

Presented by Clare Jones and Carolyn Roche
September 2026

BRIDGING BOUNDARIES

Visual stories supporting post-school pathways



BRIDGING BOUNDARIES

1. Disability and employment
 - Latest figures
 - Why work matters
 - The importance of expectations
 - Emerging employment opportunities
2. Our project – design, delivery and findings
3. What's next



DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

Proportion of NDIS participants (aged 15-24 years) in employment	
All Disabilities	20%
Autism	20%
Cerebral Palsy	16%
Intellectual Disability	16%
Down Syndrome	13%

1 in 8

First Nations
NDIS participants
(aged 15-24 years)
in employment

Reported in Second Quarter 2025-6
Source: National Disability Insurance Agency Business Systems

91%

STUDENTS EDUCATED IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS ARE
NOT WORKING

As at 31 March 2022, Royal Commission's Data and Analytics Team



WORK MATTERS

Financial security

Continued learning

Wellbeing

Mental and physical health

Structure, purpose and meaning

Social connection and support

Social worth



EXPECTATIONS MATTER

Young person with disability

Family

Friends

Supporters

Community members

Employers



OPPORTUNITIES MATTER

Customised employment

Self-employment (microenterprise)

Strengths-based

Highly flexible

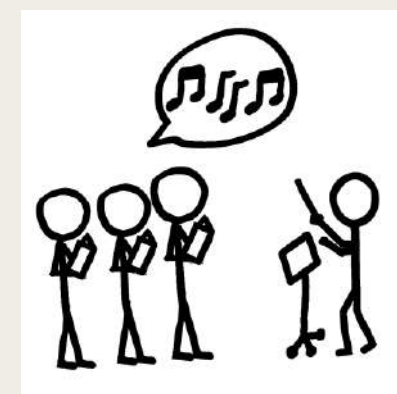
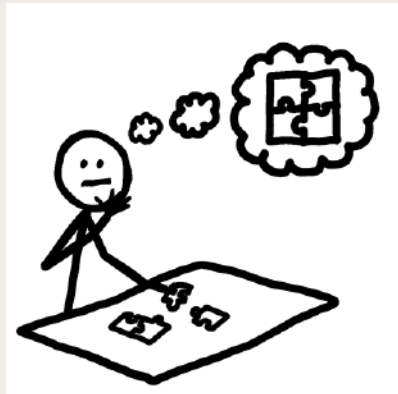
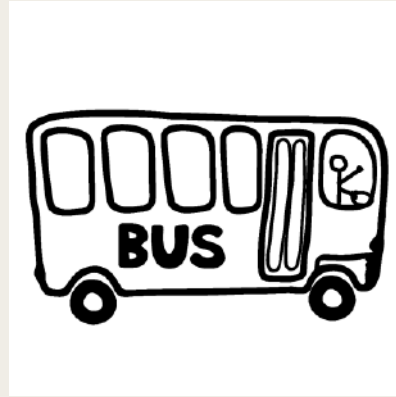
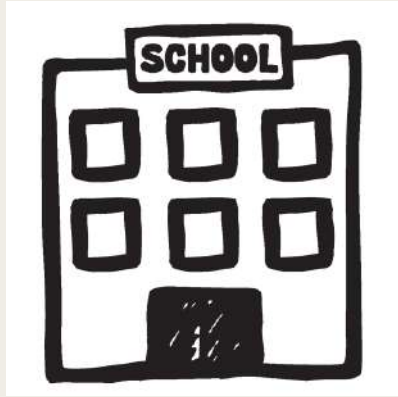


DISCOVERY

Understanding through observation of:

1. Goals
2. Special interests
3. Strengths
4. Resources
5. Conditions for success

WHAT EDUCATORS SEE

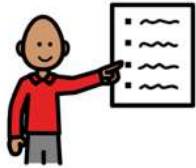




Be friendly and polite,



give others space



listen and...



learn.



Remember - it's ok to take a break.

IMAGES

- Detail
- Processing
- Understanding
- Retention
- Imagination

“Amazing where (the participants) end up”



“I had no idea...”



