

INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN APPRENTICESHIPS

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1998, 11% of the general working age population was participating in vocational education and training. However, participation rates for working age people with disabilities lag well behind, with just 2.4% participating in training in 1998 (NCVER, 1999).

In July 1999, in an effort to stimulate vocational education and training outcomes, the Western Australian Department of Training called for submissions from suitably qualified organisations to undertake a two-year pilot project aimed at increasing the participation of people with disabilities in apprenticeships and traineeships. The successful tenderer was Edge Employment Solutions Inc. The total funding for the pilot project was \$75,000 in the first year and \$125,000 in the second year. A target of 25-30 New Apprenticeship placements over the two years of the project was established.

A total of 70 people registered with the pilot project. The disabilities most commonly represented amongst registrants were intellectual disability (23), cerebral palsy (11), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (15) and psychiatric disability (7).

A total of 33 placements (28 apprenticeships and five traineeships) were secured through the pilot project. The disabilities most commonly represented amongst people placed were intellectual disability (10), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (10), cerebral palsy (4), neurological disability (3), acquired brain injury (2) and spina bifida (2).

More than 60% of project registrants placed in New Apprenticeships were 20 years or older at the time of placement.

The apprenticeships secured through the pilot project were Auto Mechanic (7 positions), Bread Maker (4 positions), Chef (3 positions), Hairdresser (3 positions), Boilermaker (3 positions), Core and Mould Maker, Optical Mechanic, Plumber, Cabinet Maker, Electrical, Auto Panel & Paint, Turf Management and Plasterer. All of the traineeships secured were clerical traineeships.

The second purpose of the pilot project was to draw on the experiences gained through the operation of the project to shed light the following research questions.

In what industries are people with disabilities seeking apprenticeships and traineeships?

The types of industry and types of apprenticeships that project registrants have sought to enter are quite diverse. Thirteen different trades were represented amongst the 28 apprenticeships commenced during the pilot project. Apprenticeship commencements through the pilot project were compared with all Western Australian commencements in apprenticeships (NCVER,

1998). A comparative analysis appears in Figure One and reveals that apprentices with disabilities placed through the project secured: a significantly higher proportion of commencements in Automotive, Food and Hairdressing; a similar proportion of commencements in Agriculture & Horticulture, Hairdressing and Mechanical & Fabrication Engineering; and a significantly lower proportion of commencements in Electrical & Electronic, Construction and Other Trades

Perhaps the most important message from the comparative commencement data is that people with disabilities are seeking apprenticeships across all industries and trade areas.

What obstacles exist for people with disabilities entering traineeships and apprenticeships of their choice?

Perhaps the greatest obstacle confronting people with disabilities securing New Apprenticeships of their choice is finding a suitable agency that will be willing and able to provide the necessary placement and post-placement assistance. People with more significant disabilities are typically referred by Centrelink to a Competitive Employment Training and Placement (CETP) agency or CRS Australia (the former Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service), both of which are funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. People with less significant disabilities are more likely to be referred to a Job Network provider funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business to provide Intensive Assistance services to disadvantaged job seekers. None of these provider groups have significant involvement in the vocational education and training sector, are not required or funded to place a proportion of people on their register in New Apprenticeships and are generally not skilled or inclined to actively seek New Apprenticeship placements.

On the other side of the coin, GTCs operate extensively and effectively within the VET sector. However, most claim to lack the expertise or resources to recruit, indenture, place and support New Apprentices with disabilities. Even if they were willing and able to support more people with disabilities, GTCs operate primarily in the small to medium business sector and place only 14% of all New Apprentices nationally. Many people with disabilities aspire to undertaking a New Apprenticeship with larger companies or in the public sector. This is, in part, due to the fact that these categories of employer usually offer greater job security, opportunities for job transfer and greater promotional prospects. Thus, even GTCs that are willing and able to indenture people with disabilities are only able to offer a limited range of host employer choices.

The next barrier to New Apprenticeships that people with disabilities confront is convincing prospective employers that are capable of completing a New Apprenticeship and, in the case of apprenticeships, becoming a competent tradesperson. When a placement was secured the next obstacle that often arose was dealing with co-worker misconceptions and disability

stereotyping. Most of the workplaces that apprentices with disabilities entered through the pilot project also employed other apprentices. Because of their relative youth and inexperience, other apprentices are not necessarily the most accepting and accommodating co-workers for a person with a disability.

Difficulties with inclusion and acceptance of apprentices with disabilities can also arise at TAFE colleges, where the majority of apprentices fulfil their study requirements. Another access obstacle for people with disabilities is transport. Many young people with disabilities do not have access to private transport, which is vital to apprentices who have to move regularly between home, work and TAFE – all of which may be some distance apart. This is exacerbated by the fact that a number of apprenticeship courses in Perth are only taught at one TAFE campus.

Finally, many apprenticeships have inflexible hours and times of work. It is usual practice for apprentices to work full-time (i.e. 35-40 hours per week) and often overtime. For apprentices with physical disabilities (or even learning disabilities requiring intensive concentration to keep pace with workplace instructions), the physical or mental work demands can be a significant obstacle in the early stages of a new apprenticeship.

What attitudes and experiences do Group Training Companies have with respect to promoting people with disabilities as apprentices or trainees?

As a general observation, most GTCs express a willingness to place and support apprentices with disabilities. However, they also claim that they do not have the experience or the skills to support such placements. Not surprisingly, given their self-assessment, they also report that they have few people with disabilities on their register.

A disappointing aspect of the pilot project has been the relative paucity of apprenticeship openings for people with disabilities through the GTCs. A recent survey of 23 disability best practice GTCs around Australia revealed that only 1.6% of all apprentices and 3.3% of all trainees had a disability.

As unspectacular as the outcomes for people with disabilities through GTCs appear, they are superior to the outcomes achieved by people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships where GTCs are not involved.

Another disappointing aspect of the association with GTCs is that only one of the 28 apprentices placed had been indentured to a GTC. All of the others have been indentured by the employer. This finding would seem to suggest that, whilst a number of GTCs have voiced support for the project, this support has not extended to indenturing apprentices with disabilities (even though indenturing apprentices is a primary reason for their existence).

It seems apparent that GTCs accept that they have certain responsibilities to assist people with disabilities (along with other equity groups) into apprenticeships. Thus, they appear to *want* to change.

Where they are stalled is that most don't know *how* to change. In such circumstances, additional funding (be it through existing schemes such as DAWS or incentive funding offered by the state government) will only have a minimal impact because they only address one part of the problem: the funding issue.

In the same manner that GTCs feel they are under-skilled and under-funded to adequately support people with disabilities, disability employment services feel under-informed and under-funded to support people with disabilities through a four-year apprenticeship (disability employment agencies currently receive the same funding if they place and support a person in an eight hour per week menial job or a 40 hour per week apprenticeship).

There are obvious synergies in GTCs and disability employment agencies coming together and pooling their expertise and resources – to the advantage of both agencies.

What information and resources do Group Training Companies require to successfully promote people with disabilities as trainees and apprentices?

In the first instance, GTCs need to have people with disabilities on their registers so that they can promote them to prospective host employers. Thus, they need information on where and how to attract New Apprenticeship seekers with disabilities. In the process of registering people with disabilities the GTCs need to collect the necessary information

Having attracted people with disabilities onto their registers, GTCs then need to collect necessary information about people with disabilities (see section 4.4) so that they can target suitable New Apprenticeships.

