Executive Summary

The WorkAbility Queensland *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Training and Skills Support Strategy (NTSSS) Advice Project* is providing strategic advice to industry and governments on matters related to the NDIS workforce in Queensland.

This Training Package Advice Report outlines the findings of research and consultation that sought to identify where changes to the current range of nationally recognised training products might better support training and workforce development in the disability sector.

The research and consultations identified that:

- many employers are not engaging in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and are placing more value on in-house and non-accredited training options
- for the sector, a worker's values and attributes and their 'fit' with NDIS participants and families are considered to be more important than qualifications
- 'soft skills' (i.e. core skills for work/employability skills) play a vital role in effective support work and may not be adequately developed through current training products
- the diversity of participant support needs across the sector means that a diverse range of training products are needed to meet workforce skill development needs. New skill sets may help to provide this diversity.
- advice and recommendations should be provided to Skills IQ to help ensure that:
    - disability related qualifications better meet the skill and knowledge requirements of the NDIS environment
    - new job roles within the NDIS environment are acknowledged.

These findings have led to the following recommendations:

Training Package

- **Recommendation 1** - Amend the wording in the qualification description for the Certificate III in Individual Support and in relevant units of competency to require those learners undertaking the disability specialisation to have completed work requirements and demonstrated their competence in a disability workplace or appropriate simulated environment.
- **Recommendation 2** - Review assessment requirements for units of competency in the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) to ensure they are appropriate and feasible within disability sector workplaces.
- **Recommendation 3** - Review the adequacy of coverage of foundation skills in the Certificate III in Individual support, ideally using the more recent Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework and make these more explicit within relevant performance criteria and within Companion Volumes.
- **Recommendation 4** - Consider the removal of HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems as a core unit for the disability stream and consider the addition of HLTAID003 - Provide first aid and CHCCS011 Meet personal care needs to the core.
- **Recommendation 5** - Consider the addition of a unit on mental health (possibly CHCMHS001 – Work with people with mental health issues) to the core or disability specialisation electives.

- **Recommendation 6** - Address gaps in the current units of competency for the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) to cover skills and knowledge in:
  - establishing and maintaining professional boundaries
  - managing own mental health, wellbeing and resilience
  - the NDIS
  - different types of disabilities
  - cross-cultural skills
  - working with interpreters.
- **Recommendation 7** - Review and revise the Certificate IV in Disability to better align with current industry job roles and higher-level skill requirements. This should include:
  - Removal of core units that are part of the core or disability specialisation from the Certificate III in Individual Support and establishing entry requirements instead
  - Considering the creation of two specialisations to meet the needs of job roles in management and supervision and in complex and clinical support

Existing Workforce

- **Recommendation 8** - Consider the development of new nationally recognised skills sets or the revision of existing skills sets to meet the need for upskilling in:
  - clinical support needs
  - skills to support the needs of specific client cohorts, including people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities and people with mental health conditions, autism and intellectual disabilities.
  - recruitment practices that support choice and control
  - HR practices that support an effective and mentally healthy workforce
  - budgeting in an NDIS environment
  - workforce and business innovation.

New Workforce

- **Recommendation 9** - Investigate the potential need for VET qualifications for the job roles of Support Coordinators, Plan Managers and Local Area Coordinators.

About this report

This report forms part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Training and Skills Support Strategy (NTSSS) Advice Project, which has been designed to provide strategic advice to industry and governments on matters related to the NDIS workforce in Queensland. The report has been developed for WorkAbility Qld by Sue Goodwin of Sodalite Projects and Rachel Healy of Rachel Healy Consulting.

This particular report has been developed to enable WorkAbility Queensland and the Department of Employment Small Business and Training (DESBT) to make recommendations regarding potential changes to the structure and content of the CHC Community Services Training Package. This is the training package to which the majority of the qualifications and skill sets commonly used in the disability sector belong.

The findings presented in this report are based upon consultations with more than 280 representatives of the disability sector across the state. This included group discussions at disability network meetings and workshops, individual in-depth interviews and responses to survey questions.

The findings and recommendations have also been validated by the 35 members of the NTSSS Industry Reference Group and NTSSS RTO Reference Group.

