positive impact on your business.

## Boost Your Brand Image

Companies known for their inclusive employment practices enjoy a stronger brand reputation. This positive public image can enhance customer loyalty, attract quality talent and distinguish your business in a competitive market.

## Access a Wider Talent Pool

With almost 20% the Australian population living with disability, having an inclusive hiring policy opens doors to a wider range of talented professionals, ensuring you don't overlook skilled candidates.

**Enhanced Staff Retention:** Employees with disabilities are four times more likely to remain in their positions, resulting in reduced recruitment costs.

**Reduced Absenteeism:** People with disabilities typically take fewer sick days,

boasting a strong attendance record of 90% or better. Additionally, 82% of employees with disabilities require no additional leave related to their disabilities.

**Elevated Team Morale:** Many employers have reported positive effects on their organisational culture and team morale when they embrace inclusive hiring practices.

## Representation and Diversity:

Approximately 4.4 million Australians live with disability. Hiring within this demographic reflects the broader community and highlights the importance of people living with disability as valued consumers in our economy.

**Financial Incentives:** Organisations that hire people living with disabilities can access various financial incentives and government programs, such as wage subsidies and grants for workplace accommodations.



## Do you qualify for financial assistance?

Speak with a **BUSY Ability** representative to find out if your business is eligible for financial assistance or wage subsidies.



Learn more about Workplace Adjustments and Support here

Learn more about Wage Subsidies here



# Creating an Inclusive Workplace

Establishing an inclusive workplace starts with empowering employees with disabilities, beginning by raising awareness about disability-related issues

- 1. Individual Respect:** Treat each person with a disability as an individual, avoiding assumptions.
- 2. Person-First Language:** Use person-first language to prioritise the person over the disability.
- 3. Ask Before Helping:** Seek permission before offering assistance, respecting their autonomy.
- 4. Accessible Communication:** Adapt communication to be inclusive and considerate of any specific needs.
- 5. Mindful Environment:** Ensure physical spaces are accessible and clear, making accommodations as necessary.
- 6. Active Listening:** Be patient and attentive when communicating, giving individuals the time they need.
- 7. Inclusive Facilities:** Choose venues with inclusive facilities for events and meetings.
- 8. Respect Privacy:** Avoid intrusive questions about their disability, maintaining respect for their privacy.
- 9. Flexibility and Accommodations:** Be open to making reasonable accommodations to ensure inclusion.
- 10. Promote Inclusivity:** Foster an inclusive culture that values diversity in your community or workplace.

# Tips for

# Inclusive Practices

Enhance workplace inclusivity with these actionable tips, spanning from education and communication to accessible processes and fair assessments, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

## Educate Yourself

- Familiarise yourself and your team with disabilities, accommodations, and etiquette before the hiring process.

## Inclusive Job Postings

- Craft job descriptions that are inclusive and avoid language that excludes.
- Encourage candidates to disclose disabilities and mention your company's commitment to reasonable accommodations.

## Accessible Application Process

- Ensure an accessible online application system.
- Accept applications in alternative formats (eg video submission, text to speech, braille) provide clear instructions for requesting accommodations.

## Equal Opportunity

- Treat all candidates fairly, focusing on qualifications, skills, and relevant experience.

## Accessible Interview Process

- Consider candidate accessibility needs and offer alternative interview formats.
- Train interviewers on disability etiquette and accessibility.

## Assessment of Essential Job Functions

- Define essential job functions and assess how candidates with disabilities can perform them with or without accommodations.

## Offer Reasonable Accommodations

- Collaborate with candidates on reasonable accommodations, such as assistive technology or modified work hours.

## Positive Communication

- Maintain respectful and open communication throughout the hiring process.

## Evaluate Qualifications

- Assess candidates based on qualifications and job-related skills, not their disability.

## Provide Training

- Train employees and supervisors on working with colleagues with disabilities and using accommodations effectively.

## Continuous Feedback

- Encourage ongoing communication with employees about accommodation needs and address barriers promptly.

# Support & Resources

The Australian Government provides access to a wide range of resources that will assist you in your inclusive employment journey.



*Learn more* about Workplace Adjustments and Support here



*Learn more* about Wage Subsidies here





Let's get

Started

With advice in this guide and our online resources, you're ready to take the next steps towards a more inclusive workplace.

**Need some more help? Reach out to the BUSY Ability team today.**

📞 1800 761 561 ✉ [info@busyability.org.au](mailto:info@busyability.org.au) 🌐 [busyability.org.au](http://busyability.org.au)

The BUSY Group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to the land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and their Elders past and present.