



# Creating Conversation

**DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE**



## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	03
Benefits of a diverse workforce.....	04
Overcoming disability misconceptions .....	05
4 steps toward welcoming diversity .....	07
Assistance and support available to you.....	08
Get started today.....	10
About Sureway.....	11
References.....	12

© Sureway Employment & Training Pty Ltd 2021, ABN 73 066 754 256

All information provided in this booklet remains correct at the time of publication. Assistance offers mentioned in this booklet are subject to eligibility criteria. Assistance offers mentioned in this booklet are subject to change.

[Download an accessible version of this Booklet here](#)



## INTRODUCTION

Thanks for joining us on this journey of Creating Conversation!

**My name is Scott Reardon and I am an Australian Paralympic sprinter.**

I lost my lower leg in a farming accident at age 12. Since this time, I've faced my fair share of adversity as a person that lives with disability, but also successes.

I have been very fortunate to build a career in elite sport - something that I felt I was always destined to do. Having a career has taught me many things about the world and myself. It also provides me with financial security, stimulating challenges and a purpose to go through life each day.

For this reason, I am passionate about using my time to advocate for others who live with disability and are experiencing unemployment.

By partnering with Sureway to produce this resource, my hope is that more employers will go from 'willing' to actively employing people with disabilities. By providing individuals with greater opportunities to engage in meaningful work, not only will this improve the lives of each individual, but it also has great flow on effects for our communities and future generations.

Thanks again for joining us on this journey, and committing to Creating Conversation about disability in the workplace.

**Scott Reardon**

**Australian Paralympian and Sureway Ambassador**



## **BENEFITS OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE**

**Diversity in the workplace is the practice of including people from a range of different backgrounds and abilities in your workforce.**

It also involves removing barriers for individuals from diverse backgrounds to uptake opportunities with you, whether that be through hiring processes, workplace access or other means.

**Here are just some of the top benefits of employing a diverse workforce:**

### **Increased effectiveness**

Studies show that inclusive workplaces are 10 times more likely to be highly effective. They are also 9 times more likely to innovate <sup>1</sup>.

### **Boosted morale**

Employing a diverse workforce has been shown to boost overall staff morale and their dedication to working together as a team, supporting one another to get the job done <sup>2</sup>.

### **Access to a broader range of talent**

By making your recruitment processes barrier-free to people with diverse abilities, your business has greater opportunity to hire the best person for the job <sup>3</sup>.

### **Enhanced reputation**

Customers and employees are more likely to stay loyal to organisations that value and support diversity and inclusion <sup>3</sup>. Organisations that do practice inclusion are also 5 times more likely to give excellent customer service <sup>2</sup>.



## OVERCOMING DISABILITY MISCONCEPTIONS

In Australia, there are over 2 million people of working age who live with disability but just over 47% of this group are in gainful employment <sup>4</sup>.

While the majority of employers indicate openness to hiring people with disability, only around a third of businesses show commitment to doing it <sup>6</sup>. By challenging common misconceptions about people with disabilities in the workplace, we can help create greater opportunities for those in our communities.

### MISCONCEPTION #1

#### **It is more effort to hire, train and manage an employee with a disability**

Truth: Disabilities are broad and diverse, from physical, mental, intellectual, health management and beyond, and each individual has their own unique skills and abilities. Living with disability does not alone define a person's ability to contribute to a successful work environment. You may even work with someone that lives with disability right now and not even know it.

In fact, statistics show that people with disabilities generally take fewer days off, take less sick leave and stay in jobs longer than other workers <sup>2</sup>. For your business, this means lower recruitment and retraining costs, and long-term team members.

### MISCONCEPTION #2

#### **People with disabilities will be less productive employees**

Truth: Studies show that people with disabilities perform just as well in their jobs as other employees in the workplace <sup>2</sup>. In a great workplace there are no limits to what your employees can achieve.

By encouraging your employees to check in regularly on how they are finding their tasks you can foster an overall more productive workplace. You may find that a simple tweak to a standard break schedule or a rotation of tasks can help an employee perform at their highest potential.



### MISCONCEPTION #3

#### **Hiring someone with a disability is more costly**

Truth: Studies have shown that on average, employing people with disability does not cost any more than employing people without disability <sup>2</sup>. In fact, the benefits of increased workplace morale and reputation amongst customers may bring greater economic opportunities to your business <sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, an Australian Government review of research found that workers with disability are no more likely to be injured at work than other employees <sup>3</sup>.