Terminology

The terms **disability industry** and **disability sector** are interpreted in this report as referring to service providers delivering services to people with disability (which include NDIS registered providers, unregistered providers, organisations, companies, sole traders, for profit and not-for-profit providers), including the organisations and people administering and managing aspects of the NDIS system (such as local area coordinators, planners and plan managers), but excluding government departments and agencies.

We have used the terms **direct service delivery** and **support worker** to describe the roles and workers providing support services directly to people with disability (which is the primary focus of this research), but excluding allied health professionals and other specialists, as well as those administering and managing aspects of the NDIS system as described in the industry/sector definitions above.

Although **support coordinators** are also involved in the provision of services directly to people with disability, this is of a different nature to those provided by support workers. Therefore, these roles are referred to separately in this report.

We have used the terms **accredited training** and **accredited qualifications** to cover nationally recognised qualifications, accredited courses and skill sets.

Scope

The consultations identified that there are a number of qualifications and skill sets being utilised by the Queensland disability sector for staff involved in direct service delivery. These include:

- Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability)
- Certificate IV in Disability
- Induction to Disability skill set

- Disability Work – Behaviour Support skill set
- Certificate III in Community Services
- Certificate IV in Community Services
- Certificate IV in Mental Health
- Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work
- Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance
- Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance.

The focus of this report however is on the Certificate III in Individual Support and the Certificate IV in Disability as they are the most commonly used and sought after qualifications for workers.

There was also considerable discussion about skill sets during consultations. These are also covered in this report.

What the consultations have told us

There is a lack of value placed on accredited training across the sector

Although accredited qualifications are in use across the disability sector, the consultations identified that greater value tends to be placed on in-house and non-accredited training.

Amongst the organisations consulted to date, some require their workers to have a Certificate III (most often in Individual Support) as an entry requirement. Others would prefer a qualification but prioritise 'the right fit' over qualifications when recruiting. Quite a few service providers encourage or support their staff to work towards a qualification once they are employed.

However, a large proportion of those consulted (including a number of large service providers) were not interested in their staff having accredited qualifications, preferring to do their own in-house training. As one large service provider described, "*we prefer to train people ourselves – we get better outcomes*". Another asserted that "*formal training doesn't necessarily equip you to meet a person's individual support needs*". Yet another reported "*We don't specifically look for workers with qualifications. Instead we look for values and reasons for wanting to work in the industry. We can do the training in-house.*"

Those requiring a qualification as a pre-requisite to employment spoke of benefits such as giving new workers "*a language and an understanding of the human body*" or providing the organisations with "*reassurance of experience and knowledge of the legal side of care*" or "*an indication that they have made an effort and have initiative*".

However, there was often an accompanying view that this did not actually prepare them for work in the sector. For example, one service provider who uses the Certificate III in Individual Support as a filtering mechanism for recruitment also stated that "*it doesn't count for much*". There were many reports of providers having to retrain workers once they were employed, to fill skill gaps or address a lack of competency, using in-house and non-accredited training.

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The lack of value placed on accredited training suggests that the current qualifications are not meeting the needs of the sector. One provider encapsulated this view in the comment that "*we haven't had a lot of luck with people coming through with a Certificate III or Certificate IV…. These qualifications are too focused on the old days. They are not contemporary*."

The importance placed on particular skills, knowledge and attributes differs from that of other sectors

There is a definite hierarchy of skills, knowledge and attributes considered necessary for direct service delivery workers in the disability sector. These differ to some extent from that of other sectors and have implications for how the VET sector thinks about the skilling of workers in the disability sector.

Throughout the consultations there was clear and widespread agreement that the foundation for an effective support worker was personal attributes — "*the right values*" and "*the right attitude*", combined with a good understanding of what the work involves. This was closely followed by a series of "*soft skills*" (i.e. Core Skills for Work), and finally. Technical and workplace-specific skills and knowledge were further down the list of importance and are often taught on the job.

This differs from the importance placed on skills, knowledge and attributes in many other industry sectors, in that:

- the disability sector has a stronger focus on personal attributes as a determinant of "fit" for the sector
- the nature of disability support work places more emphasis on Core Skills for Work – particularly communication and interpersonal skills
- workplace-specific skills and knowledge are more than just "the way that things are done in this workplace" as they are in other industries. In the disability sector they are also about the specific combinations of knowledge and skills to needed to support individual clients and particular cohorts of people with disability.