“There are so many options... it's awesome”

SKILLS ON SCREEN

Supporting students with disability to:

Understand

Employability
skills needed by
every worker in
every role

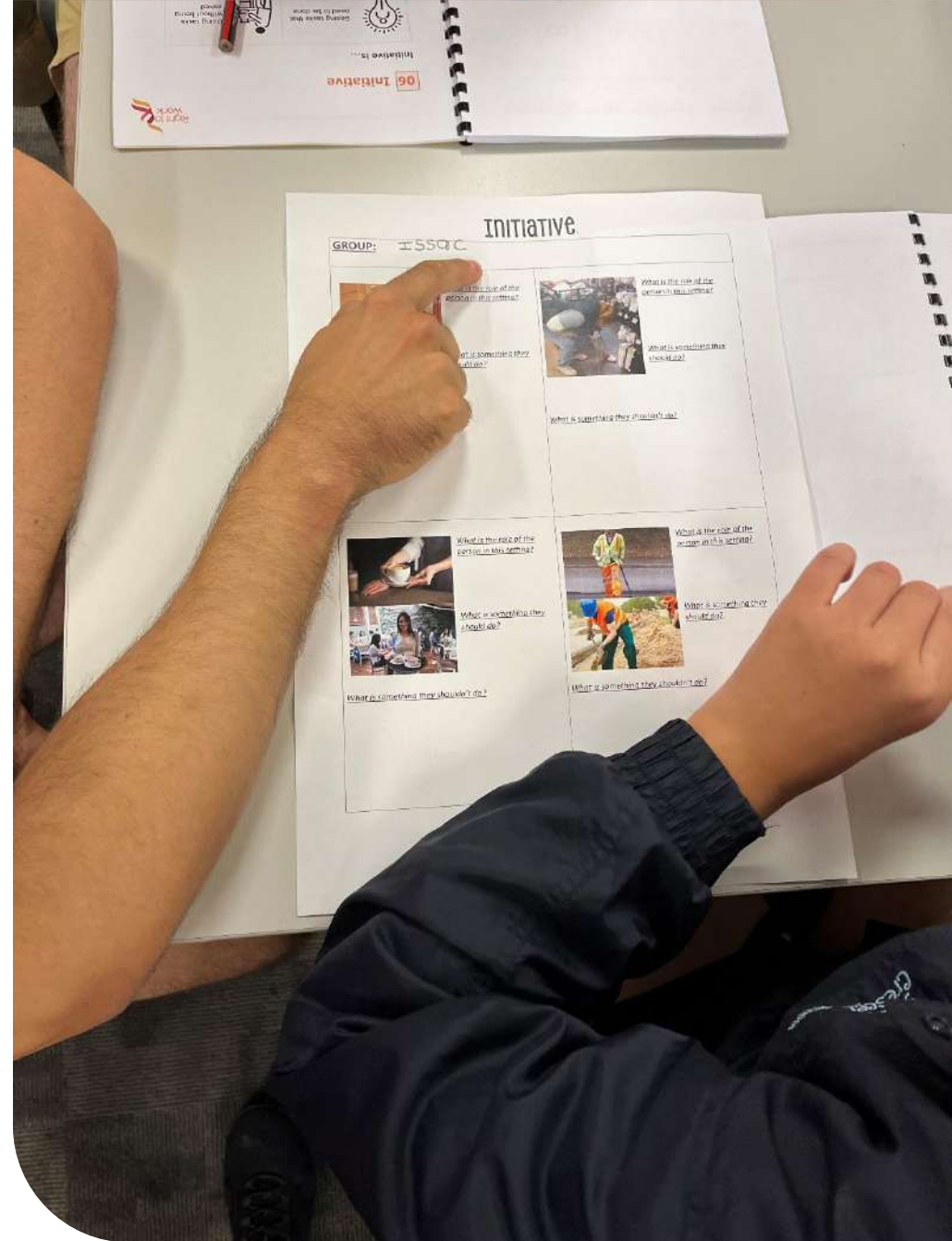
Identify

Their skills and
strengths for
employment

Communicate

Skills and
strengths to their
community

20 students
6 educators
2 schools





RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

- Professional learning workshop
- Facilitator manual
- Slideshows
- Activities
- Student Workbooks

