



National Disability Administrators

Investigation into workforce
capacity issues
Summary report

April 2006
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NDA Summary Report

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1 Introduction

This summary document provides a summation of the report arising from the project. It details the key findings of the research and provides an overview of potential forward strategies for consideration by the NDA in responding to workforce capacity issues for the disability sector.

KPMG was commissioned by the National Disability Administrators (NDA) to undertake a research project to investigate appropriate attraction, recruitment, retention strategies and employment models for the disability sector that take account of the impacts of the ageing population and the need for a skilled and competitive workforce in respect of services for people with disabilities.

In developing the evidence base to respond to this problem, the NDA has sought:

- an analysis of the impact of an ageing workforce on the disability sector including the identification of key aspects, determinants and impacts of an ageing workforce;
- development of a sustainable and responsive attraction and recruitment strategy, ensuring that the disability sector is an ‘industry of choice’; and
- strategic analysis of good-practice recruitment and selection strategies to ensure high-quality, diverse applicant pools.

The full findings of the research are contained in the ‘Investigation into Workforce Capacity Issues, Research Report’, KPMG, April 2006.

Disclaimer

This report is solely for the purpose set out in Section 1 of this report and for the National Disability Administrators (the NDA).

This report has been prepared using information provided to KPMG by the stakeholders contacted through the consultation process and through the research undertaken by KPMG. KPMG has relied on that information being accurate. KPMG has not undertaken any audit or other forms of testing to verify the accuracy, completeness, or reasonableness of the information provided. Accordingly, KPMG can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions in the information shown in this report where it is based upon that information provided.

The research report was based on a series of workshops and individual interviews conducted with stakeholders identified by the NDA. KPMG has relied upon those stakeholders as providing a complete, objective and representative view of information.

This report has been prepared at the request of the NDA in accordance with the terms of KPMG’s engagement contract dated 15 June 2005. Other than our responsibility to the NDA neither KPMG nor any member or employee of KPMG undertakes responsibility arising in any way from reliance placed by a third party on this report. Any reliance placed is that party’s sole responsibility.

2 Findings of the research

This section considers the ageing population and broader fiscal, labour force and policy trends that will have an impact on the disability workforce.

2.1 The impact of the ageing workforce on the disability sector

Chapter 2 of the research report contains a discussion of the ageing population within Australia and its implication for workforce trends and patterns, both at a national level and for the disability sector. It also details, where available and relevant, the profile of the disability workforce.

2.1.1 Ageing population

Australia's population is ageing. While there are significant implications projected across the labour force more broadly, the disability sector is likely to experience a shortage of available workers sooner than other industries given the number of people in the workforce that are projected to move to retirement in the next 10 years.

The implications of the demographic shifts noted in the Intergenerational Report (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002) suggest that, for the disability sector, the following issues require consideration:

- the disability workforce is, on average, older than the general workforce within Australia and, as such, may experience the pressures identified above sooner than the general workforce. The disability sector is likely to experience a shortage of available workers sooner than other industries given the number of people in the workforce that may move to retirement in the next 10 years;
- as part of this, there is urgent need to respond to the management of an older workforce through planned workforce strategies focused on re-skilling and retention;
- the cultural diversity of Australia's population poses particular challenges for the supply of disability support, requiring the workforce to identify and provide for the specific needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse population that may require disability support services in the future; and
- with migration now no longer likely to offset the ageing population, strategies to either maintain or retain an older workforce will be necessary, as will the need to examine other potential non-traditional applicant pools such as workers seeking a second career, workers displaced from another industry or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Finally, and of particular significance for disability services, the ageing of Australia's population will significantly increase the demand for disability support services.

2.1.2 Economic trends

Australia's economic situation will be brought under significant pressure with the increasing expenditure on health, aged care and personal benefit payments. This will lead to a potentially declining available resource base coupled with increasing competition across health and community service sectors for scant funds and human resources.

Australia's economic situation will be brought under significant pressure with the increasing expenditure on health, aged care and personal benefit payments, which is likely to lead to a declining resource base and increased competition between sub-sectors of the community services industry. As such, there will be a potentially declining resource base available to the disability sector.