These differences highlight specific challenges faced by the sector in building a workforce that can deliver the services needed for the NDIS, as well as some ways in which the VET system needs to think differently about the skilling of workers for the sector.

These unique needs are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

"The right fit" is of ultimate importance

In other industries, the extent to which particular personal attributes (e.g. motivation, commitment, initiative) are valued by employers often varies from workplace to workplace. However, in the disability sector there is a consistent and much greater importance placed on what is often referred to as "*the right values*". These include attributes such as:

- an attitude towards a person with disability "*as a human being*" and treating them with respect
- seeing what a person can do – their abilities and possibilities – rather than what they can't do
- a genuine sense of care for another person's safety, well-being and goals.

Without these attributes, potential workers are unlikely to be considered suitable for working in the sector. And now with the introduction of the NDIS and the principles of

choice and control, potential support workers need to not only be "*the right fit*" for the sector, but also for the particular people who they are going to support.

The risk for job seekers to undertake training and then be considered 'unsuitable' is very real, which can result in wasted government training funds and potential loss of further entitlements to funded training for job seekers. This creates a strong imperative for mechanisms that ensure that potential learners are aware of what "*the right fit*" looks like and have a realistic understanding of what disability work involves before committing to the completion of a qualification.

There are some suggestions that the current qualifications are not providing an up-to-date understanding of what disability work looks like under the new NDIS model.

Core Skills for work play a vital role in disability support work

Those consulted frequently referred to the importance of "*soft skills*", "*people skills*", "*EQ*" and "*communication skills*" for people working in the sector. Many also talked about "*common sense*", "*initiative*" and "*problem solving*". These skills all belong to the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework which, along with language, literacy and numeracy skills, underpins all training packages.

Disability support workers need well developed, and often, quite sophisticated communication and interpersonal skills. These begin with the types of skills needed in all workplaces that enable effective communication via verbal, telephone, email and text channels. However, depending on the people a worker is supporting and the types of disabilities they experience, the skills required can include those needed for:

- decoding abstract and non-verbal communication
- communicating with people with intellectual disabilities who have difficulties with abstract concepts like time and future planning
- managing challenging behaviours
- negotiation
- advocacy
- querying inappropriate and unsafe requests or practice by family members or the person being supported.

High level skills in problem solving, critical and analytical thinking and creative thinking are also seen as important for good support workers who provide 'active support'.

Whilst it may be challenging to do so, these skills can be taught and learned. However, this requires training that focuses explicitly on their development, rather than an assumption that they are implicit within other competencies.

This requires an analysis of the type and level of skills required, using the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework, and then making this explicit in training package support materials. Sufficient attention then needs to be given to the development of these skills during training and in work placements.

There is broad agreement on the skills and knowledge needed by new workers

Whilst there are mixed views across the sector about the need for qualifications, there was some agreement about the kinds of skills and knowledge needed by workers entering the sector. Those considered necessary for all workers included:

- Workplace health and safety
- First aid (including CPR currency)

- Manual handling (including hoisting)
- Understanding the NDIS, including:
    - National guidelines
    - National quality and safeguards framework
    - How to support the attainment of participant goals and outcomes
    - The principles of choice and control and how to support these
    - Roles and responsibilities within the system and how it all fits together
- Establishing and maintaining professional boundaries
- Managing own mental health and resilience
- Human rights safeguarding, including identifying signs of abuse and neglect
- Customer service
- Dealing with challenging behaviours
- Providing active and person-centred support
- Understanding different types of disability
- Understanding dignity of risk
- Computer skills and skills in using assistive technology.

Some of these skills and knowledge are covered within existing units of competency in the Certificate III in Individual Support, but not necessarily to the extent necessary for the current environment (e.g. knowledge around the NDIS, understanding of different types of disability), or not included within the qualification core (e.g. manual handling).

Many of those consulted also suggested that with the prevalence of mental health issues amongst clients, skills in mental health first aid should also be included as a core within the qualification.

Some also suggested that assisting with medications should be part of the qualification core. However, the assessment requirements may make this a challenge in the disability sector, where in-home support is the predominant type of service delivery.

