



Disability Employment Services (DES) involvement in Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work

In Australia, young people with disability are more likely to drop out of school early, be excluded from the labour force, have fewer educational qualifications, experience poverty and be socially isolated.

Ticket to Work believes that every young person has the right to an employment pathway and our mission is to ensure that Australian young people with disability are prepared and have the opportunities to exercise that right.

Ticket to Work prepares young people with disability for the workplace and provides them with an employment pathway that will support their transition into a successful life beyond school. Studies have consistently shown that young people with disability who exit school with a job are more likely to maintain a positive career trajectory than those who do not. Other prominent factors associated with successful post school employment outcomes are participation in authentic work experience (especially paid work) during the last years of secondary school; participation in specific vocational skills training; and, the completion of secondary school. Ticket to Work offers young people with all of these elements and provide a pathway to a life of work.

Ticket to Work takes a partnership approach to improving the employment and education outcomes of young people with disability. It brings together a range of partners (including industry, schools, youth organisations, employment agencies, disability services and training providers) in local regions that work together to provide young people with careers development, workplace preparation, work experience, vocational skills and Australian School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (ASbATs).

Ticket to Work is a unique approach to addressing the low employment outcomes experienced by young people with disability in Australia. Ticket to Work's structure is a simple one, comprised of a National Network and Local Networks located in communities across Australia.

National Approach

The National Ticket to Work Network supports local communities wanting to establish their own Local Ticket to Work Network and provides support, accreditation, resources, strategies and practices aimed at producing optimal employment and career achievement for young people with disability.

The role of the National Ticket to Work Network is to galvanise local resolve, advocate for systemic change and provide an architecture for spotlighting and promoting strategies and practices that produce optimal employment and career achievement for young people with disability.

The National Ticket to Work Network is driving the opportunity for partnerships, collaboration and collective learning action. It identifies evidence-based practice and assists local communities to create opportunities for young people to connect with employers in their regions.

Outcomes and Evaluations

Ticket to Work's model is based on research and is actively supporting young people with disability to:

- Complete their secondary education
- Participate in career development planning so that they can make informed decisions about their future
- Undertake work experience in real workplaces and in industries of personal interest
- Build belief in themselves and recognise their capacity to be an active worker in the future
- Participate in accredited vocational training and School-based Traineeships while still at school.

Ticket to Work became a national initiative in late 2013 and is currently supporting communities to develop sustainable Local Ticket to Work Networks. Ticket to Work is particularly focused on supporting young people

with intellectual disability. Even though Ticket to Work is just establishing, in 2014 we have had outstanding achievements:

- 243 x young people have commenced a School Based Traineeship ¹
- 449 x young people commenced in work experience and work place learning activities
- 375 x employers have supported young people in their workplaces
- 109 x schools are offering Ticket to Work activities to their students
- 214 x organisations and agencies are part of a Local Ticket to Work Network

86 per cent of young people who completed a Ticket to Work School-based Traineeship are still in paid employment post finishing secondary education.

Ticket to Work has been evaluated and it was found that young people, employers, parents and schools identified that Ticket to Work does work. When young people were surveyed about what they wanted in ten years' time the overwhelming and number one response was to 'have a good job'. Ticket to Work and the Local Networks across Australia are determined to make this happen.

For more information on the Ticket to Work evaluation download the ['Transitions to Employment of Young People with Disability and the Ticket to Work Initiative'](#) report ²

Disability Employment Service (DES) Involvement

Ticket to Work recognises that the complexity of transition and open employment preparation for young people is such that a partnership-driven, multi-sectoral approach is required. Partnerships create more pathways opportunities for young people collectively than they do if organisations are working individually or discretely.

Disability Employment Service (DES) providers are a large component of the Ticket to Work partnership. Where DES providers have embraced the partnership approach, the local outcomes for young people, employers and the DES provider have been very impressive. Involvement in Ticket to Work is a commitment and, as such, should be explored by DES providers at an organisational level because participation does involve the contribution of resources and belief in the underlying Ticket to Work philosophy. Commitment to Ticket to Work does require DES providers to explore the 'business case' for involvement and as such should be considered at a strategic organisational level.

