



Centre for Disability Employment
Research and Practice

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The NDIS and Disability Employment.

A Customised Approach.

Presented by Dr Peter Smith

Background



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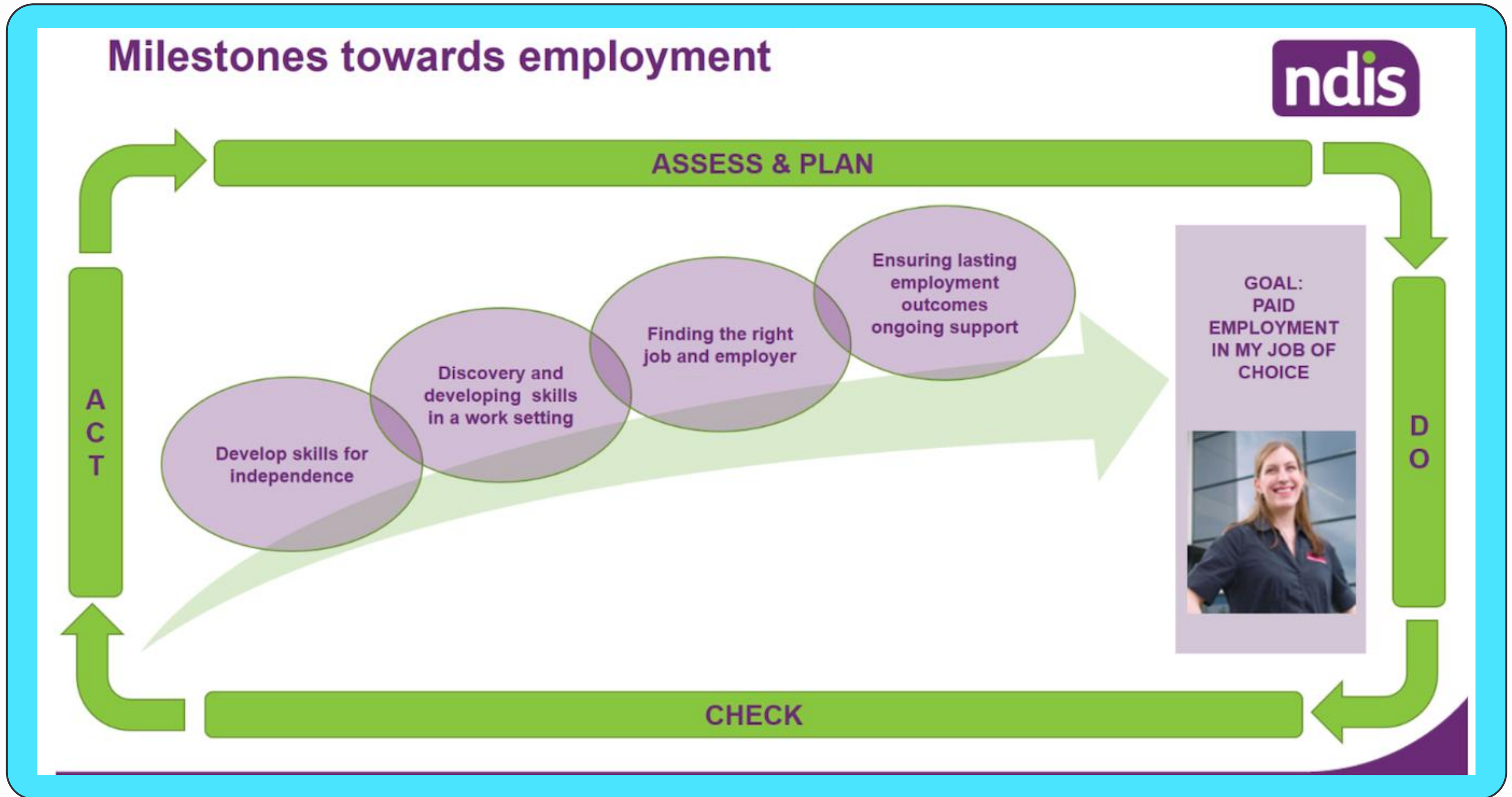
CESP - Certified Employment Support Professional - APSE1st

The Centre was established as an independent Centre of Excellence in Disability Employment over a decade ago to focus on improving the evidence base for disability employment practice within Australia. We believe that for employment outcomes to improve, there must be a shift to a whole-of-life approach for people with a disability. Current disability employment practices centred on economic philosophy fails to recognise employment as one part of a larger picture. Too much research today into disability employment is about admiring the problems, not finding solutions (Wehman, 2020).

