



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Bravo response – 21/06/15

National Disability Employment Framework - Issues Paper

May 2015



Purpose of this paper

The Australian Government is committed to improving the employment outcomes for people with disability. The Government has established a Disability Employment Taskforce to review the current support system and develop a new National Disability Employment Framework. The Taskforce will carry out two rounds of public consultation to hear your views on how we can achieve this aim. The consultation process will include forums across Australia, as well as opportunities to have your say online. The full consultation process is outlined below.

This paper is the first stage of the process. In it we outline what the Australian Government is currently doing to help people with disability find and keep jobs. We also pose questions to encourage discussion about ways we can improve what we are doing to lead to better employment outcomes for people with disability.

Consultation process overview

Time	Activity	Description
May 2015	Issues paper	We have developed this paper to outline what the Australian Government currently does to support employment for people with disability. At various points we pose questions to generate discussion with an aim to encourage creative solutions to inform future policy directions.
May/June 2015	Consultation round 1, including public forums	We will visit capital cities and several major regional centres to discuss questions raised in this paper. We will also maintain a website to seek feedback and discussion on the questions raised in this paper.
August 2015	Discussion paper	We will develop and publish a discussion paper to suggest solutions to better support employers and people with disability to find and keep jobs. This paper will take into account a range of evidence and information including the views shared at the first consultation round.
August/September 2015	Consultation round 2, including public forums	We will visit several capital cities and some other centres to discuss possible solutions to improving employment outcomes for people with disability, outlined in the discussion paper. We will also maintain a website to seek feedback and discussion on the options raised in the discussion paper.
First half of 2016	Development of a new disability employment framework	We will develop a new employment framework that will outline new ways that the Australian Government can support employment options for people with disability. This Framework will take into account a range of evidence and information including the views shared throughout the consultation process.

How can I take part?

You can share your opinion with us in person at a public forum, or by making a written submission on our website.

For more information, go to [DSS Engage](#).

Glossary of terms

Term	Description
ADE	Australian Disability Enterprise
DES	Disability Employment Services
Disability	Includes sensory impairment, physical impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions or behavioural conditions
JSA	Jobs Services Australia
Life-course	A sequence of stages and events that people typically pass through as they progress from birth to death
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
PHaMs	Personal Helpers and Mentors
SDAC	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
We	The Department of Social Services

Australians with Disability

According to the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), 4.2 million Australians (or 18.5 per cent) reported having a disability in 2012. A further 4.7 million people (21 per cent) had a long-term health condition that did not restrict their everyday activities. For those people with disability, 3.7 million (88 per cent) had a specific limitation or restriction that meant they were limited in the core activities of self-care, mobility or communication, or restricted in schooling or employment.

The rate of disability increases with age. Less than 1 in 20 children under the age of five have a disability compared to almost 9 in 10 people aged 90 years and over in 2012.¹

When identifying their main condition, 81 per cent of people with disability (3.4 million people) reported a physical condition and 19 per cent (813,900 people) reported a mental or behavioural disorder.² The main physical conditions reported were conditions of the musculo-skeletal system and connective tissue which were reported by one third (33 per cent) of people with disability. These conditions included back problems (15 per cent) and arthritis and related disorders (14 per cent). Of the 19 per cent who reported a mental or behavioural disorder as the condition causing them the most problems, intellectual and developmental disorders were the most common primary disability identified (5.6 per cent), followed by depression and mood affective disorders (3.8 per cent) and dementia and Alzheimer's disease (2.1 per cent).

Workforce Participation of People with Disability

Employment Outcomes

Australia's employment outcomes for people with disabilities are poor, despite low levels of unemployment and changes to Government employment programmes over recent years.

According to the SDAC, in 2012 there were 2.2 million Australians with disability of working age. Of this group, only 52.9 per cent were in the workforce or actively seeking work. This rate compared to a workforce participation rate of 82.5 per cent for people without disability in 2012. This means that over a million Australians of working age with disability were outside the workforce.

Australia's workforce participation rate of 52.9 per cent for people with disability is low by international standards.³ Additionally, for those in the workforce, there are concerns about underemployment and whether jobs are matched with skills and abilities or focused on career options for the individual.

The Australian Government is looking at ways to improve the employment outcomes for people with disability to enhance their social and economic participation.

This Issues Paper examines the current range of employment support for people with disability to help us develop an improved National Disability Employment Framework for 2018 and into the future.

Barriers to Workforce Participation

People with disability may face many barriers to participating in the workforce. An Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry report from February 2013 summarised three main barriers to employment for people with disability as:

- lack of skills and workforce preparedness, including technical or discipline specific skills, language, literacy and numeracy skills and employability skills;
- lack of employer engagement by employment services providers; and
- employer perceptions and misconceptions about employing people with disability.⁴

These barriers suggest that an approach to improve employment outcomes for people with disability must not only focus on making job seekers job ready, but equally must focus on meeting employer

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), *Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers*

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), *Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers*

³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (November 2010); *Sickness, Disability and Work: breaking the barriers*

⁴ Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (February 2013), *Improving the Employment Participation of People with Disability in Australia – ACCI Response*

needs, improving and harnessing labour market opportunities, and improving employer engagement with the disability sector.

The Benefits of Employing People with Disability

If the barriers to employment can be overcome, there are a range of benefits to employing people with disability, not only for the individual, but also for business. Many organisations are already recognising the strong business case for supporting diversity in the workplace. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry lists the benefits of employing outside the mainstream recruitment pool as:

- creating a competitive advantage – research shows focusing on diversity is an effective way to become more innovative;
- securing a future workforce – the future labour market is likely to be more competitive so diverse employment practices can help overcome skills and labour shortages;
- being an employer of choice – diversifying the employment base can help businesses to be seen as employers of choice;
- building employee loyalty – employees are likely to respond to opportunities with enthusiastic and loyal service; and
- businesses that employ a diverse workforce can gain a competitive edge, as their employee profile may better reflect the diversity of their customer or client base.⁵

An important part of improving employment outcomes for people with disability is promoting these benefits to employers and the broader community.

Questions

What can improve employment outcomes for people with disability?

