

family

A D V O C A C Y

## Submission on the Department of Social Services Disability Employment Support Model Consultation

*“The full growth potential of a person cannot be predicted; it only becomes apparent when a person’s life conditions are optimised.”*

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## Summary of recommendations

### *Recommendation 1*

Recognise and support “family” as the agents of positive social change and as such, build their capacity to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to have high expectations and a strong vision to create, facilitate and support employment for the person with disability in their life.

### *Recommendation 2*

Provide for a suite of innovative, contemporary models such as the School to Work project, Customised employment, Microbusinesses, and the Rotary Employment Project. There is no one-size-fits all model. Flexibility is the key to success.

### *Recommendation 3*

Put the person with disability at the centre of the new Disability Employment Support model instead of the job. Invest in a proper discovery process first, getting to know a person’s strengths and interests, their contributions and the conditions needed for success. Get to know the culture of the employer.

### *Recommendation 4*

Involve people with lived experience of disability and/or their family representative in the co-design, implementation and monitoring of the new Disability Employment Support model.

### *Recommendation 5*

Acknowledge the nexus between segregated education and poor employment outcomes and recommend the Department of Education adopt the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education’s, [Driving change: A Roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia](#) to help realise equitable education outcomes for students with disability.

### *Recommendation 6*

Commit to end segregated employment to ensure Australia meets its obligations under the United Nation’s *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* with a phasing out of Australian Disability Enterprises and transitioning workers to regular employment settings which includes equal remuneration - real jobs for real pay.

### *Recommendation 7*

Acknowledge and address the compounding disadvantage that comes with intersectional barriers that make it harder for people with disabilities from other marginalised groups to get a job and keep a job.

### *Recommendation 8*

Promote the School to Work project and support the findings and recommendations upon completion.

**Recommendation 9**

Commit to fund projects, research and innovative initiatives focused on promoting employment and improved community attitudes towards disability, which also includes an evaluation of good practices.

**Recommendation 10**

Set a 15% quota for public service employment of people with disabilities. No less than 5% of that 15 % be available for people with complex and significant disabilities.

## About Family Advocacy

Family Advocacy is a state and federally funded disability advocacy organisation that works across New South Wales (NSW). It was founded by families 30 years ago to advance and protect the rights and interests of people with developmental disability<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter “disability”) so that meaningful lives can be enjoyed by experiencing the same opportunities and living conditions as the majority of Australians.

This includes being included in things such as education, employment, and community and the right to live safely and with dignity, free from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation. We recognise that the advocacy undertaken by a family can be one of the greatest influence of inclusion and safeguards and in their family member’s lives.

Family Advocacy works across New South Wales (NSW) and supports families in their advocacy to represent people with disability from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and people from metropolitan, rural and remote areas. Some of the areas we provide advocacy support include education, employment, housing, guardianship and NDIS.

We provide support in the following ways:

- Statewide Advocacy advice and advocacy information to individuals;
- Advocacy development for family members of a person with disability - Advocacy is often undertaken by families and these efforts can be required over the lifetime of their family member; and
- Systemic Advocacy - informing government regarding legislation, policy, funding, monitoring, and practice in areas that impact on the needs of people with disability.

One of our initiatives, Resourcing Inclusive Communities, works across NSW. At Resourcing Inclusive Communities, we hold the philosophy that people with disability thrive in the heart of the community, sharing the same everyday experiences as their fellow Australians. We share our vision of social inclusion with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD).

Our work includes specific funding and activities around the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (hereinafter, the Disability Royal Commission). As such, part of our policy and advocacy work involves being discerning and constantly questioning the quality and effectiveness of the disability sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Developmental disability is a disability that occurs in the developmental period of a person’s life (in the period from conception to adulthood) and includes but is not limited to: autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and any combination of physical, intellectual or sensory disability.

## Introduction

Family Advocacy welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department of Social Services (DSS) in response to the “Shaping your New Disability Employment Support model program (the new DES model) Consultation paper”. Indeed, it has been a recommendation of ours to overhaul the current DES system due to its ineffectiveness so we are pleased this is going to be phased out.

Australia continues to run the significant risk of being left behind in other jurisdictions and countries. In terms of employment in the open market, we know Australia (and NSW) has a poor record. People with disability are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed than people without disability.<sup>2</sup> Compared to OECD countries, Australia has one of the lowest employment participation rates for people with disability at 53.4 per cent compared with 84.1 per cent for people without disability. Of 15-64 year-olds, 37.9 per cent have their main source of personal income from a government pension or allowance.<sup>3</sup> Complaints about discrimination in employment make up a significant proportion of all disability discrimination complaints made to Australian anti-discrimination agencies.<sup>4</sup>

No doubt the DSS is well aware of Australia’s poor employment record. This perpetually poor performance has a severe impact on people with disability and the lives they are able to live, with high rates of poverty being just one example. People with disability are denied the ability to benefit from the good things in life that having a job and financial security provide. The impacts of this are often more profound for people with complex and significant developmental disabilities. High rates of unemployment and low workforce participation create significant social and economic costs for Australia as a whole.

A study attributed Australia’s significant disparity in employment rates to what they termed “removeable barriers”, namely limited capacity and systemic factors.<sup>5</sup> This research is in line with the Productivity Commission’s 2011 modelling, which predicted a greater change in employment levels for people with disability.<sup>6</sup>

The current system of welfare, education, vocational training and disability employment programs is complex and multilayered which makes it very hard for a person with developmental disability and/or their representative family member to navigate with success, somehow being expected to “find their way”. It must be said then, the DES model is a cog in the wheel of a fragmented system and one must be cautious to assume that overhauling the DES model on its own will not solve all of the barriers faced by people with disability face to gain employment.

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*, 2018, Catalogue number 4430.0, 24 October 2019

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*, 2018, Catalogue number 4430.0, 24 October 2019

<sup>4</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2016) [Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability](#), AHRC, Sydney.

<sup>5</sup> Deloitte 2011

<sup>6</sup> Per capita report 2021, 17

We acknowledge there will always be a tension between whether to support a mainstream or disability specific programs. On the one hand, mainstream programs and training are desirable as this is what inclusion ought to be. However, current systemic barriers and low expectations regarding people with disability in the open employment market have resulted in the poor outcomes to date.

On the other hand, history has shown disability specific programs often have a bolt-on approach that treats the workforce participation of people with disability as a separate agenda to broader employment and workplace reform rather than an essential component to economic participation and lessen welfare dependency. Where We invite the DSS to consider these tensions and investigate to determine the better approach. And to consider whether a hybrid version may be better suited.

