

A National Disability Employment Strategy - from policy to practice to demonstrable improvement

How can Government get it right?

Rick Kane CEO,
Disability Employment Australia



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A quick history

The National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 (original Strategy) was the first time all levels of government committed to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, and to providing leadership for a community-wide shift in attitudes.



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A quick history

A critical report (***Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia, 2009***) was prepared by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council to support developing the National Disability Strategy.

It noted: For years people with disabilities have been excluded, forgotten and ignored. Now they demand to have their voices heard. As one respondent noted, admitting failure is the first step in fixing things. This report details the way things are broken. Now begins the long process of repair.

The National People with Disabilities and Carers Council Chair, Dr Rhonda Galbally AO noted: Australians with disabilities have been waiting for many years for change. They cannot and will not wait any longer. The National Disability Strategy represents an important part of the long journey to ensure people with disabilities are finally truly a part of the Australian community.



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Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia

The strategy should consider the following key features:

Underlying principles that reflect the ***UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*** to realise the rights enshrined in the Convention.

(Without a strong strategy, many participants feared that the Convention would fail to change the lives of Australians with disabilities and become just another piece of meaningless rhetoric)

A coordinated national approach to enhance consistency across jurisdictions

Creation of an Office of Disability to coordinate efforts across portfolios and between levels of government

Provision of funding increases to advocacy and other non-government agencies to participate in monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

Clear outcomes and performance measures



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Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia

The National Disability Strategy should act as an overarching policy statement, setting the national view, establishing future direction and identifying priorities for people with disabilities and their families, friends and carers. It should address four strategic priorities:

- increasing the social, economic and cultural participation of people with disabilities and their families, friends and carers
- introducing measures that address discrimination and human rights violations
- improving disability support and services
- building in major reform to ensure the adequate financing of disability support over time.



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Now we fast forward to 2022

Notwithstanding covid pandemic health, social and economic impacts and long lockdowns over the past two years critical reviews are taking place:

- Preparing the next National Disability Strategy 2021-2031
- Disability Royal Commission into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation is ongoing
- Disability Employment Services reform project
- National Disability Employment Strategy



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National Disability Strategy 2021-2031

Achievements under the National Disability Strategy include:

- NDIS
- Changing Places initiative
- Zero Tolerance initiative
- Review of Disability Employment Services
- National Arts and Disability Strategy



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National Disability Strategy 2021-2031

- New State disability legislation, such as Disability Inclusion Acts, Disability Services Acts, Mental Health Services Acts, Disability Justice Plans
- Improvements in community attitudes towards disability and level of awareness about disability, which some people traced back to the increased media attention on disability issues associated with the NDIS
- A general paradigm shift in government and social and community services from paternalistic approaches towards human rights-based language and approaches.



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National Disability Strategy 2021-2031

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xc2Q9r25vhE>



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National Disability Strategy 2021-2031

- The Strategy will drive change in seven outcomes areas:
- **Employment and financial security:**
Providing jobs and career opportunities for people with disability and making sure they have enough income to meet their needs.
- **Inclusive homes and communities:**
Increasing the number of accessible, affordable and well-designed homes and creating a community that is inclusive and accessible.
- **Safety, rights and justice:**
Ensuring the rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected, and people with disability feel safe and enjoy equality before the law.



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National Disability Strategy 2021-2031

- **Personal and community support:**

Providing people with disability access to supports so they can live independently and engage in their communities.

- **Education and learning:**

Supporting people with disability to access education and learning throughout their lives so they reach their full potential.

- **Health and wellbeing:**

Increasing support and capability in the healthcare sector to meet the needs of people with disability, and ensuring disaster preparedness and emergency responses include the needs of people with disability.

- **Community attitudes:**

Recognising the positive contribution people with disability make to society, and building confidence in the community to work and engage with people with disability.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

6 June 2019

Dear Minister Ruston

Firstly, congratulations on your appointment as the new Federal Minister for Families and Social Services. We know you are strongly committed to achieving great results for communities across Australia, and would like to work with you on what we believe are significant opportunities for making immediate inroads into the challenges of this portfolio, specifically in relation to **better employment outcomes for people with disability**.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Disability Employment Australia believe there are two fundamental components that will deliver much better results for Australians with a disability and the broader economy. These are:

- **The development of the first ever Australian National Disability Employment Plan (NDEP); and**
- **A national community awareness campaign, as a partnership between the Government and the sector and led by the sector, to engage employers and the broader community to help everyone see the social and economic benefits of employing more people with disability.**



