Employer Mobilisation Final research report – a study of people involved in the hiring and management of staff and or development of staff policies and initiatives in the public, private and not for profit sectors

Commissioned by the Department of Jobs and Small Business on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership for Improving Work Participation

10th September 2018

WHERE ▸ TO

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

1.   Report at a glance

Employer mobilisation project report

The project aims to understand employer behaviours, attitudes and intentions towards recruiting, supporting and accommodating people experiencing temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions and disability. The project phases are:

1. Staged discovery research – this report	2. Ideation and trial of interventions (2018-19) - forthcoming

1. **Online survey;** n = 2,457 people involved in the hiring and management of staff and / or development of staff policies and initiatives.	2. **Qualitative depth interviews** n = 35, recruited from the survey to reflect segments developed in the quantitative study.

Key findings

Openness to supporting people with disability and health correlated with:
- past experience of doing so
- positive psychosocial work environment
- an investment approach to worker well being
- strategic human resource flexibility, where each staff member (not just people with disability or health conditions) is seen as a package of characteristics that need to be accommodated and integrated
- organisational growth.

With respect to supporting people in the future
- 50% of employers confident in their business' ability to support
- 47% of employers believed that their culture was supportive
- 36% of employers felt that their workplace had low capacity to adapt

Low levels of experience
- Less than half of employers had ever managed processes for recruiting, accommodating or managing return to work
- Only one in four or less had done so in the last 2 years

Employer segmentation, a continuum of flexible/open to rigid/closed
Flexibility Leaders (4%) – Practice strategic flexibility in structuring the workplace and roles – for all workers, not just people with health conditions and disability.

Stumble Before Run (18%) – Passive, and driven by previous poor experience.

Building Momentum (8%) – Open but rigid (employees have to fit with them.

Starting The Path (17%) – Interested but are stymied by lack of resourcing & leadership buy in.

Curious And Looking For Direction (17%) – Little insight into or interest

Not A Priority (41%) – Supporting people with disability and health conditions is not their focus

The project was commissioned by the Collaborative Partnership for Improving Work Participation. The partnership is a coalition of organisations working together to improve the health and work participation of working age Australians. They are: Comcare, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, Employers Mutual, the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the National Mental Health Commission. Mobilisation Project Working Group. The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Collaborative Partnership and Employer Mobilisation Project Working Group.

WHERE TO

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Background and methodology

The project was commissioned by the Collaborative Partnership for Improving Work Participation. The partnership is a coalition of organisations working together to improve the health and work participation of working age Australians. They are: Comcare, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, Employers Mutual, the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the National Mental Health Commission.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Collaborative Partnership and Employer Mobilisation Project Working Group.

Led by the Department of Jobs and Small Business, the Employer Mobilisation project is examining attitudes and barriers to employment and improving employers' capacity to provide work opportunities for people with temporary or permanent physical or mental health conditions.

This report summarises the key findings of the primary research phase of the Employer Mobilisation research project. The project aims to understand employer behaviours, attitudes and intentions towards recruiting, supporting and accommodating people experiencing temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions and disability.[1]

The initial quantitative component of the study consisted of an online survey of 2,457 people involved in the hiring and management of staff and / or development of staff policies and initiatives. A qualitative phase was tasked with refining a quantitative segmentation of Australian employers, and deepening our understanding of the issues they face in managing this complex area of employee engagement. Qualitative interviews with organisations within each segment identified (total n=35 interviews) in the quantitative survey were conducted to gain deeper insight into the issues. Participants for both phases were included from both private sector and public sector organisations. This integrated report presents the combined qualitative-quantitative findings, including the employer segmentation insights.

2.2 Key findings

A key observation from responses to the survey is that past experience in hiring people with serious health conditions or disability drives a greater openness to recruiting people experiencing similar conditions in the future. This shows that actual experiences in hiring and supporting staff members with serious conditions and disability can help to break down the barriers of conscious or unconscious biases that so often accompany employer perspectives on health conditions and disability. It also shows on average that the experience is positive.

There is also a very strong relationship between the overall psychosocial work environment[2] and employer willingness and openness to consider hiring people experiencing serious conditions. Those organisations who are leading lights - in terms of their support for people with disability and serious health conditions - tended to have invested time and energy into developing a 'strategic human resource flexibility' that extended to their whole workforce. They view each and every staff member as a package of characteristics that need to be accommodated and integrated, and disability as just one characteristic within this broader set. They take an investment approach to managing and developing their whole workforce, going beyond mere compliance to

---

[1] From this point in the report, we will use 'with disability and health conditions' to reference 'the experience of temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions and disability'.
[2] See section 5 for more detail on this.

ensure all their employees are as productive as possible . At the other end of the spectrum, employers that are resistant to the idea of hiring people with serious conditions tend to focus on the condition. They imagine ways in which it will cause them issues – sapping management time and energy, or causing injury or issues other staff - and immediately dismiss the idea of ever hiring people who have a disability or who have a cognitive or psychosocial health condition.

This study also identifies an important relationship between human resource approach and organisational outcome – those employers who are classified in this study as '**Flexibility Leaders'** were two-and-a-half times as likely to say their organisation was rapidly growing, while at the other end of the spectrum, the '**Not A Priority**' were twice as likely to say their organisation was shrinking compared with all employers surveyed.

2.3   Low levels of experience

Few employers were able, unprompted, to outline the specific advantages and benefits of employing someone with a disability. But when prompted, 60% of employers indicated that 'as anyone could experience a health condition or disability, workplaces that include these people support everyone'; and, that the benefits were the same as any other suitable person for the job.

Less than half of employers indicated that their organisation had ever managed processes for recruiting, accommodating or handling the return for work for someone with disability or a health condition, and only one in four or less had done so in the last 2 years – managing processes for temporary conditions was generally more common than for permanent conditions.

Managers included in the qualitative phases who had employed people with disability tended to have done so by default or accident, being unaware of the issue at the time of hiring.

2.4   Lack of formal or informal policies or initiatives

This study found only small proportions of employers had in place formal and informal policies to accommodate people with a disability in relation to return to work (although this was nevertheless the most common policy in place), retention and recruitment. Larger organisations in the public sector were more likely to have these policies in place, and public sector organisations were more likely to have them formalised.

 Awareness of various initiatives to aid employers was also moderate to low, and actual *use* of processes or modifications to help employ or accommodate people with a disability, such as the modifications of tasks, was measured at three in ten employers or fewer.

2.5   Employers tend to be neutral, but challenged by permanent changes

Most employers (as individuals) felt relatively 'neutral' about employing someone, or having someone work for them, who may be experiencing a temporary or permanent physical or psychological condition or disability. However, employers were significantly more open to employing people with temporary conditions than permanent conditions.

Another important issue is the sheer diversity of disability and serious health conditions – every individual is unique when discussing disability, but employers can think in extremes and be inclined to be dismissive based on assumptions or generalisations, rather than taking the time and effort to consider the specifics of an individual's situation.

Almost half of employers indicated that they would be very likely to provide alternative duties for 3 months to help someone with disability or a health condition to return to work (48%), with the main barrier to alternative

duties perceived to be a lack of skills required to manage the process. Most felt that senior managers (followed by HR Departments) should be responsible for ensuring this participation in the workforce.

Only half of employers (50%) were confident in their organisation's ability to support a person with a physical health condition to be an effective contributor to the company, and were more likely to feel that their organisational *culture* was supportive for employees with a disability or a health condition (47%) than they were to feel that their organisation had the *capacity* to adapt the workplace for employees with disability or a health condition to (36%).

Overall, employers were likely to describe their company's aims in relation to maintaining the health of its employees as 'compliance only' – that is, they do what is required to comply with WHS and Fair Work law. In terms of programs and initiatives to support healthy workers, employers were mostly likely to have workplace risk identification, assessment and control processes in place, mostly for physical (54%) or chemical (39%) hazards than for anything in relation to workplace health promotion, employee support and counselling, or healthy working environment. Employers were moderately mature in relation to the adoption (at least partially) of a range of worker health practices.

2.6   Scenario testing

A range of narrative scenarios were tested as part of this quantitative phase of the research to understand their potential effectiveness to change employer openness to recruiting people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions or disability. Some of these scenarios showed they do have the power to make employers feel more positive and open towards recruiting people experiencing these issues.

Overall, employers felt much more positive about scenarios depicting temporary physical conditions and were more challenged by permanent psychological conditions. However, the scenarios with the largest uplift in openness between baseline and post-exposure measurement involved employer perspectives on employing people with permanent psychological conditions.

3. Background and methodology

3.1 Background and research objectives

The project was commissioned by the Collaborative Partnership for Improving Work Participation. The partnership is a coalition of organisations working together to improve the health and work participation of working age Australians. They are: Comcare, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, Employers Mutual, the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the National Mental Health Commission.

The partnership is focused on aligning the various sectors of Australia's work disability system to deliver better outcomes for people with temporary or permanent physical or mental health conditions. Through a range of projects, the partnership is working across sectors including workers' compensation, life insurance, superannuation, disability support and employment services to improve disability employment and return to work rates for people experiencing work incapacity through illness and injury.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Collaborative Partnership and Employer Mobilisation Project Working Group.

Led by the Department of Jobs and Small Business, the Employer mobilisation project is examining attitudes and barriers to employment and improving employers' capacity to provide work opportunities for people with temporary or permanent physical or mental health conditions.

Incidence of individuals on disability support pensions is higher than that of unemployment support, yet positive engagement with employees experiencing health conditions can prevent long term unemployment. As part of the Collaborative Partnership Initiative, the Department of Jobs and Small Business is seeking to enhance employers' ability to recruit, retain and support individuals experiencing physical, mental, temporary or permanent health conditions that impact their ability to work.

Embracing a human centred design approach, the Department first seeks to understand Australian employers' attitudes, behaviours, expectations, motivations and barriers. Learnings will inform the development of prototypes and trials to facilitate employer provision of suitable employment including longer term vocational and career development. Whereto Research was commissioned to conduct this research on behalf of the Department.

3.2 Quantitative methodology

A 25-minute online survey was developed with the input of project stakeholders. The survey was designed to cover a wide range of issues relating to employment of people experiencing serious temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions or disability. The survey included a number of validated scales, including one measuring the psychosocial work environment, another measuring the degree of integration of health protection and health promotion in workplaces as well as a range of questions designed specifically for the purpose of this project. The sample was taken from three online panels to ensure good representation and coverage across demographic and attitudinal dimensions.

Sample design and definitions

Sampling:

- n=1,441 participants from Australian businesses
- 1,016 participants from Australian public sector organisations and NGOs

- Participants had to be involved in/influential over hiring employees to qualify

The characteristics of the sample are set out below in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1:Quantitative Sample specifications

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved	Sample precision [3]
Business number of employees		
1-4	n=309	4.7%
5-19	n=330	5.4%
20-199	n=552	4.2%
200+	n=1,230	2.8%
Main business location		
New South Wales	n=729	3.6%
Victoria	n=651	3.8%
Queensland	n=411	4.8%
South Australia	n=209	6.8%
Tasmania	n=51	13.7%
Western Australia	n=256	6.1%
Northern Territory	n=31	17.6%
ACT	n=119	9%
Business type		
Mining	n=36	16.3%
Manufacturing	n=95	10%
Construction	n=106	9.5%
Wholesale Trade	n=82	10.8%
Transport, postal and warehousing	n=72	11.6%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste services	n=38	15.9%
Retail Trade	n=139	8.3%
Accommodation and food services	n=51	13.7%

---

[3] Sample precision refers to the maximum margin of error at the 95% level of confidence, that is, the sampling error. This margin of error is related to sample size, that is a smaller sample size has a larger maximum margin of error. When percentages are referred to in this report, a margin of error applies. Where a research finding is 50%, the maximum margin of error shown in this table applies. This means for example, if we find that 50% of small businesses with 1-4 employees (margin of error =4.7%) do something, we can be 95% confident that between 45.3% (50%-4.7%) and 54.7% (50% +4.7%) of the population of small businesses also do this.

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved	Sample precision [3]
Information media and telecommunications	n=85	10.6%
Financial and insurance services	n=139	8.3%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	n=38	15.9%
Professional, scientific and technical services	n=266	6%
Administration and support services	n=90	10.3%
Public administration and safety	n=239	6.3%
Education and training	n=339	5.3%
Health care and social assistance	n=356	5.2%
Arts and recreation services	n=47	14.3%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	n=41	15.3%
Total sample	n=2,457	1.9%

Notes on interpretation

Weighting has been applied to the data to ensure the statistics presented are representative of Australian businesses and public sector organisations. These weights were based on ABS statistics covering size of business (by number of employment size ranges) and the sector or ANZSIC code that the business operates in.

When sampling Australian businesses, we are only able to speak individuals, rather than the whole business. To this end the sample is representative of people who work for these organisations. This may mean that the management or board have a different view, but those involved at any level in the organisation were included in the survey, reflective of what happens at the hiring and management coalface.

In this report, unless otherwise indicated, 'disability' refers to a temporary or permanent physical or psychological (mental) health condition or disorder.

Notes on interpreting quantitative figures in this report

Charts and figures in this report indicate where statistically significant differences between the key segments and the average for the weighted population figure all hiring managers have been found. Statistically significant differences between the proportions observed in subgroups and the average for all hiring managers have been identified with coloured text as follows:

Green text indicates the subgroup result is significantly higher than the average for all other subgroups.

Red text indicates the subgroup result is significantly lower than the average for all other subgroups.

Significance testing has been undertaken at the 95% level of confidence. This means we can be 95% confident that a difference between subgroups indicated by our sample would also be observed if we were able to survey the entire Australian population.

Research limitations/ caveats

Sample surveys of the type employed for the quantitative employer survey are subject to two types of error: sampling error, and non-sampling error. Sampling error arises from the selection of only part of the population of interest for inclusion in the survey, and can be represented by a confidence interval, or margin of error. For

WHERE ▸ TO

this survey, the margin of error is at most +/- 4.4 percentage points (pp) at the 95% confidence level (taking into account the effect of weighting the data). That is, if we can be 95% confident that had all employers in Australia who fit the survey criteria participated, the results would have been within +/- 4.4 pp of the survey estimates reported here (where all Participants answered the question). Margin of error increases where sample sizes decrease, such as where employer subgroups are reported.

Non-sampling error is not mathematically measurable and includes errors such as non-response error, and Participant error. Where*to* Research employs multiple strategies to reduce non-sampling error, including techniques to maximise response rates, and utilising best practice survey design.

In this report, results represent the 'base' of Participants as noted below each chart. Results may not add up to 100% where Participants were able to select more than one option, or due to rounding.

3.3   Qualitative methodology

The qualitative component involved follow-up interviews of n=35 participants who had completed the online survey. The qualitative research was tasked with extending, qualifying and deepening the findings from the quantitative research. This in this case, the qualitative phase was designed to build on the lessons and insights from the quantitative phase. The themes arising from the qualitative interviews were very consistent, and have been analysed in conjunction with the quantitative findings to ensure that overall study findings are robust and defensible.

The participants included in the qualitative sample were managers who had completed the online survey and been assigned a segment so that the qualitative interviews included all segments identified in the quantitative research, as following.

Flexibility Leaders	Stumble Before Run	Building Momentum	Starting the Path	Curious And Looking For Direction	Not A Priority
6	5	6	5	8	5

Other sampling factors included:

- Coverage of a wide range of codes: Accommodation and food services, Administration and support, Construction, Education and training, Financial and insurance, Health care and social assistance, Manufacturing, Mining, Professional, scientific and technical services, Public Administration, Transport, postal and waste, Wholesale trade.

- Public / NFP (n=27) and private (n=8) organisations.

- Urban (n=29), regional (n=3), and remote (3)

- Small (n=7), medium (n=13) and large (n=15)

- Owner/C Suite/senior exec (8), mid management (19), HR (2), team member (5)

The interviews covered:

- segment attitudes and behaviours with respect to RTW and employment of people with disability

- understanding issues and differences between segments

- identifying appropriate potential interventions or assistance

Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and via telephone, and were 1 hour long. Participants were provided with a cash incentive to encourage participation and in recognition of their time.

4. Employer segmentation

As part of the analysis of the quantitative data, a segmentation of managers responsible for recruitment, retention and return to work in Australian private businesses and public sector organisations was developed. The analysis revealed six employer segments that differ in their openness to employing people with serious health conditions and disability, their capacity to support someone with serious health conditions or disability and the supportiveness of their culture, among a range of other firm characteristics. Following the quantitative analysis, a total of n=35 qualitative interviews were undertaken with managers who had taken part in the quantitative survey and who were assigned to a particular segment as part of the segmentation analysis. The value of qualitative interviews is the way in which they provide deeper insights into segment motivations and behaviours and help to identify opportunities for interventions and solution design. Commentary on the segments reflects the integration of qualitative and quantitative data.

This chapter sets out a summary of the segments, and then describes them in more detail. Relevant differences between the segments are also identified throughout the rest of the report.

4.1 Segmentation overview

This segmentation reflects a snapshot in time. It is a segmentation of individuals within organisations, and as such is highly revealing of the interplay between personal and organisational factors. This interplay means that the segments will not be static. For instance, if a manager shifted organisations and lost flexibility and resources with respect to employment, they might shift in their stated ability to accommodate people with health condition or with disability.

Hence, we are suggesting that the best way to think about the segmentation is as a continuum of Australian employers, from low capacity and capability to support or accommodate those with serious health condition or disability to those organisations that are leading the way and creating positive change for their employees. This employer segmentation should then be best understood as a 'stages of change' model that indicates a path to greater engagement, from starting out as 'Not A Priority' to becoming a 'Flexible Leader'.

The six segments have been named to provide an easy way to understand and remember the differences between them. From most open to the idea of supporting people with serious health conditions or disability, to least, they are:

Flexibility Leaders (17%, 4% weighted) – Employers who practice strategic flexibility in structuring the workplace and roles – for all workers, not just people with health conditions and disability, they see and accommodate the whole person in their hiring and management decisions.

Stumble Before Run (27%, 18% weighted) – Employers who are passive when it comes to recruiting and supporting people with disability and health conditions, despite having suitable roles (for some this is driven previous poor experience).

Building Momentum (19%, 8% weighted) – Employers are open to supporting people with health conditions and disability – but rigid (expect employees to fit into company, with the economic bottom line as a key KPI guiding action).

Starting The Path (10%, 12% weighted) – Employers who have an individual interest in supporting people with health conditions and disability but are stymied by resourcing/process issues and – for some – lack of leadership buy in.

Curious And Looking For Direction (13%, 17% weighted) – Employers who have little insight into or interest in pursuing organisational supports available to them with respect to supporting people with health conditions and disability.

Not A Priority (14%, 41% weighted) – Employers who struggle to see how supporting people with disability and health conditions should be their focus.

Figure 4-1 shows how the segments relate to each other in terms of being open to the idea of employing a person with disability and how they rate the supportiveness of their culture. **Flexibility Leaders** and **Stumble Before Run** have extremely supportive cultures, but the **Stumble Before Run** segment are less open to employing people with disability – the data and interviews showed that this stems from difficulties the organisation has experienced in the past in integrating people with disability. At the other end, the **Not A Priority** segment have an unsupportive culture and are virtually closed off to the idea of employing people with disability.

Figure 4-1: Segment quadrant: Openness vs Supportive culture
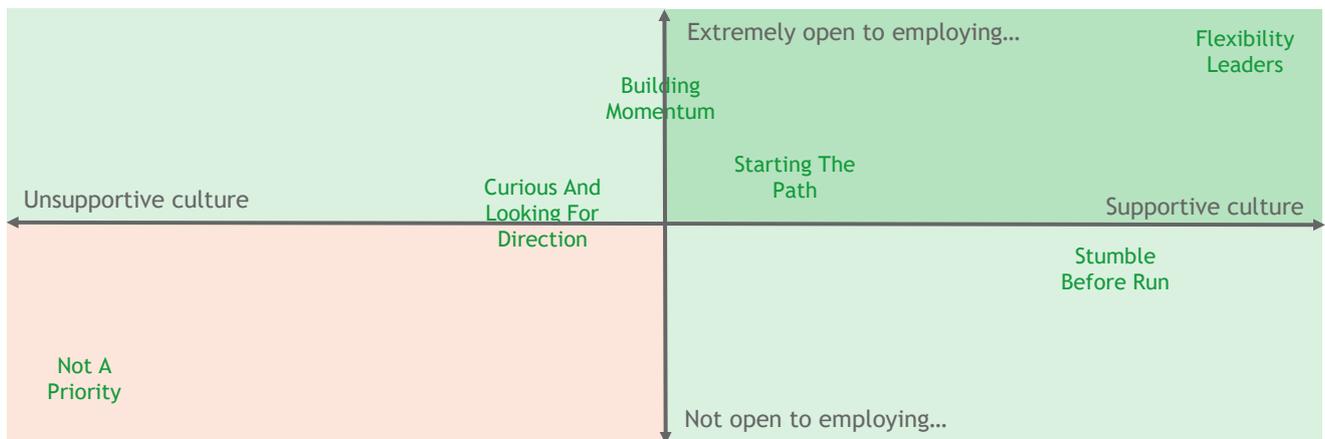
Similarly, Figure 4-2, below shows how the segments relate in terms of their perceived capacity to integrate and accommodate the special needs of people with serious health conditions or disability. Note the difference in the relative position of the **Building Momentum** segment, where they rank lower in terms of having a supportive culture, they rank higher in terms of their perceived capacity to accommodate.

Figure 4-2: Segment quadrant: Openness vs Capacity
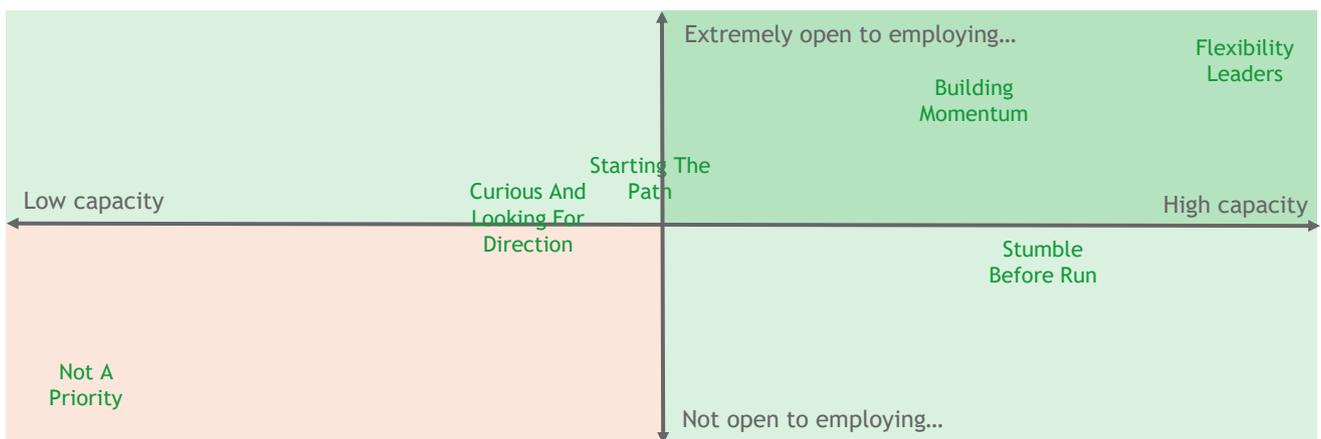
The segments also differentiated on the attitudinal and behavioural dimensions explored in more detail in section 5 below. **Flexibility Leaders** and **Stumble Before Run** are more flexible and adaptive, have stronger policies and procedures, seek to optimise the risk in new hiring decisions, are opportunistic when it comes to acquiring and developing talent, tend to see the whole person and manage quality of work-life for the benefit of their whole workforce.

4.2   Flexibility Leaders

Demographically, the segment skews:

Large
82% have more than 200 employees / 35% of businesses are ASX listed; 41% employed by a company that earns more than $50,000,000 a year.

Public
61% / significantly more likely to be employed in Federal Government departments or agencies (34%).

Established and stable.
85% are more than 10 years old / significantly lower proportion of their workforce as casual employees (14%).

Growing.
A quarter (26%) of this segment said they were rapidly growing, compared to only 9% of all survey participants.