NDIS & Employment

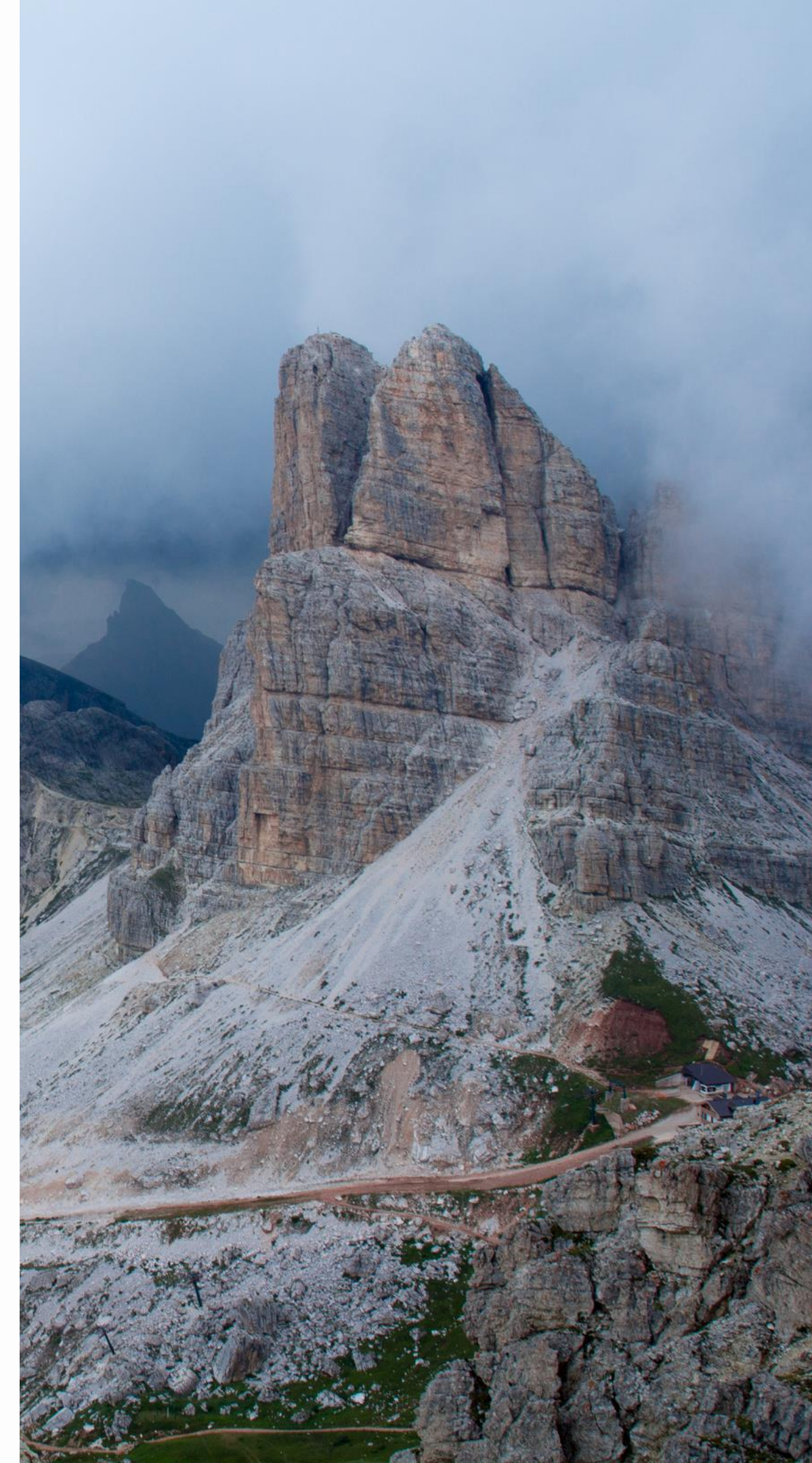


NDIS Perspective



The Expectations

- You can start young.
- It's not a program, just different types of funding categories.
- It is uniquely tailored to the individual.
- It's time rich.
- You deliver it in the community - no one's coming to you!
- It does have outcomes and expectations.
- You have to report to the agency.
- It's messy, innovative and not for people who like finite structure and guidance.
- It requires high levels of communication.
- You need to be resilient.



What Can You Do?

Hard and Soft Skill Development

- social and business communication
- money management
- travel training
- personal hygiene and personal presentation
- workplace norms, behaviours and expectations
- understanding rights and responsibilities in the workplace
- teamwork
- decision-making and problem-solving
- planning and organising
- working independently
- time management and prioritising
- conflict resolution and negotiation
- building resilience
- accountability
- flexibility
- self-motivation and self-determination
- computer literacy
- life skills and personal administration
- how a participant can sell themselves and their unique service offering
- resume preparation and job search strategies
- submitting a job application
- interview preparation
- recruitment paperwork preparation
- preparing for a participant's first day and induction

But Wait, There's More!

