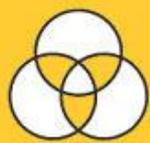


Disability Employment in Australia: The Way Up

February, 2013

ADDE



Australians for Disability
and Diversity Employment
(ADDE) Inc.

This paper stems from a vision to increase employment opportunities in Australia for people with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds; it has been researched and developed by Australians for Disability and Diversity Employment (ADDE), an organisation which specialises in systemic advocacy on employment issues for people with disability.

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For more information about ADDE, please go to our website: www.adde.org.au

The paper is endorsed by the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), an organisation that works in partnership with ADDE on employment issues for people with disability. AFDO is the primary national voice to Government that fully represents the interests of all people with disability across Australia.

We acknowledge the work of others in this field that provide some of the context for this paper; notably, the Thought Leadership Group at PwC who prepared the paper *Disability expectations: investing in a better life, a stronger Australia*, November 2011

We also acknowledge the existence of a range of Federal Government programs, including:

- **The National Disability Coordination Officer¹**: There are currently 31 NDCOs in regions across Australia, working on projects to improve the transition into training, education and employment of people with a disability aged 15 to 64. The NDCOs also provide an important link with stakeholders in their regions.
- **Disability Employment Services²**: introduced in 2010, the DES has resulted from the streamlining of a range of programs into two main forms of assisted entry into the labour market for eligible job seekers with disability.
- **The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator³** has been in place since 2010, to facilitate the movement of people with disabilities through the Disability Employment Service and in through developing working partnerships with high profile employers.
- **The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)⁴**, commencing in 2013, provides for the establishment of a Medicare-style nationwide network of offices to allow those who qualify to apply for financial support and to access services should improve the quality of life for Australians with disabilities, while easing the pressures on their support networks. Alleviating a range of barriers, this scheme should, if effectively resourced, also allow many people with disabilities and their carers to more fully participate in the labour market.

Our research also indicates that these measures alone are insufficient and our recommendations provide tangible strategies to enhance the environment to facilitate a more appropriate level of employment for Australians with disabilities.

¹ <http://www.ndcovictoria.net.au/>

² <http://deewr.gov.au/disability-employment-services>

³ <http://jobaccess.gov.au/News/Pages/NationalDisabilityRecruitmentCoordinator.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.ndis.gov.au/>

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Executive Summary

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO)⁵, one out of every six people in the world (around one billion) has a disability. The Australian Network on Disability states that 'over four million people [around one-fifth of the total population] in Australia have a disability'⁶. The Australian Human Rights Commission noted in March 2005, that 'People with disability represent a significant proportion of Australia's working age population (16.6%), yet they participate in the workforce at lower rates, are less likely to be employed when they do attempt to participate, and will earn less if they do get a job. This has been the case for a long time and the problem is not just ongoing, it seems to be getting worse.' Indeed, this prediction became fact: in 2009, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that there are two million people with disability of working age, but more than half of those are not in the workforce compared to around 5% of the working-age population as a whole.⁷ (see Appendix A for further information).

It is sound economic practice to include as many people in the workforce as possible. Having more people participating and contributing to the economy leads to productivity gains and higher economic returns for the whole community.

Conversely, this also results in lowering infrastructure, resourcing and financial requirements, as well as lessening the costs currently met by business and taxpayers to maintain non-productive and outdated management systems.

People with disabilities are also people who have a diverse range of abilities that are currently not being utilised; they are also people who can develop new skills and further enhance their potential through gainful employment, particularly in the skilled trades, professions, including leadership roles.

Many countries around the world have implemented structural changes which have had a positive impact on the number of people with disabilities employed. Governments in Australia have, for the past four decades, paid attention to the lack of equality in employment of people with disabilities; a great deal of research has been undertaken, working parties convened, schemes and programs put into place, and organisational entities have sprung up to address the needs of people with disabilities. And yet, despite all of these efforts, the situation regarding the employment of people with disabilities has not improved – in fact, it has got worse! Employment of people with a disability in the federal public service has dropped 50% over the last 11 years and currently sits at just under 3% of the total workforce. Australia ranks 21st out of 29 OECD countries in employment participation rates for those with a disability⁸.

⁵ <http://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities/lang--en/index.htm>

⁶ <http://www.and.org.au/pages/products-services.html>

⁷ <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40March+Quarter+2012>

⁸ Disability Expectations, Investing in a better life a stronger Australia, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Nov. 2011 – accessed Nov 2012 at <http://www.pwc.com.au/industry/government/assets/disability-in-australia.pdf>

The Australian Human Rights Commission inquiry that was chronicled in *Employment and Disability*⁹ (2005) made no less than 30 recommendations. This massive and well researched document laid out a plan on how to proceed on increasing disability employment in Australia. Some of these recommendations have been implemented (such as the internationally awarded website www.jobaccess.gov.au), and some are in train (including the first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme), however many more still await attention. In October 2011 Graeme Innes, the Disability Discrimination Commissioner spoke at the ADDE Best Practice Forum, and again in November 2012 at the Australian Association of Graduate Employers' annual conference, of the 'shameful' disability employment statistics and poor recruitment practices in Australia.

Why does this situation persist? The exact reasons are unclear, but in part they relate to perceived complexities and costs (all of which are in fact damaging misperceptions). In part also, this relates to a range of misconceptions about disability (for example, related to the outdated understanding of disability as a kind of sickness). It is well and truly time to put to rest the damaging mythology that has no substance, and to move forward deliberately and affirmatively, so that we can turn the tide and create a more positive employment experience for all Australians.

There is one fundamental reason for the lack of progress: Australian programs have failed, and continue to fail to address systemic inequality. While other countries' employment policies and programs have matured, operating across all levels of the labour force, programs in Australia are still largely aimed at specific groups and are implemented through another agenda (mainly, in terms of reducing the number of allowance recipients), and operate in 'pockets', addressing the needs of small groups rather than attacking the more widespread issue of inequality.

For example, in 2013 the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will begin to provide assistance for people with disabilities in two regions in terms of training, equipment and personal support, which may well improve their employability; however this scheme will, arguably, not of itself deliver better employment outcomes. Likewise, the Disability Employment Services will continue to provide a service that will assist a small percentage of people with disabilities to get mainly low level jobs. Large areas of disability remain untapped and underutilised, particularly in the skilled and professional areas, and unless an investment is made to seriously address the range of career, employment and training issues, the current situation in Australia is doomed to persist.

The Way Up

Australians with disabilities, according to definitions, exist in the millions, yet they are largely unemployed, underemployed and underutilised in the workforce. This situation undermines Australia's economic and social ambitions. It is our position that specific affirmative action and positive discrimination measures are required right now; to increase employment outcomes for people with disabilities in the near future and to help to make our workforce as diverse as the community it serves. These include:

- Graduates seeking roles that will make better use of their industry skills and knowledge
- Professionals who aspire to higher level management and executive roles
- People who have niche skills and talents that need to be nurtured through assistance to operate businesses, work from home, and develop important projects, including

⁹ Workability2: Solutions. Final Report of the National Inquiry into Employment and Disability, accessed Nov 2012 at http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/employment_inquiry/final/exec.htm#recs

research and development, that benefit Australians but do not in themselves provide an income

- People who face practical issues that may prevent them from getting to particular places at a particular time, or who require periods of time away from the workplace during standard shifts, for example to undertake necessary treatments

Many other examples could be added to the foregoing list.

With this imperative in mind, members of the ADDE management committee have developed a plan for 'The Way Up' that is outlined in this paper, including a set of five recommendations and associated implementation strategies, to address some of the key outstanding issues as well as adding value to existing and future planned programs. With the assistance of the parliament, we can start to implement it immediately.

As a result, there will be tangible benefits for:

- *The Australian Government*: widening participation and reducing welfare costs
- *Australian businesses and community-based organisations*: access to a larger talent pool which contains dedicated and capable employees, not to mention better responding to diverse customer needs
- *Australians with disabilities*: increased opportunities to use and develop talents and skills and make a valuable contribution to society
- *The Australian economic bottom-line, and, in fact,*
- *All Australians*, who will benefit from a diverse and inclusive environment.

Five core recommendations are outlined in this paper. If actioned, real evidence of progress can result.

Recommendations

Australians for Disability and Diversity Employment (ADDE Inc.) has at its disposal many strategies for improving the employment situation for people with disabilities, most of which are not discussed in this paper. In the interests of making short term improvements and to reverse the worsening trend in the employment situation for people with disability, the recommendations which arise from this paper provide five effective measures that can be implemented now, without significant cost or resourcing requirements. Ideally, to derive maximum benefit and to harness other work that is currently underway, these recommendations will be enacted in parallel with the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) starting in 2013.

