



AUSTRALIAN  
NETWORK  
ON DISABILITY

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Dear Peter,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DES 2018 Discussion Paper and for including us on the Expert Reference Group. We welcome this spirit of collaboration and look forward to further involvement in refining the reforms before 2018.

We particularly welcome the proposal to reward 52 week outcomes long advocated by AND but remain concerned that the proposals are almost exclusively directed at reconfiguring how the provider and jobseeker interact with each other with little focus on improving the service offering to employers.

The paper is largely silent on employers and their necessary role as current and prospective customers of DES. While the paper starts by acknowledging the importance of employers as critical stakeholders, there is very little detail reflecting employers' experience in using the system or proposals that might help employers (large, medium and small) to include DES as part of their recruitment channels. Unless employers are seen as equal customers (with as much focus on them as on jobseekers), DES will continue to underperform and people with disability, government and employers will all receive suboptimal outcomes.

It remains clear that more than 24 years after the Disability Discrimination Act became law, awareness of obligations, opportunities and supports for employing people with disability are poorly understood among the general community and employers. No doubt this contributes to the fact that no progress has been made to increase the labour force participation of people with disability since 1992.

DES alone cannot address all the issues associated with low levels of workforce participation among people with disability. It will require concerted effort across a range of factors including, but not limited to:

- improvements in education and training systems to ensure people with disability have the skills required for a modern and evolving workforce;
- improved and informed community knowledge about the diversity and abilities of people with disability
- progress to reduce discrimination
- the successful implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme

We contend that rather than having the wrong attitude, employers remain unaware of what to do and how to go about it, and they don't utilise DES and other government funded supports, as much as they could, perhaps due to a lack of awareness or because these services do not meet their needs. This has again been confirmed in the early learnings from our NSW government funded project, High Growth Jobs Talented Candidates project.

DES is not currently resourced or skilled to provide the deep level of engagement and education and partnership work required to help large, complex employers become accessible and inclusive.



Without support (perhaps co-funded by government), it is unlikely that a significant shift in employment for people with disability will ensue and we urge the Federal Government to consider our recommendations for how it may support this journey.

Consultations confirm that numerous employers who previously recruited via DES are no longer doing so, and despite some positive examples, many of those who recruit through DES are experiencing problems. Common concerns are that DES providers lack credibility, service is “patchy” and they cannot be relied upon to deliver the right candidates for their roles. Employers want a reliable recruitment supplier who understands their business.

Strong performing DES providers who invest deeply in employer engagement and form partnerships are having success. Those taking a transactional approach are not having success. Any new reforms must build on the evidence of what is working now for employers and recognise and build on the expertise held by some specialist providers working with particular client groups.

To summarise, employers need the DES program to:

1. Provide a clearly articulated clear quality service offering for employers.
2. Invest time to get to know and understand employers and make good job matches
3. Streamline the linkage between the talent pool and employers (facilitated by a broker).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Suzanne Colbert', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Suzanne Colbert AM  
Chief Executive Officer  
January 4, 2017

# 1. Context and methodology

## About the Australian Network on Disability

Founded in 2000, Australian Network on Disability (AND) now serves 180 members from across the public, private and non-profit sectors. Together they employ 1.3 million Australians or approximately 11% of the workforce. Employers join AND to build their capacity to welcome people with disability as customers and employees. Our mission is to create a disability confident Australia.

## About this Submission

We note that the majority of the Discussion Paper and questions posed relate to the interaction between providers and jobseekers as directed by the government as the funder and designer of program settings. Our submission does not respond directly to many of the questions raised in the Discussion Paper but rather seeks to contribute a strong employer voice into the proposals to reshape DES.

See our separate attachment Appendix A provides a summary of the journey from an employer's perspective, both now and in the future.

