

# Disability Employment Program - 2023

## Guidelines for Agencies



*Providing employment, training and development opportunities for people with disability*

# Contents

<b>1. Context</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Definitions</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. The Program</b> .....	<b>4</b>
3.1 Description.....	4
3.2 Purpose.....	4
3.3 Eligibility .....	4
3.4 Timeline/Key points.....	4
3.5 Funding.....	4
<b>4 Program Management</b> .....	<b>5</b>
4.1 Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
4.2 Financial processes.....	6
4.3 Program timeline.....	7
<b>5 Program evaluation</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>6 Records and Reporting</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Immediate supervisor.....	8
Participant/employee.....	8
DES Providers.....	8
<b>7 Employment Considerations</b> .....	<b>9</b>
7.1 Hours of duty .....	9
7.2 Workplace Adjustments.....	9
7.3 Induction of Supervisors and team members .....	9
7.4 Induction of DEP participants.....	9
7.5 Training and development .....	10
<b>8 Completion</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>9 Further Information</b> .....	<b>10</b>

## 1. Context

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) recognises the advantages of having a workforce that reflects and draws on the full diversity of the community it serves and is committed to increasing employment opportunities for people with disability within the Northern Territory.

The [EmployAbility Strategy 2018-2022](#) commits the NTPS to increase the representation of people with disability in the NTPS staffing profile as well as nurturing an inclusive workplace culture, promoting accessibility and supporting skills acquisition and career development for people with disability. The Disability Employment Program (DEP) is a core component of the *EmployAbility Strategy 2018-2022* (the Strategy). Agency participation in the program satisfies a number of agencies' obligations under the Strategy.

## 2. Definitions

**Participant:** For the purpose of this program, a participant is a person with disability assessed by a Disability Employment Service (DES) Provider and deemed eligible for employment under the DEP.

**DEP positions:** Participants are held against entry level positions for the duration of their DEP contract. Participants receive the full award wage and employment conditions of either an Administrative Officer 1 or 2, Physical 1 or 2 or Technical 1 or 2, depending on the position offered.

**Employment Contract:** A legal document in which the employee is offered, and accepts, employment in the NTPS for a specified period. The contract details the designation (level), employment dates (start date / end date) and remuneration package. There may be other unique information relevant to the employment. DEP Participants are employed under [Determination 2 of 2015](#).

**DES Provider:** Disability Employment Service (DES) Providers promote and assist the employment of people with disability. They:

- Assist people with disability to find work;
- Assist employers to employ people with disability; and
- Support the ongoing employment of people with disability.

Disability Employment Services sit within the federal government's Department of Social Services. Services are provided nationally through contracted arrangements with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). A list of NT providers is found in Appendix B.

**Training and Development plan:** A training plan is completed by the supervisor and identifies tasks in the workplace which are aimed towards developing the participant for the duration of the program.

**Disability:** The NTPS has adopted the World Health Organisation's 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.*

## 3. The Program

### 3.1 Description

The Disability Employment Program (DEP) has been operating since 1994 with all agencies contributing annually through an apportioned levy. This levy is used to fund the direct wage costs of agencies that employ people through the DEP.

The DEP provides temporary employment opportunities for a maximum of two years to people with disability who are unable to compete for a job on the basis of merit. Participants are employed with a particular agency and undertake duties or tasks considered suitable for an entry level position. Participants are employed under [Determination 2 of 2015](#).

