



**See the  
ability,  
unlock the  
potential**

*Champions  
for  
Change*

# Inclusive Employment Guide for Businesses

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[www.inclusiveemployment.com.au](http://www.inclusiveemployment.com.au)



CITY OF GREATER  
**BENDIGO**

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Throughout this booklet you will notice the spanner icon. This denotes a recommended action for business owners and people managers who want to create a more inclusive workplace.

Resources to assist businesses to make these actions are collated in the resource section at the end of this booklet.

Visit [www.inclusiveemployment.com.au](http://www.inclusiveemployment.com.au) for detailed information about inclusive employment, including links to useful resources and organisations.

Register the accessibility features of your business on the Inclusive Towns website at [www.inclusivetowns.com.au](http://www.inclusivetowns.com.au) and be part of a growing resource for people with a disability, their families, friends and carers.



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that the City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung People and Taungurung People, the Traditional Owners of this land.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People and Taungurung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



## What is inclusive employment?

You might not have ever considered employing a person with a disability, or perhaps you have but haven't known how to go about it. This booklet contains all the information you need to get you started, as well as some great testimonials from businesses and staff members who have taken the leap into inclusive employment with some excellent results.

One in five Australians have a disability. Most are able and willing to work and make excellent employees. However, unemployment for people with a disability is twice the rate as for people without a disability.

Inclusive employment means individuals with disabilities gaining jobs and working alongside their peers, with access to the same benefits and career opportunities as their colleagues without disabilities.

The benefits of employment for people with disabilities are the same benefits that we all experience:

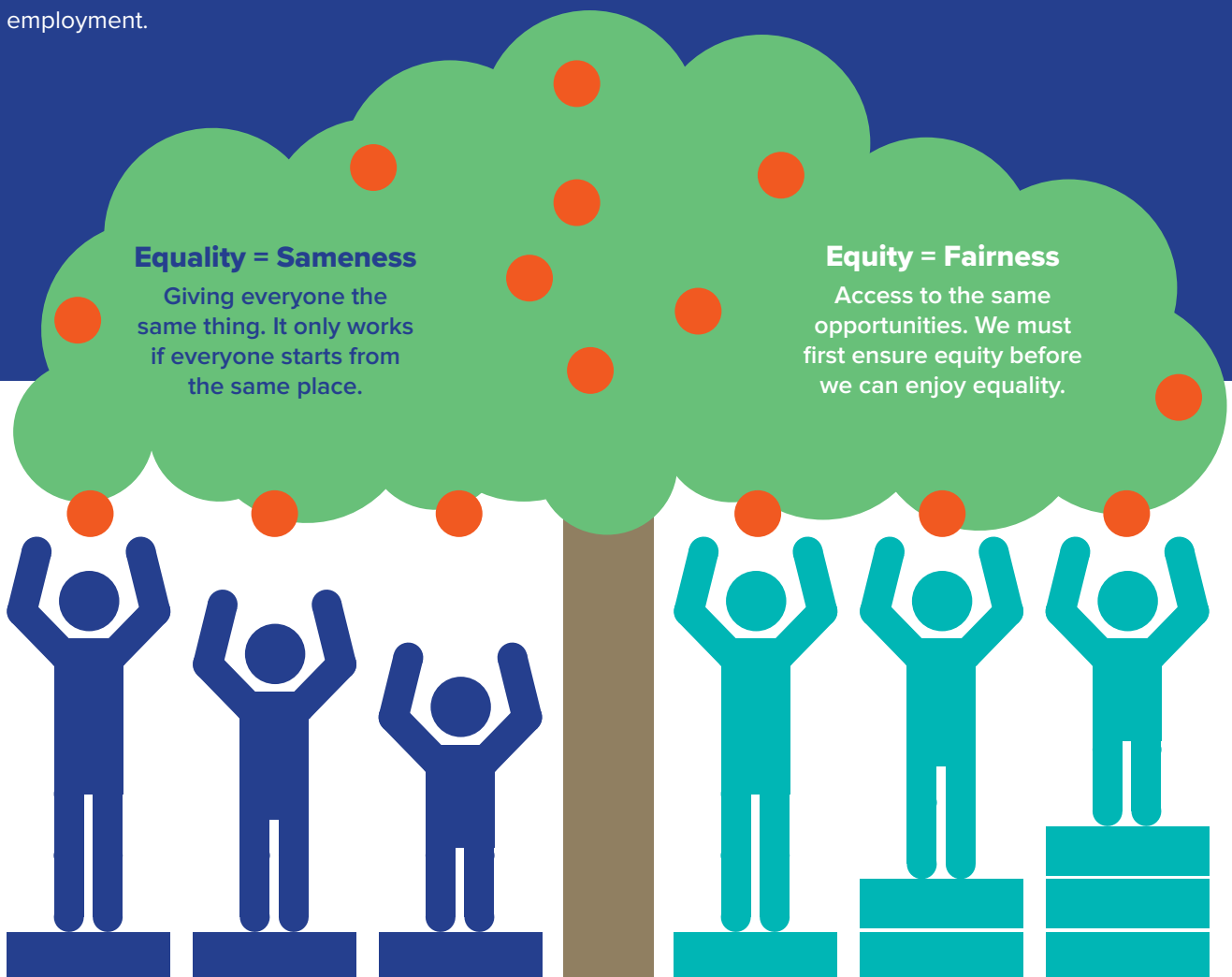
- a regular income to pay the bills
- a sense of purpose and self-esteem
- building relationships and increased opportunities for social participation
- a career and access to job networks
- the opportunity to develop financial security, independence and to make plans for the future