Employment needs agreement from two parties, the potential employee and the potential employer. The work to date has helped the readiness of the potential employees but employers have not been very motivated to either keep employees who become disabled or new hires.

Of the 2.2 million PWD of working age, approximately 1m are employed. But ABS data on when people become disabled shows that between 50-75% of these 2.2m had become disabled while at work, so if employers had both been incentivised or helped in how they could continue to use these staff, there would be significantly less unemployed.

The large, proactive employers are beginning to develop flexible work practices that support diversity, and target different groups like disability, with this is a great deal of education for managers and co-workers. This is being targeted for better business outcomes, from the employee workgroups better reflecting and understanding their target customer groups.

Trying to persuade small to medium business of these longer term benefits is difficult but has been embraced by a few, particularly councils and business owners with a personal connection to people with disability. The main concern is increased cost for less productive effort, which is not supported by research, but is the prevailing understanding of people who make the hiring decisions.

To “activate employers” (OECD Sickness, Disability and Work – Breaking the Barriers – Synthesis), consider them as clients who can buy services from DES, around both hiring, managing and, most importantly, keeping staff who become disabled. Risk of later disability will increase as the workforce ages.

This also needs policy - not forcing either on retention or new hire focus, but a bilateral emphasis.

Possibly tax incentives could be developed for achieving a certain PWD to non-PWD ratio, equally some risk reduction or cost-sharing by government for keeping disabled employees. The OECD report looks at significant policies used by other countries to shift focus from passive benefit payment to almost unemployment benefit combined with far more supports for the individual or employer.

Equally, NDIS is able to cover the transport to/from work and the personal care for work or training, which has been a significant reason why PWD have not seen the reason to be available to work, let alone risking the loss of their DSP or lodging assistance. If these concerns are removed there is

⁵ Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2012), *Employ outside the box: The rewards of a diverse workforce*.

significant motivation on the many work-ready PWD to be available to achieve their aim of working. The potential employee needs to be motivated to work rather than being financially worried that all support will go, immediately.

What can help reduce barriers for people with disability seeking employment?

1. As mentioned above, the NDIS starts covering costs for transport to/from work or tertiary education, and for personal care needed at work.
2. Often a PWD needs a active support worker, who understands the disability issues to assist induction into a company and the role, followed by ongoing support
3. Rather than help for just getting the job, they may also need help for career advancement, perhaps in the form of more hours or development to a more senior role
4. Both 2 and 3, are either offered or could be offered by DES.
5. DES staff may need more disability training or where to find the info, via Job Access to a portal to every disability-specific organisation website, with a current page on assistive technology or strategies for employment. DEA have talked about centres of excellence.
6. DES staff would need more training, and say accreditation of a Certificate IV in Career counselling, and later potentially, a graduate certificate in career counselling
7. DES staff need a better understanding of the type of employees the employer wants, rather than trying to force fit the individual into the job role. Obviously, employers also have to be more flexible.

What can help reduce barriers for employers hiring people with disability?

- 1 DES provides more assistance in getting new hires with disability, more assistance in helping the employer find roles for PWD, and provides help with risk management of the person, in case the role doesn't work out.
- 2 DES provides more assistance to employers in keeping people who acquire disabilities
- 3 Government to provide funding to employers to get assistance and for education of staff about working with PWD.
- 4 Government to provide incentives, say in tax relief, if they employ above a certain number or ratio of PWD/Non PWD.
- 5 Government has somehow got to protect employers from some of the perceived risk of employing PWD. IF THE RISK IS SMALL THERE IS MINIMAL RISK IS OFFERING COVER FOR Employment of PWDs . This needs work. But as in other countries, the insurance cover shifts to own self funded cover, overtime

How can we promote the benefits of employing people with disability?

Promotion should be about the capability and range of people with disability. Potentially, fund the Attitude foundation, chaired by Graeme Innes.

If one can change people's perception of PWD from incapable of doing a job, to one where PWD can achieve in the right job with the right supports. It's about providing a level playing field, after which the merit of doing the role or part of the role is reviewed.

Equally, if we can change the perception of a PWD, from either being intellectually disabled to full range of disabilities – from intellectual, physical, learning difficulties, sensory and mental, with corresponding education levels from special school to degree level.

The Australian Government is committed to encouraging and supporting the equal and active participation by people with disability in economic and social life. This is underpinned by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and Australia's ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2008 and more recently by the development of the National Disability Strategy 2012-2020 and the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS will play an important role in placing the individual at the centre of service delivery and linking different system and service elements together to support positive outcomes for people with disability. This is an approach to providing support to people with disability that will significantly alter community attitudes and the expectations of people with disability.

The Australian Government sees a future where people with disability, like other Australians, can expect to participate economically and socially in the workplace to the best of their ability. It supports an investment in the individual to reach their full potential, and also provide what employers need.

Principles for Changes to Disability Employment Services

A number of recurring themes have arisen in consultations, evaluations and discussions with a range of groups over recent years. For example, an internal evaluation of DES found:

- a lack of awareness of Government support available to help both individuals and employers;
- a need for greater emphasis on training and job satisfaction and suitability, over job placement; and
- a need to relax prescribed administrative requirements of employment services to create a system which is flexible to meet individual and changing needs.⁶

Additionally, other reports such as the recent *People with Disability Australia (PWDA) Disability Employment Services (DES) Consumer Engagement Project* and the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) report *Consumers front and centre: What consumers really think about Disability Employment Services*, have supported these findings while also adding:

- a need for individualised approaches to increase choice and control for the jobseeker;
- a lack of focus on the needs of employers – matching people with jobs;
- inadequate ongoing support once employees are placed in a job;
- misconceptions about employing people with disability; and
- a need for a holistic approach to service provision which works across people’s lives.^{7,8}

Based on these themes and the approach of the NDIS, we have identified the following principles we believe should underpin the new framework for disability employment.

Principles	Benefits
Individual funding based on needs and aspirations	Choice and control to the individual
Market-based service provision	Flexibility, innovation and responsiveness to individually based consumer choices
Long-term career planning and capacity building	Sustainable employment outcomes that meet current and future labour market needs
Understanding of employer needs	Better match between job seeker and jobs, leading to better, longer term employment
Increased open employment options	Social and economic gains for the individual and broader community
Whole-of-government coordination and use of technology	Improved service pathways and reduced ‘red tape’ for clients and service providers
The person is supported through the life-course	An integrated approach that maximises lifetime wellbeing

Questions

Do you agree with these as the underlying set of principles for change?

