

Advisory Group

# Vision for Sustainable Supported Employment



Easy English version

February 2012

## Disclaimer

This information was prepared by an Advisory Group. We explain who the Advisory Group are and what they do on page 8. The Advisory Group is not part of the Australian Government.

This document includes many ideas that have been recommended by the Advisory Group. The Government may or may not act on these ideas.

The ideas in this document are for the next 10 years. Over that time, policies, plans and initiatives for people with disability may change.

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The top photo on page 14 was provided by The Disability Information and Resource Centre.

## How to use this document

This information is written in an 'easy to read' way.



We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Some words are written in **blue**. We explain what these words mean.



There is a list of these words on page 45.



We've included stories to explain some of the ideas in this document. The people in the stories are not real, they are just examples.

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## About this document



This document is about **supported employment** in Australia.

Supported employment is the way that government works with some businesses to create jobs for people with disability.



In this document, we often use the word **managers**.

These are the people who run businesses that provide supported employment.

# 2010

## Thanks for your ideas

In 2010, the Australian Government asked everyone to tell us their ideas about supported employment.



A lot of people shared their ideas.



The Government received more than 600 letters and emails explaining what people think about supported employment.

These letters and emails came from:

- people with disability
- families and carers
- **disability service providers** – organisations that offer services and support to people with disability
- **advocacy groups** – people who offer information, advice and support for people with disability
- other groups that work together in the community.



Meetings were also held all around Australia.

There were:

- 39 worker meetings
- 9 family and carer meetings
- 30 individual interviews.

Altogether, the Government met with 270 workers and nearly 90 family members and carers.



The Government would like to thank everyone who shared their ideas.



## The Advisory Group

After talking to the community about supported employment, an **Advisory Group** was formed.

The Advisory Group is a group of people that work together.



We are not part of the government.

We are independent.

We give the Government advice.



The Advisory Group talked about the ideas that people shared.



We agreed on the things that the government should do to improve supported employment.

You can find a list of our suggestions on page 13.

## Why Supported Employment is so important



In Australia, having a job is an important part of our way of life.

Having a job helps you to:

- take part in the community
- learn new skills
- earn money.



But not everyone can easily get a job.

Some people, including people with disability, need some help to find a job that's right for them.

Supported employment is a great way of doing this.



Supported employment benefits:

- people with disability, their family and carers
- businesses and managers
- governments.



Here's a good example.

This is Jason. He lives in NSW. He used to go to a day centre every day.

Recently, Jason got a job at a plant nursery and warehouse that employs people with disability.

He doesn't go to the day centre anymore.



Jason loves his work. He's met lots of new people and he enjoys earning money of his own.

His managers are pleased to have such a hard worker on their team.



## The things we want to achieve

The Advisory Group has a **vision** of what the government can achieve.

A vision is a description of what we want to achieve in the future. It explains our goals.

# 10 years

Our vision is for the next 10 years.

### Our vision says:

“Australia has a good supported employment system.

It helps people with disability take part in the community by working and earning money.

We help people with disability to find and keep jobs.

The Government is working to improve the lives of people with disability. The work that we do covers a range of different areas.

We will make sure that the work being done in supported employment fits in with our other plans and **policies**.”



Some of these policies include:

- the **National Disability Agreement**  
– an agreement between the Australian Government and the states.



- the **National Disability Strategy**
  - the Australian Government’s plan to improve the lives of people with disability. The states also agree on this Strategy.
- the **National Disability Insurance Scheme**
  - a new way of providing support to people with disability.

There is more information about this Scheme on page 26.



Over the next 10 years, we want to see:



- more people in good jobs
- fair rates of pay
- more training and learning
- better support
- better work environments.

The Advisory Group has some good ideas about the way we can achieve this.

Our suggestions are:



- A new way of thinking about supported employment.



- Creating more jobs in supported employment.



- Earning good wages and saving for **retirement**. When people get older, they stop working and earning money. This is called retirement.



- Encouraging people to find work.



- Working with other policies and programs.



- Offering more choice.



- Providing safe places to work.



- Helping people as their life changes.



- Helping businesses succeed.



- Helping people with disability succeed.



- Encouraging governments to employ people with disability.

Each of these suggestions is explained on the following pages.

## A new way of thinking about supported employment



In Australia, there has been a long history of supported employment.