In any event, we recommend certain principles that ought to be considered for success based upon 30 years of experience working with families who have promoted and defended their family members' interests and rights and particularly supported their family member to be authentically included. We submit that an absolutely essential piece to the success of the new DES model is for the DSS to recognise and support "family" as the agents of positive social change and as such, build their capacity to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to have high expectations and a strong vision to create, facilitate and support employment for the person with disability in their life.

Throughout the submission, we share examples with short videos of good practice and success in employment created with the support of families. We strongly encourage the DSS to watch these videos as seeing is believing. We advocate for a suite of innovative, contemporary models and provide examples such as the School to Work project, Customised employment, Microbusinesses, and the Rotary Employment Project. There is no one-size-fits all model. Flexibility is the key to success. Many of these innovative approaches both here and internationally are not necessarily new but poorly adopted or supported.

Putting the person with disability at the centre of the new DES model is a critical component. A proper discovery process is paramount. Start with the person, take the time to get to know the person. And, it is also just as important to take the time getting to know the culture of the employer.

Another aspect of being person-centred is to not pay lip service to the "Nothing about us, without us" mantra. Co-design and co-delivery of the new DES model must happen in partnership with people that have a lived experience of disability, an/or their families plus the representative organisations which are recognised under the CRPD in its implementation and monitoring.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, General comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention (CRPD/C/GC/7).

Of the positive examples of employment for a person with developmental disability, we see that having an inclusive education system being directly connected to the opportunities for employment. We continue to impress upon the DSS the importance of adopting an inclusive education system if it wishes to achieve successful employment outcomes for students with disability. The Australian Coalition on Inclusive Education has already developed a 10 year plan and we strongly recommend the adoption of, [Driving change: A Roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia](#) to help realise equitable education outcomes for students with disability.

Unfortunately, students with disability continue to be segregated as they are funnelled from school settings (usually Support Units and Schools for specific purposes) into Day Services and Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs). This has a very distinct “othering” effect, where people with disability are living their lives parallel to the rest of society rather than being in and part of society. Decision makers continue to make decisions for reform based in isolation of other systems leaving the possible impacts of positive reform diminished.

We see a similar pattern with education and employment in the way people with disability are perceived and treated. Just as with education, students in the 1950’s were considered “uneducable”, some 70 years later we are faced with people with disability being considered “unemployable”, with no genuine pathway that leads to a real job for real pay. This is simply unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To be consistent with the many government policies embracing economic participation and community inclusion for people with disability such as the NDIS and National Disability Strategy, we strongly encourage the DSS to expressly acknowledge that segregation in education and employment is a violation of the fundamental rights of people with a disability as espoused under the United Nation’s *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD). We strongly urge the DSS, to collaborate with the Department of Education to make concrete, time bound plans to considerably transition students from segregated school settings to regular classes and transition workers from segregated employment to mainstream employment. There must be reforms that support real jobs for real pay.

## 1. Who should be able to access a specialist disability employment program?

Anyone with a disability who is interested in employment should be able to access a specialist disability employment program. This can include casual and part-time employment, short-term unpaid work experience. As a general rule, we would NOT advocate for this to include voluntary work or community engagement. Too often, voluntary work can be seen as an easy fix and may have no connection to the person’s interests and contributions. We hear of people with developmental disabilities starting in voluntary work and nothing progresses from this point so that years later, they are still in the same role without any payment for their time/services. If voluntary employment was to be included as an option, there would have to be time parameters



and/or a career pathway plan with paid employment to avoid these pitfalls.

When it comes to the NDIS supporting employment pathways, and complementing a future disability employment support program, we would in principle support this but with the following caveats:

- it's pot luck (hit and miss) as to whether a person with disability gets the supports they need. Even people who have family members that are educated, articulate and confident struggle to get the supports they need. And it is also dependent on the quality and attitude of the LAC and the Planner, who is a faceless person that the person with disability rarely meets.
- Only 10% of people with a disability have access to the NDIS so it is important to consider this when making any decisions in this regard.

The role of the NDIS ought to provide clear guidelines around this and ensure all of its staff and contractors are aware of the supports that exist for people to be supported to find employment. A positive movement within the NDIS has been added flexibility for utilising job development and employment supports outside disability specific employment providers. This is seen as a good step forward for many.

## 2. How can we simplify entry to the disability employment support model?

### Prioritise people with complex and significant disability and consider the impact of intersectionality barriers

Given there are a large number of organisations and interests being represented, the challenge will be to determine who and what is prioritised. Obviously, we would strongly recommend that the people with disability from marginalised groups need to be prioritised as they are a more vulnerable cohort, such as people with complex and significant disability and those that fall within multiple disadvantaged groups.

It is important to acknowledge the compounding disadvantage that occurs for those with disability that are part of other marginalised groups such as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, CALD backgrounds, LGBTQI, and those living in out of home care, youth justice, as well as rural and remote communities. Intersectional barriers make it harder for people with disabilities to find and keep work.

The new DES model should provide particular consideration to and recognise and address these additional intersectional barriers, with targeted actions that are time bound. As previously stated, this cannot be accomplished without the direct involvement of people at the centre of these issues and/or the families/organisations that advocate with and on behalf of them.

## The importance of discovering strengths and Interests

We absolutely agree that using a strengths-based approach is the best approach moving forward. However, we respectfully submit that the current assessment process is not starting at the right point. Rather than assess a person's capacity and capability, we suggest it would far more relevant and potent to start with the Vision for the person, then what they are good at, or interested in or the roles that would be good for them to have in their lives, or that *they* would like to have.

- It is Important to think broadly and outside the box on what is viewed as a typical 'skill or strength.'
- It is important Identify in the person what are considered to be 'soft skills' such as problem solving, team work, positive attitude, people skills and strong work ethic. These are all important skills to have, acknowledge in the ever changing and dynamic labour market.

Further, the word 'obsessions' are often used to describe the strong interests of people with disability. The word 'obsessions' have a negative meaning and this is often perpetuated within the disability sector itself.

Strong interests however can be viewed in a positive light as they often lead to deep knowledge, attention to detail and motivation to be involved in a particular interests. Many families have had success when they have utilised a strong interest and supported their family member to turn this interest into a role.

Sometimes it can be hard to identify what a strength or interest might be and that's where we have to be observant of both the big and small things. For example, one mum observed her child's love of the water. The family weren't afraid to expose him to the ordinary pleasures that we all enjoyed, and so he became very proficient at navigating the water even though he has spinal issues. This love has of course led him to enjoy not just swimming but also surfing and being part of the surf club, where many skills have been learned.

When we consider how we ourselves identified the job, role or employment experiences we wanted to explore and test when we were a young person, it was most likely based on a set of interests or strengths that we had or developed as a young person, leading into adulthood.

Every person is an individual and will have a unique career pathway and life after school and this, most importantly is not determined by diagnosis or disability type but rather by what the person or individual are interested in and/or what they are good at.