# Equality and Equity

For businesses to truly provide equal opportunities, they must first be equitable.

Most businesses would consider themselves an equal opportunities employer. However, as the image shows, equality doesn't always mean everyone has equal access. Traineeships and apprenticeships are a great way of providing equitable access to employment for people with a disability.

This booklet has been developed as a practical guide to employing someone with a disability in the workplace and provides links, resources and case studies that highlight the benefits of inclusive employment.







## Why should I employ a person with a disability?

Because inclusive employment is great for business! Research has shown people with a disability stay with their employers longer, take fewer sick days and are dedicated hardworking employees.

Businesses have found that by employing people with a disability, they have benefitted from:

- Lowered recruitment costs - people with disabilities are known to stay in jobs longer than non-disabled people and take fewer days off
- Improved customer service and public loyalty - more accessible premises and an increase in knowledge of disability is good for all customers and customers are loyal to businesses that employ people with disabilities
- Employee innovation - employees with a disability have built new networks for their organisations and expanded corporate knowledge of assistive technology
- Improved staff health and wellbeing - by considering the individual needs of all their staff, employers have increased job satisfaction, staff loyalty and team morale, as everyone benefits from inclusive practices in the workplace

- Connecting with Disability Employment Services (DES) consultants - these organisations help employers to support employees to ensure that both get the best out of the experience. They can also assist in accessing financial incentives from the Federal or State Government that are available to support businesses who employ a person with a disability

**“Staff now view life through a different lens and embrace being leaders in inclusive employment.”**

**Nathan O’Neill**  
*Chief Executive Officer - Bendigo Stadium*



## What are the barriers to inclusive employment?

People with a disability make excellent employees, but are often overlooked for employment opportunities due to barriers that can make it difficult for them to reach the selection stage of interviews or be included in the work place.


Understanding some of the physical and psychological barriers experienced by people with a disability will help employers to identify how to improve inclusion in the workplace, support employers to better understand their employees and reinforce the role that every employer can play in creating a more inclusive work environment.

The following pages list some of the barriers people with a disability face when seeking employment.


### Perceptions of disability

The way people think about disability can often be the biggest barrier to inclusion. Some people still use the medical model to understand disability. The medical model sees disability as the problem for access and not, for example the stairs in to a building. The **social model of disability** turns this viewpoint around and identifies that it is the stairs that are the barrier to access, not the wheelchair or the disability.

Low societal expectations of people with a disability gaining employment is another common misconception, which is reinforced by lack of visibility of people with a disability in mainstream employment. Not only is this incorrect, it can have a serious impact on an individual's drive and ambition.



**Reflect on how you think about disability.** Do you see the disability as the problem or the environment we live in? When you use the social model of disability to identify barriers in your workplace you will identify solutions that benefit everybody.



