



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

National Disability Employment Strategy

Submission to the
Department of Social Services

Brotherhood of St. Laurence

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Summary

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) is pleased to contribute to the consultation into the development of the National Disability Employment Strategy (NDES). The BSL has outlined key recommendations in this submission for the development of the NDES that promote best practice disability employment policy. These practices are informed by:

- academic literature
- BSL's expertise in employment-related research conducted with jobseekers, employers, and services providers
- BSL's experience as a service provider for people with disability with expertise in the development, delivery, and evaluation of active labour market programs.

We would be delighted to work closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to further inform the development of the NDES.

Principles for NDES success

1. Adopt 'decent work' as the NDES vision.
2. Integrate the NDES with broader government economic development initiatives.
3. Adopt a mainstream approach to disability employment.
4. Set ambitious employment goals and robust evaluation mechanisms.
5. Address overlapping priority areas.
6. Address ownership of actions.

Lifting employer engagement, capability and demand

7. Promote employer-focused policy that creates an enabling environment.
8. Use social procurement policies and position government as champions of disability employers.
9. Adopt further 'demand-side' and 'bridging' labour market interventions.

Building employment skills, experience, and confidence of young people with disability

10. Ensure alignment of education services with the NDES.
11. Improve access to VET for people with disability.
12. Link transition planning with future skills.
13. Align the Transition to Work model with the Ticket to Work model of disability employment.

Improving systems and services for jobseekers and employers

14. Address the disconnect between the NDIS and DES systems.

15. Improve collaboration and knowledge-sharing across government agencies as well as the disability employment sector.
16. Foster networks and collaboration in the disability employment ecosystem.

Changing community attitudes

17. Mandate disability awareness training in government and tertiary qualifications for relevant sectors.
18. Adopt awareness-raising policy measures in Article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
19. Mobilise community resources and networks.

Towards a place-based approach

20. Leverage 'local to national' approaches to disability unemployment.

Ensuring the NDES is fit for the future

The NDES is being developed at a time of significant change in the Australian labour market, driven by COVID-19 but underpinned by deeper structural changes, including the ‘digital revolution’, demographic shifts and broader cultural and environmental trends. Technological change, globalisation and climate change mean that the types, distribution and quality of jobs are shifting (Balliester & Elsheikhi 2018) and so the 21st century labour market in Australia is defined by increasing inequality, employment precarity and declining real wages.

The resultant economic change isn’t distributed evenly. In Australia, barriers are heightened for certain groups, including women, mature-aged and young workers, refugees, and asylum seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability. These at-risk groups have also been most affected by broader changes in work and social security (Bowman & Banks 2018; Bowman et al. 2017). Young people and people with disability are more likely to be in precarious, platform-mediated work (DPC 2020).

These issues present both challenges and opportunities to build a more inclusive society with equal opportunities and security for all workers. If the NDES is to achieve large-scale change in employment outcomes for people with disability, it is imperative that it recognises and responds to these changes. The BSL has highlighted the specific effects the pandemic will have on people with disability, including the health, education, and economic impacts (Brown 2020). In a post-pandemic labour market, competition for jobs among disadvantaged cohorts will be tougher than before.

Ultimately the NDES will succeed where it responds to current labour market trends and challenges, as well as supports the improvement of the entire disability employment ecosystem.

Recommendations

Principles for NDES success

1. Adopt ‘decent work’ as the NDES vision

There is an urgent need to deliver quality jobs alongside adequate social protection and respect for rights at work for people with disability. Therefore, the BSL proposes changing the NDES vision from ‘meaningful’ to ‘decent’, to allow the strategy to be guided by the notion of decent work.

Decent work is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as:

‘opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men’ (ILO 2007, p. 6).

Decent work is at the heart of the BSL’s inclusive employment framework which emphasises interconnectivity between employment, social, political, and environmental conditions (Bowman & van Kooy 2016).

2. Integrate the NDES with broader government economic development initiatives

The NDES needs to form a holistic disability employment narrative underpinned by coherent policy architecture. To do this, it must be intentionally connected with other employment strategies, frameworks, and policies across government.

An integrated NDES is designed to leverage broader economic development efforts: post-secondary education & training, apprenticeship systems, human services, social procurement, and inclusive employment policies. As the consultation paper highlighted, employers, service providers and, crucially, people with disability highlight the difficulty of navigating systems that overlap, duplicate efforts, and demonstrate a piecemeal and fragmented approach to tackling disability employment.

