



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Inclusive. Accessible. Diverse.

Shaping your new disability employment support program

Consultation paper

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Artist: Robin Warren

Robin Warren (b 1971, London) has developed his artistic practice for over 20 years and continues to explore brightly coloured and organically shaped abstract imagery. Warren's works in Copic marker, oil pastel and texta are reminiscent of cellular organisms in bloom that often radiate from a central focal point. Warren often renders multiple layers of colour that create a dream-like state as they reverberate across the paper. Though soothing, his works can have a strangely unsettling visceral or viral quality that is enhanced by his use of unreal and unlikely colour combinations. His work has been exhibited widely and appears in private collections throughout Australia.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Social Services (the department) acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia on which we gather, live, work and stand. We acknowledge all traditional custodians, their Elders past, present and emerging and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to their culture, community, land, sea and water.

Related documents

Further information can be found in the following documents:

- [Mid-term Review of the Disability Employment Services \(DES\) Program | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/mid-term-review-of-the-disability-employment-services-des-program)
- [National Disability Employment Strategy | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/national-disability-employment-strategy)
- [National Disability Employment Strategy | engage.dss.gov.au](https://engage.dss.gov.au)
- [A new National Disability Strategy | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/a-new-national-disability-strategy)
- [New Employment Services Model - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/new-employment-services-model)
- [New Remote Engagement Program Discussion Paper \(niaa.gov.au\)](https://niaa.gov.au/new-remote-engagement-program-discussion-paper)
- [Willing to Work: national report released \(humanrights.gov.au\)](https://humanrights.gov.au/willing-to-work)
- [Participant Employment Strategy | NDIS](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participant-employment-strategy)

A note on this paper

This consultation paper is not Government policy. Public consultation on this paper is an opportunity to work together and share in the ownership of a new disability employment support program that improves employment outcomes for people with disability.

Responses to this paper will help the department understand what is important to consider when designing the new disability employment support program. The information will also guide what further engagement and consultation needs to happen before making recommendations to Government.

Note the paper is limited in its scope to the parameters, settings and features that will be included in the design of a new disability employment support program. The design of the new program will not cover broader Commonwealth Government policies, such as income support payments and policies, or matters that are the responsibility of state and territory governments.

The closing date for receiving submissions is **4 January 2022**. Further information about making a submission is at the end of this document.



INTRODUCTION

People with disability want to work and have equal opportunity to experience the benefits that work brings. This includes improved mental and physical health, financial security, increased self-esteem and social connection.

It is important people with disability have the skills and supports to participate effectively and maximise their potential for a career, not just a job. When people with disability have a career, not just a job, it allows them to unlock their talents and contribute to the economy. Greater workforce participation also enables employers to access a wider pool of talent and skills to drive economic growth.

The case for change

The operating environment is evolving

Major policy changes have been introduced in the last decade that affect people with disability, including the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

There are deeper structural changes shaping the broader economy, including Australia's ageing population, advances in digital technology, the impact of increased automation on roles previously undertaken by people with disability, and the need for a more highly skilled workforce. The nature of work is also changing, and more people now work in part-time, short-term and casual jobs, or are self-employed.¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted possibilities and opportunities for a more flexible approach to work (e.g. remote work, improved technology) which can minimise the impact of daily barriers for people with disability, such as a lack of suitable transport or accessible buildings.³

Projections from the National Skills Commission indicate almost a million new jobs will be created over the five years to November 2025. The majority of these jobs will be within five growth industries: health care and social assistance; construction; accommodation and food services; education and training; and professional, scientific and technical services.⁴

¹ Senate Select Committee, *Future of Work and Workers*, 2018, [Report – Parliament of Australia](#) ([aph.gov.au](#)) [accessed 1 October 2021] p 61.

² Department of Social Services, *National Disability Employment Consultation Paper*, April 2021, [national-disability-employment-strategy-consultation-paper.pdf](#) ([dss.gov.au](#)) [accessed 28 September 2021], p 3; Scherer, Jennifer "Australians with disability say working from home should be possible after the pandemic." SBS News, 18 August 2020 <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/australians-with-disability-sayworking-from-home-should-be-possible-after-the-pandemic> [accessed 11 January 2021].

³ Australian Government, *Labour Market Information Portal*, 23 September 2021, [Welcome to the Labour Market Information Portal](#). ([lmip.gov.au](#)) [accessed 28 September 2021].



Employment support for people with disability needs to evolve

In order for people with disability to benefit from the changing economic and employment environment, employment support needs to take account of emerging opportunities and not just focus on traditional avenues to work.

