BCA

Business Council of Australia

# BCA report on improving employment outcomes for people with disability

## Galvanising for action

July 2023

AUSTRALIAN NETWORK ON DISABILITY

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# 1. Economic inclusion of people with disability

With a range of skills and experiences, people with disability represent one of Australia's greatest underrepresented talent pools. However, Australia has one of the lowest employment rates for people with disability in the OECD sitting at 21 out of 29 countries.

Australia's economy faces significant long-term challenges, including from an ageing population, slow productivity growth and an accompanying loss of economic vitality.

Employment is key to unlocking economic security, independence and wellbeing. It is also fundamental to national prosperity.

As our nation continues to chart the path out of COVID-19 and lay the foundations for a more modern and dynamic economy, the Business Council of Australia's ambition is to lift productivity and economic inclusion.

Corporate Australia wants to build an economy at the frontier of innovation and at the frontier of investing in people. It is critical that we support participation in the economy by all Australians in a way that enables everyone to achieve their full potential. That is what is required to be a frontier nation.

Deloitte Access Economic modelling commissioned for the Australian Network on Disability (AND) showed that if the gap between participation and unemployment rates for people with disability could be reduced by one third, the cumulative impact on GDP would be $43 billion.[1]

The economic case is clear. The productivity uplift is significant.

The BCA and its members are focussed on how we can ensure that all Australians are reaching their full potential and sharing in the opportunities and prosperity of our nation.

A new approach is needed to break down the barriers for people with disability, to increase their role and advancement in the workplace.

Below is an outline of key activities pursued by the BCA to further galvanise action in employment outcomes for people with disability.

An employer roundtable was held in June 2022 attended by the Minister of Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, Australian of the Year Dylan Alcott AO, the Department of Social Services, AND and Get Skilled Access.

The aim of the roundtable was to further promote activity in the area of employment; to hear the challenges and opportunities from an employer and employee perspective and to provide a range of resources to BCA members.

Subsequent to the Roundtable, the BCA prepared a policy paper "Expanding Job Opportunities for all Australians including the most disadvantaged" for the Jobs and Skills Summit 2022.

Our advocacy work resulted in the development of a pilot program on disability employment focussing on career progression and advancement for people with disability.

The pilot was announced by Minister Rishworth as part of the Jobs Summit. The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the BCA includes funding of $3.3 million for the pilot disability employment program which will go to non-government agencies supporting the pilot.

[1] Deloitte Access Economics The Economic benefit of increasing employment for people with disability, commissioned by the Australian Network on Disability, 2011.

In late 2022, the BCA in partnership with AND, released a scoping survey to its members to generate information on existing strategies and activities by members covering recruitment, retention and advancement of people with disability.

The scoping survey has provided valuable insight into:

- foundational practices members are taking, including by way of commitments and accountability
- emerging trends, including practices to support workplace culture and inclusion, and
- imperatives for success where the focus has shifted from attraction and recruitment to a focus on engagement and development.

This report presents the key findings across these domains and best practice case studies to assist members to drive further gains in employment outcomes.

# 2. What are we trying to solve?

- There are 4.4 million or 1 in 6 people with disability in Australia.
- There is a significant difference in labour force participation rates of people with disability and those without disability (53.4 per cent and 84.1 per cent respectively).[2]
- The unemployment rate for people with disability is more than double that for people without disability (10 per cent compared to 3.7 per cent).[3]
- These figures have remained largely unchanged for the last 20 years. More than 113,000 people with disability are currently unemployed and looking to work.[4]
- According to a recent report by JobAccess, Australia's disability employment gap sits at around 30 per cent.[5]
- Additionally, wage income for people with disability in employment is around 10 per cent lower than for those without disability.[6]
- The estimated economic benefit of employing people with disability would add over $50 billion to Australia's GDP by 2050, if Australia moved into the top eight OECD countries for employing people with disability.[7]

[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020, People with disability in Australia, Cat. No DIS 77, Canberra, p. 20.
[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Jan 2023.
[4] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020, People with disability in Australia, Cat. No DIS 77, Canberra, p. 20.
[5] "The compelling case for disability employment in Australia – the unrivalled benefits of an underutilised labour market, Jobs Access, 2023.
[6] South Australian Centre for Economic Studies, Disability Employment Landscape Report, prepared for the Department of Social Services, June 2021.
[7] The compelling case for disability employment in Australia – the unrivalled benefits of an underutilised labour market, Jobs Access, 2023.

# 3. Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Royal Commission) is due to release a final report in September 2023.

As part of its deliberations, the Royal Commission has considered the pathways and barriers to employment for people with disability.

