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To:
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Attachments: [Employment statement 2015.pdf](#)

When I appeared before the committee, I indicated that I would send some information on advocacy, guardianship and employment. I am writing some brief notes on these but believe in respect to employment, I could not do any better than Inclusion Australia's statement on this topic. I have attached it.

Regards
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1. We Can Work . . . With The Right Support

Few people with intellectual disability work in the open labour market. Yet with the right support, people with intellectual disability can work in the open labour market the same as any other Australian.

There are two main barriers that prevent youth with intellectual disability from getting jobs in the open labour market.

1. Low expectations
2. Lack of skilled support

Most youth with intellectual disability typically begin with low expectations about their ability to work, yet with the right support this can change. Initial job capacity assessments are almost always low, but have little to do with the level of job capacity they can achieve after skilled support. This is the key lesson from fifty years of research and demonstration.

The best way for youth with intellectual disability to develop expectations and learn about work is via work experience in real work settings together with the right training and support.

The opportunity to try work and get instruction gives youth with intellectual disability a "taste of success". This improves their self esteem and gives them an idea of what is possible. This support can change the views of others (e.g. teachers, family, employers, the community) about their capacity to work.

Even if youth have high expectations about work, they still need skilled support; just as a person with physical disability unable to walk still needs a lift to get to the second level of a building no matter how confident they are.

Youth with intellectual disability usually need higher support hours compared to other disability groups. The current lack of DES funding indexation, and the time lag between costs and payments to providers means that people with intellectual disability have become a financial risk to providers unable to carry funding shortfalls until outcomes are achieved.

Adequately funded skilled transition-to-work and open employment providers can address low expectations and break down barriers to achieve open employment outcomes. It is unlikely that youth will try work or succeed without access to this level of support because evidence based support is "what works".

The most successful Australian employment provider for people with intellectual disability — Jobsupport — achieves almost half of all open employment outcomes for youth with disability in Sydney in the Transition-to-work (NSW-TTW) program; and achieves more than half of the jobs that reach 26 week outcomes for people with moderate intellectual disability in the Disability Employment Support (DES) program throughout Australia.

This outstanding performance record tells us much about what works for people with intellectual disability.

1. The manifest Disability Support Pension qualification for people with intellectual disability;
 - 1.1. helps individuals try work without risk to pension eligibility; and,
 - 1.2. wages increase total income and reduce pension costs.

2. Evidence based transition-to-work and open employment providers;
 - 2.1. can address low expectations;
 - 2.2. can provide a good chance of getting a job; and,
 - 2.3. can demonstrate what is possible.
3. For transition from school to work, the right support means;
 - 3.1. work experience and training in real work settings based on agreed goals;
 - 3.2. skilled and experienced staff; and,
 - 3.3. strong links with an effective open employment program.
4. For open employment, the right support means;
 - 4.1. individual assessment as the basis of job search;
 - 4.2. customised job search;
 - 4.3. systematic on-the-job training; and,
 - 4.4. ongoing support for the employee and employer.

If we are to change low expectations and increase open employment participation of people with intellectual disability it will be necessary to expand the right service support across Australia.

The frustration expressed by David Bowen of the NDIA in *The Australian*¹ regarding “perpetuating the old system” of sheltered workshops, and “The interface between the NDIS and Disability Employment Services is not working” is because there isn’t a comprehensive and skilled national transition-to-work and open employment service sector for people with intellectual disability.

The NDIS has modern principles of choice and control, and goals of social and economic participation, but it is without a modern service sector to provide NDIS participants with intellectual disability the necessary skilled transition-to-work and open employment support. A skilled provider market will not emerge unless there is a plan to develop such a market of support.

According to Michael O’Sullivan, the National Disability Investment Scheme² will require investment in developing the right support for NDIS participants. Without skilled support there is no choice, control, or employment outcomes.

For people with moderate intellectual disability the DES evaluation found additional funding will not deliver better outcomes in the absence of technical competency, and that if expectations are raised, outcomes will follow, given the right type of support.

The evaluation emphasised that, From the available literature it is clear that money alone is no guarantee of outcomes—outcomes are driven by positive conviction and specialist know-how.³

The productivity commission identified the NSW-TTW program as a good example of post school transition to help youth with disability move from school to work⁴, and that transition-to-work programs can provide substantial savings for the NDIS from spending on more expensive alternative programs.⁵

¹ Outdated job service ‘defeating the NDIS’ *The Australian*, Rick Morton, Feb 10, 2015

² Budget cuts could silence voices for the disabled such as Our Voice’s Michael Sullivan. *Sydney Morning Herald*, Julia May,, Feb 15, 2015.

³ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, *Evaluation of the Moderate Intellectual Disability Loading*, April 2013.

⁴ Productivity Commission 2011, *Disability Care and Support*, Report no. 54, Canberra. p. 240

⁵ Productivity Commission 2011, *Disability Care and Support*, Report no. 54, Canberra. p. 593

2. Employment Support for People with Intellectual Disability that Works

What do we know?

We know people with intellectual disability,

1. want to work,
2. can work when they get the right support, and
3. are hired by employers when this meets the mutual needs of the business and the individual.

Yet only 8% of people with intellectual disability are employed in the open workforce.

An increase in employment outcomes will be achieved if individuals and families can choose support based on best practice for people with intellectual disability.

- A new employment support system should build on what is achieving good employment outcomes for people with intellectual disability.
- A market-based approach should provide individuals, families, and employers with genuine choice informed by published provider outcomes by disability.
- Any changes should not unintentionally harm services performing well in the current employment support system.

The expected 'dovetailing' of Disability Employment Services (DES) and the NDIS provides an historic opportunity to achieve substantial savings while delivering improved employment outcomes.

Best practice transition-to-work and open employment support can provide significant savings as alternative programs for people with intellectual disability (i.e. day programs & supported employment) are more expensive.

Inclusion Australia proposes the following key elements of a new pathway of employment support.

1. A presumption that people with intellectual disability have the capacity to work in the open workforce when provided with skilled support.
2. A national system of;
 - transition-to-work support for people with intellectual disability based on what works as part of the NDIS, that works seamlessly with,
 - open employment support based on what works as part of DES for NDIS clients with intellectual disability.

These elements if based on best practice can provide employment support from school to work for more youth with intellectual disability to choose work and successfully participate in the open workforce.

In brief what do people with intellectual disability want from the NDIS?

- A seamless pathway of evidence based support
- Presumption of open employment capacity
- NDIS planning includes post-school transition-to-work
- Informed choice of transition-to-work providers
- Seamless link with specialist open employment providers
- Informed choice of skilled open employment providers
- Published provider quantified outcomes (i.e. job placements, job retention, hours of work) by type of disability
- A performance framework focused on rewarding sustainable jobs
- A funding model that is adequate and flexible to maintain quality support

- Training and technical assistance to support a skilled workforce
- NDIS responsibility for transition-to-work support; and DES responsibility for open employment support

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