

Inform Podcast
Episode 12: Job Access — Transcript

Kirby Fenwick

Hello and welcome to Inform, a podcast where you'll be hearing from people with disabilities, as well as industry experts, on a range of topics.

I'm your host, Kirby Fenwick.

In this episode of Inform, we'll be discussing Job Access, the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.

Joining us today is Daniel Valiente-Riedl, who you heard from in episode 11 when we explored talking about your disability at work. Daniel is the general manager of Job Access and he has plenty to share about what Job Access is, the services offered and how you can access them.

So, what is Job Access?

Daniel Valiente-Riedl

Job Access is the national hub for disability employment. So, we believe that Job Access is an enabler. It is a free service that exists to remove barriers to employment, in the easiest way possible, for people with disabilities, employers and service providers.

So, my name is Daniel Valiente-Riedl and I'm the general manager of Job Access. I've been in this role for around 10 years now. And I'm very proud to deliver this award-winning service that supports people with disabilities.

So, my role at Job Access is to ensure that these services are delivered appropriately. I feel that my role is to ensure that the person with a disability is first in mind, and also that that relationship with employers is fruitful. And it is a relationship that is beneficial for both parties. But in many ways, I also feel that my role is to advance the rights of people with disabilities in terms of employment.

Kirby Fenwick

So why do we need a specialist workplace and information hub for people with disability?

Well, employment rates for people with disabilities are far below those of people without disabilities. It's harder for people with disabilities to find work and to keep it. Job Access aims to reduce the barriers to employment experienced by people with disabilities.

Daniel Valiente-Riedl

We know that Australians living with disability have double the number of unemployment rates. We know there is a great deal of disadvantage, and that is because we just don't see the disability and it's likely that employers are already employing people with disability.

There is research that shows that around 90% of all disabilities are invisible. So, employees with a disability are already in the workplace. There is about 2 million people with a disability, prior to COVID, working at workplaces in Australia at large, So people with disabilities are already there.

Daniel Valiente-Riedl

People with disabilities that have been underrepresented for so long in the Australian workforce. You know, once we have that exposure, we start losing that fear of saying the wrong thing or doing the wrong thing. Because ultimately, disability is just part of the normal human experience, it is part of the human diversity. We are all different, but we do have still that barrier, the barrier that, it can be summarized as fear.

Kirby Fenwick

It's those barriers that Job Access works to break down. But just what kind of services and supports do Job Access provide? Daniel explains

Daniel Valiente-Riedl

So, there are a range of free supports available to help people with disabilities to get work, keep their work and be more productive. And one of those services is Job Access.

Our national call service is delivered by a team of frontline professionals who provide free, confidential and expert advice on a range of matters related to employment and disability employment.

Job Access offer a number of different services, so we've got a five-pronged service delivery.

The first one is we provide advice via phone on the website. So, our website is www.jobaccess.gov.au.

So, we offer also a national call service delivered by a team of frontline professionals. They are all registered allied health professionals that provide free, confidential and expert advice.

Job Access also have a comprehensive website with information and advice tailored specifically for people with disabilities, employers and disability service providers.

We also coordinate adjustments and modifications for the Employment Assistance Fund. So, we coordinate the National Panel of Assessors to conduct free workplace assessments and advise on workplace modifications, and some of that support may be eligible for reimbursement. So, the EAF, Employment Assistance Fund,

So, the fund is available to eligible people with disabilities who about to start a job, are self-employed or who are currently working. It is also available to people with disabilities who need Auslan assistance or special work equipment to look and prepare for a job.

A free workplace assessment is available through the Employee Assistance Fund to help work out what modifications or equipment will be best fitted to the needs of the individual person to do the job. So, this is called a workplace modification assessment. The assessment is done by a qualified professional so they're all registered allied health professionals. So, the assessor will look at your specific workplace and any barrier that may exist there, and talk to you and your employer about finding solutions to make the workplace more flexible and accessible.

That conversation about, you know, accessibility needs. So, you are talking about accessibility requirements. So, you're not talking really about the persons' disability broadly, you're talking about what the individual needs.

Through Job Access, we also administrate the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator, which is our employee engagement service. And this service works with large employers to increase their confidence in the recruitment of people with disabilities.

We also run the Complaint Resolution and Referral Service which is the CRRS and it aims to improve employment government funded service to support services through a fair and impartial complaint resolution process.

And finally, the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline we usually refer to, which is a vital reporting service available to anyone who suspects abuse and neglect of a person with a disability.

We've got another four services that are not related to Job Access. So yeah, so we are, we're very busy.

We do a lot of amazing work with people with disabilities. We've funded in the last four years, over the 250,000 modifications to workplaces in Australia.

So, one of the things that we are very proud at Job Access is that we are client centered. I believe that we are one of the only examples for a fully client centered service. And that is one of the things that I need to make sure that we are focusing on the individual and the individual employer, and how we can match and maximise that relationship by removing any barriers that the person with a disability may have so they can perform at their best.

Kirby Fenwick

Through their wide range of supports and services, Job Access provide an important service for people with disabilities who are looking for work, or need support in the workplace. So how can you access the services and supports offered by Job Access?

Daniel Valiente-Riedl

All that people need to do, and I think that the most important advice, is just to give us a call. We can guide all the information that you need. We can organise all the assessments that are required and we can guide either an employer or person with a disability to whatever steps they need to take to make that workplace more flexible, and to modify that workplace so a person with a disability can do their job. So, all the advice that I can provide is just to give us a call on 1800 464 800. You will talk to a

professional advisor, an allied health professional that is fully registered, that will be able to provide you with any advice that you need and all the guidance that you will need to be able to remove any barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

So, I really encourage everybody to pick up the phone and speak with the Job Access advisor.

Kirby Fenwick

You can speak to Job Access at 1800 464 800, that's 1800 464 800.

Or visit their website at www.jobaccess.gov.au that's www.jobaccess.gov.au

Thank you for listening to Inform, a production of Independence Australia. Inform is hosted and produced by Kirby Fenwick. Our managing editor is Alison Crowe.

Our thanks to Daniel Valiente-Riedl and Job Access for sharing their information and knowledge today.

You'll find links to the resources mentioned in this episode, plus more, in the show notes at informonline.org.au

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So, if you have a story to tell or an experience to share, get in touch by emailing us at inform@independenceaustralia.com

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