Workplace-specific skills and knowledge requirements vary according to clients and cohorts

In the disability sector, a workplace is both the service provider organisation an employee works for (except if they are self-employed), as well as the place in which they provide support for individual people with disability. And under the NDIS, even when a support worker is employed by a service provider organisation, the NDIS participant and their family may wish to choose the particular support workers they want to have work with them.

This creates an added level of complexity to the skills and knowledge needed by support workers (and to organisations' recruitment processes).

The types of workplace-specific skills and knowledge needed by workers include those required to perform their role in accordance with an organisation's policies and procedures (which are the responsibility of the employer to train for through induction processes). However, support workers also require the skills and knowledge needed to support specific clients and to support particular cohorts of clients that a service provider might specialise in (e.g. children, people with clinical support needs, people with intellectual disabilities, autism or mental health needs, people from Culturally and

Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds or from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities).

Service providers report that they employ new support workers specifically to match with particular clients and that this often requires workers to have or to develop additional skills and knowledge. They also identified particular skill-related issues associated with particular cohorts of clients.

Addressing these issues may require the development of new skill sets or units of competency, or the addition of other elective units to the Certificate III in Individual Support.

Complex and clinical support

There were many reports of challenges in supporting NDIS participants with complex support needs, particularly when this requires clinical support. There is considerable demand for support workers to have skills in:

- PEG feeding
- Aspiration
- Administering of oxygen
- Dealing with colostomy bags
- Bowel therapy management.

Those service providers supporting clients with clinical support needs reported considerable challenges in finding workers with these skills. Training is generally conducted in-house and often to individual support workers as needed, which is a very costly exercise. There was interest in the possibility of skill sets that could deliver accredited training in these skills, particularly if this could be done in a group setting that makes it more cost effective.

Supporting people from CALD backgrounds

Interviews with service providers and advocates working with participants from CALD communities highlighted some skill requirements and gaps within the disability support workforce:

- There is a need for cross-cultural training, including skills in working with interpreters. This is a gap in current training options.
- Workers need an understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultural biases and how that might affect their work, as well as understanding individual client's cultural background and ethnicity and their right to practice religion and culture. Whilst this in included in current training package competencies, it is not always put into practice.
- There is a need for more bicultural and bilingual support workers in the sector. However, training is needed to ensure that cultural biases, values and beliefs that are contrary to NDIS principles are not replicated.

Existing workers also need upskilling

There were many reports from those consulted about existing staff finding it challenging to make the transition from "doing" to "supporting" under the new NDIS philosophy. Many felt that the entrenched beliefs, attitudes and practices of some existing support workers were impossible to change and that it was best to allow for the attrition of these workers. However, there are several areas in which updated skills and knowledge would

enable existing workers to adapt to the new NDIS environment. These include upskilling in:

- Understanding the NDIS
- Record keeping
- Communication and reporting against participant goals
- Use of IT-based systems (particularly the NDIS portal) and assistive technology
- Use of IT programs such as excel for reporting and planning.

There are no qualifications for Support Co-ordinators

An issue raised many times across consultations is that participants and their families don't seem to be receiving the information they need about the range of available services. This was seen to be contributing to the underspend on NDIS plans by some participants.

The responsibility for this lack of information was attributed to support co-ordinators, whose role it is to provide participants with unbiased information about available support options and how to make effective use of their NDIS plans. Some queried as to whether this was the result of a lack of independence of support co-ordination services provided by some service providers, or a lack of knowledge and skills amongst the workers performing these roles.

Currently there is no qualification that aligns with this role and no frameworks to train support co-ordinators against – although there was some mention of the availability of some excellent non-accredited training. Those consulted tended to recruit for these roles on the basis of some kind of tertiary qualification and/or significant industry experience.

There may be value in further investigation into the need for a qualification or skill set related to this role, with skills and knowledge required in areas such as:

- understanding the NDIS and the disability sector, including
    - o Legislation and principles
    - o NDIS plans and price guides
    - o concepts such as "reasonable and necessary"
    - o plan reviews
    - o roles and responsibilities of different players in the system
- conflict of interest
- reporting
- interpersonal skills for working with participants and their families.

Leadership and managerial skills

The introduction of the NDIS is requiring service providers to make major changes to the way that they operate. Feedback from consultations indicated that many organisations are struggling with this (particularly under current NDIS pricing) and that many are at risk of "closing their doors".