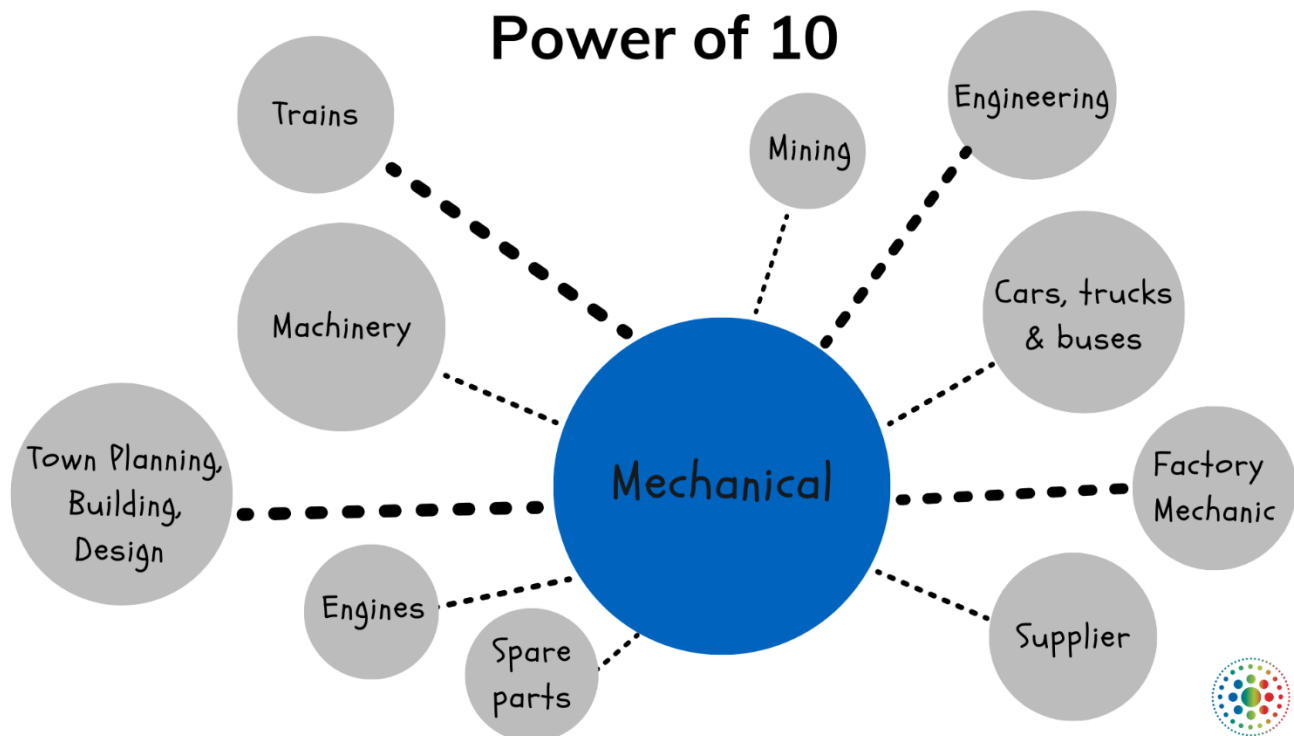
Most of us have tried various jobs or have ended up in a job because it either appeals to our strengths or interests or if we are lucky, both and that should be no different for people with disability. By considering their strengths, passions and interests it can help the person and/or their supporting family member, consider the jobs or work that would best suit them or perhaps not suit them. Of course, involve the person in this conversation.

We recommend the following questions ought to be considered:

- What is important to the young person?
- What do they get excited about?
- What do they like to do in their spare time?
- What are they great at (strengths)?
- What is their best personal quality?
- What skills have they recently developed?

It might also be a good idea to ask other trusted individuals in the person's life. A teacher, family member or family friend. Often, other people will observe interests and skills that family members might not notice.

Building on an interest to explore roles is a great way to brainstorm what might be possible. In our School to Work project we discuss the Power of 10 Activity, where you can focus in on one interest or strength and brainstorm roles that are related to that interest or strength and we are going to ask for your help. The power of 10 is a process using the concept of the multiple of ten (X10) to help us think more broadly than we usually do. You start support the young person by making a list of 10 things they are interested in or good at. Then for each of the ten interests or strengths, you name ten jobs that are related to that interest or strength.



Shown on the example is the word 'mechanics' in the middle of the page. This is an actual example a young man who was very interested in anything mechanical.

The next step in this activity would then be to choose one of the jobs you have identified and then brainstorm 10 locations / companies in your community where that job might exist.

This is an excellent activity to really think outside the box of what can be possible for the young person, while also considering the valued roles in the community that they young person might attain later in life.

Another very important part of this process of discovering the Conditions of Success - seeking to understand what needs to be present or not present for the work role to work well. For example, environmental factors, the age of the person, the nature of the tasks.

## Positive Introduction

Of course, having formulated all this rich information about the person, about the roles they have, strengths, interests and what you see and what they see for their future, a strong and positive introduction is essential when it comes to telling people about the young person.

When we introduce ourselves we don't outright tell people that we might get nervous in some situations or that we're sensitive to certain noises, so therefore we shouldn't begin an introduction with the person's disability. When we speak about the person positively we are providing a lot of rich information about the person that can lead to further conversations.

A positive introduction should include the typical, ordinary things you want to share such as:

- What roles does the person have?
- What is a strength you'd like to share?
- What is an interests you'd like to share?
- What is one thing you are really proud of about that person?
- What is the best quality the young person has?

This may seem obvious however as both the disability sector and many families continue to work off the deficit model it is essential that capacity building across both groups occur.

## Case study - Cameron

We strongly advise you watch [Let's Get to Work – Zellner Services](#) (6.10 minutes) which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get To Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. With the dedicated support of Cameron's family and his Circle of Support they used the Discovery Process to assist in identifying all of Cameron's interests and skills that could be explored for a business idea. The Discovery Process included Cameron himself, his family, friends and circle of support and the goal was to determine which of Cameron's interests would most likely lead to employment options.

### 1. Discovery Example



To begin, you can see from the slide above that information was reviewed going back to 2016, to determine which work path was going to best suite Cameron. The blue arrows on the left side of the page are Cameron's interests, which included rowing, dogs, chopping & food, cooking and photography. Red arrows indicated work roles explored, yellow are unpaid valued roles explored and green arrows have led to paid employment.

Many of the opportunities they explored came through Cameron's Circle of Support connections.

One of the interests, was computers which followed his Dad's interests in computers. Good example of how you can consider showing the young person different tasks where they shadow and learn from you. From computers, Cameron started to enjoy scanning images and from there, with the support of his family he has created his own micro business called Zellner services, that specialises in Scanning, Shredding and Data entry.

