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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Morrison Government reforms boost long-term employment opportunities for people with disability

New data shows that Morrison Government reforms to the Disability Employment Services (DES) program have produced a 27 per cent increase in the number of people with disability entering the workforce.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, said the latest analysis of DES since major reforms were introduced in July 2018 shows Australians with disability are embracing and benefiting from more employment opportunities.

“Our Liberal National Government is encouraged that more ongoing, lasting employment outcomes for people with a disability are occurring since the changes we made to DES,” Mr Fletcher said.

DES providers receive payments for helping a participant prepare for work (‘service fees’) and for successfully placing the participant into employment (‘outcome fees’).

“82 per cent of successful job placements are lasting at least 13 weeks, an increase of 24 per cent over previous arrangements.

“This shows that under our reforms providers are financially incentivised to place a job seeker into work only if there is a real opportunity for lasting employment.”

“Our reforms provide greater financial incentives for DES providers who place people with disability in long term employment and in tougher labour markets,” said Mr Fletcher.

DES helps people with disability to find and keep a job via a mix of large, medium and small, for-profit and not for profit organisations.

There are more than 213,000 participants currently in the DES program, of whom 77 per cent are seeking employment. Reforms to increase participant choice and foster greater competition in service provision came into effect in July 2018.

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson, said Australian employers are seeing the benefits of employing people with disability.

“A key feature of the new DES program is participant choice and control,” Ms Henderson said.

“Participants are able to change their provider, no questions asked. So far, more than 9,800 participants have taken that opportunity.

“We are extremely pleased to see job seekers with disability are shopping around for the services best suited to their needs.

“This demonstrates that DES participants are willing to find a service that works for them, and that providers need to establish an attractive service offer, and be competitive, to retain their participants.”

There are currently 123 providers in the program which secure payments ranging from \$4,059 up to \$30,899 when supporting DES participants to achieve at least 52 weeks of employment.

Since it started in 2010, DES has supported more than 808,000 jobseekers with disability. Over 262,000 of these participants have achieved employment outcomes lasting at least six months.

Over the next four years, the Australian Government will invest over \$3 billion in DES and associated services to help people with disability get long-term jobs with mainstream employers.

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