

Apprentices and trainees with disabilities: Profiting from participation and completion?

NCVER Research Forum – Realising our potential: Widening participation
through education and training

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Adjunct A/Professor Greg Lewis, EDGE Employment Solutions
Jeff Priday, Group Training Australia
Dr Ken Baker, National Disability Services

What the project is about

- Previous research suggests that work-based training is an effective and beneficial vocational pathway for people with disability by enhancing economic and social outcomes
- The project particularly develops two previous studies carried out with EDGE Employment Solutions in WA that indicated the benefits of specialist support programs and good graduate outcomes for people with disability
 - (Lewis, Thoresen and Cocks 2011a, 2011b)
- Build an evidence base that examines economic and social outcomes achieved by apprenticeship and traineeship graduates

How disability is defined

- Moved from a diagnostic to a functional definition (WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health [ICF] 2001)
- Different operational definitions in Australia:
 - ABS (2010a) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Careers 2009: 14.5% working age Australians with disability (full ICF)
 - ABS (2010b) Survey of Education and Training Experience: 32.5% of working age Australians with disability (ICF short form)
 - Disability Support Pension (DSP) eligibility is a combination of diagnostic and support need (and other) criteria
 - Many administrative definitions
- Our study used administrative identification and self-report

Disability in Australia: Survey of disability, ageing and carers 2012 (ABS 2013)

- 4.2 million (18.5%) with disability
- 1.4 million Australians (6.1%) have profound or severe core activity limitation
- Labour force: participation rates (unemployment rates)

No disability:	82.5% (4.9%)
All with reported disability:	52.8% (9.4%)
Mild core activity limitation:	55.4% (9.4%)
Moderate core activity limitation:	46.7% (10.3%)
Severe core activity limitation:	35.9% (9.5%)
Profound core activity limitation:	20.0% (12.7%)

Education and VET

Administrative data show consistently low apprenticeship, traineeship, and VET participation and completion rates for people with disabilities (National Apprentices and Trainee Collection & National VET Provider Collection, NCVET 2013)

- People with disability made up 1.2%-2.3% of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements between 1998-2011 (1.6% in 2011)
- People with disability made up 4.9%-6.4% of VET students between 2002-2012 (6.4% in 2012)
- 46% of apprentices and trainees complete their courses compared with 51% of those without a disability (Ball & John, 2005)
- 66% of students with a disability pass their course requirements compared to 73% of students without disability (National VET Provider Collection, cited in NVEAC 2013)
- Annual growth rate of VET students with disability, 4.3%, was 2.5 times that of the growth rate of VET students without disability (1.4%)

Exclusion of people with disability and the impact of enhanced participation

- People with disability and their families are economically disadvantaged (OECD 2003, 2007, 2010) which becomes a ***social determinant*** of related outcomes such as poor health (WHO 2011)
- Over a quarter of people with disabilities in Australia live below the 50% median income poverty line (ACOSS 2013)
- Increasing disability employment by a third can lead to:
 - A \$43 billion increase in GDP over a decade
 - A \$12 billion increase for 2011 (Deloitte Access Economics 2011)
- Estimates of economic benefits of increased disability participation in, and completion of, VET range from \$12 billion (NVEAC 2011) to \$18.8 billion (ANTA 2000)

Non-vocational pathways

- Many people with disability have non-vocational transitions from school (Cocks & Harvey 2008)
- Non-vocational pathways for people with disabilities include 'alternatives to employment' (ATE) or 'adult day service' programs
- \$6.9 billion expenditure in 2011-12 on disability support services for 317,616 people with disability with accommodation support accounting for almost half (AIHW 2013b)
- \$727 million (10.5%) spent on 'community access' (equivalent to 'day services') provided across 3,071 outlets across Australia (AIHW 2013a) for over 63,000 people.
- Majority of people with disability who undertake VET are enrolled in lower level (Cert I or II) courses (Griffin & Beddie 2011; NVEAC 2011; 2013; Lewis, Thoresen & Cocks 2011b; ANTA 2000; Cavallaro et al. 2005) – sometimes part of 'day services' (Cocks & Harvey 2008)

Disability Support Pension

- OECD (2003; 2007) has raised concern over:
 - Low welfare support payments (e.g. the monetary value of the DSP)
 - Unsustainable outlays on forms of disability pension
- Fear of loss of access to services may lead to people choosing more conservative non-vocational options (Cocks & Harvey 2008)
- DSP recipient numbers have grown steadily for many years
- Recent changes in DSP eligibility criteria saw a drop in numbers of DSP recipients in 2013 (Department of Social Services 2014)
 - 821,738 in June 2013 (down 0.7% from 2012)

