

Submission to the Department of Social Services : The Vital Role of Rehabilitation Counselling in the Success of the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence

Dear Minister Rishworth,

I am writing to provide a submission and share insights on the establishment of the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence. As a seasoned Rehabilitation Counsellor with over 15 years of experience in Disability Employment Services, I believe the success of this initiative hinges on recognising and leveraging the unique contributions that professionals in my field can bring to the table.

1. Holistic Approach to Rehabilitation:

Rehabilitation Counsellors play a crucial role in adopting an holistic approach to the employment journey of individuals with disabilities. Our expertise lies in understanding the multifaceted challenges that individuals face, whether it be related to the disability itself, mental health, or other barriers. By incorporating a comprehensive rehabilitation perspective into the Centre's framework, we can ensure that the employment process is tailored to the individual's specific needs and circumstances.

2. Individualised Support and Case Management:

One of the strengths of Rehabilitation Counsellors is our ability to provide personalised support and case management. We excel in developing individualised plans that address the unique challenges of each client. Integrating this approach into the Centre's services will contribute to better outcomes for job seekers with disabilities. This includes recognising the diverse needs of various cohorts, such as those with intellectual disabilities or high support needs, as highlighted in stakeholder discussions.

3. Bridging the Gap Between Employers and Job Seekers:

The Centre's mission to mobilise networks and engage with employers aligns seamlessly with the skill set of Rehabilitation Counsellors. We are adept at fostering effective communication and collaboration between job seekers and employers. Our role as facilitators can bridge the gap, ensuring that employers are not only aware of the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities but are also equipped with the knowledge and resources to create inclusive workplaces.

4. Research Translation and Implementation:

The emphasis on evidence-based practice resonates with the core principles of Rehabilitation Counselling. We are well-positioned to contribute to the research translation strategy mentioned in stakeholder discussions. Our field can actively participate in the synthesis of research findings into practical guides and resources that directly inform policy and practice in disability employment.

5. Quality Control and Professional Development:

Rehabilitation Counsellors are committed to maintaining high standards in service delivery. We can actively contribute to the quality control function recommended for the Centre. Our involvement in training and professional development initiatives will empower employment service providers, ensuring a consistent and high-quality approach across the Disability Employment Services sector.

6. Collaboration and Information Sharing:

The call for a collaborative and cooperative approach resonates deeply with the ethos of Rehabilitation Counselling. Our profession places a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. By fostering an environment of information sharing and collaboration, we can collectively elevate the standards of disability employment services and create a more supportive and inclusive ecosystem.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that the success of the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence is intricately linked to the active involvement of Rehabilitation Counsellors. Our profession brings a unique blend of skills, ranging from holistic rehabilitation to individualised case management, which aligns seamlessly with the goals outlined in the stakeholder discussions. I am enthusiastic about the potential impact of this Centre and am eager to contribute my expertise to its success.

Thank you for considering my submission. I am open to further discussions and collaboration to ensure the effective integration of Rehabilitation Counselling into the fabric of the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence.

Sincerely,

Justine Lawson

Rehabilitation Counsellor, RC Counselling and Coaching

Director – Rehabilitation Counselling Association of Australasia (RCAA)