The seven principles are useful but in order to expand benefit, some additional thoughts are:

1 The reason more principles need to be added or expanded is that the paradigm of the individual being at the centre is limiting. Employment requires two parties to agree - the individual wanting a job/career and the employer who has a job needing to be filled.

If that is successful employment, then both parties are at the centre of the system, needing services.

⁶ DEEWR *Evaluation of Disability Employment Services 2010–2013 - Final report*

⁷ People with Disability Australia. (August 2014) *PWDA DES Consumer Engagement Project*

⁸ Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, (2014) *Consumers front and centre: What consumers really think about Disability Employment Services*.

2 Equally employers both hire and lose employees. Currently, the DES system is purely about reemployment, with a particular focus on finding first employment. More focus can be brought to bear on both successful transition from education to employment, and keeping employees who want to work at work, so avoiding the often debilitating experience of unemployment. Whether disabled or not, unemployment leads very quickly to loss of confidence and skills decay. For PWD who get made unemployed and need to register with a DES, there is still re-employment help.

The DES role is also limited to between education and end-of-work. DES is only one of many tools that need to be recognised in the potential new Disability Employment Model 2018 which covers the entire spectrum through education to employment, and then staying employed till one decides to stop working. An individual's career voyage starts from how work is portrayed by parents or schools, through interests, work experiences, voluntary, casual and part-time work, possibly through to full time work as employee or contract work as an independent service provider. Through the life course, one continues to get education and to modify, change and develop one's job or career. This applies equally to people with or without disabilities.

The journey to employment, which should be defined as voluntary, casual, part-time or full time, is what the person wants, at the time the question is asked, and will change.

At school – SWD should/will learn about work, whether special, mainstream or tertiary. Opportunities for work experience are needed, as well as opportunities for talks from different employers. Transitions from education to employment need to be smooth, with the aim of no unemployment. The best sort of transitions seem to include community involvement of local employers, schools and service providers.

- a) Potentially, the informal world of work experience through op shops, neighbourhood houses and Adult Education centres, which currently does great work, should be more formally linked to schools. Equally, this route should not become dominated by "Work for the dole" recipients.
- b) LLENs are already developing community based networks with links to employers, DES, RTO and schools.

- i) One model used is the "Ticket to work", linking predominantly with special schools. (25 around Australia)
- ii) INLLEN (the inner northern LLEN) has developed a CTS programme, supported by councils, as well, developing local programmes with special schools over 7 council areas, pushing "Ticket to work" where appropriate.
- iii) There are also programs/initiatives backed by councils, linking mainstream schools and employers, be it offering work experience or positions, i.e. Melton, Bendigo, and Geelong is working on a work experience arrangement

- c) Councils are also working at tertiary level, either TAFE or university, to create links

- i) Mentoring or internships are critical experiences for students to improve work chances

- d) DES need to be active players in all these transitions. Sometimes their involvement is constrained e.g. they are not allowed to work with full-time students at university, or they can only get involved with a student at secondary in their last year – when year 10-12 career development though work tasters or work experience is crucial – schools try but need help

Are there other principles you would include?

There are three extra principles, if we move the Disability Employment Model from re-employment to avoiding unemployment and reemployment, where necessary

The additional principles become:

Principle 8 - Improve transitions from education to employment to avoid unemployment.

Principle 9 – Keep people at work who acquire disability, so avoiding their unemployment.

The worry that people only see the disability, not the person or the abilities, is minimised in this situation. The person is known.

There is currently the “Jobs in Jeopardy” program to help people in this position. As your report points out only approximately 5000 people have applied, yet we know approximately 1 million PWD acquire their disability during work age, (ABS 2009 and 2012 data). Program success looks dubious, but an investigation of concerns and how best to reboot is needed, as the potential to make a meaningful effect on unemployment is huge.

Only 500,000 PWD have been born with or acquired their disability before 15 years old. Finding them employment is still very important, but the size of the mature, already in-work non-disabled people who acquire disabilities is double.

Not that this should be a fight between retention and new hire, simply that both need employment outcomes perhaps with different solutions.

Principle 10 - Recognise that there is currently no appropriate DES service for professionals/ graduates. A tailored service needs developing.

A DES service for professionals is different to current DES service with different employer requirements. Recruiters currently fill this space for disabled and non-disabled.

A DES service for professionals would work with new or experienced graduates facilitating transitions. It has to be focused on careers rather than 3 or 6 month jobs. The service cannot be limited by LGAs, as employers are often looking Australia-wide or at least state-wide. Even for non-graduates, Crown had to make an agreement with six DESs to try and satisfy their requirements. The resource of the employment consultant may need different experience, perhaps more similar to a recruiter.

If the service was good, the university or TAFE careers offices, as well as Disability Liaison Units could transition students through to a DES, where appropriate.

Potentially, there is one DES graduate service by state, so all universities and all employers know where to go.

Current Services Overview

There are several Australian Government programmes available to assist people with disability find and keep jobs. These services are broadly targeted to groups based on their capacity to work and the level of support they need to find and retain employment. The programmes we will discuss in this paper are:

- Australians Disability Enterprises;
- Disability Employment Services (Employment support services and Disability Management Services);
- Job Services Australia; and
- support for employers.

In addition, the support available through the NDIS will address some of the barriers to finding and retaining employment, for example by funding personal attendant care at the time of day of a person's choosing, funding equipment related to the person's functional needs or funding specialised employment supports that respond to the nature of the person's disability. This is why Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs), which provides personalised support to people with mental illness, is transitioning to the NDIS.

The following shows a continuum of services and support currently provided by government. It has been broadly matched to the ability level of the individual the programme is aimed at. In reality there are people with varying abilities in each of these services and individuals regularly move along the continuum between services.