Aims of the study

Three year longitudinal research project investigating social and economic outcomes for apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disability

1. Identify social inclusion outcomes: social and community participation, relationships, social networks, and quality of life
2. Identify economic outcomes: career development, employment sustainability, income security, and standard of living
3. Identify barriers and facilitators to social and economic outcomes
4. Explore differential outcomes for people with and without disability who have completed apprenticeships and traineeships
5. Map pathways and trajectories, key change points/stages, destinations, outcomes, and career intentions

Method

- Cohort of **403** people with disability (DG) who completed an apprenticeship or traineeship between 2009-2011 recruited through Disability Employment Services, Group Training Organisations, Registered Training Organisations (TAFEs), and State Training Authorities
- Comparison group (CG) (matched on A/T level, gender, and age) recruited through Group Training Organisations (n=**86**)
- Reasonable match to apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disability in Australia with two exceptions described later

Survey

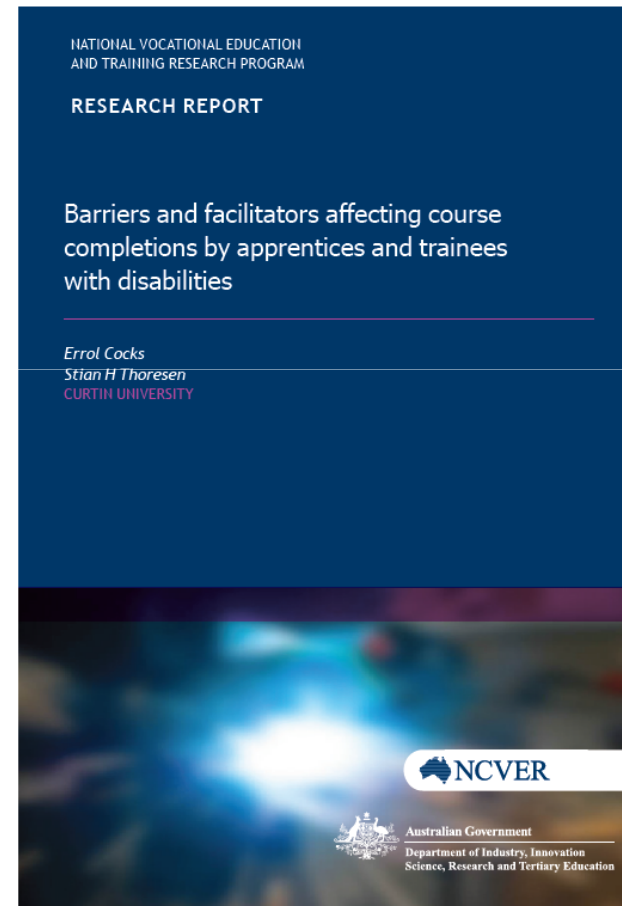
- Mail survey across three waves (2011, 2012, and 2013)
 - Survey included socio-demographic, disability, education and training, employment, income, and social participation questions
 - Reviewed other surveys (e.g. student outcome survey, longitudinal surveys of Australian youth, quality of life, and ABS datasets and collections)
- Low initial response: estimate of between 18%-20% of surveys distributed in Wave 1 returned (survey sent to last known address up to three years following completion)
- Relatively high retention: 83% in Wave 2 and 86% in Wave 3
- Small number of face-to-face interviews over 3 Waves (n=30 in Wave 1)
- Mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis

Characteristics of the cohorts

- Similar age, gender, and proportions of apprenticeships and traineeships between DG and CG cohorts.
- Older cohort than NCVET administrative data - participants were surveyed up to 3 years post-completion
- Under-representation from Victoria (Victorian State Training Authority not approached for recruitment) but otherwise reflecting the proportion of apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disability across other jurisdictions
- Over-representation of graduates with intellectual or learning disabilities (over 40% with ID/LD as primary or secondary disability)
- Broad range of apprenticeship and traineeship courses

