

IAC submission to NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce

- Australia ranks 21st out of 29 OECD countries in the employment of people with disability. The Australian Government strategy to address labour shortages includes increasing employment participation of people with disability.
- NDIS participants have lower rates of employment and are more likely to be in poverty than their peers without disability.
- NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce includes proposals that will contribute toward the disruption the current dysfunctional system.

The NDIA disruptive proposals are necessary but not sufficient to improve employment outcomes. IAC proposals are required to fulfil the vision of NDIS participants of working age having a career or being on a pathway to a career, paid at award / productivity based wages.

What happens now

- People with disability want to work but are impeded by fear of financial insecurity related to loss of DSP, uncertainty of unskilled employment and mutual obligation requirements of NewStart.
- Disability employment is divided between open employment (under DSS) and supported employment (NDIS). Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) are the main providers of supported employment.
- Many participants who want to work in open employment are forced into supported employment.
- DSS Policy and the Rules and funding framework for ADEs are barriers to participants achieving employment outcomes.
- There are many perverse incentives that inhibit participants gaining employment.

What are the challenges

- Work and career preparation is only offered in the immediate post school years.
- At the end of school, participants are streamed into supported or open employment with those in supported employment able to use reasonable and necessary support for employment related tasks and those in open employment unable to do so.
- Supported employment is limited with a significant proportion of ADEs providing traditional group and centre based services. Wages are not related to employee productivity.
- Options for customized employment are limited because of the lack of skill of employment providers.
- Perverse incentives keep participants unemployed on DSP.

IAC proposals increase likelihood of success

1. Ensure that all participants of working age are assisted to work with peer support and capacity building to assist them and their families aspire to work.
2. Enable the provision of R&N employment related support in any employment setting with:
 - a) core support that has the skill and is delivered at the intensity required to secure and retain employment
 - b) capacity building employment related support of a duration that recognizes the pace of skill acquisition; is available on multiple occasions across the working life; and enables the development of personal safeguards to mitigate fears and risks.
3. Enable participants to select employment providers.
4. Make representations to DSS to remove barriers so that automatic eligibility to DSS is meaningful.