

Left: Nova Employment helped Harry to gain open employment at Springwood Motor World. Below: CEO of Nova Employment, Martin Wren.

Employment changes

The Federal Government has established a new Disability Employment Services (DES) provider panel, with the aim of improving the DES program for job seekers. Chief Executive of Nova Employment, Martin Wren, shares his views on the changes and offers tips to people looking for work.

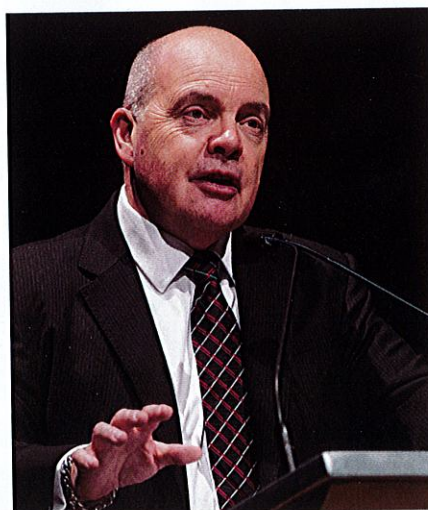
Everybody can improve and I don't deny that's true for DES providers. People with disability seeking work must be able to access services that achieve meaningful outcomes. That's demonstrated in hours worked, wages earned and longevity of employment.

Having a job can lead to greater independence. Work offers a place to grow, as well as stability, friendships, more money in your wallet, routine and a sense of purpose.

In the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) environment, where user choice and control enables consumers to vote with their feet, more and more DES providers are adapting their methods of operation to match service users' needs.

This is where people with disability may need to do some homework before deciding which provider to use. You have a choice, so ask questions.

Some good questions to ask are: have you much experience in working with people who face similar



barriers, what's the average time from signing up to getting a job, how will you support me to stay in your program, what's the average hours of work for people that you place into employment, what's the average wage, what percentage of people that you've placed in work are still in work one year later, tell me about your staff training program, and what's staff retention like?

Take notes. If the answer to any of these questions is not forthcoming, or is uninspiring, exercise caution before signing up.

One of the things that would make a real difference in the number and quality of employment outcomes would be for the people seeking work, or the service users, to be more assertive in challenging the promises of the service providers.

The new contract for DES came into effect from July 1, with a whole bunch of new organisations starting up that will give consumers even more choice, but choice and control have no value unless they are based on informed wisdom.

www.novaemployment.com.au
www.jobaccess.gov.au