

1. On the Importance of Architecture

Webinar transcript

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Peter Bacon:

Hello, everybody. So today is summarising the first of our DEA Papers. The paper itself should be out later in this week. We're just finalising the graphic design around all of that. But now is a kind of a sneak preview as to what it's going to contain.

The idea behind the DEA Papers is, I don't know how many they're going to be, but it's a way of really examining the sort of intellectual foundations of what reform should look like.

And I know it's terribly early when it comes to disability employment itself. You know, for those who've just gone through the IEA reform process, it sort of makes you feel a bit sick to talk about further reform.

But actually, this isn't just talking about IEA. This is talking about how we can reform Australia as a whole to support more people with disability, not just into work, but to succeed in work. And to do that, I think we need to go back to first principles, which is what we're doing today, which is we are in the first the first paper is called On the Importance of Architecture, which sounds like a terribly sort of grand phrase, but it's really saying that we have not necessarily been operating at the right level when we consider reform.

So what do I mean when I say that we're not operating at the right level? So Australia has changed the machinery of disability employment many times over. DEA, you know, have been part of all of that over the last 30 years. And has been real effort applied by people with genuine motivations and great capability and good intent. And yet we haven't always seen the results that we've wanted to see when it comes to the employment rate of people with disability.

And although there's been some really positive movement over the last five, 10 years, we're probably still not where we'd like to be. So at some point, we need to stop asking whether we're doing the work well and start asking whether we're thinking about things at the right level.

From our perspective, if a problem persists across many different programme designs, across different governments of all different stripes, and across different contracting models, the most likely explanation is not that every single one of those designs is just a case of bad execution and bad design.

It's that the thing being redesigned isn't necessarily the thing that's producing the outcome, or at least not by itself. And that's the possibility that this paper looks at.

So we've got the three key words here on this slide, architecture, capability and participation. And they're the kind of the spine of this argument. So we'll talk more about what we mean by some of these concepts shortly.

But architecture is how the environment is arranged.

Capability is what the arrangement allows a person to build and demonstrate.

And participation is what we're counting at the end, the quantitative element.

We have spent lots of our time measuring the third, some of the time arguing about the second, i.e. capability, and very little of it designing the first, i.e. architecture.

This is an argument about the arrangement of the whole disability employment ecosystem and is not a defence of covered current service settings necessarily, although there are elements of that.

But before we go any further, I want to acknowledge that we, I'm currently on the land of the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation today.

And I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

And in doing that, I think we also need to point out that systems and the architecture are designed from assumptions about who belongs and who is expected to work.

And those assumptions carry prejudice and First Nations people with disability feel that very acutely. And that results in employment and support outcomes that are consistently poorer. So that's just to frame this as part of the architecture and evidence to that point.

In terms of housekeeping, this session will be recorded. And please stay muted during the presentation. I'm hoping we'll have a few minutes for questions at the end, but I can't necessarily promise that. If there are outstanding questions that you have, you have DEA's details. Most of you probably have my details. So please do feel free to stay in touch. And of course, the paper itself will be coming out, I think, later this week. So you'll have an opportunity to see if we've included some of the detail that answers your questions in the paper itself, which of course is more extensive than I can go into just in this particular presentation.

So, why are we talking about architecture? Why is that the kind of, let's get back to first principles argument?

Every few years, we, you know, renovate the programme, IEA, DES, and other things before that. We adjust eligibility, we rewrite the contracts or deeds, we refine the performance framework, very current for you who are currently IEA providers, and we do it seriously and with good intent.

And then we see what the results are. We work towards better results.

This paper starts from a simple observation about that pattern. We've become pretty good at changing that machinery. Providers are very responsive to what government asks them to do in terms of incentives and in terms of moving the deck chairs around every five years or so. But we are much less practised at asking whether the machinery that we're building is a structure capable of producing what we want.

So this is a bit of a challenge to the habitual location of policy attention.

Much reform activity is necessary, but it tends to happen where government can readily change things, where they have a lever to pull, an obvious one, whether it's changing a contract or a procurement round, makes us feel like activities happen.