### 3.2 Purpose

The DEP aims to:

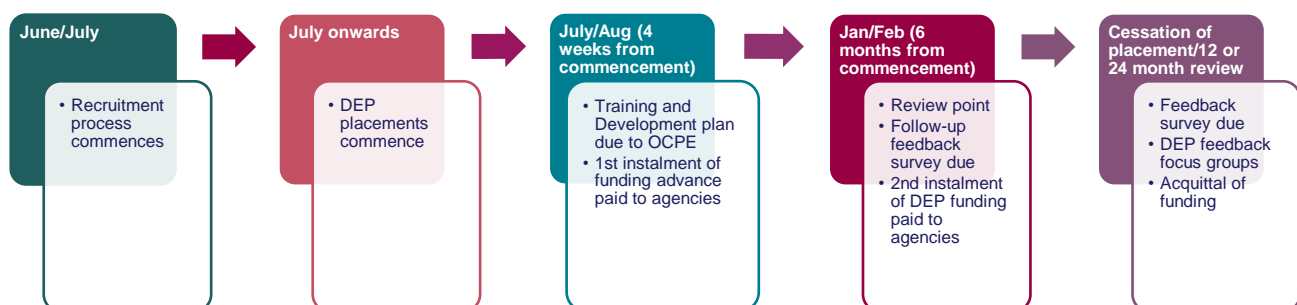
- Provide temporary employment and support increased skill acquisition and workplace exposure to eligible people who have faced barriers to employment due to their disability.
- Address the under representation of EEO groups in the NTPS; and
- Provide pathways into ongoing employment for DEP participants.

### 3.3 Eligibility

Applicants for the DEP must:

- Be an Australian citizen, hold Australian permanent residency status or an appropriate visa;
- Have a disability;
- Be registered with a Disability Employment Service (DES) provider; and
- Be new to the DEP - Have not previously held a contract on the DEP.

### 3.4 Timeline/Key points



### 3.5 Funding

Under the DEP, OCPE provides an advance for the direct wage of employing the participant. This includes actual salary plus 21% of on-costs to cover associated allowances (e.g. NT Allowance), payroll tax and

employer superannuation contributions. In addition, funding of up to \$1000<sup>1</sup> per participant is available from OCPE to support training and development activities for the DEP employee.

Direct wage cost **does not** include:

- the payment of higher duties allowance,
- accommodation,
- consumables, office stationery and general expenses,
- information technology charges, hardware and software expenses,
- other equipment expenses, including workplace adjustment equipment

A participant of the DEP receives the full award wage and employment conditions of an entry level position (e.g. Administrative Officer 1/2, Physical 1/2/3 or Technical 1/2). OCPE provides advanced payments of direct wage costs to the host agency in 6 monthly instalments or in line with the financial year. Agencies are responsible for managing the funds and paying the participant their fortnightly wage. Acquittal of funding is required prior to each instalment and at the end of the financial year. Funds not expended for their participant at the end of the financial year will not be carried to subsequent years.

## 4 Program Management

There are very clear roles and responsibilities for DEP stakeholders, including agencies, DES Providers and OCPE. It is important to note that OCPE manages the DEP funding and process, but does not become involved in the matching of participants to positions, placements or other matters relating to the employment of the DEP participant.

### 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The NTG Agency will be responsible for:

- Managing employment of the DEP Participant including coordinating the employment contract and providing an induction.
- Liaising with the DES Provider regarding support for the employee in the workplace for the duration of the placement.
- Developing a training and development plan with the employee and providing a copy to OCPE within four weeks of commencement.
- Advising OCPE and the DEP Participant of ongoing employment opportunities prior to conclusion of the program.
- Participating in program evaluation.

DES Providers will be responsible for:

- Liaising with the NTG Agency regarding support needs of the participant.
- Supporting job design for employees with disability

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<sup>1</sup> Training funds are determined by OCPE on an annual basis.

- Assisting with contract discussions and finalisation for DEP participants
- Providing training information and awareness activities for employers and colleagues
- Providing support during agency induction processes to ensure the new employee settles into their workplace and role.
- Provide any relevant ongoing support that the participant and workplace may require
- Participating in program evaluation.