The submission is drawn from:

- AND member consultations in November and December 2016 in four capital cities with more than 75 public and private sector organisations on proposed DES 2018 reforms. These organisations included members with direct experience of using DES to recruit currently or in the past.
- AND learnings from working with our employer members since we were founded in 2000.
- Published Australian research on employers' perspectives on employing people with disability cited in our endnotes and including the 2015 Business Council of Australia survey *Recognising Ability*.
- Disability Confidence Surveys of 500 small and medium sized businesses commissioned and published by Australian Network on Disability (AND) in December 2015 and 2016.  
<http://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-confidence-survey-report-2016.html>
- The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) *Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination against Older Australians and Australians with Disability, (Willing to Work)* May 2016.
- *Early Learnings Evaluation of the High Growth Jobs Talented Candidates* project, 20 December 2016.
- United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, *Survey of Employer Perspectives on the Employment of People with Disabilities*, Technical Report, November 2008.
- "Ahead of the Arc – a contribution to halving the disability employment gap" UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Disability, 6 December 2016.
- Attendance at the inaugural Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, Washington DC December 2016. <http://www.harkinsummit.org/>

## 2. Address employer concerns re increased cost and risk

There are more than a million Australians with disability in the workforce and many stories of people with disability taking their place in organisations and forging long term and successful careers. However, labour force participation rates for people with disability have not improved in more than 20 years and there are well documented concerns expressed by employers that hiring people with disability is often associated with increased risk and cost.<sup>i</sup> Australian data on the business case for employing people with disability is based on academic research published in 1999 and 2007. While there are a number of more recent employer surveys, these do not address employers' concerns about the increased risk and cost of employing people with disability specifically in relation to work, health and safety.<sup>ii</sup> While it is important to share success stories, US research confirms that there is value of information and statistics to support the business case – especially for large employers.<sup>iii</sup>

The Federal Government can also contribute to the business case for many suppliers by rewarding the inclusion of people with disability through its procurement policies. This is a strong recommendation of the recent UK All Parliamentary Group on Disability and closer to home, in relation to the employment of Indigenous Australians.

Employers also benefit from the opportunity to “try before they buy” and work trials, unpaid work experience, internships, supported part-time jobs whilst at school and vacation employment all provide good opportunities for people with disability and assist employers to mitigate fears regarding cost and risk.

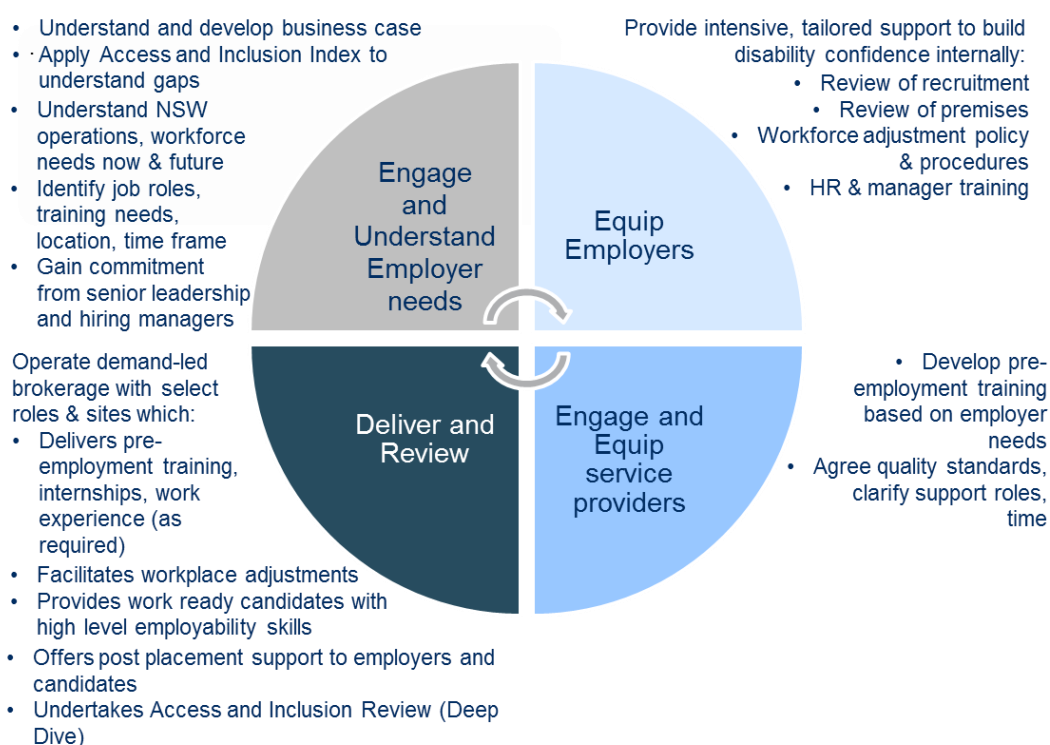
### Recommendations:

