

LWG MEETING 1 OUTCOMES SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of discussion points shared during Townsville Local Working Group Workshop 1 – Introduction and presentations were streamed over MS with Mackay then Groups worked locally on activities in second part of the session offline.

1 INSIGHTS/LEARNINGS FROM PROJECT & COHORT PRESENTATIONS

Within the Local Working Group, we had a huge variety of lived experience informing both professional and community roles. Presentation regarding Feros Care cohort focus areas including employment cohort LAC activities within the community. Removing blockages through capacity building is important through early access so that the need is lessened later when seeking employment.

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES – REVIEW AND INSIGHTS

Our Guiding Principles inform why we are doing projects within the community.

- **Accountability and transparency** – The right stakeholders are here today on the journey together
- **Inclusive and accessible design** – Everyone was invited and the activity is inclusive. However, some additional considerations Feros could have taken into account included:
 - Door opening ease
 - No bell at reception to raise attention
 - Doors have a setting for children but can't reach people at lower heights
 - The step out the front
- **Collaboration** – A good sense of a safe space for people in this group together to express what they need
- **Safe Spaces and Safe People** – A good mix of men and women in the room.
- **Circle of Support** – Social Role valorisation, every person with a disability has the right to contribute
- **Changing the narrative** – Can I change how society sees me and make a difference?
- **Investing time** – Message to employers: “You have to find a way.”

Guiding principles were accepted and understood but not discussed at length as everyone was keen to proceed directly to the employment feedback collaboration exercise.



3 CO-DESIGN RESOURCE

Resource identification and refinement focus

- Each stage of the employment process was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that future LWG's will focus on **Step 1: Finding a job and the hiring process**

Resource ideas

- Forum to capacity-build with the employers
- Putting together an inclusive job advertisement
- Information for an employer about how the person with disability will start and maintain the role
- YouTube Clip
- An accessible presentation
- A consultation with someone with a disability to advise the needs for the employer

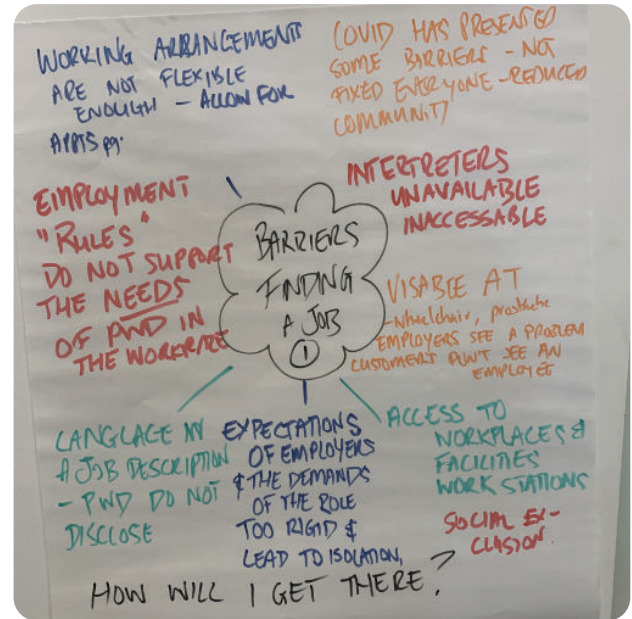
4 CO-DESIGN RESOURCE – FOUR STAGES

Step 1: Finding a job/hiring process

FINDING A JOB/HIRING PROCESS BARRIERS

- Job vacancies outweigh job seekers
- Transport – How will the person living with disability get there? No taxis or buses that are safe. Workplaces too far from the bus stop. Ramps not low enough. Stuck in the rain/heat.
- Treated like a lesser contributor
- “I am not here to make you look good”
- “The hurdles you face dealing with other people’s needs”
- Working arrangements are not flexible enough to allow for medical appointments
- Employment ‘rules’ do not support the needs of people living with disabilities in the workforce
- Language used in job descriptions can be off-putting. Means many people living with disabilities do not disclose
- Expectations of employers and demands of the role too rigid and can lead to isolation
- COVID has presented some barriers. Not fixed everyone, reduced community

- Interpreters are often unavailable or inaccessible
- If assistive technology is visible, eg wheelchairs and prosthetics, employers see a problem. Often customers don't see an employee
- Access to workplaces, facilities and workstations
- Social exclusion
- Lack of employer education eg, Supported Wage Scheme
- Cost of setting up job accessibility
- Unrealistic expectations and no communication with the people living with disabilities
- Pressure to adapt should not rest with the person living with disability
- "If I have to force my way in, I will not go"
- People on a disability pension lose the pension and benefits if they work x hours. It's not the money, but it's the other supports that being on the pension have (payment for medications etc)
- DES Providers:



- DES Workers do not know how to best represent the skills of a person living with disability
- Limited by their KPI's, staff capabilities and star ratings
- Lack of creative thinking from DES providers
- Too many KPI's
- High turnover of staff
- A person living with disabilities has different strengths and capabilities
- Some people are linked to DES providers but many are not. Why?
- Only a few DES providers will take on more severe cases
- Because a DES provider doesn't get paid till 8hrs employment, they don't want to help out
- 15-18 year olds wanting a job with a disability have no support. It's all up to parental responsibility

