

NTPS **EmployAbility** Strategy 2018-2022

Valuing an Inclusive Workforce





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Introduction

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) is the largest employer in the Northern Territory with around 23,000 staff, with 4% recently identifying as having disability¹.

The EmployAbility Strategy 2018-2022 identifies key initiatives to increase workforce participation of people with disability across the NTPS. Focusing on people with disability will open up a diverse talent pool of potential employees as well as ensuring that people who acquire a disability during their employment are appropriately supported in their employment to maximise their potential and continue to contribute to the important work we do.



Disability in the community

The national picture²

- Nationally, people with disability represent 18.3% of the population.
- Some 3.7 million Australians with disability, had a specific limitation or restriction such as a schooling or employment restriction (e.g. unable to attend or required special equipment) and/or limitation with core activities such as communication, mobility or self-care.
- Nationally, 25.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a disability.

The Northern Territory

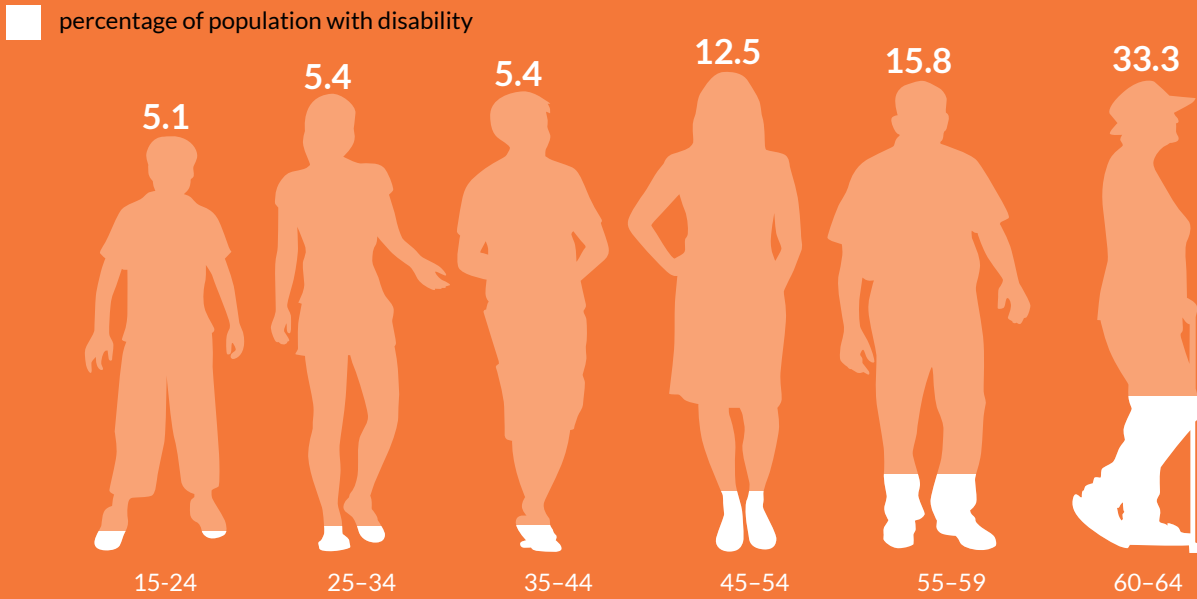
- In the NT, People with disability represent 11.3% of the population, which is significantly lower than the national average (18.3%). This is possibly related to the younger demographic of the NT.

Participation of people with disability in the workforce is important for social inclusion and economic independence. Having disability can impact on a person's ability and opportunities to participate in the workforce. The following 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) results are for the working age population (aged 15 to 64 years), living in households in the Northern Territory.