OCPE will be responsible for:

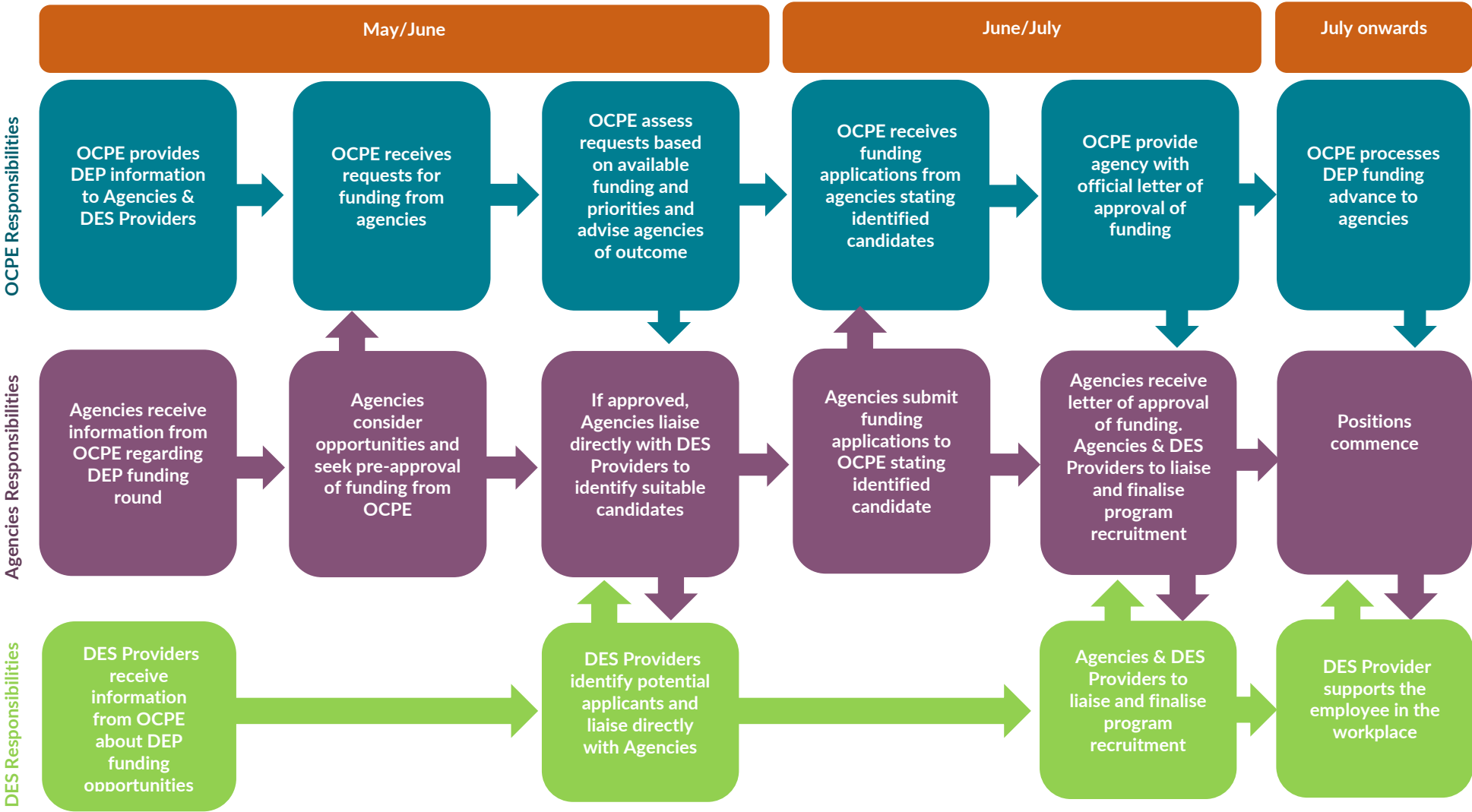
- Provision of program information to NTG Agencies
- Provision of program information to DES providers
- Management of the DEP Budget
- Assessment of placement requests based on available funding
- Administration of funding to Agencies
- Lead program evaluation and reporting.

## 4.2 Financial processes

Agencies wishing to utilise the funding under the DEP are required to complete the DEP Request for Funding form (see Appendix A).