The Disability Employment Services (DES) program is the Government's flagship program to support people with disability into employment. As at 1 September 2021, 108 DES service providers support more than 310,000 people across 3,749 sites and 6,582 outlets in metropolitan and regional Australia. The Government is currently spending more than \$1.4 billion per year on DES.

The DES program is a specialist service supporting people with disability who have been assessed based on need to receive this service. It helps people with intensive supports, building confidence and capability to prepare for employment and find a job, and providing ongoing support or services to keep the job. This may include access to training and education at Certificate III level and above, resume writing and interview skills. It may also include working with an employer to access reasonable adjustments and reduce the cost to employers. DES providers support participants in their first 52 weeks of employment and can continue to provide support if required.

In 2018, the Government reformed the DES program. The aim of the reform was to provide job seekers with greater choice over their disability employment provider, and to boost employment rates. The 2018 reforms had a number of positive benefits, for example, there was an increase in the number of people accessing the program and participants appreciated the ability to choose the provider that was right for them.

A mid-term review of DES found that, while the 2018 reforms had some positive results, overall the program was not meeting its objectives efficiently and effectively. The review found many people with disability felt they were being placed into jobs that did not match their skills and interests, or jobs with limited opportunities for career development or to maximise their earning potential. Employers and participants found systems hard to navigate, including the process of selecting a provider.

In 2020, the Government committed to reforming the DES program to meet the changing economic and labour market.

Mainstream employment services are being transformed

The DES program sits within a broader landscape of disability and employment support services. The Government is reviewing many of its employment services programs to ensure they are fit for purpose and ready to respond to economic and labour market opportunities.

From 1 July 2022, the New Employment Services Model will commence, replacing jobactive. It will include a new Digital Employment Services Platform for job-ready job seekers to self-manage their job search online. The new enhanced services will be targeted to those most in need of additional employment support.⁴ In 2023, the Community Development Program, which delivers employment support in rural and remote locations, will be replaced with a new remote engagement program.⁵

⁴ Department of Education, Skills and Employment, *New Employment Services Model*, 18 August 2021, [New Employment Services Model - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government\(dese.gov.au\)](https://www.gov.au/department-of-education-skills-and-employment/publications/new-employment-services-model) [accessed 28 September 2021].

⁵ Employment services for people with a disability in remote regions are provided by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) via the Community Development Program.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Department of Social Services (the department) knows improving employment outcomes for people with disability can only happen if we work together. We know the best outcomes will come by working in partnership with people with disability, employers, providers and other key stakeholders.

The new disability employment model will start in 2023. Between now and then, we will jointly design approaches to improve employment outcomes and exchange ideas about what success looks like.

Importantly, we are taking into account views and feedback provided over the last several years by people with disability, their families, carers, friends, advocacy organisations, peak bodies and service providers during consultations for the development of Australia's Disability Strategy⁶ and the National Disability Employment Strategy.⁷ The Disability Royal Commission is also providing an opportunity for people with disability to have their say and tell their stories about trying to find and maintain employment.⁸

People have told us employment and financial security are important issues for people with disability. In particular, we understand job seekers can benefit from support during all stages of job readiness and that people's situation will change throughout their lives.

This consultation paper covers topics that people with disability, employers and other stakeholders have said are important to consider in reforming disability employment, including:

- [Who should be able to access a specialist disability employment program?](#)
- [How can we simplify entry to the disability employment support model?](#)
- [What employment services and supports would most help people with disability?](#)
- [What employment services and supports would most help young people?](#)
- [What support do employers need to attract, employ and retain people with disability?](#)
- [How do we best tailor mutual obligation requirements to increase the likelihood of people with disability finding work in the future?](#)
- [How can funding arrangements incentivise good work outcomes?](#)
- [How do we drive high quality service and supports?](#)
- [How do we measure success?](#)

The department would like to hear from you about these issues and other areas that will help improve employment outcomes. You may wish to provide a general submission or answer some, or all, of the questions in this paper.

Please see the final section of this paper, [How you can provide feedback](#), for information on how to make a submission.

Your input to this process will be important for the design of a new disability employment support program, so please have your say.

⁶ Department of Social Services, *A new National Disability Strategy – Stage 2 consultations*, 7 May 2021, <https://engage.dss.gov.au/nds-stage2-consultation/> [accessed 28 September 2021]; Department of Social Services, *A new National Disability Strategy*, 19 August 2021, <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/a-new-national-disability-strategy> [accessed 28 September 2021].

⁷ Department of Social Services, *National Disability Employment Strategy*, 12 April 2021, <https://engage.dss.gov.au/national-disability-employment-strategy/> [accessed 5 November 2021].

⁸ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 12 May 2020, *Employment | Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability* [accessed 4 October 2021].



DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Who should be able to access a specialist disability employment program?