¹ People Matter Survey 2016

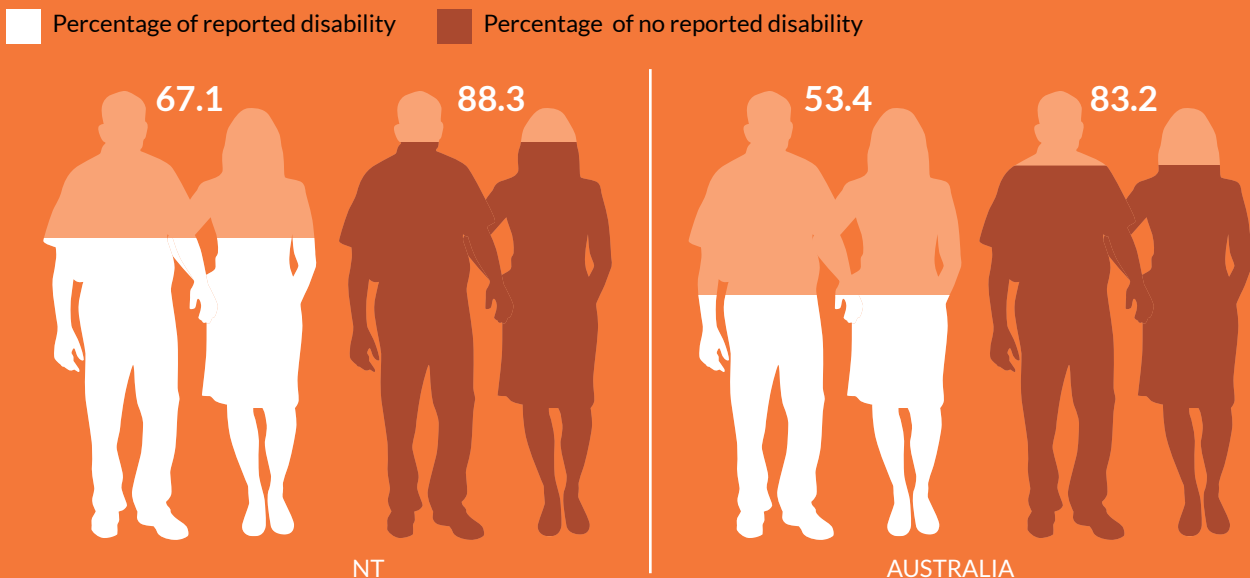
² Data drawn from the ABS SDAC 2015. Available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/Lookup/4430.0main+features202015>

Percentage of NT population with disability by working age 15-64 years of age.³



GRAPH 1: Although there is a relatively small percentage of people in the NT under 60 with disability, the ageing workforce demographic within the NTPS will increase the prevalence of employee disability experienced within agencies over time as the workforce ages. This will result in agencies needing to support existing employees who acquire disability as they age.

Employment participation: people with disability and no disability in the NT and across Australia.⁴



GRAPH 2: Indicates that the percentage of people with disability participating in employment in the NT (67.1%) is higher than the national participation rate (53.4%). However, so too is the general population participation rate (88.3%) in the NT, compared with the national participation rate (83.2%). In addition, the gap between employment participation of Territorians, with and without disability is less than that at the national level.

³ Data drawn from the ABS SDAC 2015. Available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/Lookup/4430.0main+features202015>
⁴ Data drawn from the ABS SDAC 2015. Available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/Lookup/4430.0main+features202015>



National policy context

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020³

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) developed and endorsed a 10 year National Disability Strategy designed to inform and focus policy development at all levels of government and to provide national leadership toward greater inclusion of people with disability. Prior to the establishment of the national strategy, the Northern Territory Government had already implemented a disability employment strategy in 2003. This first NTPS disability strategy was reviewed and revised in 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2017.