The fragmented approach isn't limited to federal government. The NDES needs to recognise and harmonise the efforts of states and territories. Recently the Victorian Government concluded the consultation period for the *State Disability Plan 2021-2025*, where one of the focus areas is employment. The NDES will succeed if there is a coherent interface between portfolios and between state and local levels of government and civil society.

Beyond economic development efforts, the NDES must recognise other relevant initiatives. The Disability Royal Commission (DRC) has received 65 responses to its Employment issues paper (DRC 2020a) and will be formulating recommendations for government. The NDES must provide an enabling framework for key DRC recommendations in relation to employment to be funded and implemented.

3. Adopt a mainstream approach to disability employment

The coherent policy architecture stepped out above must be grounded in a mainstream approach to people with disability. While a national strategy to tackle disability employment is needed, a separate employment system for people with disability is not and should never be the goal.

At all levels of the strategy - from integration with VET and TAFE systems to improving community supports, the inclusion of people with disability into mainstream systems and full participation in community life should always be the goal. DSS must work with other parts of government, such as with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) to ensure mainstream services themselves are inclusive and don't limit eligibility for people with disability.

4. Set ambitious employment goals and robust evaluation mechanisms

Australian disability employment literature has shown a lack of coordination and goal setting at the national level (AHRC 2016). As the NDES is slated to be a 10-year strategy, a regular review of policies and of data collected to track progress is crucial for success. Without this, the Strategy will have no 'teeth' and cannot hold actors accountable.

Furthermore, the intersection of factors such as disability, gender, socio-economic status and cultural diversity, and family factors (e.g. intergenerational unemployment) is not mentioned in the consultation paper. For example, women with disability are less likely to be employed and if employed, more likely to have part-time jobs (Holwerda et al. 2017; Moodley & Graham 2015). People with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have lower rates of employment than those from the dominant culture.

The DRC found a lack of data about CALD communities with disability (DRC 2020b). The first step to addressing the intersection of disability with other forms of identity is to fill gaps of knowledge. The starting point for NDES efforts to address the higher rates of unemployment of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and CALD people with disability must be data collection.

BSL's response to the consultation paper's Priority Areas

Overarching recommendations across priority areas

5. Address overlapping priority areas

The NDES needs to elaborate upon a theory of change that considers the relationship between supply, demand and bridging interventions (which combine supply and demand elements), as well as the interaction between these interventions in delivering mutually beneficial employment outcomes for people with disability and employers.

Specifically, the NDES needs to make explicit the type of labour market policy it is trying to implement by providing an organising framework for understanding the locus of intervention. This will also enable approaches or interventions to be grouped across a wide field of interventions facilitating the identification of patterns and gaps of effort. As it stands, the NDES consultation paper is heavy on supply-side approaches that build the capacity of jobseekers with disability but light on demand-side interventions that create work opportunities for people with disability that wouldn't have existed otherwise. Demand-side interventions can include wage subsidies, social procurement and (micro) social enterprises that promote entrepreneurship. This is stepped out further in recommendation 9.

The NDES must call out the multiplier effects some priority areas have on each other to recognise that the areas don't exist in a vacuum. For example, government playing an active role in fostering networks that empower the entire disability employment ecosystem (recommendation 16) has multiplier effects that help other priority areas. Mutually reinforcing networks of support will also improve employer capacity (recommendation 7), as employers' ability to match or create employment opportunities can be facilitated through strong networks.

6. Address ownership of actions

Too often in a fragmented, piecemeal system, overlapping problems which affect multiple actors and government portfolios fail due to lack of clear accountabilities for single or shared ownership. Understanding that issues like changing community attitudes require collective action, the NDES needs to identify and list the actors responsible for areas of reform. It is intended that this list of relevant actors be a starting point for a further discussion about responsibility of disability employment efforts.

Lifting employer engagement, capability, and demand

7. Promote employer-focused policy that creates an enabling environment

Employers, business, and employment support organisations and unions must play an active role as key stakeholders with government agencies (including DSS, DESE and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)) in developing the NDES. This will allow government policy to adapt to the changing needs and enabling conditions for employers. It will also raise government

awareness and promotion of best practice employment principles for employers, such as post placement support, tailored responses for different disability cohorts, and incentivising the creation of jobs that are properly resourced for employees to succeed. There continues to be low expectations about the capacity of people with disability to work in mainstream labour markets (AHRC 2016), and as such, employer-focused policy must hold high expectations of both employers and people with disability so they can demonstrate their capabilities and recognises their capacity to participate in full employment.

