

Toozly Five Step Plan

A guide for increasing diversity and inclusion within your organisation



toozly.com.au

The world's largest job search website for jobseekers with disabilities

Toozly Five Step Plan

The Toozly Five Step Plan has been developed as a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the essential ingredients to ensure your work place is inclusive and diverse. The Five Step Plan has been based on the latest research and policies that relate to creating an environment that is sensitive to the needs of people with disability, considerate of employer requirement for workplace productivity and mindful of creating a workplace environment that sends a clear message to customers and existing employees that the organisation is both inclusive and diverse.

The Plan covers 5 main areas and can be completed individually, or in small to large teams.



In all of the above areas, suggestions will be made to increase inclusion and tailor practices and procedures to best support customers and employees with disabilities. Where technology, workplace modifications or tools are suggested, these can often be purchased with government funding provided through Job Access – www.jobaccess.gov.au where the item is intended to be used by an employee with a disability. It is a very simple process to apply for this funding and your local Disability Employment Service provider can assist with this or you can simply call Job Access and speak to a representative. Ph. 1800 464 800.

The benefits of employing people with disability are numerous and have been backed up by Australian and international research. Workers with disability have been shown to take fewer sick days than their colleagues without disability. In fact, the cost of sick leave and absenteeism for workers with disability is approximately 36% less than the cost for workers without a disability.¹

18.5% (almost 1 in 5) Australians have a disability²

Studies have also shown workers with disability to remain with one employer longer than their colleagues without disability.

Most disabilities are not visible and chances are you already employ workers with disability.

90% of disabilities are not visible

Not all workers with disabilities require workplace modification or adaptation but those that do are well supported by the government's Employment Assistance Fund and Disability Employment Services.

¹ Graffam, J Employer benefits and costs of employing a person with a disability. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 2002

² 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)

Disabilities & Support

45% of all Australians will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives³

Do you feel you have an understanding of the various forms of disabilities and how they present or are managed and supported?

Are you aware that 1 in 5 Australians currently have a disability² and almost 1 in 2 will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives³?

Did you know that the CEO's of IKEA, Virgin, Ford, HP, Apple, Tommy Hilfiger, CISCO and Kinkos all had learning disabilities? ⁴

Are you aware of the following Government funding and support available to employers who hire a person with a disability?

Disability Employment Services and ***Jobactive***:



Employment Assistance Funding of up to \$30,000 available from ***Job Access*** for workplace modifications



Wage subsidies of \$1,500 to \$10,000 to offset costs associated with hiring a jobseeker with a disability.

Have you looked at Toozly's ***Resources*** page? – a treasure trove of information on different types of disabilities, the economic and social benefits of employing a person with a disability and tools, tips and advice to support employers and employees with disabilities.

<https://www.toozly.com.au/resources>

³ SANE Australia : Facts and Figures about Mental Illness

https://www.sane.org/images/stories/information/factsheets/fs13_facts&figures.pdf

⁴ Business Insider Australia : 15 CEO's with Learning Difficulties

<http://www.businessinsider.com.au/ceo-learning-disabilities-2011-5?op=1#but-watch-out-for-the-notorious-ceo-disease-14>

Step 1. Consider:

The skills and capabilities of people with a disability are as diverse as the skills and capabilities of people without a disability. Stereotypes and generalisations such as “*a person with a disability can't do this job*” fail to recognise that 1 in 5 people in Australia currently have a disability of one kind or another and almost 1 in 2 will experience a mental illness at some time in their lives. Often times a person with a disability (and the appropriate qualifications, experience and support) is the best person for the job.

A disability doesn't have to be a handicap. A person with one arm may struggle to become a concert pianist yet excel in their role as office manager. Someone with Asperger's Syndrome may struggle as an office manager yet excel as a concert pianist.

- i. Toozly's **Resources** page contains a valuable list of articles, documents and links on topics ranging from disability awareness to tips and strategies to support an employee with a disability. Look at the section, "**Employing a Person with a Disability**" for tips on working with Disability Employment Service Providers, benefits of employing a person with a disability and information on funding and subsidies available.
- ii. Employers who advertise vacancies on Toozly will reach a large pool of skilled and experienced jobseekers with disabilities, many of whom are supported by dedicated Disability Employment Consultants who are able to offer extensive post placement support and assistance to access government funding and wage subsidies.
- iii. Review the "**Government Funding**" section of Toozly's **Resources** page for more information on financial support available when hiring a person with a disability.

