(BACKGROUND MUSIC)

SPEAKERS:
Welcome.

SPEAKER:
Welcome to the Age of Inclusion.

GAIL LE BRANKSY:
My name is Gail Le Bransky and I'm the Director of Disability Employment at the New South Wales Public Service Commission. Thank you for joining us today for the managing in the age of inclusion webinar series. Before I commence, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm hosting and recording this webinar from the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. The Eora people was the name given to the coastal Aboriginal peoples around Sydney and that Eora means here or from this place. I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which you all work today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this webinar. May I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their on-going cultures and connections to the land and waters of New South Wales. We recently held some disability at work forums and what we heard is that people want to be more inclusive managers and colleagues, but need more information and guidance on how. So, we've created this webinar series to share some practical advice. You'll hear from a range of experts on matters relating to disability employment in the public sector.

So, we've included guest presenters from peak disability organisations. The areas we'll be focusing on are recruitment, employment and career progression for people with disability. We'll help you create a workforce where everyone feels welcomed and included. This webinar series will show you the often simple steps you can make to make a tremendous impact on the working lives of people with disability. From opening career pathways to removing blocks, so they can thrive professionally. Today's webinar will talk about all the tools, knowledge and resources currently available to assist with the hiring process for people with disability. I'll talk about the New South Wales Premier's priority for a World Class Public Service with the significantly increased representation of people with disability in its workforce and the work the Public Service Commission is doing to achieve it. I also wanna talk to you about the hiring managers toolkit which I have to admit I'm quite close to. In my opinion, inclusive recruitment and onboarding is the key to getting more people with disability working in the New South Wales government and lack of no hire by hiring managers is a key barrier. This led me to co-write the toolkit. It's based on research conducted with candidates seeking to skill roles within the public service. We'll also hear from my colleague, Tessa Pittendrigh, who was leading the recruiting right program in the PSC. Finally, the council for intellectual disability will share with us information on their More Than Just a Job Program. I'm particularly excited by this segment. It's a real opportunity to hear the perspective of people with lived experience of disability. The representation of employees with disability in the New South Wales government has been falling since 2011. In order to have a workforce which reflects the diverse community we serve, this decline needs to be challenged. The Premier, in her priorities for government, set representation target of 5.6% by 2025. That means about 10,000 current government sector jobs will be help by people with disability by 2025. It's a big number and the change needed to bring around 2,000 more people with disability into the sector every year can't be underestimated. But as the largest employer in the southern hemisphere, we're placed to make this change. There are currently around 40,000 recruitment opportunities every year. Currently, only around 667 people with disability are successfully employed. Our work is designed to increase the odds. Shifting the data from the current recruitment rate of 1 in 60 to 1 in 20 people with disability getting one of those 40,000 jobs. The PSC can't do this alone. We rely on all of you to take action and to champion the employment of people with disability. I think there's been a real change in thinking in recent years about how we view and address disability. It's now thought about in social rather than medical terms. Person may have a disability which they have acquired or were born with but it's only disabling when the barriers caused by the physical environment, the attitudes of others, and communication methods exclude them. But the goal of the PSC disability employment program is to make employment of people with disability as unremarkable as employing as woman.

Disability is just one of the many characteristics that employees bring to the public sector. Our program is focused on three pillars - The Marketplace for the recruitment and career progression, The Workforce which addresses leadership and inclusive culture and The Workplace which considers accessible workspaces and work tools. Our program raises awareness of the experiences of people with disability in the workplace. We are working to remove barriers and improve the recruitment in career progression of people with disability. Help managers and employees access successful workplace adjustments and guide the sector to improve the accessibility of workplaces, ICT, digital systems and work processes. Finally, we're promoting workplace cultures which is safe and inclusive for everyone. The Hiring Manager's Toolkit was developed to increase your confidence around the process of employing people with disability. It covers how you can adjust recruitment environments and provide practical guidance on how to be an inclusive recruiter. Importantly, I won't take you through the whole Toolkit which can be found on the PSC website. More just to pull out of all the key elements. Some candidates, based on the nature of their disability, may require extra adjustments. At interview, we need to be particularly conscious, not to reinforce any disabilities or anxieties which candidates may experience, but remove those as barriers, allowing people adjustments for the interview process may be necessary. This might include allowing extra time to prepare or to answer questions. It is not giving candidates with disability an unfair advantage, rather it will assist them to overcome barriers and perform at their best.