## Abolish Readiness Programs

Too often, mock scenarios are created for people with disability to prepare and get ready for the real world. There are many examples such as pretend supermarkets, and pretend cafés. They are an ineffective way to learn the job, the best way to get ready for the job is to do the job. However, experience has shown us that people with developmental disabilities learn best on the job in the real workplace environment. Imitation and role modelling provides are more relevant and potent learning opportunity. It is so important to set up real work experience opportunities for people and abolish readiness or pretend work programs.

### 3. What employment services and supports would most help people with disability?

We strongly encourage the DSS to investigate and adopt more innovative and contemporary models that are more effective for employment of people with developmental disability. Some suggestions are customised employment, micro-enterprises and the Rotary Employment Partnership, discussed below. Further to this, any future DES providers need to have investment in relevant training. We propose that trying to slightly modify current employment services will not go far enough to see the changes to employment rates that we need to see. Investment in innovative approaches forms a critical component of this if we want to see this rate rise for all people with disability.

#### Customised Employment

Success in employment for people with disability is usually driven via families with a determined vision of meaningful employment. For example, we have heard about families taking unique approaches to supporting their family member with disability, using innovative and contemporary models of employment, such as customised employment, and microenterprises that support this cohort. Customised Employment is based on the fundamental principle that everyone can work in typical paid employment, however, people with complex disabilities are often disadvantaged by traditional job-seeking practices. Its a process that matches a person with disability to the needs of an employer, creating a match in a customised job<sup>8</sup>.

We strongly encourage the DSS to apply the strategy of customised employment in the public sector. We refer the DSS to the website of [Marc Gold & Associates – The People who try another way<sup>9</sup>](#) in the U.S, who are disability professionals specialising in the area of employment and community participation for persons with significant disabilities. Below is their explanation of customised employment from their website:

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<sup>8</sup> June Alexander, 'Customised Employment', Presentation, Let's Get to Work Virtual Conference 2020, July 2020.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.marcgold.com/services>

## What is Customized Employment?

Customized Employment (CE) is a universal employment strategy that is especially useful for employment seekers with significant life complexities and barriers to employment, such as a severe disability. CE strategies result in competitive, integrated employment that is **based on a determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the employment seeker**. The specific abilities of the individual are matched to the business needs of an employer. CE is a **relationship** between an employer and an employee that is negotiated to meet the needs of both parties.

CE is included as a strategy to support individuals with disabilities to obtain employment in the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act of 2014.

## What Does the Process Look Like?

### STEP 1

Discovery: Discovery is a form of qualitative research that seeks to understand who the employment seeker is in as many aspects of life as necessary to inform an effective Customized Plan for Employment (CPE); it is used as an alternative strategy to a comparative assessment or other comparative procedure.

### STEP 2

Profile: The Profile is a comprehensive descriptive document that is developed to capture the information gathered during Discovery about the employment seeker. The Profile becomes the written document that informs the Customized Job Development process.

### STEP 3

Customized Plan for Employment (CPE): The CPE is a blueprint for employment for the employment seeker. The CPE is developed during a Customized Employment Planning meeting, a meeting that takes place after Discovery is complete and adheres to the values associated with person-directed and person-centred services. The employment seeker along with family, friends, colleagues and agency representatives attend the meeting and the Profile documents are shared, to support the planning process. Interest areas, tasks, specific employers, locations and other considerations that will increase the likelihood of employment success, are included in the CPE.

### STEP 4

Visual Resume: A Visual Resume is developed for each employment seeker during the Customized Employment process. The Visual Resume is used to present an employment seeker to a potential employer, in a manner that highlights the best of who they are: their relevant interests, education, employment and volunteer experience, potential contributions to the business, and a specific list of tasks the job seeker has to offer.

## STEP 5

*Customized Job Development (CJD): The CPE becomes the basis for all CJD activities undertaken for the employment seeker. Job developers use the CPE “blueprint” to identify, engage, negotiate and customize a job, and any conditions for success needed by the employment seeker, with employers.*

We recommend the DSS read the [Pathways to Careers: A Case Study in Customized Employment](#)<sup>10</sup> which was written by Source America, who have been a leading job creator for people with disabilities for more than 45 years. We share the executive summary of the lessons learned which can provide useful insights to the DSS:

**CE offers one of the most promising paths for improving employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities.** Many people previously left out of the workforce found employment through Pathways – some for the first time in their lives – highlighting how effective CE is at connecting those with significant disabilities to career opportunities. More than 170 individuals with significant barriers to employment participated in Pathways and 97 individuals secured jobs with full wages, benefits, and opportunities for future advancement. Though the scale of the demonstration project was small in terms of the staggering number of people with disabilities who are out of the workforce, Pathways serves as a model for achieving the outcomes envisioned by public policy if the necessary resources are in place.

**There is no one-size-fits-all model.** Flexibility is a key to success. Successful implementation of CE best practices must consider the local context, including the unique features of the agency delivering CE, the local labor market, and regional factors. For example, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency reimbursement rates and Medicaid Day Waiver rates differ widely across states. Local economic conditions and employment practices may also influence the effectiveness of CE best practices.

**A sustainable funding stream is needed to expand offerings and maximize outcomes.** Pathways demonstration sites used a patchwork of various funding sources to sustain their CE activities. Funding needs were compounded by other challenges, including difficulties recruiting and retaining staff; the need to adjust service delivery models due to a variety of unexpected developments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic; and countering ongoing misconceptions regarding people with disabilities and the value they bring to the workforce.

**Investments in CE have the potential to pay for themselves.** The ideal outcome for a significant improvement in the employment situation of people with disabilities is a virtuous economic cycle where individuals are able to rise out of poverty, and local, state, and federal governments reduce the cost of ongoing supports. Source America’s experience with Pathways demonstrates that such an outcome may be possible on a broader scale if policymakers recognize the economic and social gains that could be made through investment in evidence-based CE services.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sourceamerica.org/get-involved/workforce-development/pathways-to-careers/customized-employment>



## An Australian success story

We have a successful example of customised employment in Australia. We strongly urge the DSS to read the transcript from a presentation made by Peter Symonds, General Manager for Operations at 'Possability' in Tasmania called [Customised Employment](#). Instead of competing for advertised jobs in the open labour market, customised employment strategies are used to support people to create opportunities in businesses and organisations that suit their unique skill set and support needs.