Summary of the recommendations and implementation mechanisms

1. Disability workforce measurement

You can't manage what you don't measure. Applying this recommendation will ensure that we have accurate and workable data. ADDE has a tool available to support this process. It is

recommended that this tool be applied in all areas of government, in the not-for-profit sector, and to large employers (500+ staff).

2. Setting disability employment targets

Without targets, there is only tokenism, and no real commitment. Implementation of this recommendation, using the data made available from the measurement tool (see Recommendation 1), will ensure a clear, realistic and effective goal can be determined. With an overall goal of 20% of employees with disabilities across the board by 2020, interim targets should be implemented immediately at all levels of government and the NFP sector, with appropriate milestones set and recorded. Large organisations should also be encouraged to become involved through incentive schemes.

3. Social procurement

Tangible and traceable outcomes will result from improving access to a range of opportunities in the labour market generally as well as access to special projects via tenders and contracts, including social enterprises.

4. Training on or about disability by people with disabilities

'Nothing about us without us'. A process must be implemented to ensure that the delivery of relevant and appropriate training on or about disability in employment and workforce matters is managed and delivered by people with disability. Educating employers, staff and community members is essential at the outset to dispel the myths that surround disability and to create a culture of inclusivity.

5. Politicians leading

Politicians must lead from the front by employing people with disability in their electorate offices and by openly and actively encouraging business and community employers in their local areas to do likewise.

If sufficiently resourced, ADDE is in a position to take a leadership role in enabling these recommendations.

Further information about each recommendation can be found in the body of this document. The proposed strategy is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: 'The Way Up' - Strategic Plan

Recommendation	Objectives	Strategies	Indicators of Success / Benchmarks	Timeline
1 - Disability workforce measurement	Employment outcomes for people with disability are routinely assessed and recorded using an effective measurement.	Utilise ADDE's Disability Workforce Measurement tool to assess and record all employment outcomes for people with disability This calculates the total number of hours worked by employees with a disability measured against the effective full time available hours of the total workforce, expressed as a percentage	A steady increase in the total number of employees with disability A steady increase in the total number of hours worked by people with disability An overall increase in the employment level of people with disability compared to the number of people of working age with disability	Employment outcomes data reported publically on an annual basis First reporting period for Government by end 2013, large employers by end 2014, and NFP by end 2015
2 - Setting disability employment targets	People with disability are positively supported to secure a predetermined level of employment across all sectors of the workforce.	Link funding to Government and Not for Profits to achieve the employment outcomes target Implement tax incentives and/or tax levies in For Profit business to achieve the required employment targets Develop annual employment targets (quotas) for people with disability. e.g. %age of people with disability of working age in each electorate could be the target figure Use the Disability Workforce Measurement tool to record targets NDIS Head Office/Agencies to have disability employment targets for their workforce	Achievements on targets to be publically reported* Demonstrated growth in achievement of targets for each 12 month period * Suggested reporting mechanisms: govt orgs report to Auditor General's Dept; NFPs report to responsible govt ; For Profits (starting with large employers) – align with other OECD countries' reporting mechanisms.	Employment targets and achievements reported publically on an annual basis First reporting period for Government by end 2014, large employers by end 2015, and NFP by end 2016

Recommendation	Objectives	Strategies	Indicators of Success / Benchmarks	Timeline
3 - Social procurement	<p>The employment of people with disability meets social objectives through improved access to a range of opportunities in the labour market generally and to special projects facilitated by access to tenders and contracts.</p>	<p>Tender processes for consultancies, services and government/not-for-profit suppliers to specify disability and diversity pro-activity is a requirement.</p> <p>Actively assist people with disability to utilise their qualifications, skills and experience to secure employment, tenders and employment contracts.. Use the Disability Workforce Measurement tool to record and evaluate the employment/contract data</p> <p>Creation of targeted social enterprises focusing on transferable skills development.</p> <p>Public acknowledgement of organisations that employ people with disabilities as preferred suppliers.</p> <p>Successful tenderers to be audited to ensure compliance of stated objectives against actual performance Review latest ABS Disability Status by Labour Workforce against the 2009 data</p>	<p>Increased % of people with disability in employment incrementally over a five year period.</p> <p>Decreased % unemployment rate for people with disabilities incrementally over a five year period.</p>	<p>Report data on an annual basis</p> <p>First reporting period for Government by end 2015 and NFP by end 2016</p>

Recommendation	Objectives	Strategies	Indicators of Success / Benchmarks	Timeline
4 - Training on or about Disability by people with disabilities	The delivery of training on or about disability in relation to employment is relevant and appropriate	<p>Undertake a mapping exercise on training on or about disabilities.</p> <p>Link training budgets/funding to delivering employment outcomes for people with disability</p> <p>Engage people with disability to facilitate and deliver training to groups including: Employers Employment agencies Government departments</p>	<p>Reports published on number of training organisations with specific policies and strategies</p> <p>Number of training sessions delivered by people with disability cf. those without disability</p>	<p>Report annually</p> <p>First reporting period for Government by end 2014 and NFP by end 2015</p>
5 - Politicians Leading	People with disability are more effectively and numerous employed in parliamentary offices, in government agencies and in the broader community.	<p>Utilise the Disability Employment Target of 20% as a basis for Members of Parliament to: engage people with disability across Parliamentary electorate offices using a standard reporting mechanism, identify areas that are doing well, and those not doing well across electorates promote disability employment to all employers across their electorates</p> <p>Reporting on disability employment should be a standard item in electorate reports.</p>	<p>Number of people with disability working in Electoral Offices</p> <p>The number employed is equivalent to the Disability Employment Targets set for each sector.</p> <p>As per Recommendation 2. Electorate Offices have higher targets to demonstrate leadership.</p>	Report annually

Background

The employment situation for Australians with disabilities is arguably the worst it has been in the country's history, and progress has been impeded by a lack of useful targets, strategic direction, appropriate funding, high level representation by people with disabilities, proactive marketing and recruitment practices.

These areas of lack are accompanied by, and reinforce, many deleterious myths which have led to a skewed understanding of the value to society and the workplace of people with disabilities. This has been a major contributor to low levels of work readiness and confidence, gaps in policy and between policy and strategy.

The International Context

Data provided by the ILO indicates that 'one out of every six people in the world—or some 1 billion people—has a disability. Between 785 and 975 million of them are estimated to be of working age. While many of these are employed and fully integrated into society, as a group, persons with disabilities often face disproportionate poverty and unemployment.'¹⁰

A country comparison highlights differences in the way this situation has been addressed.

Table 2: Employment performance for selected OECD countries¹¹

Country	People with disabilities %	People without disabilities %	Performance (Rank)
Sweden *	62.3	83.9	1
Iceland	61.3	86.4	2
Estonia	55.8	82.2	3
Mexico	55.4	66.8	4
Switzerland	54.9	85.5	5
Denmark	52.3	81.6	6
Luxembourg	50.4	71.3	7
Germany*	50.4	73.7	8
Portugal*	47.9	75.4	9
Canada	46.9	79	10
France	45.8	71.8	11
United Kingdom*	45.3	81.4	12
Korea	44.7	70.3	13
Norway	44.7	83.4	14
Netherlands	44.5	80.5	15
Australia	39.8	79.4	21
Austria	43.9	70.8	16
Finland	43.5	76.8	17
Slovenia	41.3	69.7	18
Slovak Republic	41.1	74	19
Italy*	40.7	63.7	20
United States	38.5	83.9	22
Belgium	36.3	71.5	23
Spain*	35.7	71.1	24
Czech Republic	35	73.1	25
Greece*	34.2	67	26
Ireland	32.9	72.7	27
Hungary	31.7	71.3	28
Poland	17.6	62.1	29

* Asterisked countries: further data is provided in Appendix B

¹⁰ . <http://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities/lang-en/index.htm>

¹¹ Productivity Commission, 2011, *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers*, A synthesis of Findings across OECD countries, OECD 2010 Appendix K, accessed Feb 2012 at http://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/111310/35-disability-support-appendixk.pdf

There are problems in identifying the exact scope of the problem due to differences in how people with disabilities are defined in various parts of the world. The UN Convention definition of disabled persons states that:

persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others¹².

The generally accepted definition of disability is defined as a long-standing 'impairment' – a health issue or condition - that impacts on one's ability to carry out day-to-day activities without technological, mechanical or personal support. 'Long-standing' generally means the condition has, or is likely to persist for at least six months. The condition may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these. A disability may be present from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime. A disability might be categorised as profound, severe, moderate or mild groups. A person with disability might have one, or a range of conditions.