One in five Australians, or around 4.4 million people, live with disability. Of these, 1.4 million people have profound or severe disabilities.⁹

Currently, people eligible for DES include those with a disability, injury or health condition that will last more than 6 months. As at 30 September 2021, there were more than 310,000 people participating in the DES program.

People with disability experience different challenges when seeking employment. These challenges may be shaped and compounded by factors like disability type and age, or whether a person is LGBTQIA+, lives in a rural or remote area, or belongs to a First Nations or culturally and linguistically diverse community.

People need different supports to help find and maintain employment and build a career. For example, many people with disabilities work without any disability-related support, especially when workplaces are accessible. Others might require employers to provide individualised adaptations or more intensive support.

For some people with disability, the support provided through mainstream employment services such as the New Employment Services Model may be enough to help them to find and keep a job. Services offered by these mainstream employment programs include digital job search and learning activities and access to phone or other online support.

People with disability who experience significant barriers to employment may need intensive supports in all aspects of their employment pathway, while others may need more targeted or point-in-time supports, such as access to modified workplaces or assistive technology.

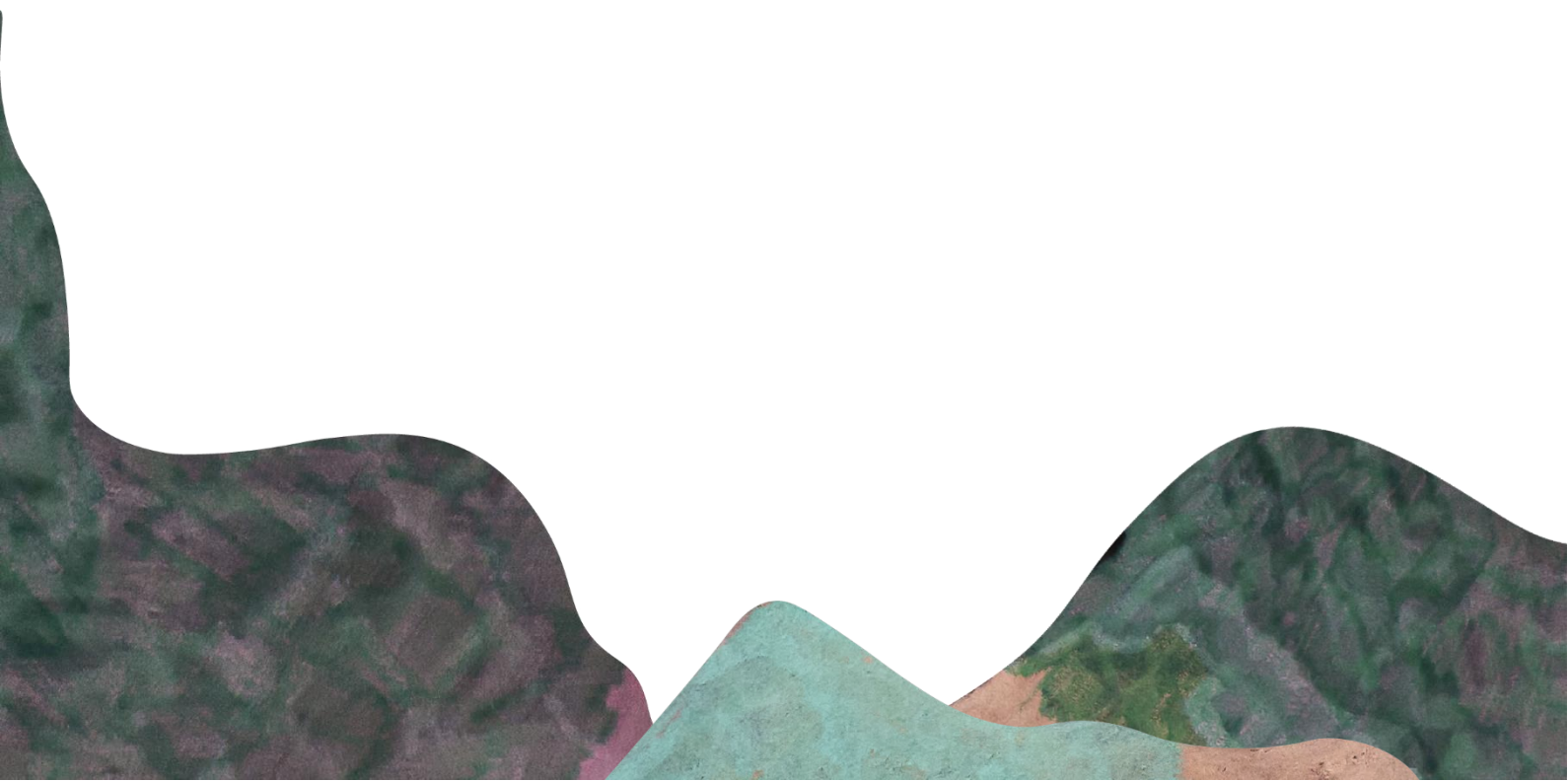
For some people with disability, participation in community engagement, volunteering or short-term unpaid work can deliver skills and experience as a precursor to obtaining meaningful employment. Community engagement or volunteering may help address the shortage of volunteers across some sectors, while providing opportunities for people with disability to build networks and future employment opportunities. However, people with disability must be supported with fair conditions conducive to positive engagement, and effective checks must be put in place to ensure vulnerable people are protected from exploitation.

