# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson’s Report</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO’s Report</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11 in Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Operations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Development</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall of Fame</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Leaders’ Forums</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Year Ahead 2011-12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors 2010-11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Disability Employment Australia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cover image:** *Rebecca is a client at Personnel Employment*
We now have the long awaited name change to ‘Disability Employment Australia’, which has been accompanied by a change in business structure to a Company Limited by Guarantee. This is a positive step forward when working in an intense competitive business environment.

Much work has been undertaken to promote Disability Employment Australia internationally, as for example in Europe - the disability employment landscape is beginning to develop more consistent open employment practices.

To reinforce Disability Employment Australia as our national peak body, we held Board meetings in six states this year. Each of these meetings was complemented by a members’ function that allowed delegates the opportunity to meet and speak face-to-face with the Directors.

I congratulate my fellow Directors who have worked diligently to continue to align the direction of the Board with our commitment to the strategic plan. We have continued to build a governance-focussed, skills-based Board, to ensure the sustainability of Disability Employment Australia and the sector in the long-term. It is through this commitment that the Board continues to drive the mission critical issues within the Strategic Plan, which have been at the forefront of the tireless work of the staff at Disability Employment Australia.

Income increased by 60 per cent this financial year due to training take up, membership fees, projects, and event attendance levels. These additional resources have made it possible to increase resources within Disability Employment Australia.

The size and scope of the team at Disability Employment Australia has increased, and this has enhanced the quality and range of member services, which in turn has had a positive impact in attracting and maintaining members. There have been numerous training and development events, with two successful Leaders’ Forums and a National Conference - where a record number of delegates travelled to Brisbane for what was an amazing event.

It was at our National Conference where I had the pleasure of welcoming a further three colleagues into Disability Employment Australia’s ‘Hall of Fame’. Sue Robertson, Michael Goldsworthy and Peter Tanner were recognised for their significant contribution to enhancing the lives of people with disability through employment.

Disability Employment Australia has responded to numerous challenges this year with robust research and commitment in their deliberations in demanding a ‘better deal for people with a disability in the workforce.’ All stakeholders can make a significant contribution to this ‘better deal’ including Disability Employment Services, ensuring that they continue to provide high quality and efficient employment services to their clients and to employers.

I would like to acknowledge everyone who has contributed to the success of Disability Employment Australia and your contribution to ‘a better deal for people with a disability in the workforce’ - you know who you are! Particular thanks go to our former ambassadors of ACE National, Keith Mahar and Dean Clifford, who have worked tirelessly to promote not only a ‘better deal’, but a ‘better understanding’ of the challenges faced everyday by people with disability.

I thank our CEO, Lynette May and her staff for what has been an outstanding year and my fellow Directors for their commitment in confronting the challenges in the way they have. Last but not least, I thank you, our members, who have significantly contributed to the success of Disability Employment Australia - it’s our combined unique history, philosophy and principles that drives our loyalty and commitment.
“How fast this past year has gone and how much has transpired during that time. Much has - and is - happening in both the disability and employment environments, and as a result, we have been travelling down previously untrodden paths.”

Lynette May, CEO.

Barry Sloan has been a client of Personnel Employment since 1987. After building up his skill base, Barry now works at Australian Plastics Recycling in South Australia.

“I work on the factory lines, feeding plastic into machines and doing all kinds of general things, I really enjoy it!”
CEO’s Report

The external environment
Australia has managed to maintain relative economic stability through the financial global crisis - thus far at least - and consequently the labour market has remained steady to the point where the focus has shifted to fulfilling a skills shortage. There is a heightened need for all those who are able to actively participate in the workforce to do so.

What has this meant for the disability employment sector? We have seen a tightening of the gate into the Disability Support Pension (DSP), and an emphasis on active participation in job searching. In the wider disability space, we saw the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) sign off on the National Disability Strategy, and commence a 12-month action planning process. Alongside this, we have seen the disability community come together in force behind the recommendations of the Productivity Commission to introduce a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) - with underlying principles of greater choice and control given to the consumer of services, and more equitable access to coordinated services.