The Royal Commission identified four key areas of systemic barriers:

- attitudinal
- physical/environmental
- organisational, and
- structural.

The Royal Commission has been critical of employer practices in relation to disability employment.

Public hearing 9 examined pathways and barriers to open employment for people with disability.

The Royal Commission identified 26 barriers to open employment for people with disability. Of particular relevance are the following:

- Assumptions that people with disability do not want to work or are not capable of working.
- Discriminatory attitudes and behaviours during recruitment and in the workplace.
- Employers incorrectly assuming hiring people with disability will be costly, burdensome, less productive and risky which may result in overlooking a person's unique skills.
- Inaccessible workplaces.
- Difficulty in accessing skills training and education, and lack of support to engage with and complete qualifications.
- Employers lacking knowledge, skills, leadership and resources to support people with disability.
- Employers refusing to provide flexible work arrangements or reasonable adjustments/accommodations, including during recruitment.
- Lack of career progression, accessible learning and development opportunities, or access to challenging and meaningful work.

The Royal Commission's final report will include findings and recommendations on how these barriers can be addressed and eliminated.

It is likely that this will include a closer examination of the benefit of government regulation and further measures to eliminate these barriers such as employment targets.

# 4. Nurturing our people and skills

Accenture research found that companies that improved their disability employment levels were four times more likely to have total shareholder returns that outperform their peers.[8]

People with disability can be a strong asset to any business. Research shows employees with disability may be just as, if not more, productive than people without disability.[9]

They also demonstrate reduced rates of absenteeism and are less likely to be represented in workplace health and safety accidents. Yet, the capability and confidence of employers to hire people with disability remains low due to a number of barriers and challenges.

Supporting and employing people with disability can deliver great business benefits. The benefits are not only financial and include:

- increased revenue
- improved productivity levels
- increased innovation
- improved workplace cohesion and respect for difference
- a business more reflective of community, and
- access to a broader pool of talent

Research has found inclusive workplaces are:

- 10 times more likely to be highly effective
- 9 times more likely to innovate
- 10 times more likely to give excellent customer service.[10]

[8] Accenture, Getting to Equal 2020 Disability Inclusion
[9] Kantar Public, February 2017, Building Employer Demand, Literature review, Market and Social Research ISO 20252
[10] Diversity Council of Australia – Suncorp Inclusion@Work Index 2017-18.

# 5. Key takeaways from our 2023 survey

BCA members have a leading role to play in creating opportunities to support the employment of people with disability. As leading businesses, our members are leaning into progressive inclusive work practices that position their workforce for sustainable growth.

In this report, the BCA explores some of the good practice measures our members have adopted. We also reference primary level measures (foundational practices) around attraction, job design and workplace adjustments. The report also points to the fact that leading measures require vision, strategy, accountability and strong partnerships.

The scoping survey has provided valuable insight into the right structures to have in place in order to increase employment opportunities for people with disability. Chief among these are Disability Action Plans including those that are embedded within Diversity or Inclusion plans or strategies as well as recruitment, retention and talent identification plans. Additionally, data and reporting against the benchmarks identified in these plans is an important component of the monitoring of outcomes and reporting on success or otherwise.

It is clear from the scoping survey that members are committed to the employment of people with disability. However, there is a lag in translating this into action that enables a meaningful increase in employment outcomes. Some of the issues in this regard relate to structural barriers in the disability employment service system and have been identified in a range of reports to government in the past. The BCA notes the latest inquiry into this issue through the House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services. The BCA is advocating for change towards a better model of demand led employment, the need for which is explained in the broader policy considerations section of this report.

Equally, shifting the dial in employment outcomes will require a concerted effort to drive change in recruitment and job design and move from entry level jobs to advanced and executive roles as well as working with leadership teams to build the business case.

A clear message from the scoping survey is that members require information on good practice and are seeking opportunities for further engagement with their peers as well as assistance with building a business case and resources. These factors are seen as critical elements to overcoming barriers to employment.

## 5.1 What works well?

- Diversity and inclusion plan or strategy (97%)
- Desire to attract appropriately skilled candidates with disability to their vacancies (92%)
- Reviewed current recruitment processes to remove barriers to employment for people with disability (82%) and a further 4 per cent are planning to do so
- Implementing initiatives to increase the employment and retention of people with disability (65%)
- Provide disability confidence training to their HR/recruitment team (41%) and an additional 37% plan to do so in the next 12 months (37%)

## 5.2 What are the barriers to implementing employment initiatives?

- Limited resources (65%)
- Managers not feeling confident in managing people with disability (60%)
- Knowing what to do/where to start (30%)
- Resources being dedicated to another diversity cohort (25%)
- Lack of expertise (20%)

## 5.3 Methodology

In 2015, the BCA and AND partnered on the inaugural "Recognising Ability: Business and the Employment of People with Disability" Report.