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2018*, October 2019.



Key questions

- 1.1. Who should be able to access a disability employment support program?
- 1.2. Should a future disability employment support program include employment pathways such as casual and part-time employment, community engagement, voluntary work and short-term unpaid work experience?
- 1.3. How can a future disability employment program better align with other programs such as the New Employment Services Model and the Community Development Program?
- 1.4. What is the role of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in supporting employment pathways, and how can this complement a future disability employment support program?





2. How can we simplify entry to the disability employment support model?

People with disability need a simple, effective way to get employment support that best meets their needs.

Feedback on the DES program has highlighted issues and challenges with the current assessment process. In particular, the assessment process is seen as time consuming and confusing for job seekers. Questions have also been raised about the accuracy of the assessments, citing inconsistencies with the identification of work capacities and inaccurate recording of barriers and interventions.

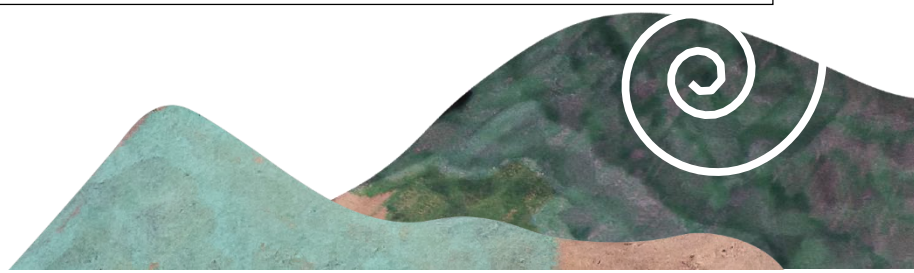
The reliability and validity of assessments are important to ensure people end up in the right employment service with the right support. Work capacity assessments are also critical because provider payments are linked to achieving employment outcomes that match assessed work capacity. If work capacity is assessed incorrectly, participants may end up under-employed or required to undertake work beyond their capacity. The accuracy of the work capacity assessment is also important in the social security system, in part because it helps to set an individual's job search requirements if they receive income support.

Currently, the assessment process for entry to the DES program is a *deficit-based model* designed to establish the existence of a disability and obtain proof of inability to work. A focus on what an individual cannot do does not reflect how most people with disabilities have full working capacity when provided with the adequate supports. Others are able to work part-time, either permanently or temporarily.

Using an alternative *strength-based approach* for an individual with disability's employment journey could start with an assessment of their employment capacity and capability. This would then determine what employment supports would best help them to establish or maintain a connection to the workforce.

Key questions

- 2.1. How can the assessment process be improved to connect people with disability to the right employment services?
- 2.2. What should be considered during the assessment process when determining support required to help a person reach their work potential?
- 2.3. How can the assessment process stream an individual with disability toward the right type of employment support, depending on need and goal?
- 2.4. Are there different assessments needed at different stages of an individual's work journey, as they prepare for work, find and maintain employment, and progress their career?





3. What employment services and supports would most help people with disability?

The evidence indicates that supports and services should be tailored to help individuals with disability prepare for work, find employment and get the support needed to maintain employment and progress their career. One size does not fit all.

Effective support needs to take into account each person's skills, experience and aspirations for work. Supports and services should be tailored to help people with disability prepare for work, find a job, support them to keep that job and progress a career. Some people may acquire a disability later in life, or become unemployed later in life, and need a different set of supports and services to help them adjust to a new role or new career.

A range of supports may be required, depending on the individual, their aspirations and specific requirements of the job. Some people may need help to build their confidence and explore their work interests, while others may only need support to find a job.

Some people with disability may only need help when they start a job, such as reasonable adjustments to ensure they can properly undertake their functions at work. Some people may need additional short-term assistance to adapt when things in the workplace change. Other people may need assistance at work on a regular and ongoing basis, to build their independence at work over time. Some employees with a disability benefit from ongoing assessment and subsequent tailored support to continue to thrive in employment.¹⁰

Ensuring a good fit for both the employer and the job seeker requires employment service providers to understand the strengths and capabilities of the job seeker, the supports they need and the skills and attributes employers are seeking. Appropriate job matching and culture fit are linked to participants achieving long-term employment outcomes.