Both these initiatives have placed employment as an essential ingredient in assisting people with disability to be both socially and economically included in the community. These are exciting times, and times where there are greater opportunities to improve employment outcomes for people with disability - that is real jobs, with real pay and career prospects.

Inside Disability Employment Australia
ACE National Network Inc ceased as an entity and transformed into Disability Employment Australia. New branding and a website with additional functionality are the most obvious outward signs of this transformation. Through these changes, we opened our business doors wider to our members, and have established an improved profile in the broader community.

We increased resources within the Disability Employment Australia office - moving from three staff to six. We now have in-house professional conference management, a learning and development program and a more professional presentation of our materials, through a new communications position. Catherine, Peter, Heather and Delphine have progressively come on board over these 12 months, and while you have experienced and will read about some of the fruits of their labour in this Annual Report, there is much more going on behind the scenes that will become visible and accessible to members over this coming year.

All this has been made possible through your membership and contribution to Disability Employment Australia. The Disability Employment Australia Board of Directors have shown sound governance and guidance and at the same time have been encouraging, supportive and have shared experiences and provided advice.

I truly appreciate working with this Board and compliment them on their disciplined attention to ensuring that Disability Employment Australia continues to grow and strengthen as the specialist employment peak organisation, and mature in its coverage and representation of disability employment in Australia.

Given the political and environmental changes ahead of us, the need for a specialist disability employment peak organisation is essential if Australia is to retain specialist employment services that are appropriate and relevant to the disability community, and ensure that these services are able to support both people with disability and employers with the appropriate level of expertise and resources. This requires two ingredients - and, it is my job to ensure they are developed - a growing and strong membership base, and professional, relevant services from the peak organisation that is recognised as the ‘go to’ peak for disability employment.

Thank you to the team here at Disability Employment Australia, the Board of Directors and mostly the support and patronage of members and their staff. With you, we have seen a prosperous year behind us and look forward to an even stronger year ahead.

Lynette May
2010-11 in Review

**July 2010**
National Disability Employment Forum
An inaugural National Disability Employment Forum was hosted by ACE National in Partnership with Minister Arbib and Parliamentary Secretary Bill Shorten. It was held in Melbourne, with 70 attendees. The forum asked employers ‘what needs to be done to increase the participation of people with disability in the open workforce?’

**September 2010**
International Forum on Disability
Bec Jackson, our former Senior Policy Officer travelled to Los Angeles to participate in the International Forum on Disability. She met with Cary Griffins and explored new development and training options through their Customised Employment Model.

National Leaders’ Forum and AGM
The September forum took place in Sydney and focussed around the DES workforce and business planning strategies. The inaugural CEO Forum was held as part of this Leaders’ Forum.

**October 2010**
Diversity@Work Sponsorship
ACE National sponsored the Diversity@Work Disability Awards.

**February 2011**
National Leaders’ Forum
The February forum took place in Adelaide, and focussed on equipping our membership with capability at both the leadership and practitioner level to ensure a sustainable future that we all have the opportunity to positively influence.

**April 2011**
Our Name Change
We changed our name from ‘ACE National’ to ‘Disability Employment Australia’ to better represent our status as the ‘go to’ peak body for disability employment in Australia.

Business Restructure
With the change of name, came a change in business structure - giving the organisation a true national scope. Disability Employment Australia is now an Australian Company Limited by Guarantee, whereas ACE National was an Incorporated Association in Victoria.

Innovation Fund - Employers Guide
We began work on a joint project with the Australian Network on Disability (AND) to develop an Employers Guide to Partnering with Disability Employment Services. The project was made possible through the DEEWR Innovation Fund 2011, and is due to be completed by the end of 2011 with an evaluation scheduled in May 2012.

Carol Wheaton started working with Business SA as an administration assistant in 2007 through Personnel Employment. Carol has Autism, and has been a real asset to the team.

