

Disability Mythbusting fact sheet



That, right there, is the first myth busted. Employing people with disability does not automatically mean employing people in wheelchairs. In fact, people in wheelchairs make up less than 2% of all Australians with disability.

(ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers, 2009).

A lack of awareness, exposure and understanding can lead to unconscious stereotyping. This can cause people with disability to be overlooked for employment opportunities.

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator works with employers to build their confidence, dispel the myths and help break down barriers to employing people with disability. So, what are some of the myths...and the facts about employing people with disability?

MYTH: People with disability can only do basic unskilled jobs

FACT: People with disability bring a range of skills, talents and abilities to the workplace. They work in all sorts of jobs and hold a range of tertiary and trade qualifications. People with disability have a clear understanding of their abilities and are unlikely to apply for jobs they can't do.

MYTH: Higher absenteeism

FACT: Disability should not be perceived as sickness. Most people with disability are not continuously sick and do not need or take more time off work than anyone else due to illness. You will also find that flexible working arrangements you may already have in place for all employees will meet any requirements for flexibility an employee with disability might have.

MYTH: Higher employment and training costs

FACT: There are usually no extra costs at all. The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator can provide advice on free Australian Government employment and related services that can support you.

MYTH: People with disability always need expensive and high tech equipment

FACT: Simple and inexpensive devices are often all that is needed to help people with disability live and work to their full potential. JobAccess is a free service that can provide advice and financial support for reasonable adjustments to the workplace. Disability Employment Services can also take care of the JobAccess process for you.

MYTH: Higher workers compensation and safety costs

FACT: Insurance premiums are based on accidents at work and not the characteristics of particular groups of employees. There is no proof that employees with disability are more susceptible to workplace injury than others.

MYTH: People with disability require more support in the workplace which will reduce productivity of others

FACT: Most people with disability need little or no support and are independent and capable of giving help as well as receiving it. If an employee does require support, there are services available to assist.

MYTH: People with disability will not fit in

FACT: In most cases customer and co-worker acceptance comes with awareness and observing that workers with disability are competent and efficient in their jobs. People with disability make up 20% of the Australian population and the likelihood of customers and co-workers having a relative or friend with disability is high. Hiring people with disability can result in increased staff morale. A business that supports all members of society often grows strong team spirit.

MYTH: Lower productivity levels

FACT: The productivity of people with disability at work is largely not affected by their disability. Most people with disability are as productive as their colleagues without disability and receive full wages. In a very small number of cases where productivity may be impacted upon as a result of disability, the Australian Government offers specialist support and assistance via the Supported Wage System (where worker is assessed and paid based on productivity levels).

MYTH: A physical disability equals a mental disability

FACT: Sometimes people think physical disabilities are linked somehow with intelligence. This is generally not the case.

What is the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator?

Helping employers find the right people for the right jobs is why the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator exists. With 1 in 5 Australians now living with disability it simply makes good business sense to ensure your teams fully embrace human potential. This comes from a focus on abilities, rather than disability.

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator is an Australian Government support service that puts the needs of employers first. We provide a range of advisory services designed to build your confidence to welcome candidates with disability into your organisation. Disability awareness training, access to good practice ideas and help developing job roles and vacancies are all part of our free service to employers.

The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator is also your link to the national network of Disability Employment Services

We can broadcast your vacancies to this national network and help you reach a greater pool of candidates for your vacancies. We also work with Disability Employment Services providers to help them develop an understanding of what it takes to work with your organisation and support you in building effective working relationships with your local providers.

For more information

Contact the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator on 1800 464 800 or visit the [JobAccess website](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/NDRC) (www.jobaccess.gov.au/NDRC).