Provide assistance such as:

- provision of assistive technology
- job search and job placement
- job design, on-the-job training and other such supports once a job is secured
- ongoing support in a workplace to keep a job
- arrangement of necessary workplace modifications
- arrangement of wage subsidies to employers and/or other financial support once a job is secured

What does all of this mean?

Capacity Building



Discovery as a capacity building tool.

The NDIA doesn't provide practice guidance but wants all providers to use evidence-based practices. In terms of practice methods, Customised Employment and Discovery is a preferred approach due to its capacity for individualisation and person-centred approach.

Customised Employment

Customised Employment originates in the early supported or open employment movement of the 80's.

In the USA, this was taking place in various centres, principally in places like Virginia, Oregon, Montana and Vermont under the influence of person-centred principles using behaviour analysis and systematic instruction techniques.

This same process was also undertaken in Australia, using the same place and train principles, recognising that the global research community for disability employment was and remains relatively small essentially using a collegiate approach of sharing ideas and research. The impetus in Australia at that time was the New Directions Report (Grimes, 1985).

The term "Customised Employment" originated during discussions within the Clinton administration's Committee for People with Disabilities. This later became known as the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), a part of the US Department of Labor, creating a permanent focus on disability employment in 2001.

At this time, the key aspect of the process became known as Discovery. (Smith, 2023)

Discovery Types

Individual
Discovery



Self
Guided
Discovery



Group
Guided
Discovery



Customised Employment Practices align with NDIS values.

Twelve Practices that Define Customised Employment.

1. Physically meet at a location of the individual's choice.
2. Build rapport and get to know the individual.
3. Mindfully listen to the person.
4. Identify the individual's interests, skills, and abilities.
5. Conduct in-depth interviews with family and friends concerning the person's interests, skills, and abilities.
6. Observe the person in daily activities in several different community settings.
7. Arrange for the job seeker to observe local businesses that match the job seeker's interests, skills, and abilities.
8. Conduct informational interviews with employers at local businesses that are representative of the job seeker's interests, skills, and abilities.
9. Observe the job seeker engaging in job-related tasks.
10. Assist the job seeker in identifying a work experience(s) to refine/identify job interests, skills, and abilities.
11. Collaborate with the job seeker, family, and friends in confirming the job seeker's interests, job interests, skills, and abilities.
12. Negotiate a customised job description.

The Process Isn't Linear!





How does the NDIS fund Customised Employment and Discovery ?

Employment Line Items

Workplace assistance

This support item provides workplace assistance that enables a participant to successfully obtain or retain employment in the open or supported labour market. This support can be supplied to any working age participant (including students reaching working age) with an employment goal. This may include supports to:

- explore what work would mean for them (discovery);
- build essential foundation skills for work;
- managing complex barriers to obtaining and sustaining employment;
- specialised job customisation;
- supports to transition from an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) to open employment;
- develop a career plan; and
- other capacity building supports that are likely to lead to successful engagement in a Disability Employment Service (DES).

Note: this support item cannot be used to fund a Certified education course (for example, Certificate I in Workplace Education), even if run within the provider's services, as this would be funded through the Vocational Education system.

| Item Number | Item Name and Notes | Unit | National | Remote | Very Remote |
|-----------------|---------------------|------|----------|----------|-------------|
| 10_016_0102_5_3 | Employment Support | Hour | \$74.63 | \$104.48 | \$111.95 |

Employment Line Items

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES)

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) are capacity-building supports for students transitioning from school to employment. They are available during the final months at school and continue post-school exit. These supports are designed to plan and implement a pathway to inclusive employment, focusing on capacity building for goal achievement. With appropriate supports, it is expected that the majority of SLES participants will transition to the Disability Employment Service (DES) to undertake the job seeking, placement and post-placement support phases of their pathway.

These supports will have an individualised approach, with a strong emphasis on “try and test” work experience opportunities, (generally in workplaces that would pay award wages). Capacity building should focus on hard and soft skill development. Supports, more generally, should facilitate positive experiences that contribute to developing an understanding of work capability and confidence to step into employment. SLES should also help inform the level and nature of future supports needed to obtain and sustain employment.

This funding support will soon be named Youth Employment Support (YES) and shift to an hourly billable rate, making it easier and more viable to deliver individualised support.

| Item Number | Item Name and Notes | Unit | National | Remote | Very Remote |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------|----------|--------|-------------|
| 10_021_0102_5_3 | School Leaver Employment Supports | Each | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Capacity Building Line Items

Employment Related Assessment and Counselling

This support is designed to provide assessment or counselling to assist participants successfully engage in employment. (Note: if a participant is employed and on award wages, then in most instances a workplace assessment is available through the Employment Assistance Fund administered by Job Access and is a free service to employers.) For employment-related counselling, this support may benefit participants who have, for example, experienced traumatic injury and need significant support (over and above a mainstream employment-related service) to develop a new work pathway.