There are various initiatives underway to assist organisations with business sustainability and consultations undertaken as part of these initiatives have highlighted some areas in which new capabilities are needed for leaders and managers in the sector. These include skills and knowledge in:

- Mentoring, coaching and professional supervision
- Supporting workforce and business innovation
- Change management
- Workforce planning
- Budgeting in an NDIS environment
- Inclusive leadership and embedding of inclusive practices, including ensuring policies, practices, induction information etc are inclusive of people with disability and people from CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Recruitment skills – particularly in how to recruit people to effectively support choice and control
- HR practices that support an effective and mentally healthy workforce.

There may be a need to review the current Certificate IV in Disability or other relevant qualifications to ensure there are training options to support the development of these skills.

There are also a number of existing skill sets that address some of these needs:

- CHCSS00082 - Lead and Mentor
- CHCSS00084 - Lead and support colleagues
- HCSS00083 - Lead Inclusion and Collaboration
- CHCSS00065 - Workforce Planning Skill Set
- CHCSS00091 - Team Leader.

However, there are still gaps around skills in recruitment, HR practices that support an effective and mentally healthy workforce, budgeting in an NDIS environment and workforce and business innovation.

Recommendations

There are a number of ways in which the current Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) and the Certificate IV in Disability might be improved to better meet the identified needs of the disability sector.

There is also a need for new skill sets to upskill existing workers so that they are better equipped to deal with the requirements of the new NDIS environment as well as new qualifications to meet the demands of job roles in support co-ordination.

It is worth noting that the recommendations are made in relation to the current Certificate III in Individual Support, in which disability is one of three streams. The current development of the new stand-alone qualification Certificate III in Ageing Support may result in the qualification for the disability sector also becoming more specialised. This may address some of the issues and recommendations highlighted below.

Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability)

Work requirements

During consultations, there were reports of potential workers who had completed a Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) without any experience in the disability sector as they had done their placement in an aged care facility.

Current training package requirements stipulate the following for the qualification CHC33015 - Certificate III in Individual Support:

> To achieve this qualification, the candidate must have completed at least 120 hours of work as detailed in the Assessment Requirements of the units of competency.[1]

Furthermore, the core unit, CHCCCS023 - Support independence and wellbeing, specifies that:

> There must be demonstrated evidence that the candidate has: …performed the activities outlined in the performance criteria of this unit during a period of at least 120 hours of direct support work in at least one aged care, home and community, disability or community service organisation[2]

Other units in the core or disability specialisation specify something along the lines of:

> Skills must have been demonstrated in the workplace or in a simulated environment that reflects workplace conditions[3]

To ensure that potential workers have actually had experience in the disability sector, each of these statements needs to be amended to require learners who are seeking the disability specialisation to have demonstrated the skills in the disability sector.

The requirements for the unit CHCDIS007 - Facilitate the empowerment of people with disability, provides a useful example of this:

> Skills must have been demonstrated in the disability's workplace with the addition of simulations and scenarios where the full range of contexts and situations have not been provided in the workplace.[4]

Recommendation 1.

Amend the wording in the qualification description for the Certificate III in Individual Support and in relevant units of competency to require those learners undertaking the disability specialisation to have completed work requirements and demonstrated their competence in a disability workplace or appropriate simulated environment.

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[1] https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHC33015
[2] https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCCCS023
[3] https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCDIV001
[4] https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCDIS007

Assessment requirements

Consultations identified significant issues with the assessment requirements for some units of competency. Many of the units of competency in the Certificate III in Individual Support are generic in nature (i.e. written for use across all three specialisations). However, for learners and workers in the disability sector who are predominantly supporting clients in their own homes, some of the assessment requirements are unfeasible. This is partly because many clients are unwilling to have students and assessors coming into their homes, but also because many disability service providers don't provide those kinds of support services.

The unit, HLTHPS006 - Assist clients with medication, was frequently raised as a particular problem due to the requirements for students to have "provided assistance with medication:

- to at least 5 different clients according to their care plans
- with at least 5 different types of medications
- used at least 3 different modes of administration"

Those consulted reported that while this may be feasible within a residential care environment, it is rarely possible within a disability support environment.

As a result, many RTOs are not delivering this unit of competency, even though there is substantial demand for these skills by disability service providers.