In 2022, the two groups engaged again with its members requesting that they complete a questionnaire. For purposes of consistency, the questionnaire used in 2022 replicated questions from 2015 allowing for a comparative review of baseline data and insights about disability employment practices and experiences. Furthermore, given the evolution of thought and progression of disability employment insights, new questions were also added.

The survey was distributed to 140 members via a Member Note to the BCA members with a link to Survey Monkey. The questionnaire was also tested by Australia Post and Get Skilled Access. Insights were captured from September to November 2022. A limitation in the survey is the low response rate however that is consistent with the result of the 2015 survey which also attracted 37 responses.

# 6. Practices that propel disability inclusion forward

In this section, we examine the key foundational planks our members have put in place to create a workplace that is safe and inclusive of people with disability.

We also provide an overview of the tools and practices our members use with the aim of leading to a shared community of practice.

Based on the survey results we have grouped this into three categories:

- **Foundation practices:** showing the intent of the business to commit to the employment of people with disability and support that objective with action. This includes practices that support commitment and accountability for Diversity and Inclusion Plans that include people with disability or a stand-alone Disability Action Plan. Foundation Practice also includes recruitment processes that support the entry of people with disability and provide pre-employment support.
- **Emerging trends:** highlighting practices designed to push disability inclusion forward. Key factors in this section show the work our members are undertaking to embed employment practices to support people with disability and where those employment outcomes are visible. The focus here is on what practices are being embedded into the business and the impact that has on business culture.
- **Imperatives for success:** these practices are indicators of highest commitment to employment and inclusion of people with disability. The focus here is on career advancement and progression, achieving strong employment outcomes and implementing a range of leading practices.

Underpinning all of this are the partnerships with key agencies in the disability sector and practices that support people with disability to propose changes to strategies and policies in order to improve workplace culture and employment outcomes.

**What Works:**

- Partnerships with specialist organisations
- Targeted recruitment strategies
- Information on good practice
- Opportunities to collaborate with business/industry partners
- Disability confidence training
- Disability Employee Networks that supports whole of business buy-in

## 6.1 Foundation practices

In this section, we explore the foundation practices members have adopted that show the intent of the business to commit to the employment of people with disability and support that objective with action. This includes practices that support commitment and accountability for Diversity and Inclusion Plans that include people with disability or a stand-alone Disability Action Plan. Foundation Practice also includes recruitment processes that support the entry of people with disability and provide pre-employment support.

The 2023 survey indicates that disability inclusion is a key priority for BCA members.

The ambition of members is indicated by the significant numbers (97 per cent) indicting they have adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Plan or Disability Action Plan (41 per cent) to increase employment outcomes for people with disability.

A genuine commitment to the employment of people with disability requires the adoption of a Diversity and Inclusion Plan. The key to driving the long-term employment and retention of people with disability is embedded in corporate culture. It is fundamental to people's wellbeing, sense of belonging and psychological safety.

**Case Study: Foundational practices**

### Australia Post – Improving access and inclusion for team members with disability

To make it easier for their team members with disability to advance in their careers and be empowered at work, Australia Post has launched two inclusive workplace initiatives.

In June 2022, the company introduced workplace adjustment guidelines and digital passports. The aim was to make it easier for team members with disability to request a workplace adjustment, and to also be able to document the arrangement in their own words through a digital passport.

For Australia Post and other leading employers, the ability to manage workplace adjustments in a dignified and respectful way is crucial to attracting and retaining talented workers. Adjustments enable people with disability to fully participate and be set up for success at work.

The other innovation, digital passports, is a way for team members with disability to record and share their details and adjustment requirements in their own words. This is a common-sense way of empowering workers by removing the need for them to explain their circumstances every time they change roles or managers within the organisation.

## 6.2 Emerging trends

**Emerging trends: this section highlights practices designed to push disability inclusion forward.**

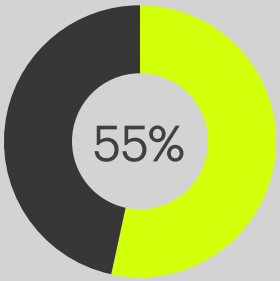
92% of respondents want to attract candidates with disability

BCA members are seeking opportunities to drive improvements in employment outcomes for people with disability.

