

A Message from the Chairperson

As the provider of the National Disability Recruitment Coordination Services, DWA is charged with entering into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with larger private sector employers defined as organisations that:

- have 100 or more employees; and/or
- have outlets in three or more Australian States and Territories.

DWA now has formal agreements in place with 57 employers across Australia. Each of these employers meets the pre-requisites and has committed to developing strategies in conjunction with DWA to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities within their organisations. I thank them for their vision and ask that they continue to promote the attributes of people with disabilities to other Corporates that may not have considered the option.

Clearly the commitment from these employers is strong and this was evident in the number that readily accepted invitations from DWA to attend the recent Consultation sessions hosted by Minister for Employment Participation, The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, The Hon Bill Shorten MP. The sessions to assist with the development of a National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy were held in all major centres around Australia and I thank our employers for making the time available to attend and in some cases for following through with submissions to the Minister.

DWA is proud of the results we have achieved in the first 4 years of operation. With the support of the Commonwealth Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the dedicated Disability Employment Network, DWA has now assisted 3423 people into employment. We hold the view that so much more can be achieved if resources are made available to train employers and offer them the support and assistance necessary to develop strategies to increase the number of people with a disability in the Australian Workforce and we will be putting our ideas to the Minister.

The Consultation process offers employers and the Disability employment sector generally a rare opportunity to contribute toward improving access to employment for people with disabilities. I commend the submission process to you and

encourage all organisations with a stake in the outcome to read the discussion paper and put their thoughts forward for consideration prior to the closing date of 30 June.

Andrew Rogers
Chairperson



Alex Riach Food and Beverage Manager IKEA Adelaide and Grant Mitchell

Ikea creates a new career for Grant

IKEA Adelaide partners with Disability Works Australia (DWA)

Grant Mitchell has embarked on a new career with IKEA following a successful partnership being formed between the Adelaide store and Disability Works Australia (DWA).

Employing more than 350 employees, IKEA Adelaide recognises the importance of a diverse workforce and the contribution individuals make to the successful operation of the store.

Building upon the success of its recruitment and retention programs in South Australia, IKEA is now piloting an innovative partnership with Disability Works Australia (DWA) to recruit more people with a disability.

Discussions between IKEA's Human Resources Manager, Sarah Marling and DWA staff began in late 2007 and initially centred on how IKEA recruits its employees and the best way to complement their current internal processes by tailoring a program for people with a disability.

It was decided to start by exploring opportunities within IKEA's Food and Beverage Department, which oversees the running of the store's 360 seat restaurant.

IKEA Adelaide's Food and Beverage Manager Alex Riach embraced the program and DWA began discussing career opportunities at the Adelaide store.

DWA staff were engaged with finding suitable candidates for positions within the Food and Beverage Department and highlighting any additional support or possible modifications to the work environment that may be required. A shortlist was then developed and interviews arranged.

On advice from DWA, the recruitment process was modified. Rather than ask candidates to apply through the mainstream IKEA recruitment system, DWA referred clients with a disability directly to Food and

Beverage Manager Alex Riach. A suitable candidate was identified and offered a two week work experience placement in the Food and Beverage Department.

The successful candidate, Grant Mitchell, has a mild intellectual disability and is supported by Personnel Employment (PE), a local Disability Employment Network Provider. The Disability Employment Network Provider forms an important part of the employment process by supporting Grant in training for a position and in the transition period while he is learning and performing in the role.

Grant started with IKEA Adelaide on two weeks work experience. Throughout this period he was supported on the job to make sure he understood his responsibilities as he performed various roles within the food and beverage department.

"The IKEA Adelaide Food and Beverage Department is privileged to be involved with DWA and has experienced a true win win outcome for both our operation and our new co-workers"

Alex Riach

Manager Food and Beverage IKEA Adelaide

Work experience is undertaken for a variety of reasons resulting in benefits for both parties including:

- Allowing employers, managers and staff to conceptualise the link of employing a person with a disability;
- Allowing managers and staff to build rapport with the candidate;
- Both parties can look at the "job fit" and make any appropriate alterations.

After two weeks work experience, Grant was offered a position within the Food and Beverage department.

IKEA Adelaide has continued its recruitment program involving people with a disability and has since employed four more employees with disability through DWA.

More about the Supported Wage System

Employers are becoming increasingly aware that there is an excellent source of potential employees who are highly reliable and productive – people with disability. People with disability are keen to work and they offer many advantages to employers. The Australian Government has a range of incentives and services through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to make it easier for employers to recruit and retain employees with disability. One of these incentives is the Supported Wage System (SWS).

The Supported Wage System (SWS) was introduced in 1994 to improve the employment opportunities for people with a disability by providing an industrial system that enables the legal payment of a productivity based, or pro rata wage.

SWS are available to people who are unable to work at full wage rates due to the effect of disability on their workplace productivity. It enables people with a disability to access a reliable process of productivity-based wage assessments to determine fair pay for fair work. Eligible employees undergo an independent productivity assessment to measure their productivity in comparison to other workers undertaking a similar job and then they may be paid a pro-rata amount of the applicable award.