But what about the physical work space? Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, employers are obligated to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's disability, unless that adjustment would result in unjustifiable hardship <sup>5</sup>. When you think about modifications that may be required for people with disabilities to do their jobs, such as magnification tools for people with vision impairments or height-adjustable work stations for flexible working options, the costs are likely to be relatively low <sup>5</sup>. Your business can also gain assistance from the [Australian Government's JobAccess](#) to identify and implement changes at no cost to you.



## 4 STEPS TOWARD WELCOMING DIVERSITY

Take these 4 easy steps today toward making your workplace more inclusive:



### **Step 1: Get comfortable and confident with inclusive language and etiquette**

By using the descriptor “person with disability” rather than “disabled person” you are focusing on the person rather than the disability. In the workplace, use terms like “accessible facilities” rather than “handicapped facilities”.



### **Step 2: Consider if your recruitment processes provide equal opportunity**

When we think about a traditional interview set-up where body language plays a huge role in our assessment of a candidate, it is important to be aware that some conditions may mean that the candidate has trouble holding eye contact, but they may still be the best person for the job at hand. You may also consider if phone-only screening limits opportunity for hard of hearing candidates.



### **Step 3: Get involved in awareness days and workplace events**

Offering opportunities for people with disability to gain insight into your industry through initiatives such as AccessAbility Day can help build confidence they need to take the leap into gainful employment. If you are new to employing people from diverse backgrounds, these opportunities can open your workplace to a huge talent pool of learning perspectives and quality candidates.



### **Step 4: Relax and don't go it alone**

There are a tonne of great free services in your community to help you, whatever stage in your journey you are at. Your local Sureway team can help get you started.



## ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO YOU

There are a wide range of free Government services and programs available to employers of people with disability. Services span from advice to recruitment support, financial assistance and more.

### Disability Employment Services (DES)



[Disability Employment Services \(DES\)](#) is the Australian Government's employment service that helps people with disability find work and keep a job. DES providers also work with employers to connect them with suitable employees and assist them to develop practices that support the employee in the workplace.



DES services are provided on behalf of the Australian Government and are at no cost to both the employer and job seekers. Sureway are a provider of DES services across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Support available for employers via DES includes, but is not limited to:	
 <p>End-to-end recruitment, including interview co-ordination, onboarding and more</p>	 <p>Assistance to access Government incentives and wage subsidies</p>
 <p>Job matching candidates to existing roles</p>	 <p>Assistance to access Accredited Training for your employee</p>
 <p>Job Carving to help craft roles suitable for candidates</p>	 <p>On- and off-the-job support for you and your employee</p>

View all available support by visiting [www.sureway.com.au/employers](http://www.sureway.com.au/employers)





## JobAccess

### Job Access

Driving disability employment

[JobAccess](#) is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers. Created by the Australian Government, it brings together the information and resources that can 'drive disability employment'.

#### Support and services available via JobAccess include, but is not limited to:

##### Funding for workplace changes

Sometimes changes need to be made in the workplace for people with disability to perform a particular job. Government funding provided through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) can cover the costs of making these changes. This can include buying equipment, modifications or accessing services for people with disability.

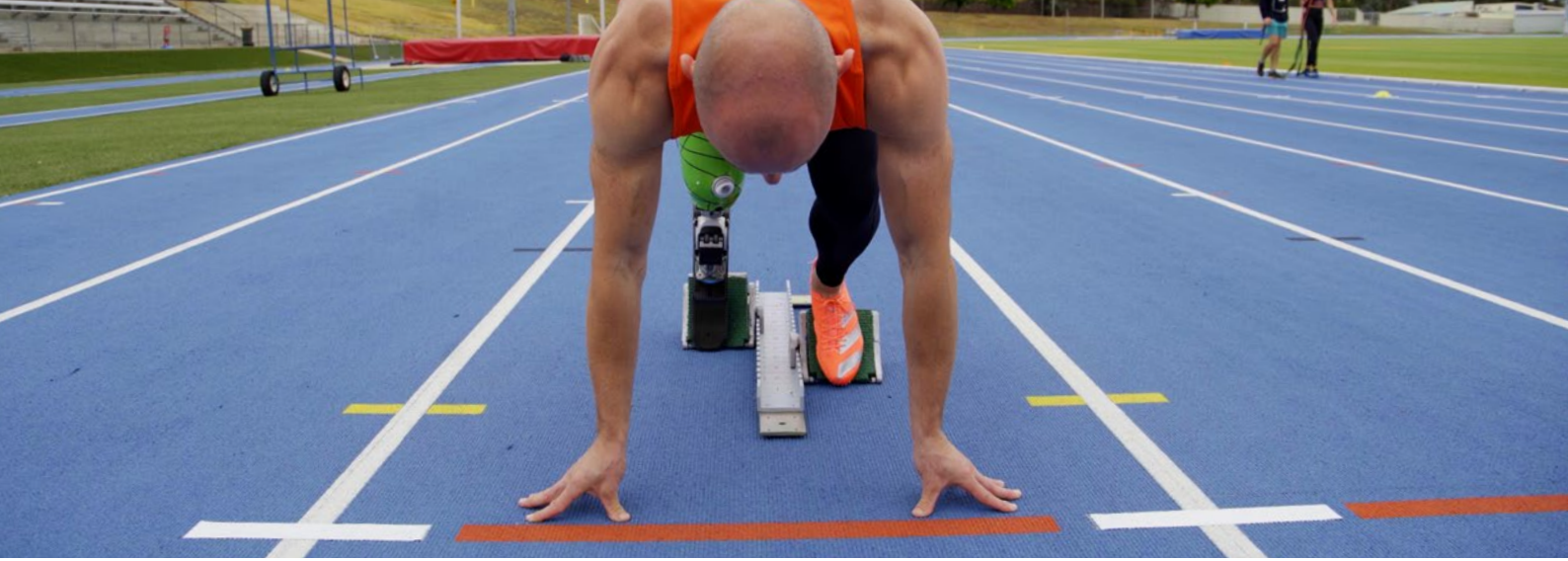
##### Supported Wage System (SWS)