Team leader Tony Bray says, “We have at any one time approximately 20,000 active files that all have a particular place they need to be and when staff from all teams can’t locate a file, Carol has been known to find it in minutes.”
<table>
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<tr>
<th>May 2011</th>
<th>DES Administration Review - ‘The NOUS Report’</th>
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<td></td>
<td>As a result of the Efficiency assessment of the new Disability Employment Services, or the ‘Nous Report’, the Government initiated the Independent Panel of Administration Review. The NOUS report marked a turning point for Disability Employment Australia, towards an advocatorial evidence-based approach. This project is a demonstration of Disability Employment Australia’s preparedness to invested money in an independent review and consultation process on matters that are deemed by the members as critical to the sustainability and success of DES.</td>
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<th>June 2011</th>
<th>First Research Reference Group meeting</th>
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<td>A strategic objective of the Board is to invest and participate in independent research projects to enhance the evidence base in order to influence policy direction in Australia and globally. An inaugural meeting of seven academics from universities across Australia and across multiple disciplines convened to form a Research Reference Group. The group will assist in formulating research questions, provide advice and oversight for research projects going forward.</td>
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<th>10th EUSE Conference 2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chairperson, Donna Faulkner, and CEO, Lynette May attended the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) Conference in Copenhagen. Five DES member organisations also attended the conference.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Australia’s Disability Employment Services Conference</th>
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<tr>
<td>We hosted our biggest ever conference at the Sofitel in Brisbane, with over 520 in attendance from across the disability employment sector.</td>
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<th>‘No to 80’ Campaign</th>
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<td>The campaign to oppose wide-spread sector tendering was launched at our conference in Brisbane.</td>
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<th>Website Launched</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Employment Australia launched a new user-friendly website, with enhanced functionality.</td>
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**Major headlines over the past year**

**Prime Minister’s speech**: Julia Gillard’s pre-budget speech to CEDA on the 1st of February 2011 put employment participation at the heart of government policy, with implications for disability employment.


**Productivity Commissions NDIS Draft Report**: In March 2011, the disability sector came to the fore with the release of the draft report on the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

**May Budget announcement**: As part of the Government’s budget, it was announced that DES-ESS 1,2 & 3 star rated providers would be taken to open tender in 2012.
Policy and Operations

2010-11 was a year of significant transformation for the sector as the new DES program was implemented across the country.

Consultation and Submissions

Over the past year, we contributed to four significant submission processes through consultation with our member organisations.

- **Parliamentary Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation**
  In May 2011 we lodged a submission that recommended a review of the Job Capacity Assessment process, greater flexibility to cater for episodic behaviours, increased learning and development and an increase in funding to better represent the cost of servicing.

- **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**
  We supported the implementation of the NDIS and advocated that Disability Employment Services sit outside of this scheme as a complementary service.

- **Minister for Employment Participation’s Consultation on the Future of Disability Employment Services 2012 and Beyond**
  Our January 2011 submission outlined our policy of longer-term contract extensions due to the immaturity of the program and the lack of reliable and appropriate performance data. To help inform our position, we convened a series of teleconferences as well as a face-to-face session in Melbourne with over sixty members and the Minister.

- **Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Long-Term Disability Care and Support**
  We supported the introduction of a long-term care and support scheme and advocated that Disability Employment Services continue to be funded separately as a stand-alone, complementary service for people with disability.

Working Groups

Disability Employment Australia sits on a number of working groups in order to best represent, resource and support our members.

- **DES Reference Group**
  This group is convened by the Minister, through DEEWR, to gain general feedback and information from the sector. We represent member views and experience to DEEWR through this avenue.

- **DES Operational Working Group**
  The Operational Working Group addresses the dual service priorities of meeting the operational requirements and client needs while balancing these with meeting contractual obligations. The group is convened by DEEWR. We represent members by collating member feedback and also maintain an issues register regarding factors that impact upon DES operations. In 2010-11 significant feedback was provided regarding anchoring job placements and the contact regime.