This poses challenges for the broader human services sector with a need to work together in responding to the needs of the Australian community through partnerships and collaboration and more streamlined approaches to service provision to ensure efficient provision of services minimising any duplication.

2.1.3 Labour force trends

The ageing of Australia's population is likely to have a significant impact on Australia's labour force. In particular, declining rates of labour participation will be experienced across jurisdictions and across industries.

The implications of these labour force trends suggest that:

- the disability sector must position itself in the market place as an industry of choice to effectively compete within the broader human services sector. Strategies for attracting new workers into the disability workforce must be specifically targeted to the specific motivations and aspirations of generations X and Y;
- with a more competitive market, there will be a need to encourage and develop greater flexibility of the workforce within the disability sector. With likely increased levels of part time employment and job sharing, the nature of disability work, direct care particularly, is well placed to respond in the market to accommodate these types of shifts;
- however, higher participation rates through part time employment may require some restructuring and rethinking of approaches to training, supervision and performance management to accommodate increased numbers of workers. This is also likely to have a financial implication for the sector;
- there will be increased pressure to refocus workforce strategies, particularly around mature age participation. The disability sector has a substantially ageing workforce itself, and there will be increased need for organisations to refocus workforce strategies around mature age participation, including the need for job redesign, workforce exit and replacement strategies and recruitment and workforce management practices that accommodate the needs of older workers;

- the ageing population and predicted increased trend towards volunteerism may provide opportunities for the disability workforce to target specific groups for participation within the sector. It is recognised that any opportunities must be balanced against risk, Occupational Health and Safety and duty of care implications for service provision; and
- higher rates of employment generally make the market more competitive, pushing wages upwards. This may have a longer term, financial implication for the disability sector in responding to increased wages across the general workforce and potential flow on effects for the disability sector in keeping pace with wage adjustments.

2.2 Broader trends and their impact on the disability workforce

Compounding the pressure of an ageing population and an ageing workforce are the following trends:

- Australia's population is shifting to coastal regions and becoming more urbanised which will change the location of service delivery demands;
- the population is becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse which will impact on service delivery;
- the population is becoming increasingly better educated, raising the expectations of those entering the workforce;
- the change in family size and structure and the slowing of women entering the workforce is likely to see a decline in the traditional disability workforce pool (women aged over 35 years);
- changes in community services sector policy will lead to increasing pressure on the disability sector to collaborate more closely with the health and community services sectors, gain a better understanding of communities and sub-communities and work towards building capacity within those communities; and
- moves to place based and in the home service provision will increase pressure on the sector to work within less structured environments when providing services to individual clients.

The roles and responsibilities of direct care workers have expanded well beyond the expectations of these workers some decades ago when they worked in traditional institutional settings. Rather than simply being required to provide personal care to their clients, direct care workers are now required to support individuals in creating and maintaining personal relationships with friends and family, to assist individuals to create and pursue their own personal goals, to facilitate the participation of the client in the workforce, to teach empowerment skills and to facilitate the access of clients to recreational and community activities.

The implications of these trends indicate that, for the disability sector, the following require consideration:

- workers will be required to have more complex skills, increasing the need for organisations to provide education, training and professional development for workers; and
- the new context for care and the subsequent demands on workers requires new ways of thinking, new skills for both management and support workers, and a new way of working with clients, their families and carers.

3 Competencies and attributes for employment in the disability sector

Chapter 4 of the research report examines the current national training framework for the disability sector and explores qualifications, pre-entry standards and other attributes that may be appropriate for successful employment in the disability sector. In examining these, consideration was given to current approaches, both within disability and other sectors, in regard to: pre-entry requirements; qualifications, competencies and attributes of the direct care and client contact workforce; and management skills and competencies.

Two things were immediately clear from the information presented in this chapter.

Firstly, while most community services sectors have a minimum requirement for entry level positions, the disability sector is a notable exception. The sector needs to move to a situation, as nursing and the aged care sectors have done relatively recently, where new entry workers are pre-qualified prior to their employment in direct care work. The disability sector needs to resolve and agree to a national position on what the pre-entry standard should be.