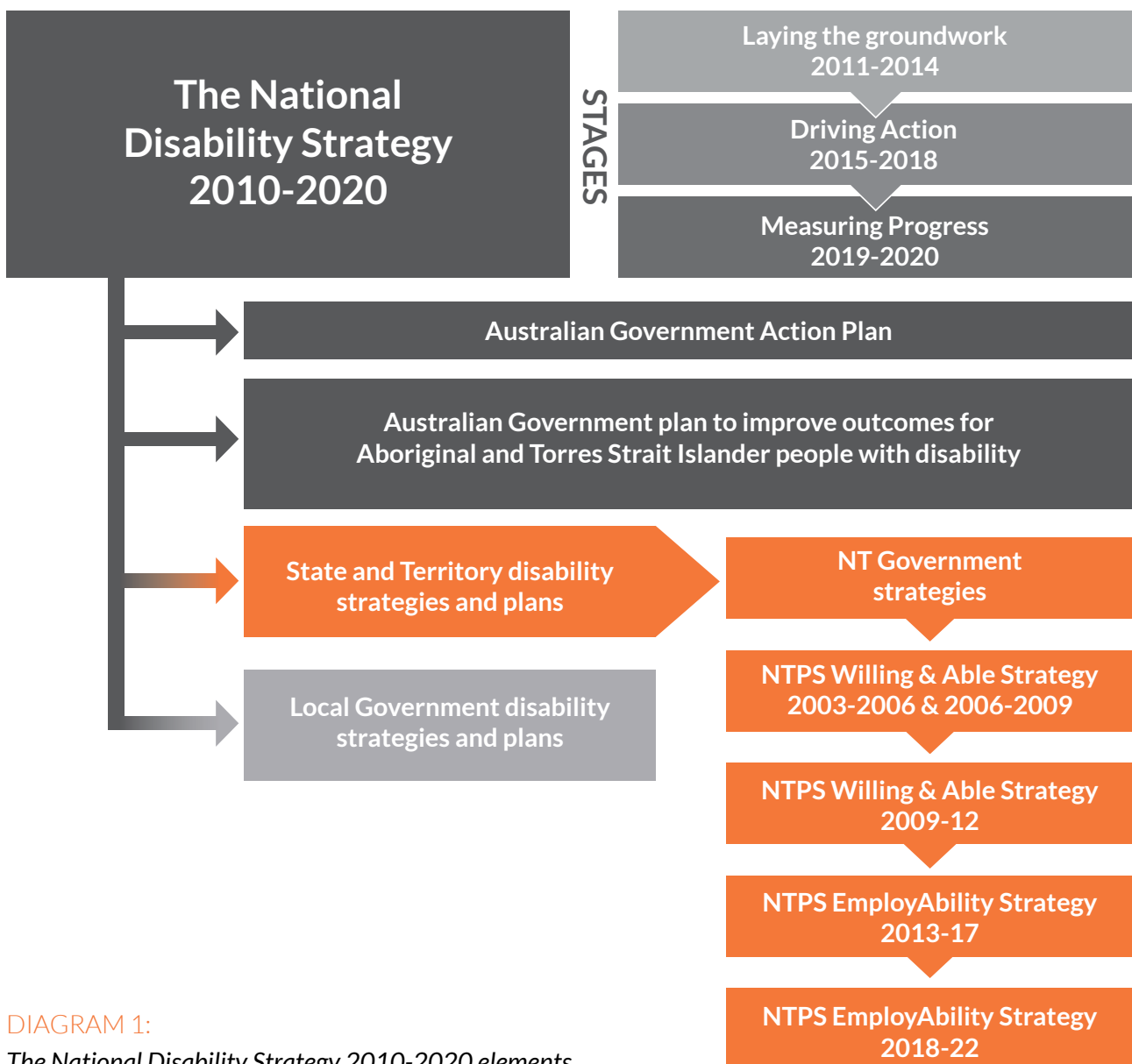


DIAGRAM 1:
The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 elements

³ Commonwealth of Australia (2010). National Disability Strategy 2010-2020. Available at <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/policy-research/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020>

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a significant national social reform to improve the conditions and opportunities for people with disability. The NDIS intersects with employment services for individuals with disability and also provides some support to enable workforce participation for people with disability. The NDIS is being rolled out in the Northern Territory throughout 2017/18⁴.



Why we need this strategy

In 2017, the Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment (OCPE) launched the *NTPS Inclusion and Diversity Initiative* to bring together initiatives and strategies focused on Inclusion and Diversity and position at the forefront the need for agencies to focus on, and engage with inclusive practice in the business of the NTPS. The initiative currently includes the following focus areas:



DIAGRAM 2:
The NTPS Inclusion and Diversity Initiative

Diagram 2 outlines the elements of the Inclusion and Diversity Initiative, including Aboriginal employment initiatives, ageing workforce initiatives as well as the EmployAbility strategy and related activities. This strategy is a key component of the Inclusion and Diversity initiative.