- **IT Advisory Group**
  DEEWR established this group through the transition phase of DES. It is now continued with revised Terms of Reference as a platform to advise providers of changes, and to invite feedback from the sector regarding the ESS IT system.

- **DES Evaluation Strategy Working Group**
  This group was convened as part of the DEEWR consultation process in the design of the DES evaluation project. Members of the group were primarily provider and consumer peaks. Disability Employment Australia was represented, along with two senior operational level staff from member organisations.
• **Contract Management and Quality Servicing Working Group**
  This group is convened by DEEWR, and provides a platform to represent members’ views regarding operational and contract management issues within the context of DEEWR’s Charter of Contract Management.

• **DES Technical Advisory Group**
  This group, which is convened by DEEWR, examines the DES Performance Framework - specifically the simplification and improvement of the regression models; performance measurement definitions; and the quality assessment framework.

• **Performance Framework Advisory Group**
  This group is convened by DEEWR, and examines the Performance Framework KPIs.

• **Employment Partnership Committee (EPC)**
  The EPC considers strategic employment participation policy issues and explores opportunities for improved approaches to programs and initiatives.

Reference Groups:

• **Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Reference Group**
  Disability Employment Australia is engaged with the APSC to develop strategies to assist APS agencies to better partner with DES providers and assist the APS in achieving their objectives of increasing the employment opportunities for people with disability in the APS. These findings will form the basis of a best practice guide to developing relationships between a provider and the APS.

• **Post Placement Ongoing Support Reference Group**
  This group was formed following support from members at the February National Leaders’ Forum to assist Disability Employment Australia in developing policy and clearer guidelines in relation to the provision of post placement and ongoing support. This need was identified out of the National Employers Forum in July, alongside feedback from consumer groups. An initial project for the group has been to act as expert advisors to the joint project of the Australian Network on Disability and Disability Employment Australia - the Employers Guide to partnering with Disability Employment Services.

• **Financial Viability Taskforce**
  This taskforce was convened in response to members reporting a critical decline in their financial viability with the introduction of DES and the ESS program. It aims to clarify issues and experiences, and to formulate solutions that Disability Employment Australia takes to DEEWR and the Minister, with the aim of resolving any risk to the sustainability of the program.

Capacity Building Fund

The Capacity Building Fund (CBF) was established by DEEWR to ensure that eligible DES-ESS providers receive support to adjust to the changes that came with the new DES contract. Sites with a rating of 2 stars or under were eligible to apply for $11,000 - 83 providers were eligible, and 61 applications were submitted. Disability Employment Australia processed 27 out of the 61 applications. The majority of the assistance sort was in relation to understanding the KPI’s, available data and performance frameworks, as well as management issues.

Operations support

The last year has been a period of intense transition, and accordingly operation support was highly sought after from members. As the sector has re-stabilised, the volume has normalised, and support is now largely directed towards more complex and systematic issues. Once these issues have been investigated, they are taken to DEEWR to seek solutions for the sector.
Learning and Development

New Appointment

Peter Smith started in January, in the position of Learning & Development Coordinator, to formalise the capacity building function of Disability Employment Australia.

Training courses

- The DES Essentials staff orientation program was completed and trialled in March 2011 followed by a national roll out in two formats - Train the Trainer and staff induction workshops. The program was well received with 46 participants attending the induction course, and a further 69 attending the Train the Trainer stream. The program continues to be rolled out via those that attended the Train the Trainer sessions, allowing state-based staff inductions by member providers.

- The Accidental Counsellor training program prepares DES staff for dealing effectively with clients in crisis. The course was facilitated by internationally renowned trainer, Caryn Walsh, and was run in May and June of 2011, with an intake of 54.

- Case Management was run inhouse at UnitingCare, with an intake of 38. The program is tailored to the disability employment sector, and suits both new and experienced DES case managers. It will be made available to the wider sector over the next year.

Workplace survey

Late in 2010 Disability Employment Australia conducted an employee survey to develop a profile of members across the domains of education, employment, demographics, career path and employer. The survey was completed by 813 participants and has provided the basis for the development of our training and development program. This survey provides the opportunity to develop a longitudinal study, and build up a profile of the sector.