On a country-by-country basis, variations exist in how disability is defined, meaning that caution should be applied when making comparisons between employment rates by country.

Nonetheless, the data provided in Table 2 indicates that while Australia has an inclusion rate of 79.4% for workers without disabilities (a ranking of 10th out of the 29 OECD countries), the appalling rate of 39.8% in relation to people with disabilities (a ranking of 21 out of 29) makes the need for change imperative.

Those countries who have proactive policies and strategies appear to have achieved higher levels of success. Although the United Kingdom¹³ is currently ranked 12/29 for employment inclusion, recent affirmative action is aimed at making a positive impact. Companies can show their commitment to employ people with disability through a 'two tick' program badged '*positive about disabled people*'. The symbol is awarded by Jobcentre Plus (a UK Government agency) to employers in England, Scotland and Wales who have made commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled staff. The symbol is included on job advertisements and application forms, and is awarded to employers who make five commitments regarding recruitment, training, retention, consultation and disability awareness. These commitments are:

1. To interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
2. To discuss with disabled employees, at any time but at least once a year, what both parties can do to make sure disabled employees can develop and use their abilities
3. To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
4. To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work

¹²van Oorschot, Wim and Balvers, M, 2009: European Comparative Data on the Situation of Disabled People: an annotated review, Report prepared for the Academic Network of European Disability Experts,(ANED), University of Leeds, downloaded January 2013 at [http://www.disability-europe.net/content/aned/media/ANEDreportEuropeanComparativeDataontheSituationofDisabledPeopl\(corrected\).pdf](http://www.disability-europe.net/content/aned/media/ANEDreportEuropeanComparativeDataontheSituationofDisabledPeopl(corrected).pdf)

¹³ http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/LookingForWork/DG_4000314

5. To review these commitments each year, assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and advise about progress and future plans.

The United Kingdom is currently moving towards legislating requirements for large organisations with regard to employment of people with disabilities.

The Australian Context

According to City Index chief market analyst Peter Esho, (The Australian, 8/12/11), with a 5.3 per cent unemployment rate 'Australia is still the envy of many developed countries worldwide'. Unfortunately, however, these statistics only serve to highlight the inequality of the situation when it comes to people with disability.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009)¹⁴ reported that four million people in Australia (18.5%) reported having a disability, and out of these, more than 1.3 million persons of working age were not in the workforce. Many of these people were on the Disability Support Pension, making them part of the 'hidden' unemployed. The main conditions associated with disability were back problems (15.6%), arthritis (14.8%), hearing loss (6%), leg damage from injury/accident (3%), depression (3%) and asthma (3%). Most (87%) people with disability had specific restrictions, meaning they had limitations in one or more of the everyday core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication or that they had a schooling or employment restriction. The remainder (13%) had a disability that was non-restricting.

For some types of disability, including those with vision impairment and mental illness, research shows that the unemployment rate is actually more than 60%. (see Appendix A.) We argue/suggest that this percentage is similar to all categories of disability but that for a range of reasons, people with disabilities are less likely to indicate that they are participating in the labour market.

The ABS data supplied on the following page shows that people with disabilities are far more likely to be excluded from the labour force:

'Despite Australia's economy performing so well in world terms, we are now 27 out of 27 OECD countries for people with disability living in poverty. Imagine the public outcry if we had dropped to 27th in the medal count at the Olympics. Politicians would soon get the message that something needed to be done to turn this around.'

Whitehorse Leader, June 19 2012, Peter Rickards, winner of 2012 Victorian Disability Sector Awards, Emerging Leader

¹⁴

[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4429.0~2009~Media%20Release~Four%20million%20Australians%20have%20a%20disability%20\(Media%20Release\)~10024](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4429.0~2009~Media%20Release~Four%20million%20Australians%20have%20a%20disability%20(Media%20Release)~10024) – downloaded November 2012

Table 3: 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), Australia: Summary of Findings, 2009, Australian Bureau of Statistics

	No Disability	With Disability
Employed	78.6%	50%
People not in labour force	17%	46%
Participation rate	83%	54%
Unemployment rate	5.1%	7.8%
Definitions:		
<p>Employed A person is employed if they reported that they had worked, either full or part time (fewer than 35 hours per week), in a job, business or farm during the reference week (the full week prior to the date of interview); or that they had a job in the reference week, but were not at work.</p>		
<p>Unemployed A person is unemployed if they were not employed during the reference week and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week; and • were available for work in the reference week. 		
<p>Not in the labour force A person who was neither employed nor unemployed.</p>		
<p>Participation rate The number of people employed or unemployed, which comprises the labour force, as a proportion of the total number of the population</p>		
<p>Unemployment rate The number of unemployed as a proportion of the total labour force.</p>		

The Social Inclusion Case

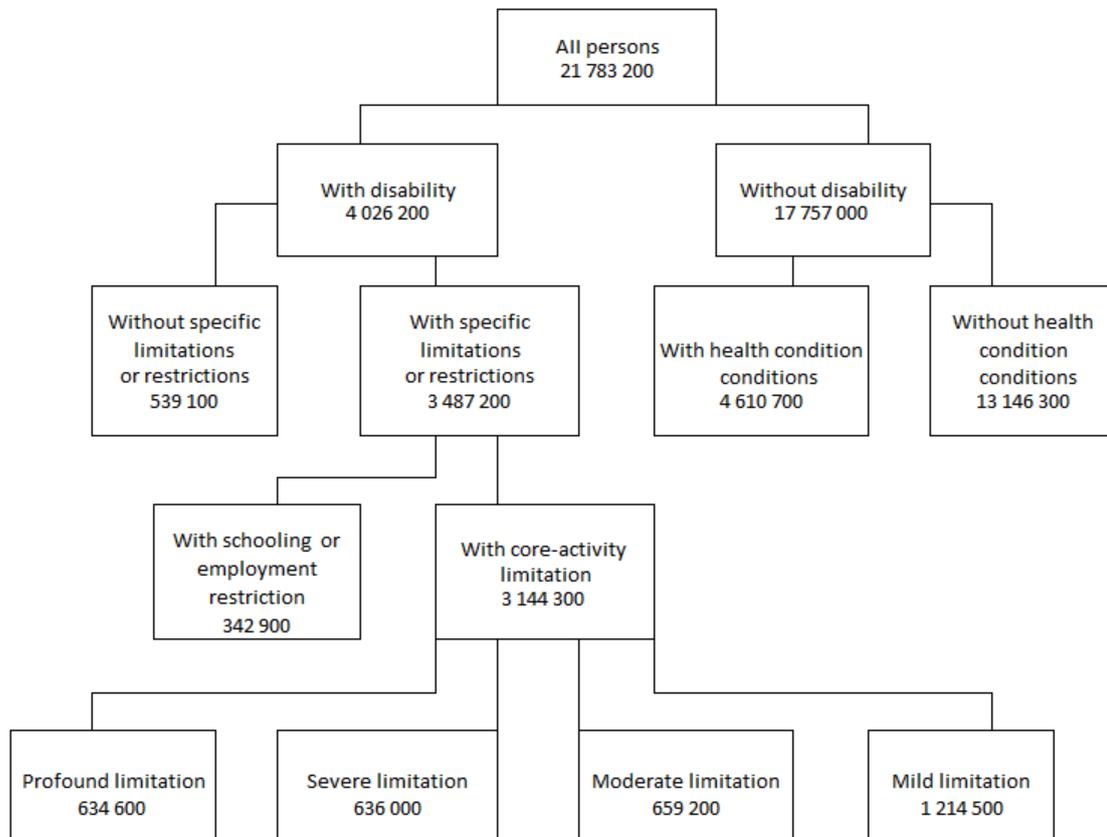
The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) reported that in 2006 that 11% (approx. 2.2 million) of Australians live at or below the poverty line, compared with 10% in 2004 and 8% in 1994. The report also highlighted that 'Australians who are most disadvantaged socio-economically are twice as likely as those who are least disadvantaged to have a long term health condition'¹⁵.

This situation will clearly not rectify itself, a multi-pronged intervention program is essential to ensure a secure economic future for people with disabilities, involving all levels of government, commercial entities and NGOs. It needs to also pay attention to the range and severity of disabilities experienced by Australians.