Government can also play an active role in increasing supports for employers. Meltzer et al. (2018) recommend:

- changing and/or clarifying the guidelines on the type and extent of support that needs to be offered to people with intellectual disability to assist with job seeking and maintaining work,
- better articulating what constitutes compliance with these guidelines, and
- better funding the work undertaken by employers to address disability employment, so that it can be considered core business for employers and support organisations.

8. Use social procurement policies and position government as champions of disability employers

As an employer of people with disability, DSS and government at large must themselves adopt social procurement policies, beyond supporting the private sector to adopt them and beyond the *Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25*. The BSL has studied the ways social procurement facilitates employment opportunities for people experiencing labour market disadvantage and documented best practice approaches and cross-jurisdictional lessons (Mupanemunda 2019, 2020a, 2020b).

9. Adopt further 'demand-side' and 'bridging' labour market interventions

The consultation paper leans heavily on supply-side labour market interventions which aim to boost human capital, through both the first and second priority areas. A range of interventions across the employment ecosystem which include not only supply-side but also demand-side interventions will be key to ensuring all aspects on disability unemployment are addressed.

Demand-side interventions will be critical as the NDES considers how to tackle decent, sustainable work in a post-pandemic labour market. Policy that creates new positions that otherwise wouldn't have existed is critical to ensuring a pipeline of decent jobs are available for jobseekers with disability.

The BSL recently concluded a project with the NDIA which maps the interventions for disability employment across Australia. The report (Kavanagh et al. forthcoming) focused on certain cohorts such as psychosocial disability; however the recommendations have broad applicability to all cohorts of disability. The project included interviews and focus groups with 34 academics, senior government and non-government executives. These experts emphasised the need to move beyond supply-side focused interventions towards demand-side and 'bridging' interventions (which combine both supply and demand-side elements). This would require policy that:

- builds the capabilities of people with disability to secure employment as well as employers' abilities to match or create employment opportunities

- is guided by a set of principles that have practical implications, including person-centred approaches that hold high expectations of people with disability and employers
- involves co-designing workplaces both with employers to support their capability to employ people with disability and with people with disability themselves
- promotes ‘place and train’ rather than ‘train and place’ models for people with intellectual disability
- attends to workplace culture and communication with colleagues
- takes into account the episodic nature of psychosocial disability by offering flexibility and control over their work.

Building skills, experience, and confidence of young people with disability

10. Ensure alignment of education services with the NDES

The NDES consultation paper importantly highlighted the issue of unsuccessful transitions from school to work, whose impacts on later employment and economic precarity are well-documented (Crosbie et al. 2019). However, employment doesn’t exist in a separate ecosystem from education and training. A strategy that aims to address unemployment must also explicitly call out the role education and training plays in developing labour market cohorts.

There is extensive evidence that commencing transition planning early for young people with disability (by the age of 14) leads to improved employment outcomes later in life (Crosbie et al. 2019). This is aligned with career development planning programs for students without disability which usually commence at working age (Crosbie et al. 2019). Collaboration between DSS and DESE to align education initiatives to the NDES will be crucial in helping to adopt best-practice transition planning and better understand young people’s pathways to work.

For example, the NDES needs to acknowledge that young people with disabilities can and do complete tertiary education, and these students may need to be supported to compete in a competitive market. Many other types of transition pathways exist, yet Disability Employment Services (DES) which is run by DSS only views ‘transition’ as supporting young people straight from secondary school to open employment (Stafford et al. 2017). Students who may pursue other pathways, such as tertiary or vocational employment training before open employment, are not viewed as requiring any specific transition support.

11. Improve access to VET for people with disability

The VET student population includes a large percentage of people with disability. Disadvantaged learners, including people with disability, encounter many challenges across the VET system including an outdated and inflexible curriculum that is misaligned with critical sectors (BSL 2020b). Social factors are also important—for example, access to transport and to information about education and careers, both formal and informal. The BSL held roundtable consultations with disadvantaged VET learners, including learners with disability, and found that VET learners with disability were over-reliant on the use of individual capital to access supports at points of need across the VET system while transitioning both within the system and into the labour market (Clarke et al. 2020b).