Many of the DES providers already involved in Ticket to Work in local regions recognise the philosophical and strategic benefits of involvement and this initiatives alignment with their own desire to improve the school-to-work transitions of young people with disability in their region.

Disability Employment Service (DES) Roles

Ticket to Work encourages partners to work beyond 'just' what they are funded for and step outside of the sector that they represent to look at the issue of youth transition needs in a cross-sectoral manner. In doing so, these partnership networks can innovatively explore what is needed in their local community and how they can combine their skills, knowledge and resources to develop strategies, structures and approaches aimed at providing a seamless transition to employment for their local students with disability.

The grass-roots nature of Local Ticket to Work Networks means that each network will differ from one another; whether that is the composition or the strategies and activities they are rolling out for young people and employers in their region. As such, the exact roles that DES providers play in each role differ also. Some are just one of the partnership members assisting to deliver outcomes for young people and employers, whereas in some regions DES providers have taken a leadership role and are the key Local Ticket to Work Network intermediary.

Within each Local Ticket to Work Network, all members generally develop their own Terms of Reference which allows the various members to outline and negotiate the roles each takes. To meet the individual needs of young people and employers, Local Networks often take a case management approach and the DES role could vary depending on the goals and need of an individual young person and the most appropriate partner/s response.

¹ *School-based Traineeships allow students to be employed as a paid trainee, undertake accredited vocational training and attend school the remainder of the week.

² Wakeford and Waugh (2014) *The Transitions to Employment of Australian Young People with Disability and the Ticket to Work Initiative*

Yet in the local Ticket to Work Network DES providers often do play some key roles (which differ from the standard support they provide to employer and employee). The can include:

Workplace preparation. Some DES providers have developed and run work preparation programs with partner schools and young people. Such programs have included: visits to employers; resume and cover letter preparation; workplace culture and communication; establishing bank accounts and tax file numbers; self-determination and career development activities; and, personal and workplace presentation. This is usually conducted at the Year 10 or Year 11 level.

Work experience. Many DES providers (in partnership with the network) help to source work experience in the student's industry interest area, and often provide support to both the student and the employer during the work experience period. This is usually conducted at the Year 10 or Year 11 level.

Australian School based Apprenticeship Traineeship (ASbAT). Many DES providers will work with the employer and other partners to convert work experience into a School-based Apprenticeship Traineeships (ASbAT). The work experience allows the young person, the employer and the DES provider to build a rapport and identify whether employment is suitable for all parties. The DES provider can then be funded to provide employment support to the ASbAT student and employer. ASbAT employment usually occurs at Year 11 or Year 12 level.

Accredited training. Many Ticket to Work participants undertake the accredited training aspect of an ASbAT 'on the job'; that is the young person learns in the workplace with the support of their trainer, employer and DES provider. The DES can work collaboratively with the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to support, tutor and mentor Ticket to Work trainees to achieve training competency. Tutorial, interpreter and mentor services are available to Australian apprentices who have been assessed as eligible for Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS) and need extra assistance. In some cases a DES provider takes on this role and is funded to do so in partnership with the RTO.

School completion. DES providers are well positioned to maintain an ongoing relationship with Ticket to Work participants post school completion. In some cases this will involve working with the young person and employer to convert an ASbAT to an ongoing traineeship or other forms of ongoing employment and increase the number of work hours the young person progresses into after leaving school.

Ticket to Work promotional and information events. The DES often participates in (along with other partners) Ticket to Work events, such as Parent Information Nights or Ticket to Work Information Sessions. Participation in such events allows the DES provider to demonstrate their role as a Local Ticket to Work Network member and also promote their service within the community.