Continuum of Current Employment Services and Support						
2.2 million Australians with disability of working age (2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers)						
	Level of support					Capacity to work
Individual's ability in relation to employment	Unable to work	Able to work in specialist supported environment	Able to work in mainstream with ongoing support	Able to work in mainstream after reasonable adjustment	Able to work in mainstream with employment support	Able to work in mainstream with no support
Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Programmes • the Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) • PHaMs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Employment Services - Employment Support Service (DES-ESS) • PHaMs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Employment Services - Disability Management Service (DES-DMS) • PHaMs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Services Australia (JSA) • PHaMs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHaMs
Available Payments	Disability Support Pension (DSP), Newstart Allowance (NSA), Mobility allowance					
Other Support	National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)					
Support for employers	Employment Assistance and Other Services (EAOS) (including Employment Assistance Fund, Supported Wage System, JobAccess information support and website, the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator and Wage Subsidies).					

This is a continuum that maps the services available to people with disability against two characteristics of the individual: the level of support they require and their capacity for work.

Based on the combination of these characteristics, the 2.2 million Australians with disability of working age are broken into 6 categories; beginning with individuals that require a high level of support and are unable to work, through to those who do not require support and have the greatest capacity to work. The services and supports aimed to assist people based on the two characteristics are listed as follows:

1. Unable to work
 - Day Programmes
 - The Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) service
2. Able to work in specialist supported environment
 - Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs)
 - PHaMS
3. Able to work in mainstream with ongoing support
 - Disability Employment Services – Employment Support Service (DES-ESS)
 - PHaMs
4. Able to work in mainstream after reasonable adjustment
 - Disability Employment Services – Disability Management Service (DES-DMS)
 - PHaMs
5. Able to work in mainstream with mainstream employment support
 - Job Services Australia (JSA)
 - PHaMS
6. Able to work in mainstream with no support
 - PHaMS

Payments that are available to all categories are listed underneath the continuum:

- Disability Support Pension (DSP);
- Newstart Allowance; and
- Mobility Allowance.

Other support available to all categories is:

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme

Programmes that provide support for employers are also listed:

- Employment Assistance and Other Services (EAOS) including:
 - Employment Assistance Fund;
 - Support Wage System;
 - JobAccess information support and website;
 - the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator; and
 - Wage Subsidies.

Questions

The issue here is that there is a continuum of services but as yet the services don't provide all services needed to help the individual or employer reach a state of employment – whatever the type of disability. Better and incentivised coordination between formal and informal services, or other formal support networks is needed. It's already starting in NDIS trial sites, and DESs would have to be integrated.

Individuals, particularly with disabilities, need work experience to both understand work and trial a type of work to see if it suits. Who provides this and works with employers to create these opportunities? At the moment LLENs do, and NDCOs work to create networks involving DES. But fundamentally, DESs don't drive this as there is minimal government funding, mostly focussed on placement or training.

It is also informally available through Neighbourhood houses, op shops and adult learning centres.

Volunteering opportunities exist - Volunteering Geelong with NDIA are developing a volunteering project with mentoring, where a volunteer gets mentored through the role, which, depending on the disability, is important.

How effective are the pathways into these services?

I would have to answer this from the different individual stages.

If I am at secondary school, can I be involved with DES to get work tasters or work experience? It has been offered in the past, but no longer. It should still be offered but may need better management. Most schools have a one-week work experience time built into their schedule in year 10. Rather than finding this through family connections, local employers/councils should be offering to take one SWD.

If I am at tertiary level, I can be involved with a DES if I am part-time student. This limits transitioning opportunities, even if employers wanted to help. Secondly, the resource capability to find graduates careers seems limited, particularly because a DES only works in one LGA, and employers looking for graduates are looking wider to get the talent, often not specifying to their recruiter that they would like a SWD proffered in the final talent mix offered to the client.

If I am post education, still looking for my first job, I need work experience. Employers need to offer this, to be incentivised to offer this for a trial period. Further training may then be identified along with a career direction.

If I am post education, and have worked, employer opportunities are needed, DESs try to do this

If I have acquired my disability during work, on a return-to-work plan or just rehabilitation, I and the employer work to cope with the situation and find a win-win outcome. As somebody who acquired a disability and wanted to work, I have both experience and a strong view on this subject. Not enough people use the "Jobs in Jeopardy" program. Why is this?

If I have acquired my disability during work, but then let go, I need employer opportunities. DESs try.

How well do these programmes work together to support people with disability throughout their life-course, including for conditions episodic in nature?

The current systems are there to find a job and keep you in it for 13 or 26 weeks. There is no incentive for support through the life course. Currently, it's a one off involvement. To support through the life course people need to be able to drop into DES for different supports at different times.

1. If the DES finds you a job or you did it yourself, it would be useful to be able to ask for career advice or career advancement advice, whether feeling under-employed or under-achieving, and seeking professional development

2. Employment advice in the event of an episodic condition. Is there access to legal or medical advice?

Are there other services which could assist people with disability to find a job?

DES staff tend to be disability-generalist in nature. It is close to impossible to be up-to-speed with the disability-specific latest assistive technology or employment-coping strategies for every disability type. Job Access have very good knowledgeable staff for individual or employer questions, but the range of different disabilities is huge. So I would propose that every disability-specific organisation should add an employment advice webpage to their site with the latest assistive technology or/and employment issues and strategies, responsible for keeping it current. Job Access would manage a portal to this, but you would also be able to get to the page directly. This information would be useful to DES staff, PWD, teachers, employers, parents and others.

As most are funded by DSS, which is now responsible for welfare and employment for PWD, transition for disability-specific organisations from pure welfare advice and advocacy could neatly be expanded to include employment advice.

What scope is there to move employment services to an individualised funding model?

We have argued that there are two key, central parts to the employment system: the individual and employer. Both require funding for services.

1 Use of DES, i.e. for employment services by individuals could be added to the NDIS planner-determined list of funded services. The individual would then go out and get the services they want. Depending on disability and severity, they may need assistance in getting the service, which is currently part of NDIS thinking.

The additional benefit is that coordination of appropriate disability and employment services might more easily get better results.

