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Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003

Abstract
[Excerpt] Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003 is descriptive in nature. When the ILO commissioned the researchers for the Country Study Series, each was asked to follow the comprehensive research protocol appended to this document. The resulting report therefore includes country background information, statistics about people with disabilities and their organizations, a description of relevant legislation and policies and their official implementing structures, as well as the education, training and employment options available to people with disabilities. While few countries have all such information readily available, researchers were asked to note the existence or lack of specific data points and to report data when it did exist. Since the lack of information about people with disabilities contributes to their invisibility and social exclusion, the information itself is important. The protocol called for limited analysis and did not specifically ask for the researchers recommendations, however, researchers were asked to report on existing plans and recommendations of significant national stakeholders.

Keywords
disability, Australia, training, employment, public policy

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AbilityAsia Country Study Series

International
Labour
Office

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003

Genene O'Neill
Marie Sutherland

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003

An *AbilityAsia* Country Study

Genene O'Neill
Marie Sutherland

International Labour Office

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Preface

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003 is part of the *AbilityAsia Country Study Series.* The series was designed as a contribution to the end of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, and to mark the 20th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s Convention No. 159 Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons).

One of the primary purposes of the *Country Study Series* is to contribute to the knowledge base on people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. According to World Health Organization estimates, people with disabilities represent 10 per cent of the population of developing countries. Yet, in many countries, people with disabilities are "invisible". Little reliable data exists about their numbers, needs and achievements. While they are recognized as among the poorest of poor, people with disabilities typically face barriers to the very services that might lift them out of poverty, such as education, vocational training, and employment and business development services. While Australia is an advanced country, with data about and considerable services for disabled persons, people with disabilities are still disproportionately under-represented in vocational training and the labour force.

A second objective of the *Country Study Series* is to provide baseline data about the status of education, training and employment of people with disabilities. This purpose takes on greater significance in light of the adoption of the ESCAP Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003 to 2012 and its implementing the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in the region. Governments from across the region adopted the BMF at a high-level meeting in October 2002. The BMF will guide regional and national disability policies and activities in several priority areas, including training and employment, during the new Decade of Disabled Persons.

The BMF includes the ILO's principle of decent work − defined as, "productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity for women and men everywhere". Further, the BMF's employment and training targets call upon countries to mainstream (integrate) vocational training programmes, collect reliable employment and self-employment rates for people with disabilities and consider ratification of ILO Convention No.159. The Convention, among other things, requires a national policy of vocational rehabilitation and employment based on the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity for workers with disabilities.

With regard to the BMF, *Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003* should prove useful as an evaluation tool since it provides a baseline description of the situation in Australia against which progress can be compared. Additionally, it is hoped that people with disabilities and stakeholders from other countries can learn from the Australian situation.

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003 is descriptive in nature. When the ILO commissioned the researchers for the *Country Study Series,* each was asked to follow the comprehensive research protocol appended to this document. The resulting report

therefore includes country background information, statistics about people with disabilities and their organizations, a description of relevant legislation and policies and their official implementing structures, as well as the education, training and employment options available to people with disabilities. While few countries have all such information readily available, researchers were asked to note the existence or lack of specific data points and to report data when it did exist. Since the lack of information about people with disabilities contributes to their invisibility and social exclusion, the information itself is important. The protocol called for limited analysis and did not specifically ask for the researchers recommendations, however, researchers were asked to report on existing plans and recommendations of significant national stakeholders.

Upon completion of the draft country studies in the series, they were shared with participants of the ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities, held in Bangkok in January 2003. The consultation was a regional meeting of Governments and representatives of workers', employers' and disabled persons' organizations from across the region. Each country team was asked to review the country study reports and make comments with regard to accuracy, omissions and content of the report.

As noted, the main purpose of the series is to describe the employment and training situation of the country at a particular point in time. Unlike the other studies in the series, the final data in the Australian study was collected in 2003. Nevertheless, the information contained in *Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Australia 2003* may not be the most current. As a complex and dynamic country, much has happened in Australia since 2003. For example, the Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry adopted a policy on disability in November 2003. That and many other developments are therefore not included in this report. Nevertheless, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the situation in Australia against which future employment and training developments can be understood and assessed.

The ILO wishes to acknowledge Development Cooperation Ireland, whose resources contributed to the research project that resulted in the *AbilityAsia Country Study Series.* Debra A. Perry, the ILO's Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation for Asia and the Pacific deserves special recognition for her technical oversight and hard work in designing and coordinating the overall country study project. The ILO acknowledges the expertise and dedication of several people who contributed to this document. Marie Sutherland of the Disabilities Unit of Adelaide University conducted the initial research and prepared a draft paper which was edited by Margaret Gadd of CARA and her colleague Dr Peter Backhouse. Futher updates were provided by Genene O'Neill, Business Development Manager at Job Placement Ltd. after the January 2003 regional meeting. Although they worked independently, each made a significant contribution to the final document. Members of the ILO staff, in particular Sugunya Voradilokkul who supported the project since its inception, and Teerasak Siriratanothai and Anne Holopainen, Associate Expert, who assisted in getting this document for publication. Special thanks also go to Jason McKey of Job Placement, Ltd. for his professional contribution to the final publication.

To the reader, whether you are an academic, researcher, policy maker, practitioner or an individual with a disability, we hope you will find the information you are looking for in these pages.

For more information about the *AbilityAsia Country Study Series* or to learn more about the ILO, Convention No. 159 or other issues related to employment and training of people with disabilities in the region, please visit the AbilityAsia Web site: http://www.ilo.org/abilityasia.

For more information about the ESCAP Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, visit http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/index.asp

Readers may also be interested in two recently published works by the ILO relating to employment and disability − *Moving Forward: Toward Decent Work for People with Disabilities − Examples of Good Practices in Vocational Training and Employment from Asia and the Pacific* and *Proceedings of the ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*. Copies of these and other ILO publications on disability in Asia and the Pacific can be ordered by contacting abilityasia@ilo.org.

Lin Lean Lim
Deputy Director
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	Association for Competitive Employment
ACROD	ACROD, formerly known as the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ADTAC	Australian Disability Training Advisory Council – a subcommittee of ANTA
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ARATA	Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association
ASSD	Additional Support for Students with a Disability
CBFT	case-based funding trial
CSTDA	Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement
DDA	Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
DEST	Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWR	Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DSA	Disability Services Act, 1986
DSP	disability support pension
DWS	disability wage supplement
ECEF	Enterprise and Career Education Foundation
EMAD	Employers Making a Difference
FaCS	Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEEP	Higher Education Equity Programme
HEFA	Higher Education Funding Act
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HPL	Henderson Poverty Line
ICC	independent living centre
JSCI	job seeker classification instrument
MIFS	more intensive and flexible services
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NDAC	National Disability Advisory Council
NDS	National Disability Services Unit – part of FaCS
NEIS	New Enterprise Initiative Scheme
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PWI	Partnership with Industry
SA	Sickness Allowance
SFSS	Student Financial Supplement Scheme
SWS	Supported Wage Scheme
TAFE	(VET system of colleges of) technical and further education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	vocational education and training
VOCED	vocational education and training research database
WAT	work ability tables

Part One: Country Overview

1.1 Introduction

Australia is a large island continent that was first inhabited by the Aboriginal people over 40,000 years ago. Britain claimed possession in 1788 and established a series of convict-based and free-settler colonies. The separate colonies were united in 1901 as the Commonwealth of Australia under a federal system of government. Each of the states and territories has a parliament with powers in all areas not specified in the constitution as Commonwealth powers.

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments operate on the Westminster system, in which the political party or coalition with the majority of elected members in the lower house of parliament forms the government. Ministers with executive powers are drawn from these elected members of the Government of Australia. The conservative Liberal Party-National Party coalition has been in power at the federal level since 1996, while the more social-democratic Labour Party has been in power in all or the majority of the six states and two territories.

Since federation, Australia has developed a strong mixed economy, with relatively high levels of state and Commonwealth government provision, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, industry development and welfare support. According to the 2001 United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, Australia ranks second of 162 countries.

1.2 Geography

Area
Australia is a land area of approximately 7,692,000 sq km, making it the sixth largest country in the world but the smallest of the continents.

Topography and climate
Australia is the lowest, flattest and, excluding Antarctica, the driest continent. Approximately 87 per cent of the total landmass is lower than 500 m in altitude, and 99.5 per cent is below 1,000 m. With regard to climate, 61 per cent of Australia lies within a temperate zone and 39 per cent within a tropical zone. More than half of the landmass is arid, with 80 per cent of the country having a median rainfall of less than 600 mm per annum; less than 300 mm of rain per annum falls on half of the country. Extreme rainfall occurs in the northern coastal areas of Queensland and the mountainous areas of Tasmania, with a median of 4,436 mm and 3,565 mm per annum, respectively. The majority of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory constitute the greater part of the arid landmass with annual median rainfall as low as 100 m. Seasonal fluctuations in temperature range from 50°C to well below zero. Australia experiences a number of serious natural phenomena, including bush fires, drought, flooding, tropical cyclones and severe storms.[1]

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): Year Book Australia, 2002

1.3 Population

Australia has a population of 19.4 million, with an annual growth rate of 1.1 per cent.[2] Just over half of the population is female and indigenous people represent some 2.2 per cent.

Geographic distribution

Much of the population is concentrated along the eastern seaboard and the south-western coast. Australia's indigenous population is significantly more widespread. While 90 per cent of the population lives on 2.6 per cent of the total landmass area, approximately 90 per cent of the Aboriginal population lives on 25 per cent of the total area.

Age composition

Percentage of population aged 0-14	20.8%
Percentage of population aged 15-64	67.4%
Percentage of population aged 65 and older	12.4%
Percentage of population aged 80 and older	3.0%
Median age of total population	35 years
Median age, males	34 years
Median age, females	36 years

Life expectancy

Current life expectancy is 82 years for females and 76 years for males. However, average life expectancy for Australia's indigenous population is significantly lower at 63 years for females and 53 years for males.[3] Aborigines currently have a death rate three times higher than that of the non-indigenous population.

Literacy levels

With a universal, compulsory education system covering all primary school years and several secondary school years, Australia has a general literacy rate of nearly 100 per cent.

Unusual demographic patterns

With projections of continued low fertility and increasing deaths from an ageing population, Australia's population is unlikely to grow rapidly. However, the pattern of migration from Asia appears to be increasing, particularly the number of students who reside in Australia for educational purposes. In 1997-1998, 77 per cent of all Asian-born long-term visitor arrivals were for the purpose of education.

Religious groupings

According to the 2001 census, Australia's population by stated religion was:

Catholic	26.6%
Anglican	20.7%
Other Christian denominations	20.7%
Other non-Christian religions	4.9%
No religion	15.5%
Not stated	11.7%

[2] ABS: Year Book Australia, 2002
[3] ABS: Social Trends Australia, 2001

1.4 Government

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional democracy with a federal system of government. The federal legislature consists of a bi-cameral parliament, composed of a 150-member House of Representatives (lower house) and a 76-member Senate (upper house). Executive power is formally vested in the Governor-General, the British monarch's representative in Australia, but is effectively held by the prime minister and the cabinet.

Each of the federation's six states (in descending order of population size: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania) and two territories (Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory) has its own parliament. Within each state/territory is a system of local government, such as municipal and shire councils.

Australia has had a very stable political system since federation in 1901. Federal elections are held at maximum intervals of three years, when half of the members of the Senate and all members of the House of Representatives face a compulsory ballot by all citizens aged 18 and older.

Structure of government and ministries

Each minister from the party in government is allocated an area of policy responsibility and is the political head of the Commonwealth department(s) charged with administering and implementing all programmes in that policy area. Currently the key Commonwealth departments in the area of disability are the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). FaCS is the key department for the provision of disability services.

Other departments include:

- Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Attorney-General
- Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
- Defence
- Environment and Heritage
- Finance and Administration
- Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Health and Ageing
- Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
- Industry, Tourism and Resources
- Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Treasury
- Transport and Regional Services

Socio-economic/development objectives and strategies

In recent years, the reform of the Australian taxation system has dominated government policy. On 1 July 2000, a comprehensive goods and services tax was implemented. There has also been a strong policy focus on defence, foreign relations, regional development, super annuation (funded pension schemes) and most significantly for people with disabilities, reform of the Australian welfare system.

The current Australian Government has implemented or proposed other reforms, including: 20,000 extra places for disability support services, such as vocational support to existing recipients of the disability support pension (DSP) and to people who are ineligible for the DSP but may require assistance with obtaining or maintaining employment; and increased funding for services for people with large support needs. The Commonwealth Government is negotiating with the states and territories to provide increased matching funds for disability services and programmes over the next five years. A new Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)[4] includes funding of approximately A$4.7 billion (US$2.69 billion) over the next five years.

All Commonwealth government programmes for people with disabilities are outlined in this report.

1.5 Economy

Currency

The Australian dollar (A$) has a value of approximately US$0.59 (as of 6 February 2003).

Industry sectors

Agriculture, mining and tourism are the most significant export-earning sectors. Japan and countries in South-East Asia are the most important trading partners. In 2001, 72 per cent of Australia's merchandise exports and half of its direct foreign investment went to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member countries. In the five years prior to February 2000, property and business services saw very strong employment growth of 24 per cent, closely followed by a 23 per cent growth in the construction industry and 21 per cent growth in cultural and recreational services. Health and community services grew by 18 per cent, accommodation, cafes and restaurants by 15 per cent and the retail sector, the largest employer, rose by 14 per cent. In 2000-2001, the largest contributors to overall employment were retail (14.8 per cent), manufacturing (12.3 per cent), property and business (11.7 per cent) and health and community services (10 per cent).[5]

GDP

Australia ranks as the tenth largest Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) economy on the basis of current-price gross domestic product (GDP). Average annual GDP growth rate in 1997 was 4.1 per cent and in 2001 was 2.4 per cent, resulting in an average annual growth rate of 3.9 per cent. These figures compare with OECD averages of 0.7 per cent and 2.8 per cent, respectively. Manufacturing contributes the greatest amount to the GDP at 11.7 per cent, closely followed by property and business services at 11.2 per cent. All other areas contributed less than 10 per cent individually to the GDP.[6] The 2000-2001 GDP per capita was A$33,281 (US$17,213).[7] In 2002-2003, the GDP growth was expected to decrease by 0.6 as a result of widespread drought.[8] Transport, wholesale trade and

[4] Previously the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement (CSDA).
[5] ABS: Industry overview – output and employment by industry, Year Book Australia, 2003
[6] ibid.
[7] At 2001 exchange rate
[8] ABS: 5,206 Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, September quarterly 2002 feature article: “Impact of the Drought on Australian Production in 2002-2003”

manufacturing of products from agricultural outputs is expected to experience a direct impact from the drought with other multiplier effects arising from diminished production and decreased availability of agricultural produce into related and dependent industries expected.

1.6 Labour markets

Labour force participation

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the country's workforce in May 2002 consisted of 6,720,000 full-time workers and 2,584,000 part-time workers.[9] Of the total, 2,241,000 of those working full time and 1,861,000 working part time were female, for a total of 4,102,000 women in the workforce. There were 4,454,000 men employed full time and 748,000 part-time, making a total of 5,202,000 male workers.

Wage levels

The national average weekly earnings for an adult working full time is A$850.60 (US$501.85),[10] though there are differences between state and territory averages. The highest overall average weekly wage is in the Australian Capital Territory at A$951.90 (US$561.62) and the lowest is South Australia at A$801.50 (US$472.89). Gender differences in the average weekly earnings for an adult full-time worker are evident across all states with the national average of weekly earnings for men at A$910.50 (US$537.20) and for women at A$772.10 (US$455.54). Males across all states consistently have higher weekly earnings than women, with the smallest difference between male and female earnings in South Australia and the greatest in Western Australia. In these states, women earned 89 per cent and 79 per cent of the average weekly earnings of males, respectively.[11]

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate in May 2002 was 6.3 per cent. This constituted 619,600 Australians out of work but actively seeking employment. In May 1992 the unemployment rate was 10.7 per cent.

Underemployment

In September 2001, there were 2.5 million part-time workers with 24 per cent of them wanting to work more hours: an increase of 5 per cent from September 2000 figures. The majority (61 per cent) of the 600,000 people who worked part time and wanted to work more hours, were female. And one-third of all part-time workers wanting to work more hours were younger than 25.[12]

Special issues in the Australian labour market

Working life in Australia has altered dramatically in recent years. Labour market deregulation has seen the centralized trade union award system extensively restructured, with a significant decline in trade union representation and collective bargaining and a corresponding increase in individually negotiated employment contracts.

[9] Full time is identified as 35 hours a week or more; part time is less than 35 hours per week.
[10] Conversions based on exchange rate as at 7 February 2003
[11] ABS: Labour levels of earnings, Year Book Australia, 2003
[12] ABS: Underemployed workers Australia, 2001

A significant and growing proportion of full-time jobs has been replaced by fixed-term, casual and part-time jobs. More Australian workers are experiencing precarious employment, which is characterized by high levels of job insecurity and low pay.

Given the recent shifts in Australia in employment, economic, social, industrial and training policies, and the fact that unemployment rates remain relatively high, Commonwealth government-funded disability employment services are facing considerable challenges. Job placement into open employment is becoming the most important outcome in measuring the success of a Commonwealth Government-funded disability employment service.

Part Two: People with Disabilities – Definitions, Data and Situation

2.1 Definitions of disability

Disability Discrimination Act, 1992

The Australian Government's Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (DDA) is the principal piece of legislation in relation to the Government's responsibility to people with disabilities. This Act has precedence over other relevant federal, state and territory legislation.

Part 1, Section 4(I) of the DDA defines disability as:

(a) total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions;
(b) total or partial loss of a part of the body;
(c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness;
(d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness;
(e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body;
(f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from person without the disorder or malfunction; or
(g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

And it includes a disability that:

(a) presently exists;
(b) previously existed but no longer exists;
(c) may exist in the future; or
(d) is imputed to a person.

