



A guide to Vocational Rehabilitation Services

What are Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) combine vocational rehabilitation with employment assistance to help people who have an injury, disability or health condition to work independently in the open labour market.

The focus of VRS is to assist the job seeker to understand, compensate for or manage their injury, disability or health condition, or the resulting limitations or restrictions they may face. It helps the job seeker build work capacity and/or avoid re-injury.

VRS providers assist job seekers find or retain work and work closely with employers to ensure safe and sustainable employment.

How can Vocational Rehabilitation Services help job seekers?

VRS are tailored to the individual needs of the job seeker and can include, but are not limited to, the following service elements:

- assessment of the impact a job seeker's injury, disability or health condition is having on their ability to gain sustainable employment
- development and implementation of strategies to manage their injury, disability or health condition, in order to achieve a safe return to work
- vocational counselling and planning to identify a safe, suitable and sustainable job goal
- counselling regarding disability issues
- training and work trials
- job seeking and job placement assistance
- assistance with workplace assessments and modifications.

VRS provides short-term support in the workplace.

What can Vocational Rehabilitation Services do for employers?

Vocational Rehabilitation Services provide free help to employers to achieve successful job placements of people with an injury, disability or health condition, or where an existing employee is experiencing difficulty in the workplace.

Services for employers include:

- help to match job seeker skills to job requirements
- unique 'work training' opportunities offering first hand experience
- help to access other incentives and support such as workplace modifications or job design
- wage subsidies, and
- extra support for existing employees who may be experiencing difficulties as a result of their injury, disability or health condition.



How to access Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Eligible job seekers, aged between 14 and <65 years, with an injury, disability or health condition may access VRS

- through a referral from Centrelink, or
- by contacting a local VRS provider directly.

All job seekers accessing VRS will need to have their work capacity assessed by a Job Capacity Assessor (JCA).

What is a Job Capacity Assessment?

If you have an injury, disability or health condition that is affecting your ability to find and/or keep a job, you will be referred by Centrelink or your employment service provider for a Job Capacity Assessment.

JCAs will undertake comprehensive assessments to identify the most appropriate employment or related service you need in order to find a job. It will ensure your ability to work is determined quickly.

In most cases a Job Capacity Assessment will be done face to face. Once your work capacity has been assessed, the Assessor will refer you to the employment service that best suits your needs. VRS is one of a number of employment and related services the JCA can refer to. Others include the Job Network, Disability Employment Network (DEN) and the Personal Support Programme (PSP).

Changes to Vocational Rehabilitation Services from 1 July 2006

As part of the income support reforms, job seekers who have a capacity to work part-time may be required to look for work suitable to their capacity as a condition of receiving income support. This will affect new applicants for income support and, where applicable, people who claimed income support assistance after May 2005.

The Australian Government is providing extra funding for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) as part of the reforms to the income support system. This investment will guarantee VRS for all eligible people with partial work capacity and new part-time activity tested requirements, when and where they need it.

Services will continue to be available for people on a Disability Support Pension and others who do not have participation requirements.

For more information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other employment and related services, visit jobaccess.gov.au or phone a JobAccess Adviser on 1800 464 800.