FINDING A JOB/HIRING PROCESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Create an Employer Accessible Pack
- Should be national, not just Townsville
- This is something that can be achieved in our lifetime, carving the path for others
- Having a voice and being respected
- Bring together employers and employees
- People with disabilities could work as paid consultants advising businesses
- Concept of inclusion in everything
- Languages in job adverts needs to be inclusive
- People living with disabilities have the answers
- Education is where employment starts!
- Education, particularly with support from IEP, can support current employment gaps
- Education encourages a "career" mindset
- Early support = early independence
- Capture young minds
- A person with lived experience needs the employer to be creative and have the support rather than putting it on the employee who is anxious and fearful

- Make a plan away from SLES and ADE supports and then move to an IEP to develop those skills and move into mainstream employment
- Supported Wage System – A DES provider can assess what a person living with disability can complete. They then work at that level and the government pay the balance so they can earn a minimum wage

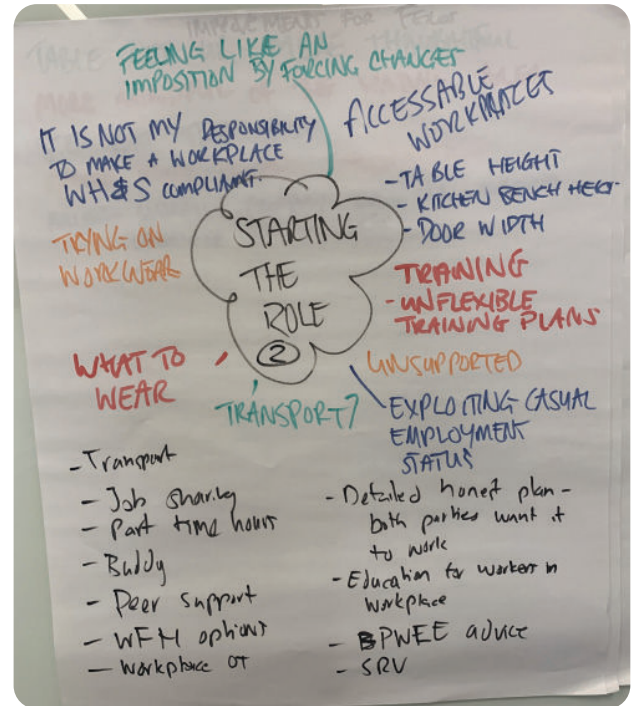
Step 2: Starting the role

STARTING THE ROLE BARRIERS

- “It is not my responsibility to make a workplace WH&S compliant”
- Workwear – Clothing for people with disability – on a DSP and can’t get clothing to go to interviews. Don’t know what or how to wear it. Assistance needed to get to the shops to get them on and off
- Feeling like an imposition by forcing changes
- Accessible workplaces: table height, kitchen bench height, door width
- Training – inflexible training plans
- Unsupported
- Exploiting casual employment status
- Transport
- It’s very hard for a person with a disability and there’s fear. Their strengths aren’t celebrated and it’s expected they can’t meet the pace of others
- If there is a genuine fear of bullying, harassment or intimidation – you won’t go into that workspace
- It’s impossible to fit a round peg into a square hole
- People with high cognition and don’t need a DES may need on-the-job supports for physical needs

STARTING THE ROLE OPPORTUNITIES

- Transport
- Job sharing
- Part-time hours
- Buddy
- Peer Support
- Work from Home (WFH) options
- Workplace Occupational Therapists
- Detailed, honest plans from both parties, as to how they would like it to work (See ‘My Disability My Way’ – Feros Care resource)
- Education for workers in the workplace
- Advice from People with lived experience
- Social Role Valorisation
- Talk to the person with a disability about their strengths and ask where the role can be adapted to meet their strengths
- Don’t start by modifying, changing or adjusting. Start with the person and tailor the role to them from the outset

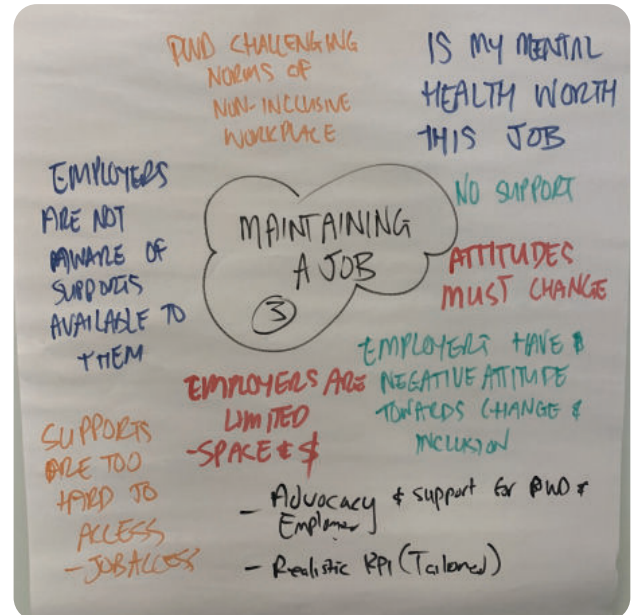


- “I know you’ve got it in you...what can you do for me?”
- “So blessed to partner with Feros Care.”