Having identified suitable New Apprenticeships in conjunction with the candidates, GTCs need promotional materials to promote New Apprenticeship seekers with disabilities to prospective host employers. These promotional materials may take the form of an information sheet or a professional brochure. These promotional materials will give GTC representatives accurate information about people with disabilities in the workforce and, as a result, greater confidence and belief to promote them to host employers.

GTCs are still likely to profit from expert advice from an experienced marketer of job seekers with disabilities to employers. In addition to marketing advice, the success rate of GTCs in

placing people with disabilities may be further enhanced by arranging joint employer visits with a partner disability employment agency.

Disability employment agencies also have their own employer networks. A number of these employers may be open to a joint approach from a GTC and disability employment agency to recruit a New Apprentice with a disability and enjoy access to the services of both agencies.

Finally, there would appear to be a widespread need amongst GTCs for access to a disability support help-desk that they contact whenever an apprentice with a disability begins to experience difficulties in the workplace. Ideally, the help-desk should be operated by a suitably credentialed disability employment agency that could offer rapid and relevant response and appropriate follow-up.

What marketing support do Group Training Companies require to successfully place people with disabilities in traineeships and apprenticeships?

Less than 20% of the 28 apprenticeship placements secured through the pilot project could be fully or partly attributed to GTCs. Of these, only one New Apprentice with a disability was indentured to the GTC. The Project Manager secured 22 of the 28 apprenticeship placements through his own efforts, or in concert with other marketing co-ordinators at Edge Employment Solutions.

There was an apparent reticence on the part of GTCs (approached through the project, at least) to indenture people with disabilities as apprentices. A number of GTCs had encountered difficulties in the past indenturing people with disabilities. Many indentured apprentices with disabilities were reported to have performed badly due to a number of factors. These included the need for extra support in the workplace beyond that which a Field Officer could provide, inadequate knowledge and skills possessed by the Field Officer to support an apprentice with a disability, and the need for extra tuition to keep up with the theoretical/academic requirements of the apprenticeships. The GTC was then left with an unhappy host employer and an out-of-work apprentice with a disability who would be even harder to place with another host employer.

A particular difficulty for marketing staff in GTCs is that, when an apprenticeship vacancy arises with one of their host employers, they would traditionally offer the host employer a selection of pre-screened candidates. Simply adding a person with a disability to a list of recommended candidates is unlikely to result in a placement outcome for that candidate. Employers will almost always be drawn to the candidate who 'looks' and 'feels' right for the position.

Disability best practice GTCs in other parts of Australia have all adopted a case management approach to marketing people with disabilities as potential New Apprentices. These GTCs also approach host employers with whom they already have a long-standing relationship, who they consider to be good employers and who would be willing to embrace diversity within their workforce. The employer already knows and trusts the GTC, so is knows that the prospective a New Apprentice is coming with the full support and back-up of the GTC. Importantly, also, the host employer also knows that if it doesn't work out the GTC will take the New Apprentice back and place him or her with another host employer.

The challenge for GTCs in Western Australia is to make the initial commitment by indenturing New Apprentices with disabilities. This show of faith will not be lost on prospective host employers and will give them greater confidence (knowing that the GTC is standing with them as the employer of record) to take on a New Apprentice with disabilities. The host employer is also likely to respond more favourably if a disability employment agency is working in partnership with the GTC to resolve help any technical training matters in the workplace.

What on-site training support do people with disabilities need to successfully complete traineeships and apprenticeships?

An important success factor in successfully placing and supporting people with disabilities in open employment has been the ability to replace certain tasks in the duty statement that may prove difficult for the person to perform (due to the disability) with other more suitable tasks. This is not as simple in many New Apprenticeships because the work and learning requirements are more structured.

Apprenticeships typically demand a higher level of literacy, numeracy, analytical ability and autonomous decision making than is the case with unskilled jobs. The funding contract that GTCs enter into requires that they undertake eight site visits per year for each New Apprentice. These site visits have traditionally had a pastoral care focus (although some GTCs are beginning to move away from this concept). A six-weekly site visit with a primary focus on pastoral care will not be sufficient to meet the ongoing support needs of many New Apprentices with disabilities. The collaborative support of a competent disability employment agency, with the additional funding that it receives for post-placement employment support of people with disabilities, will be a crucial resource to GTCs, host employers and New Apprentices with disabilities in successfully completing their training.

What workplace accommodations do host employers need to make to enable people with disabilities to enter into traineeships and apprenticeships?

During the course of the pilot project there has been no need to modify any of the workplaces (e.g. addition of ramps, wheelchair accessible toilets, etc) to accommodate a New Apprentice

with a disability. There has also been no need to modify any of the TAFE campuses or workshops to improve access for students with disabilities.

A number of equipment modifications have had to be made at several work sites. All modifications were for apprentices or trainees with cerebral palsy. Assistive equipment was provided to one apprentice and one trainee. One of the apprentice chefs, who had acquired brain injury, was provided with a computer to assist him with his TAFE studies at home. One of the office administration trainees, who had a hearing impairment and cerebral palsy, was provided with a hearing loop for TAFE and an interpreter as well as an ergonomic chair in the workplace.

All but one of the apprenticeships secured through the pilot project has included a TAFE study element. Disability Services Officers at TAFE have played an important role in arranging necessary on-campus supports. The additional funding provided in the second year of the project by the WA Department of Training enabled the appointment of a second full-time project member who concentrated solely on supporting New Apprentices through their studies. Funding was made available through TAFE and/or DAWS and used for home-based tutors, TAFE-based tutors, on-line equipment at home, scribes in class, modifications to equipment, mentors, and alternative (oral) assessments

The most common training issues that arose for apprentices placed through the project were: adjusting to the adult learning environment of TAFE (e.g. self advocacy and taking responsibility for own learning); academic difficulties, requiring additional tutorial support; difficulties with practical components of the course, requiring a mentor with practical skills in that trade area; and difficulty in applying theory to practical work.

What are the total costs of placing and supporting people with disabilities in traineeships and apprenticeships?

Over 250 telephone inquiries from people with disabilities have been dealt with by the Project Manager over the course of the pilot project. These inquiries were generated through the newspaper advertisements. Most of the remainder were generated through other disability employment agencies, schools, GTCs, Centrelink, TAFE Disability Services Officers or word-of-mouth. The average duration of a telephone enquiry followed by organising appointment times and confirming appointments was 30 minutes.

A total of 135 applicants were interviewed face-to-face by the Project Manager and the Managing Director of Edge Employment Solutions. The cost of registering of 70 New Apprenticeship seekers with disabilities (expressed as staff hours) was 740 hours, comprising 538 hours on the part of the Project Manager and 202 hours by the Managing Director of Edge

Employment Solutions (202 hours). This equates to 10.5 hours for each person eventually registered with the project.

The Project Manager expended 620 hours over the two-year pilot in the pilot project seeking placement for project registrants. The Training Co-ordinator expended 39 hours and Marketing Co-ordinators employed at Edge Employment Solutions expended a further 77 hours. Thus, a total of 736 hours was expended in securing 24 apprenticeships and five traineeships (the other four apprentices having been ‘apprenticeships in jeopardy’). This equates to 25 hours per New Apprenticeship secured. There was little variation in the time taken to secure an apprenticeship placement (26 hours) versus a traineeship placement (21 hours).

Whilst using an individual case management approach is undoubtedly more effective than traditional approaches utilised by GTCs, it is also more expensive. GTCs would need to take account of the extra resources required to successfully place New Apprentices with disabilities when assigning case loads to Field Officers.