Results: Barriers and facilitators to completion

- Open ended questions in first wave survey
- Analysed thematically with NVivo (qualitative data analysis)
- Disability group reported total of 844 barriers ($\bar{x} = 2.5$) and 1,061 facilitators ($\bar{x} = 2.8$)
- Comparison group reported total of 161 barriers ($\bar{x} = 2.3$) and 209 facilitators ($\bar{x} = 2.6$)



Barriers

Disability group

83% reported at least one barrier

- Lack of resources (49%)
- Impact of disability, health, and injury (46%)
- Employment factors (32%)
- Training and education factors (30%)
- Negative motivations, experience, and networks (20%)
- No barriers (9%)

Comparison group

80% reported at least one barrier

- Lack of resources (62%)
- Impact of disability, health, and injury (6%)
- Employment factors (17%)
- Training and education factors (32%)
- Negative motivations, experience, and networks (26%)
- No barriers (17%)

Facilitators

Disability group

94% reported at least one facilitator

- Positive motivations, experience, and networks (71%)
- Employment factors (52%)
- Training and education factors (51%)
- Receiving resources (36%)
- Addressing disability, health and injury (6%)
- No facilitators (1%)

Comparison Group

93% reported at least one facilitator

- Positive motivations, experience, and networks (58%)
- Employment factors (70%)
- Training and education factors (42%)
- Receiving resources (41%)

Results: Some economic outcomes

OVERVIEW

1. Labour force participation
2. Training employers
3. Main income sources
4. Hours of work
5. Wages
6. Disability Support Pension recipients

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Employment and related economic outcomes for Australian apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disabilities: Baseline findings from a national three-year longitudinal study

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Abstract.

BACKGROUND: Apprenticeships and traineeships are beneficial vocational pathways for people with disabilities as they include work-based training and provide nationally recognised formal qualifications. While vocational education and training (VET), particularly apprenticeships and traineeships, has been found to benefit people with disabilities, graduate outcomes are not well documented over time.

OBJECTIVE: Identify economic and related outcomes among a cohort of apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with and without disability in Australia from a prospective longitudinal study.

METHODS: A total of 489 participants completed the first of three annual surveys. A disability group (DG) consisted of 404 graduates and 85 graduates constituted a comparison group (CG).

RESULTS: Positive employment and economic outcomes were reported. DG apprenticeship graduates and DG traineeship graduates who obtained full-time employment following graduation had outcomes comparable with CG participants. The findings identified many other similarities in outcomes between the DG and CG.

CONCLUSIONS: There are strong graduate employment and related outcomes for apprentices and trainees with disabilities. Findings from the second and third waves will shed further light on the sustainability of outcomes over time.

Keywords: Apprenticeship and traineeship graduate, Australia, economic outcomes, prospective longitudinal study

1. Introduction

This article presents the initial economic outcomes among Australian apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disabilities from the first of three annual surveys in a national longitudinal study. The objective of the study was to identify employment and related economic outcomes achieved by a cohort of apprenticeship

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Labour force participation across 3 Waves

- Employed or looking for paid work:
 - DG 94-96%
 - CG 95-98%
- No statistically significant difference between DG and CG in labour force participation
- Similar for separate comparisons between apprentices and trainees in DG and CG

Training employers across 3 Waves

- Proportion of participants employed by the same employer/host employer with whom they completed their apprenticeship or traineeship
 - DG 58-64%
 - CG 57-59%
- No statistically significant difference between graduates with and without disability
- Similar for separate comparisons between apprentices and trainees in DG and CG

Main income sources across 3 Waves

- Wage or salary most frequently cited main source of income among participants
 - DG 68-69%
 - CG 85-89%
- DSP second most frequently cited main source of income
 - DG 18-19%
- Similar patterns of other government support as main source of income across the two groups
 - DG 6-9%
 - CG 6-8%
- Few participants in both groups cited support from parents/family or other main source of income

Hours of work and wages

- Weekly hours of work for DG participants was lower than for CG participants
 - Significantly lower for DG in Wave 1 ($p=0.04$), but not in Waves 2 or 3
- The hourly wages of DG participants was initially lower than for CG participants but caught up over time
 - Significantly lower for DG in Wave 1 ($p=0.01$), but not in Wave 2
 - Higher in Wave 3 (\$26 in DG and \$24 in CG)
- The weekly wages of DG participants was lower than for CG participants, but caught up over time
 - Significantly lower for DG in Wave 1 ($p=0.005$), but not in Wave 2
 - Higher in Wave 3 (\$910 in DG and \$881 in CG)