The BSL provided a submission to the Victorian Government's Inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with disability (BSL 2020a). Although its recommendations are primarily directed to state government, there is a critical role the Commonwealth government can play in improving access to TAFE for people with disability, including:

- increasing funding to state VET systems to understand barriers faced by learners with disability and their needs across the community, state VET systems, and within each institution
 - This could include encouraging a rigorous performance monitoring framework with associated targets and disaggregated reporting on access, progress, and outcomes in VET for those with disability
- helping to build stronger connections between TAFEs and NDIS Partners in the Community and other representatives of those with disability (e.g. advocacy organisations and peak bodies)
- working with states to establish Skills and Jobs Centres as key meeting sites at which LACs supporting people with disabilities can assist with career advice, pathway guidance, and contribute to TAFE workforce skills development.

12. Link transition planning with future skills

The post-COVID labour market recovery for low-skilled young people will also be impacted by trends of the last 30 years towards stronger employment growth in higher skilled occupations. Occupations with the highest skill level (bachelor's degree or higher) accounted for 45.1% of total employment growth over that time, while occupations with the lowest skill level (Certificate I or secondary education) accounted for only 9.4% (Clarke et al. 2020a).

Labour market changes such as increased need for post-school qualifications, increase in jobs in the services sector, and the growth in new jobs that will require university qualifications (DESE 2018) reduce opportunities for specific disability cohorts, namely people with an intellectual disability (ID). Evidence shows that best practice employment programs for disadvantaged jobseekers focus on job readiness and skills and provide a pathway to employment through work experience (Borland et al. 2016). This can be done at a local level through partnerships between service providers and employers.

One emerging trend to prepare for future skills demand – which has been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic – is the adaptation to existing training products, including changed delivery methods, timelines for completion, and the re-packaging of training products into micro-credentials which encompass formal/accredited and informal/non-accredited training products (Oliver 2019). These credentials could help existing workers respond to changes in the demand for skills, to move between specific jobs and across industries, and forge pathways to broader 'occupational clusters'. They would also help people to continue lifelong learning as their circumstances change.

An important caveat applies: promotion of skill sets should not undermine efforts to promote full qualifications for young people with disability. Furthermore, micro-credentials and skills sets offer an opportunity to combine work and training for young people with disability, but must be

supported by training and employment service providers, in partnership with employers, to ensure they offer a line of sight to employment outcomes.

13. Align the Transition to Work model with the Ticket to Work model of disability employment

The logic for aligning the Transition to Work model with the Ticket to Work model is one of a mainstream approach to disability employment. A mainstream employment service (Transition to Work) would have a tailored approach that sits within its system (Ticket to Work) to address disability-specific youth employment. This would also ensure that mainstream services are inclusive and responsive to young people with disability, as well as ensure congruency between federal and state levels of government employment services.

Much has been written in Australia about what high-quality transition planning looks like. Evidence-based models of transition planning (Kohler 2016) include the involvement of the young person and their family, collaboration of key services, and the development of individualised plans based on strengths and preferences. One model that demonstrates these facets of transition planning is Ticket to Work (see panel). It features partnerships with many institutions such as high schools, TAFEs and universities and represents a strong bridge between study and work. It currently operates in four regions in Victoria – Western and Northern suburbs, Hume, Geelong, and the Frankston/Mornington Peninsula – and should be expanded throughout the state and scaled across Australia.

Ticket to Work: linking young people with disability to further education and work

The Ticket to Work initiative is designed to prepare senior secondary students with disability for employment through career and vocational development, and experience within the workplace. It is delivered through Ticket to Work networks including schools, LLENs, employment services, post-school providers and employers. An evaluation revealed that 64% of participants found employment (non-participant control group 33%); 95% completed Year 12 (52% for the control group); and 83% were more socially active (65% for the control group). A House of Representatives review called for its expansion.

[\(http://www.tickettowork.org.au/\)](http://www.tickettowork.org.au/)

As recommendation 10 noted, best practice transition planning starts by the age of 14 years. The eligibility for the mainstream employment service for young people – Transition to Work – starts at 15 years. Ticket to Work’s early interventions, as well as its best practice transition planning, can ensure a more structured transition planning before the entry into the Transition to Work program, as well as clear pathways to high education and training.