At the conclusion of the financial year there will be an acquittal process for funding. If funding allows, extensions of placements may be approved.

### 4.3 Program timeline



## 5 Program evaluation

DEP Participants and their agency supervisors will be asked to complete surveys at specific points in the program cycle aimed to gather information for continuous quality improvement of the program. Feedback will also be sought from DES Providers. **OCPE will make contact when the evaluation points are reached and will provide further details at that time.** Development of the evaluation process is in view to capturing appropriate information without significant time impost on any stakeholder. See section on records and reporting for further details.

## 6 Records and Reporting

All Agencies are required to maintain records relating to the engagement and progress of DEP participants. Reports on the number of participants, progress and employment status to be provided on a case by case basis as required by OCPE.

### Immediate supervisor

The following monitoring and reporting is required to be undertaken by the participant's supervisor:

- Training and Development Plan – Supervisors to complete with the participant. **This Plan must be forwarded to OCPE by week four of the placement.**
- Short online feedback survey – OCPE will provide a link to the supervisor two weeks before the survey is due. The survey seeks information about the participant's progress and pattern of work and to gauge any variations to the initial employment contract. **This survey is to be completed every six months of employment.**
- Final feedback survey – OCPE will provide a link to the supervisor two weeks prior to the participant completing the program.
- Focus group held at the conclusion of the program.

### Participant/employee

Surveys for the participant are designed to gather information about their experiences working in the NTPS and their transition to work and skill development. Supervisors are to provide appropriate support to participants to enable them to effectively participate in evaluation surveys. This may involve participation and support by the DES Provider. Participant surveys include:

- Short online feedback survey – OCPE will provide a link to the participant and/or the supervisor two weeks before the survey is due. **This survey is to be completed by the participant every six months of employment.**
- Final feedback survey – OCPE will provide a link to the participant and/or the supervisor two weeks before the survey is due. **This survey is for the participant to complete at cessation of the program/employment.**

### DES Providers

DES Providers are asked to provide feedback on the program process and general engagement with the NTPS through the program. Feedback mechanisms include;

- A short email survey for feedback – An email consisting of a variety of questions will be provided to the DES Provider once the DEP participant commences in the position, every six months of employment and upon completion of the program.



## 7 Employment Considerations

### 7.1 Hours of duty

The number of hours the participant works per week is negotiated between the NTG Agency, the DES Provider and the participant. The agreed hours must be approved by OCPE prior to offering employment as funding for the DEP is limited.

A participant needs to work enough hours to benefit from the opportunity and develop their workplace skills. Agency discretion is applied to the minimum hours the DEP participant works taking into account the participant's capacity and the agency's need. Working more than 30 hours per week may impact on any Centrelink funding the participant may receive.

### 7.2 Workplace Adjustments

While the majority of employees with disability won't require any workplace adjustments, agencies are obligated to make reasonable adjustments if required to accommodate an employee into the workplace.

OCPE has developed a Workplace Adjustment Policy, guidelines and supporting documentation which is available on [NTG Central](#) to assist supervisors to implement adjustments confidently. Further resources are available on NTG Central. If you have queries about a workplace adjustment, please speak to your HR area.

Potential funding, and further advice and assistance is available through the Australian Government initiative, [JobAccess](#). Your participant's DES Provider can provide guidance and information regarding the assistance provided by JobAccess.

### 7.3 Induction of Supervisors and team members

A key success to the DEP is to ensure that all managers, supervisors and work colleagues are suitably briefed on the new employee, and understand the nature of any adjustments you make, keeping in mind that they do not need to know the details of the disability. Disability awareness training is an effective way to prepare yourself and your staff for working with employees with disability in a supportive and inclusive way. Free online disability confident training is available on MyLearning and supports an increased confidence for all NTPS staff.

- The [Disability Confident Managers](#) course - for managers, supervisors and leaders.
- The [Disability Confident Workforces](#) course - for all team members.

