



Employers' experiences hiring job seekers with disability

Findings from the Survey of Employer's Recruitment Experiences (SERE) – Key messages

In 2017, the Department spoke to a subset of employers responding to the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences about their experiences hiring people with disability.

- Some 27 per cent of the responding employers recently, or currently, had a worker with disability. Employers in the Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade industries were most likely to have had a worker with disability (34 and 32 per cent respectively).

When considering a worker with disability, employers most commonly expressed the need:

- to know how the applicant's disability affected their capacity to work (57 per cent), and
- for assistance or information on how to make adjustments in the workplace and provide support for the worker in the workplace (35 per cent).

Similarly, employers most commonly suggested that job seekers with disability looking to enter the jobs market, provide information about their disability and work capabilities when applying for work (34 per cent).

In addition, employers also recommended that, like all applicants, job seekers with disability need to emphasise their strengths and demonstrate their personal skills to employers (29 per cent).

Labour force participation of people with disability

People with disability who are of working age (aged 15 to 64) have lower rates of labour force participation and employment, and higher rates of unemployment, compared to those without disability. The Australian Bureau of Statistics found that in 2018, 48 per cent of those aged 15 to 64 with disability were employed, compared with 80 per cent of those without disability.¹ The participation rate was also considerably lower for those with disability (53 per cent), compared with those without disability (84 per cent). The unemployment rate for those with disability was higher at 10 per cent, compared with 5 per cent for those without disability. People with disability are also more likely to work part time, with 41 per cent of those employed in part-time jobs, compared with 32 per cent for those without disability.

Findings from the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences

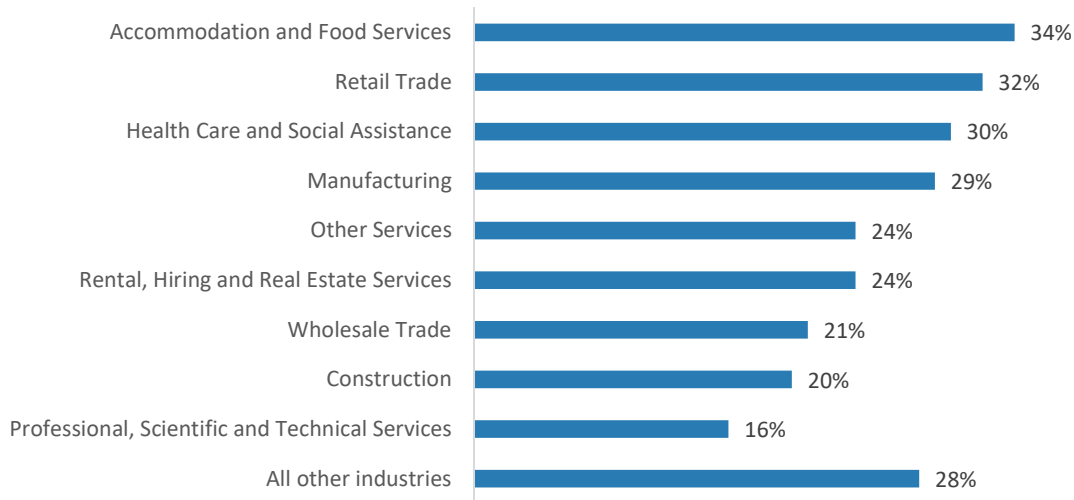
In 2017, the Department surveyed 2,303 employers in nine regions in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia about their views and experiences hiring people with disability. The findings were based on a short set of supplementary questions as part of the ongoing Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*, 2018

While the sample of employers for these supplementary questions was not designed to be statistically representative, to the best of their knowledge, 27 per cent of surveyed employers had someone with disability currently or formerly working in their business.

As shown in Figure 1, employers in the Accommodation and Food Services industry most commonly reported having a worker with disability (34 per cent), followed by Retail Trade (32 per cent), and Health Care and Social Assistance (30 per cent).

Figure 1. Employers who had workers with disability in the last 5 years, by industry



Of the five states surveyed, employers in Victoria were most likely to have, or had, workers with disability (32 per cent). Employers in Western Australia and South Australia were least likely (24 and 25 per cent respectively). See Figure 2.