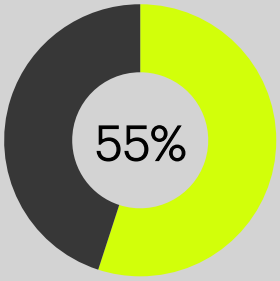
Key factors in this section show the work our members are undertaking to embed employment practices to support people with disability and where those employment outcomes are visible.

The focus here is on what practices are being embedded into the business and the impact that has on business culture.

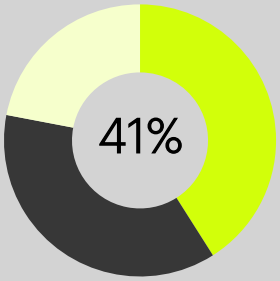
### Employment practices



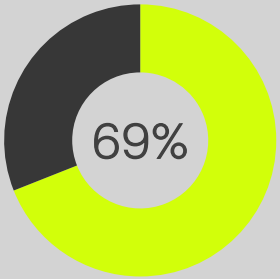

**55%** have a Senior Leadership Steering Committee that meet regularly to report on disability inclusion progress in their business




**55%** regularly benchmark their disability confidence to measure their strengths and opportunities for




**41%** have provided disability confidence training to their HR/ recruitment team, with a further **37%** planning to in the next 12 months




**69%** have a senior disability champion responsible for progressing disability inclusion, disability employment and keeping disability on the strategy agenda

## Emerging trends

**Recruitment**

- 75 % of respondents ask employees about their disability status.
- 63% receive applications from candidates with disability.
- 86% of respondents offer an inclusive and accessible graduate recruitment process.
- 39 % have reviewed their disability recruitment process externally and a further 17 per cent will be making further enhancements as a result. A further 32% have reviewed their processes internally or are about to.
- 37% will be providing disability confidence training to their HR recruitment team in the next 12 months.

**Creating accessible workplaces**

- 78 per cent stated their company had a dedicated diversity role dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion but 65% still reported that limited resources was the number one barrier that prevented implementing employment initiatives.
- 65 per cent of respondents said their company has implemented initiatives to increase the employment of people with disability. Chief among these were:
  - Building inclusive culture
  - Flexible work arrangements
  - Develop a disability employee network
  - Implemented a workplace adjustment process, and
  - Tailored recruitment.

**Disability employment**

- Access to appropriately qualified candidates (68%), labour shortages (47%) and expectations of staff (37%) were the main factors influencing organisations' willingness/ability to develop employment initiatives, focussed on people with disability in the future.
- 27% of respondents reported an increase in the number of people employed with disability in the last 12 months.
- Only 6% report having employees with disability at the executive/senior management level.

## Case Studies: Emerging trends

### Australia Post – Widening the talent pool, creating inclusive workplaces and measuring success

Australia Post takes part in AND's Access and Inclusion Index and Disability Confident Recruiter Program (DCR). These tools enables the company to regularly measure its progress on inclusive workplace practices for people with disability.

The Access and Inclusion Index is the nation's leading benchmarking tool which provides a framework for organisations to review policies, procedures and practices that assist in identifying areas for further improvement across 10 key areas of business.

Australia Post has steadily improved year-on-year since they began participating in 2017. Australia Post has been ranked as the top performer of AND's 2023 Disability Confidence Awards.

Determined to remove barriers in their recruitment process and make the process more accessible and inclusive for people with disability, Australia Post partnered with AND to achieve (DCR) status.

In fact, Australia Post is the largest organisation to achieve the status, which has seen them drive disability inclusion across their business and widen their talent pool of future employees.

Achieving the status involves completing two phases: discovery and education. During the first phase, AND guides companies in reviewing their end-to-end recruitment process. The second phase involves supporting employees to build knowledge and awareness of inclusive recruitment through online training.

To build disability confidence in leaders and peers across their team, Australia Post regularly provides a bespoke disability awareness training package.

Almost 2,000 team members completed the 'Let's talk disability' and 'You CAN ask that' training during 2021 and 2022.

To build on the activities of Australia Post's Accessibility Matters employee reference group, the company introduced an annual CEO Disability Listen'n Learn session in 2021.

The session provides a forum for five team members with disability to meet with the CEO and executive general managers to discuss a range of topics, including career development and progression, workplace adjustments and the role that leaders can play to demonstrate their commitment to access and inclusion of people with disability in the workplace.

The training enables employees to think differently about disability and reduces stigmas and stereotypes in a bid to make the workplace a more inclusive place for everyone. It also helps employers acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence to recruit and retain people with disability.