Key questions

- 3.1. What has been **your** experience of receiving employment support from a DES or other employment services provider? What was good about the support? What improvements would you recommend?
- 3.2. What type of services and support would best help a person with disability find and keep a suitable job, and progress their career? Who should provide this support?
- 3.3. What education and training opportunities help people with disability overcome the entry barriers to employment?
- 3.4. How can people receiving disability employment services also be supported to address other barriers to employment (e.g. health service or housing assistance)?
- 3.5. What employment support do mature age people with disability need to successfully gain or retain employment, or transition into new employment or a new career?

¹⁰ Brooke, V, Brooke, A, Schall, C, Wehman, P, McDonough, J, Thompson, K, & Smith, J, *Employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder Achieving Long-Term Employment Success: A Retrospective Review of Employment Retention and Intervention*, Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities 43(3), July 2018, pp. 181–193.



4. What employment services and supports would most help young people?

The transition from school to work is an important time for young people with disability, as it marks their entry into adulthood and sets them up for future independence. Young people with disability may face barriers in their transition from school to work and need focused support to bridge between the two.

A recent survey found that 92 per cent of young people with disability saw paid employment as their preferred post-school goal, highlighting the importance of building effective pathways from school to employment.¹¹ The transition from tertiary education into employment is also an important pathway into a career.

Research shows that delayed or unsuccessful transitions from school to work can lead to economic, social and personal disadvantage for young people (regardless of disability).¹² Studies also indicate that young people are more likely to be successful post-school if they receive support to develop their employment skills and aspirations early in life.¹³

The DES program currently provides support to a limited group of students with disability to make the transition to work. Other employment programs that include a focus on supporting young people into work, such as the [Transition to Work](#) program, may provide ideas for how we could better target a future disability employment support model to the needs of young people with disability.

Key questions

- 4.1. What support do young people with disability need to successfully move out of education into suitable work?
- 4.2. What best practices from existing DES or other employment programs help young people with disability find and maintain a job?
- 4.3. Should there be assistance to prepare young people to think about work much earlier than after they leave school?
- 4.4. How can disability employment services work better with the education system to enhance employment prospects for young people?

¹¹ Department of Social Services, *Disability and Career Advice Survey Report*, 4 March 2021.

¹² Skattebol, J, Hill, T, Griffiths, A & Wong, M, *Unpacking Youth Unemployment: Final Report*, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, September 2015, p.8.

¹³ European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), *The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: A guide to Key Findings for Effective Policy and Practice*, ELGPN, November 2014; Crosbie, J, Murfitt, K, Hayward, M & Wilson, E, 2019, Literature review: employment and economic participation of people with disability, Deakin University, Melbourne.



5. What support do employers need to attract, employ and retain people with disability?

Employer engagement is essential to finding employment for people with disability. The new disability employment support program will not succeed without employers who are willing to recruit and retain people with disability.

Increasingly, employing individuals with disability is understood to provide benefits for businesses. This includes more effective problem solving, increased innovation, increased revenue, staff commitment and an opportunity for businesses to make a positive social impact. For some businesses, employing people with disability can contribute to a triple bottom line accounting approach.

Some employers may lack confidence in their ability to recruit, develop and retain employees with disability. When employers want to hire job seekers with disability, or to support existing employees with disability, they may not know where to start or find the right information and supports, or be worried they cannot support people effectively.¹⁴

There are a number of incentives and supports available to assist employers to hire and retain people with disability. For example, DES currently has a range of incentives to support employers hire people with disabilities, including wage subsidies and ongoing coaching. Targeted support is also available through the [Employment Assistance Fund](#), which covers the costs of reasonable adjustments in the workplace.¹⁹

Key questions

- 5.1. What are the most important things that can be done to build an employer's confidence to employ a person with disability?
- 5.2. What services and supports does a disability employment support service need to offer employers to enable them to recruit people with disability, maintain their employment and promote career growth?
- 5.3. What are examples of good practice of employer engagement and employer-led initiatives that have been shown to improve employment outcomes for people with disability? How could these be scaled in the disability employment program?
- 5.4. What other information, services and supports do employers need to support employees with disability?

¹⁴ Department of Social Services, *National Disability Employment Consultation Paper*, April 2021, [national-disability-employment-strategy-consultation-paper.pdf \(dss.gov.au\)](#) [accessed 4 October 2021], p 8-9.