⁴ National Disability Insurance scheme Northern Territory roll out. Available at <https://ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/NT.html#du>



As the largest employer in the Northern Territory, the NTPS has a critical role in the employment of people with disability. The employment of people with disability is a key component of creating a diverse and inclusive NTPS.

The majority of people with disability can and do want to work and contribute to society. Work is essential to an individual's economic security and is important in promoting social inclusion. Employment contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and a sense of identity. Work is the pathway used by most Australians to long-term economic security and wellbeing. Recognising their ability and increasing employment opportunities for people with disability is important for a robust and representative NTPS.

According to the *Willing to Work* report⁵, recruitment and retention of people with disability requires:

- Leadership commitment
- Ensuring non-discriminatory recruitment and retention practice
- Building workplace flexibility
- Targeted education and training in the workplace in relation to rights and responsibilities at work, internal grievance processes, flexible leave options, any employee driven networks and the nature and impact of discrimination
- Building healthy workplaces.

This strategy incorporates these recommendations as well as drawing on lessons learned from the past, and building on previous work to promote the NTPS as an employer of choice for Territorians.



Evaluation of the current strategy

challenges
success factors
opportunities

During 2016 an independent consultant was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the current strategy (EmployAbility Strategy 2013-17). During the focus groups, success factors, challenges and opportunities were identified as well as activities to guide the development of this strategy. This information was used to shape and inform this strategy.

⁵ Australian Human Rights Commission (2016). *Willing to work: National inquiry into employment discrimination against older Australian and Australians with disability*. Available at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/willing-work-national-inquiry-employment-discrimination>.



What we need to achieve with this strategy

The Northern Territory *EmployAbility Strategy 2018-2022* and the *EmployAbility Action Plan* reflect the Northern Territory Government's commitment to remove systemic and attitudinal barriers so that people with disability have a better opportunity to access and retain employment in the NTPS.