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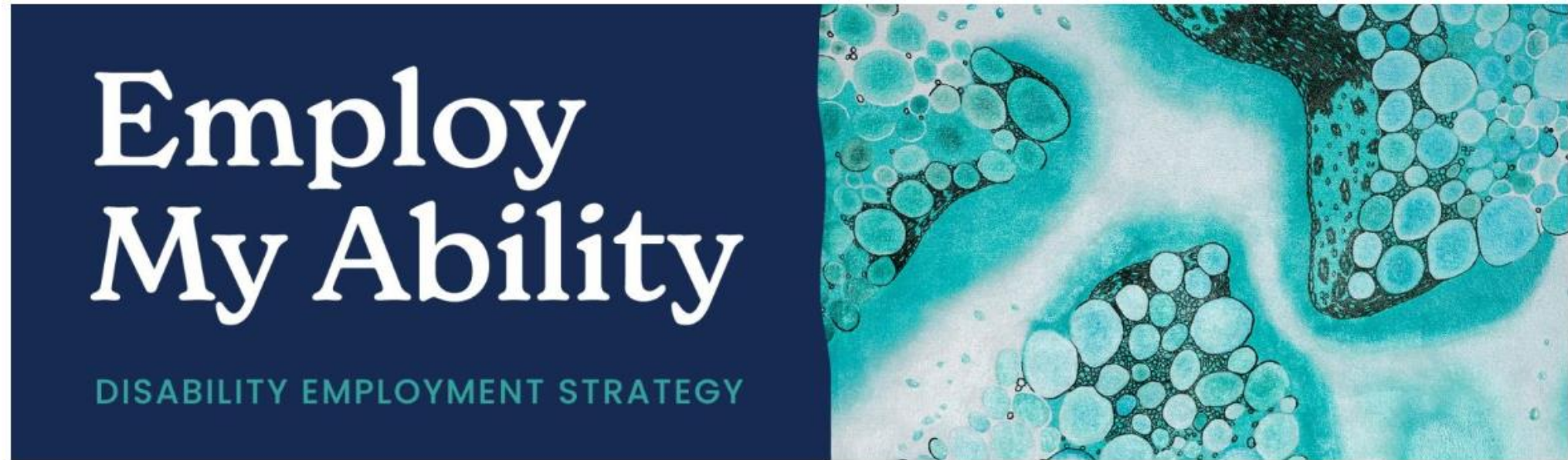


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National Disability Employment Strategy



The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services (the department), has developed Employ My Ability – the Disability Employment Strategy, to provide a guiding framework for governments, employers and the broader community to increase employment outcomes for people with disability.

Increasing employment of people with disability has many benefits to employers and the community.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

- Just **53.4% of people with disability** are in the labour force, compared with **84.1% of those without disability**.
- This gap of over 30% has remained largely unchanged since 2003.
- The Australian Government has released a disability employment strategy, *Employ My Ability*.
- Employ My Ability is focused on creating a society where people with disability can thrive in their careers.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

This Strategy is based on a social model of disability. It recognises attitudes, practices and structures can be disabling. They can act as barriers that prevent people from fulfilling their potential and exercising their rights as equal members of the community.

- This Strategy focuses on removing these barriers, so that workplaces are inclusive, and people with disability can thrive in their careers.
- People with disability include, but are not restricted to, those who have long-term physical, mental, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments.
- This Strategy recognises people with disability are diverse and have different experiences, backgrounds and points of view.
- This diversity needs to be understood, acknowledged and celebrated.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

People with disability report they still face a range of barriers when looking for and staying in work, including:

1. Discriminatory attitudes and behaviours during recruitment.
2. Bullying, experiences of discrimination and lack of support in the workplace.
3. A lack of assistance in finding, securing and maintaining employment.
4. Difficulty in accessing skills training and education.
5. Difficulty negotiating reasonable adjustments/accommodations in the workplace.
6. Negative attitudes in the community, including that people with disability can't work, or don't want to work, and that employing people with disability would be costly or risky.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Employ My Ability has 4 priority areas:



Lifting employer
engagement, capability
and demand



Building employment skills,
experience and confidence
of young people with
disability



Improving systems and
services for job seekers
and employers



Changing community
attitudes

National Disability Employment Strategy

Lifting employer engagement, capability and demand: Providing employers with the tools and abilities to confidently hire, support, develop and retain more people with disability.

