

Summary Report – Shifting the Dial on Employment

6 February 2019

Part 1 - Context

Purpose

The Shifting the Dial on Employment forum provided an opportunity to showcase, discuss and provide feedback on supports and services that enable people with disability to gain employment. This is the first of a series of forums to be hosted in 2019 to support the Participant Employment Taskforce.

Background

On 6 February 2019, the first Shifting the Dial on Employment forum (an initiative that is part of the newly established Participant Employment Taskforce) was held in Geelong to provide an opportunity to showcase, discuss and provide feedback on supports and services that enable people with disability to gain employment.

Discussions at the forum also included the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Economic Participation Grant Round for people with disability. The Summary Report from this forum is publically available to ensure all potential applicants for this grant round have access to the information that was provided and discussed at the forum.

Objectives

The objectives of the forum were to:

- Actively engage the disability community and sector in the activities of the Taskforce
- Share information about the NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grants that was announced by the Australian Government in December 2018, including two successful projects delivering employment outcomes for people with disability
- Showcase solutions, approaches and models that enable and build the capacity of people with disability to participate in work

Presenters

- The Hon Sarah Henderson MP, Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services
- Parent to Parent and Inclusion Australia, Veronica Wain and Luke Nelson
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Victoria Strachan and Dr Kevin Murfitt
- National Disability Insurance Agency, Dr Sam Bennett

Audience

The audience was drawn from the G21 area including people with disability, sector representatives and leaders, employer groups, education institutions, local government, and community groups that work with people with disability.

Part 2 - Setting the Scene

Overview of presentations

To set the scene for the next session, two presentations of existing initiatives were provided. Each presentation showcased, in a different way, solutions, approaches and models that have enabled people with disability to gain employment. The forum also received a brief presentation on the upcoming ILC Economic Participation Grant round for people with disability.

The presentation highlighted that:

- The round will open shortly, with up to \$19.9 million (GST inclusive) available to fund new activities which complement existing government initiatives.
- The round will help lay foundations for the Economic and Community Participation Program that is part of the new ILC Investment Strategy
- Consistent with all ILC grant rounds, activities that are funded under other Government initiatives will not be funded through this grant round. For example activities that are funded through: NDIS Participant Plans; Disability Employment Services or Australian Disability Enterprises.

Following the scene setting presentations, attendees were asked to discuss ideas and solutions that would enable people with disability to find and keep employment.

Part 3 - Ideas and Solutions

Capacity Building for Employers - Summary of group discussions

Ideas and solutions proposed include:

- Building on existing initiatives where possible to scale them up and replicate their successes
- Articulating what employers want more clearly – what employment skills are they looking for, and who teaches them?
- Supporting collaboration between employers and schools, and building better pathways from work experience into paid work
- Improving coordination, information sharing and resource allocation between people with disability who have NDIS plans, Disability Employment Services and employers.

Pathways to Employment – Summary of group discussions

Ideas and solutions proposed include:

- Strategies to build parental aspirations for their children from a young age; educating families when they have a baby that “it’s ok to have a dream”; “give people the belief that they can have a job”; “build self-esteem and self-belief”; Engaging parents early – shifting beyond the medical deficit model to talk about what people can do - increase quality of advice.
- Building aspirations for careers starting at school; ensuring work experience is effective and available to all school children with disability; Combined skill development during work experience – at age 18-25 identify developing skills.
- Ensuring NDIS employment funding is available from age 15 years and up, automatically included in plans.
- Providing help with steps along a career path, rather than jumping to specific jobs.

- Assigning someone from NDIA to liaise with employment service providers and Local Area Coordinators to maximise coordination and collective effort.
- “Are you getting the message?” – ask the person with disability, they’ll have the answer; National marketing campaign; use peer support to spread good news stories.