



Improving employment opportunities through accessible design: a case study from Australia

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has launched [IncludeAbility](#), a four-part project to increase meaningful employment opportunities for disabled Australians. The project includes:

- the formation of an Employer Network comprised of some of Australia's largest private and public sector employers who have committed to improving employment conditions for disabled people
- an Ambassador Advisory Group of individuals with lived experience of disability
- a web portal hosting a range of resources to support both disabled people seeking employment and employers wanting to create meaningful opportunities for disabled people (includability.gov.au)
- two innovative pilot work programs to be co-designed with the Employer Network.

Why the AHRC undertook this work

Nearly one in five Australians are disabled, yet employment and economic outcomes for people in this group are poor overall. Disabled people make up 37.9% of the population living in poverty, despite making up only 18% of Australia's overall population. Low employment participation rates among disabled people of working age (18-54 years) compared with the working-age population more broadly have remained relatively unchanged for 20 years.

The aim of IncludeAbility is to build capacity in organisations to reduce barriers that disabled people face in employment. This means improving employment pathways and workplace conditions, promoting disabled people's access and inclusion, and reviewing progress on an ongoing basis.

Accessibility

The AHRC launched the IncludeAbility website in September 2021. With resources for employers, as well as disabled individuals seeking employment, the website was designed to be accessible and usable for all audiences.

The design process included access audits and extensive user testing with blind people and people with low-vision, neurodiverse people and those with less mobility to make sure that accessibility considerations were embedded into the creation of the website and all published resources. All fact sheets and guides for disabled people have been published with an additional Easy Read option.

The result

The AHRC has received positive feedback following the launch of the IncludeAbility website for its content, accessibility and useability, including from members of the Ambassador Advisory Group and disabled members of the public. A member of the IncludeAbility Employer Network said:



IncludeAbility has created a much-needed resource for employers who are not only committed to diversity and inclusion, but **genuinely want to take practical steps to be disability inclusive**. By providing simple, easy to use resources, the IncludeAbility website strips away much of the complexity in this area.

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IncludeAbility Employer Network member

The AHRC continues to monitor engagement with the website. Among the most accessed resources are:

- [Hosting accessible and inclusive online meetings and events](#)
- [Creating an accessible and inclusive workplace](#)
- [The economic and business benefits of employing people with disability](#)

A number of new resources are scheduled to be published as part of the IncludeAbility project in 2022.