Investment-oriented
Significantly more likely to go beyond compliance to invest (84%).

Experience and openness to supporting people with health conditions or disability

Openness
Low ———●——— High
(73%)

Experience – last 2 years
Low ————●—— High
(88%)

Suitable roles
Low —————● High
(100%)

Capacity*
Low ————●— High
(92%)

Organisation is supportive*
Low ————●— High
(96%)

Formal policies
Low ————●— High
(88%)

*(Top 2 box %)
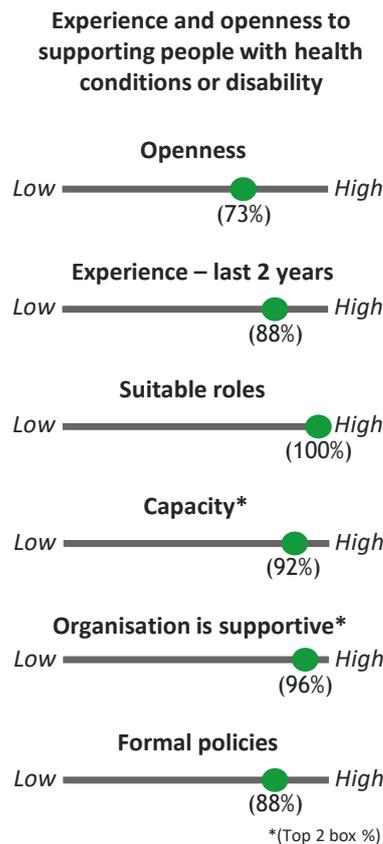
Key insights

Flexibility Leaders view the workforce through the lens of possibilities and solutions. Employees are viewed as individuals who each bring a unique perspective and skillset– they recognise that every individual brings their own set of challenges and idiosyncrasies. For **Flexibility Leaders**, individuals with physical or psychological disability merely present a different set of circumstances to consider. In fact, they note that someone with the 'wrong' attitude can be far more detrimental than someone with a physical or mental health issue.

"We look at the whole person, warts and all. We've had some shockers, you know, bad attitude, causing issues with other employees, and then we've had some people with disability who are some of our best" Large public sector organisation

A defining quality of **Flexibility Leaders** is that they do not differentiate between those with or without a disability. Instead, they take a 'whole of workforce' mindset based on a genuine appreciation for diversity and individuality and a *strengths* rather than a *deficit* approach to personnel management.

"We employed this one guy with high level anxiety, initially in a customer facing role, but that wasn't working for him and he wanted to shift to the warehouse. Now we've found he's the most diligent packer we have, he checks and double checks everything and makes no mistakes – his efficiency is off the charts" Large private sector business

A flexible approach to structuring and managing the workplace – described further below in section 5 – underpins and enables this approach. This included incorporating different ways of working as well as breaking down silos (e.g. traditional roles/departments) to enable more flexible ways of working.

Having said this, in our sample, a shift towards flexibility was often driven by highly practical considerations (e.g. ensuring a healthy and engaged workforce so that sick leave didn't represent a liability on the books).

WHERE TO

Drivers of willingness

Flexibility Leaders fundamentally believe that disability does not have to mean detriment, but can inspire new thinking and solutions. Their willingness to invest in workforce participation is driven by:

- complete engagement by senior management

- a desire to lead by example in terms of employee best practice

- willingness of employees to accommodate and adapt to unique needs of colleagues

- improved retention and engagement of staff who feel more secure in their employment

- enhanced team spirit that flows through to all work behaviours – so staff are more willing to help each other out during pressure periods

- creating an environment that supports early intervention mindset and behaviours by staff – allowing the organisation to provide support before they exacerbate

- increased desire to return to work, and maintaining workplace engagement amongst staff

- tapping into the potential of the 'whole individual' beyond the initial job role

- opening the organisation to a broader pool of talent.

Barriers

Even **Flexibility Leaders** can experience constraint and recognise there is always room for improvement. Barriers for further activity are largely considered out of their control:

- some positions do not allow much flexibility e.g. boiler makers need particular physical abilities

- limited financial means to invest in workplace reconfiguration e.g. the cost of making a manufacturing environment wheelchair friendly is prohibitive for a small business.

Their capacity to influence change

Flexibility Leaders can provide practical examples of success and help other organisations understand the attitudinal and behavioural steps to build workplace participation.

What they would need to build capacity

As one larger organisation stated, the next step is to look at career paths. Whilst the business has been successful in facilitating workplace participation for various roles, the next step is to look to broader careers. Typical of **Flexibility Leaders**, this 'next step' is viewed from a whole of workforce perspective in which those with disability are simply one aspect and assumed to be part of this evolution.

4.3   Stumble Before Run

Demographically, the segment skews:

Large	55% have more than 200 employees / 1 in 6 employers from businesses are ASX listed; and 22% of employers from businesses are from a company that earns more than $50,000 a year
Private	55%
Sectors	State Government departments or agencies (58%) compared to other segments. The organisations are more likely to be in education and training (17%), and electricity, gas, water and waste (2%) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (3%) compared to all businesses.
Established and stable.	62% are more than 20 years old / significantly lower proportion of their workforce as casual employees (14%)
Compliance-oriented	8% aim to just comply with WHS and Fair Work law.

Experience and openness to supporting people with health conditions or disability

Openness
Low ——————●—————— High
(56%)

Experience – last 2 years
Low ——●———————— High
(30%)

Suitable roles
Low ————————●——— High
(83%)

Capacity*
Low ——————●—————— High
(53%)

Organisation is supportive*
Low ———————●————— High
(65%)

Formal policies
Low ——————●—————— High
(54%)

*(Top 2 box %)
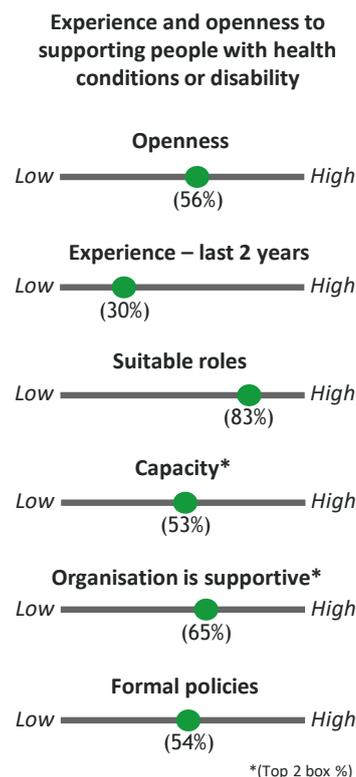
Key insights

Both the qualitative and quantitative research showed that **Stumble Before Run** have been – as their name indicates – challenged by their experience in hiring and managing people with disability and serious health conditions. They are more likely to have experience over 2 years ago than within the last 2 years, suggesting that their previous experiences have reduced their appetite for ongoing work in the area.

The **Stumble Before Run** segment told us their experiences were not always positive. Some shared success stories of people with a disability that they worked with, or hired, who were competent, hardworking and loyal. However, others recounted experiences that ended badly and left them feeling apprehensive about hiring people with a known disability or health condition.

"We hired a person with a heart condition who we really liked, but she was absent a lot. From a manager's point of view, it's very difficult. If she had a presentation or a deadline, and called in sick it put a lot of pressure on the rest of the team. Eventually we had to let her go. We didn't renew her contract." Large scientific research organisation

Perhaps as a result of this experience, **Stumble Before Run** appear well-intentioned but passive with respect to recruitment and retention of people with mental or physical health conditions and disabilities.

Those working in larger white-collar oriented companies told us they assume their company is open to the idea of employing people with physical or mental health conditions or disabilities, or they have vaguely heard something to the effect that this is company policy.

Having said this, over the course of conversations with **Stumble Before Run** they tend to 'remember' more people with disability and mental health conditions being successfully employed despite their more top of mind qualms about safety. Those we spoke with had knowingly recruited people with anxiety or depression, and they noted that an understanding approach to mental ill health is becoming more normalised in the workplace.

WHERE ►TO

But then they fail to imagine why there is a gap between population cohort of people with mental or physical health conditions and disabilities and their own organisations. They also aren't quite sure how they would accommodate this cohort if they were to come into purview.

> *"We don't see a lot of people with a disability, at least not a visible disability, applying for work with us. I'm not sure we'd be able to offer them work either, at least not on the construction site, but that really depends on the disability. We do have one guy who's been with us for about four years. He has some back problem. He can't lift anything or do manual labour, but he can drive a forklift no problem and that's what he does. So, his disability doesn't affect his work and it's not a drama at all."* Construction company

In addition to this failure of the imagination, the other challenge faced by this segment is physical. Those in mining, manufacturing and construction cite safety risks, stressful work environments that will potentially exacerbate mental health conditions (e.g. FIFO) and lack of accommodation for those with less mobility as reasons for not considering employing people with physical or mental health conditions or disabilities.

Drivers of willingness

The **Stumble Before Run's** drivers of willingness are:

- working in larger companies with a variety of suitable jobs for people with different cognitive abilities
- a general passive goodwill, i.e. if there aren't immediate safety issues and there is a good variety of work available, they see no good reason not to employ people with physical and mental health conditions and disabilities
- a sense that management believes in and encourages this.

Barriers

- physical incapability — rough or extreme worksites, no lifts, lack of adaptive technology, etc
- issues with scale, where they've been able to manage as a smaller organisation, as the organisation grew, the management problem became more time and energy consuming
- siloed hiring approaches – different departments doing different things
- no reporting on progress on the areas that cuts across the organisation
- fear of the unknown — they acknowledged that recruitment is a bigger hurdle than retention, and that a key barrier is other staff feeling uncomfortable because they "don't know how to act" or don't know how to accommodate mental ill health or disability (physical ill health and 'normalised' mental illness such as depression is less of an issue)
- have experience at the organisational but not necessarily the individual level. they are typically very distant from the topic
- tend to see the disability rather than the person
- tend to feel, and have experience of the burden of accommodating special needs, and where they do not feel fully supported, this can mean they shy away from the additional work required
- HR/filtering systems that leave managers with little control of the broader pool of people that they recruit
- trapped in reactive modes, can have high staff turnover, which means HR managers' focus is elsewhere.

Their capacity to influence change

They don't necessarily have the interests or skills to drive change. The sense from the interviews is that the organisation has good approaches, fairly good culture, but that they have come up against difficulties that they don't have the imagination, or personal resources to manage. Although company policies may be in place and the company may be generally supportive of the idea of hiring people with disability, they have found these issues difficult to deal with. They can be isolated – in remote areas or merely just from better solutions.

What would they need to build capacity?

When asked, **Stumble Before Run** were able to explain what would help them overcome barriers to recruitment of people with physical or mental ill health or disability. They cited:

- stronger organisational change and leadership — turn the vague assumptions that this is expected by management into clear directions and targets

- systems change — so that the 'filters' don't exclude people with physical and mental health conditions and disabilities

- coaching — e.g. independent advice on what technology is needed to accommodate someone who legally blind and perhaps more importantly, how that technology takes away perceived barriers

- modelling — showing how other organisations have successfully achieved change and managed difficult situations arising from hiring people with disability

- for some, resourcing

- demonstrate benefits to retention (a key issue for many of these companies), or linking efforts already made for retention to recruitment

- making the invisible visible — demonstrating how these organisations already are employing people with mental and physical ill health and disabilities.

4.4   Building Momentum

Large	62% have more than 200 employees / 17% employers from businesses are ASX listed; and 52% of employers from businesses are from a company that earns more than $50,000 a year.
Public	55%
Sectors	Frontline service or agency (31%) compared to other segments. The organisations are more likely to be in education and training (19%) and health care and social assistance (18%) compared to other segments.
Established and stable??	70% are more than 20 years old / lower proportion of their workforce as casual employees (17%).
Compliance-oriented	41% aim to just comply with WHS and Fair Work law.

Openness
Low ——————●—————— High
(53%)

Experience – last 2 years
Low ——●——————————— High
(21%)

Suitable roles
Low ————————●——— High
(73%)

Capacity*
Low —————●————— High
(57%)

Organisation is supportive*
Low ————●—————— High
(50%)

Formal policies
Low ——●——————————— High
(19%)

*(Top 2 box %)
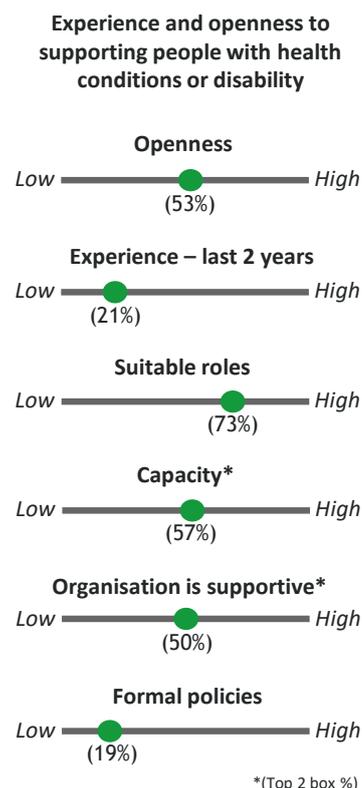
Key insights

Many spoke of their need to fill very specialised roles and the difficulty they have finding and keeping people with the skills and experience they need. This could be both a motivation and barrier to employing people with disability. The **Building Momentum** segment understands the value of providing flexible working arrangements in attracting and retaining good staff and are willing to consider making provisions (such as modifying a work space, negotiating working arrangements or providing additional training) to win over an impressive candidate. However, to do so, they also need to be convinced that their investment in an individual employee will 'pay off' in the long run.

"The candidate has to have the right experience and be willing to take on a challenge. The requirements are the same, whether they have a disability or not."

They admit to being hesitant about employing someone with a condition that could deteriorate over time, and were especially reluctant to hire someone if they knew they had a psychological disability because they felt mental health issues were unpredictable and often loosely defined.

In situations where health issues have emerged for existing and valued employees, they report being keen at first to provide support. However, their enthusiasm can wane rather quickly if it seems the condition could impact on an employee's performance long term. Their openness and willingness to support people with disability or health conditions over the long haul tends to be conditional upon their ongoing productivity and ability to keep doing the work without the organisation having to bend over backwards to accommodate them.

The quantitative data shows that while they are quite open to the idea of employing people with disability or serious health condition, they have a lot of uncertainty – they are unsure whether their organisation has policies, and they are far less likely to have direct experience in employing people with disability.

Drivers of willingness

For the **Building Momentum** segment, the key drivers of willingness were:

- an understanding that having a disability doesn't define people or necessarily limit their ability to do certain jobs well

- some difficulty filling positions, which has increased both their willingness to look outside the box to find and keep the right people

- having a range of positions available (for example, a construction company that needs both office-based staff to provide administrative and technical support as well as people for manual labour jobs).

Barriers to capacity

The barriers for the **Building Momentum** segment included:

- limited ability to change or adapt the environment or work process to suit individual employees

- environmental constraints, such as not having lifts or wheelchair accessible bathrooms which limit their capacity to accommodate people in a wheelchair

- increasing pressure on both teams and individuals to meet performance measures and targets

- concerns that people with pre-existing injuries, or those who are injured on the job, could become a liability

- lack of support from senior management

- limited budgets and/or ability to make modifications to the office or invest in adaptive technologies to support staff.

What is their capacity to influence change?

To employers in the **Building Momentum** segment, 'capacity' is often interpreted quite narrowly as their organisation's ability to adapt the workplace to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities – such as install a ramp or build a wheelchair accessible bathroom. Some felt they had limited control over this – for example, we spoke to a representative from a consulting firm that was situated on the second floor of a leased building that has no lift. Whilst they have no objection in theory to employing people with disability, they struggled to see how they would be able to accommodate a person in a wheelchair.

There was no mention of their organisation's capacity to adapt *the way* they work to accommodate employees with disability – for example, by setting up an employee to work remotely from home, or to create shorter shifts or flexible job share arrangements. It's not that they couldn't make changes to the way they work, but rather it hadn't even occurred to them do so.

The **Building Momentum** segment is comprised mainly of organisations that are large enough to have an HR team, formal policies and clearly established processes in place that, in theory, support equal opportunities for people with disabilities. However, these are not always well understood or reflective of the broader organisational culture. They report that pressures to cut costs and increase productivity tend to have far more influence on recruitment and retention strategies than policies written and disseminated by HR.

What would they need to build capacity?

This segment was quite interested in hearing case studies from similar organisations (preferably of the same size and from the same industry) that have successfully employed people with disability. However, government subsidies or financial incentives for organisations to support people with disabilities may be needed to motivate these organisations to consider ways they could increase their capacity (e.g. act in a way that doesn't impact on their bottom line).

4.5   Starting the Path

Demographically, the segment skews:

Small	62% have less than 200 employees
Private	67%
Sectors	The organisations are more likely to be in professional, scientific and technical services (13%) and health care and social assistance (12%).
Established and stable	76% are more than 10 years old / 90% growing or stable
Investment-oriented	Significantly more likely to go beyond compliance to invest (69%).

Experience and openness to supporting people with health conditions or disability

Openness
Low ——●—— High
(57%)

Experience – last 2 years
Low ●—————— High
(0%)

Suitable roles
Low ——————●— High
(75%)

Capacity*
Low ———●———— High
(56%)

Organisation is supportive*
Low ——————●— High
(73%)

Formal policies
Low ——————●— High
(65%)
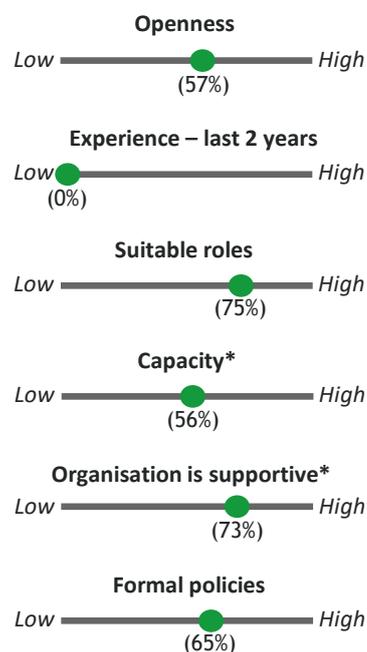
*(Top 2 box %)

Key insights

The most important characteristic of **Starting The Path** is that their personal approach to recruiting and retaining people with physical and mental health conditions is at odds with their organisation's approach. They believe that recruiting and retaining people with physical or mental health conditions is the right thing to do, and that barriers to doing so (if there are any) can and should be overcome.

Typically, **Starting The Path** have put thought into where they work. Values — the type of work they do, the colleagues they work with — are important to them. Having said this, they describe watching with discomfort as their organisation doesn't do the right thing. Examples given in this study by **Starting The Path** of what they saw as poor behaviour by their organisations included:

- offering people with mental health conditions jobs/positions far below their abilities

- debating whether or not the organisation was able to adapt to the needs of a person with physical disabilities (when they were otherwise the best person for the job)

- not being open to employing people with mental health conditions because of a fear that this might impact on client experience

- reluctance to employ people with physical disability (due to fear of the unknown)

- paying lip service to flexibility and then expecting workloads that mightn't align with mental health needs

- recruiting people with physical and mental health conditions for the government subsidies and then only keeping them for the amount of time needed to achieve those subsidies.

Whilst some are employed by organisations that are entirely or mainly driven by profit, others work for organisations that are values-driven or community minded. This suggests that organisational purpose is not a sufficient driver of capacity with respect to the employment of people with physical or mental health conditions or with disability. **Starting The Path** also appear to be very alert to the way in which their organisations or industries acted as a driver for poor mental health, as well as discrimination against diverse cohorts more

generally. For example, one interviewee noted that intolerance of diversity more generally is a signal to people with disability or mental health conditions that anyone who exists outside a narrow norm won't be tolerated or catered to.

Drivers of willingness

In our qualitative sample, there was no typified pathway for how **Starting The Path** came to believe what they did. Having said this, a unifying factor was substantial indirect or direct experience of people with physical or mental health conditions or disabilities <u>outside</u> of the workplace:

- self or family members having a health condition or disability

- volunteering for organisations that support people with disability or mental health conditions.

- family members working in the social sector

- working in an industry that is linked with, or known to cause issues with mental ill health (FIFO, the law).

In addition, this more progressive outlook is perhaps associated with higher education (quantitatively, the segment skews towards professional services).

Barriers to capacity

While **Starting The Path** are interested and alert to the idea of change, they acknowledge that their organisations are resistant to change. They are also less alert to their own biases. Key barriers cited and demonstrated by **Starting The Path** included:

- no suitable jobs — finding it hard to match existing workflow/job descriptions to the overall category 'physical and mental health conditions and disability'

- physical incapability — no lifts, lack of adaptive technology, etc

- chivalrous protectionism — those working in stressful industries could say that they didn't want to employ people with mood disorders in case the working conditions exacerbated their condition, and hence impacted on their ability to do the job well

- extremism — people tended to automatically think of the most extreme example of mental or physical ill health or disability, and cite that as a reason why they couldn't or wouldn't employ people with physical or mental ill health or disability

- fear of the unknown — they acknowledged that recruitment is a bigger hurdle than retention, and that a key barrier is other staff feeling uncomfortable because they "don't know how to act" or don't know how to accommodate mental ill health or disability (in this respect they are similar to **Stumble Before Run**)

- lack of resourcing to adapt

- lack of leadership / poor leadership — all acknowledge that culture is set from the top and that wholescale change couldn't happen in a leadership vacuum

- vicious circle – the view that it's easier to adapt if know the person has a mental illness, but that this is hard to disclose in job interviews.

What is their capacity to influence change?

For the most part, **Starting The Path** didn't feel as if they had capacity to influence overall organisational direction or policy. This analysis suggests that a well-meaning person inside a less progressive organisation (outside of upper management/the C-Suite) has, or feels that they have, little capacity to influence how the

organisation operates. Even more than organisational culture they cited resourcing as the biggest barrier to change. This makes sense given that the sample skews small and private 87% of people in the segment work for private organisations, 64% of the segment employ 1-19 people). While **Starting The Path** typically say that they work in an investment culture, their policies tend to be informal, and the 'investment' tends to come in the form of ad hoc efforts by staff to support each other, or a 'family' approach to work.

Those in higher positions, or smaller organisations, felt that they were able to influence individual hires, however didn't necessarily feel as if they had the tools in their arsenal to effect that change. Others had 'voted with their feet'. They had left organisations — with some even starting their own businesses, to be able to better accommodate their values.

What would they need to build capacity?

We asked **Starting The Path** how they would overcome barriers to recruitment of people with physical or mental ill health or disability. They cited:

- coaching — e.g. independent advice on what technology is needed to accommodate someone who legally blind and perhaps more importantly, how that technology takes away perceived barriers

- ready access to financial support to accommodate an employee (without bureaucratic red tape)

- broader cultural change (community attitudes) / also competition to 'be that sort of company'.

Interviewees emphasised the need for this capacity building to be easy – any government supports would have to be well-targeted and promoted, and involve minimal red tape.

4.6 Curious and Looking for Direction

Demographically, the segment skews:

Private.	71%

Sectors	They are significantly more likely to be in retail trade (9%) and manufacturing (7%).

Established and stable.	79% are more than 10 years old / 86% growing or stable

Compliance-oriented	54% aim to just comply with WHS and Fair Work law

Experience and openness to supporting people with health conditions or disability

Openness
Low ———●——— High
(22%)

Experience – last 2 years
Low ●——————— High
(0%)

Suitable roles
Low ————●———— High
(48%)

Capacity*
Low ——●—————— High
(22%)

Organisation is supportive*
Low ———●————— High
(32%)

Formal policies
Low ————●———— High
(43%)

*(Top 2 box %)
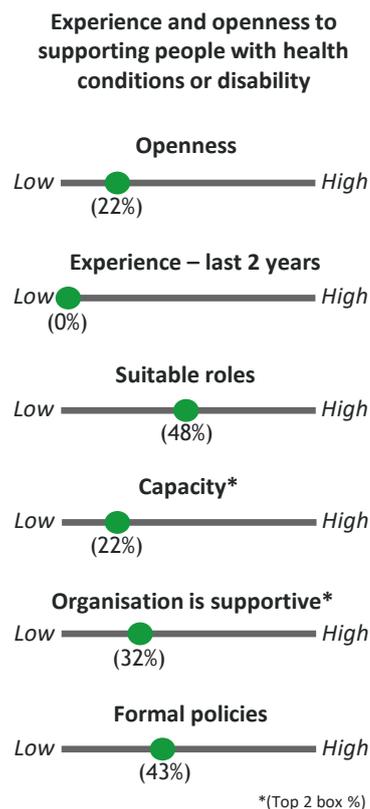
Key insights

Those in the **Curious And Looking For Direction** segment we spoke with as part of the qualitative phase represented a range of different industries from construction/demolition to large scale medical practices. However, they were united in their lack of knowledge about their organisational policies and procedures with respect to hiring people with disability.