'Disability' is not singular, either in its definition or its characteristics. The data below provides information as to the number of Australians by the severity of their disability, as

¹⁵ http://acoss.org.au/images/uploads/ACOSS_Poverty_October_2011.pdf - downloaded January 2013

estimated from SDAC 2009.¹⁶



In 2012, we should be much further down the path to inclusivity. Morally, every nation has a responsibility to ensure that the diversity of its population is represented fairly across all areas and levels of employment. The Australian Government has provided employment services to eligible people with disabilities through a range of programs since the introduction of the Commonwealth Employment Service in 1945. More recently, the Job Network and other providers of disability employment services have existed since the 1990s, and, since 2010, the Disability Employment Service has had the sole objective of placing people with disabilities in paid work and other work-related activities. Yet despite the apparent wealth of programs devoted to alleviating the situation, employment of people with disabilities has actually slowed and, in for some groups (including mental health and vision impairment) is now at the lowest level recorded by ABS..

Despite the availability of abundant research indicating that there are many organisational and economic benefits to be gained from employing persons with disabilities (including maximising the pool of available talent; providing income, and therefore spending power, to more people, and allowing customers to be serviced by 'people like them'), people with disabilities remain largely overlooked and underrated as potential employees. This

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009, [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2009](#), cat.no. 4430.0, Australia

perception is alarming enough, however in a labour market that is becoming increasingly characterised by skills shortages and in which unique talents are increasingly in demand.

- Disability employment agencies and disability advocates were a critical link in recruiting and hiring workers with disabilities.
- Participants with disabilities from the retail and hospitality sectors stayed on the job longer than participants without disabilities.
- Across all sectors, participants with disabilities had fewer scheduled absences than those without disabilities.
- Retail participants with disabilities had fewer days of unscheduled absences than those without disabilities.
- Regardless of sector, participants with and without disabilities had nearly identical job performance ratings.
- Across all sectors, the difference in amount of supervision required ratings were relatively minor among participants with and without disabilities.
- The number of worker's compensation claims of retail participants with and without disabilities were equivalent.

Exploring the Bottom Line: A Study of the Costs and Benefits of Workers with Disabilities
(October 2007, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and DePaul University)

Inclusivity also relates to the range of employment opportunities available for people with disabilities. Recent initiatives have actually been counter-productive, systemically reducing the kinds of jobs available. In March 2010 the Australian Government introduced the Disability Employment Services (DES) program, ending the long-standing limitation on the places available in open employment services for people with disability. However, from 2010-2012 the DES program will have cost \$1.7 billion, with outcomes of just one in four participants being placed in a job, and with just 14 per cent of participants sustaining employment or training for 13 weeks after placement.¹⁷ One reason for this poor result may be that the competitive nature of the for-profit business model amongst some of the DES' discourages the sharing of job opportunity information, however it may also highlight a prevailing reticence on behalf of the employer community at large to employ people with disabilities. DES operators have also, in general, displayed a lack of imagination and creativity in locating best-fit work roles for their clients, preferring instead to rely on the traditional unskilled and semi-skilled opportunities, which are, in fact, fast disappearing and which also do not suit many of the current or potential DES clients.

In summary, in late 2012, people with disabilities still present a large source of untapped, underemployed and underutilised labour. This will become increasingly problematic as we age, and more people find they need to stay in the workforce longer, due to the fact that with age, despite (and perhaps in many cases, because of) medical advancements, the likelihood of a person becoming disabled increases.

In becoming more inclusive, we need to work on issues faced by people with disabilities throughout the employment cycle. These issues include.

¹⁷ Work and Employment, Article 27 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, AFDO

1. **Problems with access, jobs not being available to people with disabilities:** for example, in 2012 a key LGA in Victoria was found to be inserting an 'abilities' checklist for all positions, requiring applicants to indicate that they could stand, perform routine exercises such as bending etc., as a blanket requirement for all positions, even administration roles that were completely deskbound. When they were alerted to this, they promised to remove the requirement altogether. We must do something to avoid the need for ongoing policing and education of employers, or worse, simply hoping they will 'do the right thing'.
2. **A lack of collaborative pathways to employment across schools and open employment agencies:** This is being addressed to some extent by NDCOs, but a great deal more work is needed, especially in outer-suburban and regional area, particularly to address the areas of skills shortage.
3. **Career development is often insubstantial or non-existent:** anecdotal evidence abounds regarding people with disabilities having been overlooked for enrichment and advancement opportunities. More valuable data would be made available through targeted research.
4. **Difficulties retaining employment:** people with disabilities face unnecessary barriers due to the lack of flexibility offered by some employers in relation to work times, job conditions, systemic discrimination, as well as the pervasive and myths and stereotypes associated with their employment.

Taking a lesson from sport

The highly successful Summer Paralympics that were held in London in August 2012 have shown to the world that people with disabilities can perform under extreme pressure in a highly challenging environment. Many people without disabilities would not have done as well as the athletes who made their countries proud. Furthermore, this event highlighted that people with disabilities want and thrive on a universal, inclusive approach to citizenship. The sporting industry has moved beyond its legislative base, providing a welcome community experience for spectators, volunteer and paid workers, and participants.

The Paralympics highlighted what a focused practical approach can achieve. A great deal can be learned from the processes and procedures involved with planning the event, the arrangement of venues and facilities, transport, communications and other adaptations. Arguably, people with disabilities should expect and receive similar adjustments in their day-to-day working lives. With simple and focused attention to our five recommendations, the benefits would be instantly available.

The Costs of Exclusion

Unfortunately, a misguided and inaccurate perception persists, related to the pervading belief that it is uneconomical to hire and keep employees with disabilities. Some of the unfounded arguments include:

- People with disabilities will be less productive
- People with disabilities will take more leave
- People with disabilities will be more difficult to manage

The only way to dispel these destructive myths is to have more people with disabilities productively employed. The social inclusion argument for providing meaningful employment for Australians with disabilities is compelling enough in a 'big picture' social inclusion sense, however, as an economic imperative, we need to, right now, facilitate the movement of people with disabilities swiftly into the workforce. Excluding a significant portion of the population means that businesses don't have access to the full pool of available talent, and the run to risk of alienating customers.

A USA study¹⁸ acknowledged that there were benefits associated with workers with disabilities included having dedicated and reliable employees and a more diverse workforce, but that managers were viewed as having biases against workers with disabilities and concerns with the cost of accommodations. Employed people with disabilities tended to remain in lower level positions longer than their non-disabled counterparts. Nonetheless, the managers who actively engaged in inclusive practices reported that the costs associated with workers with disabilities were actually minimal.

Given that there does not appear to be a case for the cost of inclusion, it is timely to present a less well-understood but more compelling argument focusing on the costs of exclusion.

A working paper authored by Sebastian Buckup for the ILO (2009:51) based on data gleaned from ten low to middle income countries estimates the 'price of exclusion' of people with disabilities from the world of work as between 3-5% of GDP¹⁹: The report also mentions that it is the *environment* that is disabling, rather than the people in the study being disabled – an important distinction that is essential in promoting widespread cultural change.

While costs of exclusion are not currently available for Australia, given that our current GDP is just on 1 trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000), applying the conservative 3-5% estimate provided in the ILO report we can estimate that the cost of exclusion in Australia is between \$30 and \$50 billion - per annum!

In other words, it costs the Australian economy between 30 and 50 billion dollars every year to sustain the exclusion and discrimination that is the day-to-day reality of many people with disabilities. What could be achieved if that same \$30-\$50 billion was available, every year- to *include* people with disabilities in the world of work in Australia!

¹⁸ *Exploring the Bottom Line: A Study of the Costs and Benefits of Workers with Disabilities*, October 2007, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and DePaul University

¹⁹ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_119305.pdf Accessed October 2012

An Investment in Economic Growth

We know that unemployment, under-employment and stressful working conditions have adverse impacts on a person's health.²⁰ Poor health is costly and a drain on human and other resources. Failure to address the employment situation for people with disabilities is, effectively pouring money down the drain.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) that is due to be implemented for the first time in 2013 was developed in part to ensure Australia meets '*the economic imperative – people with disability need to be supported and encouraged to contribute through workforce participation ...*'.²¹ This is an acknowledgement by the Australian Government that money spent now will be money saved later. We can make much better use of these programs if a transition to work program is added now, rather than making it an afterthought later on.

With approximately 800,000 Australians relying on the Disability Support Pension (DSP) as their primary source of income,²² by creating employment for many of these people the reduction in welfare and Medicare payments will not only help the economy financially but will have flow on effects such as the improvement of the social/emotional/ physical health of those employed, thus further enhancing the economic benefits. With greater disposable income, they will also be more likely to increase their spending on goods and services.