Rule 26 of the Government Sector Employment Act allows for alternative assessment methods for identified inclusion cohorts. Again, more information on this can be found on the website. Successful onboarding is also critical. This means that all adjustments requested should be available on their first day of work. You may also need to prepare the new employees team members to ensure that they have the right training and awareness of the person's needs to facilitate inclusion. For example, there may be preferred ways of communicating that the new employee would like the new colleagues to understand. You also need to make sure that all onboarding materials and training is accessible. This would make the new recruit feel welcomed and valued from day one. We have included a brief overview of relevant anti-discrimination laws as you can see in this slide. It's important to know that direct and indirect discrimination is covered under the Disability Discrimination Act and the New South Wales Anti-discrimination Act. I'd now like to introduce my PSC colleague, Tessa, who is leading the Recruitment Right Program. Tessa's recently completed project to improve the candidate experience with a focus on improving recruitment outcomes for people with disability. Tessa will talk to us today about her findings on the experiences of people with disability seeking employment using the New South Wales recruitment system. She'll also share the tools to support inclusive recruitment. Welcome, Tessa.

TESSA PITTENDRIGH:
Thank you, Gail. I'm currently leading the Recruiting Right Program implementing recommendations from the 2018 review of public service recruitment reforms. Recruitment itself hasn't changed significantly with research evidence continuing to support. The best way to understand someone's fit for a role is to meet and discuss it with them. There are three board categories of influences in recruitment - the hiring manager, the human resource business partner and the candidate. There are many different customer segments within those three influencers. We really wanted to unpack the recruitment journey and elected to take a human-centred design approach and chose the first customer at the centre to be people with disability. Engaged ARTD to deliver research through interviews and focus groups with people with lived experience of disability to gain greater insight into recruitment. Their experiences informed then led co-design of journey maps and other tools to support New South Wales Public Service to improve recruitment outcomes. All of the participant interviewed were currently employed within the New South Wales Government. Research confirmed nine barriers including that online applications and assessments can be problematic for accessibility. The disability employment service providers prefer to place people outside of government due to our lengthy recruitment processes. Research participants also indicated that if I disclose their disability, they'd have a poor experience.

They wouldn't disclose again unless they have to. For some participants, the absence of constructive feedback left them feeling that their disability is the reason they weren't successful in getting the job that they applied for. Adjustments are challenging for both candidates and hiring managers. Candidates seem they might need adjustment don't know what they can ask for and hiring managers might be reluctant to take a different approach to assessment for fear of backlash or not measuring everyone equally. This is an area to address, as without the right adjustments, people with disability are not provided an equal chance to win the role they're applying for. Hiring managers are typically decision makers for workplace adjustments with inconsistency across government where adjustments are being implemented. Participants also shared that while I have a disability, I don't necessarily want to be the person who is carrying the voice of many. We heard some people with disability feel sometimes that everyday is a battle to be treated equally and they would like to do their job without also needing to talk about it - in reference to their disability. This sets the value of sharing stories. Today, I'll share some of the stories with you that we heard during the research and invite you to share these to recent experiences to illustrate the impact of our actions. Our vision is for people to have a consistent positive experience of recruitment, regardless of location, role, agency, background and that the process is fair, inclusive, equal and flexible. The project also identified some opportunities to provide more educational formal training opportunities for HR staff and hiring managers. Develop guidelines and resources for making adjustments. Provide a supportive workplace. Increase flexibility in the recruitment process. The job advertisements show potential applicants that'll be supported in the workplace. And that there's a greater need for strategic direction from leaders. In the project, we developed a series of experienced principles. That based on the research with the community, anyone can used this to instigate a conversation or generate change. People with disability told us that using these principles to help frame inclusive job advertisements and designing roles more flexibly, made a huge impact for their satisfaction with recruitment. Flexibility in the way that the work is done and the requirements of their role is important for everyone. I'd like to share a story with you now that we heard during the process. Working from home, I'm able to manage my environment and I found technology to support me. My request to work from home was denied for a long time and wouldn't even be discussed. When I joined the disability employment network, I asked people there for a guidance. And they showed me a process to follow which was successful. Initially, I was told it could only be for one day per week and I had to specify which day. That was difficulty as my condition varies from day to day. The majority of people I know and work with are supportive of me working from home. See. This illustrates the experience principle of trust is a two-way street and flexibility. A second story that we learned was this. The advertisement for this job was upfront that they support people with disability. I included information of my condition into my resume along with my experience. I was a bit nervous but it was made to feel comfortable. They had a clear process in place in what you were doing. I had a conversation with a manager before I started which I explained my situation I have a physical disability. He said, "Let us know. We'll be led by you." It was understanding and accepting exactly what was needed. He checked in with me a couple of times in the first weeks on the job. The whole team has been great. There's another member with a physical disability and they've learned a lot from working with him. Little things show that they get it. And they're kind.

They're mindful with solid knowledge. And at the same time, they're not over the top. I feel that I was chosen for this job for the skills that I have. I feel empowered and I'm grateful. I feel included and valued and confident that I'll have a long accomplished career and that there's some predictability within it. It's a really good feeling. That particular story illustrates the experience principle of ask me. I'd like you to rate the text on the screen. Are you finding it a little challenging? This text is deliberately small by design to illustrate how it feels and the challenge faced by people who request an adjustment and their request is not met. Disclosure of disability is necessary in order to apply for special consideration or adjustments in the process. Several people spoke about not being comfortable to disclose their disability due to fear of judgement or discrimination. While this was not the case for everyone, there were examples of this concern across all disability types. One person said, if I didn't have to disclose, I wouldn't. We recommend the interview, or panel chair checks all the requests for adjustment and contacts candidates to ask them and confirm how their request will be met. We acknowledge that some people prefer not to disclose and then in doing so, their ability to be at their best may be compromised. What came through strongly in the research was the candidates may request an adjustment at any point in the process. These requests are inconsistently action currently, which has a significant impact on the applicant. The first point comes back to the universal design principle with the action to review all requirements. When did someone last consider the needs of the job to address unnecessary barriers? For example, some role description state that a driver's licence is an essential requirement for the job. Challenging whether this is still a valid requirement or whether alternative transport achieves the same outcome, is worthwhile. Having the broader needs of the branch or agency being considered when feeling around, focusing on what needs to be done, not how the job gets done, for example, if someone has to travel for the job, you don't define how they get there. Are there talent pools available that could be used to appoint someone into this position? The next part of the inclusive process is designing the assessment process. Thinking about the universal design principle and designing inclusively for all. Only offering assessments that are accessible for example. Have a prepared alternative assessment in the event that is a request for adjustment. Be flexible with the date and time of the interview. We heard during the process that a candidate was advised to have an interview at 10:30am. When they booked an online interpreter for that time, when they got to the venue, they were advised the interview is running over. Interpreter couldn't stay as they had another booking, so, the candidate wasn't able to participate at that time, on an even playing field and their experience was greatly impacted as a result of the communicated process not running to time. As the chair checked with candidates when booking interviews if they have needs, using the asked me principle, even if they haven't requested an adjustment, does the interview need to be on site? Is the venue accessible or have hearing loop or space for an interpreter? When assessing candidates and capturing feedback, there is so much value in capturing it as you're going along providing rationale as to why that particular person didn't progress or get the job. It can be as simple as noting one area of development and an overall observation that you would be happy to have shared back with the applicant. Enjoy my fieldwork ahead.

GAIL LE BRANSKY:
Next, we're joined by Adele Tashkin and then Ben Alexander from the New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability, or see ideas we call them. They're going to talk about the council's more than just a job program. Welcome Adele and Ben.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Hi, my name is Ben and I'm here to talk about more than just the job for business. This is my colleague, Adele. And we work with the Council for Intellectual Disability. My role at CID is an inclusion project worker. And I've been working at CID for 2.5 years.

ADELE TASHKIN:
My name is Adele Tashkin, and I've been working at CID, I think about 5.5 years, Ben, and I work as a project officer, and Ben and I work together to support the community and people with intellectual disability, around inclusion for people to have equal employment opportunities, which is very exciting. And more than just a job is a project from the Council for Intellectual Disability, whom we work for. Do you wanna tell us, Ben, a little bit more about CID?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah. The Council for Intellectual Disability is a disability rights organisation led by people with intellectual disability. For more than 60 years, we have been working to ensure a community where all people with intellectual disability are valued.

