



NDIS WORKFORCE FORUM TOWNSVILLE - 27 APRIL 2016

FORUM SUMMARY

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The forum opened with a Welcome to Country by Bindal and Wulgurukaba Elders, Virginia Wyles and Dorothy Savage.

Richard Nelson, Queensland Branch Manager of NDS, then introduced the WorkAbility Qld project and our first keynote speakers, Peter Gurr and Daniel Flynn, Joint Convenors of the Townsville QDN. Peter and Daniel provided valuable insight into NDIS workforce needs from the participant's perspective and challenged attendees to think about their workplace culture and approach to providing services to people with disabilities. They talked about the need to adapt to the commercial realities of the NDIS and look to the examples of hospitality to find new ways of thinking about and doing customer service. Peter and Daniel also promoted the value of employing people with disabilities in the sector and the need for a more agile and flexible workforce.

Rob Watkins, Executive General Manager, ACT/NSW for House with No Steps (HWNS) followed Peter and Daniel to share HWNS' transition experience including their challenges and solutions. Rob highlighted the need for good change management throughout the transitions process and echoed Peter and Daniel's call to learn from the hospitality sector about new approaches to customer-centric practice. Some of the key strategies shared by Rob included focusing on leadership development and the improvement of business skills, bucking the casualisation trend and maintaining a permanent workforce, and using good communication to ensure that each staff member is an expert on the organisation, its values and what it has to offer.

CONVERSATION SESSIONS

The second part of the forum included group conversations to analyse and respond to challenges and insights provided by the speakers. Three focused conversations focused on **Workforce Supply**, **Workforce Capability**, and **Workforce Utilisation**. An overview of the themes emerging from the conversations is provided in the following sections.

WORKFORCE SUPPLY

Issues	Opportunities	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural shift that requires a focus on customer service, flexibility and 'can do' attitudes • Skills shortages in allied health, support workers, business management, customer service and technology (skills) • Limited ability to foresee the new skills and roles that may be required • Attraction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Perception of the industry: not necessarily desirable work, lack of clarity about the work, and lack of understanding about career opportunities (is it a career or a job?) – Shift work and continuity of employment – Cultural and personality fit with customers • Geographical issues: delivery to remote areas and availability of workers, isolation of remote workers and infrastructure issues, including vehicle use • Retention of existing workforce: resistance to change, workloads, rostering and shifts in workplace culture • Immediate need to recruit may mean that service providers recruit the wrong people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of people with a disability and their carers • New opportunities for allied health graduates to stay in the region • Attract and retrain displaced workers from other industries • Enable current workers to increase hours where possible • Employment opportunities for university students • Values based recruitment • Skill pathways and training opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Merge training with on-the-job learning – Client involvement in training – Joint training / shared training resources – On-line delivery and blended training – Traineeships • Emerging innovative workforce supply tools such as First2Click and Uber-like platforms to quickly match workers with available shifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop employee value proposition for the sector • Community education about working in the sector / promote disability careers, including Project Able and CareCareers • Targeted attraction for People with Disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Young People etc. • Use Skilling Queenslanders for Work and similar programs • Look at better ways to identify and target workers suited to NDIS • Partnerships with employment services and training providers • Streamline/improve recruitment practices including values-based selection • Target clinical placement opportunities for allied health students • Improve on-the-job learning as part of training, including traineeships (improve funding for this) • Promote peer-to-peer and other on-line staff platforms • Upskill current staff to mentor & supervise new workers

WORKFORCE CAPABILITY

Issues	Opportunities	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting to change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New models of customer service • Need for creative business leaders • Qualifications vs Attributes/ Values • Access to training (including time, funding, internal training delivery and remote/ rural staff members) • Cost of RPL is prohibitive • Appropriateness of training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – right skills for a NDIS environment and cultural considerations (eg. Hygiene management) • Need for new and unknown skills and skill sets (e.g. hospitality, cleaning, business, technology, customer services, interpreting) • Prerequisite qualifications may lower because of NDIS pricing (will not be able to afford tertiary qualified staff) • Concerns about trained/skilled staff being 'stolen' from other organisations • Willingness of staff to upskill • Personal capabilities and attributes: flexibility, adaptability, teachability, work ethic, resilience, relatability, efficiency, quality focus, • Need for a mix of small and large organisations • Buy in re person centred care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Pathways and Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – University, VET and High School • Networks and partnerships, especially with RTOs and Universities • Exploring and expanding skill sets to include business and financial skills, and customer service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire on values and train for skills (in the workplace) • Look to a more diverse workforce in terms of culture, skills and employment background. • Upskill/reskill existing staff • RPL transferable skills • Research and utilise VET funding for training subsidies • Introduce an industry governance framework that covers financial, corporate, clinical, client and workforce governance • Support mentoring between organisations • Facilitate RTO and Industry consultation to improve content and delivery of qualifications • Develop and deliver a generic sector induction • Develop robust recruitment methods

WORKFORCE UTILISATION

Issues	Opportunities	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce is attracted by the flexibility and work/ life balance that the sector provides • Flexibility requires a balance (compromise) between client and workers needs and preferences • Award and IR constraints re flexibility. Penalty rates, minimum hours, risk and safety • Shortage of staff • Retention of a transient workforce • Changing span of work hours • Risk of burnout • Servicing remote areas – travel • Link between casualisation and turnover • Need for improved rostering • Lack of clarity about engaging and monitoring of self-employed workers – training, vetting, supervision • Productivity and expectations – may be unrealistic • Provision of career pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding out what the client base wants • Involve other sectors • Expand workforce diversity • Emerging roles • Market segmentation and niche services • Allied health assistant roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-think rostering • Identify staff strengths & weaknesses and roster accordingly • Centralised rostering and rostering software • New models like first2click (similar to Uber) • Develop retention strategies (eg. Incentives like salary sacrifice, professional memberships) • Employment of People with Disabilities • Market and support career pathways • Adequate risk analysis and risk management models • Debriefing and support models for a dispersed workforce • Adopt technology to support more efficient and connected ways of working • Develop an IR/EA environment focused on flexibility

For more information on WorkAbility Qld visit www.workabilityqld.org.au.