The Productivity Commission estimates that the NDIS and DSP reforms will lead to an additional 320,000 people with a disability employed in 2050. However, if Australia aimed for, realised employment ratios comparable to the top eight OECD countries, this figure could be much higher – an additional 370,000. With a figure like this, Australia could achieve additional GDP of almost \$50 billion (a further 1.4% contribution to GDP) in 2050, as well as assisting us to move into the top eight OECD countries in employing people with disability.²³ A goal worth working for!

Economic Benefits to Business

A diverse workplace can increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. One in five Australians has a disability: this includes your clients and customers. Having employees with disability can help you understand the needs of clients with disability, and give you a competitive edge.

Disability Expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia, PriceWaterhouseCooper, Nov 2011. Pg 18

Given that employing people with disabilities makes such good business sense, why has this not translated to more people with disabilities having jobs?

²⁰ WHO. (2008). Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health. Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, Geneva.

²¹ www.ndis.gov.au – downloaded January 2013

²² PC. (2011). Disability Care and Support. Productivity Commission Inquiry Report. No. 54, 31 July 2011.

²³ Disability Expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia, PriceWaterhouseCooper, November, 2011. Pg 10

Research undertaken by Dr Kevin Murfitt²⁴ describes why negative attitudes still remain a major barrier to employment for many people with disabilities, and highlights the need to have people with disability working alongside able bodied people in all areas of the economy. Dr Murfitt's thesis found that when members of mainstream society have an experience of disability or interaction with people who have a disability, this will lead to more positive attitudes and acceptance.

It makes especially sound business sense for staff in an organisation, especially those front-of-house, to reflect the diversity of customers who use, or could use, that businesses goods or services. Twenty percent of all Australians have disabilities, so it can be assumed that a similar percentage of customers have disabilities. With people with disabilities working visibly in organisations, this can only help customers see that the business is welcoming and non-discriminating.

Many large corporations have already identified the value of diversity, including the ANZ²⁵, - this business's website clearly states that *'crucial to our success is building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities in which we operate. This means creating a work environment where employee differences such as gender, age, culture, disability and lifestyle choice are valued.'*

The ANZ also views diversity as *'a strategic asset, and believe that the perspectives, experiences and contributions of our people are the source of ANZ's creativity, innovation and business success.'*²⁶ The Department Of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)²⁷ notes that evidence is available to show that employees with disabilities are more reliable and have lower levels of absenteeism: *'The costs to business of absenteeism and sick leave for employees with disability can be as low as 34 per cent of the cost incurred by their colleagues.'* Furthermore, they remain loyal and do not tend to leave their jobs as often. Productivity levels are comparable to non-disabled employees. Telstra has identified similar advantages in having a diverse workforce.²⁸

If the business world sees the sense of employing people with disabilities, why then has the number of people with disability in the Australian Public Service halved over the last decade? This situation must be redressed in the short term using similar principles and strategies as those employed by large corporations.

The high cost of employee turnover and insufficient number of qualified workers also presents a risk to business' competitive edge, through loss of talent and corporate knowledge. . It makes good business sense to keep competent workers instead of having to replace them all the time. Employing new staff is both expensive and resource-draining. Time and lost productivity add costs to a business each day that a position is not filled, not to mention the additional operating expenses it takes to search for, recruit and train new

²⁴ Murfitt, Kevin Francis Ph.D Attitude change in Employment of People who have a Disability, , Deakin University, Australia 2006

²⁵ <http://www.anz.com/about-us/corporate-responsibility/employees/valuing-diversity-respect/diversity/> - accessed October 2012

²⁶ <http://www.anz.com/about-us/corporate-responsibility/employees/valuing-diversity-respect/diversity/> - accessed October 2012

²⁷ An Employers Guide to Employing Someone with Disability: [http://jobaccess.gov.au/Publications/Documents/Employer's%20Guide%20to%20employing%20someone%20with%20disability%20\(PDF\).pdf](http://jobaccess.gov.au/Publications/Documents/Employer's%20Guide%20to%20employing%20someone%20with%20disability%20(PDF).pdf) - accessed October 2012

²⁸ Noble, J. (1999) Entrepreneurial Research Project, Telstra Australia.

employees. Statistical and anecdotal evidence shows that people with disabilities are more loyal, less likely to leave, and take less sick leave, so these should be seen as the prime A-Grade candidates in any selection and promotion process.

Recommendations

Disability workforce measurement

There is no point putting in place strategies if you don't measure that these are making a difference. To measure employees with disability in the workplace, it is important to develop a consistent and easy to use measurement tool that can be applied across all industry sectors, starting with all levels of government and the not-for profit sector. The first step is to mandate, as part of funding conditions, that organisations collect base line data around disability employment. The measurement tool, independent advice and monitoring could be provided on a fee for service basis.

Case example: a Government Department has 12,000 effective full time employees at 35 hours

= 420,000 Hours

Employee hours for 170 PWD at 16 hours = 2,720 Hours

%age of employees with disability this department = 0.65%

Setting disability employment targets

Using the data collected using the disability workforce measurement tool, targets can be set to increase incrementally over a five-year period to measure changes in the number/percentage of people with disabilities working in organisations. As well as providing a tracking mechanism, this also highlights the level of commitment and provides useful feedback on effective/non-effective strategies.

Social procurement

The employment of people with disability meets social procurement objectives. Tangible and traceable outcomes will result from improving access of a range of opportunities in the labour market generally and to special projects facilitated by access to tenders and contracts.

Social procurement provides employment experiences and promotes self-employment opportunities for people with disability, for example by:

- Proactively engaging people with disabilities to undertake consultancy services, such as through the mechanism of social enterprise.
- Introducing EFT (Effective Full Time) exemption for people with a disability in government agencies.
- Stipulating on tender notices that: 'Submissions from people with disabilities are encouraged'
- Publicly acknowledging organisations that employ people with disabilities as preferred suppliers. (These suppliers of goods and services must be audited regularly to ensure that they are doing what they claim.)

Training on or about disability by people with disabilities

Implementing a strategic training program will achieve instant employment-related outcomes for people with disabilities, as well as educating employers and community members.

The most effective way to deliver this training is by using people who have direct experience of disability as trainers. It appears, however, that most disability training is in fact carried out by able bodied trainers, even when there are many suitably qualified people with disabilities who could provide quality training. It is recommended that a database of people with disabilities who are qualified and experienced trainers is developed and used for disability training. Where sufficient numbers do not exist, Train-the-Trainer programs should be developed and implemented as a priority.

In addition, attitude change needs to start from the top of organisations, so senior management and Board members should be involved as participants in training. The recommended first step is to have conditions attached to training budgets of Governments and not-for-profits to require compliance to phase in disability training progressively to be delivered by people with a disability over a 2 to 3 year period.

Politicians leading

Politicians should lead from the front by employing people with disability in their electoral offices and by openly encouraging employers in their local areas (through regular communication) to do likewise: ADDE's 'Leading from the Front' research on disability employment in the Victorian not for profit sector showed that this sector, including local, state and federal government is not leading from the front.²⁹:

Finally, politicians should employ people with disability in their electorate offices. They cannot expect all sectors of the economy to support employment of people with a disability unless they show leadership themselves.

Conclusion

People with disability in Australia are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than those without disability.

In delivering a case for different work that needs to be done to improve the employment outcomes for people with disabilities, this paper has provided a way forward for how to proceed. Those involved in its production would welcome the opportunity to provide further assistance to the government and other interested parties in order to facilitate progress in these key areas.

Timing is critical; as the NDIS takes its place on the Australian stage, we can harness the outputs with parallel programs that will make use of the heightened employability of its participants and help to make lasting change.

Changing employer attitudes were significant in alleviating this problem.

²⁹ <http://www.adde.org.au/publications.html>

APPENDIX A

Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Source:

In 2009, there were 2.2 million Australians aged 15-64 years with disability, up from 1.7 million in 1993. The disability rate for Australians aged 15-64 years, those of 'prime working age', rose from 15% in 1993 to a peak of 17% in 2003, then returned to 15% in 2009. In 2009, just over half (51%) of people with disability were women.

The likelihood of living with disability increases with age. In 2009, the disability rate among 15-24 year olds was 6.6% and the rate was higher for successively older age groups, with 18% of 45-54 year olds, and 31% of 55-64 year olds living with disability in 2009.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION BY DISABILITY STATUS AND AGE(a) – 2009

Labour force status	DISABILITY STATUS (A) BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS - 2009					
	Male		Females		Total	
	With disability(b)	No disability	With disability(b)	No disability	With disability(b)	No disability
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed full time	42.5	70.5	19.9	38.2	31.0	54.5
Employed part time	12.3	13.9	25.5	34.5	19.1	24.1
Total employed	54.8	84.4	45.5	72.7	50.0	78.6
Unemployed	4.9	4.5	3.6	4.0	4.2	4.2
Not in the labour force	40.2	11.1	51.0	23.4	45.7	17.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	1,059.4	6,323.0	1,111.9	6,224.9	2,171.3	12,547.9
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Participation rate	59.8	88.9	49.0	76.6	54.3	82.8
Unemployment rate	8.2	5.0	7.3	5.2	7.8	5.1

(a) People aged 15-64 years and living in households.