In fact, some business have been offering supported employment since the 1950s.



There are laws that apply to supported employment.

Laws are the rules that we all must follow. Laws are made by the government and the courts.



One of these laws is the *Disability Services Act 1986*. This law is about supporting people with disability in paid employment.

A lot has changed since the Act was written in 1986.

We now have:



- Quality standards to make sure that supported employment is safe and fair.



- Better wages.



- More than 600 businesses around the country that offer supported employment. These businesses are called Australian Disability Enterprises.

Because so much has changed, we want to change the way we explain supported employment.

We have written a new explanation of what supported employment is.

We'd like this new explanation to go into the *Disability Services Act*.

Our explanation of supported employment is:

“Support for people with disability who want to find and keep a job.

The government will pay for this support.

The support will be based on:

- the type of disability each person has
- the way a disability affects the type of work each person can do.”



We would also like supported employment to be more **person-centred**.

This means:

- giving you more choice
- making sure that supported employment meets your needs.



We want managers to:

- pay attention to you as an individual
- understand what you want in the future
- include family and friends in decisions if you want them to be included
- give you more control over the things you do and the choices you make
- make sure you feel included and important.



## **Creating more jobs in supported employment**

The Advisory Group would like more jobs to be available in supported employment.

At the moment, there are limits on the number of jobs that are available.

The Advisory Group suggests that the Government remove these limits.

That way, there will be more jobs for people with disability.

Some businesses already offer as many jobs as they can.

Others would like to offer more, but they need the Government's support to do this.

## Earning good wages and saving for retirement



The money that you earn and the way it is paid can make a big difference to your everyday life.

The Advisory Group talked about the money that people earn when they work in supported employment.

### Wages and wage assessments

A lot of people told the Government that they like to work because they want to earn money.

Some people are happy with the amount they are paid.



Others say that they aren't being paid enough.

In general, people in supported employment earn a lot less than other workers.

Some people in supported employment earn \$3.61 per hour.

Most other workers in Australia earn \$15.51 or more per hour.



The Government and managers are in charge of working out how much people with disability get paid when they work in supported employment.

This is called a **wage assessment**.



Many people say that it's hard to understand how wage assessments work.

And some people find that the assessments are hard to do.

They feel a lot of pressure to do a good job and this makes them nervous.

### **Income support**



Income support is money that people receive from the Government. It helps them get by if they can't work. Income support is paid by Centrelink.

Some people receive income support and also have a part-time job. If you are working, you will receive less income support.



This happened to Jane.

Jane is on income support. Last year, she got a job at a cafe in her area that employs people with disability.

At first, she worked 12 hours a week. But, when she did this, she realised that she got less money from Centrelink. So she decided to work less hours. Now she only works 8 hours per week.

The Advisory Group suggests changing this. We want income support to be more flexible so that people with disability can work more hours without affecting how much they get paid.



## **Superannuation**

In Australia, most people who work earn **superannuation**.

This is money that is set aside for you to use when you retire.

Many people who work in supported employment told us that they don't have enough superannuation.

The Advisory Group suggests finding new ways to help people save for their retirement.



## **Long service leave**

In most workplaces, people can take long service leave. This is a long holiday that you get after you have been working for many years.

The amount of time you can take off depends on how long you have been working.

For example, some people get long service leave after 5 years, for others it is after 10 years.



A lot of people working in supported employment told us that they want improvements to long service leave.



Jim's story is a good example.

Jim worked in a warehouse for 4 years.

He was due to get long service leave after he had worked there for 5 years.

When his family moved to Sydney, he decided to move too.

But when he left his job at the warehouse, he lost all the long service leave he had earned over time.

And when he started a new job in Sydney, he had to start earning long service leave all over again.

The Advisory Group suggests changes to long service leave.

In supported employment, long service leave could be more flexible.

It could also be portable. This means that, if you move jobs, your long service leave moves with you.

### **A new taskforce**



A **taskforce** is a group of experts. They work together to come up with good ideas about how to fix something, change it or improve it.

The Advisory Group suggests that a taskforce is set up.

They will work on ways to improve:

- wage assessment how technology can make workplaces better
- job roles and training
- how wages affect income support payments
- how fees and taxes affect superannuation
- long service leave
- how the government can help pay for
- people's wages.