Sally has a visual impairment and works as an office Administration Assistant. She performs her duties exceptionally well with the assistance of adaptive/assistive technology purchased through Employment Assistance Funding (EAF) supplied by Job Access.

Sally's disability is not a barrier to her chosen career path, thanks to reasonable adjustments made by her employer and support from her Disability Employment Service provider.



There is an abundance of adaptive technology and assistive devices and tools that can be purchased through EAF to assist jobseekers with disabilities into employment. Contact Job Access or your local Employment Service Provider for more information.

<http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/>

Ph: 1800 464 800

Other subsidies available for employing a person with a disability include:

Wage Subsidy Scheme: Up to \$1,500 to assist with hiring and training costs associated with employing a person with a disability for at least 8hrs each week for at least 13 weeks.

The Restart Program allows employers to expand their business and benefit from the experience of mature age workers. Up to \$10,000 subsidy payable over 1 year to employ a jobseeker with a disability over the age of 50.

Supported Wage System allows an employer to pay an agreed pro-rata hourly rate of pay based on the assessed productivity of a worker with a disability compared to agreed productivity benchmarks for that role. The employee's wage is 'supported' via government funding to equal the award wage for that role.

e.g. Jenny has cerebral palsy and is working in an office as an admin assistant.

Her co-workers can pack 100 envelopes every half hour and Jenny can pack 60 envelopes in the same time. An assessor determines that Jenny works at 60% capacity so her employer pays 60% of Jenny's wages. After government support, Jenny receives the same wage as her co-workers without a disability.

Relocation Assistance to take up a Job is a program supporting jobseekers who are willing to relocate at least 90 minutes from home in order to take up a job. The jobseeker must move from a Capital City to a Regional Area or to an area with lower unemployment. Funding of \$3,000-\$6,000 is available to cover costs including removalist and rent.

Wheelchair

Can a person who uses a wheelchair safely and conveniently access your workplace and all public areas including workstations, supply shelves, kitchen facilities and toilets?

Step 2a. Consider:

- i. Consider how a person in a wheelchair might access your building from local public transport or parking areas. Is accessible parking available? Are you aware of the parking regulations for holders of Australian Disability Parking Scheme permits? The following information may be of value to staff, job applicants and customers who use wheelchairs.

NSW: <http://tinyurl.com/park-in-NSW>

ACT: <http://tinyurl.com/park-ACT>

VIC: <http://tinyurl.com/park-in-VIC>

QLD: <http://tinyurl.com/park-in-QLD>

TAS: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/park-in-TAS>

SA: <http://tinyurl.com/park-in-SA>

WA: <http://tinyurl.com/park-in-WA>

NT: <http://tinyurl.com/park-in-NT>



- ii. Be aware of any obstacles (steps, gutters, narrow paths, loose surfaces, hills, heavy doors, high buttons or panels) and the alternate routes and access points which minimise or eliminate those obstacles. Be sure to share this information on your organisation's website and other suitable locations.
- iii. Keep hallways and public areas free from clutter or objects that could become an obstacle for a customer or staff member who uses a wheelchair. Consider the height and location of items such as sign-in registers, kitchen facilities, buttons, switches and panels – can a person in a wheelchair access these without assistance?

- iv. Regularly ask for feedback from any existing customers or staff who use a wheelchair to determine if any modifications are required. Ensure customers and staff are aware of the ways in which they can provide feedback and can do so anonymously if preferred.
- v. Job Access (jobaccess.gov.au) can assist with government funding to install permanent or removable ramps if you currently employ or are considering employing a person who uses a wheelchair. Upgrades to toilets and workstations may also be funded through this service. On site assessments and advice is available at no cost to the employer.

Call 1800 464 800 to speak to a Job Access representative or discuss modifications with a Disability Employment Service provider.