Disability Services Act (DSA), 1986

Section 8 of the Australian Government's DSA defines the target group for services provided as people with a disability that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of such impairments; is permanent or likely to be permanent; results in a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, learning or mobility; and has a need for ongoing support services.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

For purposes of the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, a person is said to have a disability if:

> *"… he/she reported a limitation, restriction or impairment which lasted, or was likely to last, for at least six months, and which restricted everyday activities."*

2.2 Disability classification system

The Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) specifies classifications of disability (*see Section 3.3 for details of the CSTDA*).

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) uses the CSTDA classification codes in its annual survey of service provision and determines the primary classification grouping of an individual by the disability, impairment or condition that causes the most difficulty to the person in their daily life.

CSTDA classifications of disability are:

- **Developmental delay** (applicable to children aged 0-5 only), including conditions appearing in the early developmental period with no specific diagnosis.
- **Intellectual disability**, whereby conditions appear in the developmental period (age 0-18) with concurrent learning difficulties and the need for more support in everyday life skills compared to others of the same age, e.g. Down's Syndrome, tuberculosis, etc.
- **Learning**, as a general term referring to a group of disorders, presumed to originate with a central nervous system dysfunction rather than an intellectual disability and covering significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical skills.
- **Autism**, which is a pervasive developmental disorder involving disturbances in cognition, interpersonal communication, social interactions and behaviour (in particular obsessive, ritualistic, stereotyped and rigid behaviours).
- **Physical**, referring to paraplegia, quadriplegia, muscular dystrophy, motor neurone disease, neuromuscular disorders, cerebral palsy, absence or deformities of limbs, spina bifida, arthritis, back disorders, ataxia, bone formation or degeneration, scoliosis, etc.
- **Acquired brain injury**, which characteristically are multiple disabilities arising from damage to the brain acquired after birth that result in deterioration of cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functioning; however, this also covers a disability resulting from accidents, stroke, brain tumours, infection, poisoning, lack of oxygen, degenerative neurological disease, etc.
- **Sensory disability**, including
    - **deaf and blind**: dual sensory impairments causing severe restrictions in communication, and in the ability to participate in community life;
    - **vision disability**: blindness, vision impairment, visual handicap (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses);
    - **hearing disability**: deafness, hearing impairment, hearing loss; or
    - **speech disability**: speech loss, impairment and/or difficulty in being understood.
- **Psychiatric**, including severe psychiatric conditions (e.g. schizophrenia, affective disorders), anxiety disorders, addictive behaviours, personality disorders, stress, psychosis, depression and adjustment disorders.
- **Neurological**, such as epilepsy and organic dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's disease). [13]

[13] AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

2.3 Major sources of disability information and statistics

Three major surveys are conducted in Australia that identify and describe disability information. First, the Australian Bureau of Statistics[14] conducts every five years the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers to collect data on the basic demographics of people with disabilities. The most recent survey was conducted in 1998. Second, the Office of Disability (within FaCS) conducts a Commonwealth Disability Services census to investigate the outcomes of FaCS-funded employment services. And third, the AIHW examines the need, provision and use of disability support services provided under the CSTDA. The AIHW's annual survey provides estimates based upon a single "snapshot" day. The report outlines the type and number of services provided, including federally funded employment services and accommodation, respite and day option programmes.

The following provides a synopsis of disability- and employment-related information from those three surveys.

The 1998 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that 3.6 million people (19 per cent of the total population) in Australia had a disability. Of all people engaged in the core workforce (15-64 years old), 17 per cent had a disability and 24 per cent had a profound or severe restriction. The survey determined that people with disabilities, at 53 per cent, were less likely to be participating in the workforce compared to 76 per cent of all people. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities was higher (12 per cent) compared to all people in the 15-64 age group (8 per cent).

As Table 2.1 shows, on the snapshot day in 2001,[15] an estimated 63,830 people with disabilities accessed a total of 77,205 CSTDA-funded services from 7,712 outlets throughout the country.

[14] The ABS census of the entire Australian population does not include data related to disability.
[15] AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

Table 2.1 Consumers of CSTDA-funded services on the snapshot day, by disability and age groups, 2001

Primary disability group	Age group (years)							Total	
	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-44	45-59	60+	Not stated	No.	%
Developmental delay	1,26	173	0	0	0	0	0	1,439	2.3
Intellectual	240	2,340	7,474	18,338	7,256	1,575	352	37,575	58.9
Specific learning/ADD*	29	235	503	135	25	4	11	942	1.5
Autism	331	710	623	531	66	4	34	2,299	3.6
Physical	466	1,333	1,250	2,612	1,476	643	131	7,911	12.4
Acquired brain injury	25	91	300	1,214	827	255	49	2,761	4.3
Deaf and blind	10	11	17	72	21	33	15	179	0.3
Vision	45	83	130	285	213	766	31	1,553	2.4
Hearing	95	103	142	240	128	156	21	885	1.4
Speech	178	67	27	26	19	6	11	334	0.5
Psychiatric	9	26	586	2,672	1,377	329	420	5,419	8.5
Neurological	127	186	213	605	534	198	53	1,916	3
Not stated	19	141	37	57	25	16	322	617	1
Total consumers	**2,840**	**5,499**	**11,302**	**26,787**	**11,967**	**3,985**	**1,450**	**63,830**	**100**

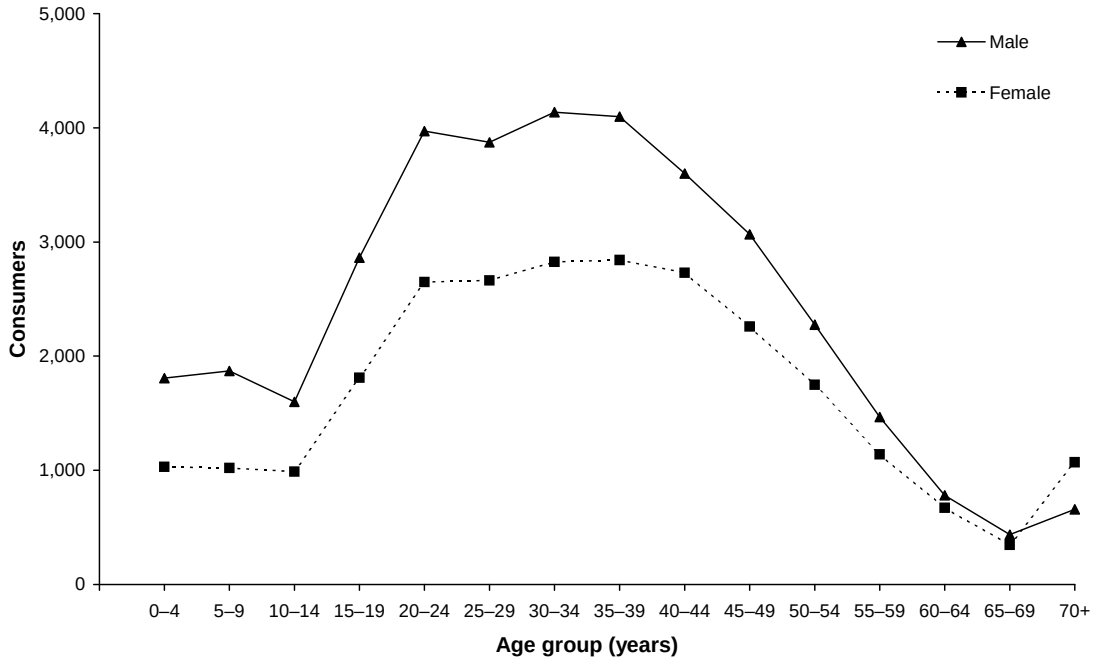
*ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder
Source: AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

The data in Table 2.1 indicates that 59 per cent of service users reported intellectual disability as their primary disability, 78 per cent of consumers were between 15 and 59 years of age[16] with 42 per cent aged between 25 and 44 years.

While not shown in Table 2.1, the report also indicated that nearly half of the service users on the snapshot day reported that they had more than one disability. In addition, people living in rural (but not remote) areas were more likely to be using disability services than their counterparts in the cities.

[16] The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines working age as 15-64 years. The 78 per cent of consumers within the workforce age range listed in Table 2.1 are perceived as underestimated because the age group for 60-64 years was not separated in the census data.

Figure 2.1 Consumers of CSTDA-funded services on the snapshot day, by age group and gender, 2001[17]



As Figure 2.1 illustrates, there is a higher proportion of male service users in all age groups, with the margin decreasing between male and female users as people age.

Table 2.2 Consumers of CSTDA-funded services on the snapshot day, by service type and state/territory*, 2001

Service type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	%
Accommodation support	6,111	7,068	3,361	2,101	2,020	719	281	116	21,775	**34.1**
Community support	3,383	5,525	1,506	3,764	2,316	174	216	129	17,011	**26.7**
Community access	3,663	7,979	2,180	705	489	504	145	39	15,703	**24.6**
Respite	553	998	438	386	165	78	47	37	2,702	**4.2**
Employment	6,019	3,929	2,652	2,099	2,101	513	279	139	17,730	**27.8**
Total consumers	**16,877**	**21,868**	**8,546**	**7,513**	**6,218**	**1,604**	**825**	**422**	**63,830**	**100**

*NSW: New South Wales; Vic: Victoria; Qld: Queensland; WA: Western Australia; SA: South Australia; Tas: Tasmania; ACT: Australian Capital Territory; NT: Northern Territory
Source: AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

Of the 63,830 consumers in all service types on the snapshot day, according to Table 2.2, 34 per cent used accommodation support services in both institutional and community settings. Another 28 per cent accessed employment services, including open and supported

[17] ibid.

employment services, and 27 per cent used community support services, which included early childhood intervention, specific therapies, counselling/case management, recreation and regional coordination services. One-quarter accessed community services, such as education, social and daily living activities. Only 4 per cent accessed respite services.

Table 2.3 Consumers of CSTDA-funded services and services received on the snapshot day, 2001

	Consumers		Services received	
Number of service groups	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	%
One	53,624	84	53,624	69.5
Two	9,331	14.6	18,662	24.2
Three	865	1.4	2,595	3.4
Four	10	0	40	0.1
Total of different service groups	63,830	100	74,921	97
Using two or more services in same service group	2,011	3.2	2,284	3
Total	**63,830**	**100**	**77,205**	**100**

Source: AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

Table 2.3 shows that the majority of consumers accessed only one type of service, with the remaining consumers accessing two or more services. A small percentage of them accessed two or more of the same service types; for example, two community support services.

Table 2.4 Consumers of CSTDA-funded services on the snapshot day, service group combinations most commonly received, 2001

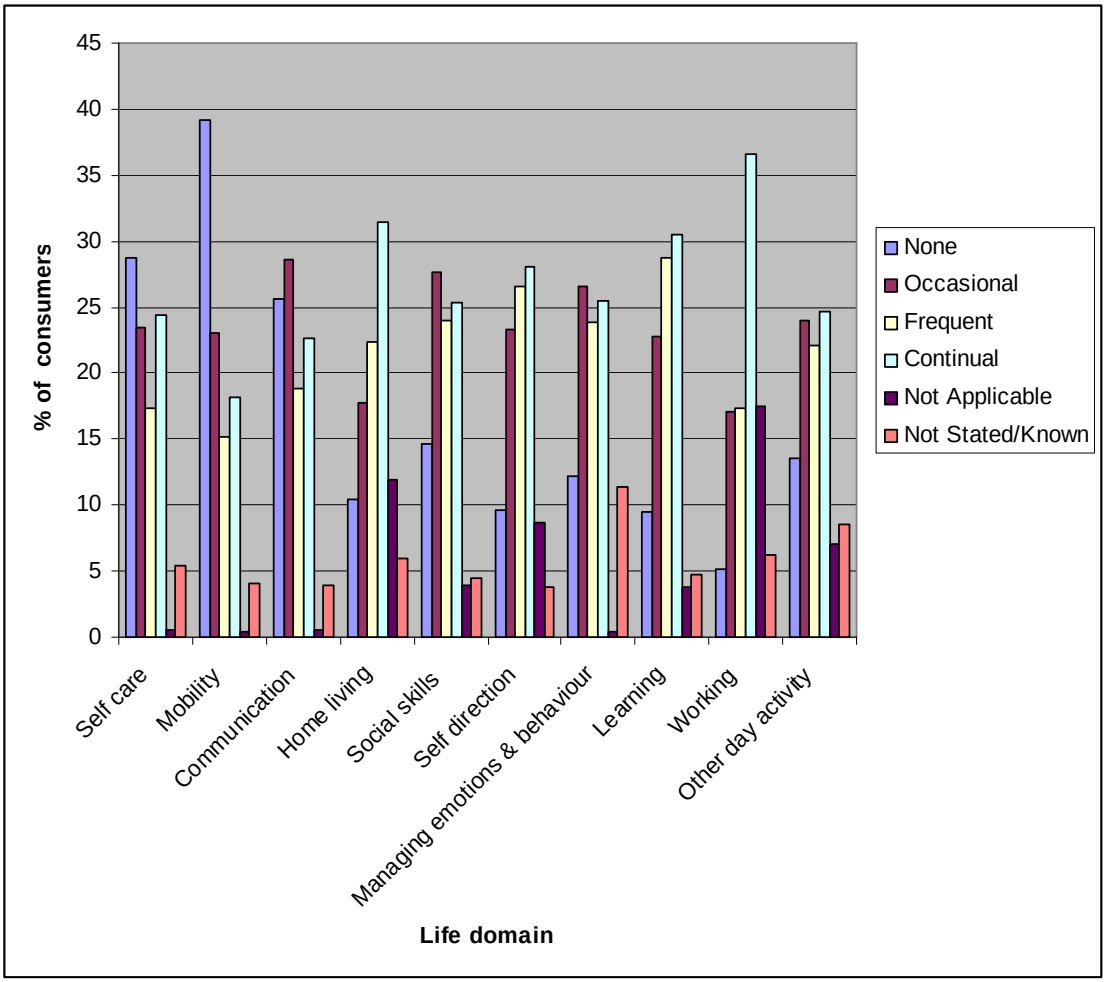
Service groups used	**No.**	**% of consumers using two or more services**	**% of all consumers**
5 most common combinations			
Accommodation and community access	4,742	46.5	7.5
Accommodation and employment	2,594	25.4	4.1
Accommodation and community support	1,627	15.9	2.6
Community support and community access	985	9.1	1.5
Community support and employment	606	6.4	1
Other combinations			
Three or more services involving above combinations	869	8.5	1.4
All other combinations[18]	1,034	10.1	1.6
Total	**10,206**	**100**	

Source: AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

[18] The AIHW states that "all other combinations" include the other four two-way combinations, e.g. employment and respite, and three-way combinations of employment, community access and respite.

As shown in Table 2.4, the most common combination of service types accessed by people with a disability was accommodation and community access. The most common combination occurring with employment as a service type was accommodation and community support at 25.4 per cent and 6.4 per cent, respectively.

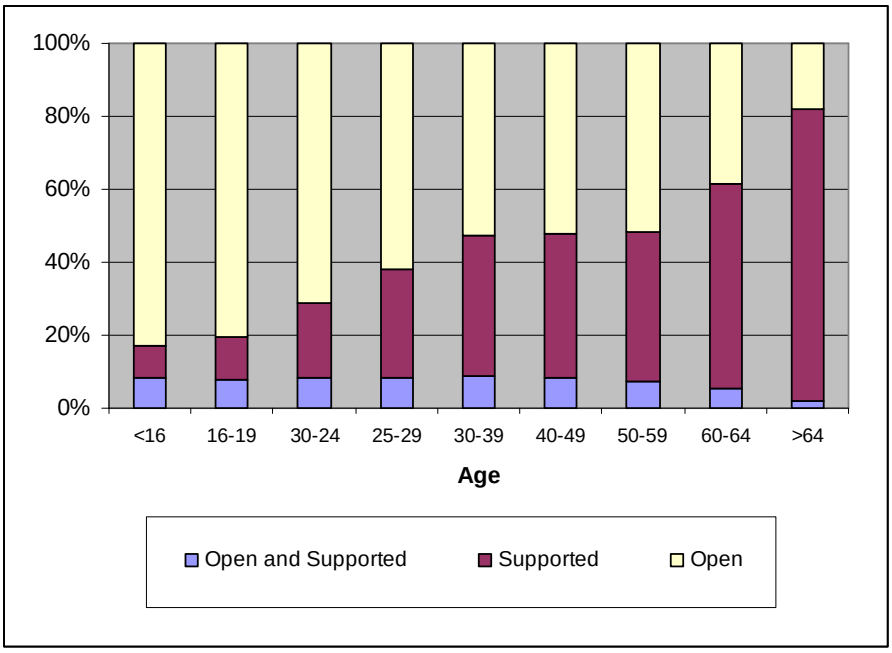
Figure 2.2 Frequency of support needed in various life domains as expressed by service users on the snapshot day[19]



With regard to employment, Figure 2.2 shows that less than 5 per cent of consumers with disabilities needed no support, around 15 per cent required occasional and frequent support, and approximately 37 per cent reported needing continual support.

[19] Total respondents of 63,830; data extracted from Table 3.16, AIHW, Disability Support Services, 2001

Figure 2.3 Employment service type, by age group



Source: FaCS, Commonwealth Disability Service Census, 2000

The Commonwealth Disability Service Census, 2000, found 53,427 people with disabilities receiving services from Commonwealth-funded services on the snapshot day. The data revealed that both open/supported and open employment services benefited the majority of young and middle-aged people with a disability, with open employment being the greater supplier of services overall for these groups. Supported employment provides more services to older people with disabilities.