(b) Includes those who may not have a specific limitation or restriction.

Source: ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2009

Age and sex

Labour force participation rates for people with disability varied with age, a similar pattern to people without disability. The difference in labour force participation between people with and without disability increased with age.

The peak of participation for people with disability was in the 25-34 years age group while for those without disability, participation peaked at 45-54 years. People aged 55-64 years with disability had the lowest participation rate (40%) of all the age groups. Of people of this age, with disability and not in the labour force, nearly one third (30%) reported long-term illness or injury as a reason for not wanting

to work, much higher than people of the same age without disability (2%). For people aged 55-64 years with disability, their low participation rate may partly reflect the desire for retirement or difficulties experienced by mature-age job seekers, which can discourage some from looking for work.([Endnote 9](#))

There were differences in labour force participation between working-age men and women among those with disability, with women (49%) less likely to participate than men (60%). This was also true for people without disability (77% and 89% respectively), partly reflecting women's roles in family responsibilities.([Endnote 10](#))

Disability type

Of the five main disability groups, the most common in 2009 was physical disability, which affected nearly three quarters (71%) of working-age people with disability. This was much higher than the proportion with sensory and speech disability (21%) or psychological disability (17%). People can be affected by more than one type of disability and therefore be classified into one or more disability groups.

The type of disability that an individual has can affect their likelihood of participating in the labour market. People with sensory or speech impairment had the best labour market outcomes with a participation rate of 54% and an unemployment rate of 7.0%, while people whose disability was psychological had the lowest participation rate (29%), and the highest unemployment rate (19%). People with sensory or speech impairment may be able to benefit from assistive technologies but this is not the case for people with psychological disability such as mental illness. People with mental illness may experience disruption to their work attendance and career due to the episodic nature of their disability.

SELECTED LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS BY DISABILITY GROUP (a) - 2009

Disability group	Labour force participation		Unemployment rate %
	People '000	rate %	
Sensory and speech	457.9	53.7	7.0
Intellectual	244.8	40.9	16.3
Physical	1,546.0	49.7	7.5
Psychological	369.6	29.2	18.9
Head injury, stroke or brain damage	155.6	35.6	15.3
All with a disability(b)	2,171.3	54.3	7.8
No disability	12,547.9	82.8	5.1
All people	14,719.2	78.6	5.4

(a) People aged 15-64 years and living in households.

(b) Includes other disability type(s) and those who may not have a specific limitation or restriction.

Source: ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009

Disability severity

The severity of disability is an indication of a person's limitations in the core activities of communication, mobility and self-care. Of people aged 15-64 years with disability, almost one quarter (23%) had profound or severe disability, while nearly half (47%) had moderate or mild disability. About one third (30%) of people with disability did not have a core activity limitation, yet they may have had a school or work restriction.

As with disability type, the severity of a person's disability is reflected in their ability to participate in the labour force. Generally, labour force participation decreases as the severity of disability increases. In 2009, those aged 15-64 years with moderate or mild disability had a participation rate of 53%, while those with profound or severe disability had a labour force participation rate of 31%. This pattern was evident across all types of disability. For example, the participation rate of those with moderate or mild physical restriction was 51%, while those with profound or severe physical restriction had a participation rate of 28%.

To see a pattern in unemployment rates, severity and type of disability need to be looked at together. For example, the unemployment rate for people with intellectual disability was high in comparison with other disability groups, regardless of severity. Those with moderate or mild intellectual disability (20%) had a higher unemployment rate than those with moderate or mild physical disability (8.8%). This may partly reflect the unique barriers that people with intellectual disability face in accessing education and work.

Employment restrictions

Some people with disability experience employment restrictions such as being restricted in the type of job they can do or the number of hours they can work, or needing special assistance in the workplace. People with disability who had an employment restriction were far less likely to be participating in the labour force (46%) than those without an employment restriction (71%).

Of the 69% of people with disability who had an employment restriction, two of the most common restrictions were the type of job or the number of hours they could work (51% and 31% respectively). People with profound or severe disability were the most likely to have some kind of employment restriction (92%).

EMPLOYMENT

In Australia in 2009, over one million working-age people with disability (50%) were in paid employment, comprising 10% of the total Australian workforce. Men with disability (55%) were more likely to be employed than women with disability (45%).

Hours worked

Generally, people with disability who were employed were more likely than people without disability to work part time (38% and 31% respectively). The number of hours usually worked by people with disability was associated with the severity and type of disability they had.

People with profound or severe disability who worked were more likely to work part-time hours than those with less severe disability. Nevertheless, almost half (49%) of those with profound or severe

disability who were working, worked full time.

Among the five disability groups, psychological and intellectual disabilities have greater association with fewer working hours. More than a third (35%) of people with psychological disability who worked, usually worked no more than 15 hours, followed by people with intellectual disability (30%). In contrast, about two thirds of employed people with sensory or speech disability (66%) or physical disability (61%) worked full time.

HOURS USUALLY WORKED EACH WEEK(a) BY SEVERITY OF DISABILITY

Footnote(s): (a) People aged 15-64 years and living in households. (b) Includes those who may not have a specific limitation or restriction.

Source(s): [ABS 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers \(cat. no. 4430.0\)](#)

Occupation and industry

Almost one fifth (19%) of working-age people with disability who were employed in 2009 worked as professionals, followed by clerical and administrative workers, and technicians and trade workers (both 15%). The distribution of people across different occupations is similar for people with and without disability. However, there was some variation of occupations according to the type of disability. For example, around one third (34%) of employed people with intellectual disability were working as labourers, such as cleaners, in 2009, while one-fifth (20%) of employed people with sensory or speech disability were in professional occupations, such as secondary school teachers.

Both people with and without disability had similar distributions across industry groups. Some industries had a higher than average (10%) disability prevalence rate, particularly Agriculture, forestry and fishing (15%) and Transport, postal and warehousing (12%). This may be partly reflective of the older age profile of people in these industries.

People with disability who were working were more likely to run their own business (13%), and/or work from home (9%), than employed people without disability (10% and 6% respectively). Such situations may enhance the flexibility of working arrangements, making it easier for people with disability to participate in the labour force.

Income sources

Among working-age people with disability who were employed, the most commonly reported main source of cash income was wages or salary (77%), much higher than the next most common income sources, government pensions or allowances, and business income (both 9%).

Of people with disability who were employed, over one fifth (22%) received some form of government pension or allowance. This was nearly double that of people without disability who were employed and in receipt of a government pension or allowance (12%). People with disability who were working part time were more likely to receive a government pension or allowance (41%) than those working full time (10%). The main disability income support, The Disability Support Pension, can provide income to supplement earnings from work (see Income support box).

Assistance needed

Employers and disability employment service providers may need to make special arrangements to ensure that employees with disability have a suitable environment in which to work. In 2009, 12% of employed people with disability required some type of special work arrangement such as being provided with special equipment or being allocated different duties.

The type of disability influenced whether assistance was needed in the workplace and the kind of assistance required. Employed people with psychological or intellectual disability were likely to require special working arrangements, with nearly one fifth (18% and 16% respectively) receiving assistance, such as a support person to assist or train them on the job. People with sensory or speech disability who were working were less likely to require special working arrangements, with one tenth (9%) receiving special working arrangements. For this disability group, assistance provided took the form of special equipment (48%).

The severity of disability also influenced whether a person required any special work arrangements, with 10% of employed people with moderate or mild disability needing special work arrangements compared with one fifth (20%) of those with profound or severe disability.

UNEMPLOYMENT

As well as being less likely to participate in the labour force, people with disability who do participate are more likely to be unemployed. The unemployment rate for 15-64 year olds with disability in 2009 was 7.8%, compared with 5.1% for people without disability. The unemployment rates of men and women with disability were not significantly different (8.2% and 7.3% respectively).

As with the labour force participation rate, the unemployment rate varied between disability groups. People with sensory or speech disability had the lowest unemployment rate (7.0%). Conversely, people living with psychological or intellectual disability had the highest unemployment rates (19% and 16% respectively).

