

National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy

Terms of Reference

The National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy will outline how policy and programs across portfolios and state, territory and Commonwealth governments can work together to help people with disability and mental illness gain and retain work.

The Strategy will guide the Commonwealth Government's design and implementation of measures concerned with the employment participation of people with disability and mental illness.

The Strategy will provide clear and practical steps that Government can take to:

- (a) overcome barriers that can make it harder for people with disability and mental illness to gain and keep work, in particular:
 - i. resistance from employers in hiring people with disability;
 - ii. difficulty accessing appropriate transport;
 - iii. the costs associated with managing a disability; and
 - iv. the unpredictable nature of some disabilities and illnesses;
 - v. achieving skills through education and training
- (b) achieve attitudinal change which will ensure that those with disability and mental illness are given the vocational and employment opportunities they deserve;
- (c) better facilitate and promote employment opportunities for people with disability and mental illness;
- (d) consider whether welfare rules could be changed to help people with disability and mental illness gain and retain employment;
- (e) provide national coordination of the efforts to tackle the many reasons why people with disability and mental illness find participation difficult.
- (f) engage and encourage employers to employ people with disability and mental illness, including:
 - i. fostering more direct linkages between employers and people with disability and or mental illness; and
 - ii. advocating social firms as a model for employment of people with disability and mental illness and exploring best practice from these firms;
- (g) engage and encourage individuals with disability and mental illness to pursue paid employment and maximise their opportunities in paid employment; and
- (h) explore innovative and creative ways to help people with disability and mental illness gain and retain work.

It is important that the Strategy be developed in the context of the wider assistance which is provided to people with disability and mental illness, in particular:

- that the community sector plays a key role in supporting people with disability and mental illness and that the sector maintains considerable expertise in assisting people with disability and mental illness
- employment services which will also form an important element of the Strategy. However, the review of employment services being undertaken by Government will inform this aspect of the strategy.

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