- 2.1. The Federal Government should fund quality academic Australian research that documents the benefits of employing people with disability and addresses perceptions of additional cost and risk, including for work, health and safety and preferably, by industry.
- 2.2. The Federal Government should establish a clearing house of successful strategies (perhaps published on the JobAccess website) so that good practice becomes common practice.
- 2.3. DES providers need to be upskilled with updated business case research and good practice case studies so they can openly discuss and address employer concerns regarding cost and risk.
- 2.4. The Federal Government rethink tendering in government contracts, grants and procurement to give preferential weighting to organisations with targets and/or actions to increase employment of people with disability. As the market of businesses owned by people with disability grows, consideration should be given to establishing something similar to Supply Nation for businesses owned by Indigenous Australians.
- 2.5. The provision for work trials in the existing DES contract should be more widely promoted and successful transitions from work trials to employment should be shared.

## Employer-led initiatives

AND welcomes the proposal to fund some employer-led initiatives and strongly recommend that funding should be directed to large employers where there is an opportunity for a significant number of jobs and a substantial potential return on investment. Findings from our work on the High Growth Jobs Talented Candidates (HGJTC) project in NSW confirm that employer knowledge and confidence around employing people with disability is low and engagement takes time, especially for employers who are growing and undergoing significant HR and structural changes.

AND is using a proven model for its HGJTC project which is described in the below diagram. A case study from the project is also provided in Appendix B.



### Recommendation:

- 2.6. Any new funded employer initiatives projects should be built on demonstrated good practice, be funded for at least three years and include rigorous evaluation which is published as soon as possible so the learnings can be immediately shared and replicated.

## 3. Invest in deep work within employers to assist them become more accessible and inclusive

More than 24 years after the Disability Discrimination Act became law, AND's experience is that Australian employers generally do not have accessible and inclusive recruitment practices. Susan Ryan, former Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, speaking on the preliminary findings of the Willing to Work Inquiry in August 2015 encapsulates this point:

*“...the worst obstacle that people with disability face in getting employment is employer ignorance; not employer unwillingness, but employers seen simply not to know what, how to hire a person with disability, how to work out whether they're a good match for the job. Once they're hired, how to support them in the role, how to prepare the workplace, how to make sure the employees who will be working with a person with disability understand the situation.”*

The trend to e-recruitment and increasing centralisation and automation of recruitment (with software that can be programmed to automatically screen out candidates with gaps in employment) is also contributing to barriers for accessibility and inclusion.

Position Descriptions (PDs) generally do not clearly identify inherent requirements (or mandatory qualifications or clearances), which may be contributing to the low suitability of candidates referred to employers by DES providers. Evidence from our HJGTC project shows considerable work is often required to identify inherent job requirements with employers, and then obtain agreement from key personnel so that these are integrated into revised PDs.

Many employers lack key policies to enable effective workplace adjustment throughout the recruitment, onboarding and ongoing employment phases. As stated at one of our recent AND Member Roundtables, *“Information for employers regarding workplace adjustment is really a big gap. More awareness and education is needed and clarification on what DES will or will not do in this regard.”* At the commencement of AND's HGJTC project, only one of the eight large employers had a workplace adjustment policy and procedure in place, the others needed assistance from our experienced Relationship Managers to build it from the ground up, working with multiple relevant business units across their organisation.

DES are not currently skilled or resourced to undertake this work and the National Disability Recruitment Service (NDRC) has limited reach and is not allowed to recommend individual DES providers to support them once they are ready to hire people with disability.

Further evidence from the HGJTC project confirms that:

- Investment in building employer's ability to welcome candidates with disability is best directed to where there is a good return (in terms of available jobs) and strong business case alignment given the significant resources required by employers and external providers.
- Employers need a trusted provider with recognised expertise to assist them to identify and make changes to their recruitment practices and help build disability confidence among hiring managers and supervisors. (This is also supported by the BCA 2015 survey).
- Considerable work across multiple areas of the business (preferably co-ordinated by a single point of contact within the employer) is needed to assist employers adjust their hiring practices to accommodate candidates with disability.