Secondly, it is clear that the competency framework for disability qualifications is heavily weighted towards skills and knowledge rather than the possession of particular values or attitudes. While the current competency framework deals adequately with the physical and administrative requirements of the job, there is a need to identify and include the personal attributes required for disability work as an integral part of working towards gaining a qualification.

3.1 Attraction and recruitment strategies

In a highly competitive labour market, it is critical that the disability sector becomes a more attractive career for prospective workers. Chapter 5 of the research report explores a range of strategies that have been recommended and trialled internationally. This chapter also provides some comments about potential critical success factors for enhancing recruitment for the disability workforce.

The disability sector has primarily sought to recruit through traditional methods which may not assist the sector in meeting the challenges of the current labour market environment. Attracting high quality applicant pools requires that the sector incorporate the following best practice, core elements:

- good workforce planning that meets organisational and program objectives by systematically identifying the workforce that needs to be recruited in the short term and projects the workforce that will need to be recruited in the longer term;
- clarity about the skills, competencies and attributes necessary for working in disability services;
- an understanding of the employment marketplace which will assist in targeting new markets for recruitment strategies;

- good job design and career pathway options that provide entry to a recognised career path and that attract recruits to a wider sector rather than to a specific job or organisation; and
- understanding the different population cohorts, how to attract them to advertised positions and how they respond to different techniques and methods, for example web-based activity versus face-to-face information sessions.

Some jurisdictions have responded with innovation to the challenges they face in attracting appropriate candidates, but the question of attraction requires the sector to work nationally to adopt a coordinated approach to workforce planning in the current employment market.

According to the research undertaken for this project, best practice recruitment for the sector is likely to include:

- realistic job previews so applicants have clear expectations of the position they are applying for;
- a suite of selection techniques that can respond to diverse applicant pools that do not solely rely on the written application or interview process;
- a range of interview techniques and the use of situational questions, hypothetical scenarios, work related experiences and problem solving exercises and developing criteria to assess applicants' responses;
- techniques that enable some assessment of values and attitudes of potential applicants;
- reference checking to support suitability;
- avoiding age discrimination – the need to review recruitment and selection procedures to ensure age discrimination is not directly or indirectly supported and educate selection panel members to avoid making recommendations based on age stereotypes (Department of Industrial Relations 2005);
- making greater use of mixed age selection panels and multiple selection techniques;
- ensuring induction processes are embedded so new workers have a better understanding of their role and where they fit into an organisation. This will also equip them with the tools they need to perform their role. Mentoring or “buddy” systems will also assist in ensuring a comprehensive induction; and
- the use of standardised tools, such as checklists and interview schedules, to support the recruitment process.

The sector could consider exploring potential new markets for workers, such as workers seeking a second career or workers displaced from other industries, as long as this is undertaken with the appropriate supports in place. There is also evidence internationally of some success in the use of mass media and related campaigns, which the sector has previously not used as a mechanism for recruiting new workforce. Finally, the sector could consider the benefits of creating cross

sector career paths, such as the approach adopted by the National Health Service in the UK. Developing increased career mobility and transferability across several community services sectors, such as child care and aged care, may increase the appeal of the sector as an entry point to a broader career in the community services sector.

Many jurisdictions and disability organisations are already implementing many of the strategies identified within good recruitment practice. However, much of the good practice strategies for attracting the desired workforce are not yet resolved in a consistent and coordinated way across the disability sector. The research suggests that the critical first steps in developing a recruitment and selection tool kit involve establishing foundation information to support attraction strategies, such as knowing the business and the sector, determining what is required to do the job effectively, determining the organisation's needs, knowing the skills and personal qualities required for the job, knowing the labour market, determining what is attractive about the sector and the role and how to capture these features and articulate them into a job advertisement.

The disability sector does not yet have a collective approach to these issues nationally.

