

## Building Momentum in gaining employment in the Disability and Community sectors

The disability sector is one of the fastest growing employers in Australia. Recent research shows that 1 in 5 Australians will work in the disability sector in the next 5 years. Tasmania has a thriving disability sector employing over 7,900 across the state.

To continue this , we need a motivated and diverse group of people.

### CHECK LIST

#### Starting Out – a check list to consider:

- **First Aid Certificate** – Essential for most entry level roles. For location options, search “First Aid Certificate” and your suburb.
- **Driver’s License** – Although not essential with all providers, a driver’s license provides workers more options for employment.
- **[Disability Standards](#) / Aged Care Rights and Responsibilities** – Essential to review before working in our sector.
- **Qualifications? [Certificate III in Individual Support](#)** – Although not essential, the sector is moving to establish this as a baseline of training. Some providers will consider paying for some or all of this training if the candidate is committed to study.
- **Working with vulnerable people check** – Essential for most roles in our sector. Many providers require a Working With Vulnerable People check as part of your application – [find out more](#).
- **Police check** – Essential for most roles in our sector. A National Police Check may be required as part of your application. [Find out more](#).

#### Who are we looking for?

- **A good, positive attitude**
- **Strong values** – Ethical and compassionate people who will support participants that receive disability services
- **A basic understanding of the disability sector** – Check the sector out online. If you don’t have internet access, book a computer at your local library. Information can be found on websites like NDS, The Quality and Safeguard Commission and the NDIS.
- **Ability to work well with others** – This sector is about teamwork. The ability to follow directions is important for safety of everyone.
- **Punctuality** – Being on time for work is critical. Rosters and schedules are created to have a continuity of care.
- **Patience and the ability to listen** – Listening skills and patience are the foundations of good provision of care. Many people you may be caring for have unique ways of communication. Interpreting that can make a big difference in participant’s lives.
- **Attention to detail** – This is crucial in an industry in which individuals’ personal goals and aspirations are important.
- **A baseline of numeracy and literacy** – Reporting is an important part of working in our sector. Employers must report regularly to the governing bodies of the disability sector.
- **Willingness to learn new skills and change** – The world is changing fast. New assisted technologies are often developed. As participants who receive disability services change, the workforce is required to change with them.

## Writing a good CV:

If you're looking for a new job, your CV announces who you are to a prospective employer. It's a key document which should outline your work experience, key skills and the value you hope to bring to potential employers. Your CV should also address the essential criteria listed in the position description. Your CV should be accompanied by a cover letter.

### How long should a CV be?

Keep your CV brief, concise and relevant. List if you have previous work experience or relevant school participation, followed by bullet points of accomplishments while you were involved with that employer or project.

### What should the length and layout be?

The standard length for a CV is 2-3 pages. The layout should be easy to read, in a standard font of a readable size. Ensure that your career objective, education and your most recent employment history are all on the first page.

### Do I need to change my CV every time I apply for a job?

Your CV should address the position requirements specified in the job ad and the position description. Both outline the reasons candidates will be considered. A tailored CV has more impact than a generic one. You shouldn't change your work experience but the skills and learnings from your past can be worded to match the skills being sought.

### What if I don't have much experience?

If your experience is less than what is required, show the value of the experiences you have had in your life. Caring for siblings, parents or school projects may show insight into the values employers are looking for. The disability sector understands that everyone has to start somewhere. Many employers look to mentor employees on a path of professional development. List your responsibilities, achievements, any training, qualifications and volunteering. Highlight your personal strengths and ambitions.

## Essentials to include:

### Cover letter:

Your cover letter should be short, informative, inspiring and respectful. Your cover letter is your chance to introduce yourself and differentiate yourself from other candidates. It should convey your motivation for a career in the Disability, Aged or Community Care. You should illustrate that you have integrity, a positive attitude to learning and compassion.

### Personal details

Your personal details should be at the top of your cover letter and CV. They should include your full name, address, phone numbers and email address.

### Career objective (optional)

A career objective can show a commitment to a particular industry or career path. A commitment to training or further education can be mentioned in support of your objectives. Highlighting key skills required for the job you are applying for is worthwhile.

### Education and training

List your education qualifications and any further training in order of your most recent studies. A brief summary of the relevance of courses completed is optional.

### Employment history

List your work history chronologically, starting with the most recent role. Include each employer's name, your job title, the dates you worked, your responsibilities and achievements. Be concise and give less priority to older roles. What you write should be relevant to the position description.

### Skills and abilities

Keep this information relevant to the role. Having a current First Aid Certificate, driver's licence and general office skills are a good start. Experience in teamwork, reporting skills and communication will be looked on favourably.

## Interests (optional)

Your interests and hobbies can complete a well-rounded picture of yourself. For example, you may have volunteering commitments, participate in team based environments, play sport or have an interest in music. Some of these interests may be shared with your eventual clients and supporting them to incorporate these as part of their support plans can help people living with disability live full lives.

## Referees

Choose people who can vouch for your workplace ethics and your contributions. List their name, position title, organisation and contact details. It is good practice to keep your referees aware of jobs you have applied for. If you choose not to list your referees, alternately, you may prefer to list 'references upon request'. But be prepared to provide them. It is extremely rare and bad business practice if an employer doesn't check references.

## Before you send your CV

Remember first impressions count. Before sending your CV remember:

- Re-read your CV and cover letter
- Spell check and look for grammatical errors
- Have someone else read through it and provide feedback

Make a note of the roles that you have applied for and follow up to confirm receipt.

## Interview Techniques

### Successful interviews have some things in common:

If you have the opportunity to present to a selection panel, this allows you to reinforce your CV by displaying the qualities which will hopefully make you a fit for the job. Most interviewers understand you will be nervous. But do some deep breathing exercises before you go into the room (this slows the heart and helps you to relax).

**Be punctual** – double check the time and date of the interview, make sure you know the exact location, where to park and arrive at least 5 minutes early.

**Be prepared** – know the name of your primary contact and do your research on the company you are meeting. Read their last annual report.

**Be ready to speak about your strengths and weaknesses** – Keep your answers short. One of the pitfalls in interviews is talking too much. Use silence effectively once you've answered the questions.

**Bring extra copies** of your CV and cover letter.

**Be prepared for scenario-based questions** - these provide you with the situation and ask how you would respond. These types of questions are to test your judgement and how well you cope under pressure. Take your time and ask follow-up questions if you don't understand the scenario.

**Ask insightful questions at the end** – Most interviews ask at the end of the interview if you have any questions. It's always good to have one or two prepared. Do not ask about money or entitlements unless they bring it up with you. A few examples are 'What would you say the best accomplishment of the year has been for your organisation?' or 'What are the values you look for when hiring?'

**Listen carefully** to questions and take time to give a considered answer. Keep your answers short, sharp and succinct.

While answering your questions, if you can speak about experiences which showcase problem solving, lateral thinking, conflict resolution and change management this will be well regarded.

If you have been out of the workforce for some time or are changing your career, think about what cross transferable skills you have and how you can draw from your life experiences to demonstrate your suitability for the role.

After you hear either way, post interview, take the time to seek feedback from the interviewers. Explain that although you are disappointed in the outcome and if any future opportunities arise to please keep you in mind. Always thank them.