Improving systems and services for jobseekers and employers

14. Address the disconnect between the NDIS and DES systems

BSL and the Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) undertook qualitative research on the NDIS and DES policy and practice interface to understand how people with disability navigate the systems. Participants in NDIS and DES highlighted both positive experiences and challenges, which

impacted their ability to access employment. In relation to DES, key issues included access to a provider that meets their needs and desire for enhanced support when engaged in the program. Within the NDIS, interviewees identified a need for greater encouragement of employment goals in NDIS plans, as well as increased collaboration and practice knowledge within and external to the NDIS workforce to help participants access appropriate supports to achieve their employment goals (MDI 2020).

The NDES needs to address the disconnect between the two systems, which is linked to workforce capabilities and resourcing. It also needs to enhance supports for NDIS participants to firstly include employment as a goal and then access available supports across the two programs, to help them achieve their employment goals. The interaction between the systems needs to be flexible enough to focus on addressing the needs of the participant and ensure the systems (and respective compliance requirements) adapt to them and not vice-versa, (MDI 2020).

15. Improve collaboration and knowledge-sharing across government agencies as well as the disability employment sector

In addition to addressing the disconnect between government agencies, there is also the need to work across the entire disability employment ecosystem including people with disability, employers, and other stakeholders to generate high quality evidence and foster good practice throughout. This could include:

- identifying ways to combine supply, demand and bridging interventions which are likely to be more effective as they can build capability across the entire system
- developing mechanisms for sharing good practice in disability employment programs and evaluation, such as a 'what works' lab, or a national community of practice (CoP) as exists in the Transition to Work program
- investing in an evidence base through expanded resourcing of agencies conducting formative, process and output evaluations, as well as a framework for prioritising evidence gaps and outcome measures
- conducting impact and outcome evaluations, particularly where formative, process and output evaluations have already been conducted and there is good reason to believe an intervention might be successful
- exploring the potential of pragmatic RCTs, quasi-experimental studies (e.g. before and after studies) and mixed method approaches in testing and evaluating interventions
- agreeing on employment outcomes that extend beyond the binary state of whether or not someone has a job to include job sustainability, the quality of work and other indicators of success.

16. Foster networks and collaboration in the disability employment ecosystem

Government can take a stewardship role in the disability employment services market. This would recognise the role of private actors in a system of marketised social services yet enable collaboration between actors that improves outcomes for jobseekers with disability. Government can foster networks between government and non-government sectors. A BSL submission to the Productivity Commission argued for the provision of 'smarter' public services; government would act as facilitators of cross-sectoral networks instead of being contract managers (BSL 2017). In this

stewardship role, government can also incentivise organisations to work together instead of creating a tendering process that forces them to compete for scarce resources.

As addressed in recommendation 5, this action has multiplier effects that address other priority areas. If government were to play a stewardship role and facilitate stronger, sustained connections between employers and the rest of the disability ecosystem, employers' capacity to match and create employment outcomes would increase.

Changing community attitudes

17. Mandate disability awareness training in government and tertiary qualifications for relevant sectors

Efforts to change community attitudes can often fail when they don't receive buy-in from everybody. One concrete way to address this priority area is by mandating disability awareness training. DSS and government at large should lead this and mandate training in sectors that impact disability employment (government, career guidance counsellors, case managers, rehabilitation staff, etc.). NDES represents a timely opportunity to implement attitude-changing policy initiatives in the fast-growing health care and social assistance industry.

18. Adopt awareness-raising policy measures in Article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

As a CRPD signatory, Australia has obligations under Article 8 to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to raise public awareness about persons with disabilities and their rights and contributions throughout society (UN 2006). Article 8 (2) gives guidance to States on implementation measures and their design, including by initiating and maintaining effective public campaigns, media, education systems and training programmes that reach all levels of the disability employment ecosystem (UN 2006).