Vision & Hearing Impairment

Are you aware of accessibility issues relating to websites and other hard and soft copy materials?

- i. Have you tested your website for accessibility?
- ii. Do you understand and use ALT-TEXT?
- iii. Do your videos have subtitles or written transcripts?
- iv. Are you familiar with National Relay Service for people with hearing impairment or National Auslan Booking and payment Service (NABS)?
- v. Are you aware of the rights of people with Guide Dogs and other service animals?
- vi. Are your resources available in braille or large print format?
- vii. Did you know that a staff member with vision impairment can perform administrative duties with adaptive technology, available at no cost to you?

Step 2b. Consider:

- i. Free online tools such as ACHECKER <http://achecker.ca/> and WAVE <http://wave.webaim.org/> will test your website for accessibility issues which could make it difficult for a customer or jobseeker with a visual impairment to access your website. Ask your web developer to run your website through this test.
- ii. A person with a visual impairment may use technology to convert your website to speech (screen reader) or to braille output. ALT-TEXT is an invisible label that is added behind images so that a screen reader will know what the image is. ALT-TEXT should also be used for all images in

documents and wherever possible digital copies of documents should be made available to people with a visual impairment.

Visit: <http://tinyurl.com/add-ALT-TEXT> for step by step instructions on adding ALT-TEXT to your documents.

Other factors which may influence website accessibility are:

Contrast:

Use high colour contrast such as black on white, **black on yellow** or **white on black**

Font Size:

Keep website text large (preferably between **12** and **18** points).

Adding accessibility modules such as **AA** function will allow site visitors to adjust font size within reason.

- iii. If your videos are uploaded to YouTube, follow the instructions here to add closed captions to your videos without having to re-edit them!


<http://tinyurl.com/add-subtitles>



Where captions cannot be added to videos, a typed transcript will allow people with a hearing impairment to access your digital media.

- iv. National Relay Service is a government funded, free service to assist people with hearing impairment to make and receive telephone calls and other forms of digital communication. As an employer or business operator, your use of NRS at no cost could provide you access to a wider pool of skilled jobseekers with disability whilst showing your community, staff and customers that you are receptive to the needs of people with disabilities. Phone 1800 555 660 (free from landlines) or visit www.relayservice.gov.au



- It  may also be useful to know that National Auslan Booking and payment System (NABS) is a government funded service providing on site Auslan Interpreters free of charge for people with hearing impairment to attend private health care appointments.

- v. It is unlawful to refuse service or access to a person with a **service animal** such as a Guide Dog on the grounds of a “*no animals*” policy and doing so could result in serious lawsuits and damages. A service animal is trained to perform a vital task specific to a person's disability, including warning a person with epilepsy of a seizure about to occur or guiding a person with hearing or vision impairment.

THE RELEVANT LAWS

“The rights of Guide Dog users are covered under Section 7 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and Section 9(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - both of which override the Health Act which prohibits dogs from entering food premises. Compliance with these laws will ensure that owners/managers of public facilities will avoid prosecution and/or embarrassment resulting from refusal of Guide Dog access.”⁵

- vi. Not all people with a visual impairment can read braille and often times a digital copy of documents is all that is required for a person with a visual impairment to read your documents with assistive technology. Ensure that any images in the document contain ALT-TEXT (a hidden label that explains clearly what the image is).

Australian Braille Authority www.brailleaustralia.org hosts a Directory of Braille Service Providers Australia wide including braille printers. Organisations can arrange for single documents to be printed in Braille or for business cards to be brailled at reasonable prices.

- vii. There is a large array of adaptive technology available to support workers with vision and hearing impairment. These include digital enlargers for reading paper documents, text to voice scanners and readers, braille keyboards and braille printers.

