

From: [Phil Tuckerman](#)
To: [COE](#)
Subject: Jobsupport CoE Options paper input
Date: Friday, 1 December 2023 2:45:42 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[TTA Evaluation.pdf](#)
[Jobsupport Evidence-Based Practices Review - Final .pdf](#)
[DES post 2025 Report 29 November 2023.pdf](#)

Jobsupport strongly supports the establishment of the Centre of Excellence (CoE) and welcomes the opportunity to have input. We have long held, and expressed, the view that understanding and disseminating best practices will lead to higher outcomes.

We understand that the CoE has a broad brief including Supported Employment (and presumably other NDIS employment activities) and Workforce Australia. The comments below refer to DES, but also have wider applicability.

We would like to make five key points regarding the CoE.

- First, the overriding objective of the CoE, and its key performance criteria, should be to lead to improved open employment outcome rates while maintaining high client satisfaction. It is essential that the CoE builds the resources to provide rigorous data-based advice and practical assistance to DES service providers to continuously improve their outcomes. Such a clear objective is essential to ensure the CoE is a valuable use of government funds.
- Second, we recommend that in addition to consulting with people with disabilities, service providers and other stakeholders, the next few months is spent investigating and learning from past and current similar initiatives. This will assist in understanding the possibilities and constraints that the centre may face. Two CoE entities have been operating overseas for several decades. These are:
 - The Rehabilitation Research and Training Centre (RRTC) at Virginia Commonwealth University. This Centre has conducted action research projects to demonstrate the employment potential of groups including intellectual disability and autism since the 1980s. The RRTC has also provided technical assistance to services across the USA and internationally.
 - The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Centre for people with a psychiatric disability.
- Third, it is important to recognise that even with the additional information potentially generated by the CoE, improving DES performance will require both a continuation of consequences for poor outcomes (a *reason* to change) along with evidence-based advice and practical assistance for providers (a *means* to improve).
 - Jobsupport received an innovation grant in 2012 to provide technical assistance to nine DES services. The initiative achieved limited outcomes but provides some useful learnings. All the services were complacent and reluctant to implement significant change. Three of the nine became willing to change after the announcement that services with poor Star Ratings would

- need to tender for continued funding (evaluation report attached).
- Leading change theorists such as John Kotter report that 70% of change efforts are unsuccessful and that the major reason for failure is complacency where the need for change is not recognised. The leading change management theorists such as the retired Australian academic Dexter Dunphy could provide some useful insights.
- Fourth, we recommend that the CoE grasps the opportunity to capitalise on current Australian best practice. The DES outcomes by type of disability data is probably worlds best practice and provides a unique opportunity to identify the practices of the best performing providers by type of disability.
 - Currently, much of the literature on employment practices consists of opinion pieces rather than evidence-based practice. Jobsupport commissioned a worldwide literature review to identify any articles or studies over the last 50 years that included data on what works for achieving open employment outcomes for people with an intellectual disability. The review identified the key components (positive assessment, job customisation, systematic onsite training and ongoing support) necessary for successful placement and employment retention but found little data on how to best implement each component (report attached).
 - The attached CIE report suggests that the best performing services by type of disability be identified, studied and their practices disseminated as detailed case studies. The findings could also inform the next DES contract and provide some early runs on the board for the CoE.
 - Finally, the CoE options paper invited feedback on four models. Jobsupport would favour a cross between an Evidence-Informed Training Hub and the Research Centre Model that operated as a stand-alone rather than being subject to host university regulations. In particular:
 - The dissemination of evidence (data) based practice, action research projects, training and technical assistance should be among the core functions of the CoE. The RRTC's experience is that without hands on assistance training alone doesn't necessarily translate into implementation.
 - Services could be less open if the CoE was also a Statutory Agency with regulatory functions.
 - The Clearing House model is totally unsuitable for what we have noted above. The CoE needs to be proactive in engaging in both research and assistance to providers.
 - The final structure of the CoE should be informed by the key points noted above.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. I would be happy to expand on any of the points raised if it would be helpful.

Kind regards,

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