ADELE TASHKIN:
And so, Ben, what do we do?

BEN ALEXANDER:
We speak up on the big issues. We provide information and learning opportunities we empower individuals and community. So, Adele, do you wanna tell us about the more than just the job program?

ADELE TASHKIN:
Love to, Ben. That's why we're here, isn't it? So, we're talking about more than just a job, which is a program that's a project that's run through CID, and it's a National Disability Insurance Agency funded project, and the project has three parts to it. I mean, we're here today to talk about more than just a job for business, but we also have, a more than just a job for staff program, and a more than just a job for me. So, you'll be able to see up on the PowerPoint that the blue is the more than just a job for business. And more than just a job for business is about really supporting businesses, companies, government departments to become inclusive employers of choice for people with intellectual disability. And CID work with that business or place of employment to become an inclusive employer of people with disabilities through a series of workshops, mentoring and support. The orange flyer that you can see at the moment is the more than just a job for me. And that's our favourite one, isn't it Ben?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yes, it is.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Where we do a six week course with people with intellectual disability, and we talk about and support people to really think about their skills, their interests, and the idea of actually going out and getting a job just like everyone else. It's really important. And then, finally, the more than just a job for staff and that's the purple flyer, and then more than just a job for staff is really about, supporting staff who work with people with intellectual disability, whether that be in an Australian disability enterprise supported employment, whether that be DES providers, your disability employment services, or even in day programs. And we work with staff who work with people with intellectual disability to support staff to create pathways and conversations for people to maybe go out and get work. So, that three pronged approach to the more than just a job program really helps us to get an understanding and to really support the community as a whole, to be able to work together to create inclusion for people with intellectual disability and employment. Do you wanna tell us what the research says about why people with intellectual disability might want to work or might like to work.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah, the research says people want to earn money, feel proud that they're working, be more independent, make friends and socialise, feel more confident, and learn new skill.

ADELE TASHKIN:
I think some of the things are that as much as earning money is important, but what do you get when you earn money? Do you get more opportunities to do things?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah, what I enjoy about earning money is the ability to pay rent because I'm you know, independent living program with the local council that I live in and it's good to get my independence living with a flatmate that I get along with.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah. And I'm wondering if we should watch a video now, of someone who loves their job?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah, yes, Adele. This is a video about my friend Jess. She works at the ABC and you will see how important Jess is. Job is to her.
(VIDEO PLAYS)
(UPBEAT MUSIC)

JESS:
I've been working at the ABC for 11 years. I like working with my work colleagues, they're like work family to me. Yeah. I enjoy all the tasks and jobs I do. I go to the library and do the filing CDs task.

Easy. I've done them all. I do the kitchen and printers. And the water jug. And I fill up the water for the World Today presenter. Work is important to me because to earn money and not to stay home all day. (LAUGHS)
I think employers should give people disabilities a chance. We've got abilities, we can do anything.
(VIDEO ENDS)

ADELE TASHKIN:
I really enjoyed that video, Ben, I love seeing Jess's smiley face myself, and I think it's really obvious that she enjoys her job but feels appreciated, doesn't she? Like I think in that video, you can really see that she has a nice connection with the people that she works with and that they really understand her, and I'm wondering Ben, if, what's some of I mean, you know Jess, but also from that video, what sorts of things was Jess sort of saying like, why work at the ABC is important to her?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Well, what I reckon is that, she enjoys working at the ABC because the work colleagues are like a second family, and she get out of the house and earns money.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah, that's it, isn't it?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah. ADELE TASHKIN: Yeah. And isn't it interesting at the moment that getting out of the house can be really, you know, it's such an important thing to keep you refreshed and keep you connected with people. So, it's, you know, it's really important to be able to do that kind of stuff and I think having work colleagues that you really connect with and that you enjoy seeing is such a wonderful thing, isn't it? Because it extends your social life. Yeah. ADELE TASHKIN: Yeah. So, Ben, I'm wondering, you know, we've had a look at Jess's video, we've had a look at why work is important to her, but do you wanna talk about why work is important to you?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah, work is important to me because it gives me purpose to get out of the house, and it gives me the motivation to get up and get ready and get to work on time.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah. And what are the some of the things that, because I know that we... that you work with us here at CID, but you also have other work, what are some of the things that you like about say, working at CID?