2.4 On-the-job injuries

Each Australian state and territory has its own legislation related to occupational health and safety and the management of work-related injuries. In addition, the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 1988 seeks to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees of the Commonwealth Government. All legislation is strongly focused on accident prevention, vocational rehabilitation and return to work of injured workers. Contracted private rehabilitation agencies that are accountable to the relevant workers' compensation authority for standards of quality in service and outcomes provide rehabilitation services in most states. Work injury insurance is compulsory for all employers, although not for people who are self-employed. Larger company employers are entitled to fund and operate their own injury management and prevention programmes if they meet standards set by the compensation authority.

The complex range of systems throughout Australia can result in a national employer having to contribute up to eight separate workers' compensation schemes, with injured employees receiving varying levels of entitlements, depending upon the state or territory in which an injury is sustained. A review of the current systems has been proposed with the aim of finding ways in which a more consistent set of arrangements can be established nationally to cover workers' compensation as well as workers' occupational health, safety and welfare issues.

It is estimated that almost half a million Australians were injured at work in 2000.[20] For people of working age with a disability, nearly one-quarter of their main impairments were caused through accident or injury (23 per cent) or were due to working conditions or overwork (15 per cent). Of those due to accidents, more than one-third (36 per cent) occurred at work. The most common, non-fatal, work-related injury was sprain and strain of joints and muscles, accounting for 54 per cent of injuries. Back injuries accounted for 25 per cent of total workplace injuries. The national figure for return-to-work rates for injured workers was 84 per cent, with Tasmania at the upper level (90 per cent) and South Australia at the lowest level (79 per cent). Nearly seven out of ten injured workers were male (68 per cent), with a mean age of 42 years. [21]

2.5 Environmental factors affecting full participation

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 makes discrimination unlawful and the Commonwealth Disability Strategy (*see Section 3.3*) has been implemented to remove barriers affecting the lives of persons with disabilities. Much positive action is occurring to prevent, or redress, barriers to full participation in employment, education, recreation, etc. for people with disabilities. These are mentioned throughout this report. However, some challenges still remain in all areas, as the following explains.

Physical environment

To comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, 1992, all public buildings in Australia are required to include accessible facilities for wheelchair users or other people with mobility impairments, unless the cost of alteration is deemed to be prohibitive or would incur unjustifiable hardship, in which case exemption may be granted.

Under the DDA, government authorities, businesses, educational institutions and other agencies can register an access plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). This is a voluntary process for employers, trade unions, government authorities and organizations to develop both a written comment and a measurable strategy for supporting people with disabilities within their workplaces, area of governance and educational settings. In 2000/2001, 24 business enterprises, 20 non-government organizations, 30 Commonwealth departments, 28 state government departments, 76 local government departments and 33 educational providers registered access plans at the HREOC. The Productivity Commission has commenced an inquiry into the cost-benefit of the DDA as

[20] ABS: 4102.0 Australian Social Trends, 2002
[21] ABS: Australian Social Trends 2002, Health-risk factors: Work-related injuries

part of the review of all legislation pertaining to national competition policy principles. The draft report is to be available in September 2003.[22]

Where physical impediments exist in the workplace, employers of people with a disability may be able to access government subsidies for workplace modifications. Interviews conducted with people with disabilities and others indicate a level of confidence that consumer advocacy is effective in improving environmental accessibility, although many challenges remain in older buildings, public amenities, footpaths, etc.

Transport

Some forms of public transport, for example some public buses and trains, have been modified to assist wheelchair users. An Access Cab system of modified taxis also operates in all states and territories. However, these services are generally limited to major urban areas.

A taxi transport subsidy scheme exists in all states and territories. Fares are usually subsidized to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total fare with the use of vouchers. There is no limit on the number of vouchers that can be used intrastate, but an interstate maximum usually applies.

Reviews of public transport and the Access Cab system consistently have found that the lack of regular availability of accessible transport, demand for services around peak times during the day and the high costs associated with using modified taxis still present barriers for many people.

Assistive devices

A wide range of assistive devices and augmentative technology is available in Australia. Aids and appliances can be purchased or hired by people with disabilities through a network of independent living centres (ILC), hospitals and government and non-government agencies. Often ILC consultants will visit schools and other services to provide on-site support and advice. A lending scheme can be arranged within the Department of Education for school students to trial devices best suited to their need.

The cost of assistive equipment can be a significant barrier for people with a low income, or even with reasonable income. Many specialist service providers, such as those who provide support to particular disability groups, can supply assistive equipment for people who are in skills training or are employed. Options also exist to submit to the relevant state government body an application for a non-recurrent grant for an individual needing equipment. Disability employment services funded by the Commonwealth Government have access to professional therapy and rehabilitation resources and can, within limits, provide aids and appliances, or modify equipment, to meet individual needs.

People with a disability living in rural and remote areas have an additional problem accessing trial products and services, such as the ILC. In addition, where products require repairs, this can mean lengthy periods without assistance as no interim equipment can be provided where adaptive equipment suits a particular person's individual needs. This can prove particularly detrimental where equipment is utilized within education, training and employment settings.

[22] The Productivity Commission, established in 1998, is the Commonwealth Government's principal advisory body on all aspects of microeconomic reform.

The Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association (ARATA) is a forum for information sharing on a national and international level, for people with disabilities and for research and development of assistive devices. With a focus on the advancement of rehabilitation technologies for people with disabilities, ARATA hosts and coordinates conferences at various levels. In 2000, ARATA signed the Tokushima Agreement with Japan. This agreement forms a binding arrangement between the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of Japan, the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe, the Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Society of North America and ARATA. The agreement also strengthens the international network and increases the quality of service and available information for service users. These partnerships provide the foundation for international and national clearinghouses for research and development of assistive technology.

Communication

The Commonwealth Government funds an array of services to assist people with hearing, sight and/or communication impairments. For example, the Australian Communication Exchange provides a range of telecommunication services, including a typewriter telephone service and operator-delivered speech-to-speech relay service.

A print and caption translation service assists people in accessing written information, and captioned television news broadcasts. The Commonwealth Government also subsidizes the production of printed material in formats accessible to people who, by reason of their disability, are unable to access information provided in the mainstream print medium. In addition, the *AccessAbility* grants programme was introduced in the 1998/1999 budget as a measure to improve access to the Internet and online services for people with disabilities. The funding aims to support the development of new products services or systems that alleviate the barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing mainstream online services in accordance with mandates within the DDA.[23] FaCS maintains an Internet register of services able to prepare information in a range of differing formats including large print, Braille, audio, easy English and pictorial and a list of advisory bodies that can assist those who are unsure which format will meet their needs.[24]

With regard to purchasing communication devices, again there is the issue of cost prohibition. Several communication devices cost the same or more as a brand new car (e.g. A$16,500). In some instances all costs are covered, in other programmes, the funding department will seek a 50 percent financial input from the primary caregiver or person with a disability. Difficulties with equipment breaking down and repair issues also exist.

2.6 Social factors affecting full participation

The DDA constitutes the legal basis for the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities and makes it an offence to treat someone less favourably because of their disability in a number of areas of public life, including access to places and facilities,

[23] HREOC Accessibility Investigation, Submission from the Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts, 2001

[24] See http://www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/reg/reg_index.htm

employment, education, and the provision of goods and services. The legislation provides for the investigation of discrimination complaints by the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, positioned within the HREOC. Many other consumer organizations and advocacy forums also operate around Australia to help people to voice concerns and raise awareness about disability discrimination.

Direct discrimination is generally not widespread or overt, but it is clear that prejudicial attitudes and misconceptions still exist. For example, HREOC received 443 complaints under the DDA in 2000/2001 and resolved a total of 505 complaints during this period. Of these, 340 (43 per cent) related to employment, 211 (27 per cent) related to discrimination in the provision of goods, services and facilities, and a further 65 complaints (8 per cent) related to education.

A Disability Services Abuse and Neglect Hotline, established by FaCS in December 2001, links people with complaints to relevant authorities. More than 430 reports of allegations of abuse and neglect affecting people with disabilities using government-funded disability services have been lodged with the hotline since it began.

2.7 Disabled persons' organizations

The FaCS reported a total of 972 Commonwealth disability support service outlets from its 2001 census. Of these, 84.4 per cent were employment services and the remainder involved a combination of respite, print services, information services and advocacy.[25] The National Disability Advocacy Programme, (administered by FaCS) funds 77 advocacy organizations, at an approximate cost of A$10 million per annum, with state governments giving some A$3.8 million to advocacy services.

Ten key consumer groups in the disability sector are: Carers Association of Australia, National Council on Intellectual Disability, Blind Citizens Australia, Physical Disability Council of Australia, Deafness Forum, Women With Disabilities (Australia), Brain Injury Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance and the Indigenous Disability Network.

[25] FaCS: Disability Services Census, 2001

Part Three: Legislation, Policies and Institutional Structure

3.1 International policies adopted

Australia is a signatory to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia and Pacific Region. The International Labour Organization Convention No. 159 was ratified by Australia in August 1990.

3.2 National legislation

The main Commonwealth legislation relating to people with disabilities:

- Disability Services Act, 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
- Disability Services Amendment (Improved Quality Assurance) Bill, 2002.

Further legislation containing provisions relevant to disability and employment:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1987
- Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 1988
- Industrial Relations Act, 1993
- Workplace Relations Act, 1996
- Public Service Act, 1999
- Public Employment (Consequential and Transitional) Amendment Bill, 1999, first reading.

The following describes those main laws and various provisions.

Disability Services Act (DSA), 1986
The DSA replaced the Handicapped Persons Assistance Act, 1974 and represents a significant change in the support of Australians with disabilities into broader employment opportunities. The aims of this Act are:

> *"To enable people with disabilities to achieve a better quality of life including increased independence, employment opportunities and integration in the community…[and to]…promote a positive image of people with disabilities in the community."*

Coupled with its emphasis on integrating people with disabilities into the broader community, the DSA outlines a number of key principles and objectives specifically related to the workplace. These include skills development and open employment outcomes, as well as the provision of post-placement support for job maintenance. The DSA also promotes individualized programmes designed to accommodate the wide variation in needs and abilities among people with a disability. The legislation requires that programmes and services funded under the DSA by the Government are essentially community-based in structure and that the delivery of these programmes and services is fully compliant with all relevant national standards.

Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (DDA)

The DDA aims to:

> *"…ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; [and to]…promote recognition and acceptance, within the community, of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community."*

As such, the central objective of the DDA is to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people on the grounds of disability in the areas of employment (Section 15), education (Section 22), access to premises (Section 23), provision of goods, services and facilities (Section 24), accommodation (Section 25), land transactions (Section 26), activities and/or clubs (Section 27), sport (Section 28), and in the administration of all Commonwealth laws and Commonwealth programmes (Section 29).

The definition of disability in the DDA encompasses physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and neurological or learning disabilities (*see Section 2.1*).

Employment provisions of the DDA

The DDA makes it unlawful for an employer or a person acting or purporting to act on behalf of an employer to discriminate on the grounds of a person's disability. The employment provisions of the DDA encompass selection, conditions of employment, training and promotion opportunities and dismissal of workers. Also included is registration and licensing to work in a trade or profession and membership of a trade union, trade association or professional association. The provisions also support clear access and supportive pathways in and to employment agencies and Commonwealth employment programmes.

Exemptions can be made where the work is performed in the home of the person with a disability and if the person with a disability does not have the functional capacity to meet the inherent requirements of a particular job. An "unjustifiable hardship" clause exists within the DDA and can be invoked where allowances, modifications or accommodations of the person with a disability impose unreasonable hardship on an employer.

Education provisions of the DDA

Section 22 of the DDA relates to education and includes provisions that make unlawful any discrimination on the basis of disability in enrolment, access and benefits to students by any school, college, university, or any other training or educational institution, including all Commonwealth education or training courses. Similar to the employment provisions, exemptions are allowed where an educational institution would experience unjustifiable hardship in meeting the requirements of the DDA or where the school or institution caters to a specific disability and the person does not have that disability.

Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1987 (EEO)

The purposes of the EEO are to eliminate discrimination by Commonwealth authorities and to promote equal opportunity for women and persons in designated groups in relation to employment matters. The EEO requires the relevant authorities to develop an Equal Employment Opportunity Programme to ensure that appropriate action is taken. People with physical or mental disability are specifically designated in the EEO. Discrimination against persons with a physical or mental disability takes place when a person:

> *"…is, because of the disability, treated less favourably than a person without the disability…."*[26]

The EEO applies to Commonwealth authorities and to the territories. Some states have introduced laws dealing with equal opportunity in a range of areas, including employment (such as the State of Victoria Equal Opportunity Act, 1984).

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 1988

While work-related injuries are generally the responsibility of state and territory governments, Commonwealth employees are covered under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 1988. This legislation provides the legal framework for Comcare, a federal statutory authority reporting to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, which is responsible for workplace safety, rehabilitation and compensation in the Commonwealth jurisdiction. Comcare aims to reduce the human and financial costs of workplace injury and disease by working with customers to prevent injuries and return injured employees to work.

Workplace Relations Act, 1996

The main objective of this legislation is to provide a framework for cooperative workplace relations that promotes the economic prosperity and welfare of the people of Australia. The law refers to the need to respect and value the diversity of the workforce and to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability.

Public Service Act, 1999

Revised from the Public Service Act, 1922, the promotion of employment equity within the public sector became the responsibility of each agency head in developing and implementing a Workplace Diversity Programme.[27] Supportive legislation in the areas of equal employment opportunity, disability discrimination, sex and racial discrimination, in general, are components of the Workplace Diversity Programmes. The Act is supported by the Public Service Commissioner's Direction (1999) in promoting equity and diversity in the workplace and eliminating employment-related disadvantages experienced as a result of gender, indigenous identification, race or ethnicity and physical or mental disability in all areas of employment and accessibility within the public sector.[28] The Public Service Commissioner's Direction requires the agency head to conduct an annual audit on the performance indicators for the Workplace Diversity Programmes and to submit these to the Commissioner upon request.

Public Employment (Consequential and Transitional) Amendment Bill, 1999, first reading

This bill lists numerous acts where the definition of "designated groups" includes women, indigenous Australians, immigrants from non-English-speaking countries and their children and people with a physical or mental disability. In employment, employers are required to take special measures to prevent discrimination and include representatives from this group when consultation action takes place. For example, the Meat and Livestock Industry Act, 1995, No. 67, Section 52 states that as a component of the equal employment opportunity

[26] Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1987, Part I Article 3 Interpretation b)
[27] Public Service Act, 1999, No. 147 Section 18
[28] Public Service Commissioner's Directions, 1999, chapters 2 and 3

programme, the employer shall include in statistical collection the type of job and number of positions occupied by "designated" people. In addition, the act requires that policies and procedures are not intrinsically or extrinsically discriminating.

Industrial Relations Reform Act, 1993
The primary aim of this act is to facilitate

> *"…the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes"* …[and thereby promote]… *the economic prosperity and welfare of the people of Australia."*

The act includes provisions aimed at

> *"…helping to prevent and eliminate discrimination (in the workplace) on the basis of physical or mental disability."*

Disability Services Amendment (Improved Quality Assurance) Bill, 2002
The Quality Assurance Bill is a measure that aims to improve the level of quality provided by Commonwealth-funded employment and rehabilitation services. Employment and rehabilitation services must be certified against the disability standards as a compliance measure of quality and retain compliance through an external audit process each year.

3.3 Disability policies and regulations

In addition to the laws and supplementing provisions, the Government has several national plans in place related to people with disabilities, as the following explains.

Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)
The CSTDA is a formal arrangement between the Commonwealth Government and all state and territory governments that divides responsibility for the administration and funding of disability support services between the different governments. The Commonwealth Government is responsible for the administration and funding of employment services for people with disabilities, largely through the Commonwealth Disability Employment Assistance Programme, and the associated disability pensions and allowances, which are administered through Centrelink (*see Section 3.5*). State and territory governments are responsible for the administration and funding of accommodation support, respite care, day activity programmes and other "quality of life" services and facilities for people with disabilities and their carers.

First formed in 1991, the CSTDA aims to foster the economic and social participation of people with disabilities by providing a coordinated, rationalized and integrated approach to the provision and administration of disability services across Australia. Incorporated within the agreement is a national development plan for the training and employment of people with disabilities.

Australians Working Together
Introduced in the 2001-2002 Commonwealth budget, Australians Working Together is a national plan embracing the key departments involved in the support of people with disabilities who are moving into skills training or employment. The principal purpose of this plan is to support individuals of working age in training, finding employment and accessing appropriate government pensions, benefits and allowances.

A job outcome-focused model, Australians Working Together is the current Government's response to the general debate in Australia about welfare reform. It targets Commonwealth-provided services, such as the Job Network, a number of community-based organizations and Centrelink (*see Sections 3.5 and 3.6*). Its ultimate aim is to reduce the number of welfare recipients and maximize labour-force participation. The strategy is managed by the National Disability Services, which is currently implementing 16,350 additional disability employment places that the Government requested as part of the package. Re-entry to work incentives are included in the strategy to assist individuals moving from unemployment to employment.

Working credit is a new scheme announced by the Government as part of the Australians Working Together package and will begin on 28 April 2003. It aims to encourage people of working age who get income support payments to take up full-time, part-time or casual work by allowing them to keep more of their payments while working. People whose total income (including income from paid work and investments, etc.) is less than A$48 every two weeks will build up working credits to a maximum of 1,000 credits over time. Working credits are used when a person's employment income reaches a level that would affect their income support payment: Currently, recipients of DSP can earn A$116 every two weeks without reducing their payments. When people earn more than this amount, they will use their working credit to reduce how much income is assessed under the income test.[29]

Commonwealth Disability Strategy
In 1994, the Commonwealth Disability Strategy was launched as a ten-year plan of action for departments and agencies to remove existing barriers in programmes, services and facilities for people with disabilities. A revised Commonwealth Disability Strategy was launched in October 2000 to assist agencies in designing and delivering policies, programmes and services that are accessible to people with a disability. The revised strategy builds on recommendations from a 1999 mid-term evaluation, and includes new features to assist Commonwealth agencies measure, report and improve their performance in meeting the needs of people with a disability over time. The removal of barriers for people with a disability is applicable to the policies and programmes of all Commonwealth departments and agencies in their core roles as employer, regulator, provider, policy adviser and purchaser.

Bridging Pathways
Bridging Pathways is a national strategy focused on increasing the opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training. The strategy was developed with the support of state/territory training authorities, disability organizations and other key stakeholders in the consultation process, such as people with a disability, vocational education and training policymakers and planners, training providers and industry groups.

[29] Working Credit, Australians Working Together, Centrelink

The Australian National Training Authority (*see Section 3.5*) endorsed the strategy in June 2000.

The goals of the Bridging Pathways national strategy are to increase access and successful participation in all fields of study by people with a disability with a focus on employment outcomes and to create accountable systems that provide equitable outcomes. The strategy also seeks to promote lifelong learning and to enable greater contribution to economic and social life.

Systemic changes and a greater focus on collaboration with the disability and employment sectors are planned within the vocational education and training (VET) system (*see Section 4.4*). At a national level, key initiatives include:

- Development of an equity advisory service to ensure that national training packages are inclusive of people with a disability;
- The establishment of a Regional Disability Coordination Officer programme, designed to provide a greater coordination of services for people with a disability in vocational education and training at a regional level;
- A strong focus on research that will inform future activities, including a project to explore existing methods of purchasing training for people with a disability, and the identification of new mechanisms to enhance the equitable access to training opportunities for people with a disability;
- The establishment of frameworks and systems for identifying and raising awareness of issues with key stakeholders; and
- The establishment of strategic partnerships.

The Adelaide Declaration (1999)

In 1999, the Commonwealth, state and territory ministers of education negotiated a new set of national goals for school education outcomes, released as The Adelaide Declaration (1999) on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.

Goal 3 in the declaration states that:

> *"Schools should be socially just, so that students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability, and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location."*

Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes Programme

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (*see Section 3.5*) administers the Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes Programme. The programme began in 2001 with a key objective to assist both government and non-government schools to improve the educational participation and outcomes of students with disabilities.

School to Work Transition Initiative

The Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF) (*see Section 3.5*) is a national body assisting those who leave school to move into the workforce. In collaboration with the

Australian Disability Training and Advisory Council, ECEF developed a national disability initiative in November 2000 to increase the participation of students with a disability in structured workplace learning programmes.

National disability standards

Section 9 of the Disability Services Act, 1986 outlines the standards that all organizations funded under the act to provide disability services must comply. These standards are as follows:

- **Service access**: Each person with a disability seeking a service has access to that service on the basis of relative need and available resources.
- **Individual needs**: Each person with a disability receives a service that is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and personal goals.
- **Decision making and choice**: Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or her daily life in relation to the services he or she receives.
- **Privacy, dignity and confidentiality**: Each service recipient's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognized and respected.
- **Participation and integration**: Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate in and be involved with the community.
- **Valued status**: Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.
- **Complaints and disputes**: Each service recipient is encouraged to raise and have resolved without fear of retribution, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the agency or service.
- **Service management**: Each agency adopts quality management systems and practices that optimize outcomes for service recipients.
- **Employment conditions**: Each person with a disability enjoys working conditions comparable to those of the general workforce.
- **Service recipient training and support**: The employment opportunities for each person with a disability are optimized by effective and relevant training and support.
- **Staff recruitment, employment and training**: Each person employed to deliver services to the service recipient has the relevant skills and competencies.
- **Protection of human rights and freedom from abuse**: The agency acts to prevent abuse and neglect and to uphold the legal and human rights of all service recipients.

Quality assurance framework for disability employment services

A robust quality assurance system for disability employment and rehabilitation services has been developed to independently assess service quality against the revised disability services standards. The updated system was implemented in July 2002.

Within this system, all government-funded disability employment services are audited for compliance with the national standards (listed above) that are relevant to employment and training. Future funding will be dependent upon each agency's ability to demonstrate quality management systems that meet the standards. Among other criteria, the quality assurance system requires services to demonstrate that staff hold skills in the areas of communication,

appropriate conduct, positive attitude, respect and dignity, effective support delivery and responding to individual need. Agencies are required to recruit, train and provide individual professional development for staff as well as support learning that responds to the changing needs of both the organization and individual staff.

The 2002-2003 funding agreements for disability employment services reflect the requirements of the new system. Before a grant can be made for 2002-2003, new and existing employment organizations need to acquire a certificate of compliance or a notice of intention to obtain a certificate of compliance.

If an existing employment organization does not hold a current certificate of compliance, it must meet the standards and supporting standards that were applicable to it immediately before the 2002-2003 agreement. To continue receiving funding, existing organizations need to be certified before 31 December 2004. To be eligible for funding, new organizations must be formally certified within six months of the date the grant was approved. This period can be extended in special circumstances but cannot be more than 12 months.[30] Failure to meet the standards will result in the service breaching its contract and thus will be unable to gain funding until areas of non-compliance are remedied and certification regained.

Accredited certification agencies assess and formally certify disability employment and rehabilitation services against the 12 disability services standards (listed previously) and 26 associated key performance indicators. The new quality assurance system is based on a system of accreditation that utilizes international standards of best practices and involves skilled audit teams whose competence and impartiality will be monitored by the independent, internationally recognized accreditation agency, JAS-ANZ (Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand).

Students with disabilities: Code of conduct for tertiary institutions

The Code of Practice for Australian Tertiary Institutions was developed in 1998 and provides general principles, minimum standards, examples of good practice and operating guidelines to achieve equity in educational opportunities for people with a disability. The code, endorsed by HREOC, is an extremely useful tool for tertiary institutions when developing disability access plans. HREOC also recommends that other education institutes utilize the expertise encompassed within the code in making educational settings accessible and equitable.

FaCS-funded research projects

The Department of Family and Community Services funds research projects related to employment and vocational rehabilitation for people with a disability. Recent projects include:

1) The Research into Open Employment project, which is examining the effectiveness of service providers who place people with disabilities into open employment. The project seeks to identify ways service delivery can be enhanced. It has been developed in consultation with the ACE National Network, the National Caucus of Disability Consumer Organizations and ACROD (*see Section 3.5*).

[30] FaCS: Quality Assurance Newsletter No. 7, May 2002

2) The Rural and Remote Disability Employment Assistance Study examines the funding principles and models that most effectively encourage the development of innovative employment service delivery for people with disabilities living in rural and remote areas of Australia. The project examines new avenues to improve and modify the current system of determining productivity-based wages in open employment settings is the Supported Wage Evaluation.

3) Through the Business Services Review, FaCS, in collaboration with ACROD, in 2000 analyzed wages paid to people with disabilities employed in the business services operations. One of the review's most significant recommendations was for business services to develop a consistent measure to determine pro-rata wages, linked to an appropriate award wage or incorporated into a legally ratified industrial agreement (*see Section 4.9*).

3.4 Evaluation and review of policies

Principle mechanisms for ensuring accountability and improvement include the FaCS annual disability services census, which investigates the service outcomes of disability employment service providers; measures include the number of consumers assisted and their vocational outcomes. Another mechanism is the quality assurance framework introduced by the FaCS (*explained in previous section*) to ensure that disability employment and rehabilitation services improve accountability and performance. Disability employment services are required to implement and review these standards and submit their evaluations to FaCS.

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy Performance Reporting Framework evaluates the disability strategy in terms of the outcomes and performance measures for each of the five main roles (employer, regulator, provider, policy adviser and purchaser) carried out by disability service providers and agencies. Since 2000, all disability agencies have been required to outline their progress in implementing the strategy in their annual reports.

All policies, programmes and services are reviewed and evaluated regularly.

3.5 Institutional structure for policy and service implementation

Department of Family and Community Services

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services is the principal government authority for the provision of disability employment and vocational rehabilitation services in Australia and for administering pensions and income support allowances for people with disabilities. Through specialized employment and vocational rehabilitation services, the FaCS encourages employers to provide durable job opportunities for people with a disability, including workplace modifications, wage subsidies, supported wage assessments and grants to address change in business recruitment practices as incentives. The FaCS also implements, monitors and facilitates service and funding arrangements under the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and their carers by providing direct funding to disability service providers or through grants to state and territory governments and agencies. In addition, the FaCS

administers the quality assurance framework for FaCS-funded employment and rehabilitation services

The FaCS employs about 5,500 staff nationwide in a range of branches and agencies. Disability-related agencies and units in the Department include the Office of Disability, which is responsible for managing disability and carer-specific income support (administered through Centrelink, *see Section 3.5*). It is also responsible for raising the awareness of Commonwealth organizations and businesses about making their services, facilities and employment opportunities accessible for people with a disability. The Australians Working Together Disability Service Reforms Branch works closely with the Office of Disability and is responsible for the development and implementation of funding, quality and strategic reforms for employment assistance and vocational rehabilitation within the context of the initiative (*see Section 3.3*). That initiative provides funding for a range of disability employment services, such as financial reviews and business planning and managing incentive programmes for employers. The National Disability Services Unit (NDS) is responsible for developing policy and implementing programmes for people with disabilities relating to employment assistance, access and participation. Some of the key NDS projects include funding for more than 800 disability employment service outlets across Australia and the administration of the additional disability employment places (more than 16,000) as part of the Australians Working Together initiative.

Centrelink

Australia's welfare system is based on a national public funding system financed through general taxation revenue. Income support payments for people of workforce age (16 years to eligible retirement age) are designed to provide adequate income to those who cannot participate in regular paid employment.

Centrelink administers all income support and welfare payments, including the disability support pension (*see Section 4.13: Poverty alleviation*).

CRS Australia

CRS Australia (formerly known as the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service) is contracted by the FaCS to provide direct services to people with disabilities. It is the largest provider of vocational rehabilitation services in the country.

Department of Education Science and Training (DEST)

Under Australia's constitutional arrangements, the states and territories have principal responsibility for the administration of primary and secondary school education, higher education and vocational education and training, while the Commonwealth government provides most of the funding. Supplementary funding is available from DEST to both state and territory schools for students with a disability, through schemes such as the Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes Programme and the Strategic Assistance Funding for Students with Disabilities (*see Section 3.3*)

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)

The ANTA is a Commonwealth statutory authority and funded by DEST. It was established in 1994 to provide a national focus for vocational education and training and administers Commonwealth funding for the VET system. ANTA advises the ANTA Ministerial Council

(composed of Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for vocational education and training) on national VET policy, goals, strategies, priorities and objectives.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
The NCVER is responsible for the collection of national VET statistics, including managing training stakeholder surveys involving the employer, student and graduate in relation to VET outcomes and performance. NCVER is the hub for VET library and information services in Australia. It produces the UNESCO/NCVER international vocational education and training research database (VOCED) and coordinates the national VET Clearinghouse Network.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)
Although the training and employment of people with disabilities largely falls within the responsibility of the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations also assists people with disabilities to find employment. The DEWR coordinates employment services that provide job-seeking assistance to Australians and forms part of a national network of employment services collectively known as the Job Network (*see Sections 3.6 and 4.7*).

Disability advisory councils and committees

National Disability Advisory Council (NDAC)
Established in 1996, NDAC provides consumer-focused advice to the Minister for Family and Community Services on disability issues and encourages consultation between the Government, people with a disability and their families and carers, and disability service providers. The Minister of Family and Community Services appoints the council members.

In 2000-2001, the NDAC advised the minister on several disability issues, including the re-negotiation of the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement (*see Section 3.3*) and the development of standards under the Disability Discrimination Act, health and ageing problems confronting people with a disability and the policy management of indigenous people with a disability.

Australian Disability Training Advisory Council (ADTAC)
The ADTAC is a subcommittee of ANTA and oversees the implementation of Bridging Pathways (*see Section 3.3*). The subcommittee is composed of state and territory training authorities, Commonwealth officials, people with a disability, training providers and industry and ANTA representatives. The ADTAC priorities are to improve pathways for people with a disability into new apprenticeships, establish a mechanism to coordinate support and advice for existing and future students with a disability, promote graduates to employers and, overall, improve opportunities and outcomes from in-school programmes, such as school-based traineeships.

Ministerial Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Commonwealth, state and territory ministers of education meet annually as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. The committee works closely with the ANTA in coordinating strategic education policy at the national level,

including the areas of pre-primary education, primary and secondary education, vocational education and training and employment.

Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF)
The ECEF provides assistance to those leaving school in making the transition into the workforce. ECEF works closely with education, government and industry bodies to facilitate industry-based learning programmes for school students. These programmes combine classroom learning with on-the-job training.

3.6 Other implementing organizations

Job Network
The Job Network is a system of government-funded, private-sector agencies that provide a range of employment services, including those designed to match people with disabilities with appropriate job opportunities. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations contracts with approximately 200 organizations to provide employment services to job seekers at more than 2,000 sites across Australia. Of these, more than 100 have specific expertise in supporting people with disabilities.

National Disability Advisory Council (NDAC)
Established in 1996, the NDAC is a consumer-focussed body to advise the Commonwealth Government through the Minister for Family and Community Services, who appoints the council members. Members are selected on the basis of their experience and expertise in disability issues. The NDAC fills an important role in facilitating consultation with disability consumer organizations, families, carers and service providers on major government policy initiatives. It also maintains links with similar disability advisory bodies, which operate at the state/territory level. It therefore provides an important avenue for the Government to obtain feedback from the disability community on the operation of its programmes and services.

National Caucus of Disability Consumer Organizations
The National Caucus of Disability Consumer Organizations was established in August 1995. Membership includes the ten key consumer groups in the disability sector: Carers Association of Australia, National Council on Intellectual Disability, Blind Citizens Australia, Physical Disability Council of Australia, Deafness Forum, Women With Disabilities (Australia), Brain Injury Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance and the Indigenous Disability Network.

National Disability Advocacy Programme
Administered by the Department of Family and Community Services, this programme aims to enable people with disabilities to achieve and maintain their rights as citizens and to improve their access to and participation in community life, taking into account the family context (*see Section 2.7*). While not directly involved in consultation with the Commonwealth, the advocacy organizations are supported to make their views heard and thus to influence decision making within their communities.

The purpose of the programme is to assist people with disabilities, their families and carers to participate in community life on an equitable basis and to achieve their rights as citizens.

Objectives of the National Disability Advocacy Programme are:

- Prevention of abuse, discrimination or negligent treatment of people with disabilities;
- Promotion and enhancement of the rights of people with disabilities;
- Encouragement for people with disabilities to make informed choices;
- Increased economic and social participation for people with disabilities in the community;
- Assistance for people with severe disabilities to participate equitably in community life;
- Increased knowledge and understanding of people with disabilities, their families and carers about the rights of people with disabilities; and
- Improved communication between people with disabilities and other members of the community.

ACROD

Established in 1963, ACROD (formerly known as the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled) is a key disability agency that represents a range of disability service organizations in lobbying for and promoting the development of quality services and life opportunities for Australians with disabilities.

Association for Competitive Employment (ACE) National Network

Established in the 1990s, ACE National Network is a peak disability body representing its state member organizations at the national level to promote quality service provision for people with disabilities in open employment.

Part Four: Education, Vocational Training and Employment

4.1 Education system

Under Australia's federal system of government, states and territories have responsibility for education and training. Each state and territory has legislation to ensure that all children and youth (including those with disabilities) have access to and receive an adequate education. Education is compulsory for young people aged between 6 and 15 years in most states or to 16 years in others. Exemption from school attendance is only granted in exceptional circumstances; for example, when a child or parent is ill, the child is satisfactorily educated at home or where, for other reasons, it is deemed in the best interests of the child to be exempted from school attendance.

In 2001, 3.3 million students were enrolled in schools throughout Australia, with approximately 69 per cent attending government schools that provide free or low-cost education. The remaining 31 per cent attend non-government or private schools, the majority of which are affiliated with Christian or other religious or cultural groups. Non-government schools receive some government financial assistance but also charge student fees.[31]

All students aged 6 to approximately 12 years of age attend primary school and continue for some years in secondary school. Excluding Queensland and Western Australia, which offer 12 years of schooling, all other states and territories offer 13 years of schooling.[32]

Females make up slightly over half the total number of students (51.8 per cent). However, there is a significant difference between male and female retention rates in the final year of secondary school, with 84.9 per cent of girls graduating compared with 73.9 per cent of boys.

Generic post-school options include universities, colleges of technical and further education, adult re-entry colleges or privately run training courses that are accredited through the vocational education and training system. In May 2001, 2.6 million people aged between 15 and 64 applied to enrol in a course with 97 per cent achieving a place. Of these higher education students, females accounted for 52 per cent of all enrolments.[33] Data on the number of people with a disability gaining entry within these overall statistics was not available. However, public funded universities are required to provide an annual report on increased participatory practices and educational opportunities for people with a disability and provide statistical data as part of their grant agreements.

Other schemes and assistance – urban /rural education

A number of government-funded schemes exist to provide educational opportunities for children who live in rural and/or remote areas or who for other reasons, including severe disability, may not be able to attend school on a daily basis.

- Youth Allowance is for full-time students younger than 25 and unemployed persons younger than 21.

[31] ABS: Education and training, primary and secondary education, Year Book Australia, 2003
[32] ibid.
[33] ABS: Participation in education and training, Year Book Australia, 2003

- Austudy is a financial assistance scheme for full-time students older than 25. The FaCS administers both the youth allowance and Austudy.
- ABSTUDY provides financial assistance for eligible Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who undertake approved secondary or tertiary education courses by full-time study or correspondence or who undertake part-time tertiary study. In addition, some assistance is available to primary students aged 14 years or older who live at home.
- The pension education supplement may be accessed by persons who are seeking to be a full-time or part-time student and who are in receipt of a disability support pension, single parenting or carer payment certain widow pension types, or a payment through the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- The student financial supplement scheme (SFSS) is a voluntary loan scheme available to students receiving the Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY and the pensioner education supplement. Dependent full-time students who are not eligible for the Youth Allowance may still access a SFSS loan if parental income is below a certain threshold.