**Increase the visibility of people with a disability in the workforce** by including positive and active inclusive imagery in publications, online training and induction manuals.

By ensuring people with a disability are represented in corporate imagery and publications, you are reinforcing the valued role people with a disability represent in your workforce.

## Disability awareness

Not all employers and staff members fully understand disability. Only 4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair, but a common misconception is to think about the problems associated with physical access when disability is mentioned. Many do not realise that disability also includes someone who has a visual or hearing impairment or has an invisible disability like autism.

In regard to recruitment, when an employer hears 'disability' and thinks 'wheelchair', they are unlikely to shortlist a person for a job that requires driving or lifting, and the candidate misses out. Employers could have a greater awareness about the different kinds of disability.

### Include disability awareness training in your staff induction

to ensure all staff have an understanding of the different types of disability and how they can better communicate with people with a disability. Disability awareness training can promote discussion on the improvement of the physical environment and inform staff of workplace adjustments that may be available to them. Resources on page 15.



## Unconscious bias

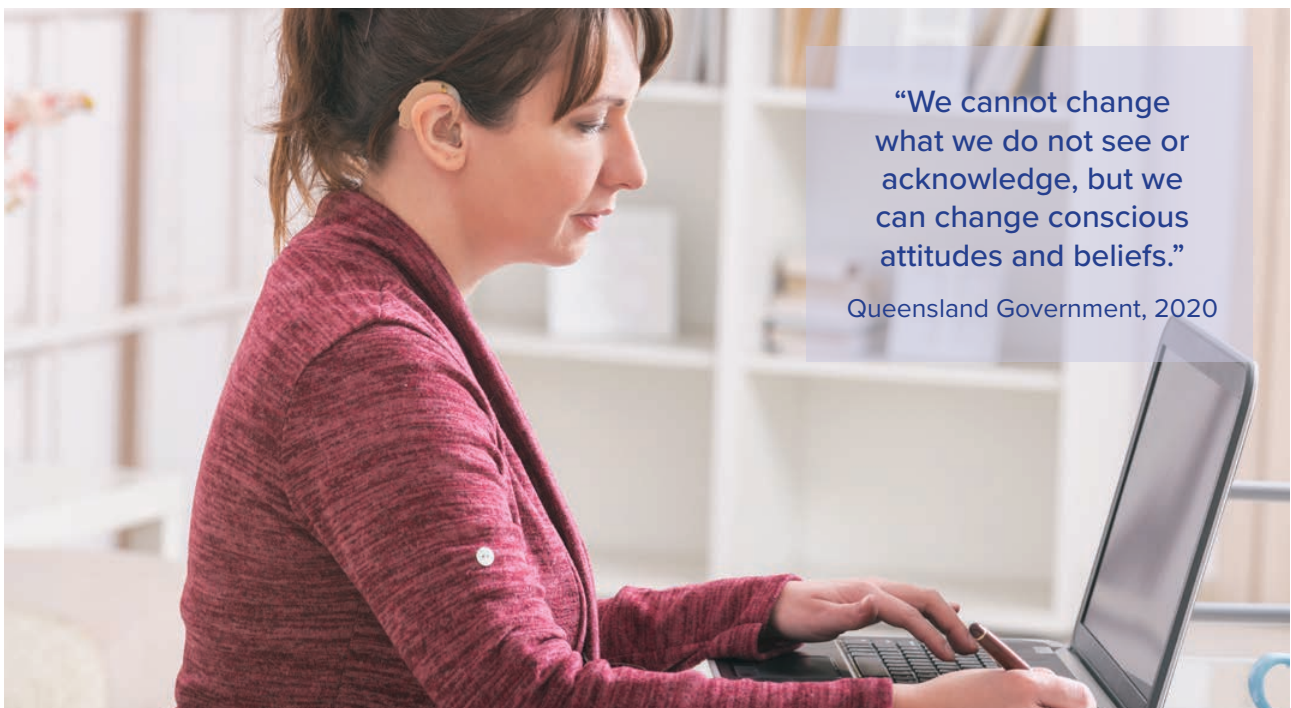
Where there is bias (conscious or unconscious) in the workplace, employers recruit, promote, allocate work, and manage performance with filters on their thinking.

