

Strategic Review of the AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE SYSTEM

2024



Final report – Fact sheet for Apprentices with Disability

Apprenticeships provide a great opportunity for employment and financial security for people with disability. However, people with disability experience challenges with discrimination, low expectations of their ability, and a lack of understanding on how to support them. They need programs that create pathways for them to start an apprenticeship in a supportive and accommodating environment.

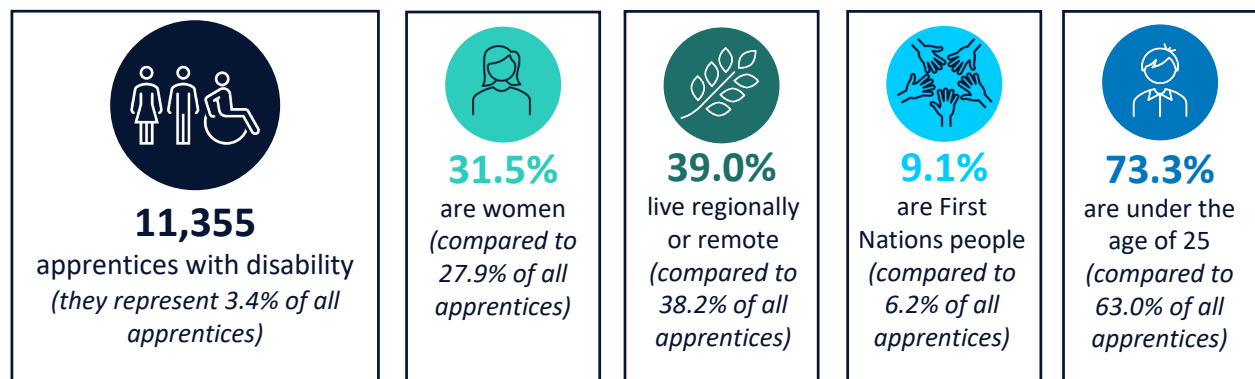
Background

The Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, led by Dr Iain Ross AO and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM, considered the effectiveness and efficiency of the current incentive system in supporting the uptake and completion of Australian apprenticeships. In particular, it considered the incentive system with regard to addressing Australia's skills needs and its ability to deliver on economic priorities and social equity objectives.

For more details on the review as a whole, please refer to the Overview fact sheet.

Australians with disability are underrepresented within the apprenticeship system compared to the working population, with 3.4% of apprentices in training reported to have disability (review analysis based on NCVER 2024) compared with 13.9% of the 15 and 24 aged population and 8% of all employed persons reporting to have disability (AIHW 2024).

Apprentices with disability



Source: Review analysis based on NCVER (2024) apprentices and trainees data.

Key Issues

The review identified the following issues that affect apprentices with disability:

- Disability advocates told the review that parents, teachers and employers can still think people with disability will have lower levels of literacy, work-ready skills or physical ability stopping them from being successful in an apprenticeship.
- Employers are often reluctant to hire apprentices with disability, or do not even consider the possibility.
- Discrimination and social exclusion within Apprenticeships often leads to many people with disability unwilling to inform their employer of their disability and subsequently face issues due to a lack of additional support or accommodation.
- The current payment to support employers of apprentices with disability is too low and is often difficult and tedious to claim.
- Training providers note a lack of clarity about how best to make reasonable adjustments for apprentices with a disability.

Recommendations

The final report made 34 recommendations that aim to address the key issues identified through the review. The following is a summary of recommendations relevant to apprentices with disability:

- Address the behaviour of employers who are not providing an appropriate working environment for their apprentices.
- Use existing apprentice data systems to better connect apprentices with support services.
- Work with industry stakeholders to address workplace culture issues and improve the working environment for apprentices.
- Expand programs facilitating pathways to apprenticeships for people with disability.
- Significantly increase the support payment for employers of apprentices with disability, index the payment to CPI and remove barriers to accessing the payment.

For details on recommendations that are beneficial to all apprentices, please refer to the [Apprentice fact sheet](#).

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2021) [Cultural diversity of Australia](#), ABS.

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW website, accessed 5 August 2024.

NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) (2024) [Apprentices and trainees 2023: December quarter](#), NCVER.