### **Recommendation:**

- 3.1 The Federal Government consider funding or co-funding support to help employers become accessible and inclusive for candidates with disability where there is a good return (in terms of available jobs) and strong business case alignment. This may include support for a resource to co-ordinate activity within the employer.



## **4. Provide services employers want**

### **A strong performance framework**

As stated by a member at one of our recent AND Roundtables: *“How do we find out who is a good provider?”*

All employers (large, medium and small) require a strong performance framework with a focus on sustained employment outcomes of 52 weeks to help them select a DES provider (or accept an approach from one). There needs to be clear and easy to access information so that employers and people with disability can make informed decisions about which providers can best meet their needs. When employers are selecting providers to partner with, they will be seeking information as well as areas of specific expertise which may be related to industry or type of disability.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 4.1. That performance information such as numbers of people entering; numbers of placements (conversion rate to 26 week and 52 week outcomes) and any industry or disability specialisation and Star Ratings be regularly updated and made available for employers and job seekers in an easy to access format in order to maximise informed choices.

### **Ensure new rules don't preclude specialist providers**

Employers have expressed strong support to be able to choose high quality specialist providers who have strong expertise in particular disability groupings, e.g. moderate intellectual disability, brain and spinal injury. Some of these providers are small and geographically limited and may struggle to survive under the reforms proposed. Employers have already expressed concerns about the demise of a high quality trusted provider, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS), in previous contract changes aimed at increasing competition.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 4.2. New rules around the size of labour market and weighting of fees to outcome payments should not preclude effective specialist providers from remaining in the market.

### **Brokerage for large multi-site employers**

The current DES contract relies on large numbers of providers approaching employers and there are no incentives or mechanisms for them to collaborate to meet employers' needs. Large employers have long expressed the need for a brokerage service to help them navigate the myriad of providers which already exist. This concern has been expressed in employer consultations and the BCA 2015 Member Survey<sup>iv</sup> and was reiterated by AND members at recent Roundtable Consultations:

*“We need a conduit; we don’t have the capacity to deal with all the DES calls we get.”*  
*“It’s very hard to navigate who is a good provider, there is no one to support you do that.”*  
Employers have often called for quality providers that can service large geographic areas, these services have been lost with previous changes to open up the market to competition.

*“We previously used CRS across the State, now that’s gone we’ve found it extremely difficult when we have a recruitment drive across the State - we had to use six different DES providers, which was a nightmare which turned our bosses off recruiting people with disability. We had to start again as all the goodwill disappeared.”*

Under the proposals to open up the market contained in this Discussion Paper, the number of providers approaching employers is likely to increase. The current Discussion Paper is silent on providing a brokerage service to help employers navigate this enlarged market.

Early findings from the High Growth Jobs Talented Candidates have confirmed that once equipped, employers are willing to participate in a demand-led brokerage model which connects them to quality providers. In turn, once connected to an equipped and engaged employer through a trusted broker, providers have proved to be extremely responsive to their needs, to constructively participate in the co-design and delivery of pre-employment training, and provide a high standard of selection, matching, on boarding and post-placement support.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 4.3. Employers are diverse, not only by size but recruitment methods, and services should align with the unique way employers recruit. Large organisations that recruit centrally need a national brokerage service, while others that recruit locally need local ‘relationship managers’. NSW Government Departments would prefer a one stop service that can deliver across the State. That Federal Government should fund a Brokerage Service to filter DES engagement with large employers with a significant volume of vacancies.

#### **A quality service standard which includes practices which deliver stronger job matches**

Employer research undertaken over many years confirms the critical importance of job match - getting the right person for the job.<sup>v</sup> Concerns expressed by employers with the current DES contract include:

- *Focus is on the jobseeker at the expense of the employer<sup>vi</sup>*
- *There is not enough time spent understanding employer business and needs/job roles/core competencies*
- *Failure to refer candidates who can meet their vacancies (poor job match)*
- *There are inconsistent customer (employers) service standards – it would be good to have an employer standard.*

An AND Member at a recent Roundtable stated: *“DES don’t know their clients well enough, the candidate quality varies and the job match is not good.”*

The 2015 survey as well as the 2013 Employer Survey reports that, *“employers ... would like ... DES providers to improve the screening of applicants prior to sending them out for an*



*interview to verify their skill and motivation levels match the employer's needs.*" They also highlighted the need for more honesty and truthfulness in the information DES providers give them, want wage subsidies to be paid on time, and would like to see the quality of DES caseworkers improved.