Loan repayments do not commence until five years after the loan is taken out and only when income reaches a certain level (A$32,918 in 2000/2001). During 2000/2001, 41,382 students took up the SFSS option, receiving A$158 million in loans. As Table 4.1 shows, students receiving the Youth Allowance took out A$81 million in SFSS loans, Austudy recipients took out A$42 million in SFSS loans and ABSTUDY recipients A$35 million in loans.[34]

Given the vast areas of arid land and the lack of accessibility for education in isolated areas, distance education programmes offer tuition through Schools of the Air, correspondence, computer and facsimile technologies. In addition, the Homeschoolers Australia programme provides for dispensation from mainstream school attendance in approved circumstances, when a parent/guardian takes on the role of teaching their children. Further, the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) scheme provides financial assistance for families of primary and secondary school students as well as tertiary students younger than 16 through the Distance Education Allowance, the Second Home Allowance and the Basic Boarding Allowance. Approximately 12,000 students each year benefit from these schemes.

[34] ABS: Education and Training, Government Assistance to students, Year Book Australia, 2003

Table 4.1. Student assistance schemes and usage, 2000/2001

Scheme	Students No.	Assistance $ million
Youth Allowance	308,663	2,259
Austudy	41,992	242
ABSTUDY	50,451	158
Assistance to Isolated Children (AIC)	11,993	36
Youth Allowance SFSS	23,458	81
Austudy SFSS	11,084	42
ABSTUDY SFSS	6,840	35

Source: ABS: Education and Training, Government Assistance to students, Year Book Australia, 2003

4.2 Educational opportunities for children with disabilities

In a 1998 survey,[35] 8 per cent of all children aged between 5 and 17 (277,400 in total) were identified as having a disability. The majority of these children (83 per cent) attended regular schools and of the remaining children, 24,000 (9 per cent) attended special school. Some 23,600 (8 per cent) did not attend school at all. More than 66,000 (29 per cent) of those children attending regular schools were in special classes for at least some of their education.

Table 4.2 Children with disabilities attending school

	School participation rate		Type of school/class				
	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Ordinary class / regular school	Special class/ regular school	Special schools	Total	Percentage of all school children
Age group	%	%	'000	'000	'000	'000	%
5-12	97.2	98.1	118.6	46.0	14.9	179.5	8.7
13-15	92.6	97.9	26.2	18.1	7.9	52.2	6.6
16-17	60.8	72.5	18.6	2.3	1.2	22.1	5.8
Total	**91.5**	**94.1**	**163.5**	**66.3**	**24.0**	**253.8**	**7.8**

Source: 1998 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

As shown in Table 4.2, participation rates of children with disabilities are only marginally lower than of their non-disabled classmates. The difference, however, is more marked in non-compulsory post-secondary school education for children aged 16-17 years of age, with only 61 per cent of children with a disability attending school compared with 72 per cent of those without a disability. While it is recognized that special schools, and/or special classes that

[35] ABS: 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

cater to students with disabilities are required to meet the needs of some children, Table 4.2 also demonstrates a focus on assisting children with disabilities to participate in the regular or mainstream education system. Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to participate in special classes in mainstream schools or to attend special schools (83 per cent and 78 per cent, respectively) than children with a sensory or physical disability, 83 per cent of whom attend ordinary classes.

Assistive devices and technology and special tuition methods are used extensively in the education of children with disabilities and in promoting their mainstreaming into regular schools. Some 69 per cent of children with intellectual or developmental disabilities received support or required special arrangements compared to 32 per cent of children with sensory or physical disabilities. Types of support provided include special tuition or the provision of a counsellor or support person (43 per cent) or the provision of specialized equipment, modified access or transport arrangements.

Students with disabilities in rural areas are less likely (39 per cent) to receive some form of special assistance or support from school compared to students in major urban centres (approximately 50 per cent). For the 23,800 children with disabilities living in rural Australia, there is an under-resourcing of special education professionals, services and equipment according to the FaCS.[36] In 1998, there were reportedly provisions for only 11 per cent of rural children with disabilities to attend special classes in mainstream schools, compared to 26 per cent of children with disabilities in major urban or urban centres.

Teacher training programmes in special education are provided at undergraduate and post-graduate level. Further, the Strategic Assistance Funding for Students with Disabilities is administered by a state- or territory-based authority, which contracts with a non-government disability service to provide education and training to mainstream schoolteachers so that they can support any student with disabilities.

4.3 The mainstream vocational training system

The vocational, educational and training system is the responsibility of the states and territories. However, the Australian National and Training Authority is a statutory authority, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education Sciences and Training. Established in 1994, ANTA provides a national focus for vocational education and training. Through its Ministerial Council (composed of Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for vocational education and training), ANTA advises on national VET policy, goals, strategies, priorities and objectives. ANTA also administers national programmes and Commonwealth funding for the VET system.

In May 2001, more than 4,000 registered training organizations offered VET programmes. They included TAFE institutions, private training and assessment organizations, universities, schools, enterprises and adult education providers. Most VET courses are available through distance learning, using online computer technology and posted study materials. In 2000/2001, a total of 1.7 million students participated in VET programmes.[37]

[36] FaCS: Disability Issues: Report of Attitudes, 1998
[37] ABS: Vocational Education and Training, Year Book Australia, 2003

Table 4.3 VET clients, vocational and preparatory courses, 2000/2001

Age group (years)	Males '000	Females '000	Persons '000
Under 16	20.6	17.6	38.2
16	44.8	41.8	86.7
17	56.0	48.6	104.6
18	57.6	45.9	103.7
19	52.1	39.6	92.0
20-24	150.0	116.1	266.6
25-29	98.5	87.0	185.8
30-39	164.4	164.4	329.5
40-49	124.4	151.9	276.3
50-59	70.0	77.7	148.1
60-64	13.3	14.0	27.4
65 and older	13.6	15.4	29.1
Not stated	28.3	35.9	68.4
Total clients	**893.5**	**856**	**1,756.8**

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2001

Table 4.4 VET course enrolments, vocational and preparatory courses, 2001

Field of study	Males '000	Females '000	Persons '000
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	90.6	28.8	119.6
Architecture, building	99.2	9.7	109.0
Arts, humanities and social sciences	60.4	94.6	155.5
Business, administration and economics	139.9	279.0	420.7
Education	26.4	37.7	64.2
Engineering and surveying	217.6	30.3	248.1
Health, community services	67.6	130.6	198.7
Law, legal studies	8.5	6.6	15.2
Science	104.5	87.2	192.3
Veterinary science, animal care	1.1	5.2	6.2
Services, hospitality and transportation	145.9	139.3	285.5
VET multi-field education	142.2	161.4	304.2
Total enrolments	**1,041.1**	**1,010.5**	**2,119.2**

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2001

Table 4.4 indicates that many students enrolled in more than one field of study. The dominant area for vocational education and training enrolment was business, administration and economics, with females representing 66 per cent of this student group. The lowest VET enrolment was veterinary science and animal care, which constituted 0.3 per cent of total VET students and with females dominating enrolment in this area at 84 per cent. A higher proportion of males (88 per cent) entered engineering and surveying, architecture and building (91 per cent).

Apprenticeships

Australia's new apprenticeship scheme is funded by the DEWR. The scheme entails a suitably qualified individual being linked with an employer for a three- to four-year work

placement in an industry of choice. During this period, the apprentice also attends a related VET training programme to complete the requirements of a trade certificate. The employer pays an apprenticeship wage throughout the placement but is under no obligation to retain the services of the apprentice when the trade training is completed.

Traineeships

A traineeship is a one-year full-time or two-year part-time course administered by the state or territory VET authority and is designed to place long-term unemployed people, especially those out of school and unqualified people in work, that will result in an accredited vocational training outcome. A trainee is linked with an employer who pays a trainee allowance, usually under the national training wage,[38] for most of the work week in industries such as hospitality, clerical and administration, horticulture or construction. The trainee also attends a weekly VET course or secondary school, or arrangements can be made for on-site accreditation and training at the workplace. A number of additional incentives are payable to employers who employ and place staff on traineeships or apprenticeships. These incentives, and the overall provision of training and support, are overseen by apprenticeship and traineeship centres.

4.4 Mainstream vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

The VET and apprenticeship/traineeship systems just described are available to people with disabilities. However, the participation rate of people with disabilities in mainstream VET programmes is significantly lower than that of non-disabled people.

The ANTA reports that the proportion of the Australian population with a disability, aged 15-64 (workforce age), who currently participate in vocational education and training is estimated at less than 2.5 per cent. Yet, the proportion of all Australians in that age group who participated in VET was 11 per cent in 1998 and estimated to rise to 12 per cent by 2005. The total Australian population aged 15-64 who has a disability is currently 16.7 per cent, yet the proportion of the VET population (aged 15-64) who has a disability is 3.6 per cent. The estimated shortfall in the participation rate of people with a disability in the VET system was nearly 178,500 people in 1998. Without changes to the system, it will reach more than 215,000 people by year 2005.[39]

To overcome current identified barriers and encourage greater participation by people with disabilities, many VET institutions employ disability support staff who offer a range of services, such as note taking, sign language interpreting, attendant care services, transport assistance, counselling and mentoring. Volunteers or other students who receive honorarium payments in exchange also provide these services. More strategies are planned to increase opportunities and participation rates of people with disabilities in mainstream VET programmes and should be available through the Bridging Pathways evaluation. The Higher Education Equity Programme (HEEP) promotes equity objectives as an integral part of institutional planning and provision. HEEP funding is determined under the Higher Education

[38] The rates of pay within the national training wage (NTW) reflect the fact that the employee is in training and will not produce the outputs reasonably required of an employer under the pertinent industry award. An employee ceases to be under the NTW upon attainment of the competencies required within the elected vocation.

[39] ANTA, Bridging Pathways, National Strategy from 2000-2005

Funding Act, 1998. It is available to publicly funded higher education institutions to encourage them to develop strategies for increasing enrolment among equity groups, which means people living in rural and remote areas, people with disabilities, women, indigenous people and people from low socio-economic backgrounds. In 2002, total HEEP funding was approximately $5.9 million.

Translation services

The National Information Library Service provides Braille and other alternative formats to higher education facilities. However, costs for these services have increased greatly with an increase in people with disabilities attending university and due to a switch in January 2001 from subsidized translation service to full cost-recovery. The change means that a transcription of a complex textbook has gone from around A$400 to approximately A$5,500. In April 2002, 38 university representatives attended a conference with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission to seek solutions to the escalating costs of translation, and a working party has now been formed. In addition, the Government provides the Additional Support for Students with a Disability programme, a budget initiative established under Section 22 of the Higher Education Funding Act, 1988 (HEFA). Beginning in 2002, the Government has provided a total of A$7.8 million in funding for a three-year period. While there is an expectation that universities will meet the costs of providing these services to people with a disability via their operational funding, additional funds to ensure access and equity are available on a case-by-case basis if an individual's support needs are extensive.

4.5 Segregated vocational training opportunities

For more than 20 years, the Commonwealth Government has funded special vocational training programmes for people with disabilities. Some programmes cater for specific disability groups (e.g. deaf, blind, etc.). A funding requirement is that the training must have relevance for eventual employment in the open labour market.

Typical examples of funded programmes:

- An employment service that coordinates a horticultural training programme specifically for students who have a disability (primarily intellectual disability) in a VET training college. The course entails college-based training one day a week and practical work for four days a week in a gardening team in open employment settings, e.g. mowing lawns and tree planting for local municipal councils. On completion of the course, students obtain a certificate in horticulture.
- A service that supports a catering/cooking training facility. Students with a wide range of disabilities are instructed in catering, cooking, table waiting and money handling, and are assisted with job placement in the open labour market when competency is achieved.
- A group training programme that assesses the skills and interests of young people with disabilities and coordinates on-the-job work experience placements to develop confidence, social skills and direct job skills.

These programmes employ a range of professional and support staff who offer assessment, job coaching, attendant care assistance, mentoring and transport assistance.

In addition, a number of VET institutions provide segregated pre-vocational training for people with disabilities. Typical courses offered:

- Certificate in preparatory education (covering various levels of literacy, numeracy and life skills training).
- Certificate in personal management (covering basic life skills, personal grooming and hygiene).
- Certificate in employment skills training (covering topics such as working and training in a group; safety signs and information; relationships and sexual education; health and personal well-being; and rights and responsibilities in the workplace).

4.6 Self-help and peer vocational training opportunities

While self-help groups are a common extension of various disability services, i.e. parents of children with a disability discussing additional needs strategies and parents of adults with disabilities providing young parents with experiential knowledge on supports available, no self-help programmes for peer vocational training opportunities appear to operate in Australia.

4.7 Mainstream employment services

The privatization of the former Commonwealth Employment Service in 1998 and the opening up of the market to private employment agencies constituted a major reform and restructuring of Australia's labour exchange and job placement services.

Government services

The national network of service providers, contracted DEWR to assist job seekers find and maintain employment is known as the Job Network (*see Section 3.6*)**.** This network provides free access to varying levels of support for job seekers in over 2,000 agencies throughout Australia.

A three-tiered system encompassing job matching, job-search training and intensive assistance operates within the Job Network. Job Matching is a low-intensity support service that may include registering available jobs and undertaking pre-employment/job screening interviews. Almost 160 different companies provide this level of support throughout Australia. Job Search Training provides a medium-support service for individuals, which may include assistance with resume writing and job seeking skills training. Job Search Training is provided by 91 Job Network companies. For individuals requiring additional levels of job preparation, an intensive assistance service can be provided. Assistance may include structured training programmes and/or workplace modifications and support. A total of 118 companies provide this high level of assistance to job seekers throughout Australia.

Any person seeking employment is entitled to attend a government-funded Job Network agency. All are required to undertake an assessment to identify the tier of service most relevant to their entry, or re-entry, into the labour force.

Private employment agencies
In addition to the Government's Job Network, there are numerous private employment agencies throughout Australia. Most specialize in particular fields of employment or industries, for example, professional and executive appointments, clerical and administrative jobs, manufacturing and building industries. These services are generally free to job seekers, but employers pay a fee for recruitment and placement services.

4.8 Opportunities for people with disabilities in mainstream systems

People with disabilities have equal rights and access to mainstream employment systems and services. It is up to an individual to identify whether he or she has a disability and to choose whether to access mainstream or segregated disability employment programmes.

According to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 2000-2001 annual report, 17.5 per cent of all job seekers accessing the Job Network and Job Matching services (low intensity) identified themselves as having a disability. Some 5.3 per cent of job seekers accessing Job Search Training assistance (medium intensity) identified themselves as having a disability. And 36 per cent of job seekers accessing the intensive assistance (high intensity) identified themselves as having a disability.

4.9 Special employment and employment support

Centrelink acts as the central referral network for all disability employment services funded by the FaCS. Each Centrelink office employs a disability officer who, among other functions, administers the job seeker classification instrument (JSCI) and the work ability tables (WAT) to determine eligibility for these services. The JSCI forms the first part of a two-tier assessment process for people with disabilities. It includes a profile of support needs and a measure of labour market disadvantage. The WAT assessments aim to quantify an individual's work-related level of function. The tables generate a profile of core work abilities, including travelling to and from work, reporting to work regularly, persisting at work tasks, understanding and following instructions, communicating with others in the workplace, work behaviour, learning and undertaking a variety of tasks and gross motor abilities such as lifting, carrying and moving objects at work.

Disability employment services
Disability employment services funded by the FaCS include open employment services, supported employment services, open and supported employment and business services. Open employment services provide employment assistance to people with disabilities in obtaining and/or retaining paid open employment while supported employment services, (traditionally known as sheltered workshops) provide direct employment suited to the assessed individual capacity of people with disabilities. Open and supported employment services offer both options. Business services provide supported (sheltered) employment for people with disabilities. These services are required to develop, grow and sustain a business that is commercially viable while remaining suitable for the varying requirements of its workforce. Though they are identified as sheltered workshops, they are distinct from the traditional supported employment services because of their business development requirements.

The Commonwealth Disability Services Census, 2000 showed that a total of 53,427 people received an "active" service from one or more of these resources. Of this number, 31,380 were engaged in some form of employment.

Strategies employed by FaCS-funded disability employment services

The predominant characteristics of service delivery to people with disabilities by the FaCS-funded disability employment services include individualized programmes and employment contracts, vocational counselling, labour market analysis, pre-vocational training, work training placements, job coaching and placement, ongoing employer liaison, post-placement support and workplace modification.

A number of Commonwealth government initiatives have been established to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities by meeting the dual needs of the job seeker and the employer. The following presents a synopsis of the various initiatives.

Supported wage scheme (SWS)

Introduced in 1994 and developed in close consultation with employers, trade unions, disability organizations and specialized employment agencies for people with disabilities, the SWS has been endorsed by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.[40] The SWS is a voluntary programme designed to support people who are unable to obtain and\or maintain employment at full wage rates due to the effects of a disability on their workplace productivity. The SWS facilitates employment through productivity-based wage arrangement.[41] Initial, then annual, independent assessments of productivity are provided in addition to on-the-job support. Other components of the SWS include financial support for employers to cover some of the additional costs of employing a person with a disability.[42]

In order to be eligible, the worker has to meet the impairment criteria for the disability support pension and be assessed as unable to work for at least 30 hours a week at full pay. The job must be covered by an award or industrial provision that makes it lawful to give pro rata wages. Thus, SWS participants have the same conditions of employment as their co-workers. SWS uses a special wage assessment process developed in consultation with unions and employers' groups to determine a person's productivity on the job. The assessment system is award based and uses the performance levels of people in equivalent positions as the benchmark for measuring the skills and productivity of disabled workers. After the wage assessment, a person previously receiving the disability support pension will transfer to the disability wage supplement (DWS). The rate of DWS depends on the wage and other income received by the person. Approximately 69 per cent of all assessments achieve between 40 and 70 per cent productivity. The median wage is A$100.35 and median hours worked is 20 per week.[43]

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[40] Full Bench decision dated 10 October 1994 print L5723

[41] From the ILO Report for the period 1 July 1993 to 30 June 1999 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) p12.