The 33 apprentices and trainees supported through the project accumulated, between them, a total of 302 months of apprenticeship or traineeship employment during the pilot project. Edge Employment Solutions’ Job Co-ordinators provided a total of 2,569 hours of on-the-job support during this period. The Project Manager provided 959 hours of post-placement related support and the Training Co-ordinator provided 1151 hours of TAFE and study related support. This translates to average post-placement support per New Apprentice of 16 hours per month – or 192 hours per year.

The Project Manager expended 1,236 hours over the two years of the pilot project on program administration. The Training Co-ordinator expended 730 hours in the second year of the project. Thus, the two project staff spent approximately 66% of their time in client placement and post-placement support and the remainder in management and administration activities.

The total pilot project inputs (excluding research activities), as provided by project staff and Edge Employment Solutions staff, are summarised below:

Pilot Project Funded Staff:

Project Manager	3,840 hours
Training Co-ordinator	1,920 hours

Edge Employment Solutions Staff:

Managing Director	70 hours
Marketing Co-ordinators	77 hours

Job Co-ordinators

3,582 hours

On an annualised basis this equates to a total human resource input of 4,709 hours, equivalent to 2.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. This was made up of 1.5 FTE through project funding plus 1 FTE contributed by Edge Employment Solutions.

The total project costs indicate that a ratio of one staff to 12 New Apprentices with disabilities placed in New Apprenticeships annually would be required to register, place and support New Apprentices with disabilities. Naturally, this ratio would vary in accordance with the type and level of disability and the complexity of the New Apprenticeship.

It needs to be remembered that 85% of all placements in the pilot project were into apprenticeships. With the exception of one problematic traineeship, the average monthly support for a trainee was eight hours – half that of an apprentice. If these support estimates held true across a larger sample of trainees in a wider range of trainees, it would be reasonable to expect a disability employment agency to be able to place and support trainees within their existing funding arrangements.

The same does not hold true for apprentices. To better portray and quantify the projected funding shortfall, the remainder of this cost analysis is based on resources required to support people in apprenticeships only.

A typical Western Australian disability employment agency, based on the most recent national census (Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, 1999), would have a field staff to client ratio of a little under 1:11. Seven of those clients would currently be in employment and four would be job seekers. Three of the employed clients would have an intellectual disability, two would have a psychiatric disability, one would have a physical disability, one would have a sensory disability (vision or hearing) and one would have either an acquired brain injury or a specific learning disability (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Significantly, from a post-placement support standpoint, an employed client would work an average of 24 hours per week. Only one-third of the employed clients would be working more than 30 hours per week and one-third would be working less than 16 hours per week.

The above data suggests that most disability employment agencies would struggle financially to support more than a handful of apprentices within their existing operations. It is unlikely that many disability employment agencies would establish a significant apprenticeship program without additional financial incentive – either from their own Commonwealth funding body or from the State government. This is borne out by the fact that there are no more than a handful of disability employment agencies (amongst 300 service outlets Australia-wide) that are currently supporting more than 10 apprentices.

Establishing partnerships with GTCs does negate those additional costs. Candidates still need to be located, registered and readied for interview (a resource cost of 10.5 hours in the pilot project). Disability employment agencies will still play a lead role in these activities.

Host employers still need to be approached and convinced to take on a New Apprentice with a disability. Even marketing in partnership with a GTC, a disability employment agency is likely to expend the most part of the 25 hours expended in the pilot project for each successful placement.

There is also likely to be little variation in the amount of post-placement support provided by the disability employment agency. This is because the primary activities undertaken by GTC Field Officers in their 6-8 weekly site visits is monitoring the group training arrangements and providing any needed pastoral care to the New Apprentice. The disability employment agency's role is different, although complementary, having a strong work skills development and work behaviour focus. The involvement of the GTC Field Officer will have minimal impact on these activities.

Without additional funding initiatives on the part of governments, there is unlikely to be a significant improvement in placement and completion outcomes for people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships in Western Australia.

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (which funds disability employment agencies) could provide a major stimulus by applying a weighting to apprenticeship placements. Based on the above cost analysis, an apprenticeship should carry a weighting of 100% (i.e. each apprenticeship placement counts for two standard placements).

The State government could provide an additional incentive to GTCs (perhaps equivalent to the usual incentives that are lost to GTCs when DAWS funding is secured) to encourage them to indenture and place apprentices with disabilities. That same financial incentive could be offered to disability employment agencies that place and support people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships where GTCs are not involved (which comprises 86% of all New Apprenticeship commencements)

The State government could also follow the lead of two other State Governments in stimulating New Apprenticeships for people with disabilities in the public sector. The New South Wales government has operated an apprenticeship program for people with disabilities since 1981. Through that program, 20 apprentices with disabilities are recruited into the public sector each year and the State government covers the full salary (less the DAWS wage subsidy) for the duration of the apprenticeship. Thus, the individual government department is not required to

meet any of the salary cost. This is on the condition that the department employs the apprentice once they have qualified. In 2001 the scheme was expanded to include 20 trainees per year in addition to the 20 apprentices per year.

The Victorian government has set aside 30% of all public sector traineeships for people from equity groups, which includes people with disabilities. The State government covers \$12,500 of the annual salary of each traineeship, leaving the individual government department with a salary shortfall of just \$6,000 - \$8,000 per trainee.

RESEARCH PERSONNEL

Project Management Team

Dr Greg Lewis	Executive Director, Edge Training Solutions
Peter Goff	Manager, New Apprenticeship Project,
Marisa Tarzia	Training Co-ordinator, New Apprenticeship Project,

Project Reference Group

Gordon Duffy	Co-ordinator, Programs and Administration, WA Department of Training
Lesley van Schoebroek	Director, Access and Participation, WA Department of Training
Craig Nicholas	Regional Employment Co-ordinator, WA Department of Training
Tony Vardaro	Disability Services Officer, South East Metropolitan College of TAFE
Judith Gillies	Disability Services Officer, Challenger TAFE
David Marshall	Manager, Disability Services Program, Department of Family & Community Services (replaced Joe Lipari)
Katy O'Callaghan	Senior Project Officer, Australian National Training Authority
Sue Robertson	Managing Director, Edge Employment Solutions
Linda Devall	Executive Officer, Group Training Western Australia
Bill Millen	Manager, Training & Youth Branch, Dept of Education, Training & Youth Affairs

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1996, 9.7% of the general working age population participated in vocational education and training. Whilst 16% of the working age population has a disability, only 1.7% participated in training in that year (NCVER, 1996).

By 1998, 11% of the general working age population was participating in vocational education and training. However, participation rates for working age people with disabilities continued to lag well behind, with just 2.4% participating in training in 1998 (NCVER, 1999).

“*Bridging Pathways: Blueprint for Implementation*” (ANTA, 2000) stated that:

“There is a short-fall group of more than 178,000 students with a disability who are needed to match their participation rate in VET with the general population.”

The report also made the following supplementary observations about people with disabilities and the VET system:

- people with disabilities who do participate in vocational education and training are not experiencing the same training outcomes or recording the same progress or satisfaction as other students,
- VET students with disabilities are less likely to be enrolled in higher-level courses (Certificate III and above) than other students,
- VET students with disabilities are twice as likely to be enrolled in multi-field programs (pre-employment, pre-vocational, language and literacy) than other students,
- Participation of people with disabilities in apprenticeships and traineeships is significantly lower than other students,
- The module pass rate of people with disabilities is lower than other students.