The taskforce could be made up of people:

- with disability
- from **unions** – groups of workers that get together to try to make wages and workplaces better
- from service providers
- from the government.

**12**  
months

They would give the Government their advice within 12 months of their first meeting.

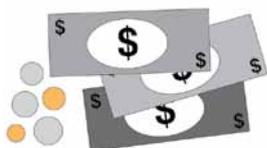
## Encouraging people to find work



For some people with disability, finding a job in supported employment isn't easy.

Sometimes, there are barriers to working.

These barriers may be physical.



Or they may be related to money.



For example, Tanya lives in a unit that she shares with a friend. It's a private rental.

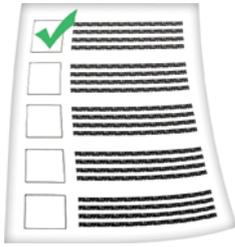
Tanya is excited about getting a new job with a cleaning company.

But, once she started earning money, she was surprised to find out that her rent was going to be more expensive.

Because she is getting paid from her job, she gets less rent assistance from Centrelink.

This means that she has less money to spend on food and other expenses.

## What the Advisory Group suggests



The Advisory Group suggests that the Government work on removing these kinds of barriers to employment.

We want to help people:

- find good jobs and keep them
- earn good money.



## How the Government can do this

Firstly, the Government can set up the taskforce we talked about on page 23.

This taskforce would work on wages and conditions for people working in supported employment.



We also want workers and their supporters to speak up about low wages and poor conditions.



Some other changes may also help:

- making income support payments more flexible
- making housing payments more flexible
- reducing taxes for people in supported employment.

## Working with other policies and programs



The Advisory Group understands that a lot of changes are taking place for people with disability – in Australia and around the world.

We suggest that any new work done by the Government fits in with other plans and **policies** that are underway.



These include:

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.**

This is an international agreement that explains how people with disability should be treated fairly. It applies all around the world.



- **The National Disability Insurance Scheme.**

This is a plan for providing long term care and support for people with disability.

Work has only just begun on the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Advisory Group understands that things might change when the National Disability Insurance Scheme is up and running.



You can find out more about the NDIS by visiting the website at **[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)**.

## Offering more choice



Many people choose their work based on:

- the things they are interested in
- their skills and talents
- their training and education
- the kind of jobs that are available.



Some people with disability choose to work in supported employment.

Others work in jobs that are not supported by the government. We call this open employment.

More businesses in Australia offer **open employment** than supported employment.

For many people who work in supported employment, the choice of jobs can be limited.

### What did people say?

People told us that they want more choices for supported employment.

For example, people want to be able to have jobs in supported employment or open employment if that's right for them.

Some people were happy with their work in supported employment. They didn't want to try open employment.





Other people wanted more opportunities for:

- working in open employment
- doing training
- finding more interesting work.

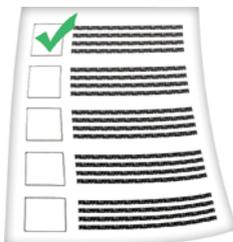


People with disability, their families and carers would like more training for staff. This would help them to provide better support to people with disability.

Service providers want people with disability to be able to access open employment right now, rather than have to wait.

### **What the Advisory Group suggests**

The Advisory Group suggests that the Government:



- Make it easier for people with disability to move in and out of supported employment.



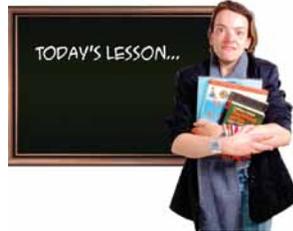
- Encourage more people with disability to work in open employment.



- Encourage more people with disability to have training related to their work.

- Help make the move from study to employment easier.

**I used to go to school...**



**...now I go to work**



- Help more people with disability get qualifications, such as certificates from high school and TAFE, or degrees from university.



- Support more people with disability in employment, no matter where they live. This includes people who live in rural and regional areas.



- Train managers so that they know how to support people with disability.



- Help people with disability to use all their skills and be the best worker they can be.



## **How the Government can do this**

We believe that the Government can make some changes straight away.

These changes will offer people more choice.

They include:

- Allowing people to work in open employment even if they already have a job in supported employment.
- Removing waiting lists. This would allow people who are eligible for supported employment to start working straight away.
- Testing new ways of supporting people.
- Testing new types of jobs to see if they are right for people with disability.