All had imagined reasons why people with disability would not be appropriate at their work: dealing with sometimes angry customers waiting at a medical clinic could upset someone with mental illness, someone with anxiety could be triggered in a high stress heavy haulage business, and people with physical disability could be a poor look for those in a building concierge environment, or in a customer facing role.

"Mental health is a difficult thing to manage in a company of our size, we've got no dedicated HR department, no one who can really manage these issues"

However, although not immediately top-of-mind for any in our sample, as the conversations evolved most were often able to remember or identify one or two people with disability in their organisation. The disability had become invisible over time, they had begun to see the person and not what they had to go through to be an effective contributor. The medical practice had hired a person with a truncated limb who turned out to be an IT whiz and had gone onto a training role at head office. The heavy haulage contractor had someone on a methadone program – they couldn't let him near some mine sites where he might be tested, but otherwise it caused no issue. The concierge service did have an intern on rotation with Down's Syndrome, but she was only allocated 'menial' tasks like fetching drinking water for meetings. In each of these cases, management had taken a 'suck it and see' approach, given the person a go, and placed them under careful watch – they had received direct management attention, usually from the owner.

The **Curious And Looking For Direction** were significantly more likely to say they 'didn't know' of any potential benefits from employing people with disability, but were significantly more likely to suggest the person could injure themselves or cause injury to other staff members.

WHERE ▸ TO

The absence of policies – or at the very least, the lack of knowledge about any policies with respect to recruitment and retention of people with disability or serious illness, is a defining characteristic of the **Curious And Looking For Direction**. Very few in this segment have any recent experience and they are significantly more likely to be 'not open' to the idea; nearly half of this segment say their organisation has low capacity to support or accommodate people with these conditions, and only a tiny proportion (5%) believe their company has a supportive culture

Drivers of willingness

Across the sample, **Curious And Looking For Direction** were not strongly opposed to hiring people with disability, but they felt they had little control over the situation. Often, they were middle level managers who would be sent potential recruits from head office, where they had been pre-screened. Thus, they often felt it was not really their problem – they hadn't been put in a situation where they had to decide to hire a person with disability.

However, it was clear across our sample that when forced to think deeply about the issue, they all knew of at least one person with a serious condition in their broader company. This suggests that merely making them more aware of the range of disability and illness that their organisation currently manages may help them lower any barriers to future hiring decisions.

Barriers to capacity

The **Curious And Looking For Direction** segment don't have any real drive to change, so in one key sense their key barrier to developing deeper capacity is caring about the issue more deeply and getting it on their radar. While they may not be strongly opposed to the idea of hiring people with disability, they are not likely to be thinking about it. However, when pressed, some of the issues they identified included:

- 'red tape' hurdles with worksite compliance make it difficult for some to find ways to integrate people with different abilities

- risk management, both the risk associated with making a poor hiring decision and having to re-hire months later, and the potential risks from having someone with a disability or serious health condition injure themselves or others because of their disability

- no suitable jobs — finding it hard to match existing workflow/job descriptions to the overall category 'physical and mental health conditions and disability'(similar to other segments)

- physical incapability — no lifts, lack of adaptive technology etc.

- extremism — people tended to automatically think of the most extreme example of mental or physical ill health or disability, and cite that as a reason why they couldn't or wouldn't employ people with physical or mental ill health or disability

- fear of the unknown — they acknowledged that recruitment is a bigger hurdle than retention, and that a key barrier is other staff feeling uncomfortable because they "don't know how to act" or don't know how to accommodate mental ill health or disability - they are unsure what effect hiring a person with disability may have on their existing staff

- lack of leadership / poor leadership — all acknowledge that culture is set from the top and that wholescale change couldn't happen in a leadership vacuum

- vicious circle – the view that it's easier to adapt if know the person has a mental illness, but that this is hard to disclose in job interviews.

What is their capacity to influence change?

Similar to **Starting The Path**, those in the **Curious And Looking For Direction** segment didn't feel as if they did have capacity to influence overall organisational direction or policy. However, different from the **Starting The Path**, the **Curious And Looking For Direction** have little desire to find out more or make any changes. They are not likely to be calling it out if they see someone doing the wrong thing.

This highlights the importance of upper management and owners taking the lead and ensuring everyone in the organisation knows that disability is no barrier to employment. Our sense is for many organisations this would be a significant cultural shift, however, there are potential levers to engage management in this conversation:

- significant staff shortages and the need to broaden a recruitment pool
- poor retention as an ongoing issue
- a desire to be a competitive and aspirational employer in one's industry.

4.7   Not A Priority

Demographically, the segment skews:

Private	92%
Small	74% have 1-19 employees
Sectors	Construction (8%), wholesale trade (7%) retail trade (10%), accommodation and food services (4%) rental, real-estate and hiring services (3%), professional scientific and technical services (16%) and arts and recreation services (4%) compared to all businesses.
Stable or shrinking	10% of the organisations in this segment are shrinking.
Compliance-oriented	49% aim to just comply with WHS and Fair Work law.

Experience and openness to supporting people with health conditions or disability

Openness
Low ———————— High
(29%)

Experience – last 2 years
Low ———————— High
(6%)

Suitable roles
Low ———————— High
(46%)

Capacity*
Low ———————— High
(19%)

Organisation is supportive*
Low ———————— High
(34%)

Formal policies
Low ———————— High
(0%)

*(Top 2 box %)
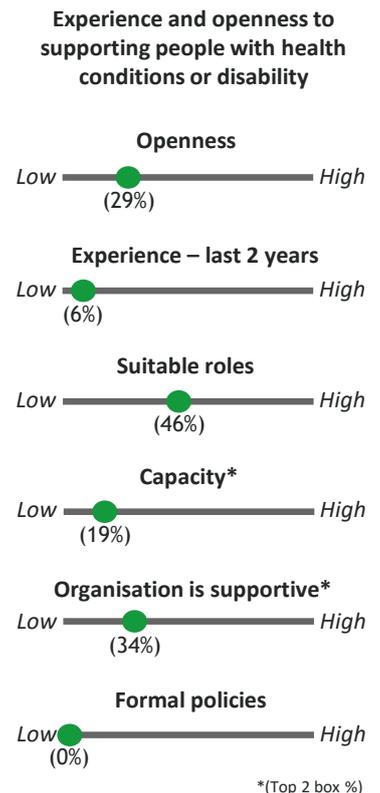
Key insights

The **Not A Priority** were not open at all to the idea of employing people with permanent disability or health conditions. There were all sorts of reasons for this, for example:

- A manager from an IT start-up felt that the chaotic and stressful environment contributes to both physical and mental health problems amongst staff. He described a culture where individuals have to fend for themselves, there is no structure or support for staff, and only the fittest survive. He felt that people with disability or pre-existing health conditions would struggle in that environment.

- An HR director from a demolition and construction firm described his organisation as having a tight knit and supportive culture with solid return to work to policies for staff who are injured at work. Despite this, she wouldn't knowingly employ anyone with a disability because she felt they posed a risk to themselves and to others. The business operates in a dangerous environment, where people need to be capable and be able to fully understand and follow instructions. Mistakes are not only costly for the company, they could cost people's lives.

- A representative of a volunteer organisation described the management culture as conservative, racist, sexist, and highly judgemental of people who they saw as different or vulnerable in some way. She felt there was no way that anyone with a disability would be tolerated, even though the organisation had a number of roles that might be suitable for people with diverse abilities and had wheelchair accessible facilities on site.

- A team leader in a small sales company described her organisation as having a relaxed and family friendly culture, but was very wary of hiring people who may require additional support, supervision or time to complete their job. Part of the issue here was a lack of confidence in how to support them, as well as to manage issues if their performance was not up to scratch.

"I guess because we do run tightly, there is a lot expected of each role, and I'm not certain that there would be that level of I guess patience that you would probably or may need for someone that may take a little bit longer when it's a psychological or a mental impairment, even a physical impairment…. it's difficult if you're not aware because you are shooting blind, you know, they're taking time, or they need to go home or they're having extended breaks and then you kind of go, is this a performance management issue or is there something else going on?"

The defining feature of this segment is a distinct lack of experience, and an absolute absence of any formal or informal policies with respect to recruitment, return to work or retention of employees experiencing serious health conditions or disability. They tend to have unsupportive cultures, and either no or low perceived capacity to support or accommodate people with special needs.

Interestingly, further questioning revealed that some of the **Not A Priority** organisations already employed people with long term health conditions or disabilities (for example, the construction company described above had a member of staff who is dyslexic, whilst the sales firm employs a staff member with an anxiety disorder). However, they didn't seem to think of these as disabilities per se – perhaps because these conditions weren't visible or obvious to them, and didn't significantly impact on their ability to do their job. It also seemed they were also unaware of the person's condition when they applied for the job (and if they had been, chances are that the person wouldn't have been hired.)

"I have hired in the past someone that suffered from anxiety, but I didn't, I wasn't aware of that upon the hiring process, that was made clear to me afterwards."

The **Not A Priority** were significantly less likely to see any benefits from hiring a person with disability, and significantly more likely to see danger and risk. They have a compliance focus, and less likely to go beyond the legislated requirements: two-thirds have never made any modifications to tasks or processes to accommodate people and very few provide employee programs or activities designed to improve their physical or psychological health and safety.

Drivers of willingness

The **Not A Priority** felt that people were reluctant to hire anyone if they knew that they had a permanent health condition or disability, especially if they required additional support or any modification of their existing environment, equipment or processes.

Barriers to capacity

The **Not A Priority** offered many excuses for why they couldn't, or didn't want to employ people with disabilities or ongoing health conditions:

- a hazardous work environment that demands all staff to be able bodied and 'on the ball' at all times
- a belief that people with disability or health conditions posed a risk
- lack of interest and/or support from management
- lack of flexibility/ budget to supply or modify equipment that may be required to ensure that a person with disability is safe and does their job well
- a focus on 'bare minimum' compliance with occupational health and safety regularly rather than a proactive interest in encouraging the health and wellbeing of their staff
- a belief they were too small or lacked various roles that suit people with diverse skills and abilities
- lack of confidence in how to support and manage people who do not 'fit the mould'

- concerns that people with pre-existing injuries, or those who are injured on the job, could become a costly liability

- pressure to cut staffing costs.

What is their capacity to influence change?

The **Not A Priority** have limited capacity to influence change, and even less motivation to do so.

What would they need to build capacity?

A dramatic change to their organisation's structure and culture would be needed to increase capacity to employ people with disability.

Diversity training and government subsidies may help to change their attitudes and encourage them to think differently and creatively about how they could employ people with disability, but is unlikely to overcome the many barriers and excuses in place.

In the short term, supply-side measures (e.g. that help seamlessly integrate people with disability and health conditions) into the **Not A Priority** workforce would be needed.

5. Organisational context

5.1 Summary

Four key predictive organisational factors were identified through the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data as being positive correlated with future willingness to recruit, and retention and return to work for people with disability and with a health condition. They are:

- recent, previous experience employing a person with a health condition or disability

- a positive psychosocial work environment

- an investment approach to personnel wellbeing (e.g. going beyond compliance with workplace health and safety legislation), and

- strategic flexibility in structuring work.

This suggests that organisations that take a holistic approach to their employees' interests and wellbeing are part a virtuous circle that includes greater opportunity for people experiencing health conditions or disability. This posits a role for communications and interventions aimed at encouraging a broader approach to work health that incorporates a total worker health perspective.

5.2 The role of experience

A key observation from the quantitative data is that employers with previous recent experience in employing a person with a health condition or with disability show a greater openness to the possibility of hiring someone with disability or permanent physical health condition. This suggests a positive experience, highlighting the benefits that can come from having a more diverse workplace.

Figure 5-1: Openness to recruiting someone experiencing permanent condition or disability, by recent experience
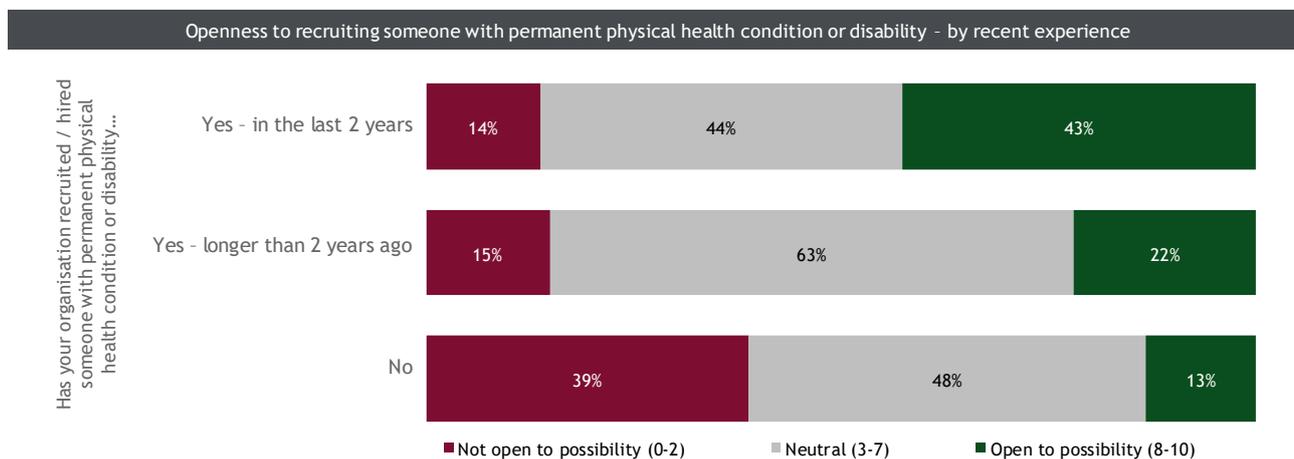
Source: B4 To the best of your knowledge, has your organisation recruited or hired someone who may be experiencing a permanent health condition or disability? B8 How open are you to the possibility of hiring someone who may be experiencing a permanent physical health condition or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Figure 5-1 illustrates open-ness to hiring a person with a permanent physical condition or disability – we note that this open-ness increases for a temporary physical condition or disability (employed in the last 2 years 57% open; employed longer than 2 years ago 34% open and never employed 27% open) and a temporary psychological health condition disability (employed in the last 2 years 56% open; employed longer than 2 years ago 30% open and never employed 21% open) and decreases for a permanent psychological health condition or disability

5.3　Psychosocial work environment

As individual employees, employers were asked about their satisfaction with a range of workplace health statements which set a 'high bar' for organisation behaviour. Satisfaction was moderate, with around half or less of participants agreeing that:

- senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance (52%)

- senior management acts quickly to correct problems that affect employees' psychological health (50%)

- psychological wellbeing is a priority in the organisation (47%)

- participants were least likely to agree (34%) that employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological health and safety matters (19% disagreed).

Figure 5-2: Employee satisfaction

To what extent do you agree with the following in relation to your own workplace...	Strongly disagree (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Strongly agree (8-10)	Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance	8%	40%	52%	53%	**39%**	46%	51%	**32%**	**43%**
In my workplace, senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' psychological health	12%	39%	50%	51%	**41%**	**40%**	47%	**31%**	**32%**
Psychological wellbeing of staff is a priority for my organisation	11%	42%	47%	47%	40%	45%	53%	**34%**	40%
There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect my employees	14%	47%	39%	39%	34%	35%	40%	**22%**	32%
Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety concerns in the organisation are listened to	12%	51%	38%	38%	31%	37%	40%	28%	**30%**
Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological health and safety matters	19%	48%	34%	33%	36%	**43%**	37%	28%	37%

■ Strongly disagree (0-2)　■ Neutral (3-7)　■ Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

Source:　E4. To what extent do you agree with the following in relation to your own workplace?
Base:　All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Unsurprisingly, **Flexibility Leaders** and **Starting The Path** were more likely to strongly agree with each of these psychosocial health inventory items, highlighting the fact that they have much more mentally healthy workplaces., and four times as likely to be open to hiring someone with a permanent psychological condition or disability.

Figure 5-3 shows that organisations with the most positive psychosocial work environments[4] – those scoring in the top quartile of the psychosocial work environment scale – are roughly twice as likely to be extremely open to the idea of recruiting or hiring someone with a permanent physical health condition or disability, and four times as likely to be open to hiring someone with a permanent psychological condition or disability.

---

[4]The Psychosocial Safety Climate is a concept derived from organisational psychology, recognising the links between work stress, immediate job demands and resources, an individual's own health and engagement, and subsequent health and motivation outcomes, and is the determined by organisational policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety. See for instance: www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/PSW/APC-WHS/PSC%20Framework.pdf

Figure 5-3: Relationship between psychosocial work environment and openness to employing

% Open (8-10) to employing

Legend: ■ Bottom quartile ■ 2nd quartile ■ 3rd quartile ■ Top quartile

Physical health condition or disability
- Temporary: 24%, 24%, 35%, 44%
- Permanent: 15%, 17%, 16%, 30%

Psychological health condition or disability
- Temporary: 16%, 25%, 27%, 40%
- Permanent: 6%, 15%, 17%, 23%
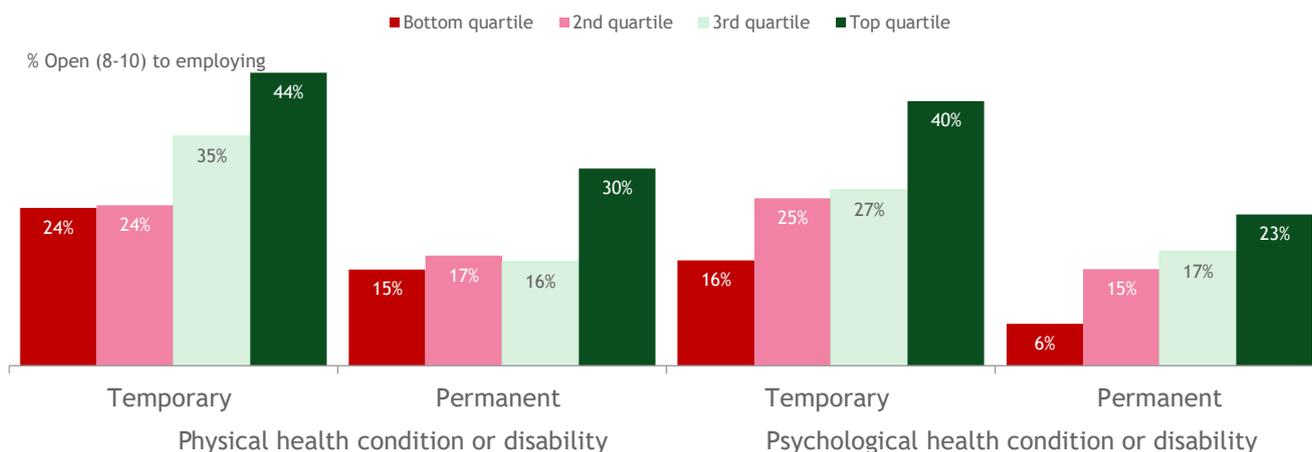
Source: B8 How open are you to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing... Psychosocial work environment scale quartile
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted;

5.4   An investment approach

Overall, employers were most likely (42%) to describe their company's aims in relation to maintaining the health of its employees as 'compliance only' – that is, they do what is required to comply with WHS and Fair Work law. Another 18% indicated they go beyond compliance to invest in health for expected productivity returns (see Figure 5-4), which was more common amongst larger employers.

31% indicated that they go *beyond* workplace productivity, to ensure employees have access to everything they need to have a happy, healthy life.

Figure 5-4: Company's aims in relation to health of employees

Company's aim to maintaining health of its employees		Private			Public		
		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Compliance - we only comply with WHS and Fair Work law	42%	42%	43%	35%	34%	47%	41%
Investment - we go beyond compliance to invest in health for expected returns in productivity	18%	17%	29%	35%	17%	26%	25%
Beyond workplace productivity, we ensure everyone has access to everything they need to have a happy, healthy life	31%	31%	21%	24%	35%	16%	24%
Don't know	10%	10%	7%	6%	14%	11%	10%

Source: E1. What would you say best describes your company's aims in relation to maintaining health of its employees?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Curious And Looking For Direction and **Not A Priority** were significantly more likely to suggest their company's aims are compliance, while **Flexibility Leaders**, **Stumble Before Run** and **Starting The Path** were significantly more likely to say their company aimed to go beyond workplace productivity to ensure everyone has access to everything they need to have a happy, healthy life.

The survey found that employers that are willing to go beyond compliance to invest in the productivity of their staff more broadly, are far less closed to the idea of employing people with serious health conditions or disability (Figure 5-5).

Openness to recruiting someone with permanent conditions or disability – by company's aims in relation to maintaining health				
Condition	Approach to maintaining health			
Permanent physical health condition or disability	Beyond compliance + Investment	27%	53%	20%
	Compliance	41%	47%	12%
Temporary physical health condition or disability	Beyond compliance + Investment	19%	59%	22%
	Compliance	41%	41%	18%
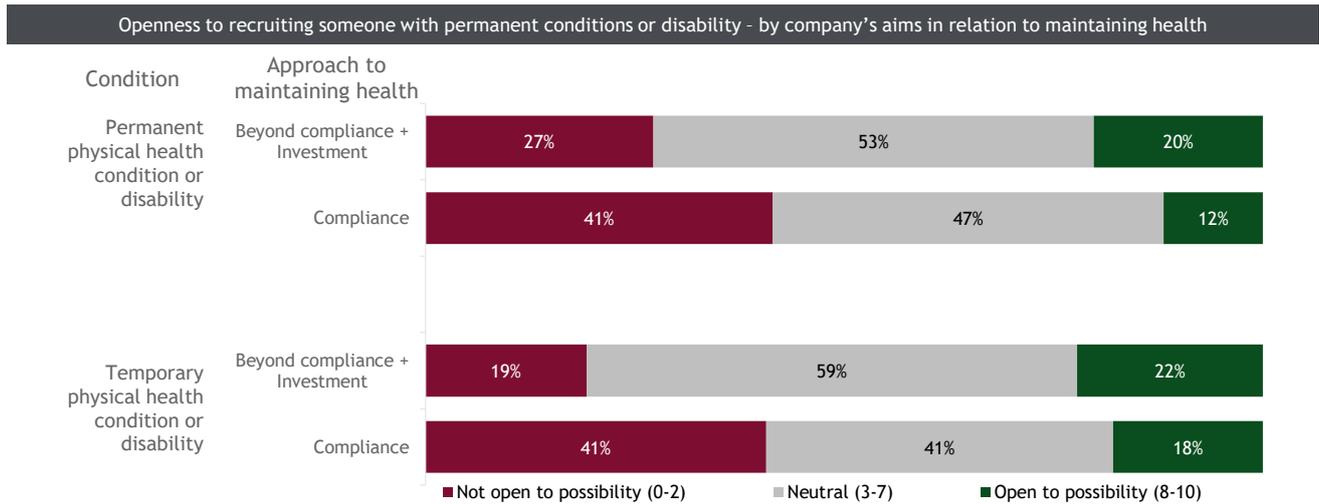
■ Not open to possibility (0-2)   ■ Neutral (3-7)   ■ Open to possibility (8-10)

Source: B4 To the best of your knowledge, has your organisation recruited or hired someone who may be experiencing a permanent health condition or disability? B8 How open are you to the possibility of hiring someone who may be experiencing a permanent physical health condition or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Around three in four employers had at least *partially* adopted various practices to integrate worker health promotion and protection (see Figure 5-6). Employers were most mature in relation to:

- Both managers and employees being engaged in decision making about priorities for coordinated worksite programs (75% at least partially adopted)

- Efforts to promote and protect worker health including both policies and individual worker education (73%)

- Decision making relating to worker health being coordinated across departments (73%)

- Both workers and worksite health being included as part of the organisation's mission (72%)

Employers were relatively less mature in relation to having joint worker-management committees to address worksite wellness and OH&S (64%).