Learning and Development Reference Group

A reference group was established to provide feedback on training needs and to provide advice from a DES provider perspective. This group has provided varied and invaluable feedback concerning both training needs and material content.

Contacts & networking

Disability Employment Australia has continued to foster and expand contacts across the academic and practitioner community locally and internationally, to further inform and assist in the development of our training programs.
Over the last year, Disability Employment Australia has laid the foundation for a respected industry-specific capacity-building program.

Matthew Muskelly was supported through a Certificate II in Horticulture by STEPS Mackay. Matthew has cerebral palsy, and works as a part-time retail assistant at Bunnings.

“I’ve only been there (Bunnings) for a couple of weeks but just love it. It’s a great working team and everyone is very friendly. I love the money too!”
Our improved financial position allowed us to review internal roles and workloads. We are pleased to have been able to increase our staff through three newly created roles, effectively doubling our in-house resources.

In October 2010, Catherine Fuller filled a new split role that encompasses both Event Production and Membership Services. In January, Peter Smith joined the team as the Learning and Development Coordinator, with a focus on increasing our training capacity. Finally, Heather Wilson started in late May and filled the new position of Communications Officer.

Our new interactive website and company rebranding was launched to delegates at Australia’s Disability Employment Services Conference on the 30th June 2011. We look forward to demonstrating to our members how this new tool will enhance their membership with Disability Employment Australia in the coming year.

We had 134 members as at 30 June 2011.

Over the last year, Disability Employment Australia has focused on increasing support resources for members.
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<th>Good Samaritan Industries</th>
<th>Peel Valley Training Enterprise Inc</th>
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<td>Great Southern Personnel Inc</td>
<td>Personnel Employment (Barkuma Inc)</td>
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<td>Greenacres Disability Services</td>
<td>Personnel Placement Consultancies</td>
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<td>Headway Support Services</td>
<td>Pioneer Employment Service Inc</td>
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<td>Hedland Personnel Inc</td>
<td>Prahran Mission UnitingCare</td>
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<td>Heta Incorporated</td>
<td>PVS Workfind</td>
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<td>Highlands Support Services Inc</td>
<td>Red Cross Employment Services</td>
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<td>Hinchinbrook Employment Services</td>
<td>ReSolutions Employment</td>
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<td>House with No Steps</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Blind</td>
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<td>Hume Employment Service Limited</td>
<td>SA Career Consultants</td>
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<td>Ideal Placements</td>
<td>SCI Workforce</td>
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<td>Interwork Limited</td>
<td>SensWide Employment (Vicdeaf)</td>
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<td>Intework Inc</td>
<td>SkillsPlus Inc</td>
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<td>Ipswich &amp; Toowoomba Employment Service</td>
<td>SMP Fremantle</td>
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<td>Job Centre Australia</td>
<td>South Burnett Jobmatch Association Inc</td>
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<td>Job Solve (ACT) Inc</td>
<td>Spinal Injuries Association</td>
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<td>Jobmatch - Northcott Disability Services</td>
<td>St. John of God</td>
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<td>Jobmatch Association Inc</td>
<td>St. Laurence Community Services Inc</td>
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<td>Jobsupport Inc</td>
<td>Stanthorpe Training Centre Inc</td>
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<td>Key Employment Association</td>
<td>STEPS Disability QLD Inc</td>
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<td>Limestone Coast Work Options</td>
<td>Sunshine Employment Solutions</td>
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<td>Link Personnel</td>
<td>Sydney Counselling Centre (STEPS Employment Service)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macarthur Disability Services</td>
<td>Tableland Employment Agency Inc</td>
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<td>Mach 1 Australia Incorporated</td>
<td>The Ascent Group Australia Ltd</td>
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<td>MADEC</td>
<td>The ORS Group</td>
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<td>Mai-Wel Limited</td>
<td>The Personnel Group Ltd</td>
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<td>Maranoa Regional Council - Employability</td>
<td>The Spastic Centre of NSW</td>
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<td>MatchWorks</td>
<td>Uniting Care Wesley - Port Adelaide</td>
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<td>Max Employment</td>
<td>Vision Australia</td>
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<td>Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria</td>
<td>Waminda Services Limited</td>
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<td>Mission Australia</td>
<td>Wesley Uniting Employment</td>
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<td>MJP Employment Services</td>
<td>Western District Employment Access</td>
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<td>Multiple Solutions (The MS Society of SA &amp; NT Inc)</td>
<td>Western District Supported Employment Service Inc</td>
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<td>Nexus Human Services</td>
<td>Western Port Employment Support Service Inc (Job Focus)</td>
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<td>Nortec Employment and Training</td>
<td>Western Vocational Association Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Queensland Competitive Employment Service Limited</td>
<td>Westgate Community Initiatives Group Inc (WCIG)</td>
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<td>North West Employment Group</td>
<td>Westside Community Services Limited</td>
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<td>Northstar Specialist Employment Service</td>
<td>WISE Employment Ltd</td>
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<td>OCTEC Inc</td>
<td>Work Solutions Gippsland</td>
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<td>On-Q Human Resources</td>
<td>Worklink Employment Support Group Inc</td>
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<td>OnTrack Employment</td>
<td>Workscope Inc</td>
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<td>Open Minds</td>
<td>Workskills Illawara</td>
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<td>Options Victoria / Paramount Personnel</td>
<td>Worktrainers Limited</td>
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<td>Ostara Australia</td>
<td>Outlook Employment</td>
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Conference