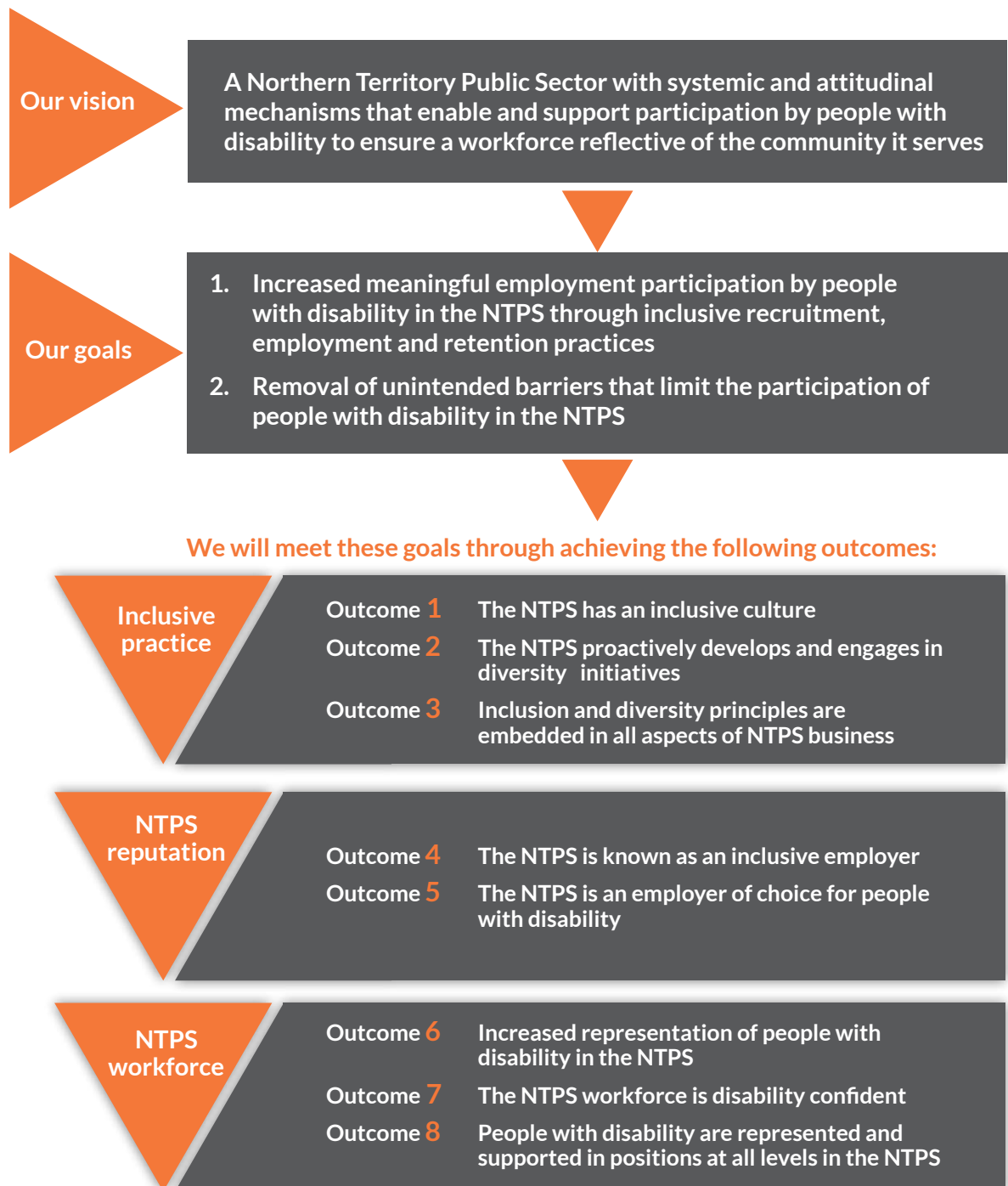


DIAGRAM 3:
Employability Strategy 2018-2022
vision, goals and outcomes



Social Model of Disability

This strategy is built on the social model of disability, which is the internationally recognised paradigm endorsed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)⁶. The social model sees disability as the result of interaction between people living with disability and an environment with physical, social, attitudinal and communication barriers that impact an individual's interaction with the environment, including the workplace.



DIAGRAM 4:

The relationship between disability, activity limitation and participation barriers

A disability can lead to participation barriers or activity limitations that are then impacted by participation barriers in the workplace including:

- **Social barriers** – group attitudes, workplace culture, exclusion
- **Physical barriers** – accessibility, inadequate workplace personalisation
- **Attitudinal barriers** – includes limitations that others perceive about the person with disability, stereotyping, stigma, prejudice and discrimination
- **Practice and policy barriers** – includes failure to provide reasonable workplace personalisation, policies that do not provide equitable access and participation for employees with disability
- **Communication barriers** – inaccessible information including technology deficiency, interpretation, technical jargon that is inaccessible to individuals with cognitive impairment.

Therefore, the overall focus of this strategy is the removal of unintended barriers that limit the participation of people with disability in the NTPS.

⁶United Nations (2006). United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability. Available at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/international/united-nations-convention-rights-persons-disabilities>



Guiding principles

This strategy is built on the foundations of the NTPS core values of **commitment to service, ethical practice, respect, accountability, impartiality** and **diversity**. The principles of employment for people with disability in the NTPS are the same as those for people without disability. The main focus is ensuring all people who work in the NTPS have an equal opportunity to fulfil their career potential.

This strategy is underpinned by the following assumptions⁷:

1. People with disability are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and the right to be treated fairly and with dignity.
2. People with disability have the same rights as other members of Australian society to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.
3. People with disability have the same right as all Australians to pursue meaningful employment and a chosen career where their skills and talents can be developed and their aspirations realised.