[42] AIRC Full Bench Decision, 10 December 1994, print L5723 (From the ILO Report: 1 July 1993 to 30 June 1999 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) p12

[43] FaCS, Supported Wage System Evaluation

Disability Recruitment Coordinator Services

Previously known as the External Coordinators Programme, the Disability Recruitment Coordinator Services provides employers with access to a single contact point for recruiting people with disabilities. This programme works with a number of employers and links them with specialist disability employment services, thus providing an efficient recruitment mechanism for large company employers who do not want to deal with multiple resources. The Special Employment Placement Officer Programme provides a seed grant to large private sector employers for the establishment of a specialist position dedicated to increasing the hiring of people with disabilities. That person implements company policies that encourage the employment of people with disabilities; identifies job vacancies suitable for people with disabilities and develops links with placement agencies to fill those vacancies.

The Partnerships with Industry agency (PWI) performs a similar role to assist employers to hire people with a disability. PWI also provides training for employers, emphasizing the benefits of diversifying their workforce to be inclusive of employees with disabilities.

Finally, Employers Making A Difference (EMAD) is an organization led and supported by employers who have reaped the benefits of employing people with a disability. EMAD promotes and supports businesses that encourage people with a disability as employees, customers and suppliers. EMAD members work with businesses to assist in finding solutions to their diverse issues. Employers can network to share best practices, brainstorm solutions to problems and discuss disability issues in a neutral environment.

The Disability Recruitment Coordinator Services are currently under review and their future funding is uncertain.

Case-based funding trial (CBFT)

In this trial model, funding was based on individual job seeker's assessed need for assistance in finding and keeping a job, as opposed to providing a lump sum to the employment service. Within the CBFT, employment services were paid a proportion of an agreed funding level each month, dependent upon achievement of outcomes for each participant. An outcome was determined to be a minimum of eight hours per week employment or self-employment under an award or industrial agreement for at least 26 weeks. The FaCS or Centrelink assigned the funding levels based on self-reports and assessments provided by the job seeker. Within the trial period, three preliminary funding levels ranged from A$5,000 to A$11,000. In addition, five employment assistance funding levels ranged from A$3,000 to A$15,000 to better suit the low and high support needs of job seekers in real terms. Four employment maintenance, funding levels ranged from A$3,500 to A$10,500.

Employment services could apply for the employment maintenance funding when the job seeker had remained in employment for the minimum of 26 weeks. Current evaluation of the CBFT shows positive outcomes for job seekers[44] and mixed outcomes regarding viability between open and supported employment services. A number of employment services benefited through the process in scrutinizing cost-efficiencies in systems as opposed to costs

[44] Outcome indicators for people with psychiatric disability were generally poor. A key recommendation is to continue to review the funding model to better define the funding and support needs of people with a psychiatric disability.

associated with job seeker needs, therefore driving services to streamline and improve internal systems.[45]

Funding for case-based models in rural and isolated areas have differed from their urban counterparts with the recognition of increased distances to support services or industry, lack of public transport and diminished employment opportunities. Seven pilot models were established in 2002 and are currently undergoing evaluation. These models focus on community development, service provider collaboration and business coalition structures. One specialist employment service undertaking the community development model is working with local organizations to provide home-based work options. They support and train people with a disability in computer skills with the expectation of home-based employment requiring little support in the future. Trials of this particular programme are taking place in south-west, central-west and far north Queensland.

More intensive and flexible services (MIFS) pilot

Established in 1996, this programme assisted disability support pension recipients with severe, unstable or multiple disabilities to access pre-vocational assistance and secondary rehabilitation supports including physiotherapy, counselling, occupational and speech therapy with the aim of securing vocational outcomes. Preliminary findings of the pilot noted that from 1996 to June 1999, 1,950 participants were accepted into the programme. Of them, 809 (42 per cent) left prematurely. The remaining 470 successfully completed programmes, with 8 per cent of them finding voluntary, part-time or full-time work. Another 34 per cent pursued vocational programmes, 16 per cent pursued non-vocational programmes or skills consolidation and 16 per cent elected not to continue with the MIFS.[46] The pilot is no longer in operation and a final evaluation was due by June 2002[47] but as yet appears to be unavailable for viewing. Some NGOs regard this programme as highly effective.

Business services review

The FaCS reviewed the business services with the aim of progressively transforming sheltered wages for the people employed within their service. The final report included a proposal for a four-year reform programme to implement a wide range of recommendations. A significant recommendation entails business services using a measure to determine pro rata wages linked to an appropriate award wage or incorporated into a legally ratified industrial agreement to "transform" sheltered wages. The Award-Based Wages Strategy was initiated to improve the openness and transparency of wage practices within the business services and to enhance its capacity in providing the same conditions of employment as those available in the broader employment market,[48] including the development of a wage assessment tool.

4.10 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation

The New Enterprise Initiative Scheme (NEIS) is a self-employment programme operated by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business. NEIS is available to people of workforce age receiving a government pension or allowance.

[45] FaCS: Main Findings, CBFT Final Evaluation, 2002
[46] FaCS: Annual Report of Department of Families and Community Services, 1998-1999
[47] FaCS: Research and Evaluation Digest, 2001-2002
[48] FaCS: Award Based Wages Strategy

The scheme provides financial support, business training, assistance in the development of a business plan and advice for the establishment of a business venture. As places are limited in this scheme, acceptance depends on the viability of the business proposal. In 2000/2001, 6,476 individuals took part in the scheme. The 2001 NEIS evaluation showed that the majority of users were short-term unemployed without a disability; more than 60 per cent of users had a grade 12, TAFE or higher education.[49] Recent numbers of people with disabilities who took part in the scheme are not available. However, previous research showed a downturn in NEIS participation: In 1989/1990, 4.6 per cent of NEIS participants had a disability and in 1990/1991 the enrolment fell to 1.1 per cent and then to 0.7 per cent the following year.[50] The low representation may be due to low referrals, inflexible programme delivery, failure of participants to disclose a disability or fear of losing the DSP and other lifestyle supports.

4.11 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation for people with disabilities

People with disabilities have full access and entitlement to participate in the mainstream NEIS scheme if they are receiving a disability support pension or other government income support and have a viable business venture. Current data on those receiving a DSP and using the NEIS are not available.

4.12 Self-employment and income generation support services

The NEIS scheme is fully available to people with disabilities. In addition, disability employment services that provide open employment services can assist clients in establishing viable self-employment ventures. Statistics on self-employment outcomes for people with a disability accessing CSTDA-funded services in 2000-2001 were reported to be less than 1 per cent.[51] In the 2001-2002 CSTDA census, 2 per cent reported "other" as their main source of income. It cannot be inferred from this that the 1 per cent accessed the NEIS.

4.13 Poverty-alleviation programmes

Subsistence poverty, defined as a lack of shelter, food or clothing and access to goods and services, is virtually non-existent in Australia. However, relative poverty does exist and is described later in this section.

As described in Section 3.5, Centrelink is the primary agency for delivering government income support to prevent subsistent poverty. Although not described as a poverty-alleviation programme, the aim of the pensions, benefits and allowances administered by Centrelink ensures a basic level of income, as well as access to employment and training services.

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[49] Kelly, R., Lewis, P., Dockery, M., & Mulvey, C. (2001). Findings in the NEIS evaluation. Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business: Centre for Labour Market Research.

[50] National Board of Employment, Education and Training: More than able: People with a disability and small business, Small Business Employment and Skills Supplementary Report, December 1994.

[51] FaCS: Commonwealth Disability Service Census 2000-2001, p 17.

Several types of income support are available to people with disabilities. The disability support pension is a means-tested income support payment for people with a physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment who are unable to work full time.[52] The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) has noted that between 1980 and 2000, the number of disability support pension recipients increased from 229,200 to 602,300.[53] These increases may be due to an increasing aged population and/or legislative changes, including the separation of disabled pension recipients from the previous invalid pension that accommodated elderly persons.

Sickness Allowance (SA) is another means-tested income support payment for people who are temporarily incapacitated for work or study due to illness and have a job or course of study to return to. To overcome the high costs often associated with specialized transport, the Commonwealth Government provides a non-means tested income supplement, termed the Mobility Allowance, to assist people with a disability who are in employment, vocational training, a combination of work or training, voluntary work or job search and who are unable to use public transport without substantial assistance.

Rent assistance is also available for all Australian pension recipients who are renting from the private market, as opposed to Commonwealth-owned dwellings. Rates vary depending on the number of children (if any), other income, living situation and the amount of rent. Other mainstream income supports include the Youth Allowance and the Newstart Allowance, which are types of unemployment benefits. Other income supports are described in Section 4.1.

Poverty estimates have been made in Australia since the 1960s using the Henderson Poverty Line (HPL).[54] The HPL is not a measure of subsistent poverty but of relative poverty, defined as a measure of an individual's or group's ability to participate in the same consumption patterns as other Australians and have the same opportunities for economic growth. Relative poverty does exist in Australia and has been monitored for the past 40 years.

It is generally accepted that poverty is linked to inequality and in order to alleviate poverty, the inequality must be addressed. Recent research shows that while some groups have experienced a reduction in poverty, the unemployed, unemployed/disabled and male sole parent groups experienced poverty more profoundly in the 1990s than 20 years prior.[55] The households of approximately 70 per cent of unemployed people, 50 per cent of people with a disability, and 19 per cent of male sole parents were deemed below the poverty line in 1997. The primary source of income for these groups is government income supports, thus the existence of relative poverty. However, many Australians have experienced difficulties in exiting government income supports and gaining employment. In part, this has been due to disincentives within the system. For example, a single parent might gain shift work on a minimum wage and lose a certain amount per dollar earned in recognition of additional

[52] Persons who are blind may qualify for the DSP regardless of income or assets.
[53] ABS: Income Support, Trends in Disability Support, Australian Social Trends, 2002
[54] Developed by a team led by Professor R.F. Henderson, a benchmark of poverty was assessed using a two-adult, two-child family set at an income equal to the value of the basic wage plus child allowances as a reference point.
[55] Australian Council of Social Services, Improving Health and Well-being Requires More Than Health Services, 2000

income. However, expenses due to childcare costs mean little overall increase in income while working.

For people with a disability, intrinsic issues of cost-benefit as experienced by many people receiving benefits is coupled with the presence of barriers within educational structures and workplaces, both physical and attitudinal, that have limited upward mobility and the means for achieving economic growth. In order to redress the experience of poverty for these groups, the Commonwealth and state/territory governments have developed broad incentives and engaged multisectorial collaboration in decreasing inequalities for all Australians. These are mentioned throughout this report in detail and include The Australians Working Together Strategy and Working Credit (*see Section 3.3*), Bridging Pathways, (*see Section 3.3*), HEEP (*see Section 4.4*) and are supported by legislation such as the Public Service Commissioners Direction (1999) and Workplace Diversity Programmes (s*ee Section 3.2*)

4.14 Training for vocational rehabilitation practitioners

All states and territories have rehabilitation counselling and/or specific educational programmes for people wishing to gain qualifications in disability studies and vocational rehabilitation. Courses are available at undergraduate, post-graduate diploma, masters and doctoral levels. A significant number of TAFE colleges also provide certificate and diploma courses for individuals interested in this field.

Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (ASORC)
The ASORC is a national professional organization that admits rehabilitation counsellors to three levels of membership: A full member must hold an approved qualification in rehabilitation counselling; the other two types of members can work as a rehabilitation counsellor (or in an equivalent position) or receive supervision from a full member of ASORC. The ASORC membership provides access to professional development and training; subscription to a published journal; ASORC international/national conferences and state-based seminars. ASORC has produced publications such *as Core Competencies for the Profession of Rehabilitation Counselling* and *Code of Ethics for the Profession of Rehabilitation Counselling*.

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS)
As described in Part Three, the CRS is the largest provider of rehabilitation services in Australia. All staff employed as rehabilitation consultants are required to have tertiary qualifications in rehabilitation counselling, psychology, occupational therapy, social work, speech pathology, occupational health nursing or exercise physiology.

4.15 Barriers and gaps related to services

Anecdotal evidence gained in key informant interviews with rehabilitation counsellors and others suggests that within the overall client group of job seekers with disabilities, people in the following groups often experience additional difficulties in finding suitable employment in the open labour market:

- Older people (over 45 years of age) and/or young people with limited formal education or work experience;
- People with a psychiatric disability, particularly with regard to retention of jobs gained;
- Indigenous people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders);
- People living in rural and remote areas. These issues are exacerbated by a higher prevalence of seasonal work and the subsequent lack of ongoing employment opportunities. Lack of private or public transport and distance to potential jobs is a major barrier for this group;
- Individuals requiring specialised assistive technology both during schooling and post-school experience additional difficulties. Expenses associated with purchase and delays associated with repairs (often undertaken in another state) delay development of much needed skills and can hinder or prevent job access. In rural and isolated areas these problems are further intensified.

Part Five: Employment Opportunities

5.1 Open employment

As outlined in Part One, significant changes are occurring in the Australian labour market. Globalization, advances in technology, industry restructuring and privatisation have impacted dramatically on employment and industrial relations in all developed nations in the past two decades. Overall, job acquisition and maintenance have become highly competitive, with organizations and individuals having constantly to adapt and respond to broader environmental factors and global market forces. Individual performance and the need for a person's skills are being regularly evaluated as working conditions and worker-employer relationships continue to change.

These factors, combined with the casualization of the workforce and the decline in semi-skilled and unskilled work and traditional entry-level jobs, present major challenges to the FaCS-funded employment services in finding positions for people with disabilities in today's open labour market.

Number of people with disabilities in open employment
The most recent ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers indicates that in 1998, 53 per cent (more than 2 million) of people with disabilities aged 15-64 were employed, compared with 80 per cent of people without disabilities (more than 10 million). In addition, 11.5 per cent (126,800) of people with disabilities were unemployed (that is, actively seeking work), compared with 7.8 per cent of people without disabilities. Data collected in the 1993[56] survey showed that for the same age group, 33 per cent of people with disabilities were employed compared to 77 per cent of people without a disability; and 21 per cent of people with disabilities were unemployed compared with 13 per cent of people without disabilities. These figures illustrate a marked increase in employment rates of people with a disability and a decrease in unemployment, independent and relative to people without a disability.

Data is collected every five years and the next statistical report will be based on the 2003 census.

Occupations of people with disabilities in open employment
People with disabilities are employed across all occupations and industries, depending on their functional capacity, education, job skills and the availability of suitable positions.

Salary levels of people with disabilities in open employment
Analysis of the Department of Family and Community Services Disability Services census for a five-year period shows an increase in wages for people using open employment services. Table 5.1 provides a guide to the salary levels of people with disabilities in open employment. (Note: Survey respondents are people who received some form of assistance from a government-funded employment service, and therefore, the data may not accurately reflect the salary levels of the overall population of people with disabilities.)

[56] ABS: Paid Work, Employment of People with a Handicap, Australian Social Trends, 1997

Table 5.1 Average weekly earnings in open employment, 1997-2001

	Number of survey respondents				
Weekly wage A$	**Census year 1997**	**Census year 1998**	**Census year 1999**	**Census year 2000**	**Census year 2001**
No Wage	2	47	5	16	24
$1-$20	225	192	155	98	89
$21-$40	258	295	264	235	204
$41-$60	606	657	669	669	704
$61-$80	379	433	474	558	594
$81-$100	496	611	713	929	955
$101-$200	2,324	2,712	2,970	3,639	3,969
$201-$300	2,099	2,253	2,423	2,749	3,109
$301-$400	2,033	1,970	2,016	2,277	2,310
>$401	1,449	1,932	2,134	2,785	3,488
Not specified	11	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	**9,882**	**11,102**	**11,823**	**13,955**	**15,446**

Source: Table 35, FaCS Commonwealth Disability Services Census 1999 and Table 35, FaCS Commonwealth Disability Services Census 2001

Table 5.1 shows a marked increase of 36 per cent of service users from the 1997 to the 2001 census. The number of people averaging weekly earnings higher than A$100 has increased from 80 per cent in 1997 to almost 84 per cent in 2001. Of those who earned more than A$300, the proportion of service consumers increased from 35 per cent in 1997 to 38 per cent in 2001. At around 65 per cent of the annual totals, males have consistently been higher users within open employment. In 2001, of all consumers employed in open employment, approximately 31 per cent worked 16-30 hours per week and 37 per cent worked full time.

Home-based employment

Home-based employment has increased significantly in Australia in recent years. With advances in computer technology and assistive devices for people with disabilities, this may provide a viable and preferred employment option for this sector of the population. No clear statistical data related to the number of people with disabilities working at home is available.

Major telecommunication and computer companies (e.g. Telstra and IBM) have introduced products and initiatives to enhance employment options for people with disabilities in a wide range of industries. For example, voice-activated and eye-tracking technology can eliminate barriers to effective job performance by people with severe disabilities. The technology companies have identified the economic and social benefits of promoting these products. And

companies such as IBM have launched awareness-raising and advertising campaigns to challenge misconceptions about people with disabilities.

5.2 Employment opportunities in protected work environments[57]

There are approximately 510 outlets throughout Australia that provide supported (or sheltered) employment to people with disabilities. Examples of the types of work carried out in these settings are:

Metal products	Packaging	Light assembly	Furniture manufacture
Cleaning	Sewing	Clerical	Desktop publishing
Nursery work	Office cleaning	Car detailing	Kitchen work
Gardening			

The average working week for individuals in supported employment is 30.44 hours, which compares closely to that of all workers. However, the average weekly wage for people in supported employment is significantly lower than the average Australian wage. Table 5.2 illustrates the average weekly wages of people working in supported employment.

