**SUBMISSION TO NDSE CONSULTATION – T.Cunnett Friday, 14 May 2021**

Firstly, can I just point out that you've omitted the Northern Territory from your list of States and Territories on the online form? Not an auspicious start.

With regard to the draft NDES, I believe this document shows a fundamental lack of respect and understanding of people with a disability. The assumption seems to be that if you have a disability, you must need "support", "services" or "development". It's incredibly patronising in tone. As a person with a disability, having served in senior management roles for many years, I resent the stereotype you're perpetuating. I don't need "support", "services" or "development".

What I do need is for employers to:

1. Comply with their obligations under the DDA (something that I really didn't see much reference to in this document). This means providing workplace adjustments, and the policies, tools and processes to enable them. A great start in achieving this would be to create the equivalent of the DSE (Disability Standards in Education) for employment. This kind of explanatory legislation, subordinate to the DDA would ensure that employers understood their obligations, and were supported to comply with the DDA. It would also enable far greater clarity and accountability. The online training for the DSE shows you how much more advanced your strategy could be: <https://www.nccd.edu.au/resources-and-tools/professional-learning/format/e-learning-5>
2. Change the archaic work culture of many workplaces, which leads to a lack of diversity in the first place. We do this through promoting inclusion. That means using the principles of universal design to create systems that are inclusive of all types of diversity. If workplaces were genuinely inclusive, we wouldn't need special services for "people with a disability". We wouldn't need to be singled out all the time, because every employee would be getting what they need to be productive and well at work. A cursory scan of the disability employment studies and literature shows that this is consistently identified as a key employment issue by people with a disability.

The consistent "singling out" of people with a disability in this strategy - setting up policies and programs which mark people with a disability as "different" and separate to "normal employees" - is what creates toxic cultures in the first place. I see no understanding of the concept of inclusion reflected in this policy document whatsoever. It doesn't seem to align with the Federal Government's own Inclusion Strategy at all.

The draft strategy is simply not good enough. My advice would be to commission somebody like Australian Network on Disability and/or Diversity Council of Australia to produce a federal employment strategy. This needs to be based on evidence and expertise.