

Job Access

Driving disability employment

Education employers can benefit from an untapped talent pool

Australian businesses in the education service, social care and healthcare industries can benefit by reaching into an untapped pool of talent by considering hiring candidates with disability.

New research released by the Australian Government titled [Building Employer Demand Research Report](#) shows that the majority (79 per cent) of Australian employers across these industries are open to hiring people with disability. While these numbers are encouraging, there is room for improvement as only 58 per cent are currently employing someone with disability.

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services Sarah Henderson said most employers recognised the value that people with disability bring to the workforce, however many were unsure about what was involved in the disability employment process at a practical level.

“83 per cent of businesses in the education service, social care and healthcare industries believe it is important for their workplace to reflect the diversity in the community by including people with disability,” Ms Henderson said.

“When considering the things that mattered to them, 76 per cent said equal work opportunities for people with disability was an issue that was personally important to them.

“But the research tells us these businesses want more help to transition from ‘willing’ to ‘hiring.’”

Just 45 per cent of employers in education service, social care and healthcare industries thought their business was equipped to employ someone with a disability, and 38 per cent saw hiring a person with disability as a ‘step into the unknown.’

Ms Henderson said a range of supports are available to open employers via [the JobAccess website](#) to support them through the process.

“Through JobAccess, employers can access practical advice and resources on all aspects of disability employment – from recruitment assistance, staff training and financial support, to workplace modifications, and tips for creating flexible work environments,” Ms Henderson said.

“Leading disability employers are already utilising these services and reaping the benefits, but we’re urging more employers to get on board.”

William Angliss Institute is one education employer echoing that sentiment, joining the Australian Government’s *Employ their Ability* campaign.

Paul Kloppenborg, Manager, Learning and Information Services at William Angliss Institute employed Daniel Giddens as a Liaison Librarian in 2016. He said considering a person with a disability led them to the best person for the job.

“I’ve worked in disability services before, so I was already open to the idea, but with Daniel, it wasn’t really about his disability.

“He was initially working here just a couple of hours a week, but I was so impressed that I’ve now got him in four days a week,” Mr Kloppenborg said.

For Mr Kloppenborg, hiring Daniel made good business sense.

“He’s been very popular amongst the teaching staff, and I think it’s breaking down some of the stereotypes of what people with disability can and can’t do,” Mr Kloppenborg said.

“It’s been great for everyone. Disability can mean so many things. I think it’s important for employers to keep an open mind and realise that having a disability can sometimes have no impact on someone’s ability to work at all.”

For resources and assistance to hire people with disability go to www.JobAccess.gov.au.

Key research findings:

- Across Australian employers in all industries, large (90%) and medium employers (83%) were more open to employing people with disability compared to small (77%) and micro businesses (76%).
- Among this cohort, there was widespread agreement that employees with disability have a good attitude to work (76% of ‘open’ medium businesses, 69% of ‘open’ large businesses) and are loyal to the business (69% of ‘open’ medium employers, 63% of ‘open’ large employers).
- Research identified professional and financial services; retail, accommodation and food services; and social, health care and education services as the major industry groups most supportive and open to hiring people with disability.
- Across all businesses, HR personnel were most open to hiring people with disability (93%) followed by admin staff (83%), middle managers (79%), people in leadership roles (76%) and business owners (73%).
- 42% of Australian businesses in the education service, social care and healthcare industries are overlooking candidates with disability during the hiring process.