Further information including the Australian Network on Disability's Manager's Guide is also available on [NTG Central](#). OCPE encourage managers to contact other DEP supervisors across the NTPS and can facilitate any requests to network. DES providers can provide further support by delivering disability awareness sessions to supervisors, managers and work teams if required.

### 7.4 Induction of DEP participants

Induction into the workplace should be undertaken in conjunction with the participant's DES Provider. This is an opportunity to ensure that the participant settles into employment with support and understands the expectations of their role. It is also a good opportunity for the supervisor to understand the individual needs of the participant and to consider reasonable adjustments to support the participant to perform their role. Ensure to make any standard agency induction processes accessible for a person with disability ensuring the new employee is familiarised with the workplace environment, facilities, team members and

procedures of the agency. The DES Provider can provide ongoing support in the workplace for the participant, if required.

## 7.5 Training and development

During the employment period, it is expected that a participant will be exposed to training and development opportunities appropriate to their capabilities. **A training and development plan is a condition of DEP funding** to ensure structured skills development occurs tailored to each participant and their abilities. Development of an individual training and development plan should occur no later than four (4) weeks after employment commences. OCPE will request a copy of this plan as part of the four weeks reporting process. While it is anticipated that the majority of training and development needs for an entry level employee will be provided for in-house, there is funding available to aid this delivery. Funding of up to \$1000<sup>2</sup> per participant is available from OCPE to support training and development activities for the DEP participant.

## 8 Completion

Although there is no guarantee of ongoing employment upon completion of the fixed period contract under the DEP, agencies are encouraged to offer suitable participants further employment where possible. Agencies may apply for direct appointment under the [Public Sector Employment and Management Act \(PSEMA\) s30\(1\)\(b\)](#).

## 9 Further Information

For further information, please visit the [OCPE website](#) or contact the Strategic Workforce Planning and Development team in OCPE via phone 08 8999 3708 or email [OCPE.Inclusionanddiversity@nt.gov.au](mailto:OCPE.Inclusionanddiversity@nt.gov.au).

For a list of Disability Employment Service Providers, please see Appendix B.

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<sup>2</sup> Training funds are determined by OCPE on an annual basis.

## Appendix A: Request for Funding

## Disability Employment Program

This request should be completed and forwarded to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment prior to the issuing of an offer of employment as funding is limited. Please forward completed request to:

Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, Strategic Workforce Planning and Development

Email: [OCPE.Inclusionanddiversity@nt.gov.au](mailto:OCPE.Inclusionanddiversity@nt.gov.au)

Phone: 08 8999 3708

Postal: GPO Box 4371, Darwin NT 0801

Host Agency Details			
Agency:			
Supervisor's Name:			
Work Unit:			
Location:		Phone:	
HR Contact		Email:	
Nomination Details			
Participant details	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Mx <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
	First Name:		
	Surname:		
Position details	Classification: AO1 <input type="checkbox"/> AO2 <input type="checkbox"/> PH1 <input type="checkbox"/> PH2 <input type="checkbox"/> PH3 <input type="checkbox"/> T1 <input type="checkbox"/> T2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other ____		
	Position title:		
Placement details	Hours Per Week:		
	Length of placement (months):		
Job Description Attached:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Training and Development Plan			
Agencies are required to provide OCPE with a copy of the Training and Development Plan for each DEP Participant no later than four (4) weeks from the date of funding approval. Please indicate if you require assistance from OCPE to develop a plan. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Disability Employment Services (DES) Provider			

