

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE



2024

Ready for Reform



Disability
Employment
AUSTRALIA

Disability Employment Reform - DEA Conference 2024 'Ready for Reform'



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Disability Employment Reform

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Position: Group Manager, Disability Employment

Acknowledgement of Country



The Department of Social Services acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and their connections to land, water, culture and community.

We pay our respects to the elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Probity Statement

The Department of Social Services is committed to conducting a fair, honest, and transparent process for the design and implementation of the new specialist disability employment program and related services.

For today's event, this means that:

- this presentation will be made publicly available on the DSS Engage website*
- any views expressed, or information provided, by attendees to this event will be considered, along with the views expressed and information provided by other stakeholders.*

Overview

Key Topics

1. New Program design
2. Performance Framework
3. National Panel of Assessors and the Centre of Excellence
4. DSS Program Management continuous improvement

**The new disability
employment program
commences 1 July 2025**



Simplified program design

- The design of the new program will improve overall access to support and improve the quality of services delivered for both participants and employers.
- The two current DES programs will be consolidated into one program.

DES

Disability Management Service (DMS) helps job seekers with disability, injury and/or a health condition who need assistance to find a job and occasional support in the workplace to keep a job.

Employment Support Service (ESS) helps job seekers with permanent disability who need assistance to find a job and regular, ongoing support in the workplace to keep a job.



New program

A diverse network of providers help people with disability, injury and/or a health condition to prepare for, find and maintain sustainable employment.

Supporting/Complementary Services

- Disability Employment Centre of Excellence
- National Panel of Assessors

Participant eligibility for the new program



The new program continues to target those who will benefit most from a specialist disability employment program.



Eligibility will be expanded, until June 2028, to support new volunteer cohorts. An additional 15,000 people each year are expected to register including:

- those with a work capacity of less than 8 hours per week, and
 - those not receiving an income support payment.
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Proposed expanded eligibility arrangements for an initial 3-year period with an evaluation to assess if the DES program is working effectively for these cohorts.

New approach to employment assistance

- The new program will have **no participation time limit**.
- There will be 2 service offers – intensive and flexible.
- Providers will offer a range of customised supports to participants depending on where they are in their employment journey and their capacity to participate.
- Providers will explore options and pathways to employment with participants under both services.

Intensive Service

The intensive service is the default for those who are preparing for work and looking for work.

Flexible Service

The flexible service targets participants who are already engaged in other activities (such as work, training or non-vocational supports) or need to build their capacity to fully engage.

Meaningful engagement



Providers will work with participants to build meaningful relationships.



Engagement will be through the delivery of a quality service that focuses on **shared employment goals** led by the participant and assisted by the provider.

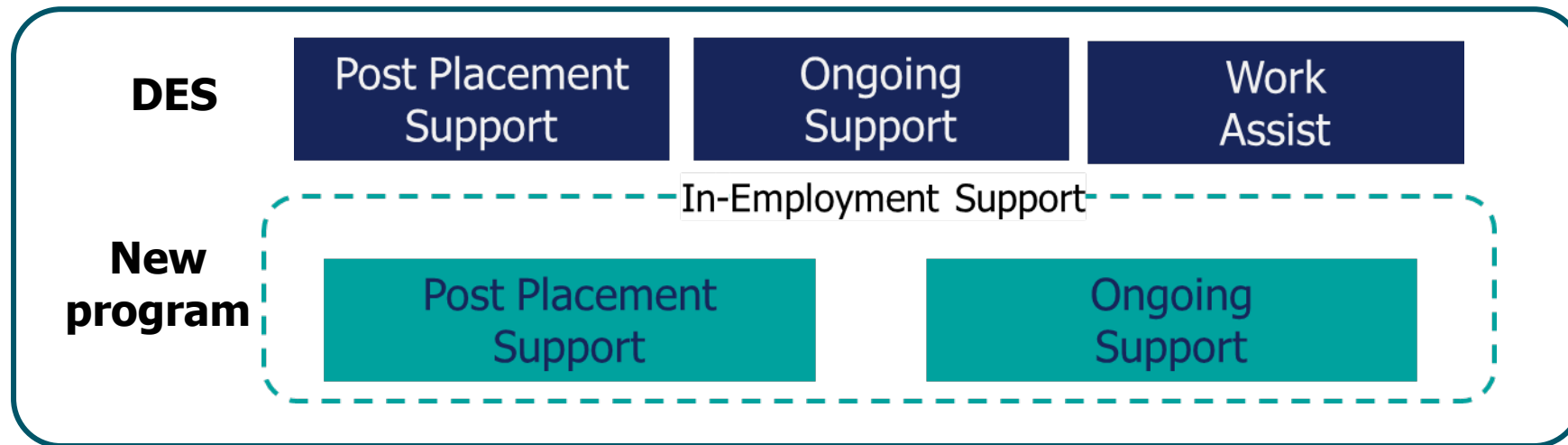


Less reliance on compliance to drive initial engagement.

