



3 November 2021

Dear Minister

I write as the Chief Executive Officer of Disability Employment Australia, in conjunction with National Employment Services Australia CEO Sally Sinclair; National Disability Services Head of Employment Kerrie Langford; and CEO of Jobs Australia, Debra Cerasa.

The future of the Disability Employment Services (DES) programme and support for job seekers with a disability is critically important to Australia's economic recovery. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with government and other key stakeholders to chart this future.

Recent data showing that the current DES programme is meeting its targets is encouraging. Importantly, there has been a 37.7% increase on four-week job outcomes, and a 41.2% increase on 26-week outcomes. The DSS Corporate Plan DES KPI 2020/21 targets are on track to be achieved.

The reform process provides a unique opportunity to build on this success and to pilot and test alternative service delivery models, funding arrangements and eligibility criteria.

It is imperative that the commonwealth, in partnership with the sector, takes the time to ensure the new model is fit-for-purpose prior to its implementation.

As such, we strongly believe that the current DES programme should be extended by 12 months to ensure sufficient time to design and pilot the new programme, with a revised implementation date of 2024 following a trial period. This is consistent with our previous advice to Government that a new funding model should be piloted and thoroughly tested ahead of implementation.

Further, it is consistent with the Government's approach to the development of the New Employment Services Model and the proposed Remote Engagement Program.

We are concerned that the current reform process is rushed and that the reference group lacks the detailed data that should inform considered analysis. It is essential that we have the appropriate amount of time to research, test and model alternatives to enable government to devise a new model supported by all stakeholders and clients. This will ensure the goals of jobseekers with a disability and the needs of society generally are met.

It should be noted DES 2018 included untested reforms, including the RAPM (Risk Adjusted Payment Model) fee structure. Less than two years later, a Boston Consulting Group review report recommended 'trailing and testing shortlisted service models and incentive structures prior to implementation.' (R.40, pg.142).

A refined international-leading model can be achieved through a genuine co-design process with stages of consultation and reflections, trialling of identified practices, and exploration and dissection of findings by the reference group leading to the production of recommendations to government.

We would greatly welcome the opportunity to discuss our request with you and your office at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



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