An example of unconscious bias is employers making assumptions that someone cannot do a job well or will not be able to work at the same level or speed as a non-disabled colleague based on what they believe to be true about people with a disability.

Unconscious bias in the workplace can mean:

- Talented people are left out of the workforce or not allowed equal opportunity for development and career progression
- Diverse voices aren't heard in meetings or able to contribute to decision making
- The workplace culture is not genuinely demonstrating inclusive principles
- Employees are not able to fully contribute to their organisation

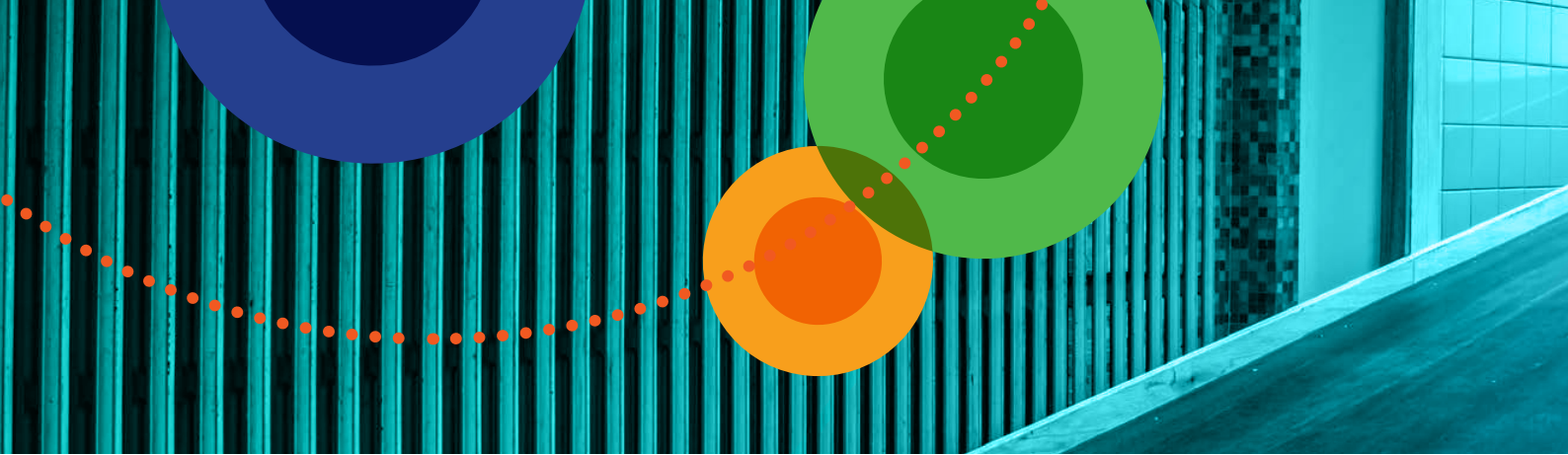
Manage unconscious bias in your workplace by providing **training and information sessions** that question biases and challenge cultural norms, to promote awareness and encourage professional and personal development. Resources on page 15.



**“We cannot change what we do not see or acknowledge, but we can change conscious attitudes and beliefs.”**

Queensland Government, 2020





## Physical Access

Inaccessible workplaces, limited transport options and inflexible working arrangements can all impact on an individual's ability to apply, succeed and retain employment. Inaccessible workplaces can be seen as a reason not to employ someone with a disability due to the cost involved in making them accessible, however research shows employers may significantly over-estimate these costs.

Making a workplace more accessible could be as simple as installing handrails in a bathroom, or rearranging furniture to enable better access.

There are additional benefits of making workplaces accessible for employers. For example, a ramp instead of stairs makes the workplace more accessible for a person with a pram or with small children as well as someone using crutches, a walking frame or a wheelchair.

## Recruitment procedures

Traditional methods of recruitment, such as formal interviews, do not always offer equal opportunities for people with disabilities and can mean candidates without disability are more likely to be successful.