Definitions

Definition of Disability

The NTPS has adopted the World Health Organisation's⁸ definition of disability as follows:

A person with disability has long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment/s which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability may be present from birth, acquired due to illness or accident, or come about progressively as we age.

⁷ Commonwealth of Australia (1986). Adapted from the Disability Services Act 1986. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00103>

⁸ World Health Organisation (2006). Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities [Article 2]. Available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>



Definition of accessibility and dignified access

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA)⁹ sets minimum standards for access to buildings, corporate systems and facilities. An accessible workplace means that an employee with disability has access to everything any other employee can reasonably access in their position.

Dignified access moves beyond compliance with the DDA and ensures that people with disability are able to access and participate fully in the NTPS. It means that our buildings, amenities, systems and workplace culture, empower and enable people with disability to fully contribute to the work we do in the NTPS.

Information sharing

Information sharing in the context of disability is any information shared by an individual in relation to their disability and associated issues. It is also referred to as ‘disclosure’.

Workplace Personalisation

Workplace personalisation is the current term for workplace adjustments or workplace modification. Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), employers are obligated to make adjustments or personalisations to accommodate an individual’s disability, unless that adjustment or personalisation would result in unjustifiable hardship for the employer.



Companion documents

- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- The NTPS Human Capital Plan 2015-2020
- The NTPS Employability Strategy 2018-2022 Implementation Plan
- The NTPS Employability Strategy 2018-2022 Evaluation Framework
- OCPE Strategic Plan (2017-2020)
- Disability Employment Program Guidelines




Relevant legislation

Northern Territory Public Sector Employment and Management Act and Regulations (PSEMA) 2012¹⁰

The PSEMA ensures that all employees have equal employment opportunities [refer Section 28(2)(f)]. This commitment is expanded further in Employment Instruction 10 – Equality of Employment Opportunity Programs (EEOP), which provides the minimum requirements for developing EEOPs.

⁹ Commonwealth of Australia (1992). *Disability Discrimination Act*. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A04426>

¹⁰ Northern Territory Government (2012). *Northern Territory Public Sector Employment and Management Act and Regulations (PSEMA) 2012*. Available at <https://ocpe.nt.gov.au/nt-public-sector-employment/employment-law/public-sector-employment-and-management-act-and-regulations>



Under the amended PSEMA, a Chief Executive can implement special measures [refer 38B] (e.g. program, plan or arrangement) with the approval of the Commissioner for Public Employment (CPE) provided they comply with the *Anti-Discrimination Act*. Special measures allow an agency to implement programs, plans or arrangements which could be used to specifically employ people with disabilities.

*Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 2015*¹¹

The *Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act* plays a crucial role in this human rights framework. The Act promotes equality of opportunity for all people in the Territory, and provides remedies for people who have suffered unlawful discrimination on the grounds outlined in the Act. The Act also prohibits direct discrimination, in the area of work, on the basis of disability.

Section 24 deals with workplace personalisations (accommodation of special needs).

Section 57 makes provision for special measures to promote equality of opportunity for groups of people who are disadvantaged or who have special needs.

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*¹²

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act* makes disability discrimination unlawful and aims to promote equal opportunity and access for people with disability, including in relation to employment.

*Disability Services Act 1986*¹³

The *Commonwealth Disability Services Act* aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to assisting people with disability to gain and maintain employment. The Act also provides a set of guiding standards for the delivery of quality services, known as Disability Service Standards.

*National Disability Agreement 2012*¹⁴

The National Disability Agreement is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). It provides a strong commitment from the Australian Government, states and territories to provide more opportunities for people with disability to participate and enjoy Australia's economic and social life.

¹¹ Northern Territory Government (2015). *Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 2015*. Available at: <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/ANTIDISCRIMINATION-ACT>

¹² Commonwealth of Australia (1992). *The Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A0426>

¹³ Commonwealth of Australia (1986). *The Disability Services Act 1986*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A03370>

¹⁴ Council of Australian Governments (2012). *National Disability Agreement 2012*. Available at: <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/467727>



Key areas of focus

This strategy draws on, and is aligned with the NTPS Human Capital Framework, pinpointing key areas of focus that will ensure the EmployAbility Strategy 2018-2022 is integrated and embedded into broader workforce development initiatives across the sector. The key focus areas are:



DIAGRAM 5:
Strategy key
areas of focus.