*Measuring how successful an employer program is relatively easy. It's based on how many people get jobs, how long they keep them, what they are paid and do the hours of work match what the person is seeking."*

- Peter Symonds, General manager for Operations at Possability, Tasmania

The statistics presented by Mr Symonds speak for themselves:

### **What are the outcomes?**

#### ***Tasmanian Customised Employment experience Jan 2014 – Dec 2015***

*75% gained employment and of this group 91% of these people remained in employment after 26 weeks*

#### ***Disability Employment Service (DES) comparison***

*24.6% gained employment and of this group 29% remained in employment after 26 weeks*

## Case study of Customised Employment – Jack

We recommend watching [Let's Get to Work – The Admin Assistant](#) (5.44 minutes), which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get To Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. When he was in Year 11, Jack's family and his Circle of Support used their connections to find work for Jack at the University of Canberra (UC). Work experience at UC led to paid employment for 8 hours a week at the University of Canberra through a school-based apprenticeship. As a young adult now, the job as an admin assistant was carved by a champion in the workplace that also happens to be on Jack's Circle of Support. The job is customised to Jack's interests and strengths.

## Case study of Customised Employment – Gus

We also recommend watching [Let's Get to Work – The Research Technician](#) (4.13 minutes) which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get To Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. With the support of Gus's family networks, they discovered a job opportunity at the CSIRO. CSIRO used an innovative interview process that was not dependent on verbal responses, rather Gus was taken straight into the lab where he demonstrated he was the right person for the job. Gus had a strong champion within the workplace and many supportive co-workers. CSIRO didn't have everything worked out before they decided to employ a person with disability, but they acknowledge the right support was imperative. It has been extremely successful.

## Microenterprises

A microenterprise is a very small business, owned and run by an individual. It's simple to start, and needs minimal capital. It can have a vital purpose in improving people's quality of life and sense of contribution to society. It can give a person a valued role in their local community providing a service or goods, and be based around the person's passions, interests and skills. It is highly individual – able to happen at whatever level best suits a person. Microenterprises create independence and empower people to make a contribution while using skills and talents.<sup>11</sup>

## Case study of Microenterprise - Josh

We provide an example in the form of a film and recommend you watch [Josh's story](#)<sup>12</sup> (6 minutes) which illustrates that employment can be the norm following an inclusive education rather than a Day Service and/or ADE. Josh now runs his own mail delivery business and is a valued and respected member of his community. We know of other examples of micro businesses such as a coffee cart business, a paper shredding business, a greeting card business where the artwork of the person with disability is used to decorate the cards, a biscuit making where the biscuits are sold in the local café's and markets.

## Case study of Microenterprise – Annie

We strongly suggest you watch [Let's Get to Work – Pa's Produce](#) (5.53 minutes), which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get To Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. In this video, you'll meet Annie and her family. Together they've created a small enterprise called Pa's Produce. A seasonal business, they roast and sell chestnuts from Annie's grandparents' farm. The family demonstrates how important it was to value Annie's strengths and interests. You'll see the power of planning and of taking the first steps, even when it all seems overwhelming. You'll also see the importance of putting the right supports in place. For Annie, this has been a

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<sup>11</sup> <http://microboard.org.au/>

<sup>12</sup> Family Advocacy, *Josh's Story*, YouTube, 24 November 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTdRgyh1dV0>>

combination of freely-given support from extended family and the paid support of a well-chosen mentor.

On the basis of the above, we recommend the new DES model employ measures to ensure that people with disability can access employment services that meet their individualised needs, and which are focused on long-term outcomes.

## Rotary Employment Partnership

Another model we suggest the DSS explore is the [Rotary Employment Partnership](#) (REP) in Alberta, Canada as it has been so successful it has expanded to other Canadian provinces and internationally. The Partnership is a collaboration between Districts 5370 and 5360, Rotary Clubs, Inclusion Alberta and the Government of Alberta. The purpose of the Partnership is to create meaningful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in association with business owners, employers and municipalities. It needs to be a win-win, and as such is not a charitable model. To hear some success stories with the voice of employers and employees with a disability, we strongly recommend watching this video: [Making a Difference by Working Together](#) (6.31 mins).

To date, the REP has created over 630 meaningful jobs for adults with developmental disabilities with an average wage of more than \$17.00 per hour, the average length of employment 4 + years, and the vast majority (90%) are supported naturally. Worksites include a wide array of companies from one-person businesses to large international firms ranging from office jobs to manufacturing and technology.

Some statistics shared on the website for employers who may be wondering if someone with a developmental disability could work in your business:

- Studies show that people with disabilities have lower absenteeism and stay with employers longer than their non-disabled counterparts
- 60% of people with disabilities rated better in work safety than their non-disabled colleagues, with 78% lower costs related to workplace accidents
- 90% of people with disabilities rated average or better on job performance a good indicator of their independence in the workplace

For more details on the partners involved, we share an explanation below:

**Rotary** – provide job opportunities by using their natural business networks. Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotarians, members of more than 35,000 Rotary clubs.

**Government of Alberta** - Provides the funding for the coordination and support to assist adults with developmental disabilities to live, work and participate in their communities as valued citizens.

**Inclusion Alberta** – provides the coordination. Inclusion Alberta is a family-based non-profit federation that advocates on behalf of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. Together, we share a dream of meaningful family life and community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities. As an advocacy organization we support families and individuals in their desire to be fully included in community life.

Inclusion Alberta’s focus on enhancing competency through the Development model gives job seekers a significant advantage over those job seekers who have had few expectations and opportunities for competency development. See the differences in the Developmental model v Traditional approach.

<b>Inclusion Alberta’s Developmental Model</b>	<b>Traditional Model</b>
Inclusive education – develop academic competencies (e.g. reading, writing, arithmetic) adaptive modelling, social skills	Segregate education – low expectations, life skills, poor modelling
Youth Employment – typical youth employment after school and on weekends (15-17 year old). Develop positive work habits, experience real work expectations, make a real contribution to employer, typical career development pathway.	Work experience – often segregated, not individualised, low expectations, not valued, often viewed through charitable lens
Inclusive Post-secondary education – young adults attend University or College to audit courses and experience typical college life (courses, assignments, clubs, campus volunteer work, activities – sports etc.	Day program – segregated, low expectations, limited adaptive models, exposed to activities but not real work, life wasting
Rotary Employment – career exploration, career development, building community capacity, real work for real pay and natural supports	Supported employment – cold-calling, job carving, job coaching

In addition, there are key concepts underpinning the REP that make it successful such as:

- Having a high consciousness about the nature of social devaluation, the wounding life experiences of people and the pressing needs of people.
- Develop positive mindsets and expectancies for the people they are developing jobs for and employing. It has been generalised that the typical areas of employment for people with disability are in the 4 F's – food, factories, flowers and filth, which are generally not valued industries. One of the most challenging aspects of the Coordinator's role is to assist employers (and Rotarians) to look beyond the traditional stereotypical roles people with an intellectual disabilities have filled in the workplace.
- Using normative pathways in all aspects of the employment process – so asking what a person of the same age without disability would be doing.
- Bringing an awareness of the heightened vulnerability that comes with an unlevel playing field for a person with disability. Ensuring the most valued options are explored and chosen rather than the jobs that merely entrench people in negatively valued roles.
- Being very conscious about portraying positive imagery of the person with development disability such as their personal appearance, and the surrounding environment.
- Provide a service model that is relevant and has potency for the person with disability.
- The invaluable use of modelling and imitation to enhance personal competencies.
- The key importance of fostering interpersonal identification (see themselves in each other) between employees with disabilities and their co-workers.