3.2 Good practice employment models

Chapter 6 of the research report considers the components of good practice employment models that assist in attracting, recruiting and retaining employees. In a highly competitive workforce, good employment models include:

- access to learning and development, including induction and orientation training and opportunities for ongoing learning and development;
- recognition of prior learning;
- a flexible and responsive range of employment conditions and benefits tailored to the needs of the workforce, including salary, employee assistance schemes, flexibility and transferability of employee benefits, focus on work-life balance, a strong occupational health and safety framework and family friendly environments;
- opportunities for career progression;
- recognition and reward strategies; and
- good exit planning.

Retaining employees involves more than simply paying workers more money. It requires a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of good employment models. Emerging from the international literature and from other industries is a comprehensive picture of the need for several critical success factors, as listed below:

- high quality induction programs that provide holistic support to staff and not just limited to skills development.

- a shared view across the sector about on-going learning and development that will provide management training, traineeships and apprenticeships to enable employers to engage workers whose training is funded for them, individually focused training to build on skills and competencies which staff already possess and recognition of prior learning to enable workers already in the sector to pursue formal qualifications;
- an emphasis on workplace conditions that include flexible work arrangements, employee assistance and benefit schemes, support for staff to pursue a healthy work-life balance, family friendly environments and comprehensive occupational health and safety frameworks;
- career pathways that enable staff to move across sub-sectors of the community services sector and a supporting training framework that allows workers to build on skills that become portable across the sector, between organisations and between jurisdictions;
- supportive organisational environments created through good leadership and management, using mentoring systems and team approaches to work design, integrating direct care workers into decision making and case planning for clients, promoting a flexible and committed work environment that ensures staff have a strong sense of worth and value and provide personal and professional development and training opportunities that are accessible to all staff;
- staff reward and recognition strategies that are genuine, consistent, fair and well articulated; and
- exit planning strategies that gather information about why employees leave their jobs and that seek to address the issues raised through the process.

4 Looking forward – creating an industry of choice

All jurisdictions strongly endorsed the need for an agreed approach to effectively promote and facilitate workforce planning and development for the disability sector.

The issues facing the disability sector and its workforce are complex and multi dimensional, with the sector not able to directly control a number of external influences and impacts. The strategies proposed in this report therefore take a long-term view, as a number of strategies will take careful planning and coordination to implement. There are, however, a number of activities that can occur in the short term to facilitate new thinking and approaches. These are primarily targeted at attraction and recruitment strategies where some nationally agreed material could kick start activity.

This section provides an overview of the key elements that require consideration to address workforce capacity issues to enable the creation of the disability sector as an industry of choice. All strategies are targeted at both the government and non-government sectors. The following key elements require consideration: workforce planning; qualifications, education and training; attraction and recruitment; and employment models.

Each of these elements is discussed in detail in Chapter 8 of the research report with recommended strategies for consideration by the NDA.

Should the NDA agree to progress the strategies within this report then clearly, given the complexities and the need for an agreed, coordinated approach, a national workforce strategy plan should be developed that focuses on priority actions for the next five years.

4.1 Workforce planning

There is a need to embed workforce planning into organisational structures and culture, both at a state and territory level (government and non-government) and from a national perspective. At some levels, workforce planning is seen as a diversion from service delivery. A clearer connection must be established between the implications of good workforce planning practices and the achievement of service delivery and improved client outcomes.

4.1.1 Workforce data

As part of an agreed approach, it will be important to encourage a stronger focus on data collection and analysis. The sector needs to determine what information it needs to collect and why. The sector must agree on common terms and definitions for data collection, including consistent standards for position classifications to enable disability to be recognised as a unique, disability-specific sector. Any agreed national data collection process should aim, over time, to include the non-government sector. It is recognised that this may require investment and support for the non-government sector to achieve this. Where possible, the establishment of a workforce data set should be linked or incorporated into existing data sets, such as the NMDS, Australian Bureau of Statistics or the CSTDA, to be as cost effective as possible.

Strategies at the national level:

- Establish a national framework for workforce planning to support and underpin workforce activity in the disability sector.
- Agree a common workforce data set to enable regular monitoring of workforce trends and identify the most suitable approach and method of collection.
- Develop a national 15 to 20 year workforce plan that details future capacity and capability requirements and articulates future investment strategies.