There is a need to review the core units and the elective units most commonly used in the disability sector to make sure that the assessment requirements are appropriate to a disability sector environment.

There may also be value in reviewing whether the requirement for 120 hours of work placement is still relevant and appropriate (and feasible) for people seeking to work in the disability sector.

> **Recommendation 2.**
>
> Review assessment requirements for units of competency in the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) to ensure they are appropriate and feasible within disability sector workplaces.

Foundation skills

The units of competency comprising the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) need to have a more explicit focus on foundation skills, particularly on:

- interpersonal skills needed for working with people with disability
- specific foundation skills needed for working with people with particular disabilities, such as autism, intellectual disabilities or physical disabilities that impair spoken communication skills, or for managing challenging behaviours
- customer service related foundation skills required for working within the new NDIS environment
- skill for negotiation, advocacy and safeguarding of human rights, safe work practices, professional boundaries and own mental health and well-being
- skills in the use of assistive technology.

The current Foundation skills guide for the HLT Health and CHC Community Services Training Packages contains a summary of key Australian Core Skill Framework (ACSF) and employability skills for the Certificate III in Individual Support and for each of the units of competency. An example of the descriptors for the unit CHCDIS007 Facilitate the empowerment of people with a disability is provided below.

Current description of foundation skills for HCDIS007 Facilitate the empowerment of people with a disability[5]

Summary of key ACSF skills

- Learning skills to reflect on values and attitudes regarding disability and acknowledge their impact when working in disability contexts; identify the ways society can effect level of impairment experienced by the person with a disability; foster human rights; respect cultural needs of person; understand types of disability; history and recent developments in disability services; work within legal and ethical guidelines for working with people with a disability

- Reading skills to assist with understanding types of disabilities

- Oral communication skills to maintain positive and respectful relationships with person with disability, use appropriate non-verbal communication strategies; assist person with a disability to understand their rights; report issues and breaches in care; assist person with disability to communicate their personal goals and make their own choices, assist with accessing advocacy services and other complaint mechanisms; seek support

Summary of key employability skills

- Problem solving skills to identify breaches of human rights; identify indications of possible abuse or neglect

- Initiative and enterprise skills to adjust own approaches to facilitate empowerment; to know when and how seek support from more experienced and qualified staff

- Planning and organising skills to deliver services that ensure rights and needs of the person are upheld; use a person-centred approach to care

- Technology skills to assist people with a disability to communicate and exercise rights

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The ACSF level at which the relevant learning, reading and oral communication skills are required is also listed. However, given that the guide uses the previous Employability Skills list, rather than the more recent Core Skills for Work (CSfW) Developmental Framework, the level at which those skills are required is not able to be indicated.

There would be value in updating the employability skills to reflect the CSfW Developmental Framework as this would allow for a more detailed focus on these skills, including the level at which they are required. It is quite likely that some of the required skills will be at the Proficient level (i.e. level 4) and may require greater attention in training and assessment activities than would otherwise be given.

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[5] Available online at https://vetnet.education.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=5e0c25cc-3d9d-4b43-80d3-bd22cc4f1e53

Some of the required skills may also need to be made more explicit in the performance criteria for specific units of competency.

> **Recommendation 3.**
>
> Review the adequacy of coverage of foundation skills in the Certificate III in Individual support, ideally using the more recent Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework and make these more explicit within relevant performance criteria and within Companion Volumes.

Changes to core units of competency

It has been suggested in consultations that the unit HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems be removed from the core for people wanting to work in the disability sector as it is a very demanding unit and not relevant for support workers in some situations. This unit could become an elective unit relevant to personal care support and supporting people with more complex needs.

Instead, the unit HLTAID003 - Provide first aid, might be added to the core as this is an employment requirement mentioned consistently across consultations. Another alternative that has been suggested is the unit CHCCS011 Meet personal care needs – although this would need to be taught and assessed from a disability perspective.

A significant concern raised in consultations is the lack of skills and knowledge in supporting the mental health needs of people with disability (and not just those with a diagnosed mental health condition) and many suggested that this should become part of the core, or the disability specialisation electives.

The current unit CHCMHS001 – Work with people with mental health issues may meet this skill need. However, this will need to be further investigated and validated as there are some suggestions that this unit may be a challenge at the Certificate III level.