Apprentices and trainees

- No significant differences in hours of work or wages between apprentices in DG and CG in across 3 Waves
- Trainees in DG had poorer outcomes than trainees in CG in Wave 1
 - Fewer hours ($p=0.04$)
 - Lower hourly wage ($p=0.03$)
 - Lower weekly wage ($p=0.02$)
- Similar hours of work and wages in Waves 2 and 3 for DG and CG trainees
 - DG trainees worked 30 hours and CG worked 31 hours a week in Wave 3
 - DG trainees earned \$22 and CG trainees earned GC \$23 an hour in Wave 3
 - DG earned \$691 and CG \$761 a week in Wave 3

Disability support pension recipients

- 91 trainees and 11 apprentices received DSP in Wave 1 – 25% of DG cohort
- Compared with other DG graduates in Wave 2, DSP was associated with:
 - Low participation in labour force
 - Similar working hours
 - Lower hourly and weekly wages
- In Wave 3, employed DSP recipients worked:
 - Fewer hours
 - Similar hourly and weekly wages
- Between Waves 1 and 2, <3% moved off the DSP
- Low number of employed DSP recipients has impact on the sensitivity of significance testing
 - DSP recipients worked 26 hours a week, earned \$22 an hour and \$591 a week
 - Remaining DG participants worked 33 hours a week, earned \$27 an hour and \$937 a week

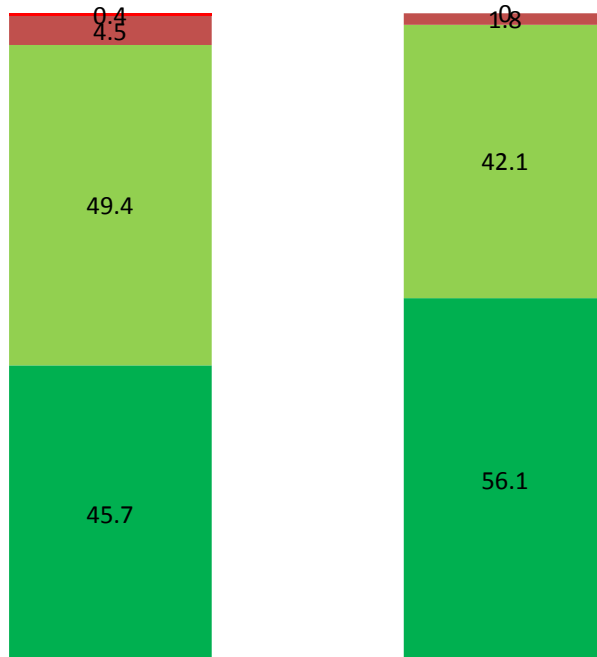
Results: Some social outcomes in Wave 3

- Member of groups or clubs
 - 64% of DG participants were members of at least one group or club with an average of 5.7 (SD 6.3) meetings in the preceding month
 - 60% of CG participants were members of at least one group or club with an average of 6.4 (SD 7.0) meetings in the preceding month
- Attending social events at work in past month
 - DG averaged 1.6 times (SD 3.1)
 - CG averaged 1.3 times (SD 1.8)
- Met people from work after working hours or during weekend in past month
 - Mean 2.0 times (SD 3.1) for disability group
 - Mean 2.3 times (SD 3.3) for comparison group

Relationships at work

I have good relationships with my co-workers (Wave 3)

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



Disability group

Comparison group

I feel accepted, part of the team, at work (Wave 3)

