



## National Safe Work Month

### Supporting Vulnerable Workers – A Disability Inclusion Service

*Presented by:*

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## SESSION OUTLINE

- ❑ Provide practical information on how employers can build inclusive workplace that optimises engagement of people with disability, illness and injury and assist them to meet their obligations
- ❑ Outline *reasonable adjustments* that can be made to maximise an employee's potential with a disclosed disability or impairment
- ❑ Provide case examples of some best practice support strategies

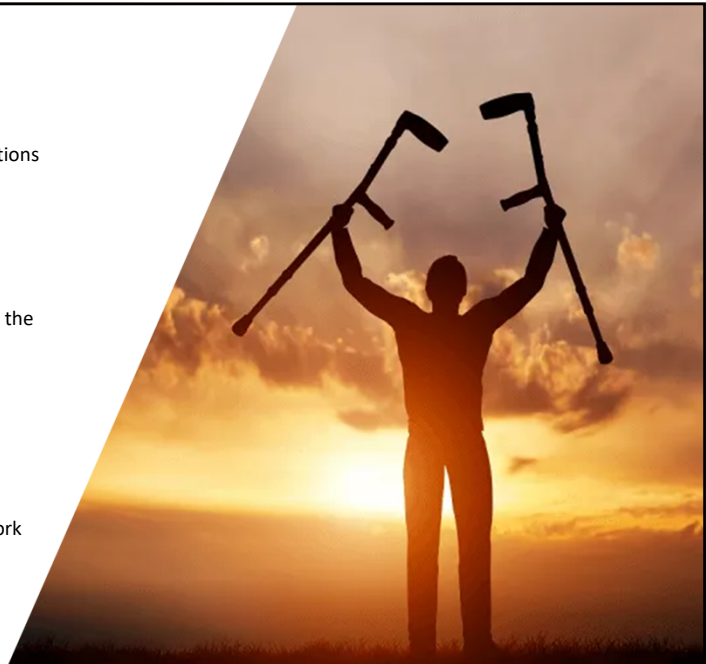


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## WHY?

- ❑ Employees with lived experience of disability help organisations to deliver services more attuned to the needs of this community
- ❑ Builds a culture that optimises engagement of people with disability and provides a supportive work environment, enabling people with a disability to thrive and demonstrate the positive contribution they can and do make
- ❑ Supports workplace inclusiveness and equality
- ❑ Bolsters employee value proposition / employer of choice
- ❑ Assists organisations to meet their obligations under Fairwork Australia and the Equal Opportunity Act



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## LEGISLATION

### **Fairwork:**

All employees working in Australia have workplace rights, including to minimum wages and conditions of employment. Everyone has the right to work in a safe environment, free from unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment.

[Employees with disability - Fair Work Ombudsman](#)

### **Equal Opportunity Act 2010:**

Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for a person with disability.

Disability includes:

- physical, psychological or neurological disease or disorder
- illness, whether temporary or permanent
- injury, including work-related injuries.

[Disability and the workplace | Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)

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## INTRODUCTORY SCENARIOS



### Scenario 1: Eliza

Eliza is 3 months into a new administration-based role and during a check-in with her manager discloses she has ADHD and has been struggling to keep up with her work tasks and has fallen behind with her induction.

Eliza advises difficulties with concentration and that it's causing repeated disruptions with her work tasks.



### Scenario 2: John

John is legally blind and has applied for a role in your company. Based on his extensive job history he is invited to interview for the role.

John advises that he uses a white cane to access the community and that he would need to use public transport to attend the interview. You have concerns as you know the office is hard to find.



### Scenario 3: Havi

Havi has cerebral palsy and mobilises slowly with two crutches.

She works as a contractor at a defence medical centre performing administrative tasks one day per week and is set to increase her workdays to 3 days per week. The extra workdays are to be performed in a sister medical centre where she will be required to mobilise more frequently to complete her tasks.

Havi reports fatiguing easily and difficulties opening the fire doors at the medical centre. She also reports experiencing back pain due to lumbar spondylosis.



### Scenario 4: Marcus

Marcus is returning to work after time off from a personal sporting injury. His doctor has indicated that he will likely have difficulties completing his computer-based tasks and his hand therapist has recommended dictation-based software and specialised equipment to support his return to work.

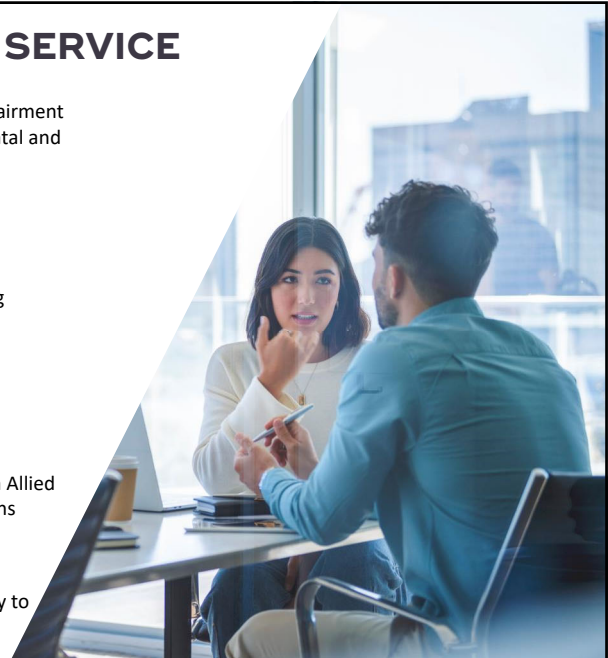
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## A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT SERVICE