In a traditional interview panel setting, candidates need to be able to respond well to random questions and be comfortable in an unfamiliar location with unknown people. For people with sensory disabilities additional aspects such as lighting and noise can make some spaces very uncomfortable. A candidate who is perfect for the job who has an intellectual or sensory disability is unlikely to be able to respond as well to questions posed in a traditional interview setting as a candidate without these disabilities.

## The pathways to employment

Many employers are keen to see work experience on potential employee resumes. People with a disability often have significantly reduced access to work experience and casual jobs whilst at school. This puts them at an additional disadvantage when their resume is in competition with people without a disability who have had work experience opportunities.

**Conduct an accessibility audit of your premises** to identify the barriers to inclusion and implement the solutions.



**Make recruitment processes more accessible** by offering assistance to all candidates prior to interview. This could include:

- Position description discussions via phone/email/ virtual meeting
- Information on flexible working arrangements and workplace adjustments listed in position descriptions
- Interview questions made available prior to the interview
- Extra assistance to attend an interview, for example Auslan interpreters or a support worker



**Work experience and traineeships** are a proven pathway of supporting people with a disability to enter the workforce. Organisations can be eligible for government financial subsidies and support to provide on-the-job training to ensure the employer and the employee are well supported.



This situation is amplified by limited access to training and further education for school leavers and a lack of entry-level pathways into organisations that provide the opportunity for people with a disability to gain on-the-job experience.





## Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation. This could be because of their disability, however this is against the law. 19% of people with disability aged 15-24 years have experienced discrimination, and in almost half of those instances, the source of discrimination was the employer.

The main types of discrimination that employees with a disability face in the workplace are:

- **Direct discrimination** - when someone is treated worse than another person in a similar situation because of their disability  
*For example: during an interview, a job applicant tells the potential employer that they have multiple sclerosis. Even though they are the best candidate the employer decides not to appoint them because they assume they will need a lot of time off*
- **Indirect discrimination** - when an organisation has a policy or way of working that has a worse impact on disabled people compared to people who are not disabled. This is unlawful unless the organisation or employer can show that there is a good reason for the policy, and it is proportionate  
*For example: a job advert states all applicants must have a driving licence. This puts some disabled people at a disadvantage, for example, if they have epilepsy and are unable to drive. If the advert is for a bus driver job, the requirement will be justified. If it is for a teacher to work across two schools, it will be more difficult to justify, as the need to drive is not required to perform the role*

[Read up on the Disability Discrimination Act and Equal Opportunities acts.](#) These Acts protect the rights of workers with a disability and are essential reading for employers.



**“I wish employers would focus on my abilities instead of thinking that my disability will present a problem.”**

David, Castlemaine

- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** - employers and organisations have a responsibility to make sure that disabled people can access jobs, education and services as easily as non-disabled people. Failing to make necessary workplace adjustments to accommodate disability is the most common form of disability discrimination

*For example: an employee with mobility impairment needs a parking space close to the office. However, their employer only gives parking spaces to senior managers and refuses to give them a designated parking space*

It can often be perceived that adjustments are expensive, but in fact, the opposite is usually true. Offering flexible working, making slight changes to a dress code or allowing an employee to sit/stand are all effective forms of support but cost very little to implement

### [Read the list of most commonly requested workplace adjustments](#)

and identify if the business is able to accommodate them. This will support managers to be comfortable in asking staff members at interviews if they require adjustments to help them deliver their role and support any staff member who asks for adjustments as their role progresses.

Further information to help implement these recommended actions can be found in the Resources on page 15, and the Checklist for recommended actions on page 16.



## Case studies

Every employer can make positive impacts and be a part of creating a more inclusive society, by adopting inclusive practices and increasing the number of people with a disability in their employment.

### Kyle, CVGT and the Belmont Hotel, Bendigo

Kyle has a great social personality, a passionate interest to work in a pub and lives with Down syndrome. A local employment service CVGT, approached Jaime, the co-owner of the Belmont Hotel and discussed employment options for Kyle who was interested in working for them.

Jaime was initially unsure of the idea at first, but she gave Kyle a chance and was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to employ Kyle. The Belmont never felt alone due to the regular check-ins from CVGT, who thoroughly prepared Kyle for the position and assisted him in getting a barista certificate.

