

19 November 2018

Tearing down barriers to employment for Australians with a disability is the mission of a new joint taskforce, announced by the Federal Government today.

The NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce will work with NDIS participant representatives, employment service providers and related organisations. It will include representatives from the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the NDIA.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, and Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson, made the announcement at the National Disability Services CEO Forum in Melbourne.

"Despite their enthusiasm, commitment and good reputation as employees, people with disability too often find it hard to get into the workforce," Mr Fletcher said.

"About 14 per cent of working age people in Australia have a disability but people with disability comprise only nine per cent of the workforce.

"Our Government wants to give a go to more of those people so that if they have the desire and capacity to work, they have that choice."

Ms Henderson said overall employment of NDIS participants has remained consistent at 22 per cent.

"Both the COAG NDIS Quarterly Report released yesterday, and the NDS State of the Sector Report released today, show that employment for people with a disability remains stubbornly low.

"The NDIS is designed to provide reasonable and necessary supports to people with significant and permanent disability to support them to choose and achieve their goals in their communities and workplaces.

"We know that having a job brings greater economic independence, and significant social and emotional benefits."

Mr Fletcher said the Taskforce will look at how participants in the NDIS are best supported to seek employment, through the NDIS and through existing mainstream services such as Disability Employment Services.

"It will make sure employment is prioritised in the NDIS planning and plan review process. It will improve employment supports in participant plans, including greater use of existing employment services," he said.

"Other responsibilities include finalising pricing for employment supports under the NDIS to include supported employment, aligning with the Government's broader jobs agenda.

"It will be charged with improving communication on employment of NDIS participants and finalising a NDIS participant employment strategy."

Ms Henderson said the Taskforce will also ensure supported employment is successfully transitioned into the NDIS

"The Taskforce will build on previous work and sector consultation, including the 2015 Disability Employment Taskforce, the consultations undertaken by DSS in 2017-18 on the future of supported employment and the outcomes of the NDIS participant pathways review," Ms Henderson said.

"I'm looking forward to being involved with targeted consultations by the Taskforce, including roundtables with participants, families, Australian Disability Enterprises, Disability Employment Services and other employment providers and stakeholders."

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