¹⁵ In July 2021, the UK Department of (DWP) published its response to the *Health is everyone's business* consultation. This sets out the Government's next steps on ways of stemming the flow of people with long-term health conditions out of employment, including the case for providing financial support for smaller employers to purchase occupational health services.



6. How do we best tailor mutual obligation requirements to increase the likelihood of people with disability finding work in the future?

People receiving unemployment payments have an obligation to take steps towards supporting themselves through paid employment. Meeting mutual obligation requirements is a core eligibility requirement for unemployment payments in social security law.

The legislation allows some flexibility in tailoring the specifics of what mutual obligation requirements entail, within the broad policy principles that requirements should be along a pathway to and increasing the chances of recipients finding employment – even if that is not an immediate goal.

A key principle is that job seekers cannot be penalised for not meeting a requirement that is beyond their control.

A new disability employment support program that includes unemployment payment recipients should address how they can meet their mutual obligation requirements and how mutual obligation requirements can be best structured to increase the likelihood of job seekers securing work.

Under the current DES program, DES providers have a dual role supporting people with disability into employment and undertaking mutual obligation compliance. Some employers have indicated that they receive a large number of applications from job seekers applying for roles outside their skills and experience in order to meet mutual obligations, placing a burden on employers.

Key questions

- 6.1. What specific assistance or flexibilities would better support people with disability to meet their mutual obligation requirements?
- 6.2. How should a future program consider other forms of participation and engagement, such as voluntary work or community engagement?



7. How can funding arrangements incentivise good work outcomes?

The new funding model must provide the right incentives for providers to support participants to find and keep a good job. It should also balance incentives for good performance, while discouraging unwanted behaviours such as parking and churning of participants.

The current payment model for DES includes service fees, outcome fees (including 'pathway outcomes', such as participation in training), and ongoing support fees.

There is a view that current funding arrangements do not provide the right incentives or adequately link provider performance to revenue. For example, feedback suggests the DES model rewards 'speed to placement' where providers receive greater financial incentive to place the most employable people into employment as soon as possible. Some job seekers have reported being placed into any role regardless of their interests, qualifications, and capabilities. Participants who are not seen as employable may be left in a holding pattern for years, or move from one provider to another with no real long-term outcomes.

Concerns have been raised regarding the long-term effectiveness of the current outcome-based funding model with a primary focus on 13 and 26 week outcomes. As a result, some employers and participants report they are dissatisfied with DES because they churn through short-term placements that do not lead to long-term outcomes.

The current funding model also does not sufficiently recognise the changing nature of work and the many types of employment outcomes that relate to the gig economy, freelance work, self-employment, and increased casualisation of the workforce. A focus on work capacity and benchmark hours adds complexity to funding arrangements and does not readily align to changes in Australia's labour market. Funding arrangements that focus less on benchmark hours and duration of employment, and more on the placement and earnings of a participant in a role may better reflect the contemporary labour market and the goals and aspirations of people with disability.

Key questions

- 7.1. How could the future funding arrangements ensure services across a continuum of work readiness, placement and retention are tailored to the needs of the participant?
- 7.2. What are the right pricing and funding arrangements, balancing provider viability with the cost of delivering high quality services to participants and employers?
- 7.3. How could the future funding model be adapted to recognise changes in the labour market and types of employment available in the modern Australian economy?
- 7.4. How can service quality and expertise be rewarded and balanced against quantity of outcomes?
- 7.5. How could funding arrangements for ongoing support be improved to ensure supports and services are tailored to the needs of the participant and the employer?
- 7.6. What do good providers currently do to support people with disability into work?



8. How do we drive high quality services and supports?

Feedback from the provider sector on the current DES model suggests there is an opportunity to improve quality and encourage innovation in service delivery through a more effectively regulated and dynamic marketplace.

An effectively regulated market could lead to stronger incentives for providers to make competitive service delivery offers to participants. Improved regulatory arrangements could reduce the barriers and cost of entry, encouraging new and innovative providers to enter the market. An effective arrangement could also make it easier for providers to partner with employers, leading to more job opportunities for people with disability.

The regulatory arrangements will also be informed by the legal mechanism for engaging service providers under the new disability employment support model. There are a number of options that could be used for legally engaging providers in program service provision, with the DES mid-term review noting three possible models:

- Grant agreements: funding is paid to service providers as a grant and governed by relevant legislation.
- Contracting: providers enter into a contract with the Government.
- Licensing: providers that meet certain conditions would be formally permitted to provide services, with an expectation that market entry and exit is easier than under contractual or grant arrangements.

DES providers work to the National Standards for Disability Services and must uphold their Quality Assurance based on the Standards. However, feedback has noted that some DES generalist providers are not equipped with the specialist knowledge required to adequately support particular cohorts (e.g. people with intellectual disability or autism) into meaningful employment. In addition, there is a view that DES staff, in the most part, are not appropriately qualified to provide the on-the-job support needed to enable job seekers with disabilities like autism to thrive in the workplace.