BEN ALEXANDER:
I enjoy my work at CID.

I enjoy it because, I enjoy working on the different projects thing. Getting out in the community with you for example, and some of our other colleagues that we work with.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah, it's fun, isn't it? We get to meet so many new people.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
True, don't we? Yeah. So, Ben, why do you think that someone might want to employ a person with disability, I mean, what perhaps are some of the things that I guess people don't realise that everyone has to offer, which also includes people with intellectual disability? What do you think some of the good reasons to hire someone with an intellectual disability are?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Some of the reasons that we are reliable, productive, affordable, creates positive working environment, and it's good for business.

ADELE TASHKIN:
It's good for business, isn't it?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
I'm wondering, you know, good for business is really interesting, I think, do you think it's good for business because people get to see themselves like reflected, you know, if you walk into a business or you go into a workplace, and there's just sort of no one that you feel that you can relate to where you can't see yourself, and it would be more comfortable if you can, so, if there's a like a representation of all the people in the community, so that workplaces reflect all the people out in the community. It makes you feel like you belong a bit more.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah. ADELE TASHKIN: Yeah. I think it's, you know, it's so really great. You know, for any company, organisation, government department, to want to be an inclusive employer, but where do you think hiring managers could start? First, we have to make sure we have works for people, one way to do this is job carving.

ADELE TASHKIN:
That sounds exciting, doesn't it? Being able to make something.

BEN ALEXANDER:
(LAUGHS) Yes, it does. Which we do. Job carving is a really interesting way of creating roles for people that are really going to match someone's skills so that a person with an intellectual disability doesn't have to come in and fit in with the culture, it's like you sort of come into the middle and you fit in with each other. So, job carving is about looking at what an organisation or a company or a business needs, and then making a job out of that, and then supporting someone to come in and do that job. So, I'm wondering, Ben, if you wanna describe what job carving is. Yeah, I'll be happy to tell you, Adele. There might be already jobs for people but it is often best to match a person with their skills and the needs of the business. Look at what your workplace is doing and imagine how it could be better. Setting up meeting rooms. Replenishing supplies. Collecting papers, scanning, shredding, laminating. Everyone loves laminating and things like this. Which an experience that I have had at CID where I've had to a bit of laminating.

ADELE TASHKIN:
I know, and we're all loath to give you the laminating, Ben, cause we all like doing laminating.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
But with that, I mean, I think that's - Thank you, that's a really good example of some things that can take people a lot of time to do and I know I really appreciate it when I've got that support when somebody else can come and set up a meeting room or you know, keep things organised for me and being able to identify that in your work place. Some of the things that would make you work place run a lot better could often be a really good starting point for job carving. And oftentimes I think Jess, in her video, was a really good example of that, wasn't she? She did things that you could tell that everybody really appreciated. Because it will take them a little bit of time out their job to do that. If you got someone just to do that for you.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Basically job carving is really looking at your work place needs. It's really focusing on the person's skills and ability, which is really, really important, and it's matching the needs of the individual to the business. And putting those things together, so, someone's strengths and their abilities and then the needs of the organisation. Suddenly, you are actually creating a really beautiful partnership. And you know, I think it's also really important to add that you know, meaningful work and things that people genuinely enjoy and they really know is gonna make a difference to the business and that if they are not there on the day, you know, that you would be missed. I think that those sorts of things are stuff that we need to keep in mind when we are employing anyone but certainly people with intellectual disabilities so you can really match up and the person really knows that they're needed within that work place or business. So, Ben, when you aren't presenting, what are some of the office task that you do? Cause that sort of gives us an idea, you do all these. We go out and you do workshops and we co-design and co-create our workshops and you make sure everything makes sense. But then when we are not doing all of these fabulous superstar stuff. What are doing in the office at CID?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah I check kitchen supplies with the list. I go down and check the mailbox and do data entry, for like the feedback that we get at some of our workshops.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah and that, I know particularly, I appreciate you doing the data entry stuff because that's quite fiddly and time consuming and you can do it really quickly, which is excellent, and it's so important. So, things like admin tasks that we often put to the side. If we don't collect that data on the kinds of work that we've done in the community. The idea wouldn't run very well, so, a lot of the stuff that sometimes seems a bit day to day is actually really, really important for the running of the business or you know, the government department or organisation. So, Ben, I'm wondering what are some of the first steps cause we are talking a lot about why it's important that everybody has equal opportunity in employment that they would like. We've talked a lot about the kind of roles that people could do. But I'm wondering just on the practical side of things. It's really important for people to be able to walk away from today and think right, I can do at least one thing to become a more inclusive recruiter. So, I'm wondering Ben, what are the first steps that you'd take to creating a job for a person with intellectual disability today? What are some of the things that recruiters could do today?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Well, make a list of tasks in the workplace that often get missed. Look at the gaps in your day to day business that an employee could fill. Ask possible employees to list their skills and interests.