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



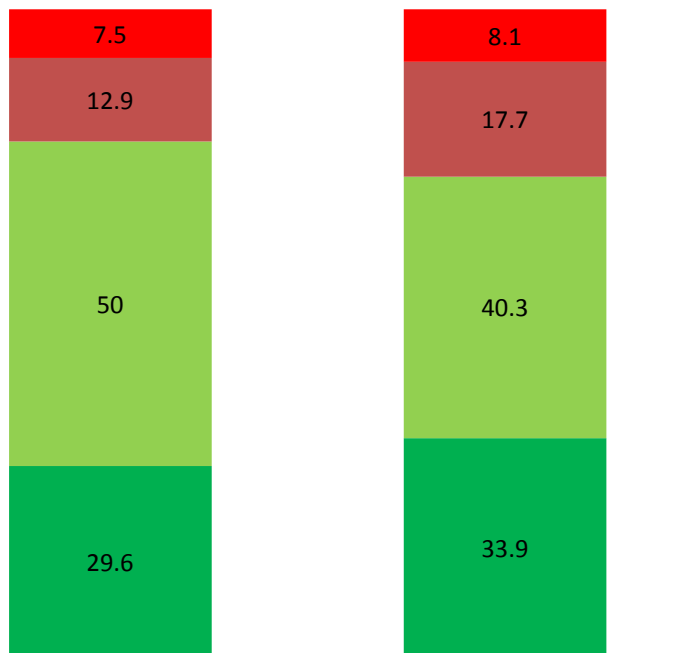
Disability group

Comparison group

Satisfaction work and social life

I am happy with my current working situation (Wave 3)

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

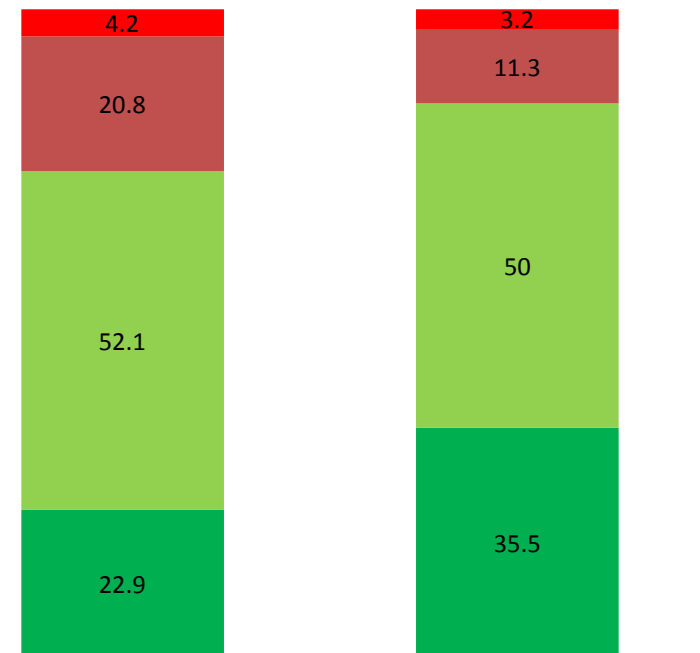


Disability group

Comparison group

I am happy with my current social life (Wave 3)

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



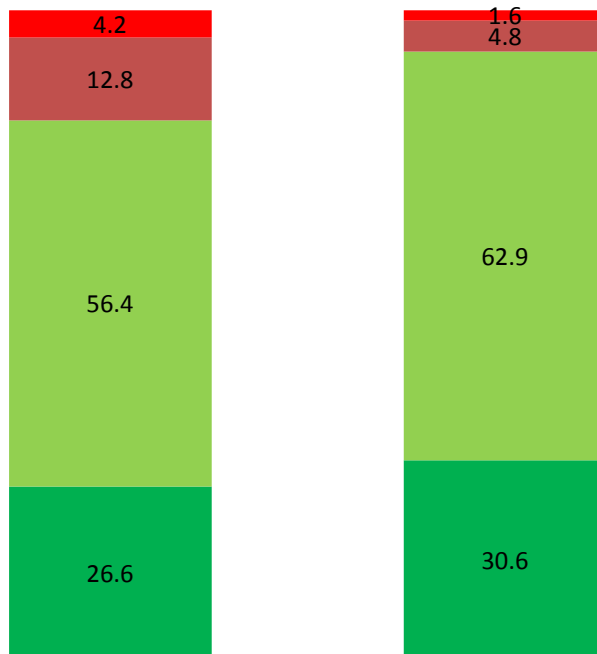
Disability group

Comparison group

Satisfaction life overall

I am happy with my life overall (Wave 3)

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



Disability group

Comparison group

In a year's time, I believe my life overall will be (Wave 3)

Much better A little better A little worse Much worse



Disability group

Comparison group

The National Disability Insurance Scheme

- With the priority of the NDIS for achieving economic outcomes which will be a key outcome to enhance sustainability, disability support services that assist participation and completion of apprenticeships and traineeships could be a key policy initiative and priority.

Conclusion

- Differences in graduate economic outcomes between research participants with and without disability moved towards equalisation over time
- Social inclusion outcomes for both graduates with and without disability were positive, reflecting the crucial role of employment
- Apprenticeships and traineeships are positive vocational pathways for people who do, and do not, have a disability

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