1.1 Who should be able to access a disability employment support program

People with a disability who might not be able to access typical employment opportunities should be able to get assistance to explore and start micro-enterprises that address their needs directly, maybe in non-traditional ways.

1.2 Should a future disability employment support program include employment pathways such as casual and part-time employment, community engagement, voluntary and short term unpaid experience

Yes, the part-time employment and community engagement but no to the voluntary and short term unpaid experiences as people should be paid for any hours that they are able to work, as often it's limited for their health reasons and pension requirements. In most situations, I feel volunteering and unpaid experiences shouldn't be included but unless it is linked to a tangible outcome for the individual. The other major employment pathway the DES should support is micro-enterprise.

1.3 How can a future disability employment program better align with other programs such as the new employment services model and community development program

The current model makes it not a client-centred approach, just what the employment services have access to in the local community eg Coles. Which often than not that isn't what the person with a disability wants or meets with their needs and necessarily the individual interests. I have used disability employment services in the past and wanted support in finding community services type jobs but was given mostly inaccessible on your feet all day type jobs which didn't meet my needs just the employer's requirements. You have to listen and understand the person's disability requirements and then work with the person to find employment opportunities that the person actually wants to work within. This, in turn, makes the person feel discriminated against even more because they want to work but there are so many barriers that limit access to what should be an equal right to employment.

1.4 What is the role of the NDIS in supporting employment pathways, how can this complement future disability employment support programs

I don't feel the NDIS does enough for employment opportunities, access to funding, skills and training for individuals with disabilities so there's even more of a need for DES providers to do their part in helping lower the super high 1 - 10 unemployment statistic for 15 - 24 yrs of age are twice as likely to be unemployed than with a disability. There needs to be a bridge in the gap which occurs from the education to employment pathway. (ie training, skills, workshops, tafe and higher education opportunities for individuals once they leave school)From my experience when these programs are offered their seems to be more and more funding cuts this causes the projects to be unstable then impacting the individual once again.

2.1. How can the assessment process be improved to connect people with disabilities to the right employment services? Ensuring the assessment process is more simplified and informing individuals of what services are available for them to access.

It's important to lead a strength-based process before things can't do. Educating disabled individuals about understanding what they could offer with supporting in keeping and maintaining a job. Finding the range of supports available and what is relevant to the disabled individual.

2.2. What should be considered during the assessment process when determining support required to help a person reach their work potential?
Judging individuals on their abilities and strengths rather than focusing on their limitations.

2.3. How can the assessment process stream an individual with a disability toward the right type of employment support, depending on need and goal? Following individuals interests, basing types of employment being offered on their strengths and working alongside individuals on a 1 to 1 approach as everyone has different needs, limitations and goals in which they wish to achieve.

2.4. Are their 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?
Using the strength-based approach is far better than the model that is being used right now.

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?
 employment opportunities with aspirations and goals, not just finding any job that is available.

3.2. What type of services and support would best help a person with a disability find and keep a suitable job, and progress their career? Who should provide this support?
By having a client-centred approach that best suits individuals on a one to one basis. Once employment has been found individuals would need coaching, a mentor and regular visits such as follow-ups from a familiar support person to see how they are progressing in their role, if there are any issues etc

3.3. What education and training opportunities help people with disabilities overcome the entry barriers to employment?
Job-specific training and skills to the field of work/career pathway the individual wishes to enter.Assistance with the person with the disability to get job-ready, whether it's creating a resume, shopping to buy clothing appropriate for the job, confidence-building workshops. Specific to the person.

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)?
Knowing which services they can access to offer support ie Advocacy, housing, support coordination, support to navigate the National Disabilities Insurance Scheme.

3.5. What employment support do mature age people with disabilities need to successfully gain or retain employment, or transition into new employment or a new career?
Specific skill training requirements for the career pathways in which they chose.

4.1. What support do young people with disabilities need to successfully move out of education into suitable work?
Client-centred approach, job-specific training with other individuals who also have a disability and are in the same age bracket or have similar interests.

4.2. What best practices from existing DES or other employment programs help young people with disabilities find and maintain a job?
I haven't come across any best practices as of yet.

4.3. Should there be assistance to prepare young people to think about work much earlier than after they leave school?

Yes, I strongly believe this needs to happen as I feel like once you leave school there is a gap in the system where people with disabilities are left to navigate on their own, whereas if there were such systems in place for when an individual leaves school this would be a far better approach.

4.4. How can disability employment services work better with the education system to enhance employment prospects for young people?
By having systems in place, in which individuals are informed of what they can access when they leave school. Whether it be providing direct entry to either training/skills or career employment pathways. This would allow for individuals/families to know where to go next in the individual journey once they have finished school.

5.1. **What are the most important things that can be done to build an employer's confidence to employ a person with a disability?** Offering to coach and mentoring for employers by creating a mutually supportive community where employers can network and connect. Assisting employers to gain confidence by showing them how to create an inclusive environment within the workplace.

5.2. What services and supports do a disability employment support service need to offer employers to enable them to recruit people with disability, maintain their employment and promote career growth? By hiring individuals with knowledge or training of disabilities to assist the employer and be the first point of contact to make it a more inclusive and employable environment for individuals with disabilities.

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?
An example of a service I have connections with is Valued Lives. they support individuals with disabilities in the community to get their micro-businesses up and running. Their model of work uses an individual centred approach and their Director understands and has experienced the real need for employment opportunities for disabilities, identified a need/gap that wasn't being filled hence valued lives became super in demand, a now has a waiting list.

5.4. What other information, services and supports do employers need to support employees with a disability?
Disability specific training, for example for that client's specific disability requirement/, need ie if they are non-verbal learning how they will communicate with their new employee.