These observations echoed previous findings in the “*Achieving Equitable Outcomes*” report (ANTA, 1998), which stated that:

“People with a disability more often enrol in educational preparation, basic employment and basic employment skills programs. They are poorly represented in higher-level award courses and contracts of training.”

Bridging Pathways has established four banner goals to achieve its vision of creating a vocational education and training system that leads world's best practice in achieving equitable outcomes for people with disabilities:

GOAL 1: OPENING THE DOOR

Increasing access to vocational education and training for people with a disability.

GOAL 2: IMPROVING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Improving successful participation and attainment in all fields of study and levels of vocational education and training.

GOAL 3: ACHIEVING EMPLOYMENT & LIFELONG LEARNING OUTCOMES

Achieving outcomes in employment and lifelong learning to allow people with a disability to make a greater contribution to the economic and social life of the community.

GOAL 4: CREATING AN ACCOUNTABLE SYSTEM

Creating an accountable system that provides equitable outcomes for people with a disability.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

In July 1999, in an effort to stimulate vocational education and training outcomes for people with disabilities, the Western Australian Department of Training called for submissions from suitably qualified organisations to undertake a two-year pilot project (one year with a one year extension based on satisfactory progress) aimed at increasing the participation of people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships (i.e apprenticeships and traineeships).

The successful tenderer was Edge Employment Solutions. Edge Employment Solutions Inc. is one of the largest and longest established disability employment agencies in Australia, having operated as an employment agency for people with disabilities since 1984. During that time the agency has secured more 2,000 award wage jobs and supported almost 1,000 people with disabilities in these positions. Edge Employment Solutions, based in Subiaco and operating across the Perth metropolitan area, is a non-profit non-government organisation with a staff complement of 40 and an annual budget of \$2 million. Edge Employment Solutions receives

80% of its funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services through the Disability Support Program.

The total funding for each year of the project was \$75,000. However, an additional \$50,000 was made available in the second year of the project to appoint a Training Co-ordinator to assist the Project Manager by co-ordinating New Apprentices' study arrangements and additional supports they required. This additional funding of \$50,000 will extend for three years beyond the project's completion to ensure that New Apprentices placed through the program will be adequately supported through to the end of their studies.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Prior to securing the tender Edge Employment Solutions had placed 13 people with disabilities in apprenticeships and traineeships over a five-year period. Through these experiences it had become apparent that:

- people with disabilities were significantly under-represented in the apprenticeship and traineeship systems and were statistically the most disadvantaged equity group,
- Group Training Companies were aware of this inequity and, although many expressed a willingness to remedy the situation, they acknowledged that they lacked the expertise or resources to effect a remedy,
- people with disabilities needed intensive support, preferably from a specialist disability employment agency, to ensure that their learning experiences on-the-job and off-the-job were maximised,
- most host employers needed and welcomed the support and back-up of a disability employment agency to assist the trainee or apprentice to successfully complete the training,
- Group Training Companies needed the specialist marketing expertise of a disability employment agency to effectively promote people with disabilities as potential trainees and apprentices and to secure appropriate positions,
- disability employment agencies could bring new host employers into the traineeship/apprenticeship system, but would also need access to the established networks of Group Training Companies to maximise placement opportunities for people with disabilities,

- disability employment agencies needed the support and expertise of Group Training Companies in the areas of trainee/apprentice employment, worker's compensation, insurance, indemnity, industrial issues and general administration of group training arrangements.

These observations were reflected in the tender submission and built into the research questions that were framed by Edge Employment Solutions and that the pilot project would seek to answer. The research questions for the pilot project were as follows:

- Q1 In what industries are people with disabilities seeking traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Q2 What obstacles exist for people with disabilities entering traineeships and apprenticeships of their choice?
- Q3 What attitudes and experiences do Group Training Companies have with respect to promoting people with disabilities as apprentices or trainees?
- Q4 What information and resources do Group Training Companies require to successfully promote people with disabilities as trainees and apprentices?
- Q5 What marketing support do Group Training Companies require to successfully place people with disabilities in traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Q6 What on-site training support do people with disabilities need to successfully complete traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Q7 What workplace accommodations do host employers need to make to enable people with disabilities to enter into traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Q8 What off-site support do people with disabilities need to successfully complete traineeships and apprenticeships?
- Q9 What are the total costs of placing and supporting people with disabilities in traineeships and apprenticeships?

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

4.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF REFERENCE GROUP

At the commencement of the pilot project a reference group was formed to advise the project and provide industry input on a regular basis. Reference group members were drawn from the Australian National Training Authority, WA Department of Training, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, TAFE and Group Training Australia. The reference group has met on five occasions since project's inception. The reference group membership was expanded as the project progressed to include a representative of the Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs, which administers the Disabled Apprentice Wage Subsidy (DAWS) scheme.

4.2 RECRUITMENT OF PROJECT STAFF

A full-time manager was appointed to manage the project, under the direction of the Project Director. The Project Manager had accumulated many years experience in the disability employment sector, most recently as Managing Director of a disability employment agency operating in the north west of Western Australia and Acting Manager of a similar agency in the Central Wheatbelt of Western Australia. Prior to entering the disability employment field, he had completed trade qualifications in the metals industry and been production manager with two major manufacturing companies, where he managed 30-40 tradespersons and apprentices.

A full-time Training Co-ordinator was appointed to the project in October 2000 – 12 months into the project. The Training Co-ordinator's role is to co-ordinate the off-the-job training aspects (primarily TAFE-based) of each apprenticeship, freeing-up the Project Manager to locate and secure further apprenticeship placements. The Training Co-ordinator holds a Bachelor of Human Services (Disability) and a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. She was previously employed as the Work Experience Co-ordinator at an Education Support Centre.

Copies of the Project Manager's Duty Statement and the Training Co-ordinator's Duty Statements appear in Appendix One.

4.3 RECRUITMENT OF GTC PARTNERS

A key strategy in the pilot project was to develop close partnerships with at least two Group Training Companies to generate placements and co-ordinate post-placement support for New Apprentices with disabilities. Meetings were held with Hospitality Group Training (HGT) and South Metropolitan Youth Link (SMYL) Group Training Division as soon as the Project Manager was appointed. Both organisations had been approached during the tender application

stage to become GTC partners in the pilot project and both re-affirmed their support for the project. As GTC partners, both agreed to share information, develop a combined employer database for marketing and notify the Project Manager of appropriate vacancies as they occur.

SMYL had built a reputation for successful placements of people from various equity groups, including disability, in traineeships and apprenticeships. According to SMYL management, these efforts, had been somewhat hampered by the lack of expertise and resources within the organisation to provide the individualised training and support needed by many people with disabilities. SMYL expressed confidence that it could improve its placement outcomes for people with disabilities with the provision of additional specialist support in the marketing and training phases. SMYL places trainees and apprentices in a wide range of industries, including: health and community services; engineering; manufacturing; customs broking and warehousing; and arts media.

Prior to being awarded the pilot project funds, Edge Employment Solutions had accumulated extensive experience in placing and training people with disabilities in the hospitality industry and was therefore familiar with the demands and expectations of the industry. Amongst Edge Employment Solutions' then register of more than 200 job seekers with disabilities, a number had expressed an interest in undertaking traineeships and apprenticeships in the hospitality industry. Edge Employment Solutions had placed a worker in a non-apprenticeship position in the head office of HGT and had had some previous dealings with HGT involving placements of people with disabilities in the hospitality industry. Thus, HGT was a logical and willing partner in the project.

