**ndis** | **SOCIAL FUTURES**

Delivering the NDIS in your community

# Building Inclusive Workplaces

## Why access and inclusion is good business



# Business Toolkit

Resources, tips and checklists for how to become a more inclusive workplace for staff living with disability.

**socialfutures.org.au/NDIS**

# Being an inclusive workplace

An inclusive business creates an environment where everyone can participate: as employees, investors and customers. Evidence shows that employees with disability bring unique benefits and are often more productive, reliable and stay in the job longer than other employees. Being an inclusive business benefits everyone, not just people with disability. Everyone wins!

## Recruiting people with disability

- have an open mind

- treat people the way you would expect to be treated

- ask if they require any support to participate in the recruitment process

- let the applicant tell you what they may or may not need

- be open to trying other ways of assessing an individual's suitability for your roles e.g. workplace assessment

- be clear about the job description and design (what is actually required for the job – the "inherent requirements" or job essentials)

- consider whether educational qualifications or specific work experience are essential to the position

- look at achieving the result rather than the means to achieving that result.

## Recruitment (continued)

- check that your application process is accessible, including the availability of application forms and other material in accessible formats (html, word doc or accessible pdf)

- make sure your website is accessible and there is a point of contact for any questions relating to reasonable adjustments and your disability employment policy

- check with the applicant any access requirements for the interview, e.g. the location for the interviews is accessible and can be found easily with clear directions, the interview is conducted in an accessible format, the venue is quiet and well-lit

- allow sufficient time for an applicant to respond to questions.
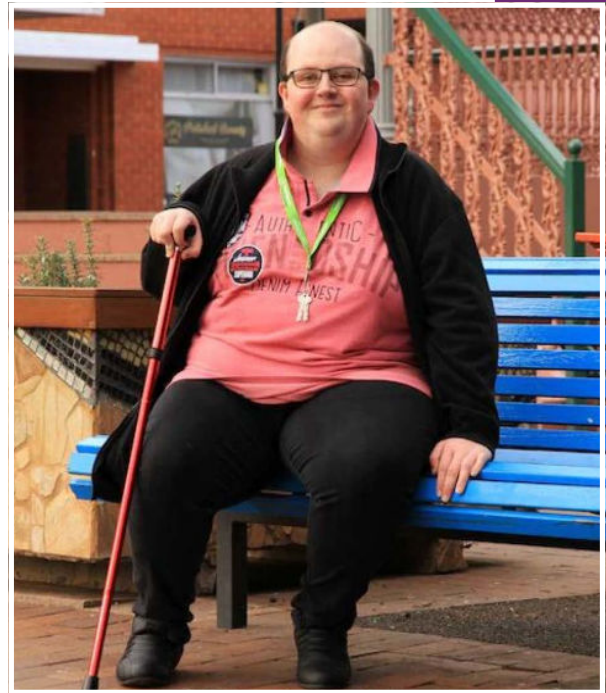


## Making Reasonable Adjustments

A 'reasonable adjustment' is a specific action or strategy developed by an employer to address the effects of a staff member's disability in the workplace.

They have been legislated to ensure employers are obligated to provide an equal opportunity environment in which someone experiencing disadvantage is offered an opportunity to excel.

Generally, there are four steps that guide the implementation of reasonable adjustments:

1. Identify the 'inherent' or 'core' requirements of the employee's role.

2. Assess the employee's skills and abilities.

3. Identify reasonable adjustments with the employee.

4. Check that the employee can meet the requirements of the role when reasonable adjustments have been identified.

There is no set formula for identifying reasonable adjustments, so look at the individual needs of the person, the core requirements of the role and then think outside the box for solutions. Look for ideas that have worked well for others as adapting good ideas to match employee needs and workplace requirements has the greatest chance for success.

Evidence suggests that employees may potentially benefit from developing a support plan to assist with the implementation of reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

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Find out more about recruitment and reasonable adjustments at **jobaccess.gov.au.**

# Services available to your business

There are several Australian Government initiatives to help you and your business to employ a person with disability. These services include:

**JobAccess** is the national hub for all things disability employment. JobAccess provides information on all aspects of employing people with a disability including financial support for workplace modifications, tools and resources, and recruiting and retaining staff. Information at jobaccess.gov.au or 1800 464 800.

**The Employment Assistance Fund** provides financial assistance for work-related modifications, equipment and services to help people with disability get employment and perform their work as independently and productively as possible. Information at **jobaccess.gov.au** or 1800 464 800.