Kyle loves his position and is an asset to the Belmont Hotel. Although initially shy, it did not take him long to learn everything he needed to do. He now enjoys being a barman/barista and the local patrons love him. Jaime mentioned that Kyle is very loyal and often tells customers it is 'his' pub. Kyle plans to stay working there until he is much older.



### Barry, Axis Employment and the Bendigo Stadium

Bendigo Stadium Ltd (BSL) partnered with Axis Employment to provide members of the community with an opportunity to re-enter the work force. Barry has been employed since June 2019, and is responsible for cleaning, maintenance and setting up for events.

After being out of the workforce for seven years, Barry had an immediate impact in contributing to BSL's organisational goals. Within his first six months of employment, Barry was nominated by his peers as 'Employee of the Month'. Staff witnessed Barry's increase in confidence, personal growth, and demonstrated social skills along his journey, which has instilled satisfaction and fulfilment within the greater team at BSL.

BSL's partnership with Axis and Barry has been so successful that eight employment opportunities have been offered within Bendigo Stadium Ltd venues.





## Jordana, Axis Employment and the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank

Jordana joined the staff at Bendigo Bank in December 2018 and is an invaluable member of the team.

Jordana performs administration tasks, including account reconciliation, invoicing and running the bank's monthly employee recognition scheme known as the People's Award. Her role has grown during her time at the bank and she is regularly picking up new tasks as she continues to develop her skills.

The Bendigo and Adelaide Bank's State Project Coordinator Phoebe Johnson said it's been extremely rewarding watching Jordana progress both professionally and personally. "She is diligent, helpful, willing to learn and just a touch cheeky, bringing a real element of fun and vibrancy into our team."

Jordana started with us on a casual basis and has done such a fantastic job in her role that she has since transitioned into permanent part-time employment. The bank recently launched a Diversity and Inclusion Plan and plans to take on many more placements in future.



## Katrina, WDEA Works and Beechworth Bakery

Bendigo's Beechworth Bakery prides itself on more than its famous pies and cakes. As an employer they seek to be engaged in their local community and social justice issues.

As a single parent experiencing a range of health issues including diabetes and chronic pain, Katrina knew that finding the right employment could be difficult. But just a week after entering WDEA Works Bendigo, Katrina had a new job at Beechworth Bakery.

WDEA Works matched Katrina with the Beechworth Bakery and were able to support Katrina into employment by assisting with clothing, footwear and fuel cards. Importantly, they helped Katrina have open communication with her employer. Amanda Armato from WDEA says "Seeing someone as happy as she is, is why we do this job."

For Katrina, the opportunity to work has proved to be a positive addition to her life. She works with customers, cleans and helps with food production. "I'm really enjoying the social interaction of the job, but apart from that, it's good to have a boost to my confidence and my finances too." Katrina said.

Manager Jordan Ditloff is well aware that the bakery thrives on the success of its employees and says "We are really proud of how well Katrina is thriving."





### Jaclyn, CVGT Bendigo Disability Employment Services and City of Greater Bendigo

Jaclyn is employed in administration within the City of Greater Bendigo where she is completing a business traineeship. She overcame her personal barriers of depression and anxiety to apply for the position and was quickly shortlisted after excelling in her interview.

Jaclyn was wanting to return to work so she could be a positive role model for her young daughter. This impressed the interview panel as they could see her commitment. As the role was for two days a week, it has turned out to be a perfect fit.

Jaclyn is loving her job and the encouraging support she receives from her team at the City continues to motivate her to excel in her roles. Her supervisor Lahra, said that she has a great personality and has improved the social cohesion of the unit.

Lahra recommends hiring an employee through CVGT as the service between the CVGT consultants, and the City's workplace and volunteer management Support officer was impeccable.

Any issue that arose, no matter how big or small was always met with a timely and positive response. The team are so impressed with Jaclyn that they have recently requested another traineeship through CVGT.



### Ned, NDIS and Saffs Café, Castlemaine

Ned was given an opportunity to undertake work experience at Saffs Café in Castlemaine one day a week for a year. Ned learnt front of house tasks, how to communicate with fellow team members and customers, and work readiness skills such as arriving at work on time, hand hygiene, and making eye contact. Ned wasn't paid during the placement, so there was no financial cost to the café.