The range of DES employment services offered could be greatly expanded to include “career services” appropriate for different life stages, each integrating with other formal and informal networks. In addition to current services offered, it could include:

- a) Career counselling
- b) Career advice at school, combined with work experience opportunities, transitioning to employment
- c) Career advice at tertiary, combining with mentoring and internships, transitioning to employment
- d) Career transitioning
- e) Handling an acquired disability – an employment perspective
- f) Resume/cover letter writing

I should disclose that I am a career counsellor for PWD, and believe that if employment services are moving to look for more sustainable and meaningful roles, then more application of career counselling theory would be a sound addition. A current issue is the funding model where the government pays on job outcomes, which incentivise short-term job matching. The entire DES contractual structure ensures administration, tracking and payment (with tax payer funds) on outcomes is very efficiently done. However, the 30% success rate for employment outcomes seems low, and so the process efficiency has been the focus rather than the effective employment of PWD.

If effective employment outcomes are the focus, the payment for services approach may be more appropriate, but tracking of employment outcomes will be needed in parallel, even though payment is not directly on these measures.

PWD may need support in the application for jobs, during recruitment and during work, on a continuous, regular or basis or just at the start until familiarity occurs and then for work changes. Work support might need to be emotional, social or technical. There may need to be work consultation/support for the employer. There might also be a need for disability awareness training for managers and co-workers.

2 The use of DES to provide employer services.

An individual employer funding model could and would need to be managed around services the employer may need, as mentioned above.

a) Organisational consultation

- i) PWD policy change
- ii) Developing support networks at work

b) Recruitment practice for PWD

c) Performance management for PWD

- d) Legal obligations
- e) Working with PWD

As with current NDIS disability services, there has been a parallel build involving service providers to in the new NDIS individually-funded choice and control paradigm. This equivalent development phase by the employment services industry will be needed and DEA and NDS as peak body groups, will need to be lead players. It should be noted that the idea has in any case been developing officially and unofficially for the last few years.

Equally, measurement of outcomes will also need to be tracked, whether anonymous surveys of the number of PWD employed by company or/and a measure of PWD who declare disability, and whether for a reasonable adjustment or not. This measure may be the link to tax rebates or other financial incentives, which can then be used to pay for services on an ongoing basis. There may be a need for first year blanket funding as PWD measurement will be a lagging indicator.

Employment Services in Context

This paper focuses on employment support services, however, they are only one element of support that can effect the employment outcomes for people with disability. Services in areas such as education, health and income support all play a role in the ability or willingness of people with disability to gain employment. This also includes services for carers and family members, including income support payments and employment support

How these services link with, and contribute to employment outcomes needs to be considered when trying to improve employment outcomes for people with disability. For example, having an employment focused investment in the early stages of life and transition from education to employment, or consistent messaging of employment requirements for income support.

The broader context around the person with disability, which includes the relationship with their carer or family, needs consideration. The employment of people with disability will affect a number of factors directly related to their carers, including the potential to increase the carers' ability to work and potential effects on income support payments. This may mean employment services also consider carers' employment options as well as the person with disability.

Questions

How can elements of the disability support system better link with employment support to improve employment outcomes for people with disability?

The disability support system tends to be a passive provider of support – very important but passive e.g. DSP, accommodation rental assistance.

If, as is happening, there is more tightening of DSP eligibility ie linking to work capability, there must also be a need for a parallel incentivisation to employers to offer jobs to PWD. Equally there must be protection for individuals getting payments e.g. DSP and accommodation rental assistance, so that they will not lose income until work is deemed regular or can easily be put back into place, if work ends.

Equally, the employer needs the risk of taking on a PWD or a health condition covered by the government, or insurance if it doesn't work out. Other countries like the Netherlands, Poland and others have shifted policy on this, (OECD Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the barriers – a synthesis of OECD countries). As well as incentive from say tax relief, if the employer manages to raise the percentage of PWD of all employees to say 5%, and a bigger tax reduction if its 10%. Perhaps a sliding scale could be devised.

NDIS are already planning to fund transport to/from employment or tertiary education, as well as provision of personal care required at work or during tertiary education. If workforce participation of PWD is 53% and 82% for non-disabled, hopefully, these changes will allow more to be available, narrowing the gap. The better the other impediments can be managed e.g. the risk of loss of financial support, then this will also help narrowing the gap.

If NDIS include management of funding for employment services, there is certainly the option for more coordination of all services. Particularly, there may be a need for specialised support at work, which the DES understands is required, but specialised knowledge in specific disability issues (beyond what the DES is resourced for) may be useful e.g. ASD, with ongoing socialisation issues for PWD at work.

The issue of linking carer employment with PWD employment is important, as is carer employment/payment of tax for PWCs financial review of the NDIS proposal. Another way to solve this is to ensure the carer can choose to be paid professionally as a carer or find work in another career direction, and be replaced by an independent professional carer. Again this can be proportional, ie depending what the family carer and PWD want. It could for instance be 2 days of one and 3 days of another, and this may change depending on how it all works out. This approach may allow freedom for separation of the carer's and PWD's employment options. Not sure.

Are there other contextual factors of the jobseeker that should be considered?

Once stable housing, food, support are resolved for an individual, employment options become feasible. See above.

Overview of current services and supports

The following presents an overview of the current services and supports available and poses questions to generate discussion on how well programmes meet the needs of people with disability and employers.

Disability Employment Services (DES)

Description

DES provides specialist employment assistance to help people with disability, injury or a health condition find and keep employment in the open labour market. DES also provides support to employers if needed. DES offers two uncapped programmes:

- **Disability Management Services (DMS)** - provides services to eligible job seekers with temporary or permanent disability, injury or health condition who need the assistance of a disability employment service but who are not expected to need regular, long-term support in the workplace.
- **Employment Support Services (ESS)** - is available to eligible job seekers with permanent disability injury or health condition who need regular long-term ongoing support in the workplace.

The Government contracts DES providers to provide open employment services for job seekers with disability and their prospective employers. Support includes individualised, tailored assistance with an emphasis on building capacity to work, work experience, job search assistance, skills development, education and training, and informed choice.

DES providers also have a key role in assisting people in receipt of income support to meet their mutual obligation and participation requirements.

Current funding for DES providers ceases in March 2018.