Check out the following organisations to see just how much adaptive technology there is to support people with disabilities in the workplace. Job Access or a Disability Employment Service can help you access government funding to purchase this technology at no cost to you.



www.rsb.org.au



www.humanware.com



www.quantumrlv.com.au



www.visionaustralia.org

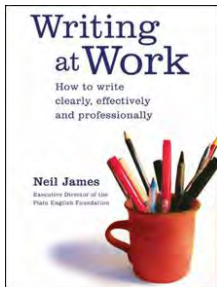
⁵ www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Materials & Documentation

Do you create documentation in formats required for people with language barriers or intellectual disabilities? (e.g. Large Print or Plain English / Easy English)

Step 2c. Consider:

- i. In his book, *Writing at Work*, Neil James (Executive Director of the Plain English Foundation) outlines key steps to ensure writing is free of unnecessary jargon, precise & clear in its meaning and intention.



Consider creating simplified versions of key documentation for staff and customers who may find jargon, acronyms, long sentences and technical language difficult confusing.

The Toozly [Resources](#) page contains a section on Easy English with extensive guides, examples and tips to keep your writing easily accessible to people with language barriers or those with an intellectual disability.

Hiring & Onboarding

- i. Do you promote your organisation as an Equal Opportunity Employer?
Do you promote the accessible features of your workplace and your willingness to make reasonable adjustments for applicants and staff?
- ii. Are front line managers and HR staff aware of what constitutes a reasonable adjustment in your organisation and how such adjustments are to be requested, funded (if applicable) and coordinated?
- iii. Do you use Disability Employment Services to source capable staff who meet your requirements? Do you advertise your vacancies on Toozly to access a large pool of jobseekers with disabilities?
- iv. Are managers and supervisors provided training to support applicants with disabilities and to accommodate reasonable adjustments?
- v. Are all applicants asked whether they have specific requirements before a job interview? (e.g. wheelchair access, sensory impairment)
- vi. Do you offer alternatives to formal job interviews? (e.g. Work trials)
- vii. Are you familiar with the Recruitability program developed by Australian Public Service (APS)?

Step 3a. Consider:

- i. Adding an Equal Opportunity Employment statement to advertised vacancies shows applicants, customers and stakeholders that your organisation is committed to their individual needs.

e.g. "Company ABC is committed to creating a diverse & inclusive workforce and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or age".

- ii. Adjustments in the workplace ensure that staff with talent and skills are able to remain within the organisation even as their personal circumstances change, and may include such things as flexible return to work options following maternity leave or reducing work load following an injury or illness.

Employees with disability bring skills, abilities and in many cases a determination and commitment that comes from having had to overcome personal, physical and social barriers. Modifications or adjustments which may be required to best support an employee with a disability vary from none at all to any of the following:

- a. Reduced working hours or negotiable start and finish times.
- b. Job sharing
- c. Longer (unpaid) breaks
- d. Specialist equipment available through Employment Assistance Funding / Job Access
- e. Provision of a mentor or 'buddy' to support the employee
- f. Additional guidance or training on the job
- g. Clear, written instructions

When discussing the position description and duties with the employee, confirm what assistance or adjustments (if any) the employee feels he or she may require and allow for regular follow-up discussions to monitor those requirements.

The following materials from Job Access will assist managers to discuss reasonable adjustments and modifications with an employee with a disability:

<http://jobaccess.gov.au/content/what-reasonable-adjustment>

<http://tinyurl.com/flexible-workplace>

<http://tinyurl.com/workplace-modifications>

[See also page 15 for information on Disability Awareness training]

- iii. Employment Service Providers are government funded to support jobseekers back into employment. These are privately operated Not for Profit and For Profit organisations that vary from one to the next in their service delivery models, yet they all have access to a large number of job-ready, skilled and capable job seekers and are all funded to provide a high level of support to local employers, including placement of suitable candidates, assistance with job design, post placement support, workplace modifications, wage subsidies and government funding (if required). These services are free to job seekers and employers.

Placing your vacancy on Toozly sends a message to candidates and the community that your organisation is serious about diversity and inclusion and is making a concerted effort to attract and retain talented staff with disabilities.

Training

The following is a small sample of some of the training providers and organisations Australia wide delivering Disability Awareness programs. These programs could be beneficial to any organisation employing staff with disabilities.

- iv. **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** is a nationally recognised course that teaches practitioners to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and how to give appropriate initial help and support to someone experiencing a mental health problem. In many organisations, physical first aid certificates such as Apply First Aid HLTAID003 are mandatory. Consider the benefits of providing MHFA training to front line staff in your organisation.