Figure 5-6: Integration of work health and health promotion

Please indicate whether the following are absent, partially or full adopted in your organisation				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Both managers and employees are engaged in decision making about priorities for coordinated worksite programs	25%	41%	34%	34%	32%	37%	35%	27%	39%
Efforts to promote and protect worker health include both policies about the work organisation and environment and education for individual workers	27%	44%	29%	28%	43%	50%	33%	44%	52%
Decision making about policies, programs and practices related to worker health is coordinated across departments, including those responsible for occupational health and safety and those responsible for worksite wellness	27%	44%	29%	28%	31%	45%	34%	36%	47%
Both worker and worksite health are included as part of the organisation's mission	28%	39%	33%	32%	39%	53%	37%	27%	44%
Joint worker-management committees addressing worker and worksite health reflect both worksite wellness and occupational health and safety	36%	38%	26%	25%	26%	39%	30%	34%	44%

■ Absent   ■ Partially adopted   ■ Fully adopted

% Fully adopted

Source: E4. To what extent do you agree with the following in relation to your own workplace ?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Flexibility Leaders and **Starting The Path** were significantly more likely to have fully adopted all of these integrated health promotion and health protection activities, while **Stumble Before Run** were more likely to have adopted about half of them.

5.5 Flexible and adaptive

Related to the above and the segmentation, the qualitative findings suggested that a key commonality amongst employers who are more open to supporting people with health conditions and disability is a strategic flexibility in their approach to personnel. They invest time and energy in optimising the productivity of their whole workforce, and are readily able to adapt roles to suit people, using technology and adjustments to work practices to make it work for both the employee and the rest of the organisation.

Flexibility and adaptability with respect to employees is a (perhaps *the)* defining characteristic of employers who are more open to employing those with health conditions or disability, and facilitates most of the other virtuous characteristics detailed below. Employers at the other end of the spectrum tend to be more rigid and inflexible, demanding employees to conform to the job requirements, and are not prepared to adapt workplaces and work practices to suit people's needs.

Rather than seeing risk in employing people with health conditions or disability, more flexible organisations find ways to make the most of their employees' different abilities and find roles where the particular disability or health condition can become a real advantage. Other employers tend to see risk in employing people with disability, and are highly averse to taking risks with employees of differing ability. They imagine a range of potential risks that include accidents and injury both to the particular employee and other staff, workers compensation claims, or the employee disappearing at times of stress.

They recognise that talent comes in all shapes and sizes and will seize the opportunity to recruit staff that offer a good fit for the organisation, solid skills to complete the tasks required of them and the right attitude. Employers who are less open to the idea of employing people with disability tended to immediately dismiss those who do not fit their pre-defined ideal.

They also tend to see the whole person. They recognise that even the most capable, healthy employee is a poor recruit if they bring the wrong attitude to work. They frequently told us that employees with poor attitudes and engagement with their job demand much more management time than someone with special needs, but who is keen and eager to work. In this sense they see all employees as packages of characteristics – both good and bad, productive and unproductive – that need to be considered as a whole. At the other end, those who are less open to the idea tend to focus on the disability, claiming that a person with that particular condition couldn't possibly work in their company.

These characteristics of employers more and less open to employing people with health conditions and disability are summarised below in Figure 5-7 and table 5-1.

Figure 5-7: Relationship between openness to employing people with disability and other firm factors

Not open to the idea of employing people with disability	Open to the possibility of employing people with disability
Inflexible and rigid	Flexible and adaptive
Chaotic and unstructured	Strong policies and procedures
Risk averse	Optimises risk
Dismissive	Opportunistic
Sees disability	Sees whole person
Manages output	Manages quality of work-life
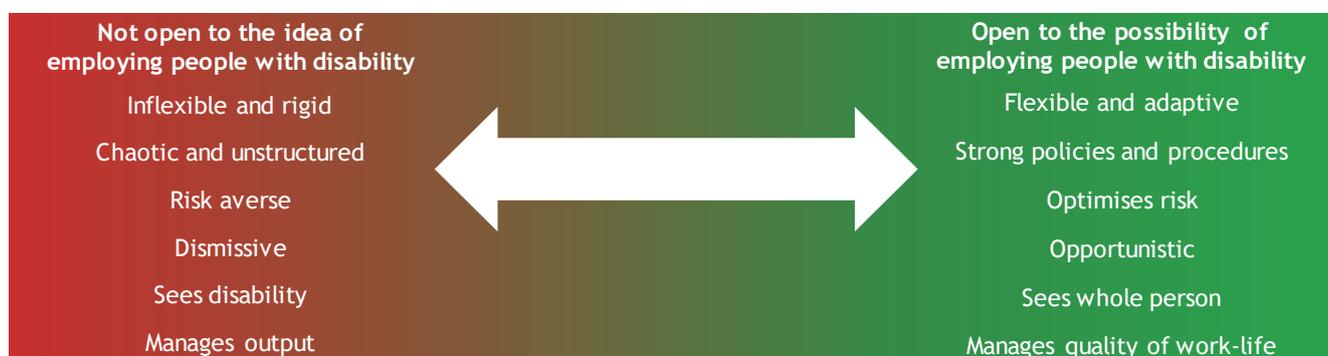
Table 5-1: Firm characteristics of businesses more open to employing people with disability

Not open	Open
Employers who were less open to employing people with disability could appear more **chaotic and unstructured**, with decisions reported to be made on 'gut feel', and little in the way of formal policy. Management say they are constantly 'putting out fires' and approach employment decisions with the need to reduce their own levels of stress – they tend to make 'safe' decisions rather than taking what they see as unnecessary risks (see below).	**Have strong policies and procedures…** that go well beyond the legislated requirements for return to work or standard work health and safety procedures. They ensure their recruitment protocols and processes do not exclude people on the basis of any particular personal factor, and that employees at every level of the organisation have a good understanding of the overall business approach. This further has the advantage of removing the burden of individual having to make a case or go out on a limb.
Risk averse. Less open employers typically focused on the risk of employing people with disability and health conditions, and are highly averse to taking risks with employees of differing ability. They imagine a range of potential risks that include accidents and injury both to the particular employee and other staff, workers compensation claims, or the employee disappearing at times of stress.	**Risk optimisers…** Rather than seeing risk in employing people with health conditions or disability, open employers find ways to make the most of their employees' different abilities and find roles where the particular disability or health condition can become a real advantage.
Be narrow/dismissive. Less open employers tended to immediately dismiss those who do not fit their pre-defined ideal.	**Be opportunistic…** Employers recognise that talent comes in all shapes and sizes and will seize the opportunity to recruit staff that offer a good fit for the organisation, solid skills to complete the tasks required of them and the right attitude.
Sees the disability or condition. At the other end, those who are less open to the idea tend to focus on the disability or condition, claiming that a person with that particular condition couldn't possibly work in their company.	**Sees the whole person…** Open employers recognise that even the most able, healthy employee is a poor recruit if they bring the wrong attitude to work. They frequently told us that employees with poor attitudes and engagement with their job demand much more management time than someone with special needs, but who is keen and eager to work. In this sense they see all employees as packages of characteristics – both good and bad, productive and unproductive – that need to be considered as a whole.
Output focus. Less open employers appear to focus on managing the output of their employees, keeping tabs on what each contributes and engaging in disciplinary action where targets are not met. Health is at best a secondary concern, when it is considered at all. The broader happiness of employees is not even on managers' radars.	**Manages quality whole work-life…** Invariably, the focus of open employers is on the total work health of their employees. They want to ensure their people are bringing their best selves to work, and provide facilities and opportunities to ensure employees can lead a happy, healthy life more, both at work and outside of it. They may run programs or facilitate healthy lifestyle choices for staff, subsidise health and fitness activities and work deliberately to ensure their culture is supportive for all employees throughout different stages of their lives.

6. Employer beliefs and experiences

6.1 Employer beliefs and experiences summary

Employers were asked about their top of mind associations about the meaning of work and the risks and benefits of employing these people of people with disability and health conditions in the workforce. They were also asked about their experiences in this regard, and their emotional reactions to the idea of employing someone with a disability or health condition in the future.

Encouragingly, the important role of work in people's lives is broadly recognised. Findings also suggest a wide but shallow knowledge of disability and health, and a tendency for employers to fear, and think of the risks and lack of skill/fit resulting from employing people with disability or a health condition rather than the benefits to employers – hence making this an altruistic task. It is only when prompted that they acknowledge that people with disability and health conditions represent a significant talent pool.

Crucially, given the links established through the segmentation, between experience and future willingness to employ people with disability and a health condition, only a minority of employers had recent experience in managing recruitment, retention or return to work processes for someone with disability or health condition.

6.2 Meaning of work

A range of attitudinal questions gauging employers' underlying perceptions about employing people with temporary or permanent health conditions or disability were included in the survey. The area that found broadest agreement and the most positivity overall was that of the inherent meaning of work. At least half of employers agreed with statements about the meaning of work (see Figure 6-1):

- 68% agreed that work brings a lot to people's lives
- 59% agreed it is the mark of a healthy society that everyone who wants a job can get one
- 49% agreed that it's hard to have a high quality of life without work.

Figure 6-1: Meaning of work
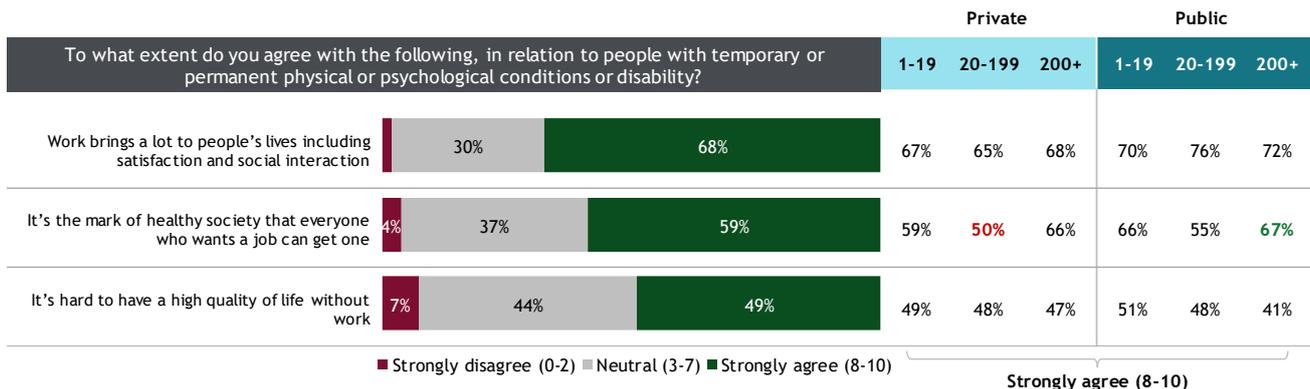
To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?	Private			Public		
	1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Work brings a lot to people's lives including satisfaction and social interaction — 30% Neutral, 68% Strongly agree	67%	65%	68%	70%	76%	72%
It's the mark of healthy society that everyone who wants a job can get one — 4% Strongly disagree, 37% Neutral, 59% Strongly agree	59%	**50%**	66%	66%	55%	**67%**
It's hard to have a high quality of life without work — 7% Strongly disagree, 44% Neutral, 49% Strongly agree	49%	48%	47%	51%	48%	41%

■ Strongly disagree (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

Source: C5. To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Both **Flexibility Leaders** and Starting The Path were significantly more likely to agree with these statements. **Curious And Looking For Direction** were significantly less likely to agree.

WHERE ▸ TO

6.3 Beliefs about health conditions and disabilities

To establish how they thought about disabilities, health conditions and work, employers were asked the following in the survey: *'thinking about physical or psychological (mental) health conditions or disabilities that may affect someone's ability to work. What, in your mind does this include?'* Responses are outlined in the chart below.

Figure 6-2: Conditions that may affect someone's ability to work (coded from open ended responses)

As the Figure 6-2 illustrates, employers cited a large number of conditions, as well as some barriers and causative factors (e.g. relationship issues and substance misuse). These are summarised in the chart below. Although there were few differences between the segments, those in the **Flexibility Leaders** and Stumble Before Run segments were able to name a larger number and a broader scope of conditions and disabilities.

Employers referenced a broad range of conditions. Depression, mentioned by almost 4 in 10 employers (36%), was the only specifically named single condition that featured strongly in responses. Employers also reference a range of physical disabilities (22%) and psychological conditions (22%). On balance, psychological conditions were mentioned more often than physical conditions (60% vs 45%).

Advantages and benefits

Employers were asked about what they saw as the advantages and benefits of employing people with disability and health conditions. They were first asked to on an unprompted basis (with answers reflecting top of mind and existing knowledge). They were then asked whether or not they agreed with a range of potential benefits (prompted).

Few employers (around one in five or less) were able, *unprompted*, to outline the specific advantages and benefits of employing someone with a health condition or disability (see Figure 6-3). The most common benefit cited (22%) was a benefit to the employee themselves, which was helping the person feel accepted and feel part of the team. Other advantages including assisting the person to get into the workplace (7%) and creating equal opportunities (5%).This suggests that at an overall level, the employment of people with disability and health conditions is viewed through the lens of deficit, and hence altruism.

Only 1 in 10 noted benefits to employers – arising from the increased loyalty and dedication of the person being employed (11%), and the capabilities and skills of the employee to do the job (10%).

Figure 6-3: Perceived benefits (unprompted) of hiring (coded from open ended responses)

Advantages of employing someone with a psychological or physical health condition or disability (Top 10 mentions)	
Help the person feel accepted / make them feel part of the team	22%
Loyalty / More dedication	11%
Good capabilities/skills to do the job	10%
Help them get into the workplace	7%
Creating opportunities/ equal opportunity for individuals	5%
Provides them more confidence	4%
Taking a social responsibility / community awareness	4%
Helps them overcome their recent health issue	3%
Enhance diversity / Diverse workforce	3%
Seems no different to any other employee	3%

Legend: ■ Employee benefits ■ Employer benefits

Source: B9. What do you think are the advantages or benefits of employing someone with a temporary or permanent psychological or physical health condition or disability?
Base: 50% of Businesses, weighted, n=1,259. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=303; 20-199 employees, n=179; 200+ employees n=264. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=27*; 20-199 employees, n=106; 200+ employees n=380.
Notes: *Low base, n=27.

When *prompted* with potential benefits, a similar pattern of response emerged. (see Figure 6-4)

- Lower turnover and greater loyalty of these employees was selected by 50% of participants
- 45% indicated that employees with these conditions promote a positive public image of the organisation.

Figure 6-4: Perceived benefits (prompted) of hiring someone

What are the potential benefits of employing a person with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition or disability in the workforce? (Top 5)		Private			Public		
		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Anyone could experience a health condition or disability – workplaces that include people with these conditions support all of us	60%	61%	53%	61%	62%	67%	73%
Same benefits as any other suitable person for the job	60%	60%	53%	58%	61%	68%	69%
Employees with these conditions may have lower turnover rates and show greater loyalty to the business	50%	51%	41%	47%	44%	46%	49%
Employees with these conditions represent a broad pool of talent and can help to meet skills	48%	47%	45%	58%	57%	55%	58%
Employees with these conditions represent the business well, and promote a positive public image	45%	45%	48%	52%	41%	42%	51%

Source: C6. What are the potential benefits of employing a person with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition or disability in the workforce?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Prompted responses also helped articulate a sense of personal relevance, teasing out the idea that any of us could experience a health condition or disability – and therefore supportive workplaces could potentially support us. To illustrate, 60% of employers agreed that 'as anyone could experience a health condition or disability, workplaces that include these people support everyone'.

In addition, prompting employers also showed that employers are conditionally open to employing people with health conditions and disability as long as they fit seamlessly into the workplace as don't require adjustment. Underpinning this appears to be a belief that many people with disability are a capable talent pool that is worth tapping into.

- six in ten (60%) employers indicated that they would employ a person with a disability or health condition if they could fit seamlessly into the workplace ('same benefits as any other suitable person for the job')
- 48% of employers felt that people with a disability or health condition 'represent a broad pool of talent and can help meet skill needs'.

Related to the above, roughly half of employers agreed with a range of statements about the job fit of people with a disability, suggesting both expectations of employers fitting into an existing framework, and also illustrating the difficulties in generalising across a broad range of health conditions and disabilities, when the reality is that each individual's condition is unique. As Figure 6-5 shows, of the employers surveyed:

- 56% agreed that suitability depends on the condition
- 55% agreed job fit depends entirely on their ability to do the job
- 49% agreed that job fit depends on attitude
- 48% agreed that there are no barriers to getting a job in their organisation if the person with the condition has better skills and experience than other candidates
- Just 28% agreed that job fit depends on the ability of the *team* to adapt to the person's needs.

Figure 6-5: Job fit
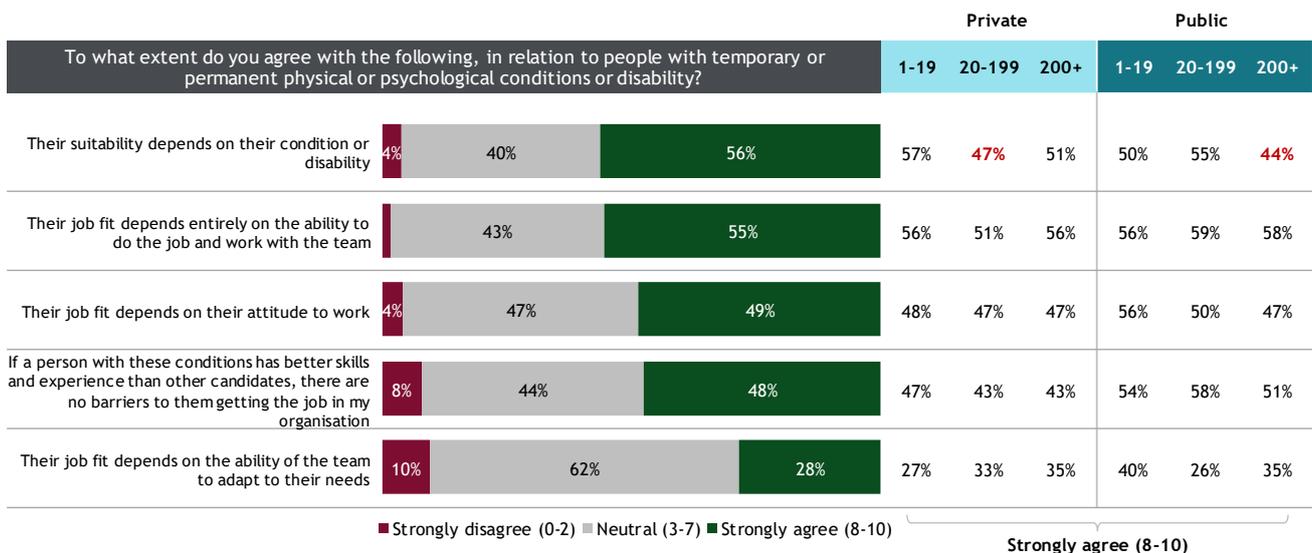
To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Their suitability depends on their condition or disability	4%	40%	56%	57%	**47%**	51%	50%	55%	**44%**
Their job fit depends entirely on the ability to do the job and work with the team		43%	55%	56%	51%	56%	56%	59%	58%
Their job fit depends on their attitude to work	4%	47%	49%	48%	47%	47%	56%	50%	47%
If a person with these conditions has better skills and experience than other candidates, there are no barriers to them getting the job in my organisation	8%	44%	48%	47%	43%	43%	54%	58%	51%
Their job fit depends on the ability of the team to adapt to their needs	10%	62%	28%	27%	33%	35%	40%	26%	35%

■ Strongly disagree (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

While there were no differences between the segments on the first statement, **Flexibility Leaders** were significantly more likely to agree with all the other statements.

Risks and barriers

Similar to the above, employers were asked about what they saw as the risks and drawbacks of employing people with disability and health conditions on a prompted and unprompted basis.

The main risk or drawback of employing someone with a disability was perceived, *unprompted*, to be the inability of the employee to perform efficiently or complete the job as efficiently as other staff (23% – see Figure 6-6). A range of less frequently noted issues included concerns for safety for the employee or others (14%), communication or interaction difficulties with customers or colleagues (7%) and that these employees would require additional assistance, care and time to manage (6%).

Risks and drawbacks of employing someone with a psychological or physical health condition or disability (Top 10 mentions)	
Inability to perform efficiently / complete job as efficiently as other staff	23%
Concerns with safety issues / risk of injury / accidents to themselves or other staff	14%
Difficult communication / interactive abilities with clients, customers, team members	7%
Additional assistance and support required / Extra care and time	6%
Absenteeism / unplanned leave or sick leave	5%
Extended break / off work periods	4%
Inability / difficulty to do physical tasks	4%
Lack of reliability / predictability to be present in office	4%
Risk of increased burden on other staff members	4%
Negative impact on client	3%

Source: B10. What do you think are the risks and drawbacks of employing someone with a temporary or permanent psychological or physical health condition or disability?
Base: 50% of Businesses, weighted, n=1,261. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=296; 20-199 employees, n=204; 200+ employees n=246. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=40; 20-199 employees, n=82; 200+ employees n=393.

When provided with a specific list of barriers that may make the employer consider *not* hiring someone with a disability, employers ranked the following issues as most important to their decision (see Figure 6-7):

- lack of skills to manage the employee
- additional support required
- cost of modifying the workplace.

Figure 6-7: Barriers to employing someone with a disability

Barriers to employing (Top 5)				Private			Public		
	Rank 3	Rank 2	Rank 1	1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
We don't have the skills required to manage / additional training required	11%	11%	12%	13%	10%	5%	12%	15%	7%
Additional support (e.g. hours) required	13%	14%	9%	9%	10%	12%	12%	15%	14%
Cost associated with modifying workplace	11%	11%	10%	11%	12%	7%	4%	9%	13%
There are too many business risks associated with employing people with these conditions	7%	7%	8%	9%	5%	5%	3%	6%	3%
Employees with these conditions represent a safety risk to others	8%	7%	7%	7%	8%	9%	5%	7%	5%

Rank 1

Source: C7. Which of the following are most likely to make you not consider hiring someone with a temporary or permanent psychological or physical disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766

Emotional responses to employing someone with a disability

Employers were presented with hypothetical situations in which someone with bipolar disorder, Down's syndrome and motor neurone disease had passed an initial screening for a position and made it to an interview stage, and asked about how they would feel about employing that individual. Nervousness, and anxiousness, mixed with a desire to be accommodating, dominated responses.

- 54% of employers were 'concerned' about employing someone with **bipolar disorder** – employers were then split between being 'nervous' (27%) or 'anxious' (22%), and 'accommodating' (25%) or 'hopeful' (22%).

- For a potential employee with **Down's Syndrome**, emotional responses were more closely clustered: 31% of employers felt 'accommodating', 29% felt 'concerned', 29% felt 'hopeful' and 25% felt 'optimistic' – these latter two positive responses were relatively prominent for this condition in particular.

- In relation to employing someone with **motor neurone disease**, 42% of employers felt 'concerned', 27% felt 'hopeful', 25% felt 'accommodating' and 21% felt 'nervous'.

As would be expected, **Flexibility Leaders**, were significantly more likely to feel accommodating, eager hopeful, optimistic and unfazed, while those in the **Not A Priority** segment were significantly more likely to feel accommodating in the case of someone presenting with bipolar disorder. A similar pattern of response was observed across the other conditions tested.

