

Advocacy Position Statement

Employment

What we believe:

- People with disabilities have the right to work, on an equal basis with others, including the right to the opportunity to gain a living through work freely chosen in a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.¹
- Work is essential to an individual's economic security and is important to achieving social inclusion. Employment contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and a sense of identity, and income from employment increases financial independence and raises living standards.²
- Successful and meaningful employment is dependent on access to accessible and appropriate accommodation, accessible public, private or personalised transport, and the opportunity for education and professional development.

The current situation:

- Labour force participation for people with disability in Australia is low. There are 2.2 million Australians with disability aged 15-64,³ with a labour force participation of 52.8%, compared with 82.5% for people without disability.⁴ Unemployment rate for people with disability is 9.4%, nearly twice the rate of 4.9% for people without disability.⁵
- Australia's employment rate for people with disability (46.6% in 2015) is on par with developed countries.⁶
- As in the broader community, women with disability face poorer economic outcomes than men with disability. Labour force participation for women is lower, unemployment higher and women with disabilities are more likely to be in low paid, part-time, short-term casual jobs.⁷
- People with disability can face greater direct costs than other people because of additional expenses with transport, personal and health care, diet and communications requirements.⁸
- Graduates with disability take 56.2% longer to gain full-time employment than other graduates.⁹

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27(1).

² National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, Commonwealth of Australia, 42.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability and Labour Force Participation, 2012.

⁴ Ibid.

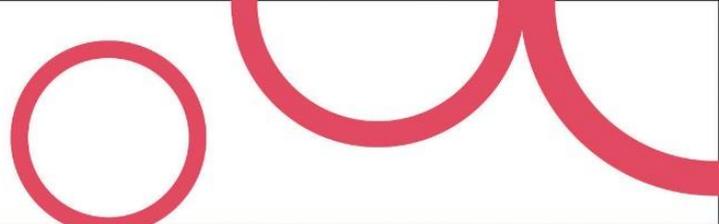
⁵ Ibid.

⁶ 'Employment of persons with disabilities' 2007, United Nations Department of Public Information, viewed 24 February 2017.

⁷ ABS, 2004, p. 8, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

⁸ National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, Commonwealth of Australia, 42.

⁹ 'Grad Stats', 2015, Graduate Careers Australia, viewed 24 February 2017.

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- A fully funded NDIS would be a significant step towards improved employment outcomes for people with disability. The NDIS will lead to between 25,000 and 40,000 new jobs for persons with significant disability,¹⁰ adding between \$18bn and \$23bn to the national GDP¹¹ and increasing tax revenue from additional employment of persons with disability and carers by \$230m-\$370m per annum.¹²
 - People with disability aged 15-24 years are 10 times more likely to experience discrimination than those aged 65 years and over.¹³

Spinal Life Australia will:

- Work to increase the employment participation rates of people with newly acquired spinal cord damage through return to work programs.
- Work to raise awareness of need for employment assistance programs for people with disability.
- Advocate and influence Local and State Government agencies to include targets for employment of people with disabilities in their strategic workforce plans.
- Implement a positive organisational culture to foster increased number of people with disability within the Spinal Life Australia workforce.

¹⁰ Dr Brendan Long, An Estimate of the Economic Effects of the Implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Charles Sturt University (2015), 5.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [Benefits to business: The evidence for investing in health and wellbeing](#) 2011, ComCare, viewed 15 March 2017.