PEOPLE NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE

In 2009, of people aged 15-64 years with disability, 46% were not in the labour force, which is significantly higher than people with no disability (17%). Of the nearly one million people with disability who were not in the labour force, more than half were women (57%). In comparison, over two thirds (67%) of people without disability who were not in the labour force were women. Nearly half (46%) of people with disability who were not in the labour force were aged 55-64 years, and of those of this age, 67% were permanently unable to work.

Having long-term illness or disability was reported by more than half (52%) of those not in the labour force as the main reason for not wanting, or not being able to work. Other main reasons for not being in the labour force were being satisfied with their current situation (no need to work for now) (18%), or being permanently retired (9%). Of people with disability who were not in the labour force, some found it difficult to find a job due to their illness or disability (41%) or because they lacked the necessary skills or experience (8%).

LOOKING AHEAD

The Australian Government, through the National Disability Agreement, provides support to people with disability who wish to enter employment ([Endnote 4](#)). Under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, federal, and state and territory governments are making a concerted effort to improve and increase employment services for people with disability. ([Endnote 5](#)) In addition, planned reforms to the Australian welfare support system, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, aim to create increased opportunities for people with disability to enter and maintain employment. ([Endnote 14](#)) Increases in labour force participation may improve both financial security and personal wellbeing for people with disability.

APPENDIX B

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Sweden

Employers who hire workers in Sweden, with reduced working capacity are eligible for the wage subsidy scheme funded by the public employment services. This also applies to currently employed workers who acquire a disability. The subsidy amounts to a set percentage based on the full salary and are subjected to a time limit of four years. In special cases the duration may be extended to support the employer into retaining the disabled employee. As part of the *Technical Aid and Adaptation* scheme, the employer receives a grant to adjust the workplace while the disabled employee receives funding to acquire personal technical aids. The scheme is made available to newly hired disabled employees as part of the wage subsidy scheme by the Public Employment Services and to existing employees who acquire a disability by the Public Insurance Office. Employers who hire disabled employees who require assistance are supported through one of two *Personal Assistance* schemes. The first scheme offers the funds to cover the appointment of an existing employee to assist the disabled worker. The second option concerns disabled workers who require assistance in both their personal and professional lives: they are eligible for a specific allowance to cover the hire of a personal assistant who will provide them with the necessary support in both their private and job related tasks.³⁰

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in France

The 2005 Disability Act ('Loi numero 2005-102 du 11 février 2005 pour l'égalité des droits et des chances, la participation et la citoyenneté des personnes handicapées') and the 1987 Disability Employment Act ('Loi numero 87-517 du 10 juillet 1987 en faveur de l'emploi des travailleurs handicapés') are the main legislations' regarding this matter in France.

Both private companies and public offices with a work force of more than 20 employees must hire 6 % of disabled workers. Employers are provided with 3 options to meet this target:

- hiring disabled workers as employees (direct hire)
- subcontracting workers from the sheltered sector (indirect hire)
- paying a contribution fee to a specific organisation which then uses the funds to further professional inclusion in both the private and public sectors

Private companies pay their contribution fee to the AGEFIPH (Association de gestion du fonds pour l'insertion professionnelle des personnes handicapées or Fund for the professional inclusion of disabled people). In turn, public offices pay their fee to the FIPHFP (Fonds pour l'insertion des personnes handicapées dans la fonction publique or Fund for the professional inclusion of disabled people in the public sector).

The contribution amounts to up to 600 times the French hourly minimal wage (8,71€ in 2008) for each missing disabled employee. After 3 years, if no effort were made, the compensation fee can go up to 1500 times the minimal wage. These particular provisions are fairly recent as they entered into force in January 2006.

³⁰ Work and Employment, Article 27, Sweden 2011

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Germany

In Germany there is a special Law as part of the social legislation dealing with persons with disabilities. This law designates that all companies employing more than 20 employees have to assign 5 % of these jobs to disabled persons. Especially persons with severe disabilities, to which blind and partially sighted individuals also belong, are to be considered in particular. Employers are obliged to report vacant positions to the Employment Offices and have to pay at present an amount between 105 and 260 Euros - depending on the number of available jobs in their enterprise - for each job not being filled by a disabled jobseeker, if they do not follow this legal obligation.

A further legal stipulation is the supplementary vacation of normally five days annually in addition to the general holidays; this is intended to be a compensation for the additional expenditure of time and energy that a disabled person has to suffer due to his/her disability.

Companies with more than five impaired employees have a representative of employees with disabilities in order to look after the special interests of these employees. It is the job of these Representatives to safeguard the interests of the employees with disabilities starting with the application for a job up to the notice of its termination. They are elected by the respective employees of an enterprise

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Italy

The Law on the employment of disabled people (Law no. 68 of 12 March 1999: 'Regulations on the right to employment for persons with disabilities') is the main legislation concerning the legal obligation to employ disabled workers in Italy.

Public and private employers are required to hire persons with disabilities belonging to the following categories:

- persons of working age with physical, sensory, mental or cognitive disabilities whose working ability is reduced by more than 45%
- persons with a visual or hearing disability
- military and civilian war-disabled persons, work-disabled persons (public sector).
- work-disabled persons with an invalidity percentage of more than 33% (private sector)

Based on the size of their workforce, both private and public sector employers are required to hire a certain percentage of disabled workers:

- Employers with more than 50 employees must meet a 7% disability employment quota;
 - At least 2 disabled workers must be hired in workplaces of 36 to 50 employees;
 - Workplaces of 15 to 35 employees must hire at least 1 disabled worker if they operate new intake
- Disabled workers hired on temporary contracts for a period of less than 9 months cannot be included in the percentage, in other words employers must hire disabled workers for longer periods to meet the legal requirement.

Employers in unfavourable economic situations may be exempted from meeting the target or paying the compensation fee until their situation improves. Otherwise, employers who do not meet the disability employment target must pay a compensation fee to a specific fund. This fund is managed at regional level and works on furthering the integration of disabled people in the labour market.

In addition to this general legislation, various legal acts govern target disability employment in specific branches.

Law no. 113 of 29 March 1985 regulated the employment of visually impaired switchboard operators and comprehensively addresses vocational training, job placement, contracting and retirement

schemes. All public offices and private companies with a switchboard of at least 5 telephone lines must hire one visually impaired telephone switchboard operator. Public offices with switchboards comprising more than one operator position must reserve no less than 51% of all positions to visually impaired people.

Law no. 29 of 11 January 1994 governs the employment of visually impaired rehabilitation therapists. Private nursing homes and public hospitals must hire at least one and up to 5% of visually impaired therapists.

In the public sector a certain percentage of posts are reserved for disabled people both in competitive entry examination and direct recruitment procedures. For example, under Law no. 270 of 1982, 2% of the teaching posts are reserved for visually impaired candidates.

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Greece

The most important Greek law on the field of Employment is the Law 2643/98 'Provision for the employment of special social groups and other clauses' (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 220/A), which defines the quota scheme for the private and the public sector.

This law forecasts the obligatory placement of individuals from protected social groups to companies of private sector, public enterprises and organisations, but also in public services and local-government bodies, via objective criteria of placement based on age, familial & economic conditions, formal qualifications and percentage of disability. (Note: The 'disability percentage' is an official tool intended to represent the extent of disability which also corresponds to different disability entitlements. The percentage is decided by statutory commissions within social security bodies on the basis of medical information for each individual case.)

According to this law, in the Greek private sector the enterprises which have more than 50 employees are obliged to cover 8% of their staff with employees with disabilities and other socially sensitive groups. In the public sector, the corresponding percentage is 5%.

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Portugal

The Decree Law 29/2001, of February 3 (Employment Quota System) defines positive measures to promote the employment of people with disabilities in central and local public administration. There is a 5% quota for people with disabilities (motor, visual, hearing, mental or cerebral palsy) with a degree of incapacity greater than or equal to 60%.

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Slovakia

The Employment Service Act (5/2004) and the Labour Law (Codex 311/2001) are the main pieces of legislation governing employment in Slovakia.

Both private companies and public offices with a workforce of more than 20 employees must hire 3.2% of disabled workers. Employers are provided with 3 options to meet this target:

- Hiring disabled workers as employees (direct hire)
- Subcontracting workers from the sheltered sector, self-employed disabled workers or outsourcing goods or services from a company that hires disabled employees (indirect hire)
- Paying a contribution fee. The contribution fee goes to a public fund which finances technical adjustments and renovation in the supported and sheltered work areas.

The contribution fee is set at 0.9% of labour costs based on the Slovak average salary. In 2008, it amounted to 23.300 SKK (approximately 776 Euros) for each missing employee.