It makes you feel like meaningful reform is going on, but it's not necessarily reform to the things that count.

Rules, contracts, procurements, these are levers that are portfolio owned. In this case, what we're used to dealing with is DSS. They can be changed within the budget cycle. They can produce visible activity. You can see progress. Effects can be reported.

Attention follows that visibility and that control. And that's fine, but it's not sufficient.

So that, so this paper asks three fundamental questions, really. So what outcomes are we pursuing? What conditions will make that outcome possible? And how do people with disability experience the interface between systems?

The point is to assess whether the machinery that we're talking about here sits inside an architecture capable of producing success.

Consider, for example, a young person finishing school who needs transport, they need NDIS support in one way or another, they need an employer willing to adjust a role, and they need an income support arrangement that doesn't just punish them for trying to do something with their lives.

Each of those things sit within a different system, a different part of the architecture controls them.

And each system can be operating exactly as designed, and the pathway can still fail because no one is accountable for the joins between them or for governing the overarching journey of that person. Nothing in that story is fixed by rewriting one program's performance framework.

That's not an argument of doing nothing, of course. While we wait for the grand architectural redesign, DEA continues to work on improving programs, contracts, policy settings, and we're going to keep doing that. But...

This is an argument about where additional attention should go, not about withdrawing that attention. And that architecture and programme reform are not alternatives. The trouble is we've only been doing one of those two things.

So, what is our central proposition?

If you take one sentence away from this presentation, I think it may be this one. Australia has spent too much time working one or more layers down from the real problem.

So what do I mean by that? We have a disability gap, employment gap. It's about 26 points, and it can't be explained, I think, through one service, one funding stream, or one policy setting.

Often, though, that's what we do. We go, oh, we have this gap here. It must be the problem of employment services not doing a good enough job. Well, that's not sufficient explanation. I'll talk a bit more about that, why when we get to an international comparison.

When I talk about architecture, that's the thing that sits behind all of that. And that really means the deliberate arrangement of responsibility, funding, incentives, information and interfaces across the system that shape employment.

So it's the level of which separate systems are given a shared objective.

And the joins between them can be designed. So, specifically, what do I mean by that?

Responsibility is who owns the outcome, not necessarily who delivers the service. So DSS or NDIA or other places. Funding is where the money sits and what it is permitted to buy. Incentives are what each actor is awarded for, which is often not what we say we want.

A classic example, of course, I think being employment support within NDIS, where we say we want people to be helped towards work and into work, but we fund the activity and not the outcome. Information is what follows the person from system to system rather than being rebuilt from scratch at every door, and interfaces other handovers, which is where pathways frequently break, which is what DEA Paper 2 on blended transitions is going to go into in great depth.

This paper makes two related claims. Disability Employment Services, or IEA, are judged against outcomes produced by that wider ecosystem.

And then the second claim, which we'll talk about much more, is that the ecosystem takes the consequences of exclusion and turns it into evidence that people lack capability, and that self-reinforces.

So to go back to what we mean when we talk about architecture.

Architecture is the difference between a set of good rooms and a building. You can improve every room individually, make them look absolutely beautiful. But if there aren't corridors between them, if you can't get from one room to the other, it's kind of all for naught. And I think that's an apt analogy that we often seen for Australia.

And that leads to an attribution error.

So, what is this attribution error?

When we get a bad outcome, it tells you that something's gone wrong. Someone with a disability who's capable of working doesn't get work. Someone who wants to achieve something in their lives, wants to live a life of their own choosing and isn't able to do so, but they could.

Something's gone wrong, but just because something has gone wrong, it doesn't tell you where or how.

So imagine a country with high rates of smoking, widespread obesity, low physical activity, little preventative care, and long waits for diagnosis. Now imagine that country has poor cardiovascular outcomes. People are dying young; life expectancy is low.

Would those outcomes by themselves prove that the country's cardiologists are inept, incompetent, lazy? Of course not. The cardiologist might be absolutely superb, world leading. They might be working extremely effectively against a set of factors against which they have no control whatsoever.

To find out, you'd have to look at what cardiologists actually do control and judge them on that. How many successful operations have they done? What's the rate of mortality in those surgical procedures, for example, while looking somewhere else for the explanation?