6.1. What specific assistance or flexibilities would better support people with disability to meet their mutual obligation requirements?
Being flexible within the job description, offering more breaks if this is what the client needs, having a support person within the workplace.

6.2. How should a future program consider other forms of participation and engagement, such as voluntary work or community engagement?
I don't agree that people have to do voluntary work to gain any employment. If the community engagement is paid then yes l think it's a great idea. People with disability are struggling to find work so any opportunity to work to gain more experience it's super important. People with disability should have the right to use their lived experience in a paid work environment.

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?
By making the work-readiness programs specific to individuals needs and capacity, a more 1 to 1 system approach rather than one system fits all perspective.

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? I'd feel that any funding arrangements should be done in an equal way, so any employers incentives should be given to the participants as well. That there should be incentives to work for their employer and

then employers should gain incentives to hire people with disability. It should be an equal setting so people with disability know that services are not just out of money to have them work for them. They are hiring people with disability for the right reasons.

7.3. How could the future funding model be adapted to recognise changes in the labour market and the types of employment available in the modern Australian economy? You have more staff that are actively looking and noticing that market and the need for a certain type of job. But being said you need to be careful, as people with disability might not want to work within the demand for work areas. They have the choice of wherever they want to work and where they want to the future path is going and if they don't know give them opportunities to find causal roles to find the passion areas they want to work in.

7.4. How can service quality and expertise be rewarded and balanced against the quantity of outcomes? By understanding what the outcomes are getting people with disability in the area of work they want to do. Noticing that they're less demand for people needing access to work opportunities in their sector of the community they work in. Working with employers and employees for as long as needed.

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?
Ensuring that there is enough funding and that programs aren't cut part of the way through. And tailoring these services on an individual process to meet the needs of the client.

7.6. What do good providers currently do to support people with disability into work?
They listen to the individuals needs, follow their interests not finding them any old job just for the sake of saying I found that person a job. They make reasonable adjustments to support the individual with the disability, promote an inclusive work environment and will look for employers that embed inclusion within their organisation through their policies and procedures.

8.**1 How should an effective and efficient competitive provider market be structured and how should business be allocated?**
You need to make an efficient market that empowers people with disability that makes them an asset to anyone company. That inspires creativity and innovation when hiring to make it a more inclusive environment for everyone to be involved in. Making efficient competitive provider market structured you need to make people with disability employable, understand the barriers from employers and prove them wrong in with their lack of knowledge and understanding on the disability community.

8.2. How can the future program settings encourage and reward innovation and continuous improvement? Having funding set aside for employers and people with disability for innovation and modernisation in program settings for future improvements is a rewarding thing to do. Asking people with disability for feedback and rewarding them for feedback might help with encouraging feedback even if it's positive or negative.
What works well in the current program? I don't think in this current program there isn't anything that works well.

8.3. What arrangements should be in place for market regulation and quality assurance of services?
Having ways for people to safely report inappropriate behaviour, without any backlash from the employer or disability employment company they are using. Having an outside service for people to report any unprofessional behaviour that people with a disability feel is inappropriate.

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?
Getting the disability community more involved in the CO'Designed format would help give disability more a voice in the making of a legal contract between government and disability

employment providers. Giving passionate disability advocates with lived experiences to share and also in a paid job capacity.

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?
More training when dealing with employers to have more understanding of the hired person's type of disability. More skills and training for companies to gain grants for hiring people with disabilities. Finding the participant's barriers when dealing with employers and working on them during training before working within the workplace.

8.6. Is there a market need for specialist providers (disability/industry/age cohorts) that would increase employment opportunities?
People who have lived experience in working within the disability community would understand about negotiating and advocating for disability employment networks so hiring people for specialist providers would 100% increase networking and connecting employers with employees. Hiring people with community services certificates or people with family members with a disability would have much-needed experience about closing the gaps with lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

9.1. What will success look like for:
a) people with a disability
For people with a disability to be able to reach their full potential, be given the same opportunities, feel a sense of belonging and inclusion in whatever work environment that may be.
b) the community
To live in an inclusive environment free from discrimination and bias where everyone has a voice heard and feels accepted
c) employers
To have a more shared understanding of disability awareness and understanding on knowledge about making my business a more inclusive and compassionate place for every human being whatever disability or invisible medical conditions they are faced with. Everyone has an equal right without fear of any social barriers that are faced when dealing with employers.

d) service providers
Having an understanding that a client-centred approach is more successful than how much my service provider business makes in a year. People with disability matter more about offering the best support I can give than how much money I can make them.

e) Government
To break barriers that society have given to people with disability experience on a daily basis. Empowering people with disability to self-advocate themselves and speak up for themselves when needed. To do your government part in breaking society mould in how they deal with people with disability and making a more inclusive Australia for the disability community. To stop with the funding cuts around disability and understand there is a true need for every cent.

9.2. What data do we need to know if the program has been effective?
Comprehensive surveys, asking people with disabilities, families, advocates, people with disability non for profit, Support Coordinator agencies that used your DES providers for their clients.

9.3. How can people with disability, employers and providers help to measure and report on the performance of the new program? By asking for feedback and being open to changes that need to happen if things don't feel right after thinking they are after then disability employment active. By sharing with NDIS support Coordinator and asking non for profit for a disability that advocates for disability. Asking sharing on Disability Facebook communities, Asking Senator Jordan Steele-John as he advocates and uses his lived experiences to make change for disabilities.

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?
By sharing their ways of incentives and support they bring to the disability community, how they make people with disabilities lives different from then other DES. By asking for feedback and listening to make changes that people with disability community want to have. By getting permission to share success stories that people with disability are happy to share. By letting people truly understand all the details so they can give informed choice which DES to use and 100% on what they process they need to go through with DES employment providers.