PROGRAM DELIVERY – TERM 1

Term 1

Work and your wellbeing

Employment options
Introduction to employability skills

Communication

Learning

Self-management

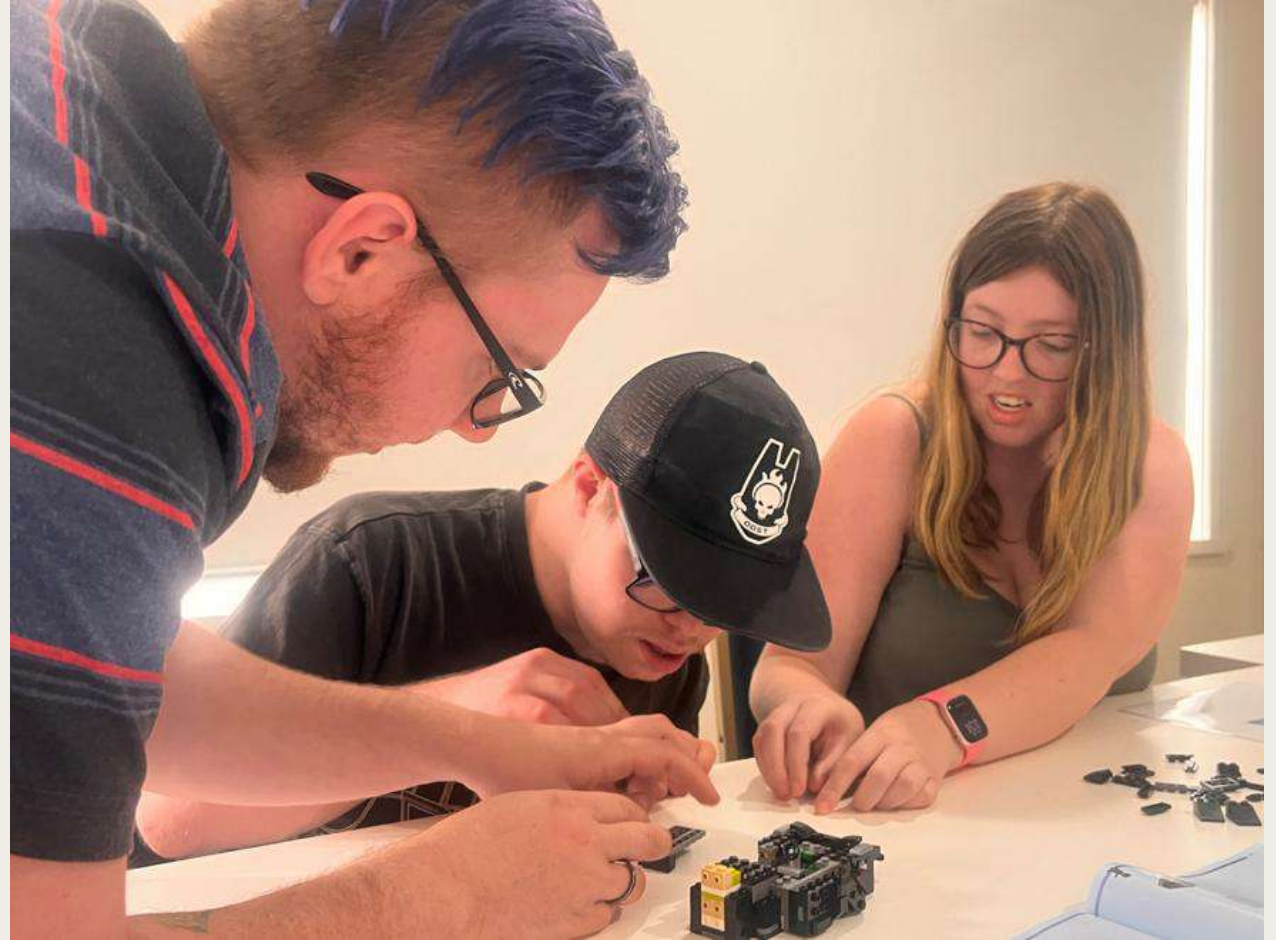
Teamwork

Problem Solving

Initiative

Planning and Organising

Technology



PROGRAM DELIVERY TERM 2

Term 2

Visual story design

Visual story creation

Identification of student networks

Skills Showcase planning

Skills Showcase event

*“a fantastic way of getting a
snapshot of a potential employee”*

(Participating Employer)

