

## A challenge of 100 jobs in 100 days means the race is on to find opportunities and employers

Jill Hogan, Advertiser content

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The saying goes that we shouldn't judge a book by its cover, yet many do when it comes to people, which is why those with a disability can find it difficult to find employment.

NOVA Employment is a specialised recruitment company, who have been matching businesses to staff with a disability, including those with intellectual and physical barriers to work, for 30 years.

Focussing on people's abilities, NOVA expertly match jobseekers with the right role. They currently have around 1,100 jobseekers ready and willing to work – they just need to find the employers to provide the opportunities.

April 1 marks the beginning of NOVA's 100 jobs in 100 days Campaign, encouraging businesses to take on new employees.

In past years during the campaign they've secured roles across a wide range of industries, from family-owned shops to warehousing, manufacturing, real estate and hospitality, for people with an equally wide range of disabilities of all ages, backgrounds and various abilities.

"We all want a purpose in life and to feel valued" said Marie Green, NOVA Employment Manager, Engadine.

"Even though a person may have a disability from birth or acquired a disability through an accident, it should not prevent a person from having the same opportunities as a person without a disability, if they are capable of doing the same job."

"During the 100 Jobs campaign, we're asking business owners, tradies, clubs and the community to focus on the ability, of people with disability. It's about shining a light on the untapped talents of people with disability. And to bring awareness to their abilities."

Alister Brawls from Harvey Norman Warehouse is one of the employers who has used NOVA Employment to hire staff members Ben and Casey.



"They both work in our warehouse so they're responsible for the receiving of goods that come from suppliers, they're responsible for putting it away and they're also responsible for customer interactions, so customers come in to pick up their goods that they've purchased from Harvey Norman

"They're also really important because they're the last people to have interaction with a customer. So that customer has purchased an item, they're excited, they're picking it up from our warehouse and they are the people who say goodbye to that customer and thank them for their purchase."

Alister compares using NOVA Employment to finding work candidates through the trusted path of word of mouth.



"The best people that I've employed in my business has been through word of mouth. So whether it's a friend of a neighbour, they tell you about someone. NOVA has become that friend, NOVA has become that neighbour and a fantastic source in finding new people for our business.

"I've really cherished and valued the relationship I have with both Ben and Casey and to see how they've grown as individuals through our business has been priceless."

And the process isn't just about the employee's welfare – Alister said NOVA were also there for him every step of the way.

"NOVA Employment have been there beside both the employee and myself as an employer ensuring that they're the right fit for our business," he said.

"For a businesses looking at having NOVA Employment as a part of finding successful candidates to join their team, the best advice that I could give is to give them an opportunity, give them a go."



Andrew Cain, co-owner of Delicious Dairies, has also worked with NOVA for six years, employing three staff with disabilities during that time, Daniel, Jordan and Damien.

"We employed Daniel six years ago and he's still with us now. He started out four hours a day, four days a week as a storeman, and he's now full time" said Andrew.



"Daniel's got ADHD and dyslexia and had never lasted at a full time job before. But since he's been with us he's learned to count better, read better, write better. He's even gone on to get married and bought a house with his wife."

Their receptionist Jordan was also employed through NOVA.

"She's deaf and has cochlear implants. She answers our phones and is the first person who anyone talks to when they rings our company," said Andrew.



"NOVA really helped out a lot with getting her set up. We even got a grant to upgrade our phone system so Jordan's cochlear implants are plugged directly into the phone, which cuts out any background noise so Jordan can hear the phone calls more clearly."

Andrew said he would encourage anyone who has a job that would suit to give an employee through NOVA a go.

"The thing we've noticed is a lot of the other people out there don't want to work. And that's the difference with NOVA. The people we've hired through them have proven to us they want to work, and want to be productive members of society," he said.

"And the support you get from NOVA is fantastic. Our support person through NOVA comes in every week and speaks to our employees and makes sure everything's alright, and then also talks to us. Having that person in the middle really makes everything ok."

For more information, contact NOVA Employment on 1300 ABILITY (1300 224 5489).