Australia’s Disability Employment Services Conference 2011 was held in Brisbane from the 28th to the 30th of June at the Sofitel Brisbane Central, with a record 521 attendees.

We opened the conference as ‘ACE National’ and closed with the long awaited new identity of ‘Disability Employment Australia’ and the launch of a new, dynamic and user-friendly website. We also gave notice to the Minister that we would be opposing the decision to take over 80% of DES-ESS providers to tender in 2012.

Disability Employment Australia team, Board and participant feedback all reported that this was a standout conference. Records were broken in 2011 in all areas, including numbers of participants, exhibitors and sponsors. We sold out the welcome reception and gala dinner, with a long waiting list in reserve. The venue and service was great, the food extraordinary. The new structure was a success, with half-day member workshops leading into the conference well supported.

There were many highlights in the feedback, including the first time a perfect score was achieved - congratulations to Dale Elliott. Michelle Colmer was also a standout presenter. Both Michelle and Dale helped raise our expectations of people with disability and what can be achieved with focused goal setting and positive determination. Overall, we aimed for a good mix of content that would be of interest to management and boards, as well as content aimed at the practitioner level. The feedback indicates that we achieved this.

Feedback also confirmed that we provided a reasonable coverage of the key issues impacting on the disability employment environment, including procurement and bid management, NDIS and changes to the DSP space. We also dealt with strategies for dealing with the workforce issues we are facing by looking at ways to become ‘employers of choice’ through integrating positive psychology into management practices and better change management capability. At the practitioner level, we offered a choice of evidence-based breakout sessions ranging from employer engagement perspective, participants’ perspectives, as well as tools and programs to consider adopting in provider services.

Hall of Fame

The second Hall of Fame awards built on the inaugural year’s event, establishing a tradition of acknowledging innovation and commitment to the sector.

The Disability Employment Australia Hall of Fame recognises individuals who have:

- made a significant contribution to the principles of the Disability Services Act by promoting the value of people with disability and their inclusion in the life of their community;
- contributed to best practice or improved quality in employment services for people with disability across the sector - in Australia and potentially, internationally; and
- been innovative in their approach to employment services for people with disability.

2011 Recipients

Recipients of the 2011 Hall of Fame Awards were announced on the 29th of June at the National Disability Services Conference dinner in Brisbane.

Michael Goldsworthy, Principal Consultant, Australian Strategic Services, Melbourne whose innovative and evidence-based leadership has consistently guided disability employment not-for-profits through processes of change, enabling a more efficient and accountable sector.