To deliver this, you must have qualified counsellors.

| Item Number | Item Name and Notes | Unit | National | Remote | Very Remote |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|------|----------|----------|-------------|
| 10_011_0128_5_3 | Employment Related Assessment And Counselling | Hour | \$193.99 | \$271.59 | \$290.99 |

Capacity Building Line Items

Multidisciplinary Team Supports

This support item enables a coordinated multidisciplinary approach to be delivered to participants 7 or older. All team members will claim against a single support item, thereby increasing flexibility in service delivery to reflect the changing needs of a participant. It can be delivered to individual participants subject to the rules set out in the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits.

This support item can only be used with the prior approval of the NDIA.

| Item Number | Item Name and Notes | Unit | National | Remote | Very Remote |
|-----------------|------------------------|------|----------|--------|-------------|
| 15_049_0128_1_3 | Multidisciplinary Team | Each | N/A | N/A | N/A |

How do you learn
about Customised
Employment and
Discovery?

Learning



In the USA, the Association of People Support Employment 1st (Apse1st) has developed a set of competencies for people delivering employment support.

To be certified as an Employment Support Professional (CESP), you are examined across 150 areas and must achieve an 80% pass rate.

Before the assessment, you must access one of the ACRE*-approved training courses.

*Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators

ACRE Equivalent Programs in Australia

www.college.cderp.com.au



Person-Centred Employment Practice

This course is designed for individuals looking to develop a basic understanding of person-centred practice as it is applied in disability employment at both an individual and service provider level. The course provides a comprehensive look at Person-Centred Practice and Organisations, along with employment consultants/employer interface



Basic Certificate in Discovery

The Basic Certificate in Discovery is a 40-hour self-paced foundation course.

- Key concepts covered include:
- Introduction to Customised Employment,
 - Understanding Discovery and the Person,
 - Understanding Discovery and Social Capital,
 - Arranging Informational Interviews,
 - Promoting Work Experience,
 - Undertaking Job Development & Engaging Employers.

Ideal for Planners, LACs, NDIS employment practitioners and active families.

[Enroll Now](#)



CDERP Certified Customised Employment Professional ©

This certificate provides 120 hours of comprehensive training in Customised Employment and Discovery designed to meet the needs of employment professionals delivering employment services with fidelity to practice evidence. The program is detailed and provides an understanding of Customised Employment practices using the contextualised version of Discovery developed specifically for the Australian setting. The program has been developed and extensively used in Australia to ensure that it meets our funding settings for disability employment practice.

[Enroll Now](#)



Glide In

Glide In is an innovative transition from school to work program that focuses on building the participant's capacity to self-determine and self-advocate, known elements in a successful transition to employment or further study. Glide In focuses on the five elements that support a successful transition including work experience and job development, with



Job Development

Job Development is an essential skill set for everyone working in employment services. This course will take you through the six stages of job development covering: understanding the client, understanding the employer, job analysis, task analysis, job carving/creation, and workplace accommodations. The course will provide insight into working with families, and employers and a basic understanding of systematic instruction. On completion, you will have developed the essential skills and knowledge built on evidence from practice and research. All course materials are downloadable.

[Enroll Now](#)



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The Influence of the National Disability Insurance Scheme on Customised Employment Practice in Australia

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Review article

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Abstract

Introduction: The New Directions Report (1985) established open employment for persons with a disability as a goal of disability service systems in Australia. Customised Employment is an emerging employment strategy that supports people with complex disabilities to find and obtain employment, while supporting Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27 principles.

Aims: This paper examined the origins and evidence for Customised Employment since the passing of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 and the impact of the NDIS on open employment practice underpinned by Customised Employment.

Method: A literature search of peer-reviewed papers was undertaken using the EBSCO database. This was followed by a review of journals that focused on disability employment. A search of grey literature limited to studies and reports of Australian-based employment was conducted to ensure that all available data was captured. Sixty-seven peer-reviewed papers met the criteria, while only six papers met the criteria within the grey literature search.

Results: The literature supporting Customised Employment and Discovery highlights the work of academics and practitioners in developing the evidence base for practice. While the descriptive studies highlighted the effectiveness of Customised Employment, they failed to meet the threshold for empirical evidence, highlighting the need for a random control trial or correlation studies.

Conclusion: Customised employment is an emerging employment model with promising results that have yet to meet the threshold for evidence-based practice. While the NDIS supports Customised Employment through capacity building and school leaver transition funds, research funding is needed to ensure that it is applied with fidelity to the existing and emerging evidence.

Keywords: Customised Employment, NDIS, person-centred practice, discovery, fidelity

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[The Influence of the National Disability Insurance Scheme on Customised Employment Practice in Australia.](https://cderp.com.au/publications/)

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