### Kmart – Building an inclusive recruitment process

To build an inclusive recruitment process and attract employees with a disability, Kmart introduced a centralised recruitment system in 2021.

This focuses on inclusive language, accessibility and offering candidates the option to request workplace adjustments rather than focusing on sharing disability information.

Since transitioning to the new system, Kmart has seen a significant increase in the number of candidates voluntarily sharing workplace adjustment information during the recruitment process and voluntarily self-identifying during onboarding.

The company believes the increase is linked to their visible commitment to employing people with a disability. This includes employee value proposition, job advertisement inclusion statements and raising the visibility of disability inclusive projects such as dolls, and quiet spaces.

To build an inclusive environment for people with disability, Kmart has taken a multi-layered approach to disability confidence training. This includes online training, facilitated training, and immersion and engagement activities. The yearly engagement activities include executive listening sessions, podcasts and communications, and opportunities for team members with lived experience to voluntarily share their stories.

The company launched a disability confidence training module for all team members in 2022, led by the Disability Discrimination Commissioner and with the support of the Include Ability Network.

In the same year, Kmart also partnered with Get Skilled Access to run facilitated training across leadership roles and support functions. The sessions have focused on both employment of people with disability and customer accessibility.

This continued focus on disability confidence enables managers to better understand the needs and abilities of employees with disability, to support their recruitment, retention and overall job satisfaction.

## 6.3 Imperatives for success

Business is dialling up flexibility, hybrid working, location agnostic and more fluid work practices. Much of this has been made possible in the post COVID environment. As evidenced throughout this report, leading organisations have developed integrated diversity and inclusion strategies with a focus on the attraction, retention and career development at all levels within their business.

Underpinning all of this is an inclusive workplace culture and the employee value proposition.

In the hunt for talent, business is increasingly turning towards these levers of change.

In this section, we examine the Imperatives for success which are the good practice measures leading businesses are taking to shift the dial in employment outcomes. Embracing these strategies and policies brings with it greater productivity and performance, improved job satisfaction and opportunity to tap into a deeper talent pool.[11]

Figure 1 demonstrates that focus on building an inclusive culture, flexible work arrangements and developing a Disability Employee Network are the main initiatives organisations have implemented that seek to increase the employment/retention of people with disability.

**Figure 1: Initiatives organisations have implemented to increase the employment and retention of people with disability**

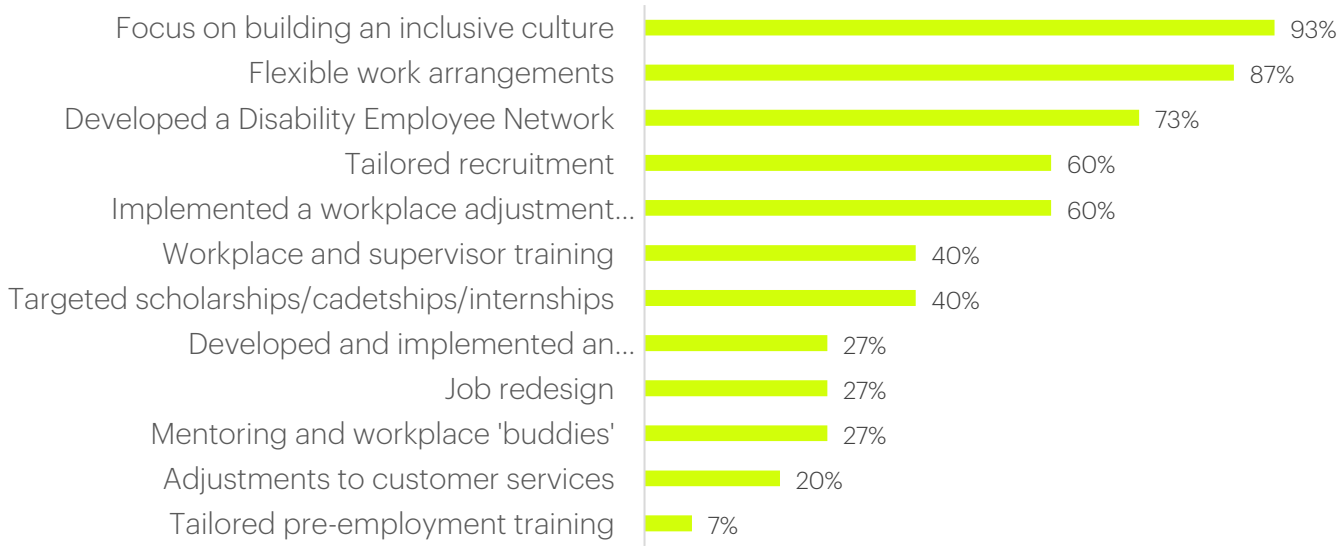



Figure 2 shows the desire to reflect the community in which they operate in, overall diversity strategy and corporate values are the main reasons for businesses to implement disability employment/retention strategies.