Now, no serious health system would respond to that hypothetical situation by re-tendering cardiology services, sometimes to people who've got no experience of cardiology every few years, or by moving cardiologists around the country from one hospital to another and call it serious reform.

I think my analogy may be obvious now, because the same error, the same attribution error, I believe, occurs when the disability employment gap is treated as proof that employment services are simply failing. Employment services are visible, public funded, measured, contracted, and accountable. They report. They are audited. Specific providers can be scrutinised and named.

Ableism in recruitment, for example, cannot be named in the same way. It's more nebulous, it's diffuse.

Same goes with transport that cannot run. It can make a massive contribution to somebody's inability to get to work, but it doesn't feature in this argument. It doesn't appear on a departmental performance dashboard for disability employment.

Attention flows to that which is measurable. And blame follows attention.

That's where the two boxes we've got on this slide make a difference. So on the left is what services control and what we should judge them upon. Specialist assistance, job search, employer engagement, placement, ongoing support. And on the right is what surrounds them, education, transport, housing, health, income support, workplace design, employer behaviour, and much besides attitudes.

Employment services struggle to control employer behaviour. They do not control education, transport, housing, poverty or ableism. **A provider can do everything well and still lose a placement because a bus route changed.** An NDIS support fell over. A job was designed in a way that no adjustment was offered against, or a hiring manager can make a bad judgment.

This isn't an argument against scrutiny for employment services. I absolutely think it's an argument for that scrutiny, but it rejects one important thing, which is using the persistence of the overall disability employment gap as sufficient evidence for service failure. Scrutiny is necessary, but misattribution is not. They're different claims. Some might say, oh, this is Pete, he works for DEA, this has just provided protection to make this point.

I understand that, but I don't think that's what I'm saying. **Misattribution is bad for good providers and good for bad ones, because where everyone is blamed for everything, nobody is held accountable for anything in particular.** It all gets thrown into the same mix. If we hold services rigorously to account for the levers they actually hold, things like placement quality, employer engagement, durability of support, and participant experience, and hold them hard, that may work better.

Because too often we let a system-wide gap substitute for that kind of judgment. Because it lets the part of the ecosystem that are not measured escape scrutiny entirely. Accountability that follows control is sharper than accountability that follows visibility.

A second challenge that you could make: if services are not the problem – that's not quite what I'm saying – but if you said that, why fund them?

And the answer is, they are part of the answer, but not all of it. Absolutely, important services can make a really big difference.

That is not all of them. So why do I say that? I think one thing that we need to talk about is sometimes people say the story of disability employment in Australia was stagnation.

That's not true. The data shows something different, which is that actually over the last five, 10 years, there's been a really big improvement.

So the idea that nothing has changed is factually wrong. It has. The Survey of Disability Age and Carers, as you can see here, has shown that the participation rate and the unemployment rate have much improved for people with disability. And DES was a big part of that story. There were 285,000 26-week outcomes generated by DES.

So that's pretty significant in terms of the numbers.

And I use this as evidence, which is meant to be analytical rather than celebratory, because I'm not suggesting that the disability employment gap is acceptable as it is. The gap is still too large, and we'll go into why that's the case. But it does show that specialised disability employment services can contribute at scale.

And therefore, when we judge them on what they can control, we should be considering the fact that they make that, they are there to make that kind of significant contribution.

And as a further point, I just want to draw out before we move on from this slide, which is if nothing ever moves, you can just blame human nature or the labour market.

You can say it's baked in, stagnated, nothing changes anything, and you can shrug. But the kind of movement we see there actually makes the problem tractable.

It tells us that things aren't fixed. Things can change. So the question is not whether change is possible. Instead, it's why change has been slower, more precarious, and more dependent on the individual effort and goodwill than it sometimes needed to be.

So how do we move on from that progress to where we really want to get to in terms of disability employment? That's where we'll go now.

So, you'll see this better in the paper. It's probably difficult to see this particular diagram. But what this is designed to show is the four interconnected layers that we talk about in this DEA paper number one.