Focus area	Descriptor	Human capital response ¹⁵
Workplace Leadership	Includes behaviour of leaders and managers at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have high performing managers and leaders who use their capabilities to achieve increased performance and productivity and model the NTPS values.
Workplace Culture	Is 'the way we do things around here'. It is closely related to values, and heavily influences morale, productivity, commitment and workplace innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a positive and high performance culture. We have high performing teams. We strive to achieve continuous improvement and operational efficiencies in everything we do.
Workplace Conditions	Includes financial and non-financial remuneration, the industrial legislative framework in place and other basic conditions of the workplace including psychosocial conditions, for example the workplace demands on individuals and work-life balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We create the right environment for people to perform at their best. We have a workforce that is reflective of the community we serve. We create the right environment to attract talent.
Workplace Design	Refers to the complexity of how the workplace is organised and the nature of the work undertaken. Workplace design includes role design, flexibility in tasks, role mobility, autonomy, systems and technical/IT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have enabling technology and best practice systems that help people to do their jobs better.



Implementation

This strategy outlines the principles, outcomes and roles and responsibilities of all NTPS agencies as well as the initiatives under each focus area for implementation by agencies and OCPE to deliver the vision and goals of the strategy. It is enabled by an implementation plan and the evaluation framework, yet to be developed.

Implementation timeline

There are two stages to the implementation of this strategy.

STAGE ONE

is outlined in the Implementation Plan 2018-2020.

STAGE TWO

implementation plan will be developed in late 2020 by The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) with input from agencies and the Disability Champion Network (DCN).

At a local level, agencies have a responsibility to develop appropriate action plans to support the implementation of the strategy including monitoring of progress against actions within agencies.

As the lead agency for the strategy, OCPE will work with all NTPS agencies in the implementation of initiatives within the strategy, including the provision of comprehensive support resources and advice to assist agencies in determining which initiatives they will undertake to support this strategy.

Focus areas and locus of responsibility Stage 1: 2018-2020



▶ Increase leadership engagement to drive implementation of the strategy

▶ Increase leadership awareness of disability issues in the workplace and best practice approaches to inclusive practice

▶ Increase leaders' understanding of barriers to employment for people with disability within agencies and engage in proactive initiatives to address these.

Workplace Leadership

OCPE will:

- Establish a Disability Champion Network (DCN) as a source of information for monitoring and continuous improvement of NTPS investment in EmployAbility
 - Identify a Chair for DCN to provide leadership and strategic positioning
 - Develop terms of reference and governance
 - Provide specific training program for Disability Champions
- Provide Disability Confidence / Unconscious Bias training opportunities (introductory) to all managers
- Provide access to Disability Confident Recruiter training through Australian Network for Disability for all managers
- Develop the strategy evaluation framework and identify reporting mechanisms
- Monitor sector progress towards outcomes of the strategy through annual review of implementation plan
- Pro-actively undertake environmental scanning to identify initiatives to implement to address any barriers
- Development and implementation of initiatives
- Develop resources to support disability initiatives.

NTPS agencies will:

- Encourage and support agency's participation in in the Disability Champion Network
- Promote the DCN within agency
- Ensure all relevant staff within the agency undertake training identified within this strategy
- Engage in the Disability Champion Network and Inclusion and Diversity bi-annual forum/symposium
- Promote the Diversity and Inclusion e-Newsletter to relevant staff
- Undertake reporting tasks as identified within this strategy
- Pro-active environmental scanning to identify initiatives to implement to address any barriers
- Development and implementation of disability initiatives
- Develop and implement initiatives to improve agency culture.