The employee is eligible to participate in the SWS if:

- 1) The job under consideration is covered by an industrial instrument or legislative provision which permits employment for pro rata wages under the SWS.
- 2) The person is an Australian citizen or resident of Australia.
- 3) The person is at least 15 years of age.
- 4) The person has no outstanding workers compensation claims against the current employer.
- 5) The person meets the impairment criteria for receipt of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) as determined by Centrelink.

The employee is paid a trial or training wage, for the first 13 weeks of employment, after which an appropriate pro rata wage rate is established, based on an independent assessment of the employee's productivity. This assessment is reviewed annually or at the request of either the employee or the employer. SWS assisted some 5609 people across Australia in 2006-07.

For more information on SWS contact the Supported Wage Management Unit in your state on freecall 1800 065 123 or visit www.jobaccess.gov.au.



How can you create a SWS position?

Many employers will comment to Disability Works Australia (DWA) "we cannot provide positions for people with disability that cannot produce at 100%". I ask employers to think out side the square when recruiting and to isolate duties that could create a position for a person with a disability on SWS.

It can be achieved with benefits all around. The following case studies are two examples of employers that worked with DWA to create jobs within their organisation. By working with DWA the outcome not only assisted their business but also provided an opportunity for people with a disability to be employed under the Supported Wage Scheme. There are many successful applications of the program but I have chosen two examples in place with a large retailer and a Government Agency to demonstrate the flexibility of the program.

Supermarkets show their passion for excellence.

Case study 1.

The Coles Supermarkets have partnered with DWA, to provide employment to hundreds of people with a disability across Australia.

Human Resource Manager Coles Supermarkets South Australia, Reagan Garner in conjunction with the Regional Managers, saw there was a great opportunity to improve the operational efficiency across some of his stores in night fill. Night fill traditionally consists of filling the gaps on the shelves with reserve products, and then 'facing up' by bringing existing stock to the front of the shelf.

Reagan needed to find a team of people that would embrace face-up duties of the role. Enter, DWA who introduced Reagan to an untapped group of people who were bursting with enthusiasm, simply at the chance to have employment. Reagan worked with DWA and developed a plan to isolate the face-up duties and create a position for people with a disability who were unable to work at full award rates due to the effect of their disability.

Below, Reagan tells of the excitement when the first group of new inductees arrived in store and the ongoing benefits of applying the SWS program in the Stores.

"It was very emotional. The look on people's faces clearly demonstrated their passion and excitement. We asked the new team if they had any questions and we only received one;

'When do we get our blue shirts?'

This response was a clear sign of commitment and made us even more proud of wearing ours.

At completion of the work training program, the newly formed Productivity and Efficiency team made a noticeable impact, demonstrating its passion for excellence. Presentation standards improved in the first three weeks. Night fill productivity improved and most importantly, the night fill and face-up teams became one, working together by sharing information and knowledge and contributing to an enjoyable and safe environment.

We witnessed the team members' enthusiasm continued to grow. They had great pleasure in bringing their families and friends into the store. They showed them their duties and introduced them to the management team and other team members with great pride. They also highlighted the importance of their role in relation to our business needs and delighting our customers." "The thing I couldn't believe the most was the response from customers and external visitors. They were amazed that Coles cares enough to make a difference to the lives of so many Australians with a disability

The program has had numerous benefits for our team members and the business. The morale and culture of our store teams has improved. Operational standards have improved, resulting in more satisfied customers and no recorded lost time injuries for 290 days.

This is another practical example of how we can use our values and behaviours to make a real difference to our business, our team members and our community" said Reagan.

The face-up team program now employs 107 team members with a disability in Coles South Australia. Currently, Coles Supermarkets employs 992 team members with a disability across all brands and states through DWA.



Andrew McGregor – SARDI and Paul Ingram – Manager of Greenhouses at the Plant Research Centre SARDI

SWS within SARDI

Case study 2.

The second example with the Government Agency provides another good case study of how the program can be applied to overcome an internal staffing issue.

Paul Ingram is a manager of the Greenhouses at the Plant Research Centre within the Waite Campus which falls under the South Australian Research and Development Institute or SARDI as it is commonly known.

Paul has had a staff retention issue with a particular position, being that of a greenhouse plant pot washer. The job entailed that the plant pots be thoroughly cleaned so that they could be reused for research purposes. Given the nature of the position, Paul found it difficult to retain staff and keep them motivated.

His daughter (who works with people with disabilities) suggested that a person with an intellectual disability would perform well in the particular role, but may be a little slower and possibly would alleviate his retention problem.

Investigations by Paul into hiring a person with a disability led to a connection to a local Disability Employment Network (DEN) provider who set up a work experience trial for two people with disabilities over a one week period. Joe who works for the DEN supported the work experience candidates whilst on the job and provided advice to the candidates to meet Paul's quality and productivity requirements.

Over that one week work experience, Paul identified Andrew as being a willing and motivated worker. Andrew has a mild learning disorder and requires only a supportive manager and extra time to perform in his role.