> **Recommendation 4.**
>
> Consider the removal of HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems as a core unit for the disability stream and the addition of HLTAID003 - Provide first aid or CHCCS011 Meet personal care needs to the core.
>
> **Recommendation 5.**
>
> Consider the addition of a unit on mental health (possibly CHCMHS001 – Work with people with mental health issues) to the core or disability specialisation electives.

Additional content

Consultations have identified a number of gaps in the coverage of the current qualification and units of competency for the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability). These are:

- establishing and maintaining professional boundaries
- managing own mental health, wellbeing and resilience
- understanding the NDIS, including:

- o National guidelines
- o National quality and safeguards framework
- o How to support the attainment of participant goals and outcomes
- o The principles of choice and control and how to support these
- o Roles and responsibilities within the system and how it all fits together
- understanding and supporting different types of disabilities
- cross-cultural skills
- working with interpreters when providing support to people from CALD communities.

Some of these areas may be able to be strengthened within existing units of competency. For example, the unit HLTWHS006 Manage Stresses in the Workplace could be updated to address the need for skills in managing workers' own mental health, wellbeing and resilience.

However, others may require the development of new units. For example, new elective units may be needed on the skills and knowledge for supporting different types of disabilities and a new core unit may be needed to encompass legal and ethical aspects of disability work and the NDIS, such as restrictive practice and the quality and safeguarding framework.


Recommendation 6.

Address gaps in the current units of competency for the Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability) to cover skills and knowledge in:

- establishing and maintaining professional boundaries
- managing own mental health, wellbeing and resilience
- the NDIS
- different types of disabilities
- cross-cultural skills
- working with interpreters.

Certificate IV in Disability

Declining enrolments in the Certificate IV in Disability suggest that this qualification is not meeting the needs of the disability sector. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the number of government funded enrolments in this qualification in Queensland has almost halved over the three years from 2015 to 2018. By contrast, government funded enrolments in the Certificate III in Individual Support (all streams) grew by almost 50% in just one year.

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Figure 2. Number of Queensland Government funded enrolments in Certificate IV in Disability 2015-2018
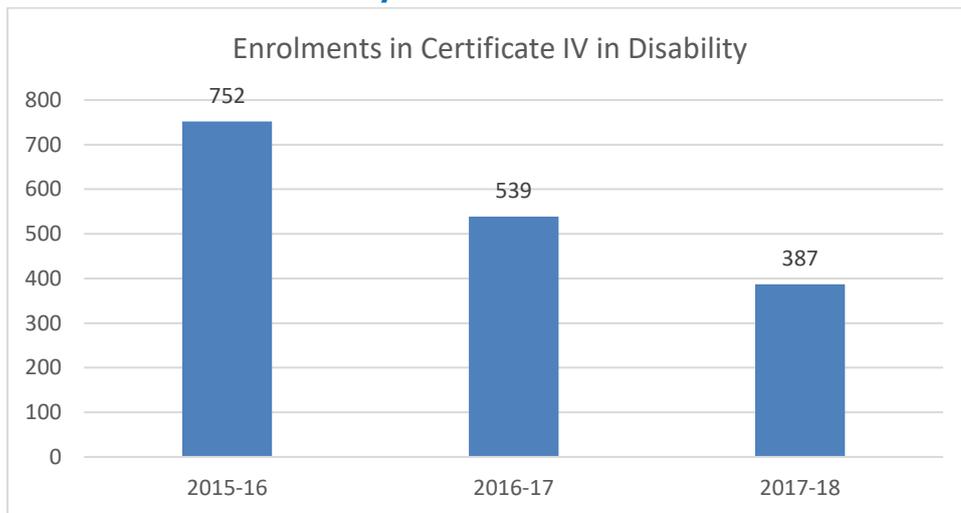
Consultation feedback also supports the view that the Certificate IV is not meeting industry needs, with some suggesting that the content is not relevant to the current NDIS environment and that the qualification needs significant review to align with current disability sector job roles and expectations.

The current qualification contains six units that belong to the core or disability specialisation units of the Certificate III in Individual Support. They are:

- CHCCCS015 Provide individualised support
- CHCDIS002 Follow established person-centred behaviour supports
- CHCDIS007 Facilitate the empowerment of people with disability
- CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people
- HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems
- HLTWHS002 Follow safe work practices for direct client care

With the exception of HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems, which this report is recommending be removed from the core of the Certificate III in Individual Support, it may be more valuable to remove these units from the core of the Certificate IV in Disability and instead make the Certificate III in Individual Support or equivalent industry experience an entry requirement.