Strategies at the state/territory level:

- Establish workforce planning capacity, systems and structures organisationally.
- Embed workforce planning processes into corporate business plans within key government agencies responsible for the funding and provision of disability services.
- Ensure workforce and associated human resource issues are embedded into quality and organisational review processes.
- Support the non-government sector to collect workforce data through:
 - establishment of agreed workforce data sets;
 - access and linkage to common data bases;
 - the collection of workforce performance data through finding and service agreement processes; and
 - embedding workforce and human resource issues into quality and organisational review processes.

4.2 Qualifications, training and cross sector career mapping

This section examines strategies to establish pre-entry standards for the disability sector and considers opportunities to establish cross sector career paths and recognition of prior learning programs to improve attraction and recruitment to the disability sector.

4.2.1 Pre-entry standards

To be employed as an allied health professional in the disability workforce, tertiary qualifications in one of several disciplines are required. This report does not propose any alterations in pre-entry requirements for allied health professionals.

There are no pre-entry requirements to work in the non-government sector within disability in Australia, and only two states have some form of mandatory entry requirement for government employees. This is in contrast to other health and community service sectors where there is a pre-entry requirement that is either certificate or diploma based or a minimum level of work experience years are required for employment.

Stakeholders were in strong agreement, however, for the need to establish a pre-entry standard for the future workforce for the disability sector. The general view from both government and non-government providers was that the minimum entry requirement should be the Certificate III in Disability Work. There was general consensus, however, that the course required adjustment based on the need to include the broader components of attributes and behaviours required by the specialist disability sector.

The introduction of a pre-entry standard is targeted at new participants in the workforce. While it in no way assumes that all existing staff should meet this standard, it does provide a benchmark which existing staff could use to plan future training and professional development activities.

It is acknowledged that the introduction of a pre-entry qualification requirement may temporarily affect the current applicant pool (due to the time and resources required to obtain pre-entry requirements). However, in the longer term, this effect should be mitigated through introduction of the breadth of strategies recommended in the research report (e.g. recognition of prior learning, career maps that encourage people looking for a second career, retention of older staff) that collectively provide a more planned approach to establishing the desired nature and shape of the disability workforce.

Core competencies, attributes and behaviours

The disability sector should look for a national position on this issue and work with the Industry Skills Council to determine and incorporate the broader range of attributes into the training package framework. In addition, the assessment of values and attitudes should clearly be built into the recruitment process through the use of various techniques and mechanisms, as described in the research report.

Relationship to broader health and community service pre-entry standards

It was strongly indicated by stakeholders that the disability sector should work to align its pre-entry standards with the broader health and community services sector. This aligns with creating structures that will enable mobility and transferability of qualifications and prior recognition of learning. It also supports the concept that pre-entry standards are focused on core competencies and on-the-job training focuses on specialist disability knowledge and expertise.

4.2.2 Career pathways

Career pathways that allow individuals to move between agencies and jurisdictions need to be established for the disability sector. Establishing career pathways across the spectrum of the health and community services sector that improve the transferability and mobility of qualifications would increase the attractiveness of disability work as a career option, enabling people to move in and out of the sector more readily.

Generally, career mapping frameworks are based on transferable, competency-based skills configured to allow for 'skills escalation'. The use of competencies allows portability for individuals across sub-sectors of the health field by moving vertically, horizontally or diagonally. This is designed to support career motivation and employment retention.

4.2.3 Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning seeks to acknowledge the skills and knowledge individuals gain through formal and informal training, work and life experiences.

By introducing a prior recognition of learning program, the disability sector would be in a position to attract and target workers seeking a career break or change from other sectors. Recognition could include both formal qualifications and work experience. The recognition program would need to be linked to the agreed competency framework and would form part of a career mapping program.

4.2.4 Job design

The nature of jobs within the disability sector is changing. Workers are required to work across different locations, with more diverse clients and in more flexible ways.

Many jobs require workers to perform at different levels, depending on the situation. Job design needs to focus on the skill sets required to do the job. By shifting job design to better reflect actual activity and performance levels, there is a capacity to provide improved remuneration structures that recognise jobs at a similar level that consistently require higher performance levels.

