

Disability strategy a strong step forward

Source: www.psnews.com.au/Page_psn1878.html

Author: PS News

21 September 2009

A National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy to encourage more people with disabilities into work has been released.

The strategy includes \$1.2 billion in new employment services for people with disabilities and includes the Disability Support Pension (DSP) Employment Incentive Pilot which will trial a new way of encouraging employers to offer work to people with disabilities and allow DSP recipients to demonstrate their skills.

Minister for Employment Participation, Senator Mark Arbib said from 1 March next year, job seekers would receive more personalised services, while employers of people with a disability would get more support.

"For the first time, services will be demand driven," Senator Arbib said.

"This means all job seekers with disability will have immediate access to assistance from an employment service helping them to gain skills and employment."

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Bill Shorten said employers would receive wage subsidies of up to \$3,000 after the job seeker has remained in work for 26 weeks. Normal income taper rates will apply to DSP recipients who participate in the pilot.

"I know that many businesses want to do more to employ people with disability. This is why the Government is supporting this pilot which is expected to provide job opportunities for 1,000 Australians who receive the DSP," Mr Shorten said.

"Providing fulfilling work and economic independence for people with disability was a key to improving their inclusion in the community.

He said there was no doubt that people with disabilities wanted to work.

"We need to ensure that we remove the barriers and negative attitudes facing people with disability who want to work, and recognise their potential rather than their impairments."

Copies of the Strategy paper could be obtained by calling 1300 363 079 (TTY 1800 554 609), or emailing employmentstrategy@deewr.gov.au

The report is available in electronic form at www.workplace.gov.au