



Toolkit for Workplaces

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

Employment without barriers: improving employment opportunities for people with disability

We are driven to create employment without barriers – especially for people with disability.

One of these barriers – often an invisible one – is the barrier to employment. It's a real and ever-present issue in Australia and one that can strip people with disability of their fundamental right to access meaningful work and the personal, economic and social benefits it provides.

This International Day of People with Disability, we want to talk about creating employment opportunities without barriers for people with disability. As one of Australia's largest disability service providers, and a disability confident recruiter we believe it's our responsibility to help lead the way.

We want to help organisations and the people within them start a dialogue about the diversity of employment in their workplace, and how they can help to make it a more inclusive and accessible space for people with disability.

People with disability: an employment snapshot

People with disability represent a significant proportion of Australian society. In fact, 1 in 5 people have disability in Australia. 50% of these people are of working age, but only half have secured a job.

We think this is unacceptable. So why is it still the case?

Long standing stigmatisation of what it means to live with a disability is one of the main barriers to employment. By changing workplace culture, we can start to improve employment outcomes for people living with disability.

Businesses and the Australian economy can benefit from the unique contributions, perspectives and committed work ethic that people living with disability possess.

Employing someone with disability is not just the right thing to do; it makes good business sense. It gives people with disability greater financial independence, higher standards of living and a sense of identity and self-worth. It gives organisations greater diversity, which inspires innovative thinking and better decision making through a variety of perspectives.

Getting started: a conversation

A great place to start thinking about how to make your organisation more inclusive for people with disability is to ask questions.

These could be something like:

What portion of our company's workforce is made up of people with disability?

And what steps, if any, have we taken as a business to optimise the diversity of our workforce?

Asking these initial questions can provide valuable insight into the culture of your organisation, and how it currently measures up as an inclusive and accessible workplace.

Ask your HR team

- What data are we collecting to record how many people with disability have applied for a job vs how many people with disability have secured a job?
- How do our current recruitment practises support diversity and inclusion?
- Do we use inclusive language in our job advertisements?
- Does the organisation strive to make itself accessible – in a variety of ways – for people with disability? How does it do this?
- Are we taking steps to actively increase demand for people with disability in our organisation?

Employment without barriers: taking action

As one of Australia's most prominent social purpose organisations, Life Without Barriers is committed to representing the communities in which we operate.

Earlier this year, we released our next **Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan**, which outlines our goal to become an industry leader in the disability employment space. By 2022, 12% of our new recruits will be people with disability.

Longer term, our employment target is to have 9% of our total workforce comprised of people with disability.

It places significant emphasis on ensuring we continue to embed improvements in accessibility in our business processes and communications to ensure our staff with disability can excel in their role.

We are proud to have earned **Disability Confident Recruitment** status through the Australian Network on Disability (AND), which means that our internal recruitment and selection processes are inclusive.

Below we've outlined some steps to get you – and your business – thinking about inclusivity, diversity and how you can move towards a similar goal.

Partner with us

We're all about partnering with like-minded organisations to change lives for the better. Our doors are always open to sharing knowledge and experiences, so please get in touch to discuss how together, we can create employment without barriers.

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#Employment Without Barriers

Take Action

- Consider setting an organisation-wide disability employment target. This will require you to not only look at and understand your current employment data, but it will also give you a benchmark to determine how you'll go about making – and measuring – improvement.
- Create an Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan to focus accessibility efforts and drive outcomes – ask us how we did it!
- Become a member of the Australian Network on Disability (AND) for their support, member forums and great tools. Why not consider joining their Disability Confident Recruiter program?
- Get to know your local Disability Employment Service providers. At Life Without Barriers, we facilitate a quarterly meeting between our Talent & Attraction staff and Disability Employment Providers to ensure that all are aware of national disability employment strategy and process.
- Anonymously ask staff how they found your recruitment and onboarding process. This will give you the opportunity to consistently review and improve how accessible your systems and processes are.
- Educate your staff in disability awareness so they can confidently and respectfully work with and for a person with disability (cover myth-busting, appropriate language).
- Formalise a Workplace Adjustment process to gain oversight of how effectively you implement adjustments to ensure that your staff are supported to work as effectively as possible.
- Join **The Valuable 500** movement – a campaign that aims to put disability inclusion on the business leadership agenda of private business. The movement is seeking 500 national and multinational, private sector corporations to be the tipping-point for change and to unlock the business, social and economic value of people living with disabilities across the world.



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