Building employer confidence and demand will mean:

- More people with disability can get a job, and have the opportunity to build a sustainable and fulfilling career of choice.
- Employees are effectively supported to return to work should they acquire a disability.
- Employers realise benefits such as increased revenue, productivity and innovation ⁶
- Workplaces better reflect our diverse community.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Building employment skills, experience and confidence of young people with disability: Ensuring young people with disability are supported to obtain work and careers of their choice.

Building employment skills, experience and confidence will mean that young people with disability:

- Understand the nature of work and can choose a post-school pathway to employment that suits them.
- Are more likely to successfully transition from school to work.
- Can benefit from the financial, social and community inclusion aspects of work.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Improving systems and services for job seekers and employers: Making it simpler for job seekers with disability and employers to navigate and utilise services, and driving better performance from service providers.

Improving systems and services for job seekers and employers will mean:

- People with disability can more easily navigate systems to access the support they need to find and keep a job.
- People facing multiple barriers due to issues such as race, sex or age are better supported throughout their employment journey.
- Services are well connected to each other, and to the broader community, providing a seamless user experience.
- Employers can easily access systems and services to assist them to support people with disability in the workplace.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Changing community attitudes: Changing people's perception and expectation about the capability of people with disability in the workplace.

Why is this a priority area?

- Discrimination, prejudice and negative stereotypes continue to present significant barriers for people with disability. These barriers can impact a person's ability to participate in society, including finding employment.
- While attitudes need to change across the whole community, employers have a particularly powerful role to play. Employers that focus on inclusion are critical in breaking down discrimination, prejudice and negative stereotypes. By becoming disability confident and employing more people with disability, employers can send a clear message that people with disability have skills and talents that are valued in the workplace.

Changing community attitudes is central to achieving a more inclusive society.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

The National Disability Employment Strategy is an Associated Plan under Australia's Disability Strategy.

- Associated Plans are strategies, plans, roadmaps and frameworks that focus on improving particular aspects of Australian life for people with disability.
- Australia's Disability Strategy includes a focus on employment and financial security for people with disability. Implementation and reporting arrangements for Australia's Disability Strategy will include actions and measures relating to disability employment.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Targeted Action Plans sit under Australia's Disability Strategy, and apply an intensive focus over one to three years to achieve specific deliverables.

Government actions taken under this Strategy will be outlined in the:

- Employment Targeted Action Plan, or the
- Community Attitudes Targeted Action Plan.

Actions will be based on available evidence and people with disability will be involved in implementation.

An annual progress report for the Employment Targeted Action Plan will be published on the Australia's Disability Strategy webpage.



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National Disability Employment Strategy

Yes, that all looks good on paper ... but in real world terms, what's the vibe with stakeholders?

Generally supportive, but a little sceptical due to a perceived lack of consultation, less codesign than expected and a concern that the Advisory Group was not reflective of DROs working with government across a range of other disability policy and program reviews.

The Strategy too is considered a little light on.

But then ...



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On 21 May
Australia
voted

1. Election 2022: New PM 'gets down to business'



Anthony Albanese will be [sworn in as prime minister today](#), pledging to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full and take tougher action on climate change as Labor takes power for the first time in nine years.



A change of government means ...

In brief

- Labor is committed to ensuring that no Australian with a disability is left behind – from getting the NDIS working properly for those that need it, to coordinating support for all 4.4 million Australians living with disability.
- Disability will no longer be an afterthought, and policies will be informed by evidence and co-designed with the people they impact.
- Labor will ensure that people with disability have equal opportunities to access the community and gain employment. Extra advocacy support will ensure they have a voice.



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A change of government means ...

The details

- Outcomes and opportunities for all 4.4 million Australians living with disability are lagging behind and even going backwards in important areas like employment and health due to a lack of accountability.
- Make the National Disability Strategy accountable by measuring its implementation, to ensure that real progress is made on important outcomes like employment and education. Labor will also develop a National Autism Strategy.
- Improve employment outcomes with a Disability Employment Centre for Excellence that will provide a clearinghouse for ideas and increase capacity among employment services.



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A change of government means ...

The Albanese Labor government decides its Ministry on Tuesday 31 May and they will be sworn in on 1 June. Then we will know the Minister or Ministers responsible for disability and employment. Then this slide will be written!



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Thank you

Questions?

Rick Kane

Chief Executive Officer

rick.kane@disabilityemployment.org.au



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