Sue Robertson, Managing Director, EDGE Employment Solutions, Perth who played an integral role in the national establishment of open employment for people with disability, significantly contributing towards improved life choices for people with physical or intellectual disability, and mental illness.

Peter Tanner, Executive Director, On-Q Human Resources, Byron Bay who played a fundamental role in building the foundations of an innovative and progressive disability employment sector along the New South Wales coast, as well as establishing a national disability employment services network.
National Leaders’ Forums

We held two National Leaders’ Forums over the last year. They provided a chance to meet with the board and staff, and to address topical sector issues and developments with colleagues from across the country.

The forums are designed as mini-conferences, and are aimed at CEO and management personnel. They are educational and inspirational events, and aim to strike a balance of working ‘on and in the business,’ as well as drawing from experiences outside of the sector.

We introduced two new features at the Leaders’ Forum in September 2010. A Members’ Reception on the eve of first day now allows an extra opportunity for informal networking, and a chance to mingle with board and staff. New, hour-long CEO Forums create the space for approximately thirty CEOs to meet together and tackle some of the tougher DES issues.

Sydney in September 2010

The September Leaders’ Forum took place in Sydney, and focussed around the DES workforce and business planning strategies. The standout session over the one and a half day program was Damian Byers, the Director of People, Learning and Culture, from UnitingCare, who spoke about workforce engagement in his presentation entitled ‘Employer of Choice: A simple proposition.’

The inaugural CEO Forum was held as part of this Leaders’ Forum. Time was spent ‘blueskying’ the future of DES, as well as exploring alternative procurement models and their suitability for the DES sector.

Adelaide in February 2011

The February Leaders’ Forum focused on equipping our membership with capability at both the leadership and practitioner level to ensure a sustainable future that we all have the opportunity to positively influence.

The highlight of the program was ‘Thinking and Acting Politically,’ presented by Dr Greg Ogle, Senior Policy and Research Officer at SACOSS, who Rick Kane from WISE Employment.

The accompanying CEO Forum looked at ways to develop leadership across the disability employment space, as a means of future-proofing the sector. The forum took time to consider what resources they would like Disability Employment Australia to deliver to help support the development of their own boards of directors.
The next year promises to be an eventful and productive time for both Disability Employment Australia, and the disability employment sector as a whole.

The Year Ahead 2011-12

No to 80 Campaign
With the announcement of our opposition to wide-scale tendering in June 2011, we launched our first major national campaign in the political arena. With extensive sector consultation, we will push for a Senate Inquiry into the tendering process, and advocate for a change of Government policy to postpone tendering, or, if tendering goes ahead in 2012, to only tender one and two star providers.

Innovation fund
We will deliver the completed booklet, Employers Guide to Partnering with Disability Employment Services, in partnership with Australian Network of Disability (AND). This will be accompanied by DVD case studies, and will be supported by an independent e-learning package developed by Disability Employment Australia.

Consultation of Request for Tender (RfT)
We will undertake consultation through our member organisations to determine our position on the RfT document relating to procurement in 2012. Once established, we will present this position to DEEWR.

Regional CEO Forums
In addition to the CEO forums that have run as part of the bi-annual National Leaders’ Forums, we will run regional CEO Forums. This will ensure that Disability Employment Australia is more available to a wider membership base, and able to pick up regional nuances.

E-learning
We take our first foray into the world of e-learning with an online version of our tried and tested Case Management program. This will be complemented with another, brand new, e-learning program which will support the DES sector in meeting the employer expectations of the Innovation Fund booklet, Employers Guide to Partnering with Disability Employment Services. Over time, we plan to make all of our training programs available in the e-learning format.

Ross Bowen came to STEPS in Bowen determined to prove that he would work again. He now has full time employment at Mansell’s Premix Transport.