We recommend the new DES model adopt these underpinning concepts and Family Advocacy would be happy to have further discussions in this regard and/or connect you with the leaders involved in the REP project.

The REP collaboration has also been recognized internationally as a world-leading innovation at the Zero Conference in Vienna, Austria by the ESSL Foundation in collaboration with the World Future Council and the International Labour Organization. The ESSL Foundation advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities internationally and a world with zero barriers.

### Rotary Employment Projects in Australia

There are two projects in Australia based on the Rotary Employment Partnership, with [Inclusion Solutions](#) in Western Australia and a pilot program with [Belonging Matters](#) in Victoria called [Community Employment Partnership](#) and we include excerpts from their website below.

### Rotary Employment Project - Inclusion Solutions, WA

This innovative project is the first of its kind in WA. This project focuses on finding opportunities within the

community that connect an individual to employment, based on their interests and skill sets. Inclusion Solutions and Rotary Clubs around WA identify local businesses that can offer valued roles to individuals in a mutually beneficial relationship between employee and employer. Through this project, we are employing a genuine strength-based approach to address a long-standing and pivotal issue for people living with a disability – that of meaningful employment.

Traditionally, when a person with a disability seeks for employment, they will need to approach a Disability Employment Service (DES) Provider. The DES Provider will then find employment for the client. The minimum requirement for people with disabilities is that they must be willing and able to work at least 8 hours a week. With the Rotary Employment Project, businesses will be flexible with their hours, accommodating the needs of the person with disability.

This project gives the person with a disability choice and control based on their capacity to engage in meaningful employment. The Rotary Employment Partnership Project also up skills, equips, and builds the capacity of employers to ensure equal, fair, and inclusive treatment of all people with disabilities in their employment.

### **Community Employment Partnership – Belonging Matters, VIC**

The idea of the project is to partner with service clubs and business groups to find meaningful employment for people with intellectual disabilities and Autism. To start with, they are working with local a Rotary Club to develop the project. Rotarians, the members of Rotary, are often business owners or know lots of business people. The project will work with up to 50 people with intellectual disability and Autism, who are between the ages of 18 and 30 years and would like to be part of the pilot project. The project aims to match the person's interests and skills with possible jobs. The jobs will be developed around each person while also meeting the needs of the business, and might include casual, part time, or full-time work.

The project has currently progressed to the stage where a steering committee has been developed with a Rotary district in Melbourne and a collaboration has been formed with Belonging Matters.

## **4. What employment services and supports would most help young people?**

### **School to Work Project**

Family Advocacy, through its initiative Resourcing Inclusive Communities, was recently successful in obtaining an Information Linkages and Capacity building (ILC) grant called the [School to Work project](#), which will go towards lifting expectations of families in relation to post school transitions whilst utilising normative school pathways to achieve real employment outcomes in the workforce. Families of young people with disability are the target audience for this project as research shows how critical it is to have families working with their family

members from a young age regarding post school employment. High expectations are very important within families to counteract many of the low expectations held by schools and professionals' groups.

School to Work aims to inspire and equip students with disability, through the support of families, to seek meaningful, paid employment in the community. The conversation, thinking, and preparation for normative work experiences and then part-time or casual employment ought to start as it does with any high school student, around 13 or 14 years old. The project is currently running webinars across three year groups, Years 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12, as well as workshops in various NSW locations. In the future it will be also roll out conferences and newly developed resources. [Resourcing Inclusive Communities](#) is working with [Imagine More](#) in the ACT and [Community Resources Unit](#) in Queensland to deliver the project.

This is a three-year project alongside the two other states and territories with the intention of this initial three years being a pilot project that will roll out across Australia for another three years if successful in receiving funding. The change needed will take longer than three years and medium-term investment is required to see positive change.

Importantly, all students in all settings will be targeted in this project, as each young person has the ability to contribute to the Australian economy. We will also be working with families concerning the flexibility of arrangements, such as shorter work experience placement sessions over a longer term than the usual two-week time frame, that may be helpful for students with disability obtaining work experience. Importantly we will be lifting expectations of families, educators and businesses alike in relation the employment outcomes that people with disability obtain and the many innovative models of support to enable this to occur. This is a three year grant and the intention is to target many students, families, educators and businesses across NSW.

Delivering this grant will also equip Family Advocacy with more knowledge of the extent of the system barriers that are currently occurring within the NSW education system. We strongly recommend that the DSS assist by promoting this School to Work project and support the findings and recommendations upon completion. For this reason, we would welcome the opportunity to be part of the development and implementation of the Employment Strategy as it pertains to NSW.

## Work experience

It cannot be overstated, that work experience is absolutely critical for a young person with disability. Currently, our education system provides poor work experience opportunities, if at all. We often hear from families the person with a developmental disability is asked to either stay home instead of doing work experience. Another common practice is that schools will often send students with disability to Day Programs or ADE's for work experience as they have deemed that the young person is not fit for open employment, with this damaging for the young person prospects of seeking paid employment in the open market with the right supports. These

experiences rob students to learn the joy of work in an area of interest and potentially earn their own money. The typical path in high school is to have work experience to get a good taste of work life and also learn what you do not like. It is important that the question be asked, What do other students at the same age? What would really good work experience be?

In the video shared in Question 3, Josh's Story, Josh was only offered a placement in a local laundry in the rural town he lived in which was an ADE. This is very common. It was only because Josh's mother had a clear vision for Josh to have a proper job with proper pay in an area of his interest and acknowledging his ability to contribute that guided her to push back to the school and find him work experience that led to him setting up his own microbusiness in 2018, which still continues four years on.

Having a flexible arrangement available to cater for the person with disability's capacity is important. The example below we have previously provided but it is such an important example that it is worth sharing again as it illustrates one of our parent's experience of advocating for a flexible arrangement for her son's school work experience, which eventually resulted in paid work and then a microbusiness.