**Wage Subsidy Scheme** provides eligible employers up to $1,500 (excluding GST) as an incentive to employ a person with disability. The subsidy requires employers to employ the person for a minimum of eight hours a week for 13 weeks, with the intent of achieving sustainable employment. Information at 1800 464 800 **jobaccess.gov.au/wage-subsidy**

**Disability Employment Services (DES)** are a mix of large, medium & small, for-profit & not-for-profit organisations that support people with disability & assist employers to put in place practices that support the employee in the workplace. Tip – share your job vacancies with your local DES **jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/about-des**

**Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support** is an Australian Government incentive payable to an employer who employs an Australian Apprentice who satisfies the disability eligibility criteria in an Australian Apprenticeship. Information at 13 38 73 or **australianapprenticeships.gov.au**

**Supported Wage System** is a workplace relations mechanism that allows employers to pay a productivity-based wage to eligible people **employment.gov.au** - 1800 464 800.

**NSW Traineeships for People with a Disability** offers fully funded award wages and allowances to trainees, and other incentives to participating agencies **nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/apprentices-and-trainees**

# Become disability confident

There are many resources available online to help businesses be disability confident; Check out some of them below.

- **Australian Network on Disability** – We help organisations employ people with disability and design their products and services for customers with disability. We help businesses to be disability confident. **and.org.au**

- **IncludeAbility** is designed to support employers who want to create meaningful employment for people with disability and accessible inclusive workplaces for everyone. Employment plays a central role in improving the economic, social and personal wellbeing of Australians with disability. **includeability.gov.au/resources-employers**

- **Accessibility Action Plan Guides** – The Commission's Disability Action Plan Guide is intended to support business and government to develop action plans which promote more accessible and inclusive workplaces, businesses and communities. **humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/action-plans-and-action-plan-guides**

- **Employ My Ability** is a guiding framework for governments, employers and the broader community towards an inclusive workforce that values diverse talent and where people with disability can reach their full potential. **dss.gov.au/employ-my-ability**

- **More than Just a Job** – Training programs to help businesses and staff be confident working with people with intellectual disability. **cid.org.au/event/more-than-just-a-job/**

- **theField.jobs** – founded by Dylan Alcott OAM, this platform matches job seekers with inclusive employers and real jobs. **thefield.jobs/Job/Home**

- **Neurodiversity Hub Employment Resources** A range of resources were developed as part of the Pilot for DES providers, employers and autistic jobseekers. These resources are now available for use. **neurodiversityhub.org/des**

- **Diversity Australia** provides a range of programs specialising in diversity and inclusion in the workplace, unconscious bias, inclusive leadership and cultural change. **diversityaustralia.com.au/**

- **Universal Design Principles** – The 7 principles are a good starting point for thinking about design from an inclusive perspective. They can apply to any building, open space, service, product, phone app, website or document. **universaldesignaustralia.net.au/7-principles-of-universal-design/**

- **Universal Access Symbols** – Help visitors, potential audiences, customers and staff identify accessibility at a glance. You can use the symbols in online and printed promotions, newsletters, conference brochures, online and printed programs, membership forms, building signs, floor plans and maps. **artsaccess.com.au/resource/universal-access-symbols/**

- **Captioning** – One in every six Australians is Deaf or hard of hearing. Full and equal participation is a social and business imperative and a human right. Captioning is an important access service, enabling full participation by Deaf or hard of hearing people. **artsaccess.com.au/resource/get-the-facts-captioning/**

- **Access checklists** to ensure online meetings and events are accessible for all participants. **aarts.net.au/arts-resources/**

# Tips for building inclusion

There are some common barriers that could hinder people accessing your business. By removing these barriers, you open your business to new opportunities.

## Physical Barriers

There are several things you can do to limit the physical barriers that might stop people using your business. These include:

- provide ramp access for wheelchairs and people with mobility issues e.g. permanent or portable ramps if your premises has one or more steps at its entrance

- ensure the floor or ground is non-slip and free from trip hazards

- signs are easy to read - use appropriate fonts and sizing, include pictures where possible

- ensure at least part of your customer service area counter is at a height that is suitable for people of short stature or who use a wheelchair

- accessible parking spaces are provided

- fit handrails to walkways

- make doorways wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through

- provide accessible toilet facilities.