## Providing safe places to work



Everyone has the right to be treated fairly.

And everyone has the right to feel safe in the place where they work.

Some people with disability have been treated badly at work. We want to change this.

### What did people say?



Some people like the idea of people with disability working with people who don't have disability. We call this a **mixed workplace**.

Some people like the idea of a mixed workplace but others don't. People said that:

- workers with disability are often treated badly
- sometimes people with disability are given boring jobs to do
- many people with disability have been bullied at school or work in the past.

The idea of mixed workplaces is included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability. We explain what this is on page 26.



Most people with disability, their families and carers said workplaces need to be made safer.

For example, some workplaces are too hot in summer and too cold in winter.

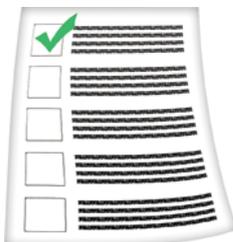
Some workplaces don't suit people with a particular type of disability.

For example, some people with autism might find it hard to work in a large factory.



Managers agreed that safety in the workplace was important. They believe that the Government should provide money to make workplaces safer.

### **What the Advisory Group suggests**



Over the next 10 years, we would like to see:

- More workplaces that treat people equally.
- Workplaces that include people from all walks of life.
- Workers with disability who know they have the right to a safe workplace. They will know how to stand up for these rights.

## How the Government can do this

The Government can:



- Teach people with disability to know when they are being bullied at work and what they can do about it.
- Teach managers what they need to do if any of their staff are being bullied.
- Develop information kits so people know how to keep their workplace safe.
- Teach people how to make their workplaces more accepting and inclusive.
- Discuss what has worked with people from other cultures, to learn how to support these groups.





## Helping you as your life changes

Everyone goes through a lot of changes in life.

We grow up and leave school.

Many of us get a job.

We might get married or move to a new area.

And then, when we are older, we retire.

The Advisory Group would like to see improvements in the way that people with disability are supported through these important stages of life.

### What did people say?

People said that there wasn't enough support for older people with disabilities.

Many families and carers said that people who were going to retire need something else to look forward to when they finish working.



Families want to be included in planning for their family member with disability.

And many families and carers are getting older. This means it is harder for them to care for their family member with disability.



Service providers suggested:

- providing case managers for people who are about to retire
- running workshops for older people
- offering financial planning for older workers.

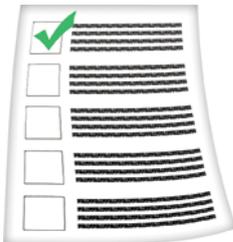


Some providers felt that extra support would be useful for people moving from:

- school to supported employment
- supported employment to open employment.

Others suggested creating workplaces especially for school leavers.

### **What the Advisory Group suggests**



Over the next 10 years, we would like to see:

- More support for people as they move
  - from school into work
  - through their career
  - from work into retirement.
- More opportunities for people with disability to develop their career during their working life
- People with different types of disability getting the right support for their needs.



- People with disability getting support through a national retirement program.

### **How the Government can do this**

The Government can:



- Improve retirement planning.
- Make sure that social and life support for people with disability is separate from the support they get through employment services.
- Fund 12 months of support for people with disability who are about to retire.
- Find new ways of supporting people when they going through changes in their life.

## Helping businesses succeed



If businesses don't succeed, there won't be enough jobs for everyone.

It's important that businesses can:

- offer great products and services
- make money
- continue to employ people.

## What did people say?



People with disability said there is a lot of pressure to work faster and harder.

Families and carers said this means there is less focus on the needs of the workers with disability.

Some people believe that supporting the individual is more important than how much money the business makes.

However, managers are worried that some people don't see supported employment as real work.

They think it is necessary to:



- get more business advice
- improve the way businesses are run
- advertise their products and services more
- put aside money for improving their business.



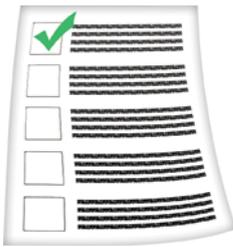
One group suggested some organisations needed to find a better balance between running a business and serving the community.



Another group said that a central place could be created where people can buy products and services that are made in supported employment.

The Government could buy a lot of these products and services. The Government would be a good customer.