This would enable the creation of a qualification that develops the higher level skills needed by the sector.

Based on consultation feedback, there are two distinct areas in which there is a demand for higher level skills. These are:

- Management and supervision roles
- Support roles for people with complex and clinical support needs.

There would be significant value gained by developing a qualification that includes two different streams that align with these two job roles.

Suggestions for core and specialisation electives are provided in Table 1 below.

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Table 1. Suggested units of competency for a revised Certificate IV in Disability

Core Units	Units for a management and supervision specialisation	Units for a complex and clinical support specialisation
CHCDIS005 Develop and provide person-centred service responses	BSBLDR402 Lead effective workplace relationships	HLTAID006 Provide advanced first aid
CHCDIS008 Facilitate community participation and social inclusion	CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice	HLTAAP002 Confirm physical health status
CHCDIS009 Facilitate ongoing skills development using a person-centred approach	TAEDEL404A Mentor in the workplace	CHCDIS010 Provide person-centred services to people with disability with complex needs
HLTAAP001 Recognise healthy body systems	HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety	CHCDIS004 Communicate using augmentative and alternative communication strategies
CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety	BSBFIM501 Manage budgets and financial plans	

There may also be potential for the development of a third specialisation for people seeking to establish their own NDIA registered provider business, or to manage the NDIS aspects of a service provider organisation. This specialisation might include skills in areas such as:

- Understanding the NDIS price guide and budgeting
- People management skills (e.g. recruitment, rostering, development of policies and procedures
- Business skills (e.g. marketing, business innovation)
- NDIA processes and requirements, including the provider portal, service agreements, service bookings, safeguarding
- Report writing and grant application writing.

> **Recommendation 7.**
>
> Review and revise the Certificate IV in Disability to better align with current industry job roles and higher level skill requirements. This should include:
>
> - Removal of core units that are part of the core or disability specialisation from the Certificate III in Individual Support and creating prerequisites instead

> - Consideration of the creation of two specialisations to meet the needs of job roles in management and supervision and in complex and clinical support

New skill sets

One of the biggest challenges with skilling workers for the disability sector is that every person with a disability who needs support will require support workers to have a specific set of skills.

The creation of new skill sets may provide the solution to equipping workers with additional skills needed to meet specific client or client cohort needs.

As highlighted earlier in the report, there is particular demand for additional skills in managing clinical aspects of support such as:

- PEG feeding
- aspiration
- administering of oxygen
- colostomy bags and bowel therapy management.

There is also demand for skills for working with specific client cohorts, such as:

- working in cross-cultural situations, including the use of interpreters where needed
- providing support to people with specific disabilities, particularly mental health related conditions, autism and intellectual disabilities.

Consultations have also highlighted multiple areas of demand for upskilling of existing workers, including supervisors and managers, to meet the demands of the NDIS.

As highlighted earlier in the report, there are a number of existing skill sets that may meet the needs identified in consultations. However, there are still gaps in the areas of:

- recruitment practices that support choice and control
- HR practices that support an effective, mentally healthy and resilient workforce
- budgeting in an NDIS environment
- workforce and business innovation.

There may be skill sets within other training packages that could be relevant, but these may need to be customised for the disability/community services sector.

> **Recommendation 8.**
>
> Consider the development of new nationally recognised skills sets or the revision of existing skills sets to meet the need for upskilling in:
>
> - clinical support needs
> - skills to support the needs of specific client cohorts, including people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities and people with mental health conditions, autism and intellectual disabilities.
> - recruitment practices that support choice and control
> - HR practices that support an effective and mentally healthy workforce
> - budgeting in an NDIS environment

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- workforce and business innovation.

New qualifications

As identified earlier in the report, there are currently no qualifications in the VET sector that are relevant for support co-ordinator roles. This is an area worth investigating further. There would also be value in exploring the potential need for qualifications in plan management and Local Area Coordination.

> **Recommendation 9.**
>
> Investigate the potential need for VET qualifications for the job roles of Support Coordinators, Plan Managers and Local Area Coordinators.

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