- Requirements met through meaningful engagement, with voluntary activities in Job Plan.
 - Option to increase details of requirements in the Job Plan if needed.
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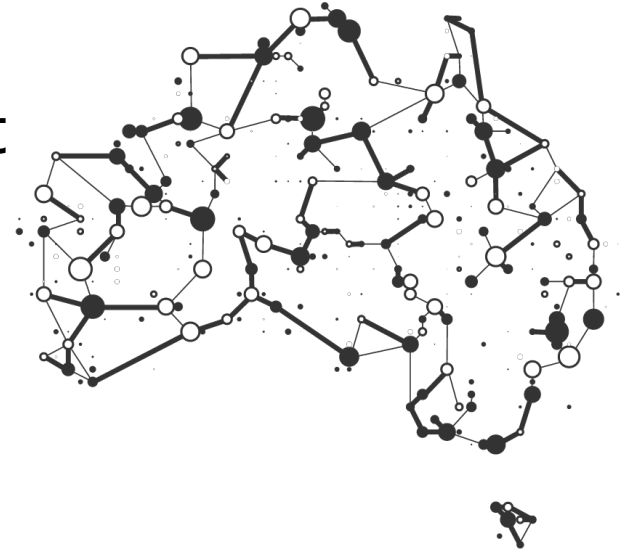
Support once in employment

- Providers will offer assistance to both their participants and their employers to make sure they have the support needed to succeed.
- In-employment support includes post-placement support for participants who have secured work and ongoing support for those who need longer-term support to keep their job.
- Work Assist will become part of Ongoing Support.



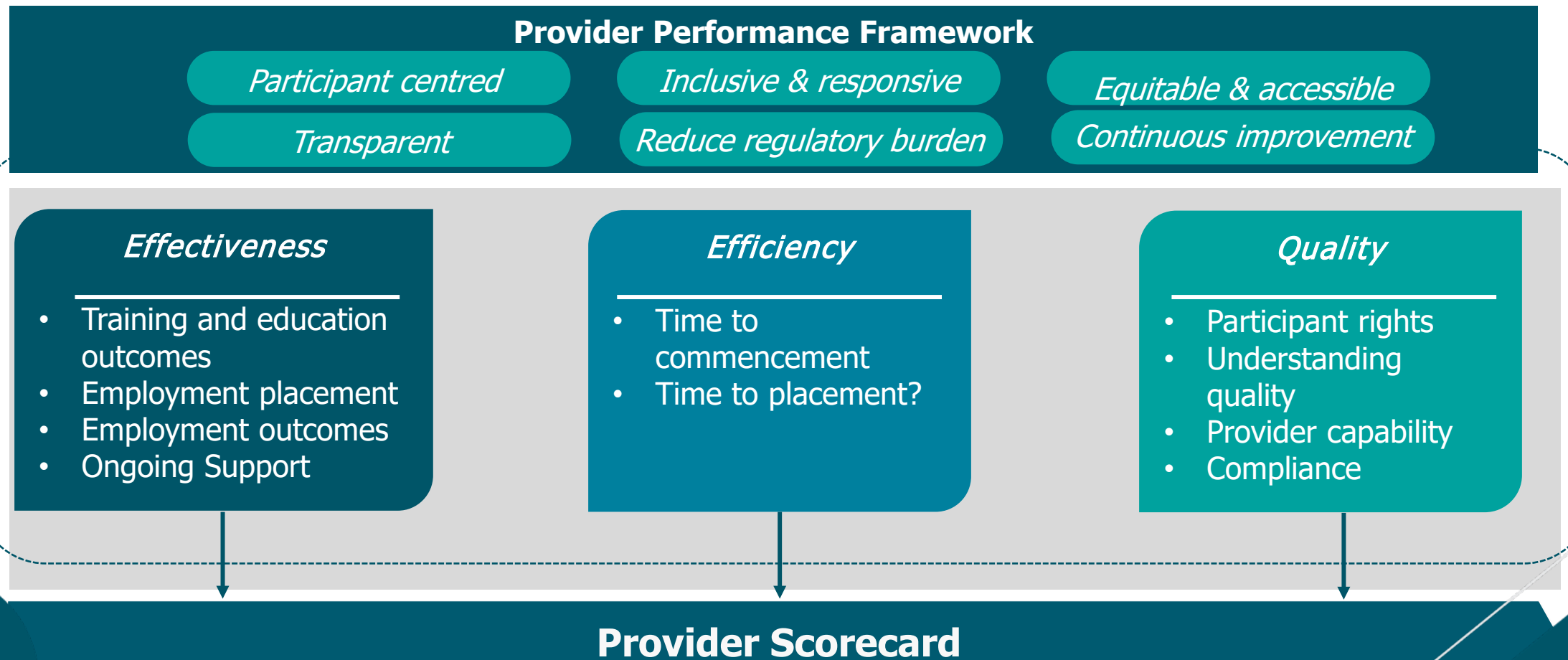
Market strategy

- The new program aims to strengthen the quality and diversity of providers.
- Specialist providers will have deep expertise in a participant cohort and can operate across Employment Service Areas.
- Create stronger market stewardship with market controls to achieve diversity and viability that supports participant choice.



Measures of quality and performance

- Performance framework and measure of quality have been the focus of the first phase of reforms and will continue to evolve.



National Panel of Assessors



The National Panel of Assessors (NPA) program is a standing panel of independent assessment service providers contracted to provide assessments to support the needs of people with disability in the workplace.



The NPA program will continue to provide high-quality assessment services from 1 July 2025.

Disability Employment Centre of Excellence

The Centre of Excellence will:

- Increase employment outcomes.
- Increase awareness and share best practice examples that work, including: customised employment, job coaching and career planning.
- Build provider skills and knowledge to understand employer needs and to help employers hire and support employees with disability.
- Provide training and resources to providers and employers to increase their overall capability.
- Foster collaboration across relevant sectors.



Continuous program management improvement

There are a range of measures that will support continuous improvement, including:

- Strengthening risk management, governance and program assurance.
- Feedback from the NDIS/DES Pathways Pilot.
- Improving communication, engagement and responsiveness.





Questions?



Feedback and more information



New information will be made available through the
Department of Social Services
(dss.gov.au/new-specialist-disability-employment-program)
and DSS Engage
<dss.engage.gov.au/LINK>



Email: DESConsultations@dss.gov.au

Get in touch



www.dss.gov.au



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Thank You!