Network member. The DES is required to be an active member in the Local Ticket to Work Network, working partnership with other organisations to develop pathways to employment for young people with disability. The DES provider needs to be willing to learn from other members with competencies in other sectors. Similarly, the DES provider needs to be willing to share their own knowledge and expertise with the other members and contribute to overall capacity building of the Local Network. DES providers may be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding when joining or initiating a Local Ticket to Work Network.

Much of the DES provider's role, such as provision of work experience or participation in events, is 'unfunded activity' with funding generally only being made available once a student commences in an ASbAT. However, many participating DES providers consider the unfunded activity as an investment a business case for their involvement in Ticket to Work.

The Business Case

For a DES to get involved in Ticket to Work there needs to be a genuine commitment to improving transition to employment for young people with disability (particularly those with intellectual disability) at a senior level of the organisation. There must be a willingness to work collaboratively and do things 'a little differently'. Partnerships require an investment of time and, to be effective and achieve the desired results, trust and understanding must be built into these relationships.

DES providers that have been involved in Ticket to Work have found that there is a definite business case for their involvement.

Ticket to Work has had great outcomes with 248 young people, predominately with an intellectual disability, commence an ASbAT during 2014 (as at October 2014). The January 2014 changes to DSS ESL Guidelines means that DES providers can achieve an outcome for placing a Year 11 or Year 12 student in an ASbAT (provided the student meets other Guidelines and requirements). Of those young people that undertook an ASbAT during the Ticket to Work pilot period 86% continued employed post leaving school, with many of these still receiving support from their DES provider.

From both a philosophical and financial standpoint, many DES providers see their involvement in Ticket to Work as an investment and one that meets a 'business case' test.

DES providers involved in Ticket to Work have noted a range of business benefits including:

- Funded Outcomes (improved star rating)
- Increased reputation in the local community particularly with schools, other community organisations, parents and young people with disability
- Increased referrals, access to a large number of eligible school leavers that are keen and motivated
- Increased local networks, resources and opportunities
- Using the combined resources and expertise of the Local Network to achieve outcomes
- Increased knowledge and understanding of traineeship and apprenticeship system
- Increased understanding of schools and education systems
- Use of the marketable Ticket to Work brand
- Involvement in a national initiative that is embraced by employers, schools, parents and young people
- Use of Ticket to Work's employment engagement approach which involves a staged approach with employers and young people whereby work experience is conducted first, followed by an ASbAT and then permanent employment
- Increased employment aspirations and expectations which is resulting in more parents and young people choosing an employment pathway upon leaving school rather than other pathways such as day services and Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs)
- Use of an evidence-based model of transition to employment that has been evaluated and is resulting in positive outcomes; with Ticket to Work data and information being useful for tenders and promotion
- Provision of marketing collateral and access to an array of program materials (available in the Members Area of the Ticket to Work website) covering governance, operations, evaluation, marketing and reporting
- Participation in a collegiate and national advocacy approach to improving outcomes for young people with disability
- Engagement in a National Network comprised of members from across Australia which facilitates learning from other members, sites and other DES providers
- Development of a community of learning, professional development and support regarding the best mechanisms and approaches of supporting young people to transition to employment.
- Increased morale and professional development opportunities for DES staff working on Ticket to Work.

These are but some of the benefits or business case opportunities identified by DES providers involved in Ticket to Work. Though we would suggest that any DES provider undertakes their own due diligence to ascertain whether joining a Local Ticket to Work Network suits the organisation.

DES providers are welcome to contact the National Office of Ticket to Work to learn more about the initiative, outcomes and ways of getting involved. In addition, the National Office can also connect you with other DES providers already involved in Ticket to Work so that you can hear about their experiences.

Ticket to Work is working to raise the employment aspirations of young people with disability, as well as that of their families and carers, and break down the barriers to employment often experienced by young people with disability. Ticket to Work strengthens supports so that a young person with disability can have a 'typical' transition from school to employment (like their non-disabled peers).

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