Figure 6-8: Emotional response to hypothetical situations

	Bipolar Disorder	Down's syndrome	Motor Neurone Disease
Concerned	54%	29%	42%
Nervous	27%	18%	21%
Accommodating	25%	31%	25%
Anxious	22%	14%	17%
Hopeful	22%	29%	27%
Unfazed	17%	19%	12%
Optimistic	17%	25%	16%
Confused	5%	3%	6%
Happy	3%	10%	6%
Frustrated	3%	4%	5%
Guilty	2%	2%	2%
Delighted	2%	10%	5%
Eager	1%	6%	4%
Excited	1%	4%	4%
Disgusted	1%	0%	0%
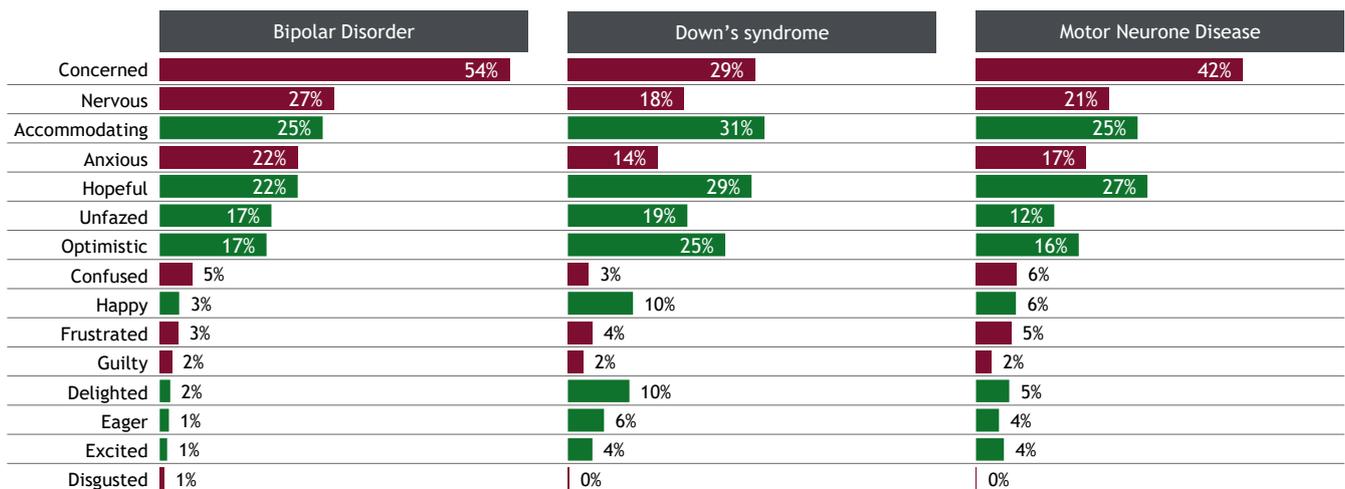
Source: B14. Imagine a person with Bipolar disorder has passed initial screening and made it to an interview for a role within your organisation, how would you feel about employing them, what emotions would you feel about it?
B15. Imagine a person with Down's Syndrome has passed initial screening and made it to an interview for a role within your organisation, how would you feel about employing them, what emotions would you feel about it?
B16. Imagine a person with Motor neurone disease has passed initial screening and made it to an interview for a role within your organisation, how would you feel about employing them, what emotions would you feel about it?

6.4   Suitable roles

Employers were asked whether they had roles suitable for a range of specific psychological and physical health conditions (see Figure 6-9).

- most employers have suitable roles for those experiencing depression (70%) or anxiety (65%)

- 6 in 10 or more employers had roles suitable for those with speech difficulties (60%), physical restrictions (62%), anxiety (65%), depression (70%) and disfigurement or deformity (76%)

- around half of employers also had suitable roles for those with incomplete use of feet or legs (51%), loss of hearing (52%), chronic pain or discomfort (56%), or breathing difficulties (57%).

Actual current support of people with these conditions was highest for chronic pain or discomfort (39%), physical restrictions (40%), anxiety (43%) and depression (44%).

Flexibility Leaders were significantly more likely to suggest they had either many or a few roles available across every condition tested. **Stumble Before Run** were similarly more likely than average to have roles available for people experiencing every one of these conditions. However, the **Not A Priority** were significantly more likely to say they had no roles available.

Specific conditions	Roles suitable	Currently support
Disfigurement or deformity	76%	15%
Depression	70%	44%
Anxiety	65%	43%
Restriction in physical activities/work	62%	40%
Speech difficulties	60%	17%
Breathing difficulties	57%	20%
Chronic/recurring pain/discomfort	56%	39%
Loss of hearing	52%	22%
Incomplete use of feet or legs	51%	15%
Slow at learning or understanding	47%	22%
Autism	45%	12%
Asperger's Syndrome	45%	11%
Bipolar disorder	43%	15%
Incomplete use of arms or fingers	41%	14%
Difficulty gripping or holding things	37%	13%
Schizophrenia	29%	6%
Head injury, stroke, brain damage	25%	11%
Blackouts, seizures, unconsciousness	22%	6%
Loss of sight	17%	8%

Source: B3. Still thinking about your organisation, would you say that there are any roles suitable for people with any of the following physical or psychological health conditions or disabilities?
B6. And to the best of your knowledge, does your organisation currently support or accommodate any employees with one or more of the following physical or psychological health condition or disabilities?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

As shown in Figure 6-10, small private organisations were less likely to have suitable roles for people with these conditions, and were less likely to be currently supporting people with these conditions.

Figure 6-10: Roles suitable for vs current support of various conditions – by size and sector

Specific conditions	Private						Public					
	1-19		20-199		200+		1-19		20-199		200+	
	Roles suitable	Currently support	Roles suitable	Currently support	Roles suitable	Currently support	Roles suitable	Currently support	Roles suitable	Currently support	Roles suitable	Currently support
Depression	69%	42%	77%	50%	84%	76%	72%	43%	89%	85%	89%	86%
Anxiety	65%	41%	71%	45%	80%	75%	69%	55%	82%	78%	87%	82%
Restriction in physical activities/work	60%	36%	76%	54%	89%	80%	77%	49%	83%	75%	95%	88%
Chronic/recurring pain/discomfort	55%	38%	59%	41%	67%	62%	68%	47%	72%	63%	86%	75%
Loss of hearing	51%	21%	61%	23%	77%	50%	51%	22%	75%	57%	84%	66%
Slow at learning or understanding	46%	20%	62%	36%	69%	49%	50%	24%	64%	49%	73%	57%
Breathing difficulties	56%	18%	57%	22%	73%	39%	70%	24%	82%	49%	87%	54%
Speech difficulties	58%	15%	72%	30%	81%	47%	73%	21%	74%	45%	86%	65%
Disfigurement or deformity	76%	13%	75%	28%	88%	51%	75%	21%	92%	42%	92%	63%
Incomplete use of feet or legs	48%	13%	66%	20%	77%	42%	65%	23%	76%	33%	88%	60%
Bipolar disorder	43%	14%	46%	12%	63%	39%	40%	19%	69%	42%	64%	44%
Incomplete use of arms or fingers	39%	12%	52%	22%	67%	43%	45%	17%	58%	24%	72%	50%
Difficulty gripping or holding things	34%	12%	49%	20%	72%	37%	62%	12%	70%	39%	76%	51%
Autism	43%	10%	56%	20%	64%	30%	60%	23%	74%	34%	75%	45%
Head injury, stroke, brain damage	24%	9%	34%	15%	49%	32%	35%	22%	47%	27%	53%	38%
Asperger's Syndrome	43%	9%	51%	14%	62%	25%	60%	18%	69%	32%	70%	46%
Loss of sight	15%	6%	25%	14%	48%	28%	39%	12%	45%	23%	58%	44%
Blackouts, seizures, unconsciousness	20%	5%	29%	8%	47%	23%	36%	14%	48%	26%	54%	28%
Schizophrenia	28%	4%	33%	11%	44%	16%	39%	17%	55%	22%	52%	26%

Source: B3. Still thinking about your organisation, would you say that there are any roles suitable for people with any of the following physical or psychological health conditions or disabilities?
B6. And to the best of your knowledge, does your organisation currently support or accommodate any employees with one or more of the following physical or psychological health condition or disabilities?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

6.5   Experience of recruiting, accommodating or handling return to work

Less than half of employers indicated that their organisation had ever managed processes for recruiting, accommodating or handling return to work for someone with a disability, and one in four or less had done so in the last 2 years (see Figure 6-11).

- Managing processes for *temporary* conditions was generally more common than for permanent conditions: in the last 2 years, 25% of organisations had worked both to actively retain or accommodate, and to manage

the return to work process for, someone with a temporary condition, compared to 15% and 10% respectively for someone with a permanent condition.

- 15% of organisations had managed the processes for recruiting someone with a temporary condition in the last 2 years – 13% had managed those processes for someone with a permanent condition.

Given the relationship between experience and attitudes, it is not surprising that the leading segments – **Flexibility Leaders** and **Stumble Before Run** were significantly more likely to have managed each of the activities, including hiring, managing return to work and retention, while few of the **Not A Priority** had done any of these.

Figure 6-11: Experiences managing recruitment, accommodation and return to work
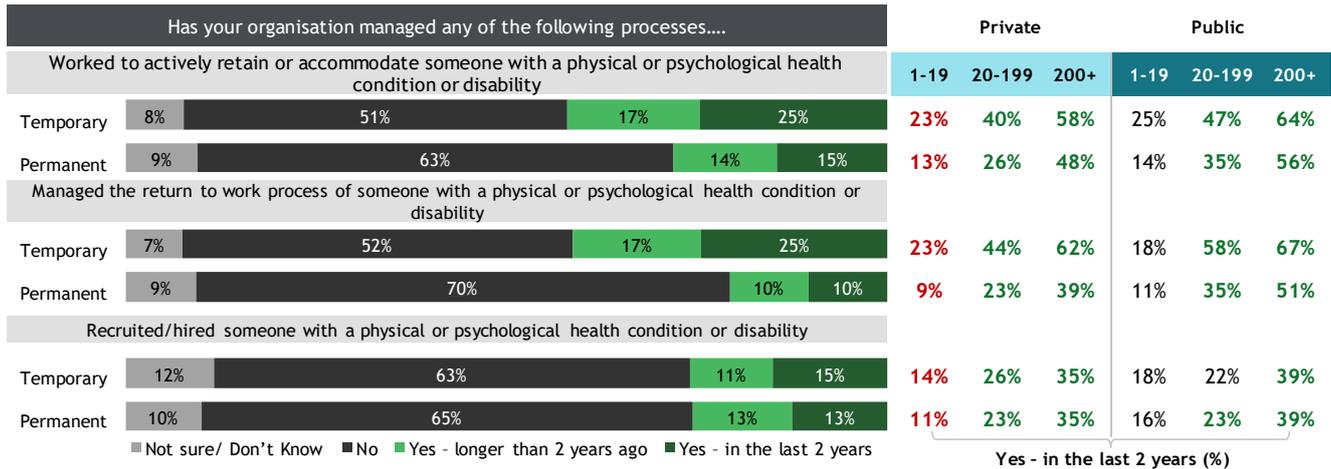
Has your organisation managed any of the following processes….					Private			Public		
Worked to actively retain or accommodate someone with a physical or psychological health condition or disability					**1-19**	**20-199**	**200+**	**1-19**	**20-199**	**200+**
Temporary	8%	51%	17%	25%	**23%**	**40%**	**58%**	25%	**47%**	**64%**
Permanent	9%	63%	14%	15%	**13%**	**26%**	**48%**	14%	**35%**	**56%**
Managed the return to work process of someone with a physical or psychological health condition or disability										
Temporary	7%	52%	17%	25%	**23%**	**44%**	**62%**	18%	**58%**	**67%**
Permanent	9%	70%	10%	10%	**9%**	**23%**	**39%**	11%	**35%**	**51%**
Recruited/hired someone with a physical or psychological health condition or disability										
Temporary	12%	63%	11%	15%	**14%**	**26%**	**35%**	18%	**22%**	**39%**
Permanent	10%	65%	13%	13%	**11%**	**23%**	**35%**	16%	**23%**	**39%**

■ Not sure/ Don't Know   ■ No   ■ Yes – longer than 2 years ago   ■ Yes – in the last 2 years

Yes – in the last 2 years (%)

As would be expected, given the low rates of employment cited above, little in the way of social norms have been established. Employers were relatively *unlikely* to feel that most employers were hiring people with a psychological health condition (19%) or physical disability (11%) these days (see Figure 6-12).

Figure 6-12: Context
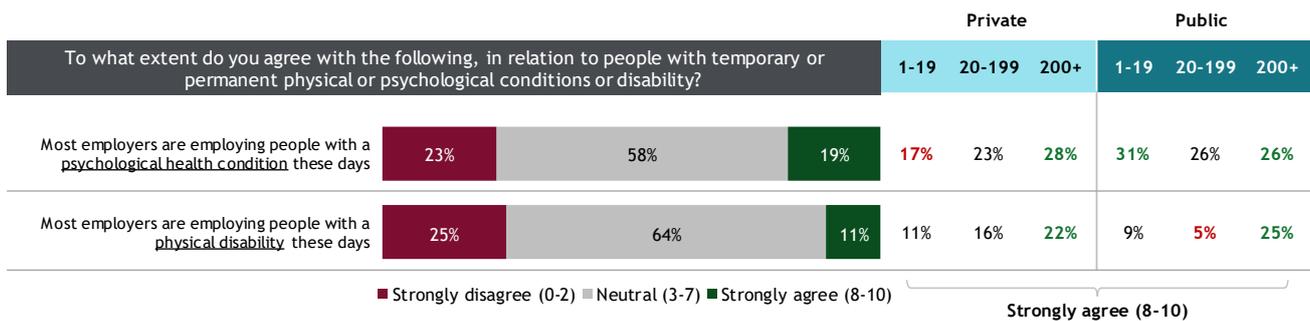
To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?				Private			Public		
				1-19	**20-199**	**200+**	**1-19**	**20-199**	**200+**
Most employers are employing people with a <u>psychological health condition</u> these days	23%	58%	19%	**17%**	23%	**28%**	**31%**	26%	**26%**
Most employers are employing people with a <u>physical disability</u> these days	25%	64%	11%	11%	16%	**22%**	9%	**5%**	**25%**

■ Strongly disagree (0-2)   ■ Neutral (3-7)   ■ Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

Those completing the survey were asked to provide some examples of the kinds of activities they had engaged in. Some examples are set out below:

"A young guy with anxiety and depression was offered a role. So that there wasn't pressure on him to be at work when he wasn't coping, we offered a casual position. This arrangement worked out very well. The guy was a great worker when he was at the office developed a lot more confidence. He has been a real asset to the team."

"Person suffered from stress and anxiety which lead to depression and inability to fully function at work. We ensured they had time off without fear of not being able to return, got them access to mental health professional and readjusted their performance KPIs and objectives to reflect [the] new state and ensured regular catch ups"

"One of our techs was injured in a car accident such that he could not walk for several weeks and is still highly restricted after several years. The biggest change required was making sure someone could cover site visits that he could no longer perform and restructuring workshop work to both accommodate his lack of mobility and ensure his skills were still well used."

"Employee was experiencing anxiety and clinical depression due to home situation, and found coping with her frontline role challenging. Moved (with her agreement) to a non-client facing role so that she had time to work towards recovery without the pressure of feeling like she was letting down colleagues and clients (roster situation), and could take breaks as needed if she became distressed."

7. Policies, processes and modifications

7.1 Policies, processes and modifications summary

Employers were asked about whether their organisation had formal or informal policies with respect to the recruitment, retention or return to work of people with disability or mental health conditions, if they were aware of initiatives and strategies that might help adjust their workplace to make it suitable for employment, and rate the relative usefulness of potential assistance to help adjust their workforces

A minority of employers had formal or informal policies; with informal policies and policies around return to work more common. There were similarly low levels of awareness and use of potential modifications and support available to fund these. As might be expected, there were higher levels of interest in practical supports.

Actual *use* of processes or modifications to help employ or accommodate people with a disability, such as the modifications of tasks, sat at three in ten employers or fewer.

Awareness of strategies initiatives available to employers to facilitate the employment of people with disability and health conditions was moderate to low. Assistance such as wage subsidies (44%), employment funds (42%) or reimbursement funds (39%) to allow organisations to employ people with a disability were seen as relatively useful.

7.2 Existence of policies

Four in ten (39%) employers have *informal* policies or initiatives in place to accommodate people with a disability – 27% have formal policies in place (see Figure 7-1).

- Return to work policies were the most common (29% informal, 22% formal)
- Retention policies were more likely to be informal (20%) than formal (11%)
- 15% of employers had informal recruitment policies (8% formal)
- larger organisations in both the public and private sector were more likely to have these policies in place, though the public sector was generally more likely to have these policies formalised.

Figure 7-1: Policies or initiatives in place to accommodate recruitment, retention and return to work

	Policies and initiative currently in place		Private			Public		
			1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Formal	Total	27%	24%	56%	73%	40%	60%	78%
	Recruitment	8%	6%	21%	35%	12%	35%	48%
	Return to work	22%	20%	48%	65%	31%	55%	74%
	Retention	11%	10%	21%	35%	18%	19%	42%
Informal	Total	39%	37%	60%	63%	43%	51%	57%
	Recruitment	15%	14%	23%	32%	20%	24%	32%
	Return to work	29%	28%	45%	52%	29%	31%	51%
	Retention	20%	19%	28%	40%	24%	32%	34%

Source: B11. Does your company have any policies or initiatives in place to accommodate people with a physical or psychological health condition or disability? This includes recruitment, retention and return-to-work activities.
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

WHERE ►TO

Here we would remind the reader that while none (0%) of the **Not A Priority** had any formal or informal policies, a majority the **Flexibility Leaders** had policies in place across each of the three areas include in the survey. This highlights a clear divide between the best and worst performing organisations, and suggests that encouraging employers to go through the process of creating policies and thinking about the issues may help them become les prejudicial in their hiring decisions.

In relation to the attitude of management, 37% agreed that management was prepared to make changes to the workplace to accommodate people with a disability (see Figure 7-2) – 27% agreed that leadership in their organisation has a strong voice about inclusion of people with different abilities. Just 12% agreed that management had actually made substantive changes to the workplace to employ people with disabilities.

Figure 7-2: Management attitude
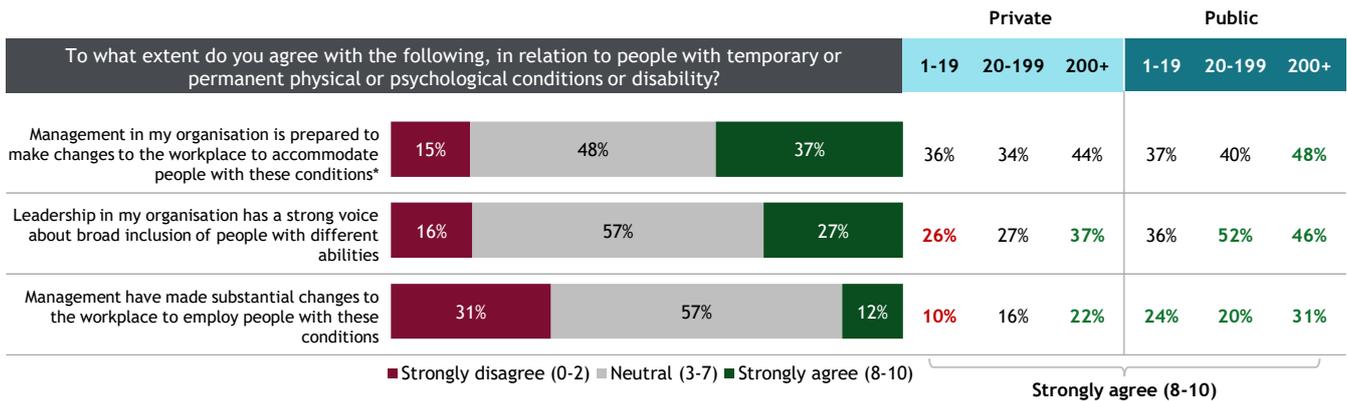
To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Management in my organisation is prepared to make changes to the workplace to accommodate people with these conditions*	15%	48%	37%	36%	34%	44%	37%	40%	**48%**
Leadership in my organisation has a strong voice about broad inclusion of people with different abilities	16%	57%	27%	**26%**	27%	**37%**	36%	**52%**	**46%**
Management have made substantial changes to the workplace to employ people with these conditions	31%	57%	12%	**10%**	16%	**22%**	**24%**	**20%**	**31%**

■Strongly disagree (0-2) ■Neutral (3-7) ■Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

Source: C5. To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766. *Statement reversed; Bottom 3 - Strongly disagree (0-2)

The **Not A Priority** and **Curious And Looking For Direction** segments were significantly more likely to disagree with each of these statements, highlighting a key need for greater involvement from upper management in driving the agenda.

7.3   Awareness and use of initiatives and strategies

Four in ten or fewer employers indicated that they were *aware* of initiatives or strategies available to help their workplace become suitable for people with a disability – awareness increased with organisation size, and was higher in the public sector.

- 41% were aware of modifications to hours worked
- just over one third were aware of modifications of tasks (36%), modification of physical workspaces (35%) and wage subsidies (34%)
- 27% were aware of assistive technology
- 25% were aware of modifications to KPIs.

Figure 7-3: Awareness of policies/ initiatives assist workplace

Policy and initiative awareness		Private			Public		
		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Modifications to hours worked	41%	38%	53%	72%	56%	66%	84%
Modifications of tasks	36%	34%	44%	64%	49%	60%	74%
Modifications of physical workspaces	35%	33%	46%	69%	54%	58%	78%
Wage Subsidies	34%	34%	41%	42%	36%	37%	35%
Assistive technology	27%	26%	33%	49%	29%	51%	59%
Modifications to KPIs	25%	25%	32%	50%	20%	34%	47%
Psychological health first aid training	23%	22%	29%	42%	39%	45%	53%
Disability and deafness awareness training	22%	21%	24%	34%	29%	31%	49%
Auslan interpreting	16%	15%	19%	25%	20%	31%	41%
Employment Fund	15%	14%	23%	30%	16%	22%	23%

Source: D2. Are you aware of any of the following policies or initiatives in place to assist your company to help your workplacebecome suitable for people with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Three in ten or fewer employers indicated that there were processes or modifications actually *in place* in their organisation to help them employ or accommodate people with a disability – again, incidence increased with organisation size, and was higher in the public sector.

- 30% had modifications to tasks in place

- 24% had modifications to responsibilities

- 22% had assistance from a support person

- 19% had training

- 18% noted physical modifications of buildings.

Figure 7-4: Awareness of processes or modifications to allow employment or accommodation

Processes and modifications implemented		Private			Public		
		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Modifications to tasks	30%	28%	42%	57%	44%	48%	63%
Modifications to responsibilities	24%	22%	38%	49%	33%	34%	58%
Assistance from a support person	22%	21%	28%	35%	22%	37%	48%
Training	19%	17%	31%	41%	38%	35%	59%
Physical modifications of buildings	18%	15%	29%	53%	42%	38%	69%
Provision of special equipment	12%	10%	18%	37%	23%	37%	60%
Modifications to KPIs	10%	9%	18%	29%	17%	20%	26%
Don't know	11%	10%	12%	14%	18%	19%	7%
Other		1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%
None	40%	44%	22%	9%	11%	7%	2%

Source: D3. What processes or modifications (if any) does your company have in place to allow you to employ or accommodate people with a physical or psychological health condition or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

While two-thirds (65%) of **Not A Priority** had made none of these modifications at their workplace, all of the **Flexibility Leaders** had made at least one, and six in seven (86%) of the **Stumble Before Run, Building Momentum** and **Starting The Path** had also made at least one

7.4   Usefulness of potential assistance types

Employers rated a range of assistance types as being moderately useful in facilitating the employment of people with disability or a health condition.

- Assistance types relating to wage subsidies (44%), employment funds (42%) or reimbursement funds (39%) were seen as relatively more useful.

- Consultants to help manage the process (34%), assistance for appropriate job design (33%), internship programs to assess ability and fit (33%) and a support line providing information about how to manage the process (32%) were similarly rated in terms of usefulness.

- Web resources were rated the least useful relative to other assistance types (28%).

Employers were asked what other forms of assistance could help in employing people with a disability – most (57%) couldn't think of anything additional or weren't sure (9%). Small proportions felt that employee training programs (9%) or awareness and education on how to facilitate employment (7%) could be helpful.