Strategies at the national level:

- Work with states and territories to agree and introduce a pre-entry standard for employment in the disability sector.
- Undertake discussions with the National Training Authority to review the suitability of the current Disability Worker Certificate Course and consider inclusion within the competency framework areas relating to personal attributes and values.
- Work with the National Training Authority to revise the methods of delivery and assessment for the certificate course to enable a better balance of classroom and practically based evidential learning and assessment.
- Undertake discussions with the Industry Skills Council to explore the potential for the development of a human services career map that incorporates the disability sector to encourage career mobility and transferability across the human services sector.
- Undertake discussions with the Australian Qualifications Advisory Board to establish a recognition of prior learning program for the disability sector.
- Facilitate discussions with the Industry Skills Council and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to explore the creation of a national traineeship program within the disability sector.
- Develop an industry wide information centre (e.g. website) to support potential applicants to understand job requirements, qualification and pre-entry standards, opportunities for career paths and recognition of prior learning programs.

Strategies at the state and territory level:

- Work with the education sector to embed contemporary disability practice and policy within school and relevant TAFE and university curriculum and to review the delivery and assessment methods of the certificate training courses.
- Review job design processes to more accurately reflect skill sets and performance levels for jobs.
- Grow the capacity to utilise apprenticeship and traineeship programs to foster the attainment of qualified new entrants to the workforce.

4.3 Creating an industry of choice

'Industry of choice' refers to the ability to differentiate employers and what they can offer leading people to choose to seek employment within that industry when presented with other career choices.

Becoming an 'industry of choice' responds to the need for sectors to address labour shortages and the need to attract and retain workers skilled in trades and technologies. In today's highly competitive employment world, there is a need to differentiate employers and what they can offer.

The literature highlights the requirements of becoming an industry of choice as:

- building an employment brand. This includes:
 - having public relations and marketing resources and strategy to develop an employment brand;
 - developing a culture of work practices and management style;
 - coordinating the employment brand with the industry brand; and
 - monitoring the industry's image, both internally and externally, to ensure the brand remains strong;
- embracing diversity and offering opportunities for all groups at different levels;
- establishing work/life balance programs that demonstrate they can reach a large number of people;
- recruitment practices that match the individual's skill sets and experience with the requirements of the industry;
- learning and development programs that enable upgrading and re-skilling matched to the requirements of the industry; and
- establishing a culture that is transparent, supports two-way communication, recognises and rewards, encourages employees to make a difference, and that is proactive about the health and safety of its workforce.

4.3.1 The disability sector's view

The concept of becoming an industry of choice was fully supported by the sector. Critical elements for consideration identified by the sector were:

- the need to create a positive and sustainable image for the sector that clearly draws the connection between valuing people with disabilities and valuing the workforce;

- clarity of expectations with regard to skills, competencies and personal attributes that we seek to attract to the sector;
- attraction strategies that understand the marketplace and the working interests and requirements of the different population cohorts. This includes tailoring attraction strategies to different population cohorts that recognise and respond to differing work objectives and requirements, as well as tailoring attraction strategies to attract more diverse applicant pools that have skill potential to work with remote, culturally diverse and Indigenous communities;
- establishing stronger connections with schools, education, TAFE and universities. To attract applicants to the workforce, there is a need to improve the awareness, knowledge and understanding of disability more broadly, as well as what it has to offer as a job and career;
- greater flexibility in recruitment procedures and strategies; and
- employment models that establish more flexible working conditions, improved professional development opportunities, genuine career paths and progression that enable the disability sector to be more competitive within the human services industry.

Strategies at the national level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a national disability website for the lodgement of job vacancies and information about working within the sector. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National marketing material to establish and promote a unique identity for the disability sector. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities with the education sector to inform and influence the curriculum so that it positively promotes the issues of diversity and disability. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing information that differentiates and accounts for different cohort groups. |

Strategies at the state and territory level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and implement strategies with the education system to provide opportunities for school and university students to engage in work experience in the disability sector. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant educational institutions to establish a graduate program to support attraction and recruitment to the sector. |

- Liaise with tertiary education institutions to ensure that curriculum reflects contemporary models of support provision consistent with program objectives.
- Provision of realistic information about the job requirements, type of person required, expectations to improve job previews for potential applicants.