[11] Accenture Report Enabling Change Getting to Equal 2020 found among the companies in their study, the organizations most focused on disability engagement are growing sales 2.9x faster and profits 4.1x faster than their peers.

**Figure 2: Main drivers for implementing disability employment/retention strategies**

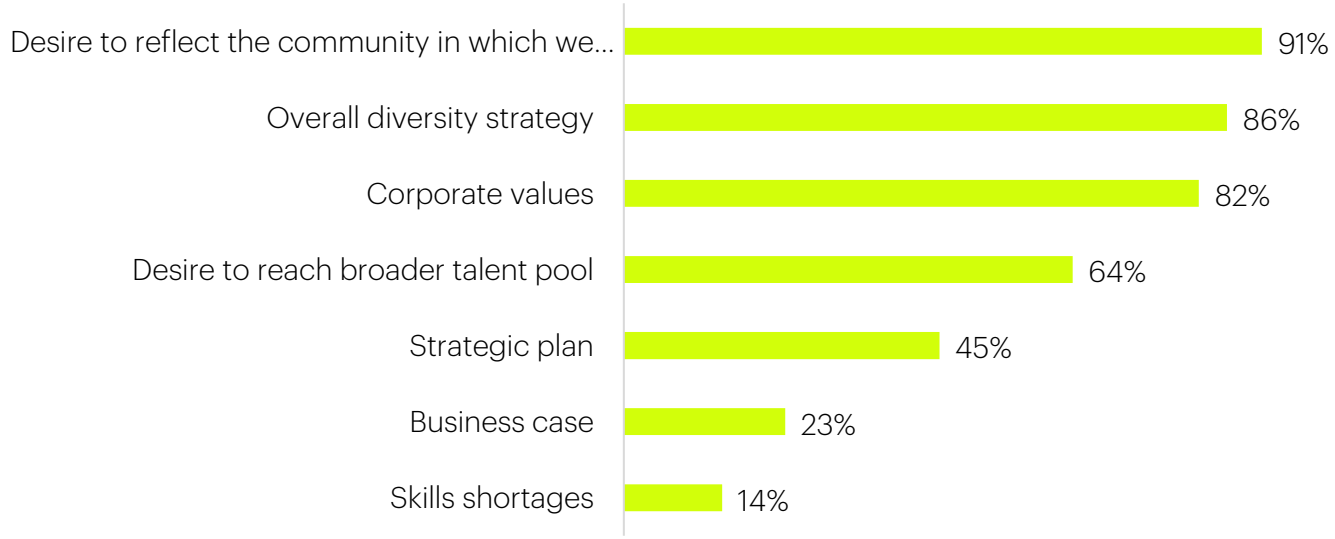
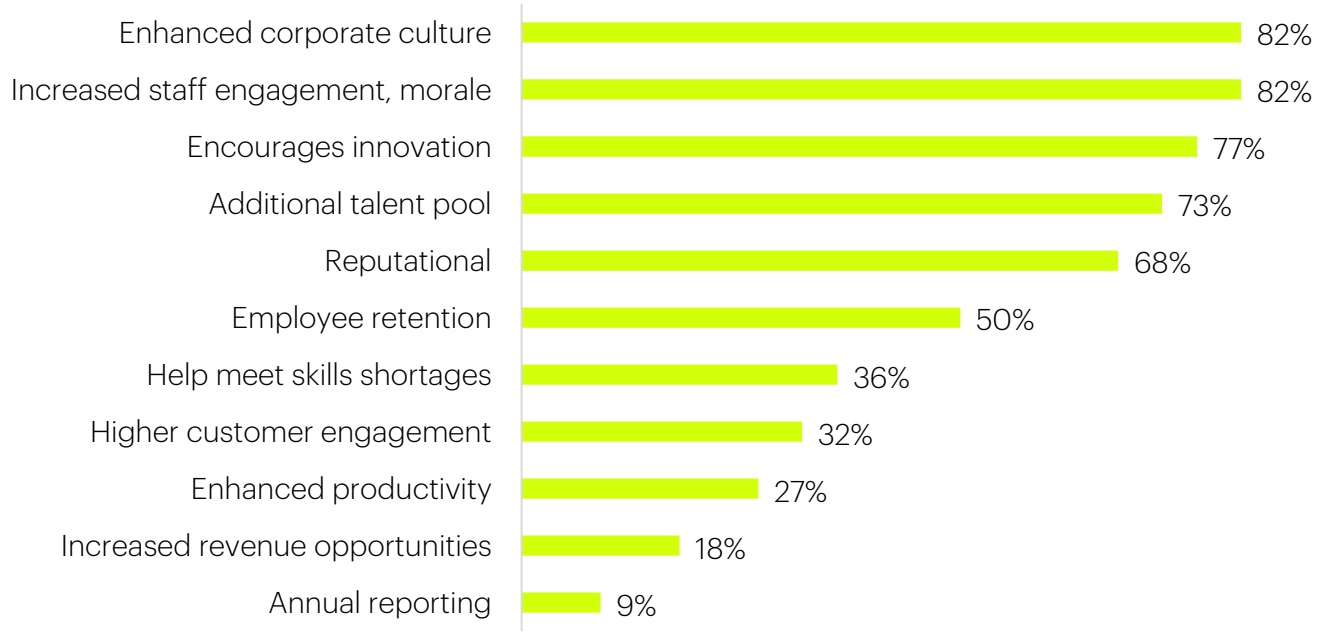