Key questions

- 8.1. How should an effective and efficient competitive provider market be structured and how should business be allocated?
- 8.2. How can the future program settings encourage and reward innovation and continuous improvement? What works well in the current program?
- 8.3. What arrangements should be in place for market regulation and quality assurance of services?
- 8.4. What legal model would be most appropriate to manage the terms and conditions of the agreement between Government and disability employment services providers?
- 8.5. What is needed to lift workforce capability and the quality of the workforce delivering disability employment services and supports for both participants and employers?
- 8.6. Is there a market need for specialist providers (disability/industry/age cohorts) that would increase employment opportunities?



9. How do we measure success?

A well thought out program performance framework will measure what success looks like, allow for monitoring and review of the program, and public reporting on program performance. It will enable the Government to understand if the program is meeting its objectives, and is a key tool for public accountability. It also gives providers a framework under which they can develop their business models, aligning delivery to program objectives.

Timely and reliable information is needed to inform participant and employer choices. Feedback indicates there is currently a lack of transparent information available for participants about what services they are eligible to receive and the quality of providers to deliver those services.

Key questions

- 9.1. What will success look like for:
 - a) people with disability
 - b) the community
 - c) employers
 - d) service providers
 - e) Government
- 9.2. What data do we need to know if the program has been effective?
- 9.3. How can people with disability, employers and providers help to measure and report on the performance of the new program?
- 9.4. What do people with disability and employers need to make an informed choice to select the best provider for their needs and how should this information be made available?



HOW YOU CAN PROVIDE FEEDBACK

- Visit the consultation website at [DSS Engage](#).
- Send us a written submission at:

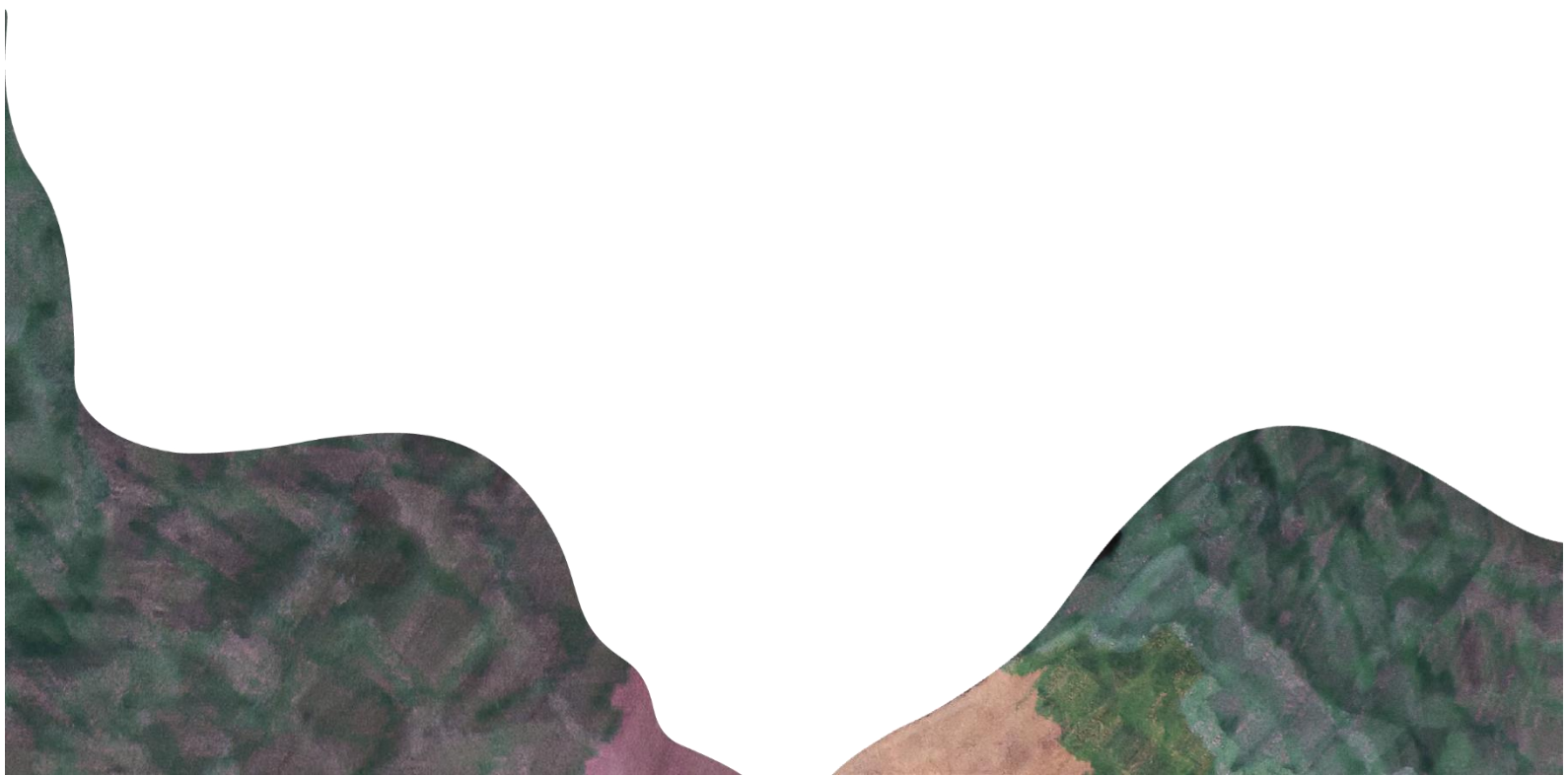
Disability Employment Reforms Branch
GPO Box 9820
Department of Social Services
Canberra ACT 2601