Match employee with tasks of interest and create a checklist of tasks to form a job description.

ADELE TASHKIN:
That is really excellent points, and they are really easy things that you can do. You can walk around with a pen and paper and you can start making those lists, can't you? And think about those little jobs that would be really great if someone just swapped in and did it for you.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Thanks, Ben. So, excuse me, I'm wondering Ben. It's alright to talk about jobs that people can do but how do we communicate with people or a person with an intellectual disability once we are in a colleague situation? So, say, for example, you and I, we work together but we have to get to know each other like we do with any colleague and I wonder not to generalise. But oftentimes if you are working or interacting with a person with an intellectual disability. There's some good little like just communication tips that might help people again, might help people today. So, Ben, what are some of the little communication tips we might be able to use when we have colleagues with intellectual disabilities?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Well, some of the tips are, get to know the person and how they best communicate. Use the everyday language. Break down ideas into smaller parts. Ask the person what might help them to understand. Allow time for the person to think about and respond to your information or question. Ask open questions to check that the person understands.

You may need to repeat the information. Non-verbal communication might help, for example, easy read and... Which is one thing that we specialise in giving information out and images or easy read will be a definite help.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah, definitely. And easy read is putting things into pictures and simple phrases, isn't it?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
I know when I came for my job interview at CID 5.5 years ago and I went onto the website and the first thing I did was look at everything that was an easy read. Because it was just really simple for me to understand how the business worked and how - Well, not business but how the organisation worked and I think that having accessible information is really important for everybody in the community, isn't it?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah, really.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah, yeah. So, Ben, can these tips be used in any situation like any of those communication tips, do you think you could use them in things such as job interviews?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yes, all job advertisements need to be in easy read. Give the candidate a copy of the question. Ask if you are going to fast or too slow. Never rush, have a break in the middle. This may help people to think and collect themselves and leave time for questions at the end.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah and thanks, Ben, because I think that's a really key take away from today is that it's taking a little bit more time which actually makes the work place kind of calmer, more sort of understanding environment instead of rush, rush, rush all the time instead of sitting with people and making that space. So, a really big take away from today should be just around giving things a little bit more time, a little bit more space. Checking in with people about the kinds of communication that really work for them. And certainly being able to know that sometimes you need to take breaks and sometimes you need to you know, give people time to think things through and I think that that stuff is important. So, it's not that it is difficult, it's just that it takes a bit more time. Which you know, in between there's a lot of fun to be had when you are hanging out figuring through that together, right?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Yeah.

ADELE TASHKIN:
So, Ben, I'm wondering. If managers and recruiters wanted to find out more about inclusive recruitment and things that could help them with easy read. Where could they go to?

BEN ALEXANDER:
Well, they can contact us by emailing us at info@cid.org or contact us on 1800 424 065 and we'll be able to give out the information to any questions that they may have.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yeah, thanks, Ben. Yeah, I think the Council for Intellectual Disability is a good place to start certainly and being able to work through with

SPEAKERDASH1:
more than just a job program. It's a fantastic opportunity. Really nice chatting with you today, Ben.

BEN ALEXANDER:
Good to chat with you today too, Adele.