Law no. 38/2004, dated 18 August defines the general bases of the legal system for prevention, habilitation, rehabilitation and participation. Article 28 states that 'according to their size, companies should contract people with disability by means of a work contract or other forms of employment for a maximum quota of 2% of their workforce.

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in Spain

The 1982 Social Integration for Disabled People Act (Law 13/1982), as extended by the 2003 Non Discrimination Act (Law 51/2003), the 2007 Equal Opportunities Act (Law 49/2007) and the Royal Decree on Non Discrimination in State services (Decree 366/2007) are the main legislations regarding disability employment in Spain.

Both private companies and public offices must meet a 2 % disability employment target, irrespective of the volume of their workforce.

Employers who do not directly hire 2% of disabled workers are provided with the following 'alternative options' to make up for the employment target:

- subcontracting self-employed disabled workers
 - subcontracting workers from the sheltered sector
 - creating a so-called Work Enclave, where sheltered workers temporarily join the company
- These options must represent at least 3 times the public indicator per worker and per year for each missing directly hired disabled worker.

Another alternative option is the payment of a contribution through donation or sponsoring of organisations, services or foundation bodies that are engaged with disability employment or vocational training. The amount must represent at least 1.5 times the public indicator per worker and per year for each missing directly hired disabled worker.

Employers may apply for an exemption if they can demonstrate

- that there are no available candidates;
- that the incorporation of available workers would outweigh the company's resources.

A sanction system has recently been introduced to strengthen the existing legislation.

Legal obligation to employ workers with disabilities in the United Kingdom

There is currently no legal obligation to employ disabled people in the UK.

The Employers' Forum on Disabilities (EFD) has developed a disability employment benchmark standard for their members, involving an online assessment tool. The Department of Work and Pensions offers a '2 tick' accreditation towards a disability employment standard.

Employers who use the '2 tick' disability symbol make five commitments regarding recruitment, training, retention, consultation and disability awareness. These commitments are:

1. to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
2. to discuss with disabled employees, at any time but at least once a year, what both parties can do to make sure disabled employees can develop and use their abilities

3. to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
4. to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
5. to review these commitments each year and assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus (Disability Employment Services (DESS) are the equivalent in Australia) know about progress and future plans.

The '2 tick' award is important for demonstrating an organisation's commitment to becoming a disability confident organisation. Shell UK, for example, has been through the accreditation process. Although some are sceptical that the award will reflect genuine commitment to disability employment, it is an important first step in convincing employees and customers of the need for inclusivity. Furthermore, the process of gaining the accreditation provides the organisation with considerable knowledge and this empowers them to move towards more inclusive hiring and more flexible staff management practices.

APPENDIX C

The story of disability employment in Australia

- Until World War II, a charitable approach to disability dominated. People with disability were portrayed as dependent and deserving of pity.³¹ Education in specialised institutions was the norm and not until World War I disabled veterans returned from war did employment quota schemes develop.³² The belief that people with disabilities needed to be hidden from society prevailed.³³ A prominent example of this attitude was the refusal of the American media and public to admit their President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had a disability.³⁴
- The medical model dominated the 1950s as technological improvements resulted in a greater capacity to prevent disability and rehabilitate those with impairments. The latter were portrayed as 'sick'; requiring treatment by trained professionals. Exclusion was seen as unavoidable due to the limitations impairment imposed and solutions were based on attempts to cure or 'normalise' those with disabilities.³⁵
- The disability movement, led by people with disabilities including Vietnam veterans and young human rights activists, began in the 1960s and 1970s in North America and Europe. Its core platform was that people with disabilities should have equal rights and opportunities as others. This was exemplified in its slogan: 'nothing about us without us'. This led to the social model of disability.³⁶
- Models of inclusion appear to have been selectively 'forgotten' from Western disability history. For example, among the Maori in Aotearoa where it is suggested that disability is accepted as being normal. Disability activists are now facing the task of re-creating a culture which celebrates and embraces difference.³⁷ Furthermore, in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, disability is understood in a vastly different way to Western perceptions. The Western Australian government found that:
*'...Having a disability did not separate people from the rest of their community. For example, the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people had no general word for disability that separated people with impairments from the rest of the community. The consultations found that Aboriginal people are, in general, less familiar with the term 'disability' and the way in which it is understood in Western culture.'*³⁸
- The UN has implemented many initiatives aimed at promoting the disability agenda. Firstly, 1982 was declared International Year of Disabled Persons. Its outcome was the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in December 1982, followed by the International Decade of Disabled Persons. The UN General Assembly adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in 1993. In December 2006 the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Disability is therefore part of the international human rights agenda.³⁹ Australia signed up to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in March 2007.
- Rights-based discourse, although employed as a political strategy, has also become a way of constructing disability by locking people with disability into an identity which is based upon membership of a minority group. Entitlements thus become contingent upon being able to

³¹ Disabled People and Development, report by Lorna Jean Edmonds, Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division, Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Asian Development Bank, June 2005. Pg 11

³² Disability Issues, Trends and Recommendations for the World Bank, Metts, pg 12.

³³ Disabled People and Development, pg 11

³⁴ Doris Zames Fleischer and Frieda Zames, *The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), pg 2

³⁵ Disability in Development: the Case for Inclusion, Sharon Tanner, Oct. 2007, pg 12

³⁶ *ibid.*, pg 12

³⁷ <http://www.ru.org/human-rights/the-history-of-disability-a-history-of-otherness.html>

³⁸ "How Is Australia Fairing": Social Inclusion and People with Disability. AFDO, Aug. 2010, Pg 36

³⁹ *ibid.* Pg 13

define oneself as a person with disability. And the conceptual barrier between 'normal' and 'abnormal' goes unchallenged, so that while one may have entitlements legislatively guaranteed, 'community' which cannot be legislated for, remains elusive. The history of disability has been a history of seeking to construct hierarchical difference out of an essential reality of oneness. The challenge is to create the reverse.⁴⁰

- While there are collectable statistics that can be used there are also many factors which are unseen and hard to measure (or not measured) and by comparison with women's progress on boards, '... people with disability are often left off consultative committees and boards, as in the case of the Social Inclusion Board.'⁴¹
- One example of progress for employment of people with disability is the Payroll tax Rebate Scheme (Disability)Employment) introduced by the NSW government in 2008, which gives businesses a payroll tax rebate for hiring a person with a disability. It is an initiative as part of Stronger Together 2.⁴²
- Looking ahead, the Australian Government, through the National Disability Agreement, provides support to people with disability who wish to enter employment. Under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, federal, and state and territory governments are making a concerted effort to improve and increase employment services for people with disability. In addition, planned reforms to the Australian welfare support system, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, aim to create increased opportunities for people with disability to enter and maintain employment.
- Education and success (or otherwise) in gaining employment, seem to go hand in hand. Recent statistics show that Year 12 attainment was around 25% for people with disabilities, compared to just over 50% for people without disabilities.⁴³ It is interesting to note that the Council of Australian Governments' [National Education Agreement \(2009\)](#) aims to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for 20-24 year olds to 90% by 2015.⁴⁴
- *By comparison, over the past decade young women (aged 20-24 years) have been consistently more likely than young men to have attained Year 12, although both have experienced increases at much the same rate. In 2001, around two-thirds of young men (67%) and three-quarters of young women (74%) had attained Year 12. By 2010, this had increased to 73% of young men and 83% of young women.*⁴⁵
- The Transition to work program in NSW, started in 2008 as a precursor to the introduction of the payroll rebate for employers who employ people with disability from Jan 2012. The idea being that by completing the 2yr course after finishing yr 12, people with disability (moderate to high needs) would be trained and ready to move to open or supported employment at the completion of their program. It aims to provide satisfying and meaningful work, consistent with employment goals, develop skills and qualifications necessary for the transition to sustainable employment, sustain work and training commitments and have fair access to support.
- In 1987 Female students outnumbered male students in University.⁴⁶ In 2010 there were 845,002 students in Higher Education. In 2010 more than half of all students enrolled were female (55.6 per cent).⁴⁷ By comparison less than 5% of all students enrolled in 2010 had disability.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ <http://www.ru.org/human-rights/the-history-of-disability-a-history-of-otherness.html>

⁴¹ "How is Australia Faring": Social Inclusion and People with Disability, AFDO, Aug. 2010 pg 36

⁴² <http://www.osr.nsw.gov.au/taxes/payroll/faqs/disability/>

⁴³ ABS Media Release , Sept. 2011

⁴⁴ <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40Mar+2011>

⁴⁵ <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40Mar+2011>

⁴⁶ <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40Mar+2011>

⁴⁷ DEEWR, 'Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics', 2011

⁴⁸ Ibid