Developing talent with disabilities

Australian Network on Disability
Who am I?
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Formerly Senior Relationship Manager

She / Her

Australian Government
Department of Social Services
Australian Network on Disability

AND’s purpose is to advance inclusion of people with disability in private, public and not-for-profit business

• Support organisations to advance the inclusion of people with disability.

• People with disability should have the same life choices and economic opportunities as others.

• We help our members to welcome people with disability as employees, customers and stakeholders.
AND’s Leadership Development Journey

**Job seeker**
- Completes PACE Mentoring Program
- Completes Stepping Into Internship in Year 3-4 of university

**Employee**
- Graduate joins Stepping Into Alumni Network
- Graduate finds job with AND member and joins a Disability Employee Network
- Employee develops a personal development plan and embarks on leadership journey

**Leader**
- Individual participates in Observership Program
- Individual completes Governance Mentoring Program
- Individual completes AICD Course

**Director**
- Employee joins a Board and becomes a Disability Champion

- Learns key employability skills
- Gains work experience
- Networks with other disability graduates
- Finds a job with a disability confident employer
- Career development plan is drafted
- Governance and leadership skills learned through board shadowing
- Skills developed through connecting with Director mentor
- Opportunity to develop governance skills and gain profession accreditation
- Employee finds a board role
Disability Observership Pilot
The Disability Observership Pilot has created a disability talent pipeline into The Observership Program and has begun to create a passionate and motivated community of future leaders.

The Observership Program connects leaders aged 25-45 to observe a not-for-profit board during one calendar year (Jan-Dec) while also being offered short governance training sessions.

AND identified and removed unintended barriers that existed for people with disability in applying for the program, as well as throughout the life of the program.
Key outcomes from the pilot

Efforts have been successful to make the program and application process more accessible and inclusive for people with disability.

2022 cohort - 2 applicants with disability
2023 cohort - 19 applicants with disability (13 successful applications)
2024 cohort - 46 applicants with disability (aiming for 25 Observers with disability)

“You cannot become what you cannot see. So, by AND partnering with the Observership Program and supporting the placement of people with disabilities, we are putting people with disabilities out there and showing others, that people with disabilities can take leadership roles, we can be part of the decision making, we can take on these types of responsibilities.” 2023 Observer (Ronny Andrade Parra)
Directing Change
Scholarships
Aim of the project

The Directing Change Scholarship provides 15 full-fee scholarships per year to people with disability to participate in a governance course with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). It is a 3-year project.

AICD are the largest director membership organisation in the world. They develop the skills and capabilities of leaders for the benefit of society.

Successful scholars are also:
• matched to a mentor – Board Director (for 8 months)
• receive one year membership to the AICD
• participate in workshops to support career and leadership development.
Key data from Year 1 and 2

235 people with disability applied for the scholarship in 2022 and 141 people with disability applied in 2023.

22 scholarships were offered in Year 1 and 15 scholarships were offered in Year 2.

32% of Year 1 scholarship recipients were successful in obtaining a board role 1 year after the program finished. These were a mix of paid / unpaid board positions.
What’s next?

A $3m Career Pathways Pilot to support employers to build their capacity to develop the leadership potential of employees with disability.

Australian Network on Disability is conducting the pilot in partnership with the Business Council of Australia (BCA). Australian Network on Disability will support organisations to progress employees with disability out of entry level roles and into leadership positions, along with upskilling middle managers to confidently develop employees with disability.

This initiative is funded by the Australian Government, Department of Social Services. The pilot is running from August 2023 – February 2025.
Connect with me

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