Paul went to his human resource team to set up the hiring of Andrew and learned about the service provided by DWA who manages the State Government Register for people with a disability. DWA effectively worked with DEN and facilitated Andrew's application for employment with SARDI.

Andrew's job included many functions of a general hand but his mild learning disorder meant Andrew's productivity level was lower than the average worker. The DEN provider advised Paul of an employer incentive called the supported wage system (SWS). Paul understood that SWS provides a legal basis for employing people with a disability who cannot work at full capacity because of their disability, using a reliable and independent process of productivity – based wage assessment to determine fair pay for fair work.

After a few weeks trial, Paul and Andrew agreed they were ready for a SWS Assessment. The assessor timed Andrew in completing his tasks and he then timed a co-worker to get a standard comparison. In Andrew's case after discussion with all parties a productivity rate of 80% was agreed however Andrew's productivity has improved over a short space of time and a follow up assessment after three months has seen his productivity and thus wage rate improve.

Paul states that Andrew is performing well in his role and has now further developed by attaining his forklift license. Paul also believes his productivity has also improved and indicated that he would not be surprised if Andrew's productivity increased further in the future to be on full award rates.

The benefits for Paul in employing Andrew are numerous. Firstly, Andrew is a happy, enthusiastic and motivated worker. Paul knows that Andrew enjoys the work and the role. In the past, Paul has found it difficult to motivate workers in this position but that's not the case with Andrew. Secondly, Andrew is fulfilled in the role and is developing himself as he interacts within the team environment. The team also is becoming more understanding of Andrew's disability and thus the culture of the team has an added dimension it previously did not have. Finally, Andrew values his new position with SARDI and both parties are benefiting from the experience.

Andrews quick development in the role has seen his responsibilities also grow. Andrew is undertaking a number of new tasks and is keen to develop these with determined enthusiasm.

Many other examples are available to demonstrate the value and flexibility of the SWS program and I encourage all employers to consider SWS as a resource to improve their business and offer employment opportunities for people with a disability, who are unable to work at full wage rates due to the effect of disability on their workplace productivity



Recruitment Made Easy

Employer or preferred supplier notifies DWA of forthcoming job opportunities.

DWA broadcasts vacancies to attract applicants with disabilities.

DWA receives applications and pre-screens applicants.

DWA provides the employer or preferred supplier with details of suitable applicants and advises about any potential supports or modifications required.

Employer or preferred supplier keeps DWA informed of changes or delays in the recruitment process.

Employer or preferred supplier decides which applicants to interview.

DWA contacts and arranges interviews with suitable applicants.

DWA notifies any applicants the employer has decided not to interview.

DWA contacts the employer or preferred supplier to discuss interview results and gain feedback to provide to the applicant.

DWA provides the employer with continued support for employees with a disability.



From Left Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Mr. Bill Shorten, Chris Baily National Australia Bank Employee, Minister for Employment Participation, Mr. Brendan O'Connor, Susan Sieber, Diversity Advisor – National Australia Bank, Dean Tulloch Recruitment Manager Sourcing, People & Organisational Development – National Australia Bank

DWA Supports Ministers Disability Employment Strategy

The Minister for Employment Participation, Mr Brendan O'Connor, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Mr Bill Shorten, have released a discussion paper for the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy.

The discussion paper seeks input from a wide range of stakeholders about how to address the barriers faced by people with a disability and/or mental illness in finding and retaining a job.

Mr O'Connor and Mr Shorten also met with a number of large employers arranged by Disability Works Australia. These included NAB, Coles, Woolworth's, Australia Post, Bendigo Adelaide Bank, IKEA, TNT, Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Hudson Recruitment, the Savings and Loans Credit Union and personnel from the Victorian Government Human Resource and Diversity units, as part of the strategy.

Mr O'Connor and Mr Shorten held a series of consultations in every capital city around Australia, as well as a number of regional centres.

"There are many people with disability or mental illness who face employment barriers on a daily basis," Mr O'Connor said.

"The Government has identified boosting employment as one of the five key measures for tackling inflation and people with a disability or mental illness have much to offer.

Yet despite 17 years of strong economic growth, Australia is ranked a disappointing 13 out of 19 OECD countries in employment rates for all people with a disability."

"We want to share their first hand knowledge with the Government so that the strategy can not only identify barriers but also address them in a practical and effective way."

Mr Shorten said the strategy has been developed in consultation with people with disability and/or mental illness, employers, employment service providers, peak bodies, State and Territory Governments and experts from the field.

"The OECD results show Australia is lagging behind the rest of the world. If we are truly to be the lucky country, people with a disability or a mental illness must have the opportunity to participate in it," Mr Shorten said.

"The strategy aims to encourage more employers to employ people with a disability or mental illness by addressing the myths about increased risks and costs, and increasing awareness of the benefits."

"As well as addressing barriers to participation in the workforce, the national strategy will also provide a comprehensive approach for Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to work together more effectively," Mr Shorten said.

Copies of the discussion paper and more information on the strategy are available at www.deewr.gov.au/employmentstrategy.

Large employers across Australia are encouraged to submit ideas and additional employer information using the link above, to assist the employment of people with a disability in the future.