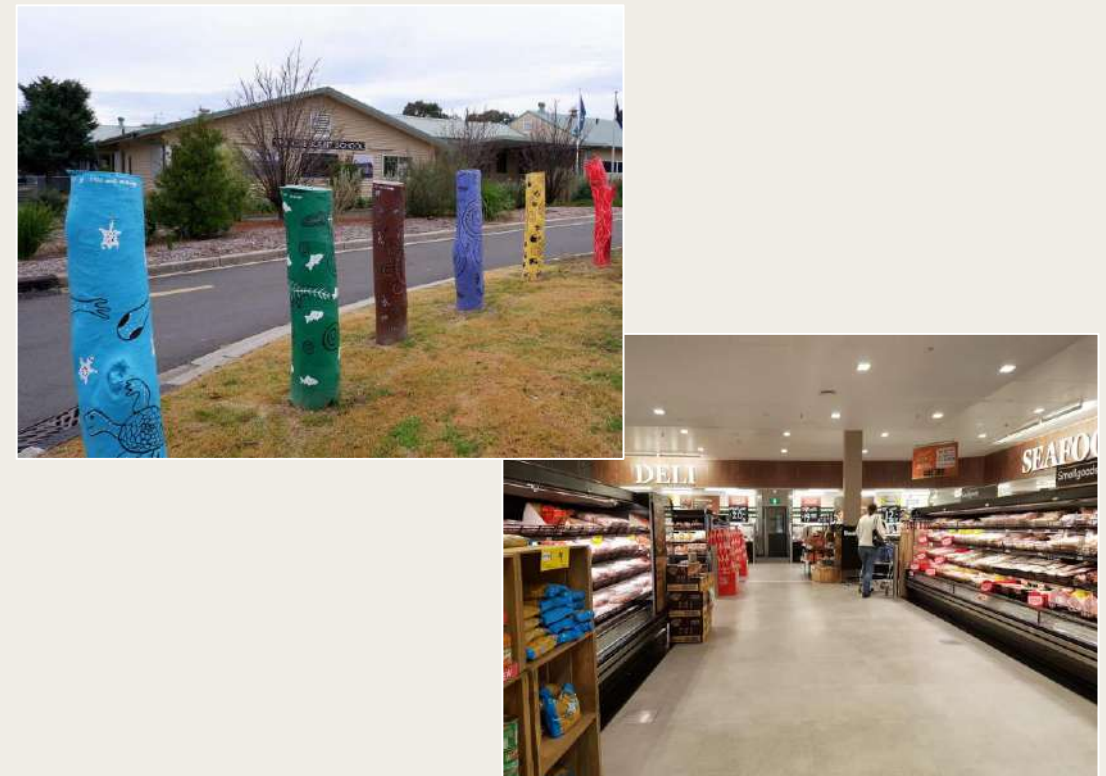


IMAGES SUPPORTING UNDERSTANDING

Clear icons consistent across
slideshows and workbooks



Photographs of familiar spaces
to support group discussion



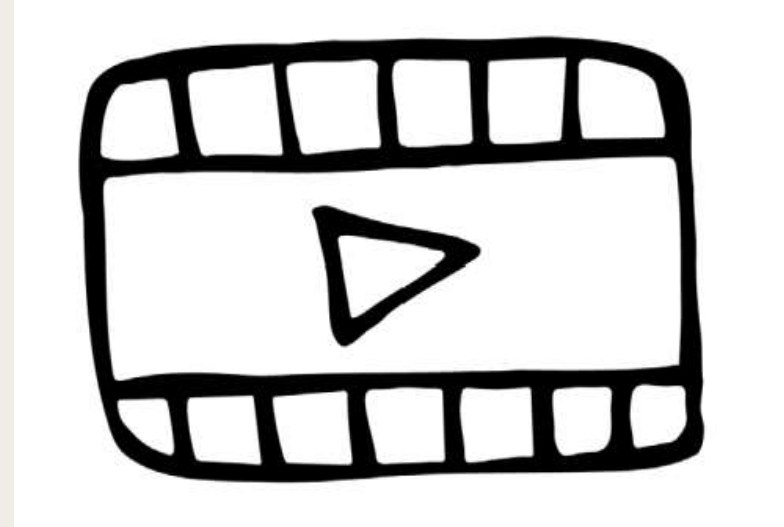
IMAGES SUPPORTING EXPRESSION

Skills and strengths in action

Printed photographs for
hard copy storyboard



Digital images for
visual story created in Canva



DATA COLLECTION

Students	Teaching staff	Parents	Employers
Pre-program	Pre-professional learning workshop	Pre-program	Skills Showcase
Completion of Term 1	Completion of professional learning workshop	Completion of Term 2	
Completion of Term 2	Completion of Term 2	6 months post-program	
6 months post-program	6 months post-program		

100%

OF STUDENTS WANTED TO WORK AFTER FINISHING SCHOOL

Prior to the program, 50% of SSP students and 90% of ESU students wanted to work.



FOR STUDENTS

Confidence

Understanding of own skills

Understanding of employment options



FOR EDUCATORS

Understanding of employment options

Capability to support student transitions to employment

Program resources were found to be:

- Easy to use
- Relevant to educators' role in the school
- 'Very relevant' to students

I'm Harry



A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE





Visual stories bridging boundaries

Students of all abilities:

- Engage in planning and goal setting
- Envision themselves as workers
- Want to work
- Communicate their skills to others, including employers



Visual stories bridging boundaries

Students of all abilities:

- Engage in planning and goal setting
- Envision themselves as workers
- Want to work
- Communicate their skills to others, including employers



Visual stories bridging boundaries

Supporters:

- Identify flexible employment pathways
- Understand how a person with disability can contribute as a worker
