

Submission to Strong Future for Supported Employment

By the members of New Wave Gippsland

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New Wave Gippsland is a disability self advocacy group in Gippsland, Victoria. New Wave is run by and for people with disability. Like other self advocacy groups, members of New Wave work together to make sure they have the same rights, choices and opportunities as anyone else in the community.



All members of New Wave are people with disability that volunteer as self-advocates. Some of the members get paid for project work. Some of the members have worked for ADEs in the past.

Several members of New Wave have discussed the Strong Future for Supported Employment paper and have made the following comments for your review*:

Comments on the Guiding Principles

- **An 'employment first' approach for all NDIS participants of working age**

Employment of people with disability needs to be done everywhere. We need to show people, like those who can't read and write, how to work. We need to build on everyone's strengths.

- Rachael

- **A diversity of employers providing employment supports**

Big business and mainstream businesses need to be given support to hire more people with disability. I am currently volunteering somewhere, but if they were able to have funding to support and employ me I think they would, and they would work on the things I am good at.

- Kathryn

Employers should treat everyone as equals. This applies to people at all levels, of all races and backgrounds. All people should be given opportunities.

- Rachael

- **Strong and viable disability enterprises**

I have worked for an ADE and I liked it. Getting paid for some time is better than no time. A Disability Employment Service once got me a job and it was good pay.

- Barbara

Have measures to protect workers. See Q8 – bullying and harassment.

Work with people on their strengths. See Q7.

* Note: the names of people who don't wish to be identified have been changed.

Comments on Discussion Questions

2. What is a 'good' participation outcome for a supported employee and how can good outcomes be measured?

People with disabilities who want to work should be able to work.

– David and Maryanne

3. What do supported employees most value about working in an ADE?

I have worked for an ADE and I liked it. Getting paid for some time is better than no time.

– Barbara

4. Why do most supported employees transition back to supported employment from open employment?

When I went to a job agency and said I wanted work, they said I had to fill in a form, but I said I could not fill in the form because I can't read or write. But they said 'that's the rules'. There should be jobs for people who can't read or write, and people should not need to fill in a form to apply for these jobs.

– Maryanne

It used to be that people with disabilities were not allowed to work. Nowadays, we are allowed to work, but it is too hard to get work! And it's not fair. If someone with disability and someone without disability come in asking for work, who will they choose? But the person without disability may slack off when the person with disability may work very hard.

- Maryanne

5. How can more supported employees be provided the opportunity to choose open employment?

Employers need to speak to people using the method they understand, e.g. vision impaired people need braille, those who can't read need video or audio. Instead of giving people forms to fill in, take the time to ask people what they can do, what they have done and what experiences they have had.

– Maryanne

6. Why is participant access to concurrent DES and ADE support services so low?

See Q4.

7. What is the role a supported employer can play in building employee capacity for transition to open employment?

Employment of people with disability needs to be done everywhere. We need to show people, like those who can't read and write, how to work. We need to build on everyone's strengths.

- Rachael

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8. What will attract NDIS participants to employment opportunities in the future?

More peer support and leadership opportunities

Working for ADE's is a low rate of pay because of the support required, but I have worked as a project worker and co-facilitator on disability education projects, and for these projects I will get \$20 to \$30 per hour and there will be people to support me in those roles as well, including to help me sign the employment contracts.

– Kathryn

Clearer roles without exploitation for people with disability

Sometimes in the workplace employers will get people with disabilities to do their jobs for them, for example telling a co-worker that they are not doing their job properly, or being asked by a supervisor to supervise another person with disability while they have lunch. This is not fair as it is outside the worker's role.

– Rachael and Kathryn

Measures to Prevent Bullying and Workplace Harassment

Sometimes other workers are nasty and don't fold things properly and it would get me in trouble. The support staff need to talk to the people who are trying their best to get the job done properly. They need to pay more attention to bullying.

– Kelly

A friend of mine went to work where there was bullying and had to quit his job. They stood over the top of him and gave him too many things to do, just sent him off to do extra jobs when he hadn't finished what he was doing. He was sent to the shops to get things and told he would be fired if he didn't come back with the right money.

– Maryanne

Flexible support and education for work

Yes, I believe that people with a disability should have an equal right for employment, as much as a normal person does. And they should be able to learn and grow with help they might need for their jobs. Or at least go to T.A.F.E. or university to learn their skills for work they want to do. As long as they don't get bullied, even though they have a disability or not.

– Rachael

Ability to work at own pace

It's hard for me to work hard and fast because of my ABI. I get tired, so I'm used to working at my own speed.

– David

We need places we can work at our own pace and not get rushed. We will learn better.

– Maryanne

Simple communication

Some people use language I don't understand.

– Maryanne

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