Figure 7-5: Usefulness of types of assistance
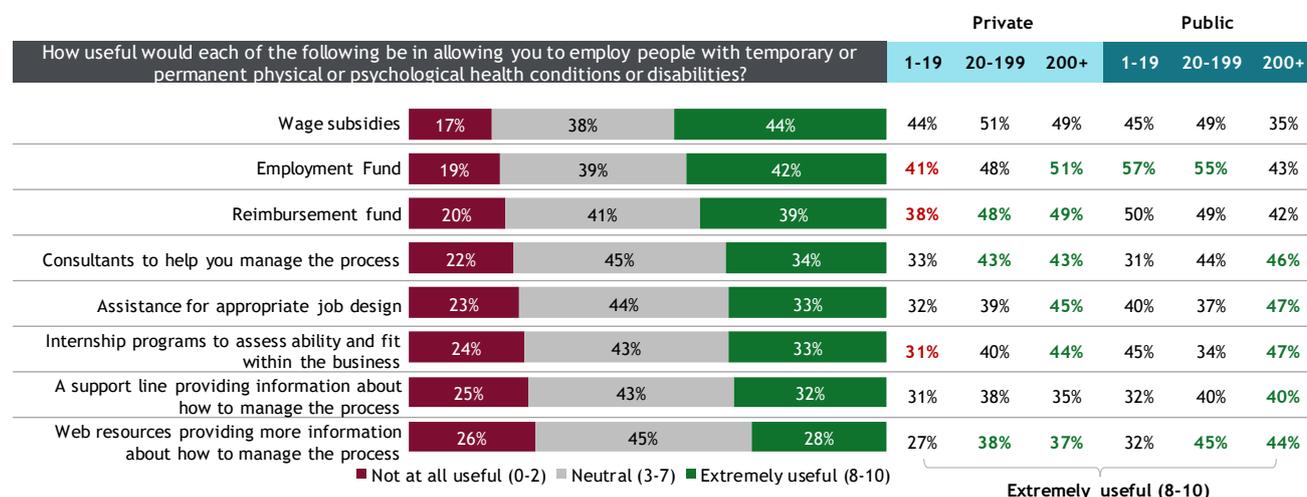
How useful would each of the following be in allowing you to employ people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions or disabilities?	Not at all useful (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely useful (8-10)	Private 1-19	Private 20-199	Private 200+	Public 1-19	Public 20-199	Public 200+
Wage subsidies	17%	38%	44%	44%	51%	49%	45%	49%	35%
Employment Fund	19%	39%	42%	41%	48%	51%	57%	55%	43%
Reimbursement fund	20%	41%	39%	38%	48%	49%	50%	49%	42%
Consultants to help you manage the process	22%	45%	34%	33%	43%	43%	31%	44%	46%
Assistance for appropriate job design	23%	44%	33%	32%	39%	45%	40%	37%	47%
Internship programs to assess ability and fit within the business	24%	43%	33%	31%	40%	44%	45%	34%	47%
A support line providing information about how to manage the process	25%	43%	32%	31%	38%	35%	32%	40%	40%
Web resources providing more information about how to manage the process	26%	45%	28%	27%	38%	37%	32%	45%	44%

Extremely useful (8-10)

The Not A Priority were significantly more likely to suggest that all of these potential assistances would be not at all useful. Interestingly the Starting The Path were more likely to suggest that wage subsidies (57% extremely useful), employment funds (60%), consultants(46%), internships (46%) and support lines (51%) would be useful. In fact, they the segment most likely to claim that many of these would be useful in allowing them to hire more people with disability.

8. Future ability and interest

8.1 Future ability and interest summary

Managers were asked about their individual interest in employing someone with a health condition or disability, as well as their perceptions of their organisation's ability to support a health condition or disability. They were also asked to assign responsibility for this.

8.2 Individual openness

Most of the hiring managers we spoke to felt relatively 'neutral' about employing someone, or having someone work for them, who may be experiencing a temporary or permanent physical or psychological condition or disability (50-55%: see Figure 8-1).

- Managers were more open to employing people with *temporary* conditions (28-33%) than permanent conditions (16-20%).

- Public sector and large private sector managers generally displayed more openness to these possibilities – in particular, 66% of large public sector employers were open to employing someone with a temporary physical condition.

- Managers from all sector/size organisations were the least open to employing someone with a permanent psychological condition.

Figure 8-1: Individual openness to employing someone with a disability

Openness to employing someone with …				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Temporary physical health condition or disability	14%	54%	33%	31%	39%	47%	50%	65%	66%
Temporary psychological health condition or disability	17%	55%	28%	27%	32%	40%	35%	47%	56%
Permanent physical health condition or disability	29%	51%	20%	17%	27%	34%	41%	38%	48%
Permanent psychological health condition or disability	34%	50%	16%	15%	19%	25%	26%	33%	37%

■ Not open to the possibility (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Open to the possibility (8-10)

Open to the possibility (8-10)

Source: B8. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not at all open' and 10 means 'extremely open', how open are you to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a...
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Almost half of employers indicated that they would be very likely to provide alternative duties for 3 months to help someone with a disability return to work (48% – see Figure 8-2).

- This dropped to 29% for a 6-month time frame, and 14% for an indefinite period of time.

- Large public sector employers were the most likely to provide alternative duties for 3 months (77%), 6 months (60%) and indefinitely (33%).

The segments are a strong predictor of an employer's likelihood of providing alternative duties. **Flexibility Leaders** are extremely likely to provide alternative duties for 3 months (87%), 6 months (76%) and indefinitely (50%) compared to the **Not A Priority** (35%, 18%, 9%). The other segments fall in between.

Figure 8-2: Likelihood of providing alternative duties

Figure 8-2: Likelihood of providing alternative duties

How likely are you provide alternative duties to help someone with a physical health condition or disability return to work for...				Private			Public		
	Not at all likely (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely likely (8-10)	1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
3 months	16%	36%	48%	46%	62%	71%	65%	65%	77%
6 months	24%	47%	29%	26%	37%	46%	51%	48%	60%
Indefinitely	42%	44%	14%	12%	21%	28%	28%	27%	33%

Extremely likely (8-10)
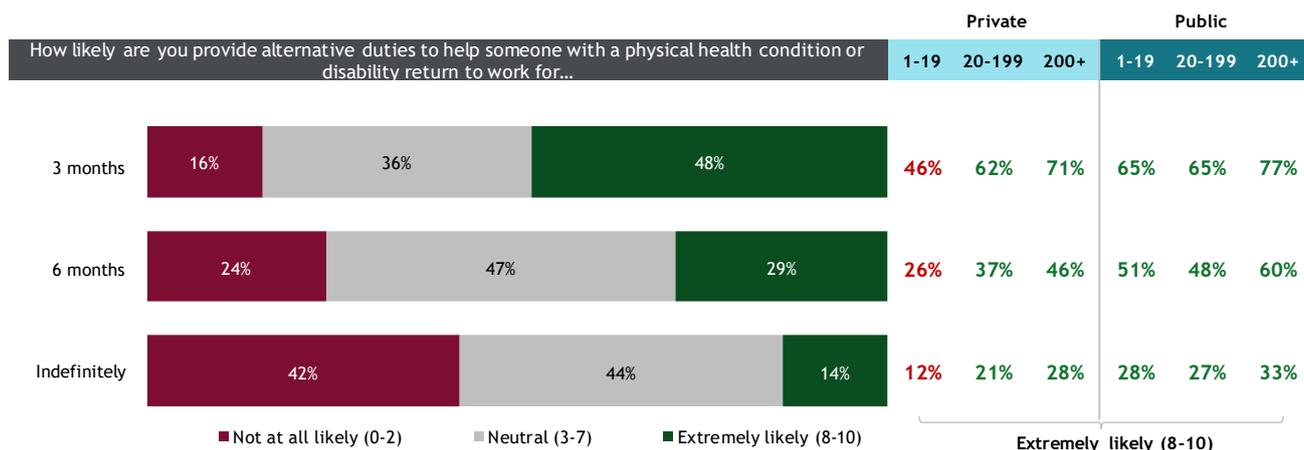
Source: C1d. How likely are you provide alternative duties to help someone with a physical health condition or disability return to work?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Employers identified that the main barriers to providing alternative duties to allow someone with a disability to return to work were: a lack of skills required to manage the process and the additional training required, the additional support required, the costs associated with modifying the workplace and organisational risks (see Figure 8-3).

Figure 8-3: Barriers of providing alternative duties to support return to work

Barriers to providing alternative duties (Top 5)				Private			Public		
	Rank 3	Rank 2	Rank 1	1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
We don't have the skills required to manage / additional training required	7%	10%	13%	14%	9%	9%	9%	11%	6%
Additional support (e.g. hours) required	12%	13%	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	7%	12%
Cost associated with modifying workplace	12%	11%	10%	10%	9%	4%	11%	10%	8%
There are too many business risks associated with employing people with these conditions	7%	6%	8%	9%	6%	7%	4%	7%	6%
Employees with these conditions would be less productive	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	2%	2%	3%

Rank 1

Source: C8. Which of the following are most likely to make you not consider providing alternative duties to allow someone with a psychological or physical disability return to work?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Flexibility Leaders were very likely (57%) to say that 'none' of the factors listed above presented barriers for them. **Curious And Looking For Direction** and **Not A Priority** were more likely to rank organisational risk or safety risk as their number one concern.

Although mostly neutral in terms of *personal* openness to employing someone with a disability (as noted above), employers were more likely to feel it was important that their *workplace* was able to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities (see Figure 8-4).

- 45-52% felt that the accommodation of *temporary* psychological or physical conditions respectively was very important

- 26-31% felt that accommodation of *permanent* psychological or physical conditions respectively was very important

- larger public sector employers were more likely to recognise the importance of workplace accommodations.

How important do you feel is it that your workplace can accommodate the needs of people with a...			Private			Public		
			1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Temporary physical condition	9% | 39% | 52%		50%	62%	69%	62%	80%	83%
Temporary psychological health condition	14% | 41% | 45%		43%	49%	63%	60%	71%	75%
Permanent physical condition or disability	22% | 48% | 31%		28%	39%	52%	50%	64%	66%
Permanent psychological health condition or disability	26% | 48% | 26%		23%	32%	43%	44%	49%	59%

■ Not at all important (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Extremely important (8-10)

Extremely important (8-10)
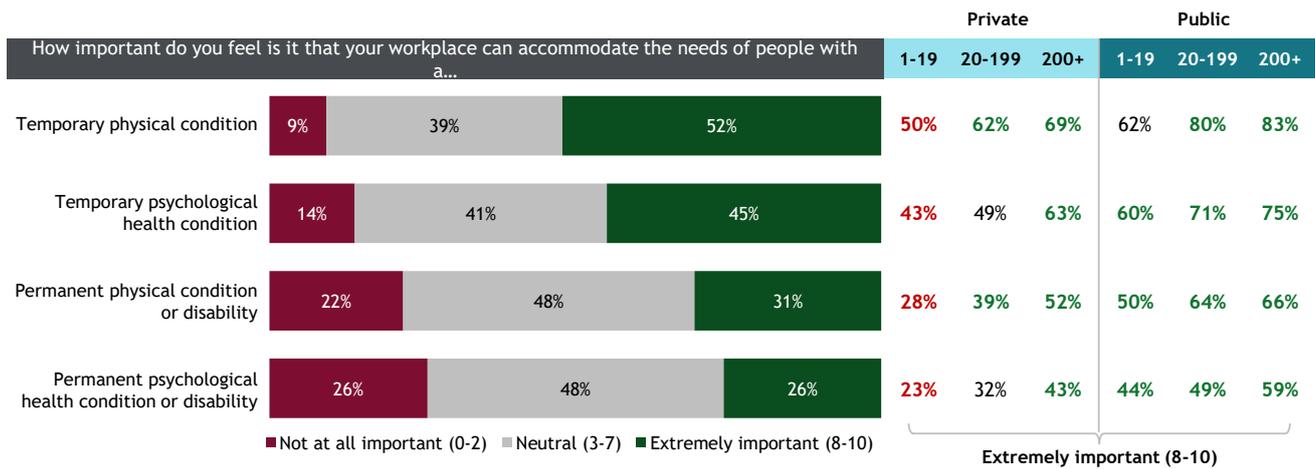
Source: C2. How important do you feel is it that your workplace can accommodate the needs of people with...?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Predictably, most (92%) **Flexibility Leaders** said it was extremely important that their organisation could support people with *temporary* physical or psychological conditions, however, this dropped substantially for permanent physical (63%) and psychological (61%) conditions. Only a third of the **Not A Priority** felt it was important they accommodate temporary physical (39%) and psychological (34%) conditions, and this proportion similarly decreased for permanent conditions (22%, 17%)

8.3   Organisation capacity

Half of employers (50%) were confident in their ability to support a person with a physical health condition to be an effective contributor to the company (see Figure 8-5). Public sector and larger employers were most confident in this regard (around 7 in 10 or more).

Figure 8-5: Organisation capacity to employing someone with a disability

Workplace attitudes and perceptions		Private			Public		
How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
10% | 15% | 25% | 37% | 13%		46%	69%	74%	76%	84%	82%

■ Not at all confident ■ Not very confident ■ Unsure ■ Somewhat confident ■ Extremely confident

How much capacity ... does your organisation to adapt the workplace for an employee experiencing a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
5% | 22% | 37% | 30% | 6%		34%	54%	67%	44%	57%	73%

■ Don't know / not sure ■ No capacity ■ Low capacity ■ Moderate capacity ■ High capacity

How supportive do you think your organisational culture is for employees with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition?		1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
4% | 13% | 35% | 33% | 14%		47%	54%	64%	53%	49%	63%

■ Not at all supportive ■ Not very supportive ■ Somewhat supportive
■ Very supportive ■ Extremely supportive

Top 2 (%)

Source: C1a. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
C1b. How much capacity – in terms of economic and human resources - does your organisation to adapt the workplace for an employee experiencing a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition?
C1c. How supportive do you think your organisational culture is for employees with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Two aspects of an organisation can underpin this confidence: its **capacity to adapt** in terms of economic and human resources, and its **culture**. Employers were more likely to feel that their organisational *culture* was supportive for employees with a disability (47%) than they were to feel that their organisation had the capacity to adapt the workplace for employees with a disability (36%).

- culturally, large organisations were most likely to be supportive of employees with a disability (64% private, 63% public)
- public sector organisations were better placed from the point of view of capacity, with up to 73% of large public sector organisations indicating their organisation had the capacity to adapt the workplace.

8.4   Responsibility

Workforce participation

Employers felt that government should be responsible for ensuring participation in the workforce of people with a disability (see Figure 8-6), followed by big business.

Figure 8-6: Who should be responsible for ensuring participation in the workforce

Who should be responsible…				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Government	17%	21%	45%	44%	42%	41%	57%	52%	**54%**
Big businesses / employers	13%	23%	39%	40%	38%	**52%**	28%	30%	39%
Small business / employers	17%	16%	9%	9%	11%	**3%**	9%	12%	**2%**
Not for profits	18%	13%	7%	7%	9%	5%	5%	6%	6%

Rank 3   Rank 2   Rank 1

Rank 1
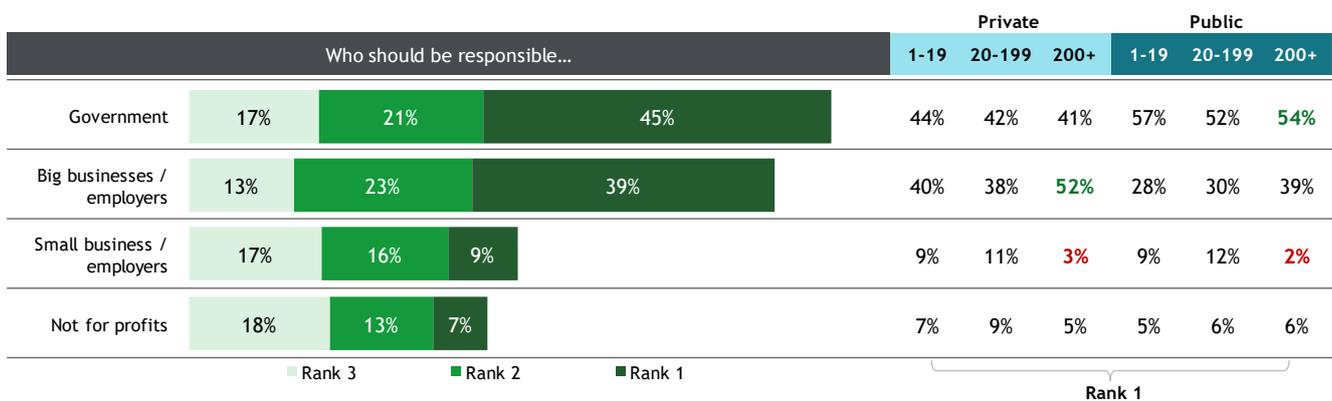
Source: C3. Who should be responsible for ensuring the participation of people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions or disabilities in the workforce?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Within organisations, most employers felt that senior managers or human resources departments should be responsible for ensuring participation in the workforce of people with a disability (see Figure 8-7), followed by 'all employees'.

Figure 8-7: Who should be responsible for ensuring participation in the workforce

Who should be responsible…				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Senior managers	8%	11%	31%	31%	34%	37%	24%	37%	26%
Human resources departments	16%	15%	25%	25%	20%	24%	30%	25%	24%
All employees	8%	9%	21%	20%	24%	23%	26%	26%	**33%**
Middle managers and supervisors	16%	19%	8%	8%	12%	8%	7%	4%	8%
The employee	6%	8%	6%	6%	4%	4%	6%	6%	7%

Rank 3   Rank 2   Rank 1

Rank 1
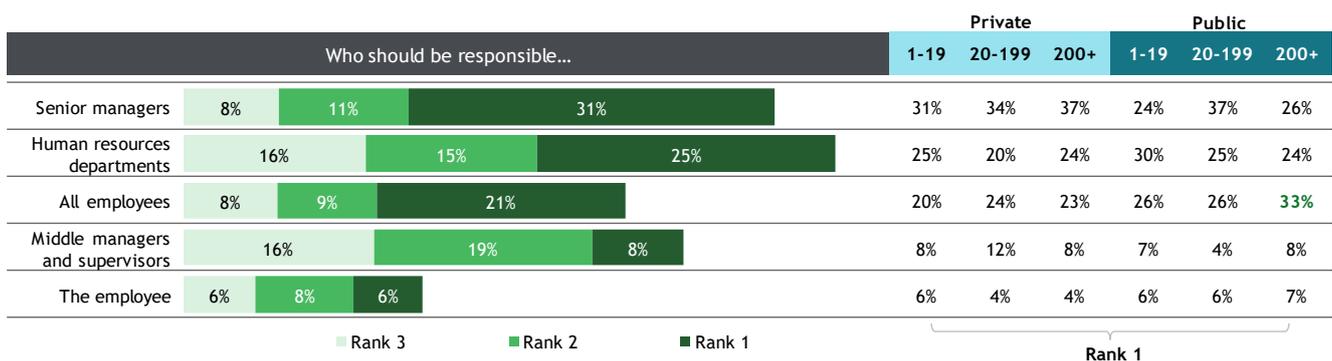
Source: C4. Who should be responsible for ensuring the participation of people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological health conditions or disabilities in the workforce?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Responsibility for accommodation of needs

While 48% agreed that their organisation would ensure that the roles and duties of a staff member returning to work after an illness or injury were appropriate to their capabilities, perceptions were more polarised in relation to whether companies like theirs could be expected to hire people with health conditions or disability (30% agreed, 24% disagreed).

WHERE
►TO

The segments differed on these statements in highly predictable ways – the **Flexibility Leaders**, **Stumble Before Run** and **Starting The Path** tended to have much more positive attitudes, while the **Not A Priority** and **Curious And Looking For Direction** had a more negative outlook.

To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
Our organisation would ensure the role or duties of a staff member returning to work after an illness or injury are appropriate to their capabilities	6%	46%	48%	**47%**	55%	55%	60%	**62%**	**60%**
Companies like mine can be expected to hire people with health conditions or disability*	24%	46%	30%	**28%**	28%	**47%**	**52%**	**46%**	**57%**
My workplace definitely could accommodate people with these conditions*	22%	49%	29%	**28%**	32%	**46%**	42%	42%	**52%**
My workplace has a clear policy regarding people returning to work after a health issue or injury	26%	47%	27%	**24%**	**43%**	**59%**	42%	**51%**	**64%**
We would be open to employing people with these conditions, but we don't know how to go about it	27%	60%	13%	**12%**	17%	15%	**23%**	17%	17%

■ Strongly disagree (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

Source: C5. To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766. Note: *Statement reversed; Bottom 3 - Strongly disagree (0-2)

Figure 8-9, and consistent with the findings in relation to responsibility for return to work for people with a disability (above, Figure 8-7), 37% of employers agreed that it is management or HR's responsibility to ensure that everyone's needs are accommodated – 20% felt that this responsibility rests with the employee themselves.
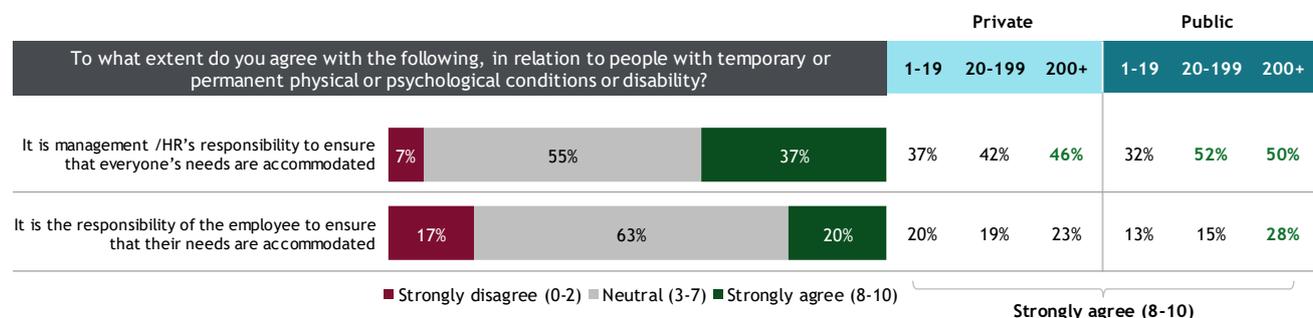
To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?				Private			Public		
				1-19	20-199	200+	1-19	20-199	200+
It is management /HR's responsibility to ensure that everyone's needs are accommodated	7%	55%	37%	37%	42%	**46%**	32%	**52%**	**50%**
It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their needs are accommodated	17%	63%	20%	20%	19%	23%	13%	15%	**28%**

■ Strongly disagree (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Strongly agree (8-10)

Strongly agree (8-10)

Source: C5. To what extent do you agree with the following, in relation to people with temporary or permanent physical or psychological conditions or disability?
Base: All Businesses, weighted, n=2,457. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=574; 20-199 employees, n=367; 200+ employees n=500. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=65; 20-199 employees, n=185; 200+ employees n=766.

Flexibility Leaders were significantly more likely to agree with both these statements, while Starting The Path were only more likely to agree with the notion that it is management's responsibility. This suggests that the Flexibility Leaders take a more holistic point of view, seeing it as the responsibility of both management and the employee to work out the accommodations together, where other segments tend to see the burden falling on management. Helping the broader employer population understand this point may help to reduce barriers.

9.   Scenario Testing

Employers were presented with a hypothetical situation (one of seven, randomly selected) in relation to employing someone with a disability. These scenarios presented positive examples of return to work processes, workplace modifications, the use of assistive technologies, changes to recruitment processes, and the future of work, and they demonstrated the impact on the employee, and emphasised their skills and capability.

After reading the scenario, employees were asked to indicate how the story made them feel about employing someone with a similar condition, to rate their openness to the possibility of employing or having someone work for them who may be experiencing a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition (depending on the scenario), and to rate their confidence in their ability to support a person with a similar condition to be an effective contributor to their company.

Individual openness was compared to the equivalent question asked earlier in the survey (for Scenarios 1-6), helping to identify which Scenarios affected the biggest 'uplift' in openness. A summary of the results is shown in Table 9-1. The results for each Scenario (ordered by overall positivity) follow.

Table 9-1: Scenario Summary

Scenario	Overall positivity	Uplift in Openness
Scenario 1 (perm. physical) Employer perspective	66%	+3pts
Scenario 2 (temp. physical) Employer perspective	75%	+5pts
Scenario 3 (perm. physical) Employee perspective	66%	+11pts
Scenario 4 (temp. physical) Employee perspective	70%	+8pts
Scenario 5 (perm. psychological) Employer perspective	55%	+13pts
Scenario 6 (perm. psychological) Employer perspective	58%	+13pts

Employers reacted most positively to the scenario outlining a return to work process for an injured employee, which had flow on effects in relation to unplanned leave and recruitment costs (see text box below, and Figure 9-1) – 75% of those who saw this scenario indicated they felt 'positive' about accommodating someone with a similar condition, while 22% said it made no difference to them.