GAIL LE BRANSKY:
Thanks, Adele, thanks, Ben. That brings us to the end of presentations for today. Now we have about ten minutes for any questions or comments you want to ask the presenters. So, please, feel free to type in your questions and we'll respond to them shortly. If you'd like to get in touch with any of the presenters, please, do so using the following links appearing on the slide. I'd also like to thank our presenters, Tisa, Adel and Ben for talking to us today. But I especially wanna thank you for giving your time. It's an important step in joining the edge of inclusion.
(MUSIC PLAYS)

SPEAKER:
Well, welcome back, everyone. I have a first question from Amanda, who asks in relation to acquired disability for an employee in government. She knows that with her experience, many people are reluctant to disclose invisible disability for fear that they'll lose their jobs. She is asking what we've already done within the government to assist people in making disclosures more easily and what's in the pipeline. So, Amanda will be pleased to know that we have recognised that this is a significant problem. If we are to reach the premier's priority that means around 2,000 jobs per year. And in the current climate, that is not going to occur purely through recruitment. We also know that more people are disclosing in 2019. The level of employment of people with disability in the government sector remains steady at 2.5%. This was despite the fact that the exit rate of people with disability leaving the sector was higher. That speaks to a larger number of people being willing to share their disability in workforce profile data. But there's a lot more that needs to be done, and we've recently included on the disability employment website a sharing disability guide. That guide helps people with disability understand that their disability is actually included in the definition because many people with unseen disabilities, such as dyslexia or a mental health condition don't always understand that that is identified as a person with disability within workforce profile. So, what is a disability, when to share, what you might share and with whom and, you know, it's really designed to help people have more confidence in disclosing the disability. We also have a new disability information page, which will shortly be uploaded to the "I work for New South Wales" website. On that page, we have video and text material that makes it very clear that you can ask for adjustments in the recruitment process with no fear of discrimination. Finally, another important issue is that disability data is prone to what we call data leakage. We're working to try and address that, particularly for government connected agencies through a better data capture for people with disability so that the data travels with you wherever you move in the government sector. Don't forget to keep your questions coming in. We have a second question from Lizette Collins. Lizette has asked, and I think it's quite a legitimate question in the current climate, is there a reduced risk of increased job losses for people with disability because of the impacts of COVID, and if so how this might be addressed? I think in the current climate, there will be reductions in the overall number of public servants over time although there is a current government policy of no forced redundancies.

In terms of the COVID and the fact that many government agencies are undergoing structure realignments, there is a conversation going on with secretaries around ensuring that there isn't any further reduction in the employment of people with disabilities through structure realignment. Obviously, it's not something that can be guaranteed. That alongside of targeted employment strategies is perhaps the best way of addressing this.

Thomas has asked a question about what are some of the untrue negative stereotypes about people with disability in the workforce?

I might throw that question to Adele or Ben.

ADELE TASHKIN:
Yes, thanks, Gail. Ben, I'm not sure if you wanted to make comments on that.

There's just a few things that come to mind when I think of that, I guess. It's probably things like, things would be too hard, things would take too long." The practice of supporting people will mean that we won't be as productive." But in fact, research shows that people with- and particularly working with Council of Intellectual Disability, people with intellectual disability are often more productive and often really quite dedicated to their work. As much as setup time can, you know, that it takes time to set people up and to understand things and get people comfortable, like anywhere and anyone, but certainly once that's established, the research shows that people with intellectual disability often take less sick days and are more dedicated to their job and will stay in that role for a lot longer. Thank you for your question. Is there anything you wanted to add, Ben?

BEN ALEXANDER:
No. I know a few people... like a few people that I know with intellectual disabilities that have worked absolutely committed to working. And I know that they're really committed to their work, which is a really good thing. That comes back to what you said, Adele, of the people with intellectual disability will be committed to working.

GAIL LE BRANSKY:
Following up on that, Gerard has asked whether the centre for intellectual disability exists only in New South Wales or if there's counterparts in other states?

ADELE TASHKIN:
That's a really good question. We have rebranded from New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability to Council for Intellectual Disability. I hope that we stretch across Australia but at the moment we are in NDI and ILC-funded, so it's just in New South Wales at the moment. That's for all of our free programs. They're more than just a job program that Ben and I just presented is just in New South Wales are all our ILC-funded projects, but any of our people service works, so we convert to Easy Read and we do a lot of other stuff that is across Australia and across the world. Our fee for service work has no boundaries, but our ILC and NDIA funded work, such as the (INAUDIBLE)
is in New South Wales. However, we're really always keen to hear from all around Australia.