The SWS is for employees with disability who are not able to perform jobs at the same capacity as any other employee. Under SWS, special workplace arrangements are created so that employers can pay wages to a person with disability based on how productive they are in their job. Your employee with disability will need to have a SWS assessment from a qualified assessor.

##### Developing strategies and plans

JobAccess has a wide range of information available on creating and maintaining disability employment strategies, action plans and employee support plans. You can also access information on creating flexible work times and establishing suitable work tasks.

View all available support by visiting [www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers)



## GET STARTED TODAY

We specialise in supporting employers end-to-end through their employment journey and supporting people with disability to achieve success in the workplace.

By working with Sureway, you and your business will receive:

- ✓ Personalised support to identify your current and future workforce requirements
- ✓ Tailored servicing plans to ensure that you are getting exactly what you need
- ✓ Access to our call centre support team Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 5.30pm AEST/AEDT
- ✓ A support plan for you and your employee(s) based on your immediate and ongoing needs

**If you are ready to create a more diverse workplace, contact us on:**



**1300SUREWAY**  
(1300 787 392)



**info@sureway.com.au**

If you feel uncertain about how or when to start, we recommend speaking with your local Sureway team who can provide free information and direction that is suited to your business and goals.



## ABOUT SUREWAY

Sureway Employment and Training connect and support job seekers and employers alike in order to change lives and build stronger communities.

Sureway opened its doors in 1991 as a training provider. Since then, it became our mission to work closely with businesses from various industries and transform their operations by upgrading the skills required in their workplace. We uncovered what they were looking for in order to level up their businesses.

In 1998, with a vision to widen our reach, Sureway was chosen to deliver employment services to clients on behalf of the Federal Government. What was initially limited to rural, regional and remote NSW has now expanded to rural and regional Victoria, and South Australia metropolitan and regional areas.

Now, Sureway continues to provide support to clients in their goal of achieving sustainable employment. We have a vast knowledge of the needs of the local industry. We have identified the skills demanded by different businesses and tailored our training for job seekers in order to meet the requirements of the labour market in their local area.

This best positions our clients to take up employment opportunities in their local community.

We specialise in meeting the needs of job seekers by developing their skills, providing personal support and moving them into sustainable employment, and; meeting the needs of employers by providing skilled applicants, tailored services and localised assistance.

We offer this support through our Australian Government programs from over 80 locations across NSW, VIC and SA:

- jobactive
- Disability Employment Services
- Career Transition Assistance

We also deliver Nationally Accredited Training solutions throughout our Registered Training Organisation, Sureway Skills Training (RTO: 91058), and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services through Sureway Health Support.





## REFERENCES

1. Australian Government Department of Social Services, Disability Makes Good Business Sense, [Disability Employment Fact Sheet](#), 2018
2. Australian Government Department of Social Services, Job Access, [Benefits of employing people with disability](#), 2016
3. Australian Network on Disability, [Employing People with Disability](#), 2021
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Disability and Labour Force Participation 2012](#), 2015
5. Australian Network on Disability, [Workplace Adjustments](#), 2021
6. Australian Government Department of Social Services, Job Access, [Employ their ability](#), 2021

[WWW.SUREWAY.COM.AU](http://WWW.SUREWAY.COM.AU)

CHANGING LIVES, BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

**sureway**  
employment & training