So if we're talking about the fact that we've just seen gains happen in disability employment somewhere, this is the map of that somewhere. Without this shared map, every conversation about disability employment tends to collapse into whatever your pet subject is or whatever's in the news that week.

And I think it's worth saying, well, what are the four layers at which we normally talk at and where do we think we should be talking more?

Let me say the ecosystem.

It's what we've just been talking about. It's the broad environment in which people with disability experience work. That goes right through from school and early years, family, transport, health, housing, community expectation, employers.

Architecture is the organising design for that ecosystem. So it's how do we draw those things together in relation to one another?

And in the case of the current system, an analysis of whether they had been arranged at all, or whether they've just emerged.

Systems, including the systems that we talk about, that tends to be IEA, NDIS, education, those kind of things. And then subsystems are the operational settings within those particular systems, like eligibility, assessment, performance frameworks, data collection, etc. This distinction matters, and it matters a lot to this paper.

Because what we're saying is that we think most policy activity happens at system and subsystem levels. And I think we can say that with some authority. I've been in the post for 3 1/2 years now, and that's entirely where the debate and discussions with government have lived.

And we're slightly getting some slightly more architectural questions at the moment, particularly around how things like NDIS and IEA can be arranged better together, what the institutional underpinnings of that should look like. But really, we've been operating at the system and subsystem levels. So we can change an assessment tool. A department can rewrite a deed, but nobody can sign a brief that changes employment culture by Tuesday.

So reform gravitates downward to the areas which are more controllable, more easily reformable, I suppose. And in the case of us at DEA, I think we end up doing careful, technically competent work on those layers. But they are layers beneath where the problem, in our view, actually sits.

So, we're working to return to the earlier point, at least one layer down from the central proposition. And the consequence of this is that a technically efficient subsystem can do what it's supposed to do, but still disappoint when surrounding systems pull in different directions or no one owns the joints. So you can optimise a component inside the machinery, but if the machinery itself isn't working, it can only make so much difference.

So imagine for a second a young person who finishes school with no work experience and no expectation of employment. They get themselves a plan that may or may not have some employment funding in it. They arrive at an employment service that's measured on placements and outcomes. Every institution in that sequence, school, NDIS, IEA, may be operating correctly by its own rules. But the sequence itself is not governed by any one organisation or institution. And in fact, there's very little scope for those various different organisations, institutions, and parts of the architecture to talk to each other and work with each other.

And what that results in, is worse experiences. These are real lives lived across those four layers, even though policy has only really made it a couple of them.

So to return to what the DEA Papers are trying to do, we're trying to concentrate on that ecosystem and that architecture while also continuing to make sure that we're doing our work on the systems and the subsystems because those are important.

So this isn't a refusal to engage with the programme detail, it's a claim about where we need to focus more.

So layer two, which is the architecture layer, is in our view where almost nothing has been done deliberately. And that is where we go to next, to what architecture could be in practical terms for Australia.

Architecture can sound like an abstraction until you write down what it contains and then it actually becomes something that's a bit more practical. So what do I mean by that?

A credible architecture needs a defined objective, allocated responsibility, designed interfaces, aligned incentives, shared information, feedback, and learning mechanisms. And we'll return to that because I think those are some good tests for how we are doing in Australia.

But they are the spine of an important list.

So what do I say when I mean objective? **If every system has its own target, as is certainly the case that we currently see at the moment, the ecosystem itself has no target.** What are we actually trying to do with disability employment in Australia? I would consider myself an informed person on this matter and I don't know.

The, when I say roles, I mean what are the levers there and who controls each of those levers?

Information. Today a person retells their story at every threshold and the evidence that they have built does not travel with them.

And on learning, we generate huge amounts of data, but we don't always turn that into knowledge.

If no institution is responsible for these interfaces, fragmentation is not accidental. It is what the system has been designed to permit. It is not a bug. It is a predictable output of an arrangement in which nobody owns the space between these different parts. And without architecture, thoughtful, planned, considered architecture, fragmentation becomes the default.

Now, you could say, well, all of this is, it's fixable within, this is the failure of Australia specifically. We're getting this wrong in this space and we're getting it wrong in other comparable spaces.