Knowing and understanding the employer's business is crucial to achieving a good job match. Sustained employment for people with disability is based on a relationship, not a transaction. That relationship is dynamic, based on mutual benefit, and built on expertise to understand both the needs of employers and people with disability, often developed over many years.<sup>vii</sup> This was confirmed in the 2015 BCA member survey which found that *"working with a partner organisation to source talent" was the top response from companies when asked about recruitment success factors*".<sup>viii</sup>

In terms of job matching, the HJGTC project has found key elements include:

- site visits to understand the employer
- job analysis to identify inherent requirements of identified roles which are usually not specified in position descriptions
- short pre-employment training co-designed and delivered by employers and providers;
- skilled matching of candidates to the available roles;
- single point of contact for post placement in work support.

One AND member recently said the key factors to success for their recruitment process using DES have been:

- *Open information sharing with the DES*
- *The DES working in our workplaces to understand the roles that we have, the pace and the culture*
- *The DES utilising our job dictionary*
- *The suite of documents that we have created to gather information from the candidate to ensure we can accommodate their workplace adjustments and ensure they are safe in our workplaces*
- *The job matches by the DES is critical to sustainable employment*

### **Recommendations:**

- 4.4. That within the DES contract, there is a Service Commitment made to employers and that includes spending time to understand their business and jobs, single point of contact/account/manager; high standard of job matching; post placement and ongoing support delivered by a single point of contact from the provider.
- 4.5. That any new model should be tested for unintended negative impacts for employer servicing – the Discussion Paper proposals are complex with multiple factors interacting and it is hard to predict how it will drive provider behavior in relation to employers.

### **Interaction of employment benchmark hours, the labour market and wage subsidies**

At June 2016, 35 percent of DES clients had minimum employment benchmark hours of 23 per week or more<sup>x</sup>, yet this may not reflect the reality of the labour market and available roles. Evidence from HJGTC shows that even with an engaged employer and successful job match, minimum benchmark hours may not be met, due to the shift away from permanent to contract or casual, low minimum hours requirements by employers, particularly for care work and food and accommodation services. This trend in care work is likely to increase as the NDIS and aged care reforms are implemented and flexibility of the workforce is critical due to uncertainties in forecasting service demands.

DES providers are required to find additional hours or another role with the minimum benchmark roles, even if the placement is successful and ongoing. Without this the jobseeker may not meet their mutual obligations and the DES provider will not receive an outcome payment. In reforming DES consideration needs to be given to whether these hours can be adjusted if an employee has a successful placement with the prospect of future hours.

Many of our employers have indicated wage subsidies are not the most important reason they will take a jobseeker with disability (job match and good post placement support are usually considered to be more important), however some employers do use the offer. Recently we tried to assist a member navigate the wage subsidy system and were given three different pieces of information from Employer Support hotlines. We note also that while the \$10,000 Restart subsidy for jobseekers over 50 years (and in receipt of income support for 6 months or more) is available to DES clients, all information and fact sheets are labelled *jobactive* only. It is also not clear how DES clients' minimum weekly Employment Benchmark hours and hours required to meet wage subsidy minimum hours interact with each other and if they conflict with each other. For example, eligibility for the Restart subsidy from 1/1/17 is based on a minimum of 20 hours per week employment, yet as discussed above, more than a third of DES clients are required to work a minimum of 23 or 30 hours per week.

#### **Recommendation:**

- 4.6. That rules around Employment Benchmark hours be reconsidered so they reflect the reality of many roles within the labour market and do not deter promising placements. That wage subsidy rules and guidelines be made clear for employers, including their interaction with Employment Benchmark hours.