*There is generally a lack of supported and flexible work experience and this impacts their knowledge of career planning and employment prospects. For my son, I had to advocate rigorously to get the school to give permission for my child to have a flexible work experience as it was not practical for him to do it every day for 2 weeks. Instead, the school gave us permission to go once a week for 2 hours for a few months.*

*As it was well thought through and the right supports were put in place; this has led to future employment for my son. He now runs his own business as a mail courier. At the same time, I received a letter from the NDIA assuming the only option for my son was for a day program for work experience. If I did not have a clear vision for my son to have an inclusive life, and the support of Family Advocacy, his life would be on a very different path. I feel lucky to be educated and have English as my first language. What about those families that are not and do not know any better and do not have the support?*

Carole

A great example is the video recently created by our initiative, Resourcing Inclusive Communities, [Rhiannon's work experience](#) (6.26 minutes), a story about Rhiannon's successful work experience at her local Bakery. Rhiannon's mother, Di, thought carefully about the tasks her daughter would be performing and prepared the employer and Rhiannon as much as possible prior to the work experience actually happening. Rhiannon was prepared for success as her mother collaborated with the employer and the employer was receptive to her input. We strongly recommend this video be adopted as an exemplar of good practice towards changing community attitudes, upskilling the capacity of parents, and lifting employer engagement.



Even though this was work experience and not paid employment per se, it does prove the point that family drove this to happen, through having good community relationships and not a service or a professional. With this in mind, it is vital that the DSS support the capacity building of the family to have the skills, knowledge and confidence in order that they can support the person with disability in their life.

## 5. What support do employers need to attract, employ and retain people with a disability?

Misunderstanding, stigma, prejudice and discrimination impact significantly on people with disabilities gaining employment in a mainstream workplace. First and foremost, attitudes need to be addressed within each government department at the national/state/territory/council levels. We would assert that the Australian government (and the States/Territories) needs to “clean up its own backyard” if it is to engage with business on the topic. Government needs to be a role model and lead the way for community. Having said this, some pockets of business and community may already be exercising good practices of inclusion and in this regard, we strongly encourage the DSS government to explore exemplars of good practices and be prepared to learn from these rather than reinventing the wheel.

We recommend the DSS make a commitment to fund projects, research and innovative initiatives focused on promoting employment and improved community attitudes towards disability, which also includes an evaluation of good practices. Such an investment must be across the life of the National Disability Employment Strategy and needs to recognise this goal will require an ongoing and sustained effort.

Any attempt to address employer attitudes, the employer would need support to:

- intentionally address organisational disability awareness including the inherent devaluation of this group and the unconscious bias<sup>13</sup> that exists and breaking down barriers to create a more welcoming, inclusive and accessible culture.
- Improve internal policies, practices and service delivery that improve human resources policies including more accessible recruitment policies, giving attention to reasonable adjustments and quotas. Obviously, there will be much variation depending on the size of the organisation.
- Improve an employers confidence to hire people with disability with a long term sustainable match that is mutually beneficial to the employer and the employee. We refer to the customised employment approach discussed in Question 3.
- Be provided an employer toolkit which could include information and resources on a range of areas that would assist in the building of disability confidence.

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<sup>13</sup> For an in-depth discussion on how to tackle the unconscious bias within community and improve community attitudes, Family Advocacy's [Submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Submission No.3 - Rights and Attitudes Paper](#).

- attend workshops to educate on a range of topics such as disability awareness, communication, language, social media, accessibility, and improving workforce practices.
- Any attempt to address both government and community attitudes needs to intentionally address the inherent devaluation of this group and the unconscious bias that exists in both community members and our systems.

Importantly, the investment in the capacity of families is critical in this as they are best positioned to support their family members with high expectations, work with mainstream services and to counteract low expectations of groups such as allied health, disability services etc. Significant change cannot occur without this group invested in.

## 6. How do we best tailor mutual obligation requirements to increase the likelihood of people with disability finding work in the future?

We are very concerned with the premise of this question and would strongly advocate that DSS abolish the notion of mutual obligation requirements. People with disability are already at a disadvantage due to structural barriers and cultural devaluation. It is inherently unfair and is based on the assumption that people with disability do not want to work, when the research shows that it is due to structural barriers and cultural barriers. It places an unnecessary administrative burden on people with a disability and employers, who receive a large number of applications from job seekers applying for roles outside their skills/experience in order to meet mutual obligations.

Should the DSS not be prepared to abolish mutual obligation requirements, then we suggest it would only be appropriate if the Customised employment model was adopted. One could adopt the concept of model coherency where one could review the places the person with disability is applying for and what their needs are and assess if there is an appropriate connection, instead of how many applications they have made. Where there is incoherency, further analysis and discussion could take place with the person with disability to improve the connection between relevancy and potency of a person's needs and the role they are applying for.

## 7. How can funding arrangements incentivise good work outcomes?

We refer to The Employment Framework from the US based State Employment Leadership Network.

Member states enlist the support of a wide variety of key informants to participate in discussions and workgroups to determine a state's course of action. A direct member benefit is access to guidance that can lead states to a better understanding of priorities while setting that course. The Framework for Employment, developed through extensive experience and research conducted within states, is used to guide the SELN's strategy for system improvements. The elements represent practices and outcomes known to be effective at enabling states to

develop and sustain high-performing integrated employment systems.

## Elements of a High-Performing Employment System

When working together, the factors below can lead to better integrated employment outcomes. It is the dynamic interplay of all the elements that can lead to long-term systems change.

**Leadership.** Clear and unambiguous commitment to employment in individual community jobs, from top leadership through all levels in the system. Local and state-level administrators are identifiable as champions for employment.

**Strategic Goals and Operating Policies.** Employment is identified as the preferred outcome in state developmental disabilities policy, and is supported by program goals and operating practices that are clearly designed to achieve that objective.

**Financing and Contracting Methods.** The outcome of employment in integrated community jobs is emphasised and supported through the state's resource allocation formulas, reimbursement methods, and rate-setting practices.

**Training and Technical Assistance.** Investment in the development and maintenance of a strong, competent workforce. Skill-building emphasizes an expectation for employment across job coaches and developers, supervisors, key employment staff, case managers, job seekers including young adults who are still in school, and families.

**Interagency Collaboration and Partnership.** Building relationships with advocates, families, businesses, civic groups, key state and local agency partners (vocational rehabilitation, education, mental health, state Medicaid agency) and removing barriers to employment supports.

**Services and Service Innovation.** Service definitions and support strategies are structured and aligned to facilitate the delivery of employment supports to all individuals with developmental disabilities regardless of the intensity of their needs. Non-work supports encourage individuals to become involved in typical adult life activities, building employment skills, such as community service and volunteering opportunities.

**Performance Measurement and Data Management.** Comprehensive data systems are used to measure progress, benchmark performance, and document outcomes. Information is gathered on key indicators across employment and other related systems and is used to evaluate and track results, inform policy, and improve provider contracts and service agreements. Data are shared with other state agencies to report results and improve quality.