Host Agency Details			
DES Provider:			
Contact Name:			
Agency Declaration (please tick confirming the following)			
The nominee meets the eligibility criteria under the DEP			<input type="checkbox"/>
The nominee has not previously received funding under the DEP, including in another agency			<input type="checkbox"/>
The manager has completed the Disability Confident Managers eLearn and encouraged team members to also complete the training.			<input type="checkbox"/>
The Manager has read the following documents and is aware of, and agrees to, their obligations under this program.			
The DEP Guidelines (attached to this form)			<input type="checkbox"/>
The EmployAbility Strategy			<input type="checkbox"/>
Determination 2 of 2015			<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed:			
Office Use Only			
Nomination/s received at OCPE			
Nomination meets Eligibility Criteria	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment:	
Approved:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment:	
Agreed Salary:		Contract Dates:	
		Hours per week:	
Approved Program Manager		Date:	
Approved Directors SWPD		Date:	

## Appendix B:

## Disability Employment Service (DES) Providers

Below is a list of DES Providers current as of June 2023. For further information on providers in your region, please visit the [JobAccess](#) website.

Provider Name	Contact	Contract details	Region
MAX Employment Solutions	General Contact	e: via online webform Ph: 1800 625 350 w: <a href="http://www.maxsolutions.com.au">www.maxsolutions.com.au</a>	Palmerston Casuarina Alice Springs
Advance Personnel Management (APM) Employment Services	General Contact	e: <a href="mailto:apm4jobs@apm.net.au">apm4jobs@apm.net.au</a> Ph: 1300 366 047 w: <a href="http://www.apm.net.au">www.apm.net.au</a>	Casuarina, Fannie Bay, Palmerston , Alice Springs
Mission Australia	Alison Neibling Ciara Kelehan Antanella Kyle General Contact	e: <a href="mailto:neiblinga@missionaustralia.com.au">neiblinga@missionaustralia.com.au</a> Ph: 0428 217 091 e: <a href="mailto:kelehanc@missionaustralia.com.au">kelehanc@missionaustralia.com.au</a> Ph: 0490 890 793 e: <a href="mailto:kylea@missionaustralia.com.au">kylea@missionaustralia.com.au</a> Ph: 0490 890 202 e: <a href="mailto:adminnt@missionaustralia.com.au">adminnt@missionaustralia.com.au</a> Ph: 08 8935 0916 w: <a href="http://www.missionaustralia.com.au">www.missionaustralia.com.au</a>	Casuarina  Palmerston
AimBig Employment	Elise Davis General Contact	e: <a href="mailto:EDavis@aimbigemployment.com.au">EDavis@aimbigemployment.com.au</a> Ph: 0428 681 419 e: via online webform Ph: 1300 034 997 w: <a href="http://www.aimbigemployment.com.au">www.aimbigemployment.com.au</a>	Casuarina Berrimah
Wise Employment Ltd	Jamal Hope-Cooke Onkar Sharma Leigh Russell General Contact	e: <a href="mailto:jamal.hope-cooke@wiseemployment.com.au">jamal.hope-cooke@wiseemployment.com.au</a> Ph: 0438 746 882 e: <a href="mailto:onkar.sharma@wiseemployment.com.au">onkar.sharma@wiseemployment.com.au</a> Ph: 0438 896 078 e: <a href="mailto:Leigh.russell@wiseemployment.com.au">Leigh.russell@wiseemployment.com.au</a> e: <a href="mailto:DES.NT@wiseemployment.com.au">DES.NT@wiseemployment.com.au</a> Ph: 1800 685 105 w: <a href="http://www.wiseemployment.com.au">www.wiseemployment.com.au</a>	Darwin City Casuarina Palmerston

Provider Name	Contact	Contract details	Region
STEPS Employment Solutions	Stacey McKeand Peter Floyd General Contact	e: <a href="mailto:staceym@stepsgroup.com.au">staceym@stepsgroup.com.au</a> Ph: 07 4727 2600 e: <a href="mailto:peterf@stepsgroup.com.au">peterf@stepsgroup.com.au</a> Ph: 0474 729 275 e: <a href="mailto:alicesprings@stepsgroup.com.au">alicesprings@stepsgroup.com.au</a> Ph; 08 8950 7600 w: <a href="http://www.stepsemploymentsolutions.com.au">www.stepsemploymentsolutions.com.au</a>	Alice Springs