Table 5.2 Average weekly earnings in supported employment, 1997-2001

	Number of survey respondents				
Weekly wage A$	**Census year 1997**	**Census year 1998**	**Census year 1999**	**Census year 2000**	**Census year 2001**
No Wage	38	45	8	52	130
$1-$20	2,981	2,511	2,694	2,115	2,215
$21-$40	4,044	3,490	3,689	3,937	3,663
$41-$60	4,376	4,528	4,515	4,504	4,657
$61-$80	1,460	1,758	1,790	1,969	2,033
$81-$100	652	741	811	831	866
$101-$200	621	851	853	1,003	1,097
$201-$300	201	119	147	175	139
$301-$400	68	83	48	49	41
>$401	69	16	27	54	31
Not specified	36	n/a	n/a		
Total	**14,546**	**14,142**	**14,582**	**14,689**	**14,872**

Source: Table 35, FaCS Commonwealth Disability Services Census 1999 and Table 35, FaCS Commonwealth Disability Services Census, 2001

[57] These are known as Supported Employment Services and Business Services in Australia

Table 5.2 shows a relatively stable number of people accessing supported employment places from 1997 through 2001. Earnings for employees with a disability have improved slightly with the number of people averaging weekly earnings higher than A$100 per week increasing from 80 per cent in 1997 to 84 per cent in 2001. Similarly in 1997, 35 per cent earned over A$300 with current day figures showing a slight increase to 38 per cent. Male and female representation is similar to that of open employment with males, on average, representing 65 per cent of annual totals. Of all consumers employed in supported employment settings in 2001, approximately 28 per cent worked 16-30 hours per week, with 58 per cent working full time.

Average wages in supported employment settings vary across states and territories, with the highest weekly wage at A$101-$150 (US$60.44-$89.80) in the Australian Capital Territory and the lowest at A$21-$40 (US$12.50-$24.00) in Queensland.

As mentioned previously, combined open/supported employment services also have a presence but are the smallest of all employment supports in Australia. As such, extensive evaluation on the wage structure is not provided here.

In summary, it is significant to note that people with an intellectual disability are more likely to be working in supported employment settings (68 per cent), while people with a physical or psychiatric disability are more likely to be working in the open labour market. Of the total population receiving assistance through the FaCS disability employment services, approximately 30 per cent of both males and females were assisted through a supported employment service.

5.3 Self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Statistics on self-employment outcomes for people with a disability accessing CSTDA-funded services in 2000, as mentioned previously, were less than 1 per cent,[58] with 2 per cent reporting "other" as their main source of income in the 2001 CSTDA census. Self-employed non-disabled people represented approximately 19.9 per cent of employment types in 1997,[59] thus showing substantial under-representation of entrepreneurial outcomes for people with a disability. No other data appears to be available in Australia in relation to people with disabilities who are self-employed.

5.4 Segregated or protected employment opportunities

Apart from supported employment services (business services) described in Section 5.2, there is no segregated or protected employment in Australia. The aim of anti-discrimination legislation is to ensure that people with disabilities have equal rights and opportunities to all aspects of life in Australia, including employment.

[58] FaCS: Commonwealth Disability Service Census, 2000-2001
[59] ABS: The Labour Force, ABS Cat. No. 6203, July 1997

5.5 Barriers and gaps

Despite the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 making it an offence to treat someone less favourably because of a disability, some inequities are still evident. For example, wages in supported employment services vary greatly between states and territories and cannot be attributed to generic wage differences between those areas (as experienced by people without a disability working in different locations in the country; *see Section 5.2*). The Business Services Review has recommended strategies to address this situation.

A need for greater consistency in data collection and recording systems across disability employment services also has been identified. Additional statistical information would be valuable for further policy development, including access to frequency, incidence and comparison analysis of people with a disability accessing self-employment schemes against people without a disability. In addition, the types of job and industries that people with disabilities access in the open employment market are not recorded in the FaCS census. Assessing career path experiences and the potential for upward mobility would assist in determining the impact of poverty alleviation strategies and also predict any plateau effect.

Part Six: Activities Involving Social Partners

6.1 Initiatives aimed at educating employers involved in training and/or employment of people with disabilities

Award schemes

Award schemes have been established to recognize best practices among Australian organizations in the recruitment and training of employees with disabilities. One such scheme is the Gold Medal Disability Access Strategy, launched in August 1999 and culminating in the Prime Minister's Gold Medal Access Awards in November 2000. The awards recognize Australian businesses that demonstrate excellence in the employment of people with a disability. The Department of Family and Community Services has built on this strategy by facilitating the establishment of an employers' forum on disability for benchmarking and sharing initiatives. The annual Prime Minister's Employer of the Year Award has been offered since 1990 and is given to companies who have demonstrated inclusive practices in the workplace for people with a disability. The nominees are judged on a number of criteria, including the conditions and length of employment, appropriateness of wages and the nature of work. Businesses, Commonwealth departments and higher education institutes can enter the awards. The award includes significant media coverage. Hence, both the Employer of the Year and companies providing corporate sponsorship reap promotional rewards.

At the state and territory level there are also awards that acknowledge employers nominated by disability employment services and/or employees with disabilities and their carers/advocates for their positive recruitment practices.

Other schemes

The Disabled Apprentice Wages Scheme provides a subsidy to an employer who takes on a person with a disability, for the duration of the apprenticeship, which is usually three to four years. The Workplace Modifications Scheme provides employers with access to worksite assessments and financial assistance for workplace modifications and/or the purchase of special or modified equipment for people with disabilities. Pro rata wage assessments for people with a disability who are not fully productive in open employment are available within the supported wage system. Finally, the Workers Compensation Scheme offers subsidies to employers who take on disabled workers who are unable to return to the workplace or duties as a result of their injury.

6.2 Initiatives aimed at educating trade unions and workers' organizations

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) supports and promotes partnerships between unions and providers of vocational rehabilitation services in the facilitation of work training placements for people with disabilities. The ACTU endorses the supported wage system for people with disabilities in supported employment and promotes the scheme within its union membership. The ACTU also conducted an inaugural Workers with a Disability Conference in Australia in July 2002.

6.3 Employer, trade union or workers' organizations employment promotion activities

Employers Making a Difference is a national scheme embraced by employers' groups throughout Australia to promote the recruitment of people with disabilities through their positive portrayal as integral members of the workforce.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, 1992, government authorities, businesses and educational institutions can register an access plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). This is a voluntary process for employers, trade unions, government authorities and other organizations that results in the development of a written statement of commitment and a measurable strategy for supporting people with disabilities within their workplaces or area of governance. In the financial year (2000-2001), HREOC received access plans from 24 business enterprises, 20 NGOs, 30 Commonwealth departments, 28 state and 76 local government departments and 33 educational providers.

Workers rehabilitation and compensation authorities in all states and territories operate in a tripartite relationship between government, employer organizations and trade unions.

6.4 Other initiatives

The Abilympics, which showcases the work skills of people with disabilities, takes place at the local and national levels.

Part Seven: Summary and Future Directions

7.1 Looking back over the past decade

Australia's commitment to equity and the full participation of people with disabilities in all spheres of life pre-dates the Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons. For example, human rights and equal opportunity legislation has been in place in Australia since the mid-1980s and the Disability Services Act was established in 1986 to help meet the Government's obligations to people with disabilities. Many disability services and programmes also have operated in Australia for more than 20 years with support and funding provided by Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

In 1991, Australia introduced the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement, which represents an effort on the part of national, state and local governments to develop a coordinated, rationalized and integrated approach to disability services in Australia. The Disability Discrimination Act was introduced in 1992 to provide the legal basis for the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities.

However, in the past decade, many significant steps have been taken that have had a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities. In summary:

- In November 1994, Australia adopted the Commonwealth Disability Strategy, a ten-year plan of action for Commonwealth departments and agencies to remover barriers facing people with disabilities.

- The National Disability Advisory Council was established in December 1996 as Australia's national coordination committee on disability. A key objective of the Advisory Council is the achievement of goals for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons.

- National data collection and analysis systems have been strengthened in order to obtain consistent and reliable information about people with disabilities and the demand for disability services.

- Information has become more available and accessible for people with disabilities through the development of special Web sites, funding for printed disability services and captioning for television and film media.

- Extensive research funding and service reviews are providing greater knowledge and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities and contributing to the development of new policies and programmes.

- Progress is occurring in terms of improved accessibility to the built environment, national communication services and transport services.

- Various new programmes of assistance for education have been introduced for children and students with disabilities and post-school options programmes have

enhanced the links between education and employment, and community access and recreation for people with severe disabilities. Intensive assistance after school has been shown to increase the potential for employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities by providing transitional supports from school to adult life in the community.[60] Post-school programmes exist in most states and territories.

Many of the initiatives outlined in this country study demonstrate the wide range of policies, programmes and new initiatives established by the Australian Government to meet its commitment to widening opportunities for people with disabilities for independence, access and participation in the social and economic life of Australian society.

Many actions have been taken to reach various targets of access and equity in education, vocational training and employment, some of which are described elsewhere in this report and highlighted in the following:

- Under the Higher Education Funding Act (1988) the Australian government has sought to provide a quality higher education system that is equitable and accessible. The Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Post-graduate Education Loan Scheme are available to all Australians for undergraduate and non-research degrees who for reasons of cost may not otherwise be able to access a university education. Costs for higher education are deferred with the debt paid via a Commonwealth loan and linked to the student's tax file number. Deductions are made through the student's or graduate's wage if or when a minimum salary is achieved. Under the present structure, if the minimum wage is not achieved, the debt is not repayable.
- Persons in receipt of a pension are eligible for subsidized education in all states and territories in VET-accredited courses. In many instances, training is fully subsidized by the Government.
- Universities and training institutions in general have policies on inclusive practices, accessibility and the willingness to adapt academic courses in instances where the needs of an individual can be met without losing course integrity.
- In order to deliver accredited training courses, registered training organizations are audited against the Australian Quality Training Framework standards. The standards involve mandatory inclusive practices for people with a disability, including delivery, assessment and support strategies and flexibility. Endorsed by HREOC, the Students with Disabilities: Code of Conduct for Australian Tertiary Institutions provides recommendations and guidance for entry and supportive participatory practices in tertiary settings.
- VET training is provided in rural and urban settings through both built environments and online access. In rural areas, registered training organizations provide the course component and trainees are paid at a higher rate than in the same course in an urban area. However, the cost-benefit is still assessed by some training providers on an efficiency of scale, and smaller numbers may result in a course not being offered. In addition, while the technological capacity exists to

[60] O'Neill, G., & Richardson, B., (1997). One year ahead: the purchaser role in a coordinated role to post school options. Australian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability, Conference paper [unpublished].

provide adaptations to existing resources, demand exceeds available resources for transcriptions and additional supports to meet all needs.

- Employer incentives are available in financial and human resource terms. Financial incentives include: disabled apprenticeship wage scheme, national training wage, supported wage scheme, workplace modifictions scheme, traineeship and apprenticeship payments and on-site support from trained rehabilitation and employment consultants. Awareness-raising campaigns targeted at employers and employees have been established; these include: Partnerships With Industry, Employers Making a Difference, Abilympics and Employer of the Year Award.
- As an indicator of meeting the Public Service Commissioners Directions (1999), many public service departments have set minimum quotas of employment for people from minority groups, including people with a disability, in the workplace diversity programmes. Employment outcomes and other components must be reported annually.
- Gender discrimination is prohibited.
- Several national strategies have been established to address the inequities between people with a disability in training and employment and people without a disability. However, national targets have not been established as a goal in these strategies.
- People with a disability have been embraced into workplace diversity programmes. In addition, consumer representatives are present in numerous key agencies, organizations and councils.
- Specialist employment services and business services provide both open and sheltered employment opportunities, with the latter tending to have a higher number of people with more severe disabilities. Business services provide supportive, protected employment options for people with more significant disabilities. Support services for self-employment is met via the NEIS scheme and supported employment is accessible via referral through Centrelink. Assistive devices can be accessed through the workplace modification scheme though not by self-employed persons.
- In order to place people with disabilities in jobs or to assist them in self-employment in rural and urban areas, disabled persons are identified within the social security and /or education system. Service pathways are provided to people with disabilities at any time during the life course for a variety of service types including private or public, specialized or generic employment services.
- There exist several key pieces of legislation to protect the rights of disabled workers in all laws, policies and collective agreements relating to employment (including provisions on recruitment, promotion, dismissal and retrenchment):
    - Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
    - Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1987
    - Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 1988
    - Industrial Relations Act, 1993
    - Workplace Relations Act, 1996
    - Public Service Act, 1999
    - Public Service Commissioners Direction, 1999.

Provisions are made within Workplace Diversity Programmes of the Public service with regard to recruitment and promotion and abolition of workplace harassment. In addition, dismissal and retrenchment fall within generic workplace relations and human rights legislation. The anti-discrimination law and the Disability Discrimination Act serve to protect in the private sector.

- Consumer participation is a key component in the annual quality assurance audit of specialist employment services. The outcome of the audit is, in turn, monitored by the FaCS. All registered training organizations must meet the standards within the Australian Quality Training Framework and are audited annually against the standards and must show accessible and flexible training and assessment strategies for people with disabilities.
- NCVER coordinates the national clearinghouse network and VOCED. VOCED, a joint development between NCVER and UNESCO, provides a database of VET research abstracts in English and is supported by a number of clearinghouses in Australia and New Zealand. International support for VOCED is via UNESCO's International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Germany, the international hub.

7.2 Looking forward

Several major government initiatives that have been introduced recently will help to maximize labour-force participation of people with disabilities, overcome barriers to participation and reduce dependence on welfare support. Among them, the Australians Working Together package, which was introduced by the Commonwealth Government in the 2001-2002 budget, is a major initiative that offers services through the Job Network, a number of community-based organizations and Centrelink. Many of the established services offered by the Australians Working Together package have been outlined in relevant parts of this report. Other recently introduced programmes include:

- **Personal support programme**, which began in July 2002 and provides assistance to individuals with multiple, non-vocational barriers. This service is individualized in both the type of support offered and the outcomes identified (for example, employment or social outcomes).
- **Transition to work programme**, to assist people in returning to work after periods of long absences.
- **Training credits**, which began in July 2002 to offer financial support for accredited training for job seekers who successfully exit other preparation programmes and meet eligibility requirements.
- **Training accounts**, which also began in July 2002) to assist indigenous and mature age job seekers in intensive assistance programmes to gain work-related skills.
- **Literacy and numeracy supplement**, which began in September 2002 to provide extra financial assistance to accommodate the incidental costs associated with undertaking approved literacy, numeracy and language training.

The Bridging Pathways national strategy will assist people with a disability to gain access to VET training by addressing systemic barriers that previously have prevented them from developing skills that can lead to a career path. Workplace diversity programmes within the

public sector promote the representation of people with disabilities in the workforce. And the Quality Assurance Bill will ensure specialist employment services are accountable to people with disabilities by providing a quality framework embedded with the disability standards.

7.3 In-country plans and recommendations

Key issues confronting Australia in terms of disability
Recent developments and issues for people with disabilities include:

- Failure of a bill that sought to apply new and stricter work activity tests to current and future recipients of the federally funded disability support pension. Another bill has been proposed that will protect the benefits of all existing DSP recipients (that is people assessed, as of 1 July 2002, as unable to work 30 hours per week). However, under the terms of the proposed bill, future applicants for the DSP will be assessed according to a work capacity of 15 hours, or less, per week, and will potentially be directed to alternative federally funded benefits/allowances and associated vocational programmes. Since 1990, the number of people receiving the DSP has more than doubled, with approximately one in nine Australians, aged 50-64, currently receiving the payment.

- Consumer groups were particularly alarmed at the proposed changes to the disability support pension. The key disability bodies (*described in Section 3.6*) and the disability community in general mounted a strong protest and was supported by the political parties that blocked the original bill from being passed through the Senate.

- Additional concerns reported by people with disabilities, both through their consumer groups and individually, point to the slow process in abolishing sheltered wages and the change to linking wages in supported employment services and business services to productivity-based wages.

- There is no funded service that has the role of assisting people with disabilities with the process of retirement, although a number of business services report that they do this on an *ad hoc* basis. With the increasing population of older individuals with a disability, there is a need to address this issue in the future.

- Given the known under-representation of people with a disability in higher education facilities, it is important that targets are established within the current national strategies.

- A national clearinghouse for both employment services needs to be pursued.

- There are needs for additions to the assistive technology research and development clearinghouse, national and regional networks of service knowledge and advice for people with a disability, education and training facilities, and employment organizations that streamline the supports required for the realization of national initiatives, such as the Australians Working Together strategy and Bridging Pathways.

Source Materials

The information provided in this report is based on a wide range of source materials, including government publications and Web sites, Australian Bureau of Statistics publications and reports, disability agency reviews, annual reports from Commonwealth and state government departments and agencies, statistical yearbooks and almanacs, disability service providers and consumer groups, OECD reports and UN agency reports.

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About the Authors

Genene O'Neill

Genene O'Neill is currently the Business Development Manager of the Queensland-based Job Placement Ltd., an employment service that places individuals with disabilities in open employment. Working in senior management for the past seven years and acting in a consultancy capacity across the past ten, she has developed programmes, policies and strategies for people with severe and profound disabilities from birth to 65 years of age. Besides employment services, she has worked in school to work transitioning, life skills training, residential care, respite service and flexible childcare. She managed a cutting-edge transitional services programme for people with disabilities exiting school that resulted in replication in two Australian states. Ms O'Neill will complete her Ph. D. within the next few years and is in the process of publishing her thesis. She has also authored other papers dealing with school-to-work transition and career life planning for people with disabilities.

Marie Sutherland

Marie Sutherland is studying for a Doctorate of Philosophy at the Disabilities Research Unit of the University of Adelaide. Her thesis is "People with Disabilities throughout Their Lifespan: A Comprehensive Analysis of Support Systems in Training and Employment Models. Ms. Sutherland is also a course coordinator at the School of Psychology at the University of South Australia. Additionally, she has held posts at South Australian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and the Industry and Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. Notably, she is the co-author of the publication "Intellectual Disability and Models of Employment."

