



DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FLEXIBLE, TAILORED EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

The Australian Government's new and improved \$1.2 billion Disability Employment Services will deliver more effective employment assistance for job seekers with disability from 1 March 2010.

Disability Employment Services will increase the employment participation of job seekers with disability.

Disability Employment Services are a significant improvement in services for people with disability, their families and carers, and employers. Job seekers with disability will have immediate access to tailored services that are flexible and responsive to both their needs and those of employers.

The new Disability Employment Services will provide eligible job seekers with disability, injury or health condition access to individually tailored employment services better suited to their needs, with stronger links to training and skills development, particularly in areas of local skills shortages.

There are two separate programs within Disability Employment Services:

- **Disability Management Service** is for job seekers with disability, injury or health condition who require the assistance of a Disability Employment Service but are not expected to need long-term support in the workplace.
- **Employment Support Service** is for job seekers with permanent disability and with an assessed need for more long-term, regular support in the workplace.

The new Disability Employment Services are the result of an extensive consultation process, including an invitation for initial submissions, a discussion paper responding to those submissions and two nation-wide consultation periods.

A better pathway to employment

The Australian Government values the contribution people with disability make to Australian society and believes that people with disability want to work and should be supported in their efforts to get and maintain a job.

Disability Employment Services will be uncapped, so that all eligible people with disability will have immediate access to the service they need. There will be no waiting lists.

All eligible job seekers with disability will have access to individually tailored and comprehensive services including capacity building, training, work experience and other interventions to help participants obtain and maintain suitable employment.

Providers of Disability Employment Services will be able to commit to early intervention partnerships with schools and other services to ensure employment assistance is available as soon as a person with disability is ready to participate.

Features of the new Disability Employment Services

- Uncapping of Disability Employment Services so that job seekers with disability will no longer have to wait for services to help them get and keep a job.
- Two clearly distinct programs focusing on job seekers with disability with different needs, making the assessment and referral processes less complex.
- Providing the right assistance as early as possible, including for school leavers, to ensure a successful transition to work.
- Encouraging a stronger focus on job outcomes with the greatest rewards available when Disability Employment Services find sustainable jobs for participants.
- Better incentives for Disability Employment Services to encourage skills development, education and training.
- A funding structure that targets resources to the most disadvantaged job seekers.
- Increased resources to assist job seekers with disability in remote areas.
- Development of an Employment Pathway Plan between a Disability Employment Service and a job seeker which details the services tailored to help the individual secure employment.
- A flexible approach so Disability Employment Services can deliver a mix of interventions to address both vocational and non vocational barriers.
- A reduction of administrative burden and red tape to give Disability Employment Services more resources to assist job seekers to find and maintain a job.
- All Disability Employment Services will be required to be certified as complying with the Disability Services Standards. For more information visit www.jobaccess.gov.au.

Helping employers find skilled workers

The new Disability Employment Services will reward providers for working with employers to supply job seekers who can meet local labour market and skills demands.

An Employment Assistance Fund will provide job seekers, employers and providers with easier access to resources to assist with finding and maintaining employment, such as workplace modifications and Auslan interpreting services.

For those participants who require support to maintain their employment, ongoing support will be available from a Disability Employment Service for as long as it is required. There will be three levels of ongoing support (Flexible, Moderate and High) to cater for the varying needs of workers with disability and their employers.

Flexible ongoing support is a new feature and will provide a safety net for participants who have been placed into work, but who may require irregular or less predictable access to support to maintain employment. This provides better options for some participants such as those with mental health or episodic conditions.

Many participants will also be able to leave Disability Employment Services as independent workers once they have moved into sustainable employment.