### **What the Advisory Group suggests**



Over the next 10 years, we would like to see:

- Many successful businesses offering a variety of jobs to people with disability.
- Businesses that are managed well. They balance business needs with the needs of people.
- Businesses creating great products and services that meet the needs of their customers.

## How the Government can do this



The Government can:

- Encourage people to buy products and services from businesses that employ people with disability.
- Provide more help and advice to businesses that employ people with disability.
- Provide more training for people who manage supported employment organisations.

## Helping people with disability succeed



For many people, having a good job is an important part of living a happy life.

The Advisory Group talked about the ways that having a good job can make a difference in the lives of people with disability.

### What did people say?

Families and carers said that the Government should provide more money for supported employment.



Some people also like the idea of **individualised funding**.

Individualised funding is a way of receiving money from the government to pay for your support needs. It is just for you. It is in your name.

The money is not paid for a group of people.



Some families and carers feel that, in supported employment, the needs of people with disability don't always come first.

Instead, the way that businesses are run – including paperwork, rules and administration – are more important.



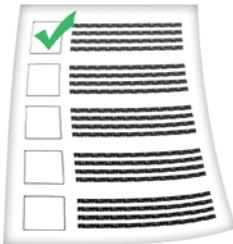
Some people said that the current Quality Standards aren't working very well to improve the rights of people with disability in the workplace.

Managers said:

- it is hard to provide the right support
- there is too much paperwork.

### **What the Advisory Group suggests**

Over the next 10 years, we would like to see:



- Businesses that offer new types of work and better jobs for people with disability.



- The Government, businesses and not-for-profit organisations working together to improve employment for people with a disability.

### **How the Government can do this**

The Government can:



- Encourage research to improve supported employment, including working with universities and colleges.
- Offer people with disability more opportunities to learn and develop their skills.
- Help businesses succeed.

## Encouraging governments to employ people with disability

The Government employs a lot of people.

There are governments at all levels:



- Federal



- State



- Local – your local council.

All of these governments can employ more people with disability.

The Advisory Group believes that, if governments employ more people with disability, they will be leaders in the community.



They will set a good example for businesses and other organisations.



This will also encourage more people with disability to take part in the way government operates – including developing plans and policies.

### **What the Advisory Group suggests**

Over the next 10 years, we would like to see:

- More people with disability working in all areas of business and government.
- More accessible buildings.
- More communities understanding and including people with disability.
- More businesses seeing the value in employing people with disability.

### **How the Government can do this**

The Government can:



- Decide on a number of people with disability to employ.
- Work on increasing employment of people with disabilities in private businesses. The Government can ask people for their ideas. They can hold a meeting with business, government and not-for-profit organisations.



- Make sure that people with disability have a voice in the media. The ABC's RampUp website is a good example of people with disability having a place to speak up. Visit [www.abc.net.au/rampup/](http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/)
- Find new ways to encourage inclusion and acceptance for people with disability in our community.

## Word list



### Advisory Group

This is a group of people that work together. Their job is to give the government information and advice.



### Advocacy groups

Groups of people who offer information, advice and support for people with disability.



### Disability service providers

Organisations that offer services and support to people with disability.



### Individualised funding

A way of receiving money from the government to pay for your support needs. It is just for you. It is in your name. The money is not paid for a group of people.



### Managers

The people who run businesses that provide work. In this document, we are talking about businesses that provide supported employment.



### Mixed workplace

Where people with disability and people without disability work together.



### **Open employment**

Jobs that are not supported by the government. More businesses offer open employment than supported employment.



### **Policy/Policies**

The rules about Government programs. These rules are usually written down.



### **Retire/Retirement**

This is when we finish working. In Australia, most people retire at the age of 65.



### **Superannuation**

Money that is set aside for you to use when you retire.



### **Supported employment**

The way that government works with some businesses to create jobs for people with disability.



### **Taskforce**

A group of experts who work together.



## **Unions**

Groups of workers that get together to try to make wages and workplaces better.



## **Vision**

A vision is a description of what we want to achieve in the future. It explains our goals.

## Contact us



1300 653 227



TTY – phone 133 677 and ask for 1300 653 227



[fahcsiafeedback@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:fahcsiafeedback@fahcsia.gov.au)



PO Box 7576  
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610



[www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)