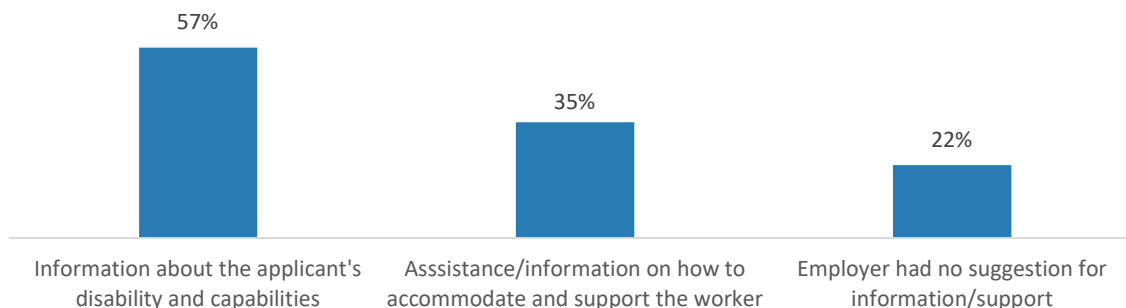
Figure 2. Employers who had workers with disability in the last 5 years, by state



What employers need when hiring job seekers with disability

The survey asked employers “What information or assistance would have been most useful when you were considering taking on a worker with a disability?” Employers most commonly stated that information on the nature of an applicant’s disability and their work capabilities would be most useful (57 per cent). See Figure 3.

Figure 3. What employers need when hiring job seekers with disability



Many of these employers also emphasised the importance of disclosing the disability during the job application/interview process. Some employers suggested a work trial to help ascertain the applicant’s abilities and workplace requirements.

‘I think them being upfront with you straight off the bat, and then being upfront with how potentially it might affect them in the workplace’

Employer in Accommodation and Food Services, Queensland

Some 35 per cent recommended that assistance or information on how to make adjustments in the workplace, and provide support for the worker would be particularly useful.

‘The agency gave all the information to the employer from the outset. Information on what adjustments are required is useful’

Employer in Retail, New South Wales

Employers’ advice for job seekers with disability

The survey also asked employers “What advice would you give to a job seeker with a disability looking to enter the jobs market?” As shown in Figure 4, employers most commonly suggested that applicants inform employers about their disability and work capabilities (34 per cent).

‘You need to show what you're capable of... businesses are there to help and work around limitations if necessary’

Employer in Wholesale Trade, Queensland

Figure 4. Employers’ advice for job seekers with disability looking to enter the jobs market



Some 29 per cent recommended that, like all applicants, job seekers with disability emphasise their strengths and demonstrate their personal skills to employers, such as work ethic, reliability and enthusiasm.

'Focus on the positives and have a good referee that can vouch for your abilities'

Employer in Education, South Australia

Some 23 per cent of employers provided job search advice, such as how to find jobs, including the importance of approaching employers in person; how to apply for jobs; and the need to look for jobs that are realistic and attainable.

'Show an interest and approach the employer. Chances are that even if there are no spots available today, the employer will remember that you made an effort and keep you in mind for next time'

Employer in Accommodation and Food Services, New South Wales

Around 22 per cent of employers acknowledged the barriers faced by job seekers with disability, particularly the reluctance on the part of some employers to take them on. They stressed that job seekers should look beyond any initial setbacks, keep refining their job search skills, and recognise that many employers will give them a chance.

'Don't give up! Keep applying, because you will eventually find an employer who is willing to embrace you for who you are'

Employer in Health, New South Wales

Additional recommendations included job seekers approach appropriate employment services for support. Employers said they not only will help them find work, they will also assist the job seeker and employer make the necessary adjustments for the job and help through the transition to work.

'Sign up with Disability Employment Service. This is how we found the worker with disability and it worked out well'

Employer in Education, Western Australia

A number of employers suggested that a work trial would be a good way for job seekers with disability to get to see if a job suits them, and to get a foot in the door. Employers said it would not only help them to get to know the job and the workplace culture, it would be a great opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and enthusiasm.

'Do a day of watching what the job entails with another worker. Look at the job requirements and make sure you are suitable to complete most if not all'

Employer in Manufacturing, Victoria

About the Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences

Through the annual Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences (SERE), more than 14,000 employers provide information about their local jobs market, including recruitment issues and competition for vacancies. The survey results also identify practical information about what employers are looking for in applicants and how job seekers can better connect with employment opportunities.

The survey runs throughout the year, covering all 51 Employment Regions in Australia. In 2017, the Department approached a subset of employers responding to the SERE with supplementary questions about their experiences hiring people with disability.

For more information on the SERE go to the Department's website at
www.employment.gov.au/recruitment-conditions

Resources for job seekers and employers can be found on the Labour Market Information Portal at
<http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmployersRecruitmentInsights>