

Healthcare employers can benefit from untapped talent pool

More Australian businesses in the education, social care and healthcare industries can benefit by reaching into an untapped pool of talent and 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 healthcare, social care and education service 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 the healthcare, social care and education service industries thought their business was equipped to employ someone with a disability, and 38 per cent believed employing someone with a disability is 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.”

Gold Coast University Hospital is one healthcare employer echoing that sentiment, joining the Australian Government’s *Employ their Ability* campaign.

Ebru Dogan, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor at Gold Coast University Hospital said considering a person with a disability often leads them to the best person for the job.

“Aside from working towards an inclusive culture and meeting targets, it brings a diversity of thought that is invaluable,” Ms Dogan said.

For Gold Coast University Hospital, having a clearly articulated procedure for hiring people with disability ensures a smooth process.

Job Access

Driving disability employment

“We’ve worked with JobAccess and Epic Assist for the last few years, and most of our employees with disability have come through there. Once a position has been identified that a hiring manager wants to fill with a person with disability, we work with a number of organisations to make sure it can happen,” Ms Dogan said.

Epic Assist is a Disability Employment Services (DES) provider, which links people with disability with employers looking for candidates. The Gold Coast University Hospital’s workplace health and safety team then helps to determine what will be involved in the job, and what kind of person would be best suited.

“The health and safety assessments are in place to make sure that whoever we end up hiring is set up to succeed. We want our employees to stick around for a long time, so making sure a job is suitable is an important part of that,” Ms Dogan said.

When positions require adjustments to ensure that people with disability are able to thrive, services like [JobAccess](#) and the [Employment Assistance Fund](#) (EAF) are available to make any necessary changes or acquire new equipment. The EAF can cover more than just physical changes to the workplace. Other items often covered under the EAF include communications technology, Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreting, disability awareness training for staff, and specialist support for people with mental health conditions or learning disorders.

Ms Dogan said Gold Coast University Hospital is committed to hiring more people with disability.

“At the moment we have just under ten people with disability working here, but after seeing the benefits, we’re actively looking to increase that number.”

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 healthcare, social care and education service industries are overlooking candidates with disability during the hiring process.



Australian Government
Australian Government Crest

JobAccess is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.

1800 464 800

www.jobaccess.gov.au