Figure 3 shows that increased staff engagement and morale, along with an enhanced corporate culture and encouraging innovation, are the main benefits of having a focus on employing people with disability.

**Figure 3: What are the benefits of having a focus on employees with disability?**



**Case Studies: Imperatives for success**

### Bendigo and Adelaide Bank – delivering mentoring and peer support

Since 2020, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank has been participating in AND's mentoring program that connects job seekers with disability and mentors from the Bank. Positive Action towards Career Engagement (PACE) is a mutually beneficial program where mentors can develop their leadership skills and disability confidence, while jobseekers gain vital workplace exposure, develop their skills and expand their networks.

Over three years, more than 50 Bendigo and Adelaide Bank staff, including senior leaders, have made the four-month commitment to meet with their mentees and together, set goals and desired outcomes, discuss experiences, skills and career pathways.

Mentors have really valued participation in the program sharing the way it assisted them to build disability awareness and confidence, removed some of their own barriers and perceptions of disability and build on their inclusive leadership shadow.

All mentees reported an improvement in their employability skills, including their confidence in their skills and abilities, confidence with job interviews, networking and communication, and confidence in building their resume and applying for jobs.

To further grow its foundational practices, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank has implemented BENability – an employee network where members from across the Bank who have lived with a disability, and carers and allies with a passion for building an inclusive and accessible workplace, connect and provide feedback on practices, processes and projects through an accessibility lens.

### Boston Consulting Group – Mentoring@BCG

To support the recruitment, retention and overall job satisfaction of employees with disability, Boston Consulting Group has a mentoring program which pairs staff with mentors who can provide guidance on navigating lived experiences at work, career guidance, and or general mentorship.

Mentors and mentees are paired based on personal preferences and are provided resources to make the most of their mutually beneficial relationship.

To create an inclusive workplace environment and build an understanding of various lived experiences, Boston Consulting Group hosts short, all-staff panel discussions.

These events provide employees with practical tips to collaborate and focus on more inclusive leadership. Topics include the do's and don'ts in navigating a conversation around disclosing a disability as well as focusing on areas such as ADHD and chronic illnesses.

Boston Consulting Group is committed to building awareness and fostering a supportive network of peers and leaders that enables every 'BCGer' to contribute to their full potential at work.

To achieve this, they have created the AcessAbility@BCG Disability Employee Network that is dedicated to promoting the inclusion and representation of individuals with disabilities, chronic illness, and caring responsibilities.

This network creates spaces to amplify the voices of those with lived experiences and promotes education, awareness, and bias reduction throughout the firm.

### Telstra – Employee representative group

Telstra has created the TelstrAbility group of passionate employees to support a culture and workplace where accessibility and disability is normalised and everyone feels like they belong.

The group share their experiences to advocate for greater accessibility across the business. They support recruitment programs for employees and graduates with disabilities, helped to promote accessibility awareness campaigns, advised staff on web content accessibility guidelines, establish user testing with people with disability, and run immersive experience labs with colleagues.

Each year on International Day for People with Disabilities, members share their stories to spread awareness of some of the challenges and biases they face each day.

Over the past two years, the size of the group has nearly tripled to 130 members, as more employees have experienced the benefits of openly discussing their disabilities with managers and colleagues.

The cultural change has been supported from the top, with Group Executive Michael Ackland stepping up as sponsor of the group.  Several other executives loudly championing the need for greater accessibility across both the company's workforce and operations.