Maybe. But I think one thing that we should do, which is the thing that we don't do enough, which is look at where do we sit against other comparable countries to see if the pattern repeats.

The answer is, it does. If you look at, I think we looked at 32 different countries with recent-ish disability employment gap data, they did measure things differently. So there's always huge amounts of caveats around how we measure things like disability employment gaps. But what's interesting is that our disability employment gap in our most recent data set is 26 percentage points.

The average across those countries we looked at is 27 percentage points. So we are right in there, in the middle of the distribution, and most economies have gaps over 20 points. Some have them over 30. So Australia is by no means extraordinary or unique. In fact, it's typical.

So what do we make of that? The fact that we have a recurring disability employment gap against so many different countries.

The fragmentation that we've just talked about was only an Australian design fault, the countries that we just talked about, which have made different choices with different programs, different funding, different institutions, different histories, they would show materially different results.

But the gap repeats and recurs. So the explanation has to sit at a level above that.

This consistency makes a single programme or even a particularly narrow explanation implausible. 32 countries did not happen to design the same ineffective service. Some have strong quota systems, some have none, some have generous, individualised funding, some very little, some place tight obligations on employers, some rely on voluntary action. It varies enormously, but the gap does not vary as much. So what is it?

What is the explanation that links those countries?

Well, we think it's to do with how modern labour markets organise and value work.

So that's where we will go next with that same gap appearing in all those different countries.

What is it that we all have in common? Well, you could say ours is ableism, I don't know. Maybe. But then we need to look for an explanation as to why ableism is a thing, rather

than just citing the label. So what do we think of this, in economic terms at least? Industrial and post-industrial labour institutions increasingly, since the Industrial Revolution really, standardised processes, time, performance, roles.

Think the work of Frederick Taylor. Think Model T production lines. Standardisation was not a conspiracy, and it was not irrational. It made work scalable, trainable, measurable, transferable, and it delivered enormous gains.

But standardising the work also standardised the picture of the person doing it. As work became standardised, an implicit standard worker was imagined around it.

So what do we mean by that? We mean that standardised work meant things like time performance, familiar processes, interchangeable roles and conventional locations. That's now been challenged when it comes to things like hybrid working and working from home. And I don't think it's any coincidence that some of the recent gains that we see in disability employment have come at a time when that element of the standard worker template has been challenged.

But this imagined worker is available at expected times, moves and communicates in expected ways, and is supported by infrastructure outside work that nobody ever discusses.

What happens then? So you have this bias towards a standard worker, standard ways of working.

Well, that generates exclusion because people who don't fit those templates are excluded from that process. And so what this template then does is it hardens into a definition of merit. So surface fit with familiar working patterns is mistaken for capacity to create value.

Work is never organised for a neutral human being. Assumptions appear in rosters, recruitment, teaching, supervision, measurement, progression, and of course, hiring.

And I think disability merely highlights those assumptions. It makes them visible, because it tests whether a workplace is assessing the essential functions of a job or merely familiarity with that customary profile of the person who has actually performed it.

A recruitment process that screens on having a continuous work history, or a role that's advertised as being full-time on site when it doesn't need to be, or to have a driving licence when that's not required, or a performance measure rewards speed of response rather than quality of resolution.

In each case, the requirement may be seen as genuine by the employer, but also in each case, it may also be an inherited habit that has never been tested against what the job actually needs.

The architectural question, our questions, is simply, has anyone ever asked? Have we ever really thought about that?

We don't reject the importance of productivity, but we do think that capability should be assessed through whether someone can create value with appropriate job design, adjustment, support, the right conditions, rather than through resemblance to a conventional worker template.

So that's the pattern.

The harder question is why this persists, because the standard worker template is perhaps not the sufficient explanation, but what we think is that the pattern feeds itself in the cycle.

So, as this diagram shows, it's an important one, and hopefully when you get the paper, you'll be able to see it and scrutinise it and really think about it, because it's kind of the engine of the whole paper.