Service Area: Australia wide
Web: <https://mhfa.com.au/>

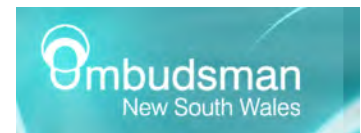
Enable Development delivers hands-on professional development and team building programs that will:

- Raise awareness among staff of disability
- Encourage staff to gain a better understanding and empathy of the challenges of people living with a disability
- Equip staff with knowledge and confidence to engage with people with disability in a positive, inclusive and welcoming manner



Service Area: Australia wide
Web: <http://enabledevelopment.com>

Ombudsman NSW provides disability awareness training (DAT) to organisations in NSW:



Almost 20% of Australians have a disability. This workshop has been developed to empower participants to work effectively and confidently with people with disabilities, and to explore strategies for establishing a disability-friendly workplace. This workshop provides participants with general awareness of disability and focuses on attitudinal and practical issues for people with disabilities.

Service Area: NSW
Web: <http://tinyurl.com/ombudsman-DAT>



Although developed to support students with disabilities in an educational setting, the resource provides a lot of transferrable information and ideas to support staff with disabilities.

- v. Asking applicants before a job interview whether they have any requirements they wish to disclose will ensure that no applicant is unfairly disadvantaged due to a disability. In doing so, the employer could inform the applicant of their willingness to make reasonable adjustments to compensate for the disability, including changing interview location, interview time or the method in which any assessments are carried out.

e.g.

“Company ABC endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to ensure no candidate is disadvantaged during the application process. Do you wish to request any adjustments or considerations based on disability, religion or other personal factors? This will not affect the outcome of your application.”

The Job Access Workplace Adjustment Tool lets you search for ideas on how to make a workplace more accessible for people with disability. You can search for ideas based on the type of job being undertaken, a particular disability, a type of product or a particular supplier. When you find the product or solution you need, you can view contact details for suppliers in your area. Follow the step-by-step instructions to begin your search.

http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/work_place_adjustment_tool

- vi. There are many alternatives to traditional one-on-one or panel interviews so consider whether the role in question requires someone who is always confident and well spoken under pressure or whether it simply requires someone who's really good at fixing car engines, teaching children to read or stacking shelves in a supermarket.



A gardener may be very friendly and confident speaking to customers and colleagues in the gardens but find the formal interview structure overwhelming.

Alternatives to traditional job interviews may include:

- Meeting and talking casually in the work environment
- Chatting whilst walking around the office or grounds
- Demonstrating tasks and asking the candidate to perform those tasks
- Offering the candidate a work trial

vii. **RecruitABILITY** is a program created by the Australian Public Service to attempt to increase the participation rate of people with disabilities in the workforce. Under this scheme, applicants who identify as having a disability and who satisfy all the minimum requirements, will be invited to a job interview.



<http://www.apsc.gov.au/priorities/disability/recruitability>

Communication

- i. Are communications inclusive, taking into consideration any communication barriers including language barrier, sensory impairment and learning difficulties?
- ii. Does your organisation promote collaboration and team work between staff?
- iii. Consider the language and expressions used to describe people with disabilities.

Step 3b. Consider:

- i. Ensure that any internal communications are receptive to the needs of all staff.
 - Provide digital copies of documents for staff with visual impairment,
 - Use Plain English, free from technical jargon when communicating with staff to ensure those with learning difficulties or language barriers are not disadvantaged.
- ii. Ensure that feedback can be provided in multiple ways (telephone, email, face to face allowing anonymous feedback where preferred). Articulate your organisations' feedback policy and ensure it is followed closely.
- iii. There are many schools of thought on the politically correct language for expressing 'people with disabilities' however Toozly recommends a People First approach.

People First Language (PFL) is language that helps individuals and those around them to see the person before they see the disability that the person may have.