- ❑ A program that supports employees with a disclosed disability or impairment by **offering reasonable workplace adjustments** (physical, environmental and / or social)
- ❑ **Voluntary** in nature (employees encouraged to opt in)
- ❑ Can be offered to **new employees** as part of recruitment / onboarding process or for **existing employees**
- ❑ Supports leader in assessing an employees' potential and long-term suitability for role
- ❑ Service consists of an initial triage call and an onsite assessment by an Allied Health Professional, where indicated, and associated recommendations
- ❑ **Specialised service** offering support beyond the provision of standard ergonomic or workplace equipment that an organisation would supply to meet their obligations under WHS legislation



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## WORKPLACE REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS



- Specialised ergonomic equipment e.g., chairs, split keyboards, vertical mouse
- Sit/stand desk
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Portable magnifiers
- Larger monitors
- Noise dampeners
- Specialised telephone headsets
- Sensory equipment
- Accessible mobile phones



- Dictation software (i.e., Dragon NaturallySpeaking)
- ZoomText
- JAWS
- Texthelp Read&Write
- Colour contrast adjustments
- Break reminders
- Calendar reminder set-up



- Door removal / adjustment
- Desk height increase / decrease / relocation
- Kitchen modifications
- Bathroom modifications
- Ramp installation
- Automated door installation
- Signage
- Parking access



- Optimum meeting scheduling
- Proposed work breaks
- Flexibility with work hours / work from home
- Desk location to minimize distraction / disruption
- Frequency of leader check-ins
- Daily scheduling
- Disability Awareness Training

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## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

### SCENARIO 1: ELIZA

*Eliza is 3 months into a new administration-based role and during a check-in with her manager discloses she has ADHD and has been struggling to keep up with her work tasks and has fallen behind with her induction. Eliza advises difficulties with concentration and that it's causing repeated disruptions with her work tasks.*



### SOLUTION/S:

Through discussions with Eliza, she identifies a number of supports that have been effective whilst she was in a previous role such as:

Meetings conducted in the morning when her medication is most effective

Agreement that additional variations to job tasks will be communicated in the morning and in writing.

Manager to check in with Eliza towards the end of the day and regroup on priority tasks

An alternate desk location is identified that isn't located right near the building entrance to minimize disruption caused by people entering and exiting

Noise cancelling headphones are also approved for use (in particular during busier periods in the office)

An OT is engaged to supply some additional work-related recommendations around other changes or sensory items that could support.

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## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

### SCENARIO 2: JOHN

*John is legally blind and has applied for a role in your company. Based on his extensive job history he is invited to interview for the role. John advises that he uses a white cane to access the community and that he would need to use public transport to attend the interview. You have concerns as you know the office is hard to find.*



#### SOLUTION/S:

A virtual / phone interview is offered in the first instance to accommodate access requirements

A secondary interview is scheduled for an alternate location that is in a well known location, and is considered to be more accessible

You offer a taxi voucher / Uber to support interview attendance with a number the driver / John can call if any issues finding the building.

If you offer the role, you offer the below supports:

Uber / taxi to initial first days at the office

Confirming supports needed around managing public transport routes to the office (such as someone to meet at the train station in the first instance etc.)

Liaison with IT to ensure required software for installation is applied prior to commencement and that IT staff member is on hand to support on day 1 / first week as needed

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## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

### SCENARIO 3: HAVI

*Havi has cerebral palsy and mobilises slowly with two crutches. She works as a contractor at a defence medical centre performing administrative tasks one day per week and is set to increase her workdays to 3 days per week. The extra workdays are to be performed in a sister medical centre where she will be required to mobilise more frequently to complete her tasks. Havi reports fatiguing easily and difficulties opening the fire doors at the medical centre. She also reports experiencing back pain due to lumbar spondylosis.*



#### SOLUTION/S:

##### ENVIRONMENTAL:

Allocation of workstation close to the entry/exit door to reduce walking distance and assist with fatigue management and productivity. The assessor also identified preferred consult rooms for her to access for the same purpose;

To address the issue of opening fire doors – consider installing an internal doorbell

Ergonomic – provision of an ergonomic chair with the following specifications: chair glides instead of castors to prevent the chair from sliding; height adjustable arm rests to support sit-stand motion; and adjustable lumbar support to reduce back pain.

##### SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Supply of a wearable portable duress alarm for fast activation in the event of an emergency situation (i.e., due to the workplace alarms being in a location unable to be accessed quickly by Havi due to her mobility issues);

Establishment of a personal emergency evacuation plan in case of emergency.

##### WORK MODIFICATIONS

Permission to eat her lunch at her desk as opposed to mobilising to and from the kitchen

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## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

### SCENARIO 4: MARCUS

Marcus is returning to work after time off from a personal sporting injury. His doctor has indicated that he will likely have difficulties completing his computer-based tasks and his hand therapist has recommended dictation-based software and specialised equipment to support his return to work.



### SOLUTION/S:

Based on recommendations, dictation software is arranged prior to Marcus' return

A return to work program is developed to support return to his role and ensure expectations are clear

An ergonomic assessment is scheduled for the morning of his first day, and you confirm with the provider that equipment needs should be communicated as soon as possible.

Regular check-ins with his leader to ensure all progressing well in his return to work

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## EXTERNAL FUNDING SUPPORTS

### Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)

- The EAF gives financial help to eligible people with disability and mental health conditions and employers to buy work related modifications, equipment, Auslan services and workplace assistance and support services.
- For more information: [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\)](#) | [Job Access](#)

### JobAccess

- The national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.
- For more information: [Home](#) | [Job Access](#)

### National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding directly to people with disability.
- For more information: [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#)

### Work Assist

- Work Assist provides support to eligible employees who have difficulty fulfilling the essential requirements of their role due to their injury, disability or health condition.
- For more information: [Work Assist](#) | [Job Access](#)

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## QUESTIONS

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