- ▶ **Promote diversity and inclusion to raise awareness of its importance within the NTPS**
- ▶ **Increase agency awareness and take up of actions and initiatives related to EmployAbility Strategy**
- ▶ **Increase disability confidence and inclusion readiness in NTPS agencies**
- ▶ **Increase agency awareness of workplace culture and its impact on Inclusion and diversity within agencies**
- ▶ **Improve agency culture in relation to inclusion and diversity.**

Workplace Culture

OCPE will:

- Provide targeted training opportunities
- Develop inclusion & diversity toolkit and make available on NTG Central
- Establish a bi-annual inclusion and diversity forum/symposium through the DCN to present NTPS best practice examples, guest speakers and latest research
- Develop and distribute inclusion and diversity e-newsletter providing current research, best practice, items of interest and awareness raising targeted at relevant agency staff
- Include information on inclusion and diversity in whole of government induction materials
- Utilise established feedback mechanisms for gauging employee satisfaction
- Monitor sector progress towards outcomes of the strategy through annual review of implementation plan.

NTPS agencies will:

- Develop and implement initiatives to improve agency culture
- Participate in Disability Champion Network (DCN) to build knowledge and engage in continuous improvement in relation to inclusion and diversity
- Include information on disability and services at agency level inductions
- Utilise established feedback mechanisms for gauging employee satisfaction
- Develop placements opportunities and participate in DEP.



Workplace Conditions



- ▶ Maintain current knowledge of contemporary practice and policy directions in relation to disability
- ▶ Ensure Attraction and retention strategies are informed by best practice in relation to disability
- ▶ Ensure consistent sector-wide approaches and policy development in relation to disability.

OCPE will:

- Communicate definition of disability and work with relevant agencies to adapt current systems to be consistent with definition
- Invest in memberships with Disability Peak Bodies
- Australian Network on Disability
- Diversity Council of Australia
- Utilise specialist disability services for information and advice (eg job design, workplace personalisations etc)
- Develop resources (inclusion and diversity toolkit) to support best practice approaches and centralise access via NTG Central
- Provide networking opportunities through inclusion and diversity forums
- Undertake an annual EEO census.

NTPS agencies will:

- Improve partnerships between agencies through the Disability Champion Network and other networking mechanisms
- Promote the Diversity and Inclusion forum/symposiums within agency and ensure relevant participation
- Ensure all relevant staff within the agency participate in the OCPE HR forums
- Utilise resources contained in the inclusion and diversity toolkit.



- ▶ **Ensure EEO compliance in recruitment documents, resource materials and process**
- ▶ **Demonstrate NTPS commitment to disability employment internally and externally**
- ▶ **Provide practical support for agencies in relation to workplace design and disability**
- ▶ **Adopt adaptive technologies where possible.**

Workplace Design

OCPE will:

- Building resources to support EEO compliance in recruitment process
- Collect and administer the DEP levy
- Manage the DEP
- Promote the use and process for workplace personalisation, flexible work arrangements and other workplace design initiatives
- Provide case studies of workplace personalisations and information about JobAccess resources
- Develop resources to support best practice approaches and centralise access via NTG Central
- Regularly review opportunities to adapt to new technologies to increase flexibility in the workplace: digital transformation to support work redesign in collaboration with DCN.

NTPS agencies will:

- Contribute to the DEP levy
- Promote and support employment of people with disability through the Disability Employment Plan
- Update and promote the use and process for workplace personalisation, flexible work arrangements and other workplace design initiatives.
- Regular review of opportunities to adapt to new technologies to increase flexibility in the workplace and digital transformation to support work redesign.



Stage 2: Implementation plan 2020-2022

In late 2020, a mid-strategy review will be undertaken by OCPE in collaboration with agencies and the DCN. The review will evaluate progress to date against the goals and expected outcomes of the strategy. Following this process, an implementation plan 2020-2022 will be developed to guide the strategy through to the end of 2022.



Evaluation

A robust evaluation framework will be developed at the commencement of the strategy. The framework will include a process logic and performance indicator framework to guide data collection and analysis. The evaluation will draw data from existing and new sources to gauge the efficacy of the EmployAbility Strategy 2018-2022 and guide development of the strategy, related policy and initiatives into the future.