# 7. Broader policy considerations

Broadly speaking our members do not have deep engagement or relationships with disability employment service providers. When employment service providers don't understand the working requirements of the employer, it stands to reason, the placement of a job seeker will not be effective or successful.

This lack of engagement with disability employment service providers is evidenced in our survey

- Nine per cent of respondents indicated they had engaged with a Disability Employment Service provider regarding disability employment.
- Twenty four percent of respondents accessed government funding to support the employment of people with disability.
- None reported working with a Job Services Australia provider.

We believe that demand-led employment approaches offer the best avenues for successful employment. This is because it is based on the needs of a business and the demand it has for labour. It is therefore sustainable and delivers long-term employment opportunities as it is based on real jobs.

This contrasts with many of the programs which work in reverse, where a job applicant is offered to an employer whether the need is there or not. The recent reviews of disability employment services, by way of example, found that the current approaches to commissioning and funding these services do not facilitate best practice collaboration, nor do they necessarily result in sustainable employment.[12] It is noted that the government has extended its review of the Disability employment service system for a further two years.

Broadly speaking our members do not have deep engagement or relationships with employment service providers. When employment service providers don't understand the working requirements of the employer, it stands to reason, the placement of a job seeker will not be effective or successful. The BCA argues that government should be working with sophisticated, established job marketplaces like LinkedIn and SEEK to ensure the best outcomes for employers and jobseekers in the digital stream.

Recent data provided by SEEK found that fewer than one per cent of people surveyed stated that they got their job through the Workforce Australia or JobActive site.

By contrast, adopting a 'place based' or industry-based approach ensures government and industry is responding to actual labour market needs and ongoing employment opportunities. That is largely because employers and market-based employment agencies such as SEEK and other invest heavily in attracting job seekers and employers.

The BCA is advocating for demand-led employment approaches because we believe they offer the best avenues for successful employment. Other key elements that could underpin success include:

- Establish early, strategic partnerships with large employers (in line with a demand-led approach) to prepare job seekers to meet foreseeable workforce needs.

[12] The Hon Amanda Rishworth media release "improving the quality of employment services for people living with a disability" 21 August 2022

- Provide greater information to employers about the work readiness of a job seeker. This could be achieved by employment services providers partnering with sophisticated job marketplaces like SEEK and LinkedIn, because that's where employers go to find candidates.
- Link with appropriate / relevant organisations who provide services to assess the accessibility of the employer's workplace for people with disability and provide employers with the support and advice needed to make the job placement succeed. This would assist employers who do not have the expertise or specific knowledge required to support a person with disability and make their job placement a success.
- Relatedly by linking with relevant NGOs there should be an increased focus on monitoring the success of people with disability once they commence work and provide targeted and timely interventions to support job seekers and address any issues that immediately arise.
- Create a dedicated service point for employers within employment services providers.

The BCA also supports the development of a Raising the Bar style program for and designed by people with disability which includes four key elements:

- accessible procurement
- targeted recruitment using specialist services such as disability employment services (DES) and The Field and other parties, and
- a supply chain of businesses owned and operated largely by people with disability.
- This will require the creation of a certifying body predominantly made up of people with disability.

**Case Study: Disability procurement**

### Case Study: Australia Post – Disability procurement

To build sustainable partnerships and economic prosperity for people with disability, Australia Post has proudly partnered with social enterprise Blend Creative – a multi-service, socially inclusive graphic design studio.

They provide real work opportunities to people with disability, while delivering commercial outcomes to national clients. Their mission is to Design by Example – not only in the work they produce being highly accessible, but by the inclusive nature of their workplace.

# 8. Call to action

A key takeout from the 2022 Disability Employment Survey is the demonstrable desire by business to build inclusive workplaces, employ people with disability and invest in the strategies to support that ambition.

Through the survey and responses by our members, we have uncovered seven key factors that will enable business to realise this ambition and also support the goal of greater advancement for people with disability while also supporting business growth.

Committing to this set of tangible actions will lead to increased, sustainable and measurable improvements in employment and career advancement outcomes for people with disability.

**Seven factors for success**

- implement workplace adjustment to recruit and retain employees with disability
- develop or review discrete and identifiable Disability Recruitment, Retention and Career Development Strategies
- establish senior leadership group to drive and monitor progress
- develop an employee reference group that meets with senior leadership quarterly
- implement disability confidence training particularly to middle management levels
- examine talent identification and career pathway to support career advancement opportunities for people with disability, and
- create regular stories about disability employment success on internal and external communication platforms.

BUSINESS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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