However, the scenarios that showed employer perspectives on hiring people with permanent psychological condition generated the most change from the measure taken earlier in the survey.

Amy has a fairly strenuous physical job in warehousing and strained her back at work. This is a common occurrence at her company. The company decided it is important to have good incident reporting and triaging, quick access to immediate physiotherapy and a welfare check in place. Workers in the warehouse are called in the week before they are due to return to work to check that everything is ok, and be assured they are missed and will be welcome when they are ready to return. They are reassigned duties that are appropriate given their injury, and engaged in their return to work process. This systematic emotional and physical support has dramatically reduced the number of lost days and staff not returning to work, and also reduced the recruitment fees that the company has paid over the past year.

Figure 9-1: Scenario 2: Return to work processes
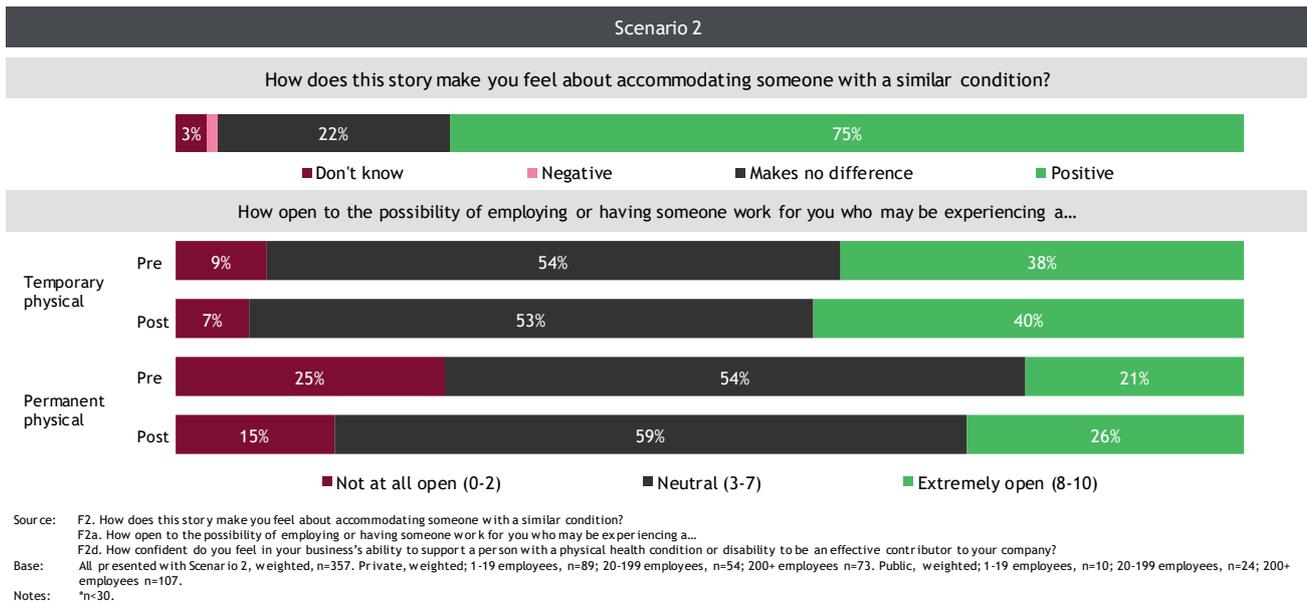
Seventy per cent of employers reacted positively to a scenario outlining workplace modifications for a temporarily injured employee (see text box below, and Figure 9-2), and 28% said it made no difference.

- Employers were significantly more open to employing someone with a temporary physical condition (from 26% to 53%) after reading this scenario, and slightly more positive about employing someone with a permanent physical condition post-scenario (15% to 23%, with more employers moving to a neutral position).

Amy loves her job at a book warehouse where she has made lots of good friends and gets to take home a book of her choice each week. A few months ago, she had an accident that hurt her back. Luckily, her workplace had an immediate response – they got a physio to look at her straight away and made sure she was alright. But the doctors recommended she take a month or so off work to get better – which she was really disappointed about. After a month had passed, she was still in a bit of pain, but she really wanted to get back into work. She talked to her boss about modifying her job so she wouldn't have to lift anything, and they worked out she could easily take charge of checking orders before they got loaded into the delivery vans. About a week before she was due to start back, her boss gave her a call, which really lifted her spirits and made her feel like she was needed and wanted back. Although she doesn't love her new role quite as much as what she used to do, she knows she'll be back out there soon, and is super happy to be working with her friends again.

Figure 9-2: Scenario 4: Workplace modifications

Scenario 4
How does this story make you feel about accommodating someone with a similar condition?

	Don't know	Negative	Makes no difference	Positive
			28%	70%

How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…

		Not at all open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely open (8-10)
Temporary physical	Pre	20%	54%	26%
	Post	15%	32%	53%
Permanent physical	Pre	42%	43%	15%
	Post	26%	50%	23%

Source: F4. How does this story make you feel about accommodating someone with a similar condition?
F4a. How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…
F4d. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
Base: All presented with Scenario 4, weighted, n=359. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=87; 20-199 employees, n=58; 200+ employees n=63. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=9; 20-199 employees, n=24; 200+ employees n=118.
Notes: *n<30.

Two thirds of employers (66%) reacted positively to a scenario outlining a highly trained and hard-working employee with a physical disability who requires the use of assistive technology (see text box below, and Figure 9-3) – 31% said this scenario made no difference to how they feel.

- Employers were significantly more open to employing someone with a permanent physical condition (from 22% to 33%) after reading this scenario. No real difference was recorded for openness to a temporary physical condition.

David is a highly trained accountant, who has a physical disability that requires him to use assistive technology at work. He's aware that not all employers are comfortable around him, and that they won't necessarily invest in the technology he needs. Despite this, he's managed to get a lot of experience and is willing to go above and beyond for employers who take him on. He works hard and tries hard to be the very best he can be – and he's proud that he often gets recommended to potential new employers whenever he's looking to move jobs.

Figure 9-3: Scenario 3: Assistive technology

Scenario 3
How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?

	Don't know	Negative	Makes no difference	Positive
		3%	31%	66%

How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…

		Not at all open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely open (8-10)
Temporary physical	Pre	16%	42%	43%
	Post	14%	41%	44%
Permanent physical	Pre	33%	45%	22%
	Post	22%	46%	33%

Source: F3. How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?
F3a. How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…
F3d. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
Base: All presented with Scenario 3, weighted, n=357. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=75; 20-199 employees, n=59; 200+ employees n=78. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=10; 20-199 employees, n=32; 200+ employees n=103.
Notes: *n<30.

WHERE ▶ TO

Two thirds of employers (66%) also reacted positively to a scenario where an employer invested in specialised computing equipment to accommodate an employee with a serious physical disability (see text box below, and Figure 9-4) – 25% said this scenario made no difference.

- Employers were slightly more open to employing someone with a temporary physical condition (from 27% to 31%) after reading this scenario. No real difference was recorded for openness to a permanent physical condition although employees tended towards a neutral stance post-scenario.

Liz runs a thriving food business. She's always had trouble finding finance managers who understand her business. Last year someone recommended David. She was a bit worried as David has a serious physical disability and needs assistive technology – including specialised computing equipment - to work. This wasn't a situation she'd ever had to deal with before. However, David's industry experience and air of reliability meant that she decided it was worth investing. Liz was able to claim some of the expenses involved in creating a suitable workplace for David from the Australian Government. They've now formed a really good working relationship and it's an area of the business she knows is in good hands.

Figure 9-4: Scenario 1: Assistive technology

Scenario 1
How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?

Don't know 5% | Negative 4% | Makes no difference 25% | Positive 66%

How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…

		Not at all open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely open (8-10)
Temporary physical	Pre	7%	66%	27%
	Post	7%	62%	31%
Permanent physical	Pre	25%	57%	18%
	Post	18%	62%	21%

Source: F1. How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?
F1a. How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…
F1d. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
Base: All presented with Scenario 1, weighted, n=353. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=91; 20-199 employees, n=41; 200+ employees n=77. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=12; 20-199 employees, n=27; 200+ employees n=105.
Notes: *n<30.

Fifty-eight per cent of employers reacted positively to a scenario where an employer significantly changed its recruitment processes to accommodate autistic applicants, who were uniquely suited to the jobs on offer (see text box below, and Figure 9-5) – 34% said this scenario made no difference.

- Employers were more open to both employing someone with a temporary psychological condition (from 29-35%) and a permanent psychological condition (19-32%) after reading this scenario (in addition, there was a large shift to neutral for permanent conditions).

Normally, when someone applies for a job at Big Tech Company and gets through the early stages of consideration—the resume screening, the phone interview, maybe a homework assignment to assess their skills—they're brought on campus for a day of intense back-to-back interviews with managers, where they're quizzed about their experience and, if they're applying for a technical position, asked to work out problems on the fly. This doesn't work so well for autistic people who get frazzled by unfamiliar experiences.

Now, Big Tech Company has a special program crafted especially for autistic applicants. The program does away with the typical interview approach, instead inviting candidates to hang out on campus for two weeks and work on projects while being observed and casually meeting managers who might be interested in hiring

them. Only at the end of this stage do more formal interviews take place. The goal is to create a situation that is better suited to autistic people's styles of communicating and thinking. This program was originated by two Big Tech Company executives who had children with a disability and realised that many autistic people are not only perfectly capable of meeting serious intellectual demands—they also can have qualities that are suited for tech jobs, such as being detail-oriented and methodical. They believed that by adjusting their hiring process, Big Tech Company could discover great candidates that other companies were overlooking.

Figure 9-5: Scenario 6: Recruitment processes

Scenario 6		
How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?		

	Don't know	Negative	Makes no difference	Positive
	5%	3%	34%	58%

How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a...

		Not at all open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely open (8-10)
Temporary psychological	Pre	17%	54%	29%
	Post	9%	56%	35%
Permanent psychological	Pre	33%	48%	19%
	Post	13%	55%	32%

Source: F6. How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?
F6a. How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a...
F6d. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
Base: All presented with Scenario 6, weighted, n=361. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=88; 20-199 employees, n=62; 200+ employees n=69. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=10; 20-199 employees, n=26; 200+ employees n=106.
Notes: *n<30.

Just over half of employers (55%) reacted positively to a scenario where a candidate was open about their psychological condition, changing the views of the employer (see text box below, and Figure 9-6) – a large minority (40%) said this scenario made no difference to how they feel.

- Employers were more open to both employing someone with a temporary psychological condition (from 22-33%) and a permanent psychological condition (13-26%) after reading this scenario.

Jenna works in a senior role in a large engineering firm. A few years ago, she interviewed a candidate for a senior role. This candidate told Janna that he had a psychological illness. He was successfully managing this illness with medication and hadn't had an episode in over 12 years. Jenna was surprised that the candidate was so open, and in the end decided that he was the best person for the job. Jenna now realises that the candidate bought to the table deep self-awareness, a keen mind, and profound emotional intelligence. She says that working closely with the candidate opened her eyes to finding talent.

Now, when she interviews new candidates Jenna asks them to tell her something deeply meaningful to them personally — if they can't share some vulnerability then they are not the right person for the job. Janna says: "They may be good, but they're not good enough to work in any business which demands that we be fully human."

Figure 9-6: Scenario 5: Candidate openness

Scenario 5
How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?

3% | 40% | 55%

■ Don't know ■ Negative ■ Makes no difference ■ Positive

How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…

		Not at all open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely open (8-10)
Temporary psychological	Pre	18%	60%	22%
	Post	15%	52%	33%
Permanent psychological	Pre	40%	47%	13%
	Post	27%	48%	26%

■ Not at all open (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Extremely open (8-10)

Source: F5. How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?
F5a. How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…
F5d. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
Base: All presented with Scenario 5, weighted, n=363. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=78; 20-199 employees, n=56; 200+ employees n=69. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=9; 20-199 employees, n=26; 200+ employees n=125.
Notes: *n<30.

When presented with a general scenario to consider, in relation to the future of work and rethinking what a 'job' is, 43% of employers felt 'positive' about employing someone with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition (see Figure 9-7).

As evident from the balance of the research findings, employers were more open to employing someone with a temporary condition (32%) than a permanent condition (18%, with 26% not open).

> Part of the future of work will involve re-thinking what a 'job' is. At the moment we accept that a certain bundle of tasks is a 'job' But actually this can involve a lot of unrelated tasks – some administrative, some technical, some involving people skills. It's likely that automation will mean unpacking these tasks – some jobs will be suitable for people, some won't. It's like the change from taxis to UBER. We won't look back.
>
> At the moment, we employ people with a disability or health condition if they are the right person for the job. But what if we could re-think the job…This might open up a lot more roles for people with a disability or psychological health condition – and that will be better for everyone!

Figure 9-7: Scenario 7: Rethinking work

Scenario 7
How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a temporary or permanent physical or psychological health condition or disability?

6% | 4% | 47% | 43%

■ Don't know ■ Negative ■ Makes no difference ■ Positive

How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…

		Not at all open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Extremely open (8-10)
Temporary condition	Post	12%	56%	32%
Permanent condition	Post	26%	57%	18%

■ Not at all open (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Extremely open (8-10)

Source: F7. How does this story make you feel about employing someone with a similar condition?
F7a. How open to the possibility of employing or having someone work for you who may be experiencing a…
F7d. How confident do you feel in your business's ability to support a person with a physical health condition or disability to be an effective contributor to your company?
Base: All presented with Scenario 7, weighted, n=370. Private, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=91; 20-199 employees, n=53; 200+ employees n=81. Public, weighted; 1-19 employees, n=7; 20-199 employees, n=29; 200+ employees n=109.
Notes: *n<30.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

10.1 Key Conclusions

This study provides several key insights around the state of employment for those experiencing disability or serious health conditions in Australia. We highlight below those we feel are most important to helping drive change with respect to the way employers approach hiring, retention and return to work decisions:

1. Many employers have significant barriers to hiring people with disability. These include perceptions, prejudices, and capability issues. However, the data clearly shows that once an organisation begins to build some experience in employing people with health conditions and with disability, many of these issues begin to fade.

2. Although there are employers with excellent attitudes towards hiring people with different ability, they represent a minority of employers. The Flexibility Leaders represent only 4% of organisations, although given they tend to represent the largest employers, they include a much larger proportion of employees.

3. The majority of employers fall into more negative segments. 96% of Australian businesses have fewer than 20 employees. Smaller organisations tend not to have a formal layer of human resource management, and this means the function is led by managers who may also be talking responsibility for finance, operations, marketing and customer service. They need to minimise the effort and energy required to manage staff, and their approach to employing people with health conditions and with disability y is framed by this imperative.

4. The segmentation identifies a 'stages of change' framework. Employers move from being Not A Priority, to segments that have lower barriers. They then move up the framework, Building Momentum towards hiring people with disability. The model also shows that as an organisation develops a stronger enabling framework of resourcing and cultural norms, and begins to hire more people with disability or serious health issue, they can come up against unforeseen issues and challenges that mean they sometime fail in their attempts at integration and deterred from further efforts. This is reflected in the 'Stumble Before Running' segment.

5. Those employers that report being most successful with respect to employing people with disability and health conditions practice a kind of 'strategic human resource flexibility' that extends to the workforce as a whole. This goes well beyond flexibility of working hours, into flexibility of role descriptions and scope and the recruitment stage, and throughout the employee's engagement with the company.

6. These employers also tend to report an 'investment' approach to their workforce, believing that there is greater organisational value in having happier healthier workers (as opposed to merely toeing the compliance line).

7. Another dominant paradigm of more open employers is that they see their employees as packages of characteristics – of which a disability may only be one relatively small area to accommodate. They look at the whole package when considering new hires and understand all the pros and cons. For the Not A Priority and Curious And Looking For Direction, the disability or health issue takes a more central focus.

8. The employers who were most open to employing people with health conditions and with disability were also two-and-a-half times as likely as the broader population to say they are 'rapidly growing'. Although this study cannot comment on causality, this highlights a clear link between performance and approach to human resource issues.

10.2 Recommendations

This study has raised a number of issues that need to be considered in the development of potential interventions to improve employment outcomes for those with disability and serious health conditions. The next phase of this project is an ideation and refinement process where the project team and stakeholders will develop a number of specific activities to test and develop.

However, the results of the study suggest that different segments will need different approaches. The 'Flexibility Leaders' can become advocates, while the 'Not A Priority' need direct support and encouragement to begin the journey through the stages of change.

We table below a broad framework for potential segment - targeted interventions below. This will be used as a starting point for ideation around specific approaches and activities.

However, the results also suggest a need for a broader cultural shift that helps all employers, large and small, to reduce and eliminate their prejudices in hiring decisions.

Flexibility Leaders	Stumble Before Run	Building Momentum	Starting the Path	Curious and Looking for Direction	Not a Priority
15% (2% wtd)[5]	24% (18% wtd)	17% (7% wtd)	12% (17% wtd)	15% (12% wtd)	17% (44% wtd)
Encourage integrated investment approach to work health and safety, encourage deeper commitment to strategic organisational flexibility					
Convert into advocates.	Build on experience. Help them tackle issues. Encourage the formalisation of policies.	Help build capacity. Encourage development of formal policies and initiatives. Model success stories.	Inform about available support. Link to services. Encourage development of formal policies and initiatives. Model success stories.	Sell benefits. Provide incentives Inform about available support. Link to services. Encourage development of formal policies and initiatives. Model success stories.	Need direct support and encouragement to begin journey. Sell benefits. Provide incentives. Provide templated policies and procedures Use of compliance 'stick', regulations.

Another point worthy of consideration is that as the NDIS rolls out across Australian states and territories, we believe there a range of opportunities to leverage NDIS activities and engagement that are worthy of further exploration and potential integration. This could include better links between local area coordinators, employment service providers and local businesses, individual incentives built into NDIS plans and incentives for NDIS service providers to help get their clients into work, among a range of other initiatives worth considering.

---

[5] The first percentage refers to the number of people completing the survey. The weighted proportion is the proportion of businesses in the Australian business population.

11. Appendix A

Participants' individual profile

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted[6]	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Gender		
Male	59%	n=1,439
Female	40%	n=993
Other/ prefer not to say	1%	n=25
Age		
18-34	14%	n=338
35-49	37%	n=914
50-64	44%	n=1,086
65+	5%	n=119
Business sector		
Private	59%	n=1,441
Public	41%	n=1,016
Business functions		
Operations	39%	n=958
Marketing/Sales	23%	n=561
Production	12%	n=306
Logistics	15%	n=360
IT	24%	n=581
Finance	28%	n=687
Human resources	35%	n=869
Management	60%	n=1,464
Other	15%	n=375
Business responsibility		
Recruitment/hiring staff	59%	n=1,460
Management of staff	80%	n=1,954
Development of staff policies and/or facilities	47%	n=1,150

---

[6] See the Background and methodology section for a discussion of the w

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted[6]	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Management of staff policies and/or facilities	49%	n=1,208
Supporting staff to return to work following illness or injury	31%	n=770
Other	1%	n=14
Work title		
Director	11%	n=281
CEO	4%	n=107
Owner	8%	n=204
Department Head	10%	n=244
Manager/ Team leader	28%	n=676
Human Resources	3%	n=83
Hiring/recruitment manager	1%	n=25
Manager	20%	n=483
Team member	10%	n=235
Assistant	2%	n=52
Trainee	<1%	n=5
Volunteer	<1%	n=4
Freelancer	<1%	n=6
Other	2%	n=52
Department currently working in		
Marketing / Sales	9%	n=225
Operations	27%	n=672
Logistics	2%	n=52
Manufacturing	2%	n=54
Human Resources	10%	n=236
Finance	8%	n=208
Policy	5%	n=118
IT	6%	n=148
Program/service delivery	16%	n=404
Other	14%	n=340
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)		

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted[6]	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Yes	3%	n=70
No	96%	n=2,371
Don't know / prefer not to answer	1%	n=16
Culturally or linguistically diverse (CALD)		
Yes	14%	n=352
No	85%	n=2,095
Prefer not to answer	<1%	n=10
Language(s) other than English spoken at home		
Italian	19%	n=67
Greek	8%	n=27
Arabic	4%	n=13
Cantonese	10%	n=35
Mandarin	5%	n=19
Vietnamese	3%	n=11
Spanish	5%	n=16
Turkish	1%	n=3
Bahasa	2%	n=7
Bosnian	1%	n=5
Farsi	<1%	n=1
Hindi	5%	n=18
Sinhalese	1%	n=3
Tamil	2%	n=6
Urdu	<1%	n=1
Other	41%	n=143
Time employed by current workplace		
Less than 6 months	3%	n=70
6-12 months	4%	n=87
1-2 years	7%	n=167
2-5 years	17%	n=428
5-10 years	24%	n=594
More than 10 years	45%	n=1,111

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted[6]	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Personal permanent limitations, restrictions, impairments or medical conditions which restricts everyday activities		
Yes	13%	n=327
No	86%	n=2,103
Prefer not to answer	1%	n=27
Know someone with permanent limitations, restrictions, impairments or medical conditions which restricts everyday activities		
Yes	62%	n=1,513
No	38%	n=922
Prefer not to answer	1%	n=22
Total sample		n=2,457

Participants' business profile

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Business size (number of employees)		
1-19	26%	n=639
20-199	22%	n=552
200+	50%	n=1,230
Business location (State)		
NSW	30%	n=729
VIC	26%	n=651
ACT	5%	n=119
QLD	17%	n=411
NT	1%	n=31
WA	10%	n=256
SA	9%	n=209
TAS	2%	n=51
Business industry		
Mining	1%	n=36
Manufacturing	4%	n=95

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Construction	4%	n=106
Wholesale Trade	3%	n=82
Transport, postal and warehousing	3%	n=72
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste services	2%	n=38
Retail Trade	6%	n=139
Accommodation and food services	2%	n=51
Information media and telecommunications	3%	n=85
Financial and insurance services	6%	n=139
Rental, hiring and real estate services	2%	n=38
Professional, scientific and technical services	11%	n=266
Administration and support services	4%	n=90
Public administration and safety	10%	n=239
Education and training	14%	n=339
Health care and social assistance	14%	n=356
Arts and recreation services	2%	n=47
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2%	n=41
Other	8%	n=198
Business location (Metro/Regional)		
A capital city	77%	n=1,880
A major regional centre	13%	n=330
A country town	6%	n=150
A regional or remote locality	3%	n=85
Other	<1%	n=12
Length of operation		
Less than 5 years	8%	n=80
5 to 10 years	14%	n=132
10 to 20 years	17%	n=168
More than 20 years	60%	n=581
Rate of business growth		
Rapidly growing	9%	n=87
Growing	37%	n=358

WHERE ▸TO

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Stable	48%	n=457
Shrinking	6%	n=59
Annual company revenue		
Up to $50,000	1%	n=28
$50,001 to $200,000	4%	n=99
$200,001 to $500,000	5%	n=112
$500,001 to $1,000,000	5%	n=134
$1,000,001 to $2,000,000	6%	n=152
$2,000,001 to $5,000,000	8%	n=197
$5,000,001 to $10,000,000	7%	n=177
$10,000,001 to $50,000,000	11%	n=279
More than $50,000,000	21%	n=509
I prefer not to answer	8%	n=208
Don't know	23%	n=562
Australian stock exchange status		
Business listed on Australian stock exchange	14%	n=204
Subsidiary or related entity of a business listed on ASX	4%	n=63
Business not listed on ASX	75%	n=1,084
Don't know	6%	n=90
Type of public sector role currently working in		
Federal Government Department	22%	n=199
State Government Department	49%	n=443
Local Government	9%	n=85
Frontline service or agency	24%	n=215
Don't know	1%	n=11
Proportion of organisation that falls into the following job classifications (average)		
Managers	21%	-
Professional	34%	-
Technicians and trade worker	17%	-
Community and personal service workers	10%	-