The café provided mentoring and support, and Ned used his NDIS funds to set up and monitor the work experience placement.

**“It gives me immense pleasure to see trainees from all life situations completing their traineeships, whether they have been dealing with anxiety or being on the Autism spectrum. There is a feeling of real joy and pride to see them gain new skills, and for me to share in their achievement of gaining a qualification.”**

**Greg Harris**  
*Work Placements Officer, City of Greater Bendigo*





## Financial supports available to employers

Many people with a disability participate in the open workforce at full rates of productivity and pay. For some employers, the following Government subsidies may assist them to start offering employment to a worker with a disability.

Disability Employment Service (DES) providers can help find the right candidate for the workplace as well as support the recruiting manager through the process and apply for any subsidies and supports the workplace may be entitled to.

### Wage Subsidy Scheme

Available to employers of eligible job seekers registered with a Disability Employment Services provider. Employers should employ the person for a minimum of eight hours a week for 13 weeks, with the intent of achieving ongoing employment.

### Enhanced Wage Subsidy

Available to employers of eligible job seekers registered with a Disability Employment Services provider. It is aimed at assisting people who have had difficulty obtaining employment to get a job of at least 15 hours a week for 26 weeks.

### Supported Wage System

The Supported Wage System is a workplace relations mechanism that allows employers to pay a productivity-based wage to eligible people whose work productivity is reduced as a result of disability.

### Wage Connect

Wage Connect is a wage subsidy for employers who offer employment to job seekers with little or no recent work experience. Wage Connect is paid for the first 26 weeks a person is employed and may be paid for longer in some circumstances.

### Disabled Australian Apprenticeship Wage Support

Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support is an Australian Government incentive payable to an employer who employs an apprentice who satisfies the disability eligibility criteria and is also available to employers of an apprentice who acquires a disability during their apprenticeship or traineeship.

For the most up-to-date information on government subsidies and supports, contact your local Disability Employment Service (DES) or visit [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au)





## Opportunities for your business

### Work experience

Work experience gives a job seeker a short-term placement that broadens their experience and understanding of the world of work and career opportunities in general. It is focused on building a person's skills, confidence and readiness to enter employment. It helps people new to a work environment to develop practical skills to get a job, improve their resume with relevant experience, and find longer term employment.

### Traineeships and apprenticeships

A traineeship is a partnership between a registered training organisation, a workplace, and a trainee worker. It provides a learning pathway for people to gain a qualification while working on a job that allows practical application of theory and development of skills. Qualifications can range from a Certificate II to a Diploma in traditional trades, community services, office workplaces and hospitality industries.

### Personalised job opportunities

A DES provider can help the workplace identify roles and tasks that can be carried out by a new worker with a disability. A DES provider will match the strengths and skills of the potential worker with a disability with the unmet needs of the organisation. A DES provider will also help access government subsidies and funding to support this initiative.

To provide work experience placements, connect with your local [DES](#) or an organisation like the [Australian Network on Disability](#).



For traineeships and apprenticeships contact your local [DES](#) or [Australian Apprenticeship Pathways](#) for more information.



### Open Employment

Potential employees apply for jobs by replying to advertisements with their application and resume, and are interviewed in an open and competitive process. People with disabilities may struggle to be successful in this situation. With help from a DES provider employees can tailor their resume to the needs of the advertised job and prepare for an interview.

A DES worker can secure an interview for a job seeker with a disability and help navigate issues such as disclosure of disability, any workplace adjustments needed, and can provide financial incentives to support the employment situation. Often the best job for a worker with a disability is one crafted around their particular skills and attributes.

# Resources

## Australian Network on Disability

Provides resources for businesses by providing pathways for people with disabilities into work through mentorship and traineeships and includes an excellent tool kit of ideas.

[www.and.org.au/pages/business-benefits-of-hiring-people-with-a-disability.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/business-benefits-of-hiring-people-with-a-disability.html)

## Disability employment service providers and financial incentives

Contact your local employment provider via Job Access for practical support and guidance for employing a person with a disability.