- Hold higher expectations of employment success.

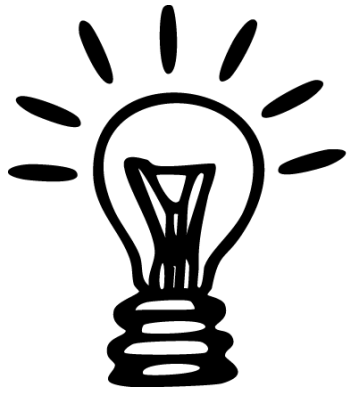
Picture This: Skills on Show is a school-based employment readiness program for students with disability.

Helping students recognise their strengths, build confidence and explore pathways beyond school.



Online access supports program delivery across rural and regional Australia.





Picture This Skills on Show



REFERENCES

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2026). *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 Reporting: Employment and financial security*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/australias-disability-strategy/outcomes/employment-and-financial-security> Retrieved 30/5/2026
- NSW Department of Education and Training (2026). *Supporting Students with Disability in Learning*. <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/diversity-of-learners/special-education/supporting-students-disability-learning> Retrieved 20 July 2026.
- Plibersek, T. (2026). *Speech to NDS Disability at Work Conference*. <https://ministers.dss.gov.au/speeches/19186> Retrieved 12 August 2026.
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (2023). *Final Report Vol. 7: Inclusive Education, Employment and Housing - Summary and Recommendations*.
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, Data and Analytics Team (2023). *The Association Between Segregated Education and Employment on the Outcomes of NDIS Participants*. <https://disability.royal.commission.gov.au/publications/association-between-segregated-education-and-employment> 14/8/2026 Retrieved 14 August 2026.
- Wilson, E. And Campain, R. (2020). *Fostering Employment for People with Intellectual Disability: the evidence to date*. Centre for Social Impact for Inclusion Australia.