Performance

- Currently, around **140** DES providers run open employment services from over **2,200** sites across Australia.
- As at 31 March 2015, there were over **170,000** participants in the DES programme.
- Since the introduction of the programme in March 2010 there have been over **253,000** paid job placements for people with disability. This is a **59 per cent** increase compared to previous programmes.
- **32 per cent** of DES Employment Assistance job seekers were in employment three months following participation in DES.

Questions

How can DES providers better assist people with disability to prepare for and find a job?

As mentioned before employment requires the right person to be offered the right job in the right company. A role exists for both the individual to be ready for the work, and the employer to be ready,

On top of this there is a role for employers in providing work experience options, to assist the individual in terms of choosing which type of work is enjoyable and motivating, let alone understanding what work involves and hopefully, having a supportive experience, reflecting a supportive environment. Without this learning, the match is likely to be short-lived and not sustainable.

Obviously, there is training for both technical skills and workplace expectations.

How can DES providers better support people with disability in the workplace?

Individual Support in the workplace is varied but includes:

- 1 Through interview process or a trial period in the work environment
- 2 Through induction, potentially daily till individual settled in terms of both technical work, but also settled in work environment with co-workers and managers
- 3 As appropriate for any work changes
- 4 As appropriate for ensuring social acceptance between workers
- 5 As appropriate in performance management, further training, development

How can DES providers better support employers?

- 1 As above plus
- 2 Awareness training for managers and co-workers
- 3 As appropriate, Policy and Procedure development

How can the employment service model be improved to help providers deliver better support?

If you give individuals and employers money to buy services, natural market forces will move the services offered towards those that are requested as they are needed.

The model must include formal and informal opportunities for work experience

Does DES need to be redesigned to operate in an NDIS environment?

Absolutely, yes. Because the NDIS environment is based around principles of choice and control, as well as using a lifetime costing approach (as an insurance scheme) i.e. if early intervention can reduce later costs more than the cost of early intervention, then spend the early intervention money. DES IS NOT, AT THE MOMENT.

For choice and control to be exercised by the individual, individuals need

- 1 the money
- 2 the information

Information is needed to permit informed choice of DES such as

- 1 What experience is there of placing people with my disability
- 2 what success rates have been achieved
- 3 what staff training has been undertaken
- 4 which companies have proven supportive
- 5 how do they work with employers
- 6 what sorts of ongoing support are provided

Finally, the new DES model needs a professional provider (not LGA restricted) targeting the assistance of graduates; gain experience at university – mentoring or internships; get through graduate selection schemes or into graduate jobs; career advice whilst in work; career transitions. Naturally, working with universities and employers, building a post university support network.

Job Services Australia (JSA)

Description

The Australian Government started JSA on 1 July 2009 to:

- provide tailored assistance for job seekers
- provide early assistance to the most disadvantaged job seekers
- meet the skills needs of employers
- enhance opportunities for work experience, including improvements to Work for the Dole and Green Corps
- introduce a more work-like compliance system
- simplify programs and processes to reduce administration and red tape, to cut costs for service providers.

JSA providers are a mix of large, medium and small, for-profit and not-for-profit organisations that are experienced in providing services and support for job seekers and employers.

JSA providers offer personalised support to help job seekers to find a job. They also connect job seekers with other government initiatives, including training programmes, to help them gain skills to find and keep a job.

Job Active 2015

From 1 July 2015, a new national employment services system, Job Active, will begin to increase workforce participation by working age Australians and help more job seekers move from welfare to work. The new system will replace JSA.

The new employment service is a significant redesign of the current system. Its objectives are to:

- better meet the needs of employers;
- increase job seeker activation by removing the option of passive welfare and introducing stronger mutual obligation requirements;
- increase job outcomes for unemployed Australians with specific targets for Indigenous Job Seekers; and
- reduce service prescription and cut red tape.

Performance

- In 2013-14, **81** JSA providers delivered job services in over **1,700** locations.
- As at February 2015 there were **828,852** job seekers in JSA. **221,759** of these identified as having a disability.
- From when JSA began up until February 2015, more than **2.1 million** people have been placed in jobs. **407,777** of these people identified as having a disability.
- In the 12 months to February 2015, **76,917** job seekers with disability found a job placement. Of these, **32,606** achieved a 13 week outcome and **21,903** achieved a 26 week outcome.

Questions

How can JSA providers better assist people with disability to prepare for and find a job?

Use a career counselling approach to find out what interests and motivates, then provide work experience to confirm interest, then training, if needed. Provide support through the recruitment phase.

How can JSA providers better support people with disability in the workplace?

Ensure induction complete; provide support until new employee understands work and is happy with the social environment and rules; provide support to individual when changing workload, if appropriate.

How can JSA providers better support employers and respond to employer needs?

Ensure employer understands individual issues and that JSA will maintain support until employer is happy with staff and situation, and equally, knows who to call if a query.

How do you think the proposed changes will improve the JSA model and employment outcomes for people with disability?

There seems no change to the JSA in trying to find work and get a 13 or 26 week outcome. Equally, although moving away from passive welfare and more mutual obligation requirements, there seems to be little incentive for employers to increase the number of new hires or keep PWD in the employer workforce.

Based on this view, more stick but no carrot has been added, so I wouldn't expect any improvement.

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs)

Description

Australian Disability Enterprises are not-for-profit businesses that can be found across Australia in a variety of industries. ADEs are workplaces providing supported employment for employees with varying support needs. They provide employees with ongoing assistance to engage in work and gain the benefits of having a job such as improved confidence, self-esteem and social engagement.

ADEs also play a broader role in the community, the lives of people with disability and their families and carers providing a source of economic and social capital. For people with disability they can be more than just a job by providing opportunities to form social networks and being a source of social inclusion.

The Australian Government provides funding to ADEs for the ongoing assistance and training in the workplace they provide to employees with a disability to perform their jobs. Supported employment places are available to people with disability that are able to work for at least 8 hours per week. ADEs are transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Performance

- Currently, **191** ADEs provide supported employment in **299** outlets across Australia.
- Supported employment is currently provided to over **20,000** people with disability.
- In 2014, **159** ADE supported employees left ADEs to move into open employment.
- As of March 2010, **71 per cent** of all supported employees were employed on a part-time basis (less than **35 hours** per week) and worked an average of **25 hours** per week.⁹
- The most common industries for ADEs are packaging, landscaping, cleaning, recycling, and light manufacturing.¹⁰

Questions

Can we improve support for people moving out of ADEs into open employment?

