

One platform for all - from assistance to incentives for employers

Australia / Department of Social Services (DSS), WorkFocus Group

By providing practical assistance to people with disabilities, employers, and service providers, Australia's JobAccess Service is a government-driven service that removes barriers and reduces bureaucratic hurdles to disability employment. To date, JobAccess has managed 245,000 enquiries and 33,000 applications for employment assistance funding, and has created 2,500 job opportunities.

IN BRIEF

Australia's JobAccess Service of 2006, renewed in 2016, helps people with disabilities, employers, employment service providers, and the community to access advice regarding resources, financial assistance, and workplace services. It engages with employers to educate them on the benefits of employing people with disabilities and on the kinds of support that are available; facilitates the removal of workplace barriers through advice and adaptation grants; and offers people with disabilities the support they need to find or retain a job.

FACTS & FIGURES

- JobAccess Service was initiated in 2006 and renewed in 2016.
- More than €50 million in employment assistance funding has been provided, and applications for less than €7,000 are now answered within four hours.
- Since 2010 the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator has engaged with 152 large employers, created 2,500 job opportunities, hosted 10 seminars for employers, and held 74 sessions for intermediaries.

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Accommodation

Not only are environmental adaptations provided, but also communication devices, sign language, and mental health supports.

Continuous consultation

The involvement of all stake- holders ensures the ongoing improvement of JobAccess, and recent consultations have led to combining four different services while realizing cost savings and efficiencies.

Access to information

The JobAccess platform creates a central gateway for support, self-help information, and multi-channel guidance, providing access to the right advice and funding at the right time.

CONTEXT

In 2005, Australia's Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission undertook a national inquiry to identify the major obstacles to the employment of people with disabilities, and among its

recommendations it urged a reduction in the bureaucratic burden that is placed on employers so as to improve their attitude towards such hiring practices. After further consultation, the JobAccess Service was launched in 2006. In 2015 a new stakeholder engagement took place, with 740 people attending 38 public forums and providing 122 written submissions. Eight workshops were conducted to develop the JobAccess website. As a result, in 2016 a renewed JobAccess started to consolidate services and other employment-related elements, such as the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service and the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator.

QUOTE

We commend the Department of Social Services for its considered engagement with civil society throughout the development of the new JobAccess. - Dwayne Cranfield, CEO, National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA), an Australian Disabled Peoples Organisation

KEY FEATURES

The Australian JobAccess Service, overseen by the Department of Social Services and administered by WorkFocus Australia, incorporates all matters related to the employment of people with disabilities. It comprises a user-friendly website that provides information on the full range of employment services available, including: information on recruitment and job search; referral points to government-funded programmes and services; an email and telephone-based information service; the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service; the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline; employment assistance funding that provides financial assistance to purchase a range of work-related modifications and services; the promotion of employment of people with disabilities; and engagement with employers to increase opportunities for people with disability through the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator. WorkFocus Australia provides the Department of Social Services with quarterly reports to review progress, which monitors its performance.

OUTCOME, IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

- Statistics for January–March 2016 reveal that 96 per cent of people are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the service that WorkFocus Australia is providing.
- A 2015 evaluation of the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator showed that 93 per cent of its partners are satisfied with it.
- Many of the JobAccess staff have completed a Certificate in Mental Health First Aid.
- JobAccess won the 2016 Australian Government Contact Centre Award for Best People Strategy.

TRANSFERABILITY, SCALABILITY AND COST-EFFICIENCY

The JobAccess team recently provided information to the United States' Job Accommodation Network, Qatar's Assistive Technology Centre, and Canada's Office of Disability Issues. JobAccess was granted the UN Public Service Award in 2008.

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POLICY

JobAccess Service 2016

Department of Social Services (DSS), WorkFocus Group, Australia

SOURCES

JobAccess Programme, website: *<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/>* ; 2016 Australian Government Awards: *<http://bit.ly/2dsFyHy>* JobAccess, EAF Guidelines, 2016: *<http://bit.ly/2eAaKBY>*; Business Council of Australia, 2015: *<http://bit.ly/1MjDhUp>*