



Disability Royal Commission Australian Government Response: Volume 7b Inclusive Employment

Volume 7b considers the experiences of people with disability in accessing inclusive employment. It includes 17 recommendations, all of which are within the Australian Government’s primary or shared responsibility.

Inclusive Employment	
Recommendation	Australian Government Response
7.16: Priorities for inclusion in the new Disability Employment Service model	Accept
7.17: Develop education and training resources for Disability Employment Services staff	Accept
7.18: Establish specific and disaggregated targets for disability employment in the public sector	Accept in principle
7.19: Establish specific disability employment targets for new public service hires in agencies and departments	Accept in principle
7.20: Clarify the application of the merit principle in public sector recruitment	Accept in principle
7.21: Introduce consistent adjustment principles and adjustment passports	Accept in principle
7.22: Public reporting on public sector disability employment strategies and targets	Accept in principle
7.23: Strengthen disability employment procurement policies	Accept in principle
7.24: Convene a Disability Employment Rights Council	Noted
7.25: Amend the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)	Accept in principle
7.26: Amend the Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Accept in principle
7.27: Enable a Fair Work Ombudsman referral mechanism	Accept
7.28: Improve information about wages and the Disability Support Pension	Accept

7.29: Embed an 'open employment first' approach in the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy	Accept
7.30: Support the transition to inclusive employment	Accept in principle
7.31: Raise subminimum wages	Subject to further consideration
7.32: End segregated employment by 2034	Subject to further consideration

Key actions and initiatives

The Australian Government has implemented a new specialised disability employment program commencing on 1 July 2025. The program will replace the current Disability Employment Services program and help people with disability, injury or illness find and maintain sustainable employment by delivering high-quality, personalised services.

The Australian Government is establishing a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence. The Centre will ensure employment service providers and staff have access to clear and useful information and training on disability awareness, cultural competency, human rights, customised employment, and employer engagement. It will complement the role of the current JobAccess service, which builds employer capability and disability confidence, and facilitates access to supports for workplace adjustments, advice and training.

The Australian Government is implementing a new Disability Employment Advocacy and Information Program to deliver information supports for people with disability. The program will run until 30 June 2027 and will be delivered by Inclusion Australia, in partnership with Disability Advocacy Network Australia.

Public service commissioners will work together to share best practice on improving public sector employment outcomes for people with disability.

The Australian Government has also commenced research and analysis on how the Commonwealth could use its purchasing power to increase employment of people with disability. As an initial step, in the 2023-24 Budget, the Government dedicated significant funding to target entrenched community disadvantage.

In September 2023, the Fair Work Ombudsman entered formal arrangements with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Fair Work Commission to facilitate referrals of unresolved matters involving allegations of serious and/ or systemic disability discrimination and certain other unlawful conduct under the *Fair Work Act*, to the Fair Work Ombudsman for potential investigation and enforcement action.

The National Disability Insurance Agency released the next iteration of the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy 2024-2026 on 20 March 2024.

Disability Ministers agreed to a national Supported Employment Plan in November 2023. The Australian Government announced various initiatives in the Supported Employment Plan in November 2023, which aims to support people with disability to move to inclusive, open employment options in a range of settings, including:

- A structural Adjustment Fund, which will provide grants to enable supported employment services and social enterprises to evolve their business models to better meeting community expectations and create sustainable employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Disability Employment Expos, which will be open to people with high support needs and their families and provide them with information on a range of employment pathways and available supports.

The NDIS-DES Pathways Pilot is another initiative currently underway. It aims to improve the interface between the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Disability Employment Services and improve the experience for NDIS participants. Learnings from this pilot will inform future practices and guidelines for the two systems.

Government investment

- Over the next 4 years, the Australian Government has committed over **\$5.2 billion** towards disability employment, including:
 - An additional **\$227.6 million** to implement a new specialist disability employment program commencing on 1 July 2025.
 - **\$23.3 million** to establish a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence, which will develop best practice, evidence-based information and training to help disability employment service providers deliver high quality and effective employment services.
- As part of the 2023-24 Budget, the Australian Government announced a **\$52.7 million** investment to help strengthen the supported employment sector.
- The Australian Government is implementing a new Disability Employment Advocacy and Information Program. The **\$9.8 million** program will run until 30 June 2027, and be delivered by Inclusion Australia, in partnership with Disability Advocacy Network Australia.
- The Australian Government is supporting the Disability Leadership Program with 100 scholarships as part of its **\$2 million** investment to develop disability leaders across the country.
- The Business Council of Australia and Australian Network on Disability partnered with the Commonwealth and four large employers to deliver an 18-month Career Pathways Pilot. A total of **\$3.3 million** in Commonwealth has been allocated to the pilot.