Person First	Avoid saying
Person with a disability	<i>Disabled person</i>
Person without a disability	<i>Non-disabled, normal person,</i>
Person who uses a wheelchair	<i>Confined to a wheelchair</i>

"Culture is made up of the values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, attitudes, and behaviours shared by a group of people" ⁶

- i. Corporate culture varies greatly between organisations and can have an immense influence on the workplace experience of people with disabilities. Would you describe your culture as being more:
 - a. Collaborative or Competitive?
 - b. Risk averse or Risk taking
 - c. Structured or Flexible?

Step 4a. Consider:

- i. People with disabilities often perform better in organisations that encourage collaboration and teamwork above competition.

In a competitive work environment, colleagues are often less inclined to offer guidance or support to others. Some organisations use competition to separate the *high-performers* from the *not-so-high-performers*. Be aware that this may disadvantage some employees with disabilities.

Instead, consider allocating a mentor or supervisor to support an employee with an intellectual or learning disability or an acquired brain injury. Your Disability Employment Service provider will be able to offer advice on how best to mentor and guide your new recruit and provide post placement support and wage subsidies to offset the cost of additional supervision. Check the Toozly **Resources** page for lots of relevant tips.

Research suggests that greater contact with people with disabilities helps to reduce negative stereotypes. Working together with colleagues with disabilities helps to shape the organisational culture to one of greater acceptance and inclusion.

⁶ Taking Action: An HR Guide
<http://on.cme-mec.ca/download.php?file=h6z1z1ea.pdf>

Attitudes towards Workplace Diversity

The concept of diversity includes **acceptance** and **respect**. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognises our individual differences. For people with disability, it is about exploring the differences in a safe, positive and fostering environment and moving beyond simple tolerance toward embracing the diversity contained within each individual.

Workplace diversity management is a process where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued so that all can reach their potential and maximise their contributions towards the organisation.

- i. Does your organisation publicly promote its commitment to increasing diversity? Have you aligned yourself with organisations and programs that mirror your commitment to diversity?
- ii. Does the organisation have clear goals or targets relating to diversity and inclusion?

Step 4b. Consider:

- i. Market the organisation's commitment to diversity through various channels such as the organisation's website, targeted trade and other group-affiliated periodicals, local newspaper and sponsorship of community events.

Aligning with organisations and programs that mirror your commitment to diversity could be as easy as following and sharing social media updates or signing MoU (Memoranda of Understanding) to formally recognise a way in which your organisations will support each other (eg. Agreeing to host a work experience student with a disability).

Taking the Toozly Pledge[®] is another great way to publicly showcase your determination to make *Diversity Work* in your organisation!

- ii. Research has found that employees without disability are more likely to be swayed on accepting employees with disability if the communication is framed as equal opportunity and not reverse discrimination⁷. Researchers have found that rather than using rhetoric emphasising that diversity is "*the morally right thing to do*", communication strategies might focus more on how these initiatives will help people with disability to be personally more effective on the job or help their company be more competitive.

Consider linking organisational rewards such as promotions and compensation to the achievement of diversity goals.

Provide training and resources for diverse teams including conflict management (see pg. 14)

Maintain an open door policy for all grievances.

Consider the benefits of aligning with the RecruitABILITY scheme developed by the Australian Public Service. RecruitABILITY guarantees a job interview to any applicant with a disability who meets MINIMUM requirements for a job.

⁷ Kossek, EE et al (2004). Human Resource Strategies to Manage Workforce Diversity in *Handbook of workplace diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bullying & Harassment

- i. Do you offer an easy mechanism for staff and customers to discreetly voice any concerns, complaints or feedback? (especially regarding matters such as bullying, harassment and discrimination) Can feedback be provided anonymously?
- ii. Do you have a written and distributed policy regarding Bullying and Harassment? Are procedures and expectations clear and followed by supervisors and management? Are staff aware of the definition of Bullying and Harassment and the WH&S dangers they bring?

Step 5. Consider:

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourable than another person because of their background or certain personal characteristics, such as disability. Ensure that staff are informed of the types of Bullying and Harassment that can occur in some workplaces and understand that this behaviour is unacceptable.

Ensure that reporting mechanisms such as pro-forma or feedback forms are readily available when needed and ensure that staff are aware of the limitations that anonymous feedback provides.

see Toozly [Resources](#) page for more information on Bullying & Harassment)