Some lessons for best practice attitude changing initiatives are (OHCHR 2019):

- Direct contact with persons with disabilities in training and awareness campaigns is key in giving a human dimension to the lived experiences of the persons concerned and supports the correction of misrepresentations and stereotypes (OHCHR 2019, p. 10)
- Full community participation is required in awareness-raising programmes aiming at eliminating attitudinal barriers, which should appeal emotionally to a community for it to see disability-based discrimination and exclusion as unfair or unjust for the community itself and not just 'others' (in this case persons with disabilities) (OHCHR 2019, p.11),
- There is limited research on the actual effects of awareness-raising programmes. Therefore collecting data and undertaking research at regular intervals could provide for an effective monitoring tool to measure progress and evaluate changes in discriminatory patterns. The broadcast media, broadcasting regulators, communities, disability-related organisations, and organizations of persons with disabilities should be involved in such research (OHCHR 2019, p. 14).

19. Mobilising community resources and networks

As well as changing community attitudes, this priority area should also focus on mobilising local resources and networks to unlock positive employment outcomes for people with disability.

Community-scale arrangements enable flexibility by tailoring delivery and partnerships for different cohorts of jobseekers, local labour markets and communities.

Case study: Finding that spark: Transition to Work Community of Practice

The Transition to Work (TtW) Community of Practice (CoP) is convened by the BSL with 11 members that collectively deliver TtW services for 15–24-year olds at 13 sites around Australia. The TtW CoP member organisations deliver a common, evidence-informed model that can be adapted in place to offer quality services for young people that improve their education, training, and employment outcomes. The model seeks to empower and equip young people with the skills and opportunities to engage in work that they have reason to value. It also aligns these outcomes to business and local economic development needs.

Key lessons from the TtW CoP include (Bond & Keys 2020):

- Harnessing community investment drives positive outcomes. A multisector response, whereby sectors share expertise and experience, is the most effective way to shape solutions to unemployment issues and build Australia’s workforce and productivity.
- A key feature of community investment is a mechanism that enables networks and collaboration. In TtW CoPs, Community Investment Committees (CICs) play that role. They link the supply-side organisations supporting young people with employer-led, demand-side interventions, while focusing on systems change at the national level and access to opportunities at the local level.

Towards a place-based approach

20. Leverage ‘local to national’ approaches to disability unemployment

Too often national policy doesn’t take into consideration local labour market needs or characteristics. Since people with disability, their immediate support networks, the local community and local employers are best placed to translate national policy into local outcomes, the NDES should ensure efforts to tackle disability unemployment are place-based. The positive benefits of a place-based approach include:

- addressing the mainstream approach to disability unemployment by de-segregating education. Local tertiary offerings can be tailored to needs of people with disability in the community
- positive employment outcomes, as industry can share local labour market needs with policymakers and make employment services responsive to employers
- full participation of community in local structures, which will – by proximity – help change community attitudes (OHCHR 2019).

These benefits agglomerate over time and create positive feedback loops. A place-based approach improves employment outcomes by leveraging all relevant actors and resources, improving outcomes for people with disability beyond what each actor could achieve alone.

The BSL has experience in facilitating innovative employment support models that harness local to national policy alignment, notably in its enabling role in the National Youth Employment Body (NYEB) (see panel).

National Youth Employment Body (NYEB) lessons in place

To inform a coordinated and scalable national approach to youth employment, the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (Formerly the Department of Jobs and Small Business) funded the BSL in 2018 to establish and coordinate the National Youth Employment Body. The aim of the NYEB is to facilitate collaborative efforts that enable young people to secure decent work while addressing the needs of industry for a diverse and adaptable workforce (p. v).

The NYEB seeks to multiply young people's employment opportunities and outcomes through implementing a scalable national model that builds effective place-based practice and solutions that are mutually beneficial to employers, the community, the local economy, and young people themselves (p. 2).

Local communities are supported to harness their expertise in co-developing strategies to improve local youth employment pathways. Their work in turn provides real-time community knowledge to national policy makers and experts across industry, employment services and education and training organisations on how to align their efforts to build the capabilities of young people and meet the needs of employers at the local level (p. v).

For example, local employers across the NYEB are codesigning youth employment courses with TAFE, while TAFE is exploring flexibility within the national training package framework to tailor courses for young people and industry. Local employers are also being recruited to champion investment in young people by other employers, including through offering work experience or work tasters, hosting site tours or by providing entry-level pathways including internships. (Monson-Wilbraham et al. 2020)

Supporting the development of similar scalable models of disability employment that harness place-based solutions should be explored further in the NDES, given the NYEB's success in curating place-based solutions that build community capacity.

The BSL stands ready to assist further with the development of the NDES.

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