4.4 RECRUITMENT OF NEW APPRENTICESHIP SEEKERS

Edge Employment Solutions traditionally supports people in receipt of (or eligible for) the disability support pension who have moderate to significant disabilities. Their disability may be intellectual, physical, sensory, neurological or psychiatric – or a combination of the above. Due to the significant nature of their disability, many of these job seekers would be classified as ineligible for Job Network services, even under the Intensive Assistance services for significantly disadvantaged job seekers.

Recruitment of people with disabilities was undertaken in several phases during the first year of the pilot project. An initial advertisement (see Appendix Two) was placed in the General Employment section of the West Australian newspaper inviting people with disabilities to apply for positions as apprentices or trainees in Cooking, Hospitality, Food and Beverage, Kitchen Hand, Metal Fabrication, Clerical, Aged Care, Transport, and Warehousing. These vacancies were available through one or other of the two partner GTCs at the time that the advertisement was placed.

The one advertisement generated 104 telephone enquiries to the Project manager in the ensuing weeks, providing an early indication of the widespread demand for access to apprenticeships and traineeships by people with disabilities.

Because of the huge response to the first advertisement and the resources consumed in responding to all of the enquiries and interviewing interested persons, it had been decided to control the response rate to any further advertisements. A second, smaller advertisement was run in a community newspaper in the south-eastern suburbs of Perth several months after the first newspaper advertisement. A third advertisement was run in the General Employment section of the West Australian at the end of the first year of the pilot project. This advertisement was half the size of the original West Australian advertisement and did not specify that any specific New Apprenticeships were available. As was the intention, both of the latter advertisements attracted a much smaller and manageable number of enquiries.

Several newspaper articles about the project were generated to raise the profile of the pilot project and raise awareness amongst potential applicants. Copies of two newspaper articles, both of which appeared in the West Australian, appear in Appendix Three. A total of 42 people were registered on the project in the first year.

In the second year of the project it was not been necessary to advertise for new registrants. This was because there were a growing number of self-referrals and referrals from GTCs, Centrelink, TAFE Disability Services Officers and disability employment agencies. The 39 referrals or self-referrals in the second year resulted in 28 additional people being registered with the project. The 28 second-year registrations emanated from Centrelink (9), Competitive Training Employment and Placement agencies (6), CRS Australia (4), TAFE Disability Services Officers (4), Schools (2), self-referrals (2) and GTCs (1).

A total of 118 people were interviewed over the two years of the pilot project. As a result of these interviews a total of 70 people were registered during the course of the project. A demographic profile of registrants appears in Table One.

Table One. Demographic profile of people with disabilities who were registered with the project.

GENDER	Male	59	84%
	Female	11	16%
AGE	15-19	34	49%
	20-25	28	40%
	26+	8	11%

DISABILITY (PRIMARY)	Intellectual/Specific Learning	23	33%
	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	15	21%
	Cerebral Palsy	11	16%
	Psychiatric	7	10%
	Autism	3	4%
	Acquired Brain Injury	3	4%
	Hearing	2	3%
	Spina Bifida	2	3%
	Cystic Fibrosis	1	1%
	Amputee	1	1%
	Neurological	1	1%
	Organ Transplant	1	1%

As can be seen from Table One, a wide array of disabilities was represented amongst the registrants. The area of disability that was perhaps under-represented was sensory disability, with only two registrants with hearing impairments and no registrants with vision impairments on the register. The most strongly represented disability type was people with some form of learning disability, including intellectual disability, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism - as well a significant proportion of the registrants with cerebral palsy or acquired brain injury. The knowledge that at least two-thirds of project registrants had some form of learning disability contributed to the decision of the WA Department of Training to fund an additional staff member in the second year of the project to support New Apprentices through their TAFE studies.

It is also interesting to note that more than half of project registrants were 20 years or older at the time they joined the project, which represented an additional challenge for the project management team in securing New Apprenticeship placements.

All people who expressed interest in registering with the project were initially interviewed over the telephone, during which the Project Manager described the project in greater detail and ascertained their eligibility for the project (i.e. they had a disability and they were genuinely seeking an apprenticeship or traineeship). All eligible persons who were interested in pursuing an apprenticeship or traineeship were then invited to attend a registration interview with the Project Manager and the Managing Director of Edge Employment Solutions. The interview process followed the standard Edge Employment Solutions procedures, which are described more fully in Lewis, Robertson and Drenen (2001).

An Individual Plan was jointly developed with each suitable candidate at the interview. The Individual Plan is developed on the understanding that there is a direct correlation between quality of job match and long term employment outcome. The most reliable way of ensuring a compatible job match is to start with the person and find the appropriate apprenticeship.

The most important determination made in the interview was whether the individual indeed wanted to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship. Another important consideration was the support that the future worker could expect from significant other people in his or her life outside work. Most commonly this was a parent, although it may also have been siblings, a spouse or a partner.

During the interviews, the interviewers ascertained whether there were any disability-related barriers to performing certain types of work. These may have taken the form of physical, sensory, neurological, intellectual, learning, psychiatric or multiple disabilities. These may have been readily observable or they may have been raised by the interviewee(s). If the Project manager was to confidently and accurately promote candidates with disabilities to prospective employers, it was crucial that he had a full understanding of every candidate's disability and its likely impact on any given New Apprenticeship. It was made clear to applicants that this was a condition of registration.

Another area that can influence occupational choice is work-related skill factors. Skill areas that can have a major impact on employment and training include communication, reading, writing, computation and transportation. In addition to ensuring accurate physical and skill matches, the interviewers were also sensitive to applicants' social skills, which can influence workers' social integration and acceptance into various workplaces.

In the first year of the project, applicants were then asked what apprenticeships or traineeships they might like to do. The stated interests were compared with the physical, social and skill factors and a short-list of suitable apprenticeships and traineeships was jointly derived. The Project Manager then undertook to begin looking for suitable apprenticeships or traineeships in the agreed occupations. In the second year of the project, only people seeking apprenticeships were registered. People seeking traineeships were referred to Edge Employment Solutions' mainstream disability employment services.

All of the information collected and decisions made at the interview were recorded on an Individual Plan. A copy of an Individual Plan appears in Appendix Four.

More information about the registration process as it affected individual registrants can be found in the five case studies that are included in Appendix Five.

5. SECURING NEW APPRENTICESHIPS

Once applicants were accepted into the pilot project, resumes were prepared by the Project Manager (see sample resume in Appendix Six). The resumes served a dual purpose: to introduce the job seeker to the most suitable GTC and to present the job seeker to prospective employers.

5.1 JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Because Edge Employment Solutions has been in operation since 1984 (and has secured more 2,000 award wage jobs for people with disabilities since commencing), its job search processes have been thoroughly researched, are labour market sensitive and are relatively sophisticated. The techniques that are practiced by Edge Employment Solutions in its mainstream disability employment program (Lewis, Robertson and Drenen, 2001) formed the basis of the job search efforts in the pilot project.

There are major differences in the marketing approach used by Edge Employment Solutions and the approach adopted by most GTCs (and Job Network agencies for that matter). Edge Employment Solutions takes a case management approach to marketing job seekers with disabilities. That is, the agency starts with the individual and provides one-to-one marketing support to secure the job of their choice with a suitable employer.

GTCs more typically service a network of host employers and send along a group of applicants (deemed suitable by the GTC perhaps after having completed some form of training and/or assessment) from which the host employer selects the most suitable (in the host employer's view) applicant. Most, although not all, GTCs feel under pressure to supply host employers with a high quality applicant pool for fear of losing the custom of that host employer to another GTC or other service provider. Thus, people with disabilities rarely make it onto the shortlist. Most host employers, in their turn, are seeking the brightest, most skilled, hardest working and most dedicated New Apprentice each time they fill a vacancy. Thus, they are unlikely to select a candidate with a disability from the applicant pool against other more superficially suitable candidates.

