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Disability Employment Policy Section
Department of Social Services
GPO Box 9820
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

Public Consultation for the National Disability Employment Strategy

I work with my daughter, Hannah [REDACTED] on a daily basis, to ensure she is active in her community. This is a considerable challenge for her as she has cerebral palsy and uses a powered wheelchair. I am included in a group of four. We assist her in managing her NDIS package, housing, transport, employment, social activities and therapy.

We have some suggestions on how to assist people with disabilities in their quest to find employment.

SUBSIDIES or TAX BENEFITS

- **Subsidise the first 12 months of employment**, this will help people get an into a business. It is extremely difficult to be invited for an interview in a competitive process. Continuing this subsidy for 12 months will give the employer time to see the person's value and contribution. A period of six months may not be long enough as settling in can take some time.
- **Give grants** to renovation bathrooms, entrances and workspaces at a business. For example, adding ramps, lifts, automated doors, quiet areas, making larger spaces, so there are no obstacles for an employer wishing to employ someone with a disability.
- **Immediate tax advantages** for height adjustable desks, assistive technology and software, office equipment, assistive technologies to enable inclusion.

LIAISON, EVALUATION

- Allocate a **liaison** for employers and employees, for the co-ordination of needs, around the employment opportunity, including transport, work environment etc.
- **Coach and support** managers of employees with disabilities.

POLICY

- **Evaluate**—assess workplaces for employment of disabled employees and register these employers, so they become **Employers of Choice**.
- **Promote these employers** in positive ways to businesses and the community.
- Build in disability access standards to **Quality Systems** for larger companies.
- Require completion of an **annual disability report** by companies, as is the case with the annual gender employment report

- Revise minimum **building standards** regarding access, regardless of age of building. Currently owners of properties in Australia are not required to renovate old buildings to make them accessible. This is supported by laws. For example, many old buildings do not have to add lifts if they are heritage listed. This is not the case in the UK, Holyrood Palace, built in 1128 has an operating lift.

TRAINING & RECRUITMENT

- **Increase awareness and education** around disabilities and employment to begin at high school. Discuss what is available for people with disabilities, eg which institutions offer employment and training, which careers are most suitable. This needs to start when subjects are being selected in high school. Currently it happens after school, which is too late.
- Offer **incentives for recruiters** to take on candidates with disabilities, pair them with a liaison officer to handle the disability aspect of the employment with the potential employer.
- Subsidise **training** for people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities study as it is so hard to find a job. This will make them more attractive as an employee.

TRANSPORT

- The taxi subsidy scheme is essential to enable involvement in employment
- During 2020 and COVID, there was too much risk for vulnerable people to go out into the community. Because of this drop in demand many access cab drivers left to go to other jobs. This has resulted in a significant lack of drivers, to the point where the service is unworkable and unreliable. We have experienced this in Adelaide and Melbourne
- The transport budget in NDIS is very good, but as cabs are now very hard to find, could additional incentives be offered to drivers to attract them back into the access cab scheme?

If you would like any further explanation or information regarding these suggestions, or have any questions, please feel free to contact me on the phone numbers above.

Yours faithfully



Annie Fabig

(additional team members- Bianca Renna, Keren Balkwill, Emma Parkinson)