In terms of the steps, so we're saying **standardised work produces that narrow worker template I've just talked about. We then design our workplaces and our practises around that template. We exclude those who do not fit that template.**

And that lower opportunity, that exclusion then produces thinner work histories, lower earnings, weaker confidence in that people who are excluded, and fewer visible examples of success.

This of course does not only apply to people with disability, but I believe this is where it's highlighted most.

And so then what happens once you've done that exclusion, which has led to fewer visible markers of fitting into that standard worker template for people with disability?

Well, it gets read as the incapability of that person with disability. Instead of locating the failure in the system, we locate it in the person.

And then that really is used to justify step one, which is to say work is standardised to this template.

So it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A mistaken definition of the situation, as in the standard worker template, prompts behaviour that makes that assumption appear true.

So if people with disability are expected to succeed less often, they receive fewer chances to build that evidence of success. And the absence of that evidence, is then treated as evidence of absence.

The cycle does not need anyone to hold a prejudiced belief in order for it to keep turning. It only needs each participant to act on the evidence that they see in front of them. A recruiter reads a patchy resume. A manager chooses a safe hire. A careers advisor steers towards the option least likely to end in disappointment.

And every one of those decisions, defensible in isolation, but together they reproduce the outcome that we are responding to. And that's why this is an architectural problem and not a problem of individual attitude, or to be located in one single program. Lower expectations can also be absorbed by institutions, families, people with disability, and it narrows what seems possible or safe to pursue.

Policy then responds to that diminished horizon it helped create.

And this is an uncomfortable part of the cycle, because nobody in this loop is the villain. Everyone is acting with care. The parents who counsel caution have usually watched the system disappoint their child before.

The point is that caution repeated at scale over decades becomes a structural fact.

And then government bakes it into how they manage the issue. Not on thinking of how do we realise capability at scale, but on how do we manage things like welfare? How do we keep the costs down?

So if this loop runs for long enough, it stops looking like a loop at all, and it starts looking like data. And if that is the diagnosis, then a single programme cannot be the treatment.

So what does it actually take to break a cycle like this?

Well, we also need to think about ableism as part of this too, because that evidence, that can become the thing that feeds the ableist expectation. Ableism at that point begins to wear the clothing of evidence for those who hold it as an explicit or even an implicit prejudice.

Let's think about the disability support pension as an example. And that's architectural ableism, I would argue. But the qualification framework asks an applicant in some cases to establish that impairment prevents work of at least 15 hours a week.

So what does it ask them to do?

It asks them to, it says that to obtain that income security, they must build and defence a case of their own capacity in front of an assessor, often repeatedly. They must go on things like IEA for a couple of years to prove that they can't work. So whatever the intent of that rule, the architecture awards a demonstration of what someone cannot do. And precisely the moment, we should really be talking about what we could achieve if we actually invested together and built the right conditions to succeed.

So **we think that policy should shift the question.** Instead of requiring people to improve capacity, we should be asking what investment, support, job design, employer practice, and income security arrangements would allow rights to be exercised, capability to be built, and productive contribution to occur.

Now, most of what we talked about so far has been diagnosis. And in the next 7 minutes, I'll probably talk too long on those things. I'm afraid we won't have time for questions. We'll talk a bit more around what we think the solutions are. So we can look, I think, to women's workforce participation here as an interesting and useful analogy. It's not perfect.

But if you look at the history of women's workforce participation, even 50 years ago, I think it was below 50%. And now it's well into the 80s. So it's an interesting story there that we can learn from, because none of the changes around things like, there have been lots of changes that really made women's workforce participation happen. Things like changes to education or childcare or contraception or attitudes from employers and flexibility.

Now, **none of these changes would have been sufficient on their own**, but it's, you know, rights without childcare wouldn't have done it. Childcare without change expectations wouldn't have done it. Change expectations without changes to how work was organised would not have done it. **But they moved together over decades and the shift happened.**

So if we accept the cycle described in previous slides, then the same logic does apply, which is that a change confined to services is a change to only one element of a system when several elements need to move at once.

Article 27 provides us with some of the direction and language here, with a vision of a labour market and work environment that are open, inclusive and accessible, beyond an employment program.