The Project Manager undertook almost all placement searching, using a range of case management strategies to locate the New Apprenticeship vacancies sought by project registrants (job seekers). Each of these strategies is described below.

Advertised Vacancies refers to those vacancies that are advertised in newspapers, industry journals, employer newsletters, government gazettes, bulletin boards and Internet job sites.

A major advantage of this strategy is that most of these publications can be delivered to the agency, thus saving on travelling time. Another major advantage is that there is an actual position to be filled. Set against these advantages are several potential disadvantages. Within the print media, there is usually limited information about the position or the company, and little time to undertake such research. However, information about prospective employers and advertised positions is becoming more accessible as an increasing proportion of vacancies are lodged on the Internet, where more comprehensive information and/or links to company web-sites can be found.

The process of identifying targeted jobs through advertised vacancies is relatively mechanical once the apprenticeship and/or traineeship being sought has been established. Job seekers themselves, and significant others, can scour newspapers or the Internet for vacancies in the occupational areas preferred by the job seeker.

Many of the New Apprenticeships advertised on the Internet required that application be made through an intermediary, most commonly a Job Network provider. This complicated and slowed down the process because registrants needed to first be interviewed by the intermediary before being introduced to an employer. Only one apprenticeship was secured via this avenue.

A more fruitful avenue to placements proved to be directly approaching medium to large businesses advertising their own apprenticeship or traineeship vacancies in the local newspaper.

The advertised vacancies strategy has proven to be the most effective with 11 of the 33 placements (33%) secured by this means. The apprenticeships secured through advertised vacancies were as follows:

- Bread Maker (2 positions)
- Boilermaker
- Mould and Core Maker
- Optical Mechanic
- Chef
- Auto Mechanic

The traineeships secured through advertised vacancies were as follows:

- Office Administration (4 positions)

Employer Canvass is a strategy whereby an employer is approached by the agency, with or without a referral, and with no prior knowledge of any vacancies in the company at the time of contact. As distinct from advertised vacancies, employer canvassing does not require that a vacancy be identified before this strategy is implemented.

An advantage of employer canvassing is its capacity to provide access to employers and subsequent vacancies before they are advertised. Another advantage is that, being job seeker (as opposed to job vacancy) oriented, it remains faithful to the job seeker's stated apprenticeship or traineeship preferences. Therefore, it is of particular value to job seekers with more significant disabilities because it gives the agency time to build a relationship with the prospective employer and locate the right position for the job seeker. Employer canvassing also carries with it several disadvantages. One of the major disadvantages is that recruitment is not likely to be a high priority for the employer if there are no current vacancies. Accordingly, many employers may not be ready or willing to expend time contemplating their future labour force requirements when they are currently fully staffed.

Employer canvassing was undertaken by various means, including targeting a certain street, a specific area or a particular type of business. With respect to targeting specific businesses, their identities were established through a number of publications including: the Yellow Pages; Business and Professional Associations; and Local Government. Another useful source of potential placements was the TAFE colleges' records of employers who provided work experience for students in pre-apprenticeships.

The initial approach to these types of employers took the form of an introductory letter followed by a telephone call or a personal visit. Asking all the employers canvassed (regardless of whether or not they offered a position) to suggest other prospective employers also proved useful in building a prospective employer database.

While employer canvassing consumed a reasonable proportion of the Project Manager's available job search time, it also provided some difficulty to secure apprenticeships.

Six of the 33 placements (18%) were secured through employer canvassing. The apprenticeships secured through employer canvassing were as follows:

- Auto Mechanic (3 positions)
- Plumber
- Boilermaker

The traineeships secured through employer canvassing were as follows:

- Office Administration

Family/Friend Network refers to job leads located by job seekers, their families or friends. The Australian Bureau of Statistics consistently finds that the majority of jobs secured by job seekers with disabilities are found through their family or friends.

The primary advantage of the family/friend network strategy is that more people are hunting for suitable positions. Another advantage is that the agency gains access to new employer networks through family and friends, thus enhancing its prospective employer database (which may prove useful in placing other project job seekers in the future).

There are a number of possible pitfalls in using the job seeker and significant others as job scouts. If the prospective employer is a family member or friend, the subsequent employment relationship might be based on sympathy or family obligation. This may make it difficult for the job seeker to be seen, or to become, a legitimate employee. Another consideration is ensuring a suitable job match. The potential exists for the family/friend network to uncover poorly matched positions. The potential also exists for the prospective employer to misunderstand the role of the agency in supporting the worker.

The above problems were addressed by requesting that the job seeker and significant others go no further in the job search process than identifying leads. This allowed the Project Manager to make an independent judgement as to the suitability of the position, clarify the role of the agency and place subsequent negotiations with the employer on an appropriate footing. However, despite all attempts to put the employment relationship on a regular footing, both of the apprenticeships secured by through family or friends resulted in confused relationships between the involved parties.

Two of the 33 placements (6%) were secured through family/friend networks. The apprenticeships secured through family/friend networks were as follows:

- Hairdresser
- Auto Panel & Paint

Repeat Business refers to generating vacancies with companies that currently employ, or have previously employed, a worker through Edge Employment Solutions.

A primary advantage of repeat business is that the agency does not have to spend valuable time selling the concept and the agency's services because the employer is already a client of the agency. Another advantage is that the agency's previous involvement with the employer, including knowledge of the workplace culture, improves the accuracy of subsequent job matches.

A potential disadvantage of repeat business is that too many workers with disabilities on the one job site could create a disability sub-culture or an enclave within the company that could be viewed and treated differently by management and other staff.

In Edge Employment Solutions' mainstream job search operations, the repeat business strategy has consistently shown itself to be the most lucrative source of job leads, with more than half of all jobs secured by Edge Employment Solutions over the past ten years being secured through this one strategy. It has also proven itself to be the most efficient in terms of the average time taken to secure a position.

Jobs secured through repeat business are secured through two discrete avenues. The first avenue is via employers who initiate contact with the agency seeking assistance in filling a position. Thus, the nature of the approach is identical to that found in the employer initiated strategy. The second avenue is agency initiated contacts - which are similar to employer canvassing, but proceed on the basis of having had previous dealings with the employer.

One of repeat business placement was secured because Edge Employment Solutions already had a relationship with that employer and Hospitality Group Training (one of the original partner GTCs) supplied apprentices to the hotel. Thus, the employer had a long-standing repeat business relationship with both parties. Another repeat business placement followed an earlier apprenticeship placement secured in another outlet of the same business.

Six of 33 placements (18%) were secured through repeat business. The apprenticeships secured through repeat business were as follows:

- Apprentice Mechanic (2 positions)
- Apprentice Chef (2 positions)
- Apprentice Bread Maker
- Apprentice Turf Management

GTC Initiated refers to placements that are secured through Group Training Companies. GTC initiated is a strategy that was developed specifically for the pilot project and makes use of the host employer networks of partner GTCs and the wider GTC network.

As was previously mentioned, Edge Employment Solutions established formal partnerships with Hospitality Group Training and South Metropolitan Youth Link Group Training prior to commencing the pilot project. As partner GTCs, they had both committed to share information, develop a combined employer database for marketing and notify the Project Manager of appropriate vacancies as they occurred. Job seekers registered with the pilot project were to be introduced to and registered with the appropriate partner GTC and the Project Manager was to meet with each partner GTC to establish a short-list of prospective host employers, drawn from the employer databases of both organisations. The Project Manager was also to develop a joint marketing strategy with each partner GTC to effectively promote the job seeker to the short-listed host employers. Edge Employment Solutions' marketing materials were to be integrated into the GTC's marketing materials for this purpose.