When providing a submission online via DSS Engage, you will be asked to specify whether you would like your submission published on the DSS website.

If you send your submission via email or post, please specify whether you would like your submission to be published online.

The closing date for receiving written submissions or those through DSS Engage is 11:59pm, **4 January 2022**. Please consider postal delivery times if providing a written submission.

If you have any further questions about this paper, please contact us at DESConsultation@dss.gov.au.





APPENDIX 1- RESEARCH LIST

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2018*, October 2019.

Australian Government, *Labour Market Information Portal*, September 2021.

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APPENDIX 2 – DES MONTHLY REPORT – AUGUST 2021¹⁶



DES Monthly Report - August 2021

DES Summary Report

Total DES Caseload at 31 August 2021: 312,074

The Caseload for the 31st of August 2021 is 312,074. A decrease of -0.9% from the 31st July 2021. This includes 137,390 (44%) in the Disability Management Service program and 174,684 (56%) in the Employment Support Service (ESS) program. The caseload was distributed to 108 providers and 3,749 sites.

DES CASELOAD					Status	DMS	ESS	Total DES	Percentage
Gender	DMS	ESS	Total DES	Percentage	Referred but not Commenced	5,037	7,550	12,587	4.0%
Male	69,962	93,294	163,256	52.3%	Commenced	97,704	129,922	227,626	72.9%
Female	67,428	81,390	148,818	47.7%	Suspended	34,649	37,212	71,861	23.1%
DES Age Distribution	DMS	ESS	Total DES	Percentage	Phase - Commenced	DMS	ESS	Total DES	Percentage
Under 21	3,243	12,149	15,392	4.9%	Employment Assistance	65,186	82,776	147,962	65.0%
21 - 24	7,796	17,804	25,600	8.2%	Post Placement	30,632	31,436	62,068	27.3%
25 - 34	19,606	32,004	51,610	16.5%	Ongoing Support	1,886	15,710	17,596	7.7%
35 - 44	22,056	26,851	48,907	15.7%	Primary Disability	DMS	ESS	Total DES	Percentage
45 - 49	15,744	16,866	32,610	10.4%	Physical	75,434	59,475	134,909	43.2%
50 - 54	18,697	19,346	38,043	12.2%	Psychiatric	52,240	73,324	125,564	40.2%
55 - 64	43,764	43,507	87,271	28.0%	Specific Learning	1,333	6,549	7,882	2.5%
65 and over	6,484	6,157	12,641	4.1%	Intellectual	394	9,421	9,815	3.1%
Job Seeker Cohorts	DMS	ESS	Total DES	Percentage	Neurological	4,200	7,196	11,396	3.7%
Indigenous	8,539	13,060	21,599	6.9%	Autism	935	11,435	12,370	4.0%
CALD*	30,933	27,529	58,462	18.7%	Hearing	1,033	2,262	3,295	1.1%
Homeless	9,976	12,796	22,772	7.3%	Acquired brain injury	594	2,467	3,061	1.0%
Refugees	7,779	7,055	14,834	4.8%	Vision	1,065	1,927	2,992	1.0%
Ex Offender	10,394	14,417	24,811	8.0%	Speech	88	355	443	0.1%
					Deafblind (Dual Sensory)	30	161	191	0.1%
					Unknown/Not Stated	44	112	156	0.0%

*CALD = Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

¹⁶ Disability Employment Services, [Welcome to the Labour Market Information Portal. \(Imip.gov.au\)](https://www.imip.gov.au/) accessed 5 October 2021.