“I’ve found that it pays to be upfront with people so they know what they’re dealing with. The job is perfect for me as a driver; there are no heavy duties at all.”
Certificate Training

• We will develop a contextualised Cert IV in Employment Services (Disability), initially in partnership with Gipps Tafe in Victoria, and extended to member RTO’s to deliver the program in other states.

• We expect to trial the Diploma in Person Centred Practice - Employment in 2011-2012. This is a partnership between Disability Employment Australia and the Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Sydney.

• Leadership training remains on our agenda, with the expectation that we will have programs that meet the sector’s needs available to members towards the end of 2011-12.

Research projects on the horizon

We will begin scoping two research projects over the next financial year.

• One potential project will ask the question, ‘what is the real impact of the DES program?’ We will explore whether the program is achieving in practice what it set out to do on paper.

• Another potential project will begin to gather and assess examples of best practice from the disability employment sector, both nationally and internationally. Aspects of quality and person-centred practice will guide the research, which will be shared with the sector, with the goal of promoting best practice.

Scoping Blueprint Two - 2015 and beyond

We will begin the process of ‘blueskying’ the DES sector for 2015 and beyond. This will involve consultation with members, focus groups and research, with the goal of influencing policy and realising the potential of the sector moving forward.

Communications

With the creation of a new communications role in May 2011, coupled with a new user-friendly website, we will be able to deliver a more professional, informative and wide-reaching service to members. Regular issue-specific e-bulletins, and printed membership material will be two areas of development over the next year.

Events management support to members

A new events and membership services dedicated role will allow us to provide event management support to members through a ‘fee-for-service’ model. This includes online event registration and customised event web-hosting.

International Network of Supported Employment

As a result of our goal to increase international networking, we will join the International Network of Supported Employment, which will link us to other international bodies such as the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE), the American Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), and the Association of Supported Employment New Zealand (ASENZ).
Board of Directors 2010-11

Donna Faulkner  
Chairperson  
Executive Director,  
Work Solutions  
Gippsland, Victoria

Kerry Jones  
Vice Chairperson  
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Personnel Employment,  
South Australia

Chris Connor  
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CEO, Job Centre  
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LEAD Employment,  
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John Lysaught  
Board Member  
CEO,  
Forrest Personnel Inc,  
Western Australia

Garry Hooper  
Board Member  
CEO, STEPS Disability  
Queensland Inc,  
Queensland

Rick Kane  
Board Member  
Policy Advisor,  
WISE Employment,  
Victoria
About Disability Employment Australia

Disability Employment Australia is the peak industry body for Australia’s Disability Employment Services.

Disability Employment Australia exists to represent the interests of our members at a national level to government and other stakeholders. We have a range of functions designed to support our members to achieve best practice service provision in their role to find employment outcomes for people with disability. We advise, advocate, train, inform, as well as undertake events to promote the sector.

We have a particular focus on:

- government policy relevant to disability employment;
- issues impacting on the viability of the industry;
- removing barriers to workforce participation for people with disability; and
- promoting best practice and innovative ways to find people with disability meaningful and sustainable jobs.

Working from a social inclusion perspective, Disability Employment Australia approaches its work from a society-wide perspective and is committed to identifying opportunities to realise a ‘better deal’ for jobseekers and employees with disability and to educating the public about issues related to disability employment.

Disability Employment Australia has played an active role over many years in providing advice on increasing workforce participation rates for people with disability and has worked hard to establish itself as the peak organisation in relation to disability and open employment.

Disability Employment Australia has worked closely with government Ministers and departments over the past three years, during which time the Australian Government has undertaken significant consultation and review in the area of disability and employment.

Additionally, Disability Employment Australia has had many opportunities to work with DEEWR to gather industry views and feed into the policy and procedure making process. This has been particularly pertinent during the lead up to the implementation to the new DES program and post transition.

Two-years-ago, Sari Anderson didn’t want to continue living. Through the support of a STEPS Disability Mental Health Advisor, she now has work as a cleaner at a local office block.

“STEPS have been a great support. They gave me a real purpose and a reason to get out of bed in the morning. They really gave me a chance to re-enter the real world.”
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