Whilst a combined employer database did not eventuate with either partner GTC, all job seekers with apprenticeship or traineeship preferences in relevant occupations were referred to the appropriate GTC for consideration as and when suitable vacancies arose. The Project Manager provided the partner GTCs with a brief information sheet outlining Edge Employment Solutions' services that could be handed to host employers who would consider employing an apprentice or trainee with a disability. The Project Manager also undertook a number of joint visits to prospective host employers to jointly market job seekers with disabilities.

As a strategy for broadening its involvement with the group training network beyond the partner GTCs, the Project Manager also gave a presentation to some 15 GTC representatives at a regular Group Training Australia (WA) meeting. This presentation was organised by the Executive Officer of Group Training Australia (WA) – who is also a member of the pilot project reference group. The response of GTC representatives at the presentation was very positive. Many GTCs professed a willingness to place more apprentices with disabilities, but admitted that they did not have the skills or confidence to market or support such placements. Neither did they have many people with disabilities on their register.

In addition to the group presentation, the Project Manager has also made direct contact with a number of GTCs that offer apprenticeships in areas of interest to the project's job seekers. The approach to, and involvement with, each of these non-partner GTCs was different and is described below.

When visiting the larger auto service companies to secure apprenticeships, the Project Manager found many used the Motor Industry Training Association (MITA) as the host employer. MITA has expressed its willingness to be a host employer for project registrants. They preferred the Project Manager to make contact directly with employers and believed that, with his experience, the Project Manager was better equipped to market the individual qualities of the prospective employees, as well as effect better job matches.

WA Group Training initiated contact with the Project Manager asking for assistance with two young women with disabilities. One woman was already a first year apprentice hairdresser. The apprentice was indentured to WA Group Training and she was placed with a local hairdressing salon. However, the apprentice was only being employed on a casual basis due to several performance-related difficulties. The Project Manager approached the hairdresser and negotiated a re-commencement of the apprenticeship on full hours with DAWS funding (see Section 5.3 for further information on this scheme), on-the-job support provided by Edge Employment Solutions and off-the-job TAFE support provided by the project's Training Co-ordinator. The other young woman had had some part-time work in a hairdressing salon and was eager to obtain an apprenticeship.

Workplace Services initiated contact with the Project Manager asking for assistance with a young man with a disability who was a second year apprentice cabinet maker. The apprentice was indentured to Workplace Services and he had been placed with eight different cabinet making companies in less than two years. Workplace Services were at the point of terminating the apprenticeship after a previous suspension. The Project Manager negotiated a pause in the apprenticeship for three months to concentrate on the TAFE element of the apprenticeship, which was lagging significantly. The Project Manager also worked in conjunction with Workplace Services to locate a new host employer.

A project registrant was referred to the Western Australian College of Construction (WACOC) as he wished to undertake an apprenticeship in plastering. WACOC offers prospective apprentices access to a three-month pre-apprenticeship course with a guarantee of indenture with WACOC subject to satisfactory completion of the course. The registrant successfully completed the course and was subsequently indentured to WACOC and placed with a plastering contractor.

The Project Manager approached Aboriginal Group Training Organisation (AGTO) about an Aboriginal client who had registered with the project and was seeking a traineeship in hospitality. The Project Manager approached a resort hotel and arranged for AGTO to meet the registrant at Edge Employment Solutions to draw up a suitable Training Agreement with the employer. The registrant commenced a work trial at the hotel. However, because the work trial did not lead to a traineeship commencement, the placement was not counted in the project placements.

Five of 33 placements (15%) were initiated by GTCs. The apprenticeships initiated by GTCs were as follows:

- Hairdresser (2 positions)
- Plasterer
- Cabinet Maker
- Electrician

In the context of the pilot project, this is a slightly disappointing result in that the pilot project anticipated that GTCs (both partner GTCs and, to a lesser extent, other GTCs) would be the primary avenue to apprenticeships for people with disabilities. What has emerged is that it was the marketing efforts of the Project Manager (backed by Edge Employment Solutions and its own employer network) that accounted for the great majority of the placements in the project.

Another disappointing aspect of the association with GTCs is that only one of the 28 apprentices placed had been indentured to a GTC. All of the others have been indentured by the host employers. This finding would seem to suggest that, whilst a number of GTCs have been

very helpful and accommodating through the project, they seem reluctant to extend that involvement to indenturing apprentices with disabilities (even though indenturing apprentices is a primary reason for their existence). This would suggest much work still needs to be done with GTCs if people with disabilities are to gain equal access to their services.

GTC Field Staff were typically well-versed in industry requirements, group training arrangements and pastoral care activities. However, few appeared to have more than rudimentary knowledge of disability or the strategies and techniques available to improve chance of a disabled person securing and successfully completing a New Apprenticeship. Thus, Field Officers were neither sufficiently skilled nor confident to effectively promote apprentices with disabilities.

Other Agency Initiated refers to placements that are secured through other agencies, such as TAFE colleges or other disability employment agencies.

In the second year of the project referrals began to be received through TAFE colleges where apprentices with disabilities were having difficulties keeping up with their TAFE requirements. These apprentices were more likely to be in their first or second year of their apprenticeship studies. Until the advent of this project such apprentices were a greater risk of not completing their apprenticeship studies and, thus, not becoming qualified tradespersons.

The Project Manager subsequently met with these students and, subject to project eligibility and willingness to register with the project, registered two apprentices. In addition to the increased study support that they received through the project, support and mentoring was also provided to them on their respective job sites. Applications were subsequently submitted through New Apprenticeship Centres for both apprentices to receive funding through the DAWS scheme (see Section 5.3 for further information on this scheme).

Three of the 33 placements (9%) were initiated by other agencies, primarily TAFE. These placements differed from other project placements in that they were apprenticeships in jeopardy rather than new placements. The apprenticeships were as follows:

- Auto Mechanic
- Bread Maker
- Boilermaker

Employer Initiated refers to an employer, who has not previously used the agency's services, making contact with the agency with an offer of a position.

The major advantages of employer initiated vacancies are that the agency has not expended time and resources in locating the job lead and an actual vacancy exists. A disadvantage of the

employer initiated strategy can be unrealistic employer expectations of the worker or the support that the agency can provide.

Employers can only initiate contact with the agency if they know the agency exists, what it does and how it will benefit the employer. This was achieved during the pilot project by various means. A newspaper article and a newspaper feature story appeared in the West Australian newspaper during the course of the first year of the pilot project (see Appendix Two). These were designed to raise awareness of Edge Employment Solutions and the pilot project amongst prospective applicants and employers alike.

Regardless of the apparent suitability of any position offered, the Project Manager would always visit the employer and inspect the workplace. This afforded the opportunity to vet the employer, identify other jobs that may be suitable and build an on-going relationship that may lead to future repeat business.

There were no employer-initiated placements into apprenticeships or traineeships during the project. This is not surprising in that the project has only been operating for a brief period and building awareness, and a positive response to, a new service is a long term strategy

Thirteen different trades were represented amongst the 28 apprenticeships commenced during the pilot project:

- Auto Mechanic (7 positions)
- Bread Maker (4 positions)
- Boilermaker (3 positions)
- Chef (3 positions)
- Hairdresser (3 positions)
- Core and Mould Maker
- Optical Mechanic
- Plumber
- Cabinet Maker
- Plasterer
- Electrical
- Auto Panel & Paint
- Turf Management

A demographic profile of the 33 registrants placed in an apprenticeship (n=28) or traineeship (n=5) appears in Table Two.