[www.jobaccess.gov.au/find-a-provider](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/find-a-provider)

## Diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias training resources

There are many providers who can deliver staff training. Who you choose will depend on the business and the size of the team. The links below will provide a starting point.

<https://disabilityawareness.com.au/elearning/disability-awareness/>

[www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/online-training/online-learning-centre/diversity-and-discrimination](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/online-training/online-learning-centre/diversity-and-discrimination)

[www.futurelearn.com/courses/diversity-inclusion-awareness](http://www.futurelearn.com/courses/diversity-inclusion-awareness)

## Employable Me

A great resource for building awareness of disability and the barriers to employment and starting a conversation around inclusion. Available on ABC iView.

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/employable-me-australia>

## Human Rights Commission

<https://humanrights.gov.au/education/employers>

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/willing-work-good-practice-examples-employers-2016>

## Inclusive Employment latest news

Up-to-date inclusive employment information and learning opportunities

[www.inclusiveemployment.com.au/latest-news](http://www.inclusiveemployment.com.au/latest-news)

## Inclusive recruitment practices and pathways to employment

For a comprehensive guide to resources and information on inclusive employment.

[www.inclusiveemployment.com.au](http://www.inclusiveemployment.com.au)

## Job Access employers toolkit

This toolkit includes short video guides and downloadable resources with practical advice on disability and employment - from inclusive policies and recruitment, to workplace changes and managing staff.

[www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers/employer-toolkit](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers/employer-toolkit)

## Physical environment self-assessment resources

The City of Melbourne Good Access is Good Business checklists for retail, hospitality, services and events.

[www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/run-business/Pages/making-business-accessible.aspx](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/run-business/Pages/making-business-accessible.aspx)

## Self-assessment inclusion guide for employers

The Global Business and Disability Network is a 10-point self-assessment guide to assist and gauge inclusivity for people with disabilities.

[www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GBDNSelfAssesmentTool.pdf](http://www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GBDNSelfAssesmentTool.pdf)

## Workplace Adjustments

A comprehensive guide to workplace adjustments including a list of the most common workplace adjustments and employer supports available.

[www.and.org.au/pages/workplace-adjustments.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/workplace-adjustments.html)



# Checklist for recommended actions

Connect with a local Disability Employment Services at <a href="http://www.jobaccess.gov.au">www.jobaccess.gov.au</a>	
Read up on the Disability Discrimination Act and Equal Opportunities act: <a href="http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPGB_disability_discrimination.pdf">www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPGB_disability_discrimination.pdf</a>	
Provide education on disability awareness and unconscious bias in the workplace. Resources are listed on page 15 under <b>Diversity, Inclusion and Unconscious Bias Training resources</b>	
Read the list of most commonly requested workplace adjustments: <a href="http://www.and.org.au/pages/workplace-adjustments.html">www.and.org.au/pages/workplace-adjustments.html</a>	
Identify inclusion as a core organisational value or in the 'about us' section on the website and social media pages.	
Place inclusion on the agenda at staff meetings	
Conduct an audit of the workplace and implement access solutions: <a href="http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/run-business/Pages/making-business-accessible.aspx">www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/run-business/Pages/making-business-accessible.aspx</a>	
Work with professional disability organisations to develop an organisation wide disability action plan: <a href="http://www.and.org.au/pages/what-is-an-accessibility-action-plan.html">www.and.org.au/pages/what-is-an-accessibility-action-plan.html</a>	
Build a network of staff committed to promoting inclusive employment	
Review recruitment policies and procedures with an inclusion lens and identify where positive changes could be made	
Adopt a flexible workplace approach and consider job shares, part time positions and working from home arrangements	
Provide entry level opportunities such as work experience placements and traineeships.	
Include positive and active inclusive imagery in publications, online training and induction manuals	

If you have any questions or queries about inclusive employment or would like further information, please visit [www.inclusiveemployment.com.au](http://www.inclusiveemployment.com.au) or contact the City of Greater Bendigo on (03) 5434 6000 or [communitypartnerships@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:communitypartnerships@bendigo.vic.gov.au)

If you would like to read this document in an alternative format e.g. large print only, contact Customer Service on (03) 5434 6000 or [requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au)



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