Participant Specifications	Sample achieved (%) - unweighted	Sample achieved (n) - unweighted
Clerical and Administrative workers	19%	-
Sales workers	13%	-
Machinery operators and drivers	7%	-
Labourers	10%	-
Don't know	0%	-
Proportion of organisation's employment status (average)		
Full-time	68%	-
Part-time	23%	-
Casual	17%	-
Volunteer	6%	-
Don't know	0%	-
Proportion of organisation's workers with temporary or permanent physical or psychological disabilities or conditions employment status (average)		
Full-time	63%	-
Part-time	41%	-
Casual	31%	-
Volunteer	13%	-
Don't know	0%	-
Company length of operation		
Less than 12 months	1%	n=22
1-2 years	2%	n=53
3-4 years	4%	n=97
5-7 years	6%	n=150
8-10 years	6%	n=146
More than 10 years	81%	n=1,989
Total sample		n=2,457

12. Appendix B – Segment profiles

Flexibility Leaders

Figure 12-1: Flexibility Leaders - Firmographics

Flexibility Leaders – Firmographics (%)

SECTOR

61% Public

35% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS **LISTED** ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

56% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS **NOT LISTED** ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE
- Federal Government — 34% ▲
- State Government — 45%
- Local Government — 8%
- Frontline service/agency — 19% ▼

82% ARE **EMPLOYED** BY A COMPANY WITH **MORE THAN 200 EMPLOYEES**

BUSINESS GROWTH
- Rapidly growing — 26% ▲
- Growing — 42%
- Stable — 29% ▼
- Shrinking — 3%

33% of **FLEXIBILITY LEADERS** ARE **MANAGERS / TEAM LEADERS** IN THEIR ORGANISATION

FLEXIBILITY LEADERS MENTIONED ON AVERAGE THAT **66%** OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS EMPLOYEES ARE **FULL-TIME**

20% ARE **EMPLOYED** BY A COMPANY IN THE **HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE** INDUSTRY

41% of **FLEXIBILITY LEADERS** ARE EMPLOYED BY A **COMPANY** THAT EARNS **MORE THAN $50,000,000 p.a.**

Base: Flexibility Leaders segment, unweighted, n=413.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Figure 12-2: Flexibility Leaders - Organisational culture and policies

Flexibility Leaders – Organisational culture and policies

OPENNESS TO EMPLOYING
- Temporary physical — 17% | 82% ▲
- Permanent physical — 28% | 70% ▲
- Temporary psychological — 24% | 74% ▲
- Permanent psychological — 40% | 57% ▲

■ Not open (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Open (8-10)

COMPANY POLICIES
- Recruitment — 82% ▲ / 61% ▲ — NET FORMAL 97%
- Return to work — 92% ▲ / 71% ▲ — NET INFORMAL 78%
- Retention — 71% ▲ / 60% ▲
- None of these — 1% ▼ / 7%
- Don't know — 2% ▼ / 15%

■ Formal ■ Informal

97% are **EXTREMELY CONFIDENT** in their business' ability to employ

56% agree their company have **HIGH CAPACITY** to employ

97% AGREE THERE ARE **SUITABLE ROLES** FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

PROCESSES MANAGED (LAST 2 YEARS)
- Recruited/ hired — Temporary 69% ▲ / Permanent 84% — NET 87%
- Worked to actively retain or accommodate — Temporary 83% ▲ / Permanent 81% ▲ — NET 89%
- Managed the RTW process — Temporary 85% ▲ / Permanent 74% ▲ — NET 88%

47% believe their company is **EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE**

Base: Flexibility Leaders segment, unweighted, n=413.
Note: Company Policies; Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level within subgroups (formal and informal).
Note: Confident scale (not at all confident – extremely confident); Capacity scale (No capacity – high capacity).
Note: Supportive culture scale (Not at all supportive – extremely supportive).

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

WHERE TO

Figure 12-3: Flexibility Leaders - Company programs and processes

Flexibility Leaders – Company programs and processes

16% INDICATE THEIR FOCUS IS TO **COMPLY WITH WHS AND FAIR WORK LAW** ✓

PROGRAMS AND INITITIATIVES

Physical hazards	82% ▲
Confidential counselling	78% ▲
Harassment policy and training	77% ▲
Support programs covering workplace stress and communication	72% ▲
Chemical hazard	65% ▲

82% EMPLOY PROGRAMS REGARDING **PHYSICAL HAZARDS** ⚠

78% PROVIDE **CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING**

80% MAKE **MODIFICATIONS TO TASKS**

74% PROVIDE **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**

PROCESSES / MODIFICATIONS

Physical modifications of buildings	80% ▲
Modifications to tasks	79% ▲
Provision of special equipment	74% ▲
Modifications to responsibilities	72% ▲
Training	71% ▲

88% AGREE THAT **WORK BRINGS A LOT TO PEOPLE'S LIVES INCLUDING SATISFACTION** AND **SOCIAL INTERACTION**

Base: Flexibility Leaders segment, unweighted, n=413.
Note: Quotes sourced from open-ended questions.
Note: Programs and Initiatives; Top 5 charted. Processes/Modifications; Top 5 charted.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Stumble Before Run

Figure 12-4: Stumble Before Run - Firmographics

Stumble Before Run – Firmographics (%)

SECTOR

54% Private

18% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE
71% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS NOT LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE

Federal Government	15% ▼
State Government	58% ▲
Local Government	11%
Frontline service/agency	23%

55% ARE **EMPLOYED** BY A COMPANY WITH **MORE THAN 200 EMPLOYEES**

BUSINESS GROWTH

Rapidly growing	10%
Growing	41%
Stable	44%
Shrinking	5%

29% of the **STUMBLE BEFORE RUN** SEGMENT ARE **MANAGERS / TEAM LEADERS** IN THEIR ORGANISATION

STUMBLE BEFORE RUN MENTIONED ON AVERAGE THAT **65%** OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS EMPLOYEES ARE **FULL-TIME**

17% ARE **EMPLOYED** BY A COMPANY IN THE **EDUCATION AND TRAINING** INDUSTRY

22% of the **STUMBLE BEFORE RUN** SEGMENT ARE EMPLOYED BY A **COMPANY** THAT EARNS **MORE THAN $50,000,000 p.a.**

Base: Stumble Before Run segment, unweighted, n=666.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Where ►TO

Figure 12-5: Stumble Before Run - Organisational culture and policies

Stumble Before Run – Organisational culture and policies

OPENNESS TO EMPLOYING

	Not open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Open (8-10)
Temporary physical		43%	55% ▲
Permanent physical	6%	58%	36%
Temporary psychological		53%	44%
Permanent psychological	11%	64%	25%

■ Not open (0-2) ■ Neutral (3-7) ■ Open (8-10)

COMPANY POLICIES

	Formal	Informal
Recruitment	26%	36% ▲
Return to work	66%	74% ▲
Retention	26%	49% ▲
None of these	13% ▼	8% ▼
Don't know	14% ▼	0% ▼

■ Formal ■ Informal

NET FORMAL 73%

NET INFORMAL 92%

22% are **EXTREMELY CONFIDENT** in their business' ability to employ

12% agree their company have **HIGH CAPACITY** to employ

18% believe their company is **EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE**

90% AGREE THERE ARE **SUITABLE ROLES** FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

PROCESSES MANAGED (LAST 2 YEARS)

			NET
Recruited/ hired	Temporary	33% ▲	NET 42%
	Permanent	29%	
Worked to actively retain or accommodate	Temporary	59% ▲	NET 66%
	Permanent	47% ▲	
Managed the RTW process	Temporary	63% ▲	NET 67%
	Permanent	39% ▲	

Base: Stumble Before Run segment, unweighted, n=666.
Note: Company Policies; Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level within subgroups (formal and informal).
Note: Confident scale (not at all confident – extremely confident); Capacity scale (No capacity – high capacity).
Note: Supportive culture scale (Not at all supportive – extremely supportive).

▲ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean ▼ at the 95% confidence level

Figure 12-6: Stumble Before Run - Company programs and processes

Stumble Before Run – Company programs and processes

44% INDICATE THEIR FOCUS IS TO COMPLY WITH WHS AND FAIR WORK LAW

PROGRAMS AND INTITITIVES

Physical hazards	72% ▲
Harassment policy and training	60% ▲
Chemical hazard	59% ▲
Confidential counselling	57% ▲
Support programs covering workplace stress and communication	54% ▲

72% EMPLOY PROGRAMS REGARDING **PHYSICAL HAZARDS**

57% PROVIDE **CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING**

59% MAKE **MODIFICATIONS TO TASKS**

28% PROVIDE **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**

PROCESSES / MODIFICATIONS

Modifications to tasks	59% ▲
Physical modifications of buildings	53% ▲
Modifications to responsibilities	52% ▲
Training	44% ▲
Provision of special equipment	42% ▲

88% AGREE THEIR WORKPLACE HAS A CLEAR POLICY REGARDING PEOPLE **RETURNING TO WORK AFTER A HEALTH ISSUE OR INJURY**

Base: Stumble Before Run segment, unweighted, n=666.
Note: Quotes sourced from open-ended questions.
Note: Programs and Initiatives; Top 5 charted. Processes/Modifications; Top 5 charted.

▲ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean ▼ at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ►TO

Building Momentum

Figure 12-7: Building Momentum - Firmographics

Building Momentum – Firmographics (%)

SECTOR
55% Public

17% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

64% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS NOT LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE
- Federal Government: 22%
- State Government: 41% ▼
- Local Government: 10%
- Frontline service/agency: 31% ▲

62% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY WITH MORE THAN 200 EMPLOYEES

BUSINESS GROWTH
- Rapidly growing: 9%
- Growing: 36%
- Stable: 51%
- Shrinking: 5%

32% OF THOSE BUILDING MOMENTUM ARE MANAGERS / TEAM LEADERS IN THEIR ORGANISATION

THE BUILDING MOMENTUM SEGMENT MENTIONED ON AVERAGE THAT **67%** OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS EMPLOYEES ARE FULL-TIME

19% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING INDUSTRY

38% OF THE BUILDING MOMENTUM SEGMENT DON'T KNOW THE ANNUAL REVENUE OF THEIR COMPANY

Base: Building Momentum segment, unweighted, n=473.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Figure 12-8: Building Momentum - Organisational culture and policies

Building Momentum – Organisational culture and policies

OPENNESS TO EMPLOYING
	Not open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Open (8-10)
Temporary physical		45%	52%
Permanent physical	6%	56%	38%
Temporary psychological	6%	48%	46%
Permanent psychological	12%	59%	29%

COMPANY POLICIES
- Recruitment: 20% ▼ / 0%
- Return to work: 38% ▼ / 0%
- Retention: 15% ▼ / 0%
- None of these: 4% / 0%
- Don't know: 56% ▲ / 100%

NET FORMAL 40%
NET INFORMAL 0%

■ Formal ■ Informal

15% are EXTREMELY CONFIDENT in their business' ability to employ

13% agree their company have HIGH CAPACITY to employ

13% DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY SUITABLE ROLES FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

PROCESSES MANAGED (LAST 2 YEARS)
Recruited/ hired	Temporary	23% ▼	NET 29%
	Permanent	20% ▼	
Worked to actively retain or accommodate	Temporary	49%	NET 56%
	Permanent	37%	
Managed the RTW process	Temporary	53%	NET 56%
	Permanent	27% ▼	

12% believe their company is EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE

Base: Building Momentum segment, unweighted, n=473.
Note: Company Policies; Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level within subgroups (formal and informal).
Note: Confident scale (not at all confident – extremely confident); Capacity scale (No capacity – high capacity).
Note: Supportive culture scale (Not at all supportive – extremely supportive).

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ►TO

Figure 12-9: Building Momentum - Company programs and processes

Building Momentum – Company programs and processes

41% INDICATE THEIR FOCUS IS TO COMPLY WITH WHS AND FAIR WORK LAW

PROGRAMS AND INTITIATIVES

Physical hazards	68%
Harassment policy and training	61% ▲
Chemical hazard	57% ▲
Confidential counselling	56% ▲
Support programs covering workplace stress and communication	53% ▲

61% EMPLOY HARASSMENT POLICY AND TRAINING

56% PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING

44% MAKE MODIFICATIONS TO TASKS

28% ENSURE THERE IS ASSISTANCE FROM A SUPPORT PERSON

PROCESSES / MODIFICATIONS

Modifications to tasks	44% ▼
Physical modifications of buildings	41%
Modifications to responsibilities	38% ▼
Training	35%
Provision of special equipment	32%

65% AGREE WORK BRINGS A LOT TO PEOPLE'S LIVES INCLUDING SATISFACTION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Base: Building Momentum segment, unweighted, n=473.
Note: Quotes sourced from open-ended questions.
Note: Programs and Initiatives; Top 5 charted. Processes/Modifications; Top 5 charted.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Starting The Path

Figure 12-10: Starting The Path - Firmographics

Starting The Path – Firmographics (%)

SECTOR

67% Private

ONLY **8%** EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

82% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS NOT LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE

Federal Government	29%
State Government	49%
Local Government	10%
Frontline service/agency	16%

62% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY WITH LESS THAN 200 EMPLOYEES

BUSINESS GROWTH

Rapidly growing	6%
Growing	41%
Stable	49%
Shrinking	4%

16% of the STARTING THE PATH SEGMENT ARE DIRECTOR'S IN THEIR ORGANISATION

STARTING THE PATH MENTIONED ON AVERAGE THAT **72%** OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS EMPLOYEES ARE FULL-TIME

12% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SAFETY INDUSTRY

11% of the STARTING THE PATH SEGMENT ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY THAT EARNS BETWEEN 2 AND 5 MILLION

Base: Starting The Path segment, unweighted, n=245.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ▸ TO

Figure 12-11: Starting The Path - Organisational culture and policies

Starting The Path – Organisational culture and policies

OPENNESS TO EMPLOYING

	Not open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Open (8-10)
Temporary physical	7%	46%	47%
Permanent physical	19%	55%	27% ▼
Temporary psychological	9%	44%	46%
Permanent psychological	24%	55%	21% ▼

COMPANY POLICIES

Formal / *Informal*

	Formal	Informal	
Recruitment	33%	38% ▲	NET FORMAL 80%
Return to work	73% ▲	67% ▲	
Retention	47% ▲	51% ▲	NET INFORMAL 80%
None of these	15% ▼	11% ▼	
Don't know	5% ▼	9% ▼	

21% are **EXTREMELY CONFIDENT** in their business' ability to employ

18% agree their company have **HIGH CAPACITY** to employ

80% AGREE THERE ARE **SUITABLE ROLES** FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

PROCESSES MANAGED (LAST 2 YEARS)

Recruited/ hired	Temporary	16% ▼	NET 16%
	Permanent	0% ▼	
Worked to actively retain or accommodate	Temporary	37% ▼	NET 40%
	Permanent	20% ▼	
Managed the RTW process	Temporary	40% ▼	NET 43%
	Permanent	18% ▼	

20% believe their company is **EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE**

Base: Starting The Path segment, unweighted, n=245.
Note: Company Policies; Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level within subgroups (formal and informal).
Note: Confident scale (not at all confident – extremely confident); Capacity scale (No capacity – high capacity).
Note: Supportive culture scale (Not at all supportive – extremely supportive).

▲ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean
▼ at the 95% confidence level

Figure 12-12: Starting The Path - Company programs and processes

Starting The Path – Company programs and processes

29% INDICATE THEIR FOCUS IS TO **COMPLY WITH WHS AND FAIR WORK LAW**

PROGRAMS AND INITITIATIVES

Physical hazards	66%
Harassment policy and training	66% ▲
Support programs covering workplace stress and communication	56% ▲
Confidential counselling	52%
Chemical hazard	51%

66% EMPLOY **HARASSMENT POLICY AND TRAINING**

46% ENGAGE IN **TEAM BONDING EXPERIENCES**

58% MAKE **MODIFICATIONS TO TASKS**

40% ENSURE THERE IS **ASSISTANCE FROM A SUPPORT PERSON**

PROCESSES / MODIFICATIONS

Modifications to tasks	58% ▲
Physical modifications of buildings	47%
Modifications to responsibilities	47%
Training	44%
Assistance from a support person or colleague	40%

**77%** AGREE **WORK BRINGS A LOT TO PEOPLE'S LIVES** INCLUDING **SATISFACTION** AND **SOCIAL INTERACTION**

Base: Starting The Path segment, unweighted, n=245.
Note: Quotes sourced from open-ended questions.
Note: Programs and Initiatives; Top 5 charted. Processes/Modifications; Top 5 charted.

▲ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean
▼ at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ►TO

Curious And Looking For Direction

Figure 12-13: Curious And Looking For Direction - Firmographics

Curious And Looking For Direction – Firmographics (%)

SECTOR

71% Private

12% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

77% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS NOT LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE

Federal Government	11% ▼
State Government	58%
Local Government	6%
Frontline service/agency	29%

37% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY WITH 1-19 EMPLOYEES

BUSINESS GROWTH

Rapidly growing	7%
Growing	40%
Stable	46%
Shrinking	8%

29% OF CURIOUS AND LOOKING FOR DIRECTION ARE MANAGERS / TEAM LEADERS IN THEIR ORGANISATION

THE CURIOUS AND LOOKING FOR DIRECTION MENTIONED ON AVERAGE THAT **72%** OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS EMPLOYEES ARE FULL-TIME

9% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY IN THE RETAIL TRADE AND **7%** IN MANUFACTURING

ONLY **13%** OF CURIOUS AND LOOKING FOR DIRECTION ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY THAT EARNS MORE THAN $50,000,000 p.a.

Base: Curious And Looking For Direction segment, unweighted, n=313.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Figure 12-14: Curious And Looking For Direction - Organisational culture and policies

Curious And Looking For Direction – Organisational culture and policies

OPENNESS TO EMPLOYING

	Not open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Open (8-10)
Temporary physical	11%	62%	27% ▼
Permanent physical	28%	56%	16% ▼
Temporary psychological	20%	58%	22% ▼
Permanent psychological	34%	55%	11% ▼

COMPANY POLICIES

	Formal	Informal
Recruitment	5%	6% ▼
Return to work	34% ▼	32% ▼
Retention	8% ▼	16% ▼
None of these	19%	9% ▼
Don't know	40% ▲	47% ▲

NET FORMAL 41%

NET INFORMAL 43%

■ Formal ■ Informal

7% are EXTREMELY CONFIDENT in their business' ability to employ

Only **4%** agree their company have HIGH CAPACITY to employ

65% AGREE THERE ARE SUITABLE ROLES FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

PROCESSES MANAGED (LAST 2 YEARS)

			NET
Recruited/ hired	Temporary	7% ▼	NET 7%
	Permanent	0% ▼	
Worked to actively retain or accommodate	Temporary	30% ▼	NET 32%
	Permanent	13% ▼	
Managed the RTW process	Temporary	35% ▼	NET 37%
	Permanent	13% ▼	

Only **6%** believe their company is EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE

Base: Curious And Looking For Direction segment, unweighted, n=313.
Note: Company Policies; Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level within subgroups (formal and informal).
Note: Confident scale (not at all confident – extremely confident); Capacity scale (No capacity – high capacity).
Note: Supportive culture scale (Not at all supportive – extremely supportive).

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ▶ TO

Figure 12-15: Curious And Looking For Direction - Company programs and processes

Curious And Looking For Direction – Company programs and processes

54% ✓
INDICATE THEIR FOCUS IS TO COMPLY WITH WHS AND FAIR WORK LAW

PROGRAMS AND INITITIVES

Physical hazards	57%
Harassment policy and training	45% ▼
Chemical hazard	42% ▼
Confidential counselling	41%
Biological hazards	31% ▼

45% EMPLOY HARASSMENT POLICY AND TRAINING

27% PROVIDE SUPPORT PROGRAMS ABOUT STRESS AND COMMUNICATION

29% MAKE MODIFICATIONS TO TASKS

31% HAVE NO PROCESSES IN PLACE

PROCESSES / MODIFICATIONS

None	31% ▲
Modifications to tasks	29% ▼
Modifications to responsibilities	22% ▼
Physical modifications of buildings	21% ▼
Training	20% ▼

50% AGREE WORK BRINGS A LOT TO PEOPLE'S LIVES INCLUDING SATISFACTION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Base: Curious And Looking For Direction segment, unweighted, n=313.
Note: Quotes sourced from open-ended questions.
Note: Programs and Initiatives; Top 5 charted. Processes/Modifications; Top 5 charted.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

Not A Priority

Figure 12-16: Not A Priority - Firmographics

Not A Priority – Firmographics (%)

SECTOR

92% Private

2% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE
93% EMPLOYED BY A BUSINESS NOT LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE

Federal Government	10%
State Government	50%
Local Government	10%
Frontline service/agency	30%

74% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY WITH 1-19 EMPLOYEES

BUSINESS GROWTH

Rapidly growing	4% ▼
Growing	27% ▼
Stable	59% ▲
Shrinking	10% ▲

30% of NOT A PRIORITY ARE OWNERS OF THEIR ORGANISATION

NOT A PRIORITY MENTIONED ON AVERAGE THAT **27%** OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS EMPLOYEES ARE CASUAL

16% ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY IN THE PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

15% of NOT A PRIORITY ARE EMPLOYED BY A COMPANY THAT EARNS BETWEEN $200,000 and $500,000 p.a.

Base: Not A Priority segment, unweighted, n=347.

▲▼ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ▸TO

Figure 12-17: Not A Priority - Organisational culture and policies

Not A Priority – Organisational culture and policies

OPENNESS TO EMPLOYING

	Not open (0-2)	Neutral (3-7)	Open (8-10)
Temporary physical	20%	51%	29% ▼
Permanent physical	36%	46%	18% ▼
Temporary psychological	24%	54%	23% ▼
Permanent psychological	42%	44%	14% ▼

COMPANY POLICIES

	Formal	Informal
Recruitment	0%	0%
Return to work	0%	0%
Retention	0%	0%
None of these	100%	100%
Don't know	0%	0%

Resistant and risk averse report no policies within their organisation around recruitment, return to work and retention

5% are **EXTREMELY CONFIDENT** in their business' ability to employ

Only **3%** agree their company have **HIGH CAPACITY** to employ

10% believe their company is **EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE**

36% **AGREE THERE ARE NO SUITABLE ROLES FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION**

PROCESSES MANAGED (LAST 2 YEARS)

|			NET
Recruited/ hired	Temporary	7% ▼	NET 10%
	Permanent	7% ▼	
Worked to actively retain or accommodate	Temporary	17% ▼	NET 19%
	Permanent	9% ▼	
Managed the RTW process	Temporary	14% ▼	NET 16%
	Permanent	4% ▼	

Base: Not A Priority segment, unweighted, n=347.
Note: Company Policies; Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean at the 95% confidence level within subgroups (formal and informal).
Note: Confident scale (not at all confident – extremely confident); Capacity scale (No capacity – high capacity).
Note: Supportive culture scale (Not at all supportive – extremely supportive).

▲ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean ▼ at the 95% confidence level

Figure 12-18: Not A Priority - Company programs and processes

Not A Priority – Company programs and processes

49% **INDICATE THEIR FOCUS IS TO COMPLY WITH WHS AND FAIR WORK LAW**

PROGRAMS AND INTITIATIVES

Physical hazards	40% ▼
Don't know	31% ▲
Chemical hazard	25% ▼
Harassment policy and training	20% ▼
Biological hazards	13% ▼

20% EMPLOY **HARASSMENT POLICY AND TRAINING**

10% PROVIDE **HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENTS**

62% HAVE **NO PROCESSES IN PLACE**

12% ENSURE **THERE IS ASSISTANCE FROM A SUPPORT PERSON**

PROCESSES / MODIFICATIONS

None	62% ▲
Modifications to responsibilities	14% ▼
Modifications to tasks	13% ▼
Assistance from a support person or colleague	12% ▼
Don't know	10%

46% AGREE **A PERSON'S JOB FIT DEPENDS ON THEIR ATTITUDE TO WORK**

Base: Not A Priority segment, unweighted, n=347.
Note: Quotes sourced from open-ended questions.
Note: Programs and Initiatives; Top 5 charted. Processes/Modifications; Top 5 charted.

▲ Arrows represent a significant difference from the mean ▼ at the 95% confidence level

WHERE ▶ TO