



PDA Board Position Statement On The Upcoming Jobs & Skills Summit

22 AUGUST 2022

Physical Disability Australia (PDA) is calling on the Albanese Labor Government to ensure people with disability are given a voice at the upcoming Jobs and Skills Summit (the Summit) in September.

Unions, employer groups and civil society will be given a voice at the Summit. *PDA* contends that given the under-representation of people with disability in these groups, people with disability deserve dedicated representation. This is particularly important when this under-representation extends to the Federal bureaucracy and Members of Parliament.

“We call on our friends in the Union movement, employer organisations and civil society to support our call – we all deserve the opportunity to enjoy the dignity of work on equal terms”.

People of working age with disability are twice as likely to be unemployed as people without disability and, at a time of record low unemployment and severe skills shortages, *now is the time to act.*

There is a history of well-intentioned undertakings made at times of reform such as this. However, history has also shown that these undertakings rarely translate to better opportunities for people with disability. The lack of lived experience among decision-makers plays a large part in this.

Feel-good statements about the importance of diversity and inclusion and commitments to ‘do better’ might boost corporate reputations and provide good narratives for the media. However, they are meaningless to people with disability when nothing changes and no one is held accountable.

“People with disability have the skills, what we need is the opportunity and support to secure a job”.

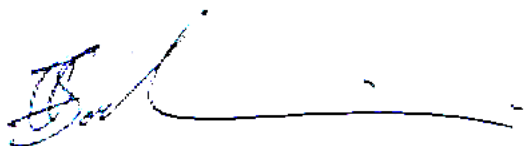
Background:

Approximately 2.1 million working-age people are living with disability in Australia - only 53% are in the labour force, compared to 84% of people without disability. Some not in the labour force cannot participate due to their disability, but around 30% (or nearly 300,000 people) do have some desire to work.

The entrenched disadvantage, negative attitudes, stereotypes, and perverse social security rules that actively disincentivise looking for work suggests that the actual number available is likely to be much higher than 300,000.

A report by *PwC* estimates that almost \$50 billion in GDP could be added to the economy by 2050 if Australia moved into the top eight OECD countries in employing PWD. The latest available data (2011) has Australia sitting at number 21 out of 29.

Signed for and on behalf of Physical Disability Australia



ANDREW FAIRBAIRN
PDA PRESIDENT



SIMON BURCHILL
PDA GENERAL MANAGER

PDA invites other Australian disability organisations, people living with disability and those with a supportive interest in the disability sector to join in this call to ensure that people with disability are given a voice at the upcoming Jobs and Skills Summit (the Summit) in September.

For more information or to show your organisation's support in this campaign, please contact Simon Burchill (PDA's General Manager) via manager@pda.org.au, Natasha Nobay (Communication and Engagement Manager) or Andrew Fairbairn (PDA President) on 0466 526 605.