



## **Issues Paper 2: Issues Facing People with Disabilities**

*What factors impact on people with disabilities seeking to enter and remain in employment?*

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One of the goals of this Inquiry is to identify the problems faced by people with disabilities when they seek employment.

The Inquiry will also focus on identifying and developing practical strategies that can help address the disincentives that many people with disabilities experience when they do seek employment.

Another important goal is to map out where people with disabilities who do want to find employment can find support and guidance.

As a first step towards achieving these goals, this Issues Paper sets out some of the commonly identified barriers faced by people with disabilities when seeking employment. It also attempts to identify existing initiatives that aim to increase the participation of people with disabilities.

This Issues Paper draws on feedback already received from the disability sector in the preparatory stages of this Inquiry. The Inquiry is interested in further feedback about employment issues. Please use the questions set out below as a guide to your submissions.

### **1. What are some of the barriers faced by people with a disability who might seek employment?**

- **Inadequate information and advice about how to enter the open workplace and obtain ongoing support. For example: there is no 'one-stop shop' for people with disabilities looking for information, advice and ongoing support**
  - there seems to be a lack of coordination between different government services so that people with disabilities are unclear about which Commonwealth or State agencies can provide them with assistance
  - information about the financial and health impacts of entering the open workplace is hard to find
  - there is limited or delayed access to open employment services.
- **Financial costs of participation. For example:**
  - additional transport, support and other costs associated with work, many of which are not subsidised
  - foregoing the Disability Support Pension and associated benefits, such as the Pensioners Health Care Card

- **Inflexible working environment. For example:**
  - difficulties with physical access to the workplace, and getting to and from work
  - inadequate adjustments and adaptations to workplace equipment
  - inflexible working hours
- **More limited opportunities for people with disabilities. For example:**
  - poor links between State-administered school and post-school programs and Commonwealth-administered disability employment services
  - under-representation in the vocational, education and training systems
  - limited scope and variety of jobs offered to people with disabilities
  - lower possibilities for promotion
  - lower paying jobs
  - lower retention rates
- **Stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities**

### **Your feedback: disincentives for people with disabilities**

- (a) What are the most pressing concerns of people with disabilities who might want to seek employment?
- (b) Are there any factors in addition to the ones listed above that might make people with disabilities reluctant to seek or stay in employment?
- (c) What are some individual examples of how these factors have affected the decision to seek or stay in employment?
- (d) What are the particular problems that face people with specific physical, intellectual and psychiatric disabilities when seeking or staying in employment?

## **2. What assistance is currently available to support people with disabilities to enter and remain in employment?**

Some of the Commonwealth government initiatives that assist people with disabilities to enter open employment are set out in Issues Paper 4. The Inquiry is interested to hear about additional projects being undertaken by the Commonwealth government, State government, private sector and community sector.

### **Your feedback: assistance for people with disabilities**

- (a) What are some of the existing initiatives designed to assist people with disabilities to enter and remain in the open workplace? For example:
  - Commonwealth government initiatives (see also Issues Paper 4)
  - State government initiatives
  - private sector initiatives
  - community sector initiatives.
- (b) What cross-sector initiatives exist to assist people with disabilities to enter and remain in the open workplace? For example: Commonwealth-State government initiatives
  - Commonwealth and/or State government-private sector initiatives
  - Commonwealth and/or State government-community sector initiatives
  - private sector-community sector initiatives.

### 3. Send us your solutions!

In addition to providing a 'map' of existing initiatives, it is important to identify the gaps and to develop practical solutions to the issues facing people with disabilities who are seeking employment. The Inquiry would like to hear your ideas on what strategies or initiatives would make a positive difference.

#### Your feedback: solutions

- (a) What additional steps could governments take to support people with disabilities to enter and remain in open employment?
- (b) What additional measures should be taken to make it easier for people with disabilities to enter and remain in open employment?
- (c) What specific steps could be taken to support people with psychiatric disabilities and mental illness to enter open employment?

### 4. How do you make a submission?

Further information about the Inquiry can be found at:

[www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/employment\\_inquiry/index.htm](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/employment_inquiry/index.htm)

Submissions are due by **15 April 2005**.

You can email your submission to: [employmentinquiry@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:employmentinquiry@humanrights.gov.au).

Submissions may also be sent in hard copy, audiotape or videotape, to:

Employment Inquiry  
Disability Rights Unit  
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
GPO Box 5218  
Sydney NSW 2001

Questions can be directed to:

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