4.3.2 Recruitment

The research clearly indicates that there are a range of recruitment methods available and being utilised across different sectors. This was also evident within the disability sector. It is clear there is no single ‘best practice’ recruitment method; rather, it is more important to have an understanding of a range of approaches and the resources and capacity to implement these. To improve recruitment practices, there is a need to:

- adopt new and different approaches to interviewing and selection – the research and consultations have strongly confirmed there is a need to have a suite of flexible approaches available as part of the recruitment process;
- foster relationships with career placement specialists, community controlled employment agencies, guidance counsellors and post secondary educational program staff to facilitate knowledge and understanding of the disability sector and what it can offer potential job applicants;
- establish strong links with the local community in which the employer is based to recruit people who are reflective of the community in which the clients come from;
- expand approaches to advertising;
- review and remove barriers created by the public sector and other organisational structures. There is a need to step outside traditional public sector requirements. This includes creating greater flexibility about:
 - where and how positions are advertised;
 - market reach;
 - timing for decision making;
 - being able to utilise different selection techniques; and
 - revising the way position descriptions are developed to create more realistic and user-friendly statements of requirements and stronger links to understanding the job to create a better job fit;

- work in collaboration to share resources and maximise opportunities. There is capacity, particularly in the non-government sector, for agencies to look at joint recruitment strategies, particularly where agencies are unable to offer full time work and they are in a similar location. Sharing costs and resources will maximise the capacity of agencies to attract staff into the sector; and
- undertake a national recruitment campaign with extensive use of different mediums. Such a campaign would enable direct linkage of community education with regard to disability, focusing on the value of the work and fostering the notion of a career within the sector, rather than within a particular jurisdiction or organisation.

Strategies at the national level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a national recruitment campaign to establish disability as a sector promoting a career within the industry. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a national recruitment package to enable consistent and coordinated information for potential applicants that establishes disability as an industry. |

Strategies at the state and territory level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of position descriptions and job profiles to create a better alignment between the job and the skills and attributes required. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with public sector entities to establish more flexible structures for recruitment processes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish networks and relationships with career placement specialists, community controlled employment agencies, guidance counsellors and post secondary educational program staff to facilitate knowledge and understanding of the disability sector and what it can offer potential job applicants. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consistent and coordinated recruitment processes and tools across the sector. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for staff in both the government and non-government sectors in good practice recruitment processes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of information and resources across agencies (government and non-government) to strengthen recruitment capacity. |

4.3.3 Employment models and retention

As part of creating an industry of choice, there is a need to establish flexible, attractive and sustainable employment models. It is important to understand that employment models consider issues beyond salary and remuneration. Of equal importance are working conditions, access to learning and development, management capabilities and career pathways and progression. This will require more flexible public sector structures, embedding of casuals into the workforce and establishing career pathways that are not just focused on promotion.

Portability of employment conditions is an important strategy to enable the attraction of people to the sector who may be looking for a career change but are concerned at losing accrued benefits. Portability of employment conditions could include recreation, sick leave and long service leave.

Achieving these strategies is not a simple task for the disability sector as awards and enterprise bargaining agreements guide much of the current conditions. In addition, portability of conditions has financial implications that would require cross sector negotiation and agreement. As such, portability is seen as a long-term strategy. However, many of the flexible arrangements proposed are able to be considered by organisations and government departments in the short term.

Strategies at the national level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Industry Skills Council to establish a national approach to induction training. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussions with key public sector bodies across Australia to examine the feasibility of creating portability of employment conditions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Industry Skills Council to develop a national competency based management skills program. |

Strategies at the state and territory level:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant unions and public sector entities to establish greater flexibility in employment conditions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the feasibility of remuneration and recognition strategies linked to the attainment of enhanced skills and training, including a cost benefit analysis to consider the feasibility of such an approach. |

- Establish mechanisms to ensure casual employees are linked into learning and development and performance management structures within organisations.
- Establish front-line management training programs using a competency based approach.