In essence, we would advocate to base funding that takes a wholistic approach into account on a framework such as this one or the models already discussed such as customised employment as they are process oriented NOT outcomes. History has shown it is not effective. The current financial incentives of the DES model have the effect of rushing to get a placement regardless of whether it is a good fit. It has the effect that the more capable person is recruited and a person with developmental disability is not. Also, the focus on a 26 week retention can simply mean a person with disability has no other choice and is too scared to say anything for fear of losing employment rather than being an indicator that there is a good fit for both employer and employee. We have provided a comprehensive list as to the measures of success in Question 9 below and would suggest that these factors be considered when assessing funding incentives.

## 8. How do we drive high quality services and supports?

The new DES model must proactively engage with people with disability, advocacy and community organisations as well as external experts with evidence based practices to ensure the lived experience of people with disability is heard, understood and the effective strategies applied. We do not feel our families have been consulted in a meaningful way other than feeding in their input/information/opinions. Having all stakeholders part of the design and of the monitoring process is essential.

We are very concerned, moving forward, that there will not be adequate consultation with deep engagement of people with disabilities, their family members, advocacy organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.

The success or otherwise of this Strategy will depend on how it ends up being implemented 'on the ground'. We believe it critical that an ongoing steering committee be involved in the implementation and monitoring process to feed in with proper guidance and the lived experience sought from parents of students with disability, and Family Advocacy and other disability advocacy organisations. We are invested in getting this right and must all work together towards realising this.

Further to this, the marketplace will require professional development to teach these innovative models such as customised employment. In this regard, we refer the DSS to [Marc Gold & Associates – The People who try another way](#), who provide performance based certification in the areas of Discovery, Job Development and Systematic Instruction. There are entry level courses for 3 days on customised employment then more advanced leadership courses such as a 12 day course on customised employment and systemic instruction. This includes learning how to really get to know the person with disability, how do people perform tasks and how do they learn them.

These courses also include learning how to get to know the employer such as learning to know how a company has tasks and how they are performed, what are the means for learning the tasks, who helps the person to learn the task within the company, how do staff interact, is there an unmet need in the business and how does it

intersect with what the person with disability can offer, what is noticeable that could be improved in a business that the person with disability can offer, are there tasks performed by staff that are highly qualified that could be better performed by others at an entry level of pay.

One example given here was of a welding job where the highly qualified welders who were getting paid \$35 were doing certain tasks that Michael could perform, who was getting paid \$15 per hour. This gave the welders more time to focus on their highly skilled tasks and this gave Michael paid employment.

## 9. How do we measure success?

Due to the inconvenient timing of this consultation paper's due date, we have not had the time we would like to properly consult with our family members. However, we put forward the following suggestions without this being an exhaustive list of how success may be measured:

- Have people with lived experience of disability been genuinely consulted as part of a steering group that regularly provides input into the design, measure, monitoring and review of the new DES model?
- Has the person with disability and/or their family member been asked of their satisfaction level?
- Has an adequate discovery process taken place of at least 30 hours?
- Has the family been properly consulted in the discovery process, the job development process and once employment has commenced? As stated in our previous submission to the DSS, and quoted by the DSS in the National Disability Employment Strategy, family are usually best placed to know the person with disability. When we hear of successful employment stories, the key element was the parent having a clear vision for their child being included in mainstream society, high expectations for employment in the long term, and good collaboration with the employer.
- Has the job development process taken place of at least 10 hours?
- Has the high school student had meaningful work experience in an area of interest taking into account their strengths/preferences?
- Has the person received extra support when initially starting with an employer to ensure success?
- Has the employer's capacity been built in relation to the supports a person with disability requires in order that the support person may be eventually phased out as much as possible?
- Has the person with disability gained employment in paid work that matches the person there is opportunity for growth and to pursue community relationships?
- Has the person with disability remained in employment for 26 weeks, 1 year, 2 years?
- Does the employer value what the person with disability brings to the workplace?
- Does the DES provider have an education program for staff to raise awareness about unconscious bias in relation to people with disability for example, regarding low expectations, to help build their belief and confidence?

- Does the DES provider have good staff retention rates? In practice, we hear staff turnover is a problem and the “good” staff members on the ground end up being promoted to management.
- Find a way to measure community attitudes. Any attempt to address both government and community attitudes needs to intentionally address the inherent devaluation of this group and the unconscious bias that exists in both community members and our systems.
- Is there a commitment and implementation from all sectors to cross-agency collaboration? Have all governments collaborated internally and externally with their own departments, with other departments and between state and federal governments as well as local councils?
- In terms of good role models, if there are positive exemplars within business, have their stories, pathways and good practice been shared through various mediums/platforms such as in workshops, podcasts, social media etc. to educate the government and non-government agencies?
- It is imperative that any outcomes being measured must distinguish between different types of employment, looking at the percentage of people in real employment versus ADEs.

We also bring to the DSS attention, additional aspects of the NDIS reporting scheme which would have benefit in the context of tracking the success of the new DES model:

- **Reporting on participant satisfaction** – a similar evaluation could be made in relation to the satisfaction of people with disability regarding progress across the new DES models key outcome areas such as those suggested above;
- **Assessment of participant outcomes** – this is vital to determine the actual effectiveness of strategies, and should therefore be part of the evaluation of any project/scheme under the new DES model;
- **Longitudinal tracking** – it is important to track progress against the key outcomes over its life span to ensure that progress is being made across long term projects as well as tracking whether incremental progress is being met as part of these long term objectives.

### Quotas for people with disability and specifically complex and significant disability

Another measure of success would be to ensure the public sector has sets quotas to employ people with disability and also specifically, people with complex and significant disability. For example, the Australian government should set, say a 15% quota for public service employment of people with disabilities with no less than 5 out of that 15% be available for people with complex and significant disability. Here, it is pertinent to acknowledge the “hierarchy of disability” which is a social construct that makes certain types of disabilities more acceptable than others<sup>14</sup>. Intellectual disability is at the bottom of the disability hierarchy.

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Deal, ‘Disabled People’s Attitudes Toward Other Impairment Groups: A Hierarchy of Impairments’ (2003) *Disability & Society*, 18:7, 897-910.

It is our opinion, that the recent work that the NSW Premier's Department has undertaken to achieve the increased employment of people with disability does not include more innovative models of support such as customised employment that cater more towards supporting people with a developmental disability. Many of the structural changes they have made to recruitment and modifications at work only accommodate a certain subset of people with disability, usually the “cream of the crop” or those considered “exceptional” or “high functioning”. If the DSS is serious about National Disability Employment Strategy Vision for all people, which includes people with a developmental disability, then it will need to adopt and support these more contemporary models. Again, our governments need to lead by example for the business community in the employment of disability.

## Conclusion

We look forward to the development of a robust new Disability Employment Support model which reflects a commitment to empowering and including people with disability in the entirety of the process. We encourage the adoption of our recommendations and are happy to provide further information or clarification on any matters we have raised. We look forward to participating in the process and to facilitate the involvement of people with developmental disability and their family advocates as the new Disability Employment Support model is created.