The fact that it's just not enough to have us in New South Wales, it would really be good to have us across Australia, so we're always keen to hear requests for our work across Australia to build in a campaign on that one. (LAUGHS)

GAIL LE BRANSKY:
Thanks, Adele. Cibian's asked a really interesting question that if we were to look at targeted recruitment of people with disability, is there any recommended avenues that we could share? Yes is the very definite answer to that question. One of the strategies- there's a number of strategies that you can utilise but one that we would certainly recommend to you is utilising Rule 26 of the Government Sector Employment Act. There's information on that on the PSC website. We've recently applied it to our tailor talent program, which was designed to match people on the Autism spectrum with stem roles across the New South Wales Government. Through that program we used an alternative assessment process of a three-week workshop to assess the skills of individual candidates.

Then, some one-on-one conversations between the person with the disability and potential hiring managers in a less threatening environment than a formal interview process. That's resulted in the placement of 11 people in internships of 12 months or longer in the New South Wales Government. Another way of targeting roles is to work with disability employment providers and to designate a position as only being available to applicants with disability.

Catherine has asked whether any treasury funding is available for roles or do all roles come out of agency budgets? The answer is all roles come out of agency budgets, but I think, one of things to consider in that- and Tess, you might want to comment further in terms of the research that you'd been doing around how you might shape the existing roles that you have to be better able to be filled by people with disability. Tess, do you want to comment further on that in terms of recruitment of people with disability and some of the pain points that you identified?

TESSA PITTENDRIGH:
Yes, thanks, Gail. It certainly one of the things that we'd been working towards in the agency. There's an additional question there in relation to making some adjustments but it's looking at assessing the role before you even go to advertising. One of the pain points we found was people often think about their needs while they're in recruitment rather than beforehand. Trying to work with hiring managers to help them understand the benefits really looking at the role before they start advertising and working out the best way to approach the recruitment, but also working in ways that the recruitment's really accessible for all. So, we have much more inclusive processes. So, we're not progressing down the path of offering assessments that then we discover are not accessible, which presents a challenge. There are pain points that the PSG are working closer with the workplace to try and help them address, so that we can ensure we're providing right upfront as inclusive a way as possible.

GAIL LE BRANSKY:
Thanks, Tess.

Christopher's asked whether there's been any study done on whether or not it might be socially and economically advantageous for Government to specifically allocate additional funding to agencies, which is tied to the recruitment of employees with disability? The answer to that is no. There has been no specific research done, but I guess from a philosophical position, we believe that people with disability- that our workforce should be inclusive. Then, reflect to the communities we serve and that having a special program for people with disability while it might have a short term impact, in the longer term it really doesn't do a lot to ensure that people with disability are fully included in our workforce. Whereas programs that are around culture change and really embedding the notion in not only our recruitment practices but the way we work with our people will have a much stronger impact in the long term. Tess or Adele, do you want to provide additional comment?

ADELE TASHKIN:
Thanks, Gail, yeah. Adele here. I agree with you. I think it's really fantastic to set things up while we go through a journey. But inclusion, I think, is the key there and having a separate and adjunct program, as you say Gail, for short term is really great but long term it just needs to be included in all our practice and with all of our colleagues.

GAIL LE BRANSKY:
OK. Lee has asked a really important question around if a person with disability needs a workplace adjustment and it hasn't been offered to them, where do they go? I would suggest that the first port of call is to their manager. Their manager as a manager is responsible for providing an inclusive workplace, and part of the process of inclusion is ensuring that all of the team members have got access to the tools and equipment and work practices that they need to bring their best selves to work. Now, unfortunately not all managers fully understand that concept. If you are having difficulty, most agencies also have a diversity and inclusion manager. Or, if you can't locate that individual, then ideally talk to someone in HR and hopefully you'll get the result that you need to bring your best self to work. Unfortunately, there are other questions but we are at time, so we need to wrap up. I want to thank you all for joining in today's webinar and hope that you found it very useful. There are two more managing for inclusion webinars in this series. I hope many more of you will join us again next week. Thanks everyone, and welcome to the age of inclusion.