#### **Support for people already in employment**

The GAP Taskforce on Productive Ageing reports that 660,000 people in the potential labour force (aged 45-64) have retired for health reasons – costing \$12 billion per year. Many people could be prevented from premature departure from the workforce if they received assistance to retain their employment. The cumulative disadvantages of unemployment, gaps in work history, being an older worker and having illness, injury or disability makes it almost impossible for these people to re-enter the workforce.<sup>x</sup>

AND has previously called for more support to assist people with (non-compensable) degenerative conditions or acquired disability to stay in work. We note only just over 5,000 people (0.1% of the DES caseload) have been assisted by the current program, the ill named “Jobs in Jeopardy” - from 3/3/10 to 31/8/14 and note that the Discussion Paper states monthly participation rates are declining. The program is poorly understood with many employers unaware of its existence and that it is available to all employees, not just those

originally placed by a DES provider.<sup>xi</sup> We have strongly advocated for a name change to the Jobs in Jeopardy program as the name deters employers from using it, even if they are aware of it.

For those who used the program between 2010 and 2014, the success rate was high – 65 percent retained employment. Clearly there is an opportunity to expand its reach (once renamed) to many more employers and employees.

As stated in the Discussion Paper post placement and ongoing support are currently under-utilised and more needs to be done in the new contract to ensure high quality is delivered in a flexible manner to meet the needs of employers and former DES participants. Experience from our HGJTC project is that employers prefer a single point of contact supporting all former DES participants employed per site.

**Recommendation:**

- 4.7. That the Jobs in Jeopardy program be re-named (possibly to Work Assist) and promoted to assist employees who acquire non-compensable disability to remain in the workforce.
- 4.8. The new contract should promote and incentive post placement support be delivered flexibly and for as long as is required by employers and former DES participants.

**Enhance and promote JobAccess and the Employment Assistance Fund**

Both JobAccess and the Employment Assistance Fund is currently underutilised with many employers remaining unaware of its existence and the support available. Feedback from our members who use the Employment Assistance Fund is generally very positive.

**Recommendation:**

- 4.9. JobAccess and the Employment Assistance Fund should be enhanced so it is known and used by more employer, including the introduction of a dedicated telephone line for employers.

## **5. Direct support to DES participants**

### **Participant controlled funding**

Purchasing an employment outcome is fundamentally different to purchasing equipment or personal care which are the main services available under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Different as it requires multiple elements, usually built over time and is a decision that involves several players, including employers. Not all interests are necessarily aligned. There are other significant differences as well: all participants in the NDIS are volunteers, while 76% of the current DES caseload are not<sup>xii</sup> and are obliged to participate to sustain their income support. It is not clear how any participant controlled funding could work within this reality and we believe this a fundamental question to resolved. We are unaware of any evidence that allowing participants to control funding associated with DES

will improve employment outcomes. Evidence from the recent youth mental health pilots suggest the opposite.

**Recommendation:**

- 5.1. Do not introduce any participant controlled funding until there is evidence to support the contention that it will increase employment outcomes for people with disability.

**More support for people with disability to start their own businesses**

Continuing low rates of labour force participation and poverty for people with disability require a broadening of approaches, including self-employment.

**Recommendation:**

- 5.2. That consideration is given to developing and supporting businesses owned and managed by people with disability, including enhancements to the existing National Enterprise Incentive Scheme to ensure it is fit for purpose for people with disability.

In summary, reforms to the DES program should address employers' perceptions of increased costs and risks, reforms should make it easier for employers to engage with the DES program and the program should deliver services that matter to employers.

## Appendix A: Employers' Journey – current and proposed response

*What happens when:*

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Current response</b>	<b>Current Result</b>	<b>Proposed response</b>
An employer decides they would like to hire someone with disability	JobAccess will email a link to the vacancy to all DES providers. They are unable to assist selecting relevant DES providers or in qualifying or shortlisting suitable applicants.	Employer may get many applications from unsuitable candidates Process is too cumbersome and tiresome for employers and they discontinue.	Organise a site visit to understand the business and any accessibility barriers, assist the employer be clear about the inherent requirements of the job, provide support on interviewing and selection processes and shortlist the most suitable candidates.
A large multi-site employer wants to implement a national program	Employers can link with the >140 individual providers – no national approach available.	Process is too cumbersome and tiresome for employers and they discontinue	Broker services support employers and ensure that their disability employment programs are successful.
An employer asks what services can they expect from a DES provider	They are often told “it depends on the candidate”	Employers don't understand and don't engage with DES	The DES provider should commit to understanding the business, undertaking a needs analysis, providing a shortlist of suitable candidates, explaining how the new employee will be safe at work and then providing induction and probationary period support as well as ongoing support until mutual agreement that it's no longer required.
An employer asks about wage subsidies	Telephone advice is confusing and employers are told a wage subsidy is paid at the discretion of the provider and depends on an individual candidate.	Employers find that it's impossible to predict whether they will or will not be paid a subsidy.	Employers can get accurate information in a timely way and payment of wage subsidies are predictable.
An employer asks the DES provider about ongoing for support to the new employee	Most likely will be told that it depends on the employee – many employers complain about place and 'dump'	Employers are unsure of what to expect from the service and in the face of ambiguity – and some	The DES provider assures the employer that support will cease when the new employee and the employer agree the timing is right and

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Current response</b>	<b>Current Result</b>	<b>Proposed response</b>
		mistrust - don't engage	that it can be re-instated at any time upon request.
A longstanding employee acquires a disability – how do they get help	Most employers don't know about the 'Job in Jeopardy' Program – if they did they could seek assistance – they would need to manage the conversation carefully with their employee to introduce the ill named program.	An employer enlisting the 'Job in Jeopardy' may prejudice findings of an industrial relations dispute at a later date. Most employers do not understand their obligation to accommodate non-compensable disability	A Work-Assist program is promoted and can be initiated by employee or employer resulting in less people leaving work due to ill health.
Employers offer multiple roles seeking suitable candidates from local DES providers	Providers put forward many candidates (all with similar resumes) because they say that all the clients 'have the right' to apply	Process of interview and selection is overwhelmingly difficult and not fit for purpose.	DES providers shortlist the most suitably skilled candidates.
A diversity practitioner or Senior Executive Champion tries to write a business case for introducing an employment initiative for people with disability	There is no current 'Business case' information on JobAccess for employers – dot points on benefits of employing people with disability cite one 2002 study as evidence.	Employers commit to programs for mature workers or Indigenous employment programs with a reliable business case.	Quality academic research provides evidence that people with disability do not cost more to employ and employer specific phone advice is available at a minimum. Preferably an offer to assist should be made through JobAccess/ Employer Assistance Fund where there is potentially a return on investment.



## **Appendix B: Case Study Compass Group: Matching high growth jobs with talented candidates to meet employer commitments**

Rosie McArdle, Compass Group Australia Executive Director HR and Risk, said at the commencement of the project in March 2016 that they hoped to build on the strong commitment they've made to ensure 10 per cent of their Australian workforce are Indigenous. She said: "We've made some progress on employing people with disability outside NSW and this project gives us the opportunity to bring that to NSW."

Part way through the project Compass Group created a full-time Diversity Co-ordinator role to be the central point for the HJGTC project and other disability employment initiatives they are undertaking. This has contributed significantly to the outcomes achieved to date, given the complexity of Compass Group and the fact that HGJTC employees will all be employed at Compass Group client sites. To date Compass Group has employed six people with disability (and a further five have job offers) as part of their commitment to employ 20 people with disability by July 2017. During this process, Compass Group has agreed to offer permanent part-time roles at the Westpac sites and a minimum number of hours for casual contracts at the Taronga Zoo site.

AND and Compass Group agreed to focus the first round of recruitment at Westpac's Sydney corporate offices where Compass Group has the contract to provide food and beverage services for functions and corporate staff. Like Compass Group, Westpac Group is a founding and Platinum member of AND. AND has worked closely with Compass Group to help build their disability confidence including training for their site managers across the two Westpac sites. To date four candidates with disability have been employed in permanent part-time roles as boardroom attendants, kitchen hands and café staff with most working at least 20 hours a week.

Candidates were sourced and supported by MAX Employment who worked closely with AND and Compass Group to co-design a four day pre-employment training course that included an on-site employer information session and walk through, hands on training and mock interviews that ensured candidates were 'Compass Ready' ahead of being put forward for interview. Compass also agreed to modify their recruitment process to allow all candidates to be interviewed informally and to have a MAX Employment consultant with them in response to their requests for workplace adjustment. MAX Employment are continuing to provide post placement support for the new employees and site managers at Compass Group. Since they've started work, candidate and employer feedback has been very positive. Rosie McArdle has said "it has been an intrinsic motivator for line leaders which you can't pay or train for."

Teremoana, 43, started work in October 2016 with Compass Group. Teremoana works as a Board Room attendant at Westpac's headquarters – a catering contract held by Compass Group. Her job involves organising rooms for meetings and functions, drinks, morning tea, lunches, afternoon teas and attending to any needs of meeting attendees. She has a permanent part-time role with Compass and works additional hours, hopefully moving to a full time role in the near future. "I was out of work for two years. Although I returned to housekeeping, my knees couldn't handle the demands of the job. Compass is giving me great support. Previously I tried to hide my disability but I just can't do that anymore. This role is great. I work in four hour shifts and I can manage my condition much better," said Teremoana.

“The shift work works really well for me.” “When I’m at work I don’t have to hide my disability, I can be myself. I never thought I’d find a full time role like this. I have done so many other courses and got nowhere but this one has worked and I’m so pleased I did this program. It is awesome,” she said. “This program is a great thing for [people with] disability. I am really proud to have this job. I feel special and I feel important to be a Board Room attendant for a big bank. It is awesome stuff,” she said.

Mother to five grown up children, Teremoana hopes that her commitment to finding employment makes her a better role model. “I want them to be proud of me. I didn’t have to give up because of my bad knee,” she said.

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- <sup>i</sup> For example: Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI), *Recruiting people with a disability: an employer perspective*, Research Report, August 2011. DEEWR, *Employer perspectives on recruiting people with disability and the role of Disability Employment Services*, August 2011. NCVET, *What would it take? Employer perspectives on employing people with a disability*, Peter Waterhouse, Helen Kimberley, Pam Jonas and John Glover, Group Training Association of Victoria, 2010. Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *ACCI's plan for the employment of people with a disability*, 2008. 2007 Employer Survey Papers: *Employer Attitudes towards Recruiting and Retaining Job Seekers from Particular Equity Groups*. Paper by TNS Social Research for the then Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Department of Family and Community Services, *Report of the Review of the Employer Incentives Strategy*, March 2003. Peck, B & Kirkbride, 'Why businesses don't employ people with disabilities', in *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 16, no.2, pp.71–5. 2001.
- <sup>ii</sup> DSS Employer Consultation Canberra, 8 December 2016.
- <sup>iii</sup> United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, *Survey of Employer Perspectives on the Employment of People with Disabilities*, Technical Report, November 2008. Very large study undertaken in the US - ~4000 employers representing 2.5 million companies.
- <sup>iv</sup> Business Council of Australia, *Recognising Ability: Business and the Employment of People with Disability*, 29/10/15.
- <sup>v</sup> DEEWR, *Employer perspectives on recruiting people with disability and the role of Disability Employment Services*, August 2011. Based on research in 2010-11 which included a 2010 Survey of Employers (completed between September and December by 2,780 respondents from a random sample of employers plus 2,744 employers from a departmental sample of users of employment programs) supplemented by qualitative data from an online discussion forum in May 2011 with 40 employers (20 who had and 20 who had not used DES).
- <sup>vi</sup> See for example: Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI), *Recruiting people with a disability: an employer perspective*, Research Report, August 2011.
- <sup>vii</sup> See *Disability Employment Australia and the Australian Network on Disability (AND), Employer's Guide to Partnering with Disability Employment Services* <http://www.and.org.au/pages/employers-guide-to-partnering-with-disability-employment-services.html>
- <sup>viii</sup> Business Council of Australia, *Recognising Ability: Business and the Employment of People with Disability*, 29/10/15.
- <sup>ix</sup> DES Historical Commencement and Caseload Data, 30 June 2016.
- <sup>x</sup> *Global Access Partners & NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing – GAP Taskforce on Productive Ageing June 2014*
- <sup>xi</sup> Reiterated at DSS Employer Consultation Canberra, 8 December 2016.
- <sup>xii</sup> August 2016 DES Program Data cited in Discussion Paper.