Allow DES to work with ADEs to move staff to open employment, allow ADEs to broaden their employee mix, i.e. 50% PWD, 50% non-PWD

How can ADEs operate as viable businesses? Move to more a social enterprise model.

⁹ DSS (March 2010) *Inclusion for people with disability through sustainable supported employment; Discussion paper.*

¹⁰ DSS (March 2010) *Inclusion for people with disability through sustainable supported employment; Discussion paper*

Support for Employers

Description

The Australian Government, as a part of DES, offers employers several services to assist them to employ a person with a disability through the Employment Assistance and Other Services programme (EAOS). This support includes the:

- **Employment Assistance Fund.** This helps people with disability and their employers by providing financial support to pay for special workplace equipment, modifications and services (including Auslan) the employee with disability requires to do their job.
- **JobAccess.** This is a website and free telephone information and advice service for employers and people with disability who have a job or are looking for one. It provides confidential, expert advice on all disability employment matters, including assistance available through the Employment Assistance Fund.
- **Supported Wage System.** This allows employers to pay a productivity based wage to people whose work productivity is reduced because of disability.
- **Wage Subsidy Scheme.** This provides funding to employers to employ participants with disability in the open employment market at award wages.
- **National Disability Recruitment Coordinator.** This works with large employers (who employ more than 100 people) to develop an agreement to commit the employer to increase their employment of people with disability.
- **Job in Jeopardy Assistance.** This is delivered by Disability Employment Services (DES) providers as part of the DES programme. It provides assistance to people in the workforce who are at risk of losing their job due to the impact of their injury, disability or health condition.

Performance

- The Employment Assistance Fund received **4,080** applications in 2013-14 and provided assistance to **2,787** people with disability.
- In 2014 there were about **850,000** unique visits to the JobAccess website. There are about **2,600** telephone and email enquiries to JobAccess advisors each month.
- In 2013-14 the Supported Wage System assessed **4820** people with disability. They were assessed as having a median productivity of **60 per cent** and received an average of **\$174.98** per week for an average of **14.6 hours** of work.
- In 2013-14 **16,023** job placements were supported by the Wage Subsidy Scheme and **6,838** of these positions reached a 26 week outcome.
- The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator has negotiated **53** new agreements with large employers since January 2013. It is projected to create over **700** job vacancies by the end of 2014-15.
- In the period 3 March 2010 until 31 August 2014, **5283** people received Job in Jeopardy assistance. Of those, **3406** remained in their jobs after assistance, including **1409** who required ongoing support.

Questions

Are employers aware of these supports?

Not well versed. But reality says they will only be interested and seeking out this information if they can be persuaded of the need to hire PWD. Large companies are beginning to see the business case, but small and medium companies are working more short-term, and believe PWD will cost more to employ for less benefit. This is a perception of PWD which has to be confronted by a campaign on the capability and diverse nature of PWD, as the Attitude Foundation is trying to do.

How can supports help achieve long-term employment for people with disability?

PWD is made up of 10% who have disability by 15 years old, another 30% get disability during working age and 60% get disabilities after 65 years old, (ABS). If working age is 2.2 million, then getting new hires is a much smaller part of the problem than keeping people who are already in the workforce but then acquire disability and often then lose their job. It is possibly a three times bigger

problem or source of unemployment. So job retention is vital for PWAD, (people with acquired disability).

Job Access, i.e. information for employers and a working version of jobs in jeopardy programs, is particularly important.

Other supports are important, but as DSP is tightening up, from passive welfare to proactive tool to get more PWD in work, there has to be a corresponding policy to actively incentivize employers to both retain and hire PWD, so more supports are needed.

If one is applying the NDIS insurance scheme thinking, the cost of early employer incentives may be significantly less than the increased health and support costs for the later, redundant employee or long term unemployed.

Are the support needs of large employers different to the support needs of small employers?

Yes, Small employers need to manage costs, so direct monetary incentives will make a difference for small employers, and will be helpful for larger companies, who are often doing things anyway.

How can we encourage more engagement between employers and people with disability?

At the moment, only some employers believe the business case. Or don't see it being relevant to them. Or have a perception that PWD cost more and deliver less, as well as putting their company at risk of discrimination claims.

What other supports or approaches could increase employment participation of people with disability?

Employment participation can be broken down into needing more available PWD for work, as much as employers willing/wanting to employ them whether through retention or new hires.

Other Supports for People with Disability

In addition to employment services, there are other supports that may assist people with disability in achieving employment outcomes. In particular the NDIS and the services transitioning to it, like PHaMs, will work in a complementary way with employment services to help people with disability engage economically and socially to the best of their ability.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Description

The NDIS is a new way of providing individualised support for eligible people with permanent and significant disability. The NDIS is a flexible, whole-of-life approach to the support needed by participants to pursue their goals and aspirations and participate in daily life. It provides participants with choice and control in reaching their full potential.

The NDIS is currently operating in seven trial sites and transition to full national coverage will start from July next year. Trial sites include the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie local government areas of the Hunter in New South Wales, the Barwon area of Victoria, Tasmania for young people aged 15-24, South Australia for children aged 0-13, the Australian Capital Territory, the Barkly region of the Northern Territory, and the Perth Hills area of Western Australia. In Western Australia, the experience of the comparative trials of the National Disability Insurance Agency NDIS model and the NDIS My Way model are informing the operational planning for the future of the NDIS in WA. From 1 July 2015, the NDIS will also roll out in the Nepean, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Lithgow area for children and young people aged 17 years and under.

For the most part, the NDIS will work alongside employment services, including specialist and mainstream services, to help people with disability reach their employment goals. The assistance funded by the NDIS for participants may support employment goals. There are some specific elements of disability employment services which are in scope of the NDIS, including ADEs and PHaMs. These programmes are transitioning to the NDIS, so NDIS participants are provided with funding for supported employment as a part of their individualised funding package.