Research Protocol

PART ONE: COUNTRY OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction
- Brief history and current events
- Brief introduction to level of development and UNDP Human Development Index

1.2 Geography
- Area in square kilometers
- Topography and climate
- Rural/urban configuration

1.3 Population
- Total population
- Geographic distribution, including rural/urban
- Annual growth rate (total and by gender)
- Life expectancy (total and by gender)
- Age composition (total and by gender)
- Literacy levels (total and by gender)
- Unusual demographic patterns (e.g. declining birth rate affecting workforce, etc.)
- Primary religious groupings

1.4 Government and general development plans
- Form of government
- Political system and stability
- Structure of government, including number of ministries
- Administrative structures (i.e., central and local, including number of provinces/states and description of local government structures)
- Influence of central government vis a vis local structures and influence
- Socio-economic/development objectives and strategies (e.g. 5-10 year plans), especially in relation to training and employment and/or people with disabilities

1.5 Economic composition and status
- Economic sectors such as the size and significance of the country's primary agricultural, manufacturing and service industries
- Relative sizes of the formal and informal sectors of the economy
- Current annual GDP, GDP per capita, and annual growth rates
- Percentage of people below the international poverty level
- Impact of recent current events on0 economy, if appropriate (e.g., impact of the Asian economic crisis, political instability, etc.)
- Economic projections

1.6 Labour markets

- Labour force participation (total and by age and gender)
- Unemployment rates (total and by age and gender)
- Underemployment rates defined as less than 35 hours per week (total and by age and gender)
- Relative levels of open employment, multiple employment (individuals holding more than one job), and self-employment (total and by age and gender)
- Levels of employment in the formal and informal sectors (total and by age and gender)
- Wage levels for the primary occupations in the formal and informal sectors
- Identify and describe any special issues that impact the country labour markets (e.g. importing labour, high rates of youth unemployment, ageing workforce, etc.)

PART TWO: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES---DEFINITIONS, DATA AND SITUATION

2.1 Identify and describe the most common definition(s) of disability used, especially the legal definition(s). If multiple definitions exist, describe them and reference their sources.

2.2 Identify and describe the primary disability classification system(s) used for official government purposes. If multiple classification systems exist, cite their sources, describe them and explain how they are used.

2.3 Identify and describe the major sources of disability information. For each, specify the

- Nature of the source (e.g., Census, national database, survey, registration for services, study, etc.)
- Definition of disability and classification system
- Data gathering procedures
- Scope (e.g., aimed at all disabled persons, a disability subgroup, a geographic part of the country, etc.)
- Primary demographics and findings to include, as available, the number of and types of disabled persons, principle causes of disability, gender, literacy level, education, employment status, and income levels
- Problems that may have existed in collecting information or that affect the validity of the available data (e.g., unclear definitions, etc.).

2.4 Cite and describe national data sources and statistics related to the number of people disabled by on the job injuries and cite return to work rates, if available.

2.5 Describe the environmental factors affecting the full social participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life, especially their direct participation in training and employment. Note those specific to certain disability groups. For example:

- Environmental accessibility/barriers
- Communication accessibility barriers (e.g., sign language development/use, signage, use of Braille, etc.)

- Transportation accessibility/barriers
- Others.

2.6 Describe social factors that may also affect participation including
- Prevailing cultural attitudes toward disability (including religious beliefs)
- Negative attitudes or misconceptions (note disability specific attitudes)
- Societal and family expectations for people with disabilities by gender, if appropriate.

2.7 Identify and describe the primary advocacy organizations of (not for) disabled persons and their advocates. In particular, note
- If the organizations represent a single disability group or all types of disabilities
- Number of members and geographic scope
- Objectives, influence and services, especially those related to employment and training.

PART THREE: LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

3.1 International policies adopted
- Has the country ratified the Asia Pacific Decade Declaration? If so, when?
- Has the country ratified ILO Convention No. 159? If so, when? Describe any supervisory comments.

3.2 National legislation, official decrees, etc.
- Describe reference to equal rights, especially of disabled persons in the Constitution.
- Cite and describe any global disability rights or disability-specific legislation.
- Cite and describe legislation that currently influences persons with disabilities in relation to (include name, date, purpose, and disability provisions or lack thereof):
  - Education, vocational training and/or human resource development
  - Employment, wage, and labour issues
  - Income generation, self-employment and enterprise development
  - Transportation, housing and building codes, assistive devices, other.
- Cite and describe in detail any employment promotion legislation or provisions to promote employment of people with disabilities, such as quotas, levies, employer incentives, laws protecting employment rights, etc.
- Cite and describe any national legislation that discriminates against disabled persons, for example, with regard to employment in certain professions, etc.
- Cite and describe vocational rehabilitation provisions contained in the country's workers' compensation, social security and/or employment injury laws.
- Cite any other legislation that promotes or hinders the training and employment of people with disabilities.
- Describe any draft or impending legislation that deals with disabled persons.

3.3 Disability policies and regulations
- Cite and describe the national development plan as it relates to training and

employment or includes the mention of people with disabilities.

- Cite and describe significant existing regulations or policy statements to implement the legislation described in 3.2.
- Cite and describe the national plan regarding vocational rehabilitation, training and employment for disabled persons, or a general rehabilitation/disability plan that includes these issues. Include the date developed, when and how the plan was developed, who was involved in its development and if workers' and employers' organizations and people with disabilities were included, the process for developing the plan, and its significant contents.
- Cite and describe any policies and/or regulations related to the availability of vocational rehabilitation staff and their competency and training.
- Cite and describe any policies and/or regulations related to vocational rehabilitation research activities.
- Cite and describe any other policies and regulations that relate to the training and employment of people with disabilities, their equal treatment, and their access to support services to enable them to secure employment and training.

3.4 Evaluation and review of policies

- Are there measurable targets with regard to the training and employment of people with disabilities? If yes, describe these targets, including gender dimensions and requirements for joint action by all ministries (such as those responsible for employment, training, small enterprise or rural development).
- Describe methods of reviewing and evaluating national plans or policies.

3.5 Institutional structure for policy and service implementation

- Briefly describe the historical evolution of vocational rehabilitation and other strategies to foster the employment of people with disabilities.
- Identify and describe the activities of the key government ministries or semi-autonomous organizations involved in implementing the policies and overseeing the services related to the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons.
- Identify and describe any national coordinating body [ies] in support of employment and training activities for disabled persons, including the composition, structure and functions.
- Identify and describe any inter-ministerial groups or committees in support of employment and training activities for disabled persons.
- Describe the role of local (state/provincial) government in implementing disability policy.

3.6 Other implementing organizations

- Describe the relationship between the government, the private sector and the NGO community regarding the implementation of disability policies and vocational rehabilitation services. In particular, note the funding relationship between government and NGOs, including organizations of/for disabled persons, and how they cooperate to implement policies or deliver services in response to policies (e.g., funding arrangements, policy implementing roles, partnerships, collaborations, etc.).
- Describe any policy implementation or service provider roles for employers' groups

and trade unions.

PART FOUR: EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING PRACTICE AND EMPLOYMENT

4.1 General education system

- Describe the structures of the primary, secondary and post-secondary education systems.
- Is schooling compulsory, and if so, to what level?
- Are fees charged, and if so, how much and to what level?
- Provide enrolment data for each level of schooling (total and by gender).
- Describe any urban/rural differences in educational systems and opportunities.

4.2 Educational opportunities for persons with disabilities

- Cite data or estimate the proportions of the disabled population that receive primary, secondary and post-secondary education (by gender and disability type).
- Identify and describe the educational opportunities for disabled persons in the country's mainstream educational systems, and estimate the numbers of disabled persons enrolled at each level (by gender and disability type).
- Identify and describe NGO-sponsored educational opportunities for disabled persons, and estimate the numbers enrolled (by gender and disability type).
- Identify and describe the educational opportunities for disabled persons in other systems that may exist (e.g., community based rehabilitation programmes) and estimate the numbers enrolled (by gender and disability type).
- Estimate the retention rates for persons with disabilities in each of the above systems.
- Describe the availability of appropriate teaching aids, assistive devices and facilities for promoting successful educational outcomes for persons with disabilities.
- Describe the nature and extent of disability related teacher-training programmes for teachers in the mainstream and special educational systems.
- Describe differences in availability and/or quality of educational services related to urban and rural areas, type of disability or gender variables.
- Cite data, evaluation studies or other authoritative sources to describe the quality of education services for students with disabilities.

4.3 The mainstream vocational training system

- Describe the formal vocational training system (i.e., certificate, diploma or qualification based), including oversight bodies, ministry or ministries involved, institutional structures, and types of training courses offered.
- Describe the informal vocational training system (i.e., provides skills training that does not result in formal qualifications), including ministries involved, institutional structures and types of training courses offered.
- Identify and describe programme[s] to provide vocational training through distance learning.
- Identify and describe work-based and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Identify completion rates (total and by gender) and outcome data (percentage who

are employed or self-employed after training) that are available for the different types of training.

- Describe the availability of NGO or commercial vocational training programmes and their importance to the overall human resource development system.

4.4 Mainstream vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe any existing opportunities for mainstreaming and/or special support services for disabled trainees in the mainstream formal and informal vocational training systems.
- Identify disabled persons enrolment and completion rates (by gender and disability type) and outcome data (percentage who are employed or self-employed after training) that are available for the different types of training.
- Discuss differences in availability and/or quality of mainstream vocational training related to urban and rural areas, type of disability and gender variables.

4.5 Segregated vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe any existing segregated government and NGO-sponsored vocational training systems and programmes for persons with disabilities, including those providing formal and informal vocational training and any distance learning or apprenticeship opportunities.
- Describe special accommodations or special support services offered to students, including follow-up.
- Describe prevocational, remedial or other specialized training that may be offered.
- Describe the types of occupational skills taught, and discuss their relevance to labour market and self-employment opportunities.
- Describe the nature and extent of disability related instructor-training programmes for those in mainstream and segregated systems.
- Identify (or estimate) completion rates (total and by gender) and outcome data (percentage who are employed or self-employed after training) that are available for the different types of training.
- Discuss differences in availability and/or quality of mainstream vocational services related to urban and rural areas, type of disability and gender variables.
- Cite evaluation studies or other authoritative sources to describe the quality and responsiveness of the vocational training system to people with disabilities.

4.6 Self-help and peer vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe any existing self-help or peer vocational training programmes.
- Estimate the number of disabled persons enrolled, graduated and employed as a result of their participation by gender and by disability type.
- Discuss any differences in availability and/or types of self-help and peer vocational training related to urban and rural areas, type of disability and gender variables.

4.7 Mainstream employment services

- Identify and describe the government sponsored employment services system (i.e., providing assessment, vocational guidance and job placement services), the responsible ministry or ministries involved and particular groups targeted.
- Describe the institutional service delivery structures (e.g., schools, employment

offices, and outsourcing to NGOs) and nature and extent of services provided.

- Identify significant NGO-sponsored employment programmes, the services that are offered, and the target groups (e.g. youth or women) served.
- Discuss any differences in availability and/or types of employment services based on urban/rural or gender dimensions.

4.8 Opportunities for people with disabilities in mainstream systems

- Identify and describe any existing opportunities for mainstreaming and/or special support services for disabled job seekers in the mainstream employment services.
- If mainstreaming occurs, provide data or estimate the proportion of disabled persons who use the mainstream system (s) and their success rate in terms of employment outcomes.

4.9 Special employment and employment support services for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe special employment and employment support services available to people with disabilities through government agencies, NGOs, schools or other sponsoring institutions.
- Describe the structures for delivering employment and employment support services (e.g., employment offices, work oriented rehabilitation centres or sheltered workshops, special vocational schools, etc.).
- Describe the services offered, especially disability specific employment support services (e.g., vocational assessment, peer group counseling, work experience or adjustment services, supported employment, job analysis, selective placement, etc.).
- Note if these services focus entirely on open employment, or include placement in sheltered employment, enclaves or other protected environments.
- Identify the number of persons served by gender and disability type and the number placed in employment (open employment, protected employment or self-employment) by gender and by disability type.

4.10 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation

- Identify any government sponsored self-employment and income generation services and the responsible ministries.
- Describe the services offered (e.g., business planning, business development training, access to credit. etc.) and target groups.
- Identify any NGO sponsored self-employment and income generation programmes.
- Describe the services offered (e.g., business planning, business development training, access to credit, etc.) and target groups.

4.11 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation for disabled persons

- Describe opportunities for inclusion of people with disabilities in self-employment programmes by identifying mainstreaming policies and special outreach and support services.
- Describe the extent to which people with disabilities are included in such programmes by citing or estimating participation and outcome rates

4.12 Self-employment and income generation support services for people with disabilities

- Identify support programmes for self-employment and income generation for

people with disabilities sponsored by governments, NGOs or special schools and training facilities.

- Describe the services offered and target groups.
- Identify the participation and outcome data (number starting businesses) by gender and by disability type.

4.13 Poverty alleviation programmes

- Describe any major poverty alleviation programmes and their sponsors and related ministries (if not identified in 4.11 or 4.12).
- Identify policies and practices related to the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Identify or estimate the participation rates of people with disabilities in such programmes.

4.14 Staff training for vocational rehabilitation

- Identify and describe training programmes for professionals providing vocational rehabilitation and training and employment services for people with disabilities.
- Describe the availability of competent trained personnel related to vocational rehabilitation practice (e.g. trained rehabilitation counselors, vocational assessors, vocational counselors, job placement specialists, etc.). Cite data, if available, and estimate the proportion of disabled persons.

4.15 Barriers/gaps related to services

- Identify specific barriers that people with disabilities face in accessing or benefiting from educational, vocational training, employment and self-employment and income generation services, both mainstream and segregated (e.g., related to accessibility, transportation, support services, availability of assistive devices, trained instructors, policy support, etc.).
- Note gaps in services that may exist (e.g., such as for those with certain types of disabilities, age, ethnic or gender groups, those residing in certain geographic areas, etc.).
- Whenever possible, identify data or a rationale to support the identification of these barriers or gaps.

PART FIVE: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Open employment

- Identify and describe open employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the public, for profit and not for profit sub sectors.
- Estimate or provide data related to the number employed (by gender and by disability type) especially in relation to the types of jobs, wages, benefits, and career advancement potentials in the open labour market.
- Identify and describe any teleworking, home-based or other non-traditional employment structures in the open market.
- Identify and describe employment opportunities that have developed because of advances in information technology, the Internet and the computer industry.

- Identify and describe any decreases in open employment opportunities, especially related to employment of disabled persons, such job loss due to technology, trade or globalization issues, the impact of transition economies, etc.

5.2 Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in protected work environments

- Describe the available employment opportunities in protected work environments designed for people with disabilities including the following:
- Government set-aside job programmes (i.e., jobs that are set aside or give priority to people with disabilities, such as sale of lottery tickets in Thailand)
- Sheltered workshops and work centres for people with disabilities.
- Supported employment programmes
- Enclaves (segregated work setting for people with disabilities within larger companies)
- Other.
- For each type of protected job opportunity, provide data or estimate the number of people employed (by gender and by disability type), especially in relation to the types of jobs, wages, benefits and rehabilitation services that are available to participants in these protected work programmes.
- Explain and describe opportunities and specific services for transitioning workers with disabilities from protected employment to open employment.
- Cite data or estimate the numbers or proportions of people with disabilities who transition from protected to open employment.

5.3 Self-employment opportunities for persons with disabilities

- Identify and describe self-employment opportunities for disabled persons in the formal sector, and estimate the numbers of people employed and the incomes of self-employed people with disabilities in the formal sector.
- Identify and describe self-employment opportunities for disabled persons in the informal sector, and estimate the numbers of people employed and the incomes of self-employed people with disabilities in the informal sector.
- Identify any special government or NGO programmes to support or assist people with disabilities in self-employment, such as special marketing schemes, tax breaks, etc.

5.4 Identify and describe other segregated or protected employment opportunities that may exist, such as disabled persons cooperatives, welfare enterprises, etc. and estimate the number of persons employed, types of job opportunities, wages, and number and types of disabled persons served.

5.5 Barriers and Gaps

- Identify specific barriers that people with disabilities face in accessing or benefiting from employment opportunities including those in open, formal, informal and protected environments (e.g., related to accessibility, transportation, support services, availability of assistive devices, discriminatory practices, lack of policy support, etc.).
- Note specific gaps to accessing employment opportunities that may exist (e.g., such as for those with certain types of disabilities, age, ethnic or gender groups, those

residing in certain geographic areas, etc.).

- Whenever possible, identify data or a rationale to support the identification of these barriers or gaps.

PART SIX: ACTIVITIES INVOLVING SOCIAL PARTNERS

6.1 Identify and describe any government or NGO initiatives specifically designed to educate, raise awareness in, or provide supports and encouragement to, employers who are involved in the training or employment of people with disabilities.

6.2 Identify and describe any government or NGO initiatives specifically designed to educate, raise awareness or provide supports and encouragement to trade unions or workers' organizations that are involved in the training or employment of people with disabilities.

6.3 Describe any employer or trade union initiated activities, partnerships, or liaisons with government or NGOs that are specifically designed to promote the training and employment of people with disabilities.

PART SEVEN: SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

7.1 Looking back over the past decade 1992-2002

- Describe significant changes in policy and practice over the past decade.
- Describe specific progress or lack of progress.

7.2 Looking forward

- Describe major barrier needs related to policies and practices for equal opportunity and treatment of people with disabilities in regard to training and employment.
- Describe major strengths or opportunities related to policies or practices in regard to training and employment of people with disabilities.

7.3 Plans and recommendations from in-country

- Cite and describe goals, directions, and targets from official government planning documents related to training and employment policies and practices and specify time frames.
- Cite and describe any current recommendations made by advocacy or disability organizations related to the future of employment and training policies and practices.
- Cite and describe any other recommendations, studies or analyses within the country that pose specific recommendations about the future of policies and practices for the training and employment of people with disabilities.

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