- Display Access at a Glance stickers in your front window if you have accessible options available that are not visible. Please talk to Social Futures about these stickers.

## Communication barriers

Communication can be a barrier for potential employees when applying for a job or customers using your business. To limit communication barriers:

- ensure you have multiple methods for people to contact you and find out more information about your business e.g. email, SMS, phone, face-to-face

- ensure your website is built with accessibility in mind - refer to the Australian Government's web content accessibility guidelines at **australia.gov.au/accessibility**

- use easy to read fonts and sizing (Arial 12pt) and use braille where possible

- use captions on videos

- understand and use the National Relay Service for people who are hard of hearing or deaf. **relayservice.gov.au**

## Service barriers

Providing good customer service is always essential. Staff behaviour can have a major impact on creating a welcoming environment. Activities to reduce service barriers can include:

- training staff on how their attitudes can make the business more inclusive

- training staff on using inclusive language.

### Activity

Complete our physical environment check list on p.7 to find out how well your business rates.

### Activity

Complete our communication and service barriers check list on p.8 to find out how well your business rates.

# Inclusion check lists

It is important to consider the physical, communication and service barriers to identify possible areas of improvement to make your business more inclusive. There are a range of things your business can do to ensure everyone in the community has the same level of access to the things they need. Complete the checklists in this document to assess how inclusive your business is.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Car parking spaces are wide enough for people with wheelchairs and mobility aids to get in and out of their vehicles.
- ☐ Accessible car parking spaces are close to the business entry point and identified with appropriate signage and symbols.
- ☐ There is an accessible toilet on the premises.
- ☐ Ramps are fitted instead of stairs - these can be temporary ramps if a permanent solution is not possible.
- ☐ Handrails are fitted for ramps or areas of uneven ground.
- ☐ Doorways and aisles/corridors are wide enough for wheelchairs, prams and door handles are at an accessible height for wheelchair users.
- ☐ Customer service area/counter is at a height that is suitable for people who use a wheelchair.
- ☐ Visible and audible fire alarms.
- ☐ The venue is well lit.
- ☐ High glare areas of the premises kept to a minimum.
- ☐ Seating is available for people who need to wait long periods and space provided for people waiting in a wheelchair.
- ☐ Floor surface or ground is non-slip and free from trip hazards.
- ☐ Clear signage is visible for all facilities e.g. toilets, lifts.
- ☐ Staff understand how to provide good customer service to all guests with individual needs.
- ☐ There is a continuous accessible path of travel from the car park to the building/ facility.
- ☐ Signage is easy to read.
- ☐ Staff know where to find more information to support inclusion.

# INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION AND SERVICE CHECKLIST

☐ Staff understand and use inclusive language in the day to day running of your business.

☐ Staff feel confident in using inclusive communication with people of different disabilities.

☐ Our business has multiple methods for people to contact us and find out more information about the business e.g. email, phone, face-to-face.

☐ Our website is built with accessibility in mind refer to the Australian government's web content accessibility guidelines at **australia.gov.au/accessibility**.

☐ Our written materials including menus, signs etc. use large, easy to read fonts and use braille and pictures where possible.

☐ Videos we use on social media have captions.

☐ Staff understand that discriminatory attitudes are not tolerated in your business.

☐ Access to translations for CALD customers.

☐ Opportunities provided for people with disability, their families, carers, relevant organisations and staff within your organisation to provide feedback on your business.

☐ Staff understand policies around assistance animals and assistance animals are accommodated.

☐ People have access to a separate, quiet area when needed.

☐ Loud noises such as background music is kept low.

☐ Staff are trained to feel confident in dealing with customers who express discriminatory attitudes.



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Delivering the NDIS in your community

We've been there, done that. As a large employer, Social Futures has a proud history of employing people living with disability in critical roles across the organisation over many years.

Our team of inclusion experts draw on our own personal experience of disability to deliver engaging, insightful presentations to your team, business group or network.

Learn simple and cost-effective ways to build access and inclusion in your workplace, opening up new recruitment possibilities, skills and customers.

We offer insights and resources based on the latest evidence, best-practice and first-hand knowledge of how diverse workplaces thrive.

Social Futures works to achieve positive social change. We know your local community - we live and work here too.

Call us today on **1800 522 679** or email at **lac@socialfutures.org.au** to talk about delivering this free program in your workplace, group or network.

Or for info on how to access support through the NDIS call our LAC hotline on

📞 **1800 522 679**

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