Step 3: Maintaining a job

MAINTAINING A JOB BARRIERS

- Employers are not aware of supports available to them
- Supports are too hard to access, eg Job Access
- Employers have limited space within a workplace
- “Is my mental health worth this job?”
- No support
- Attitudes must change
- Employers have a negative attitude towards change and inclusion
- Provision for continence care, oxygen, epi-pens etc not addressed appropriately in the workplace
- Access to buildings and emotional impact on wellbeing. Accessing a lunch table can be difficult leading to physical and social isolation.
- Economically – loss of housing or benefits and pension. Can’t work 30 hours



MAINTAINING A JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Attitudes must change
- Advocacy and support for people living with disabilities and their employers
- Realistic, tailored KPI’s
- People living with disabilities are challenging the norms of non-inclusive workplaces
- The value of COVID to changing workspaces
- Having quiet-time rooms
- Why don’t we have part time LACs?
- Managing oxygen, continence, epi-pen, anything extra in the workplace.
- The cost to the workplace to have the right set up. Under x hours means you are a casual and have no rights so they can just not roster you on

Step 4: Supporting career progression

SUPPORTING CAREER PROGRESSION BARRIERS

- Invisible disability has been seen by this point. Can be subject to discrimination
- If assistive technology fails, may need time off work
- People living with disabilities may be unable to work until retirement age
- Not even getting this far
- Reduced opportunities for people living with disabilities increases competition in the market
- Needs to be better education but education is halted by exclusion in education
- Mental health has been impacted greatly by this point
- Greater competition and ability to progress. Person with disability may not have networked to the same extent, made friends and therefore had opportunities to progress

SUPPORTING CAREER PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

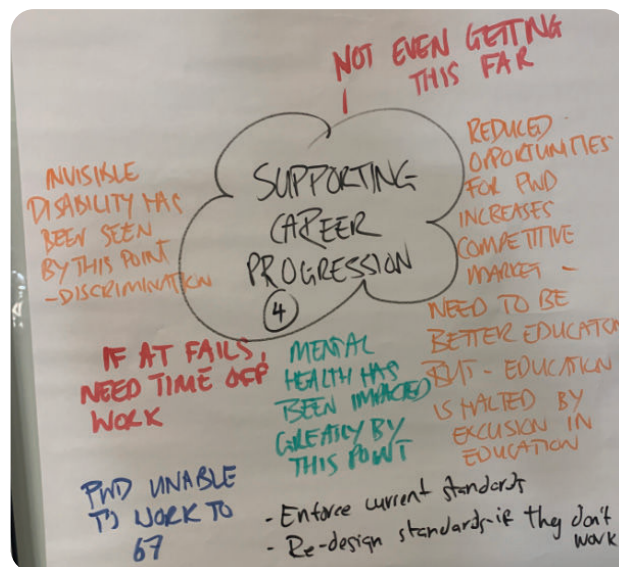
- Enforce current standards
- Re-design standards if they don't work

GENERAL OUTCOMES & SUMMARY

LWG1 was deemed to be a success with input from all participants and valuable feedback on all stages of the Job seeking process. Everyone was engaged and interested to hear about people, their interests and connections.

Project Team Insights Following Workshop

- We are a group who will put their money where their mouth is
- Loved hearing the different experiences and thoughts about where the barriers are. However, there is someone in the room with a solution
- Together we are strong.
- "We have the answers and live this life everyday"
- We forget how powerful we are and its good to get the creative juices flowing
- Relates across all disciplines of inclusion
- Awesome to hear the concept of inclusion and the barriers and getting involved into all areas of sport. It's worth the effort of trying to include people with disabilities
- The solutions will come from people with lived experience
- My world got a bit bigger eg, "why does it have to be that way?" "Why does the person have to do all parts of the job?"
- Having a voice
- Exciting times. When initially rolled out no cooperation. Now Microsoft jumping on board to make more accessible
- A whole socio-cultural change, not just up to NDIS but up to everyone
- COVID has opened up a lot of jobs and employment opportunities. People living with disabilities are able to meaningfully connect and work in the community. Becoming used to new norms
- Whatever we do will benefit the next people coming through so they don't have to put up with what we've had to
- Employers and the workforce will be able to ask and employ more people with disabilities.
- Learned so much. Worked in DES for so long but don't think that customers don't see an employee. The start of our national plan



Thanks to everyone for their valuable contribution and commitment to this project!

SAVE THE DATE:

LWG 2 has been locked in for Thursday 9 February from 10am – 1.30pm.