Performance

- At full rollout, the NDIS will support 460,000 people with significant and permanent disability.
- The NDIS is a nationally based scheme with funding and governance shared amongst all governments.
- The NDIS takes a lifetime approach to planning support for participants.

Questions

In what way do you think the NDIS can support employment outcomes for people with disability?

Employment services funding for individuals should be added or processed through NDIS. The issue becomes how are NDIS tier-2 or people not on DSP funded for DES services?

NDIS can support employment by tracking individual employment outcomes. It must mobilise employers to become more active in the employment of PWD. Attempts have been made to mobilise employers or make them aware of the issue, as well attempts to change their behaviour. This also has become a national objective with a national plan, building on the NDIS.

Making the DES system more helpful to individuals and employers is useful, but in the end employers have to do more to accept new hires and keep PWD.

What do you think we can learn from the NDIS to improve job services for people with disability?

The NDIS principles of choice/control and use of an insurance or life-time costing approach need to be developed for employment services.

This results in;

- 1 Choice –
 - a) selection of services/DES based on more available information about the DES e.g. employment success/experience with certain disability types.
 - b) ability to switch services and DES, even where some services are from one DES and others from others
 - c) The rule that a DES has rights in a LGA was developed to allow management and structure for the DES system to service Australia. This needs review from the point of view of the individual's needs and the employer needs.

2 Control - funding through individual to buy services.

3 Insurance system

- a) A rationale for an incentive system for employers may result in long term savings for the government in health and disability payments or merely delay these costs, as individuals are healthier for longer because of the social benefits of work
- b) Moving the DSP from passive welfare is what the NDIS is doing with active welfare. But with regard to employment, more active steps need developing to persuade employers to take on more new job hires of PWD, and to keep PWD, as well as disability acquired while working, whether naturally acquired or as a result of a work incident.

Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs)

Description

PHaMs provides practical assistance for people aged 16 years and over whose lives are severely affected by mental illness. PHaMs helps participants to overcome social isolation and increase their connections to the community. PHaMs provides one-on-one support to help participants in their recovery journey and assists them to find other support services they may need.

A personal helper and mentor:

- helps participants to manage their daily activities and connect to their community;
- provides direct and individualised support through outreach services;
- provides referrals and links with appropriate services, such as drug and alcohol services or accommodation services;
- works with participants to develop individual recovery plans, focused on participants' goals;
- involves and supports family, carer and other relationships; and
- reports progress against the participant's individual recovery plan.

PHaMs has services specifically for employment. PHaMs Employment Services focus on assisting people to address non-vocational, or personal issues that are barriers to finding and maintaining employment, training or education. These services work closely with Government employment services to ensure that people with severe mental illness are able to use the labour market assistance that is available to them. PHaMs Employment services are in scope to transition to the NDIS.

Performance

- In 2013-14 PHaMs assisted **18,539** participants.
- **1,737** of these participants received assistance through PHaMs employment services.

Questions

What more can be done to assist people with mental illness to find a job?

Employers are worried that a person with mental health may cause damage to their business. Improved education on what mental health is and how it can be improved. Often it is temporary.

Equally, the incidence of mental health issues may be increasingly apparent, often due to a high-pressure environment, so learning about good work practises may help current or future sufferers working.

What more can be done to support people with mental illness in the workplace?

More support in developing a RTW program. Prejudice and fear needs to be replaced by knowledge and education.

Life-course and Diversity

The needs of people with disability change over their lifetimes and vary between different groups. These differences may change the types of support a person needs to help them find and keep a job.

Life-Course

We are also undertaking work on the life course of people with disability, which recognises the diversity of experience for people with disability across the stages of life. This may reflect the experiences of children in education, those seeking to transition into employment, disability that is episodic in nature and those who acquire disability during their life. This work will focus on the critical milestones which enhance the prospects of obtaining and sustaining employment.

Diversity

Different groups of people with disability may also have different needs. For example, the needs of someone with a physical disability will be different to the needs of a person with an intellectual disability or mental illness.

Employment services will need different approaches to assist these different groups of people. The following groups of people do poorly in terms of employment outcomes:

- people with mental illness and behavioural disorders;
- people with intellectual impairment in open employment;
- people with disability over 50;
- young people with disability, particularly when transitioning from school to work;
- people with disability and a work capacity of 8-14 hours a week;
- people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Indigenous people with disability.

Questions

Are there particular milestones which have a positive impact on employment prospects for people with disability?

What issues need to be considered in relation to specific groups of people with disability?

Evidence is needed to confirm the hypothesis that more than 50% of unemployed PWD acquired their disability during work, were let go, but want to work. A more effective version of the “Jobs in Jeopardy” program is needed that works to help individuals and employers keep PWD at work.

Equally, for the young cohort making transition from education to employment, they should avoid the unemployment experience. So focused transition programs from special, mainstream and tertiary education need investment and development where appropriate. But there are existing programs for some transitions that need backing.

For the people then who fall through the transition-to-employment or can't stay at work, a reemployment strategy is required which improves on the current system, through more consultation and support for the individual and more incentive and less risk for employers to employ PWD.

What approaches work with the different groups and these different issues?

The real point is that a generic offer doesn't work. It has to be tailored for the individual, not even the group. The current DES approach is a generic offer, with only small leeway for tailoring to the individual, as only certain supports are funded by the government. In a new NDIS-type service, the payment is from the individual, so tailored services can be arranged locally, or there will be no payment.

Notes

All figures used in this Paper which do not include a reference were sourced from DSS administrative data.

Contact details

You are invited to contribute to this discussion. Please visit our website for further details and to make submissions at [DSS Engage](#).

Alternately, hard copy submissions can be sent to:

Disability Employment Taskforce
PO Box 7576
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

If you have questions about this process you can email the Taskforce at:
disabilityemploymenttaskforce@dss.gov.au

Next Steps

Consultation on this paper is your first opportunity to contribute to the future directions of disability employment support services. It has highlighted the different elements of the current system and posed questions to generate discussion.

There will be another round of consultations in August and September 2015, following the release of more detailed options and proposals in a Discussion Paper.