So the institutional conclusion here is that coordinated change across expectations, incentives, rules, investment and institutional behaviour does need stewardship. We do need them to move forward, and government is uniquely able to authorise and coordinate that architecture because they can go across portfolios.

So, coordination and stewardship from government needs something to coordinate around.

We believe strongly that we do need to work out what we actually are trying to achieve here when it comes to disability employment. Now the moonshot analogy is probably used too much, but I want to use it here. And the reason why I want to talk about it is because when they did the moonshot, they merely said that they wanted to reach the moon.

They didn't know how they were going to get there, but they knew that they were going to organise as a principle all of the best technology and knowledge and training to achieve that. And in that process, they went as far as doing lots around testing what works, learning quickly, scaling what proved effective. And then executed on that.

That's what we need to do with disability employment. **We need to decide what we're trying to achieve; we need to throw all the powers of different elements behind it that we need to throw behind it and we need to be humble about it and learn and scale what works.** That's the architectural challenge.

In terms of responsibility across that system, there's responsibility for lots of different layers, but government is critical.

So government must provide that stewardship across portfolios and funding streams. They hold levers that no one else holds.

Employers must step up to the plate when it comes to things like job design, recruitment, adjustment, progression.

Nothing that we do on the supply side can change the fact that, you know, it's going to be very hard to get people with disability work if we're building around that narrow worker template that I talked about.

Education systems need to shape expectations, skills, transition and early experience. NDIS needs to provide the right disability related supports, and I appreciate that's under threat to some degree at the moment. And employment services of course must bring specialist capability to helping people enter work and stay there.

So what's the change we want to see?

In terms of this graphic, it's really a synthesis of the argument that we've made so far. We want to see the change from the ecosystem moving towards higher participation, better jobs, and genuine choice and progression.

We want to see an architecture that is directing its efforts towards that process. We want to see the thought behind that. And then we want to see the systems and subsystems the elements that work towards that architecture and that ecosystem that we want to see, rather than feeling like they're disjointed and disconnected pieces.

In terms of our tests for that architecture, it's what you can see on the screen. A defined objective, designed interfaces, shared information, allocated responsibilities, aligned incentives, feedback and learning loops, and accountability for the outcomes and joins.

In the other DEA Papers that we write, it will be testing the various reforms that we suggest against those kinds of principles. And of course, above all of this, we must make sure that people with disability hold authority within this architecture, including in design, governance, evaluation and adaptation, and not just in a, we'll talk about it but not really execute it way that we've just seen in the NDIS legislation reforms, but in a real and sustainable and meaningful way.

So this paper sets A-frame for the other papers that we're going to be doing across, I don't know, however long, but we've got a couple more which are nearly ready to go.

It's not a complete brief. It is, as I say, a first principles argument that we need to be considering architecture. And that if we don't do that, we aren't going to see the kind of changes that we want.

Paper 2 is the blended transitions paper written by Dr. Ann Nevile, and that's really about how this architecture is experienced by people within the current system and what we can do to make it better.

And then other papers will go into things like, well, what can we do more to get more employers to the table, make sure they're getting the support they need? What's the

relationship between capability and conditions, contribution? How do we need to change the NDIS employment?

The argument of this paper is not that Australia has been doing nothing. It's not that nothing that we do works either. It's that we have been reforming one layer down from the problem and that the layer above the programmes that we have is the one that we have not deliberately built.

We possess many necessary components, but their arrangement is underdeveloped. A better system requires a national objective, defined roles, designed interfaces, aligned incentives, shared information, learning loops, accountability for the joins, and authority for people with disability.

The choice is whether to keep refitting individual pieces and hope they add up, or to build deliberate architecture around much higher participation, better jobs, progression and economic contribution.

If a single sentence is to be remembered from this presentation, it could be this one.

Set the target, design A pathway, learn our way towards it.

I'm afraid I don't have time for a question. I really do thank you all for attending today. Hopefully, it's been interesting hearing me talk about this pet subject of mine.

We're going to try and do one of these webinars for each of the papers that we produce, hopefully to bring it to life.

And of course, we'll be alerting you to the paper as it comes out over the next week.

So thank you very much for your time, everyone. I do really appreciate it.

ENDS