More roadblocks removed for NDIS participants to move into work

31 January 2019

New and practical changes to help National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants with career aspirations to find work are kicking in next month, the Federal Government has announced.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher said the NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce he established in November 2018 is now delivering changes that open the way for better employment outcomes.

"The Federal Government is committed to reducing barriers to employment for Australians with a disability - and these changes are going to make a practical difference," Mr Fletcher said.

"The first change is that NDIS participants will have easier access to employment support funding in NDIS plans by being able to activate employment supports as soon as they find a job, instead of waiting for the next plan review.

"Local Area Coordinators and planners will be given fresh training and support materials so they can better discuss employment options and build the confidence of participants seeking work.

"For new NDIS participants with a job in an Australian Disability Enterprise without supported employment in their plan, we are making changes so funding for their employment supports continues.

"For those people, Case-Based Funding will continue to the ADE until their plan review is completed."

Mr Fletcher said the changes would accelerate and smooth the road to employment and give people with a disability more options.

"Having a job for NDIS participants who want one is an important outcome for them and their self-esteem and it's important for our community," Mr Fletcher said.

"It's possible because we have a strong and growing economy that allows us to fully fund the NDIS and plan for its future."

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson, said the changes will be supported by an awareness campaign about available employment supports for people with disability.

"The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will host a national webinar this month to inform NDIS participants about how they can include employment in their individual plans," Ms Henderson said.

"People on the webinar will hear from other participants about their experience of getting a job and having work as a goal in their NDIS plans.

"We want to encourage participants to think about work in an aspirational way and understand how the NDIS can help them achieve their goals."

Minister Henderson will lead consultations with the disability sector about improving employment outcomes for NDIS participants.

National Disability Services CEO Chris Tanti welcomed the announcement to remove delays and blockages impeding people with significant disability from accepting an offer to start immediately in supported employment.

"NDS has been working for a long time on this issue with Government, and the announcement today is in line with our recommendations," Mr Tanti said.

"We know how important it is for all people to work, and this has been especially difficult for many of our Disability Enterprises who have been faced with funding issues due to the delays, which ultimately impacts on people with a disability who are ready to work."

CEO of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Ross Joyce, has also welcomed the renewed focus on employment options for people with disability.

"It is positive to see employment now being such a prominent feature of NDIS plans for people with disability," Mr Joyce said. "It is important that this has been recognised and will be raised with people with disability prior to their planning meeting so they can come better prepared.

"It is also critical that NDIS planners will be well trained in employment planning as a priority. Disability Employment Services will play a key role in the success of ensuring people with disability are linked to open employment opportunities. This is a tremendous outcome."

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