Table Two. Demographic profile of people with disabilities placed in apprenticeships or traineeships through the project (Oct 1999 – Sep 2001).

GENDER	Male	29	88%
	Female	4	12%
AGE	15-19	13	39%
	20-25	16	48%
	26+	4	12%
DISABILITY (PRIMARY)	Intellectual/Learning	10	30%
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	10	30%
	Cerebral Palsy	4	12%
	Neurological	3	9%
	Acquired Brain Injury	2	6%
	Spina Bifida	2	6%
	Psychiatric	1	3%
	Autism	1	3%

A comparison of Table Two (New Apprenticeship placements) with Table One (project registrants) reveals a similar profile across gender, age and disability type. This suggests that project registrants were able to be placed in the New Apprenticeship of their choice regardless of their age, gender or disability type.

With the benefit of hindsight, an arguable weakness of the project is that job search was not undertaken in closer collaboration with the partner GTCs. This oversight was probably due to several factors. First, only one job seeker was subsequently registered with any GTC. As a result other job seekers did not become part of any GTC Field Officer’s placement caseload. Second, the project management team was strongly focused on securing New Apprenticeships, and primarily apprenticeships, to prove that people with various disabilities could enter and successfully complete a wide array of apprenticeships (and also to meet the project funding target of securing 25-30 New Apprenticeship placements over the two-year funding period). With its own extensive employer network and well-developed marketing systems, it was most expedient to promote and place New Apprentices with disabilities through Edge Employment Solutions’ internal processes.

Also, it needs to be recognised that GTCs indenture only 14% of all New Apprentices in Australia, primarily in small to medium businesses (which is the industry sector that GTCs

were initially established to service). People with disabilities who aspire to join a large corporation or the public sector are unlikely to secure such a placement through a GTC.

More information about the job search and placement support provided to individual job seekers can be found in the five case studies that are included in Appendix Five.

5.2 NEW APPRENTICESHIP CENTRES

At the commencement of the pilot project, there were seven New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs) in Western Australia. All new apprenticeships need to be lodged and processed through a NAC. Both of the pilot project GTC partners were NACs at the outset of the project. However, in November 1999, the number of NACs in Western Australia was reduced from seven to four. Neither of the GTC partners retained their NAC status – which was one of the reasons they had been selected as GTC partners in the first place. The four remaining NACs were the Confederation of Commerce and Industry (CCI), the Australian Medical Association (AMA), Centacare Employment Services and Central Apprenticeship and Traineeship Services (CATS).

The loss of a NAC connection through the two GTC partners necessitated the formation of new partnerships with at least one of the four NACs. A pre-condition in any such partnership was that the NAC would have to be willing and available to prepare and submit the necessary documentation to access Disabled Apprentice Wage Subsidy (DAWS) funding. The AMA proved willing in this regard and, since January 2000, has been the NAC through which the bulk of the apprenticeship commencements and DAWS funding applications have been processed. A growing proportion of apprenticeships and DAWS applications were processed through the other three NACs as the project progressed.

5.3 DISABLED APPRENTICE WAGE SUBSIDY

Access to DAWS funding has been a critical element in two-thirds of all apprenticeship commencements during the project. DAWS funding provides a weekly wage subsidy of \$114.73 per week to the employer. This subsidy is paid directly to the employer by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (DETYA). In addition to the wage subsidy, the apprenticeship is also eligible for up to \$5,500 per year in tutorial/interpreter assistance and/or mentoring support. This assistance is funded through a Registered Training Organisation, most commonly a TAFE college.

Applying for DAWS funding is a time consuming task. Based on having completed and submitted 19 DAWS applications, it has been calculated that each DAWS application has taken an average of 25 hours to complete. In Western Australia, the application process has required arranging an assessment and written report (the Standard Medical Occupational Assessment

form) from a medical practitioner. This needs to be accompanied by an occupational therapy assessment and report that describes the impact that the applicant's disability is likely to have on the applicant's work performance. These reports are then provided to the NAC for approval. NACs are regularly audited by the commonwealth government to ensure that DAWS approvals are made in accordance with the funding guidelines.

Awaiting DAWS funding is also a drawn-out process. The average processing time is 8-10 weeks. Thus, if an apprenticeship commenced at the point the DAWS application began to be assembled, the employer would typically have to wait for three months to receive the wage subsidy. Even though they are advised the wage subsidy will be backdated, the lengthy application, processing and payment time for DAWS has led some employers to retract their offer to take on an apprentice with a disability and instead fill the vacancy with a non-disabled person.

The three month delay in receiving DAWS funding also means that necessary workplace modifications cannot be undertaken or assistive equipment purchased to enable the disabled apprentice to work productively or safely (a duty of care issue).

An additional difficulty with the current DAWS scheme is that a new application must be submitted for each continuing apprentice each year. Re-application requires a full submission, including updated general practitioner and occupational therapist reports.

NACs also interpret the published DAWS guidelines in different ways, often causing further delays. For example, one application for DAWS funding was rejected by the involved NAC. The Project Manager appealed to the Commonwealth Department of Employment Training and Youth Affairs and had the rejection overturned. However, the appeal process caused many further months of delay before the employer received any wage subsidy or the apprentice obtained needed extra support with the study element of the apprenticeship.

Under the current funding arrangements, there seems to be little financial incentive (and perhaps even a financial penalty) for GTCs to place apprentices with disabilities. Whilst they have access to the Disabled Apprentice Wage Subsidy, first they would have to spend some 50 hours arranging, checking and submitting the required reports.

If they are successful in their application, GTCs usually pass the full DAWS subsidy directly onto the host employer. This may be because GTCs feel it necessary to offer the full DAWS subsidy to the host employer to secure a placement for an apprentice with a disability.

When placing a non-disabled apprentice, the GTC can expect to receive up to \$4,400 over the course of the apprenticeship to cover administration, insurances and on-costs. However, DAWS funding negates the regular subsidies that a GTC receives to place and support an

apprentice. If the full DAWS subsidy has been passed onto the host employer, the GTC is out-of-pocket to the extent that there is no additional funding to cover normal administration, insurances and on-costs.

6. POST-PLACEMENT SUPPORT

Once an apprenticeship or traineeship was secured, the Project Manager co-ordinated all aspects of each placement and subsequent on-the-job and, with the later assistance of the Training Co-ordinator, off-the-job training. This included applying for DAWS subsidy where required, organising on-the-job support from Edge Employment Solutions and arranging the off-the-job training through the appropriate Registered Training Organisation (on all occasions TAFE).

6.1 ON-THE-JOB SUPPORT

On-the-job support to all apprentices and trainees placed through the project is provided by Job Co-ordinators employed by Edge Employment Solutions. Edge Employment Solutions has a complement of 20 Job Co-ordinators who come from a range of professional and technical backgrounds including: occupational therapy, psychology, teaching, social training and the trades. Each worker who is placed in an apprenticeship or traineeship is allocated an available Job Co-ordinator whose training and/or experience most closely matches that of the worker.

Once an apprenticeship or traineeship was secured, the allocated Job Co-ordinator arranged a joint meeting on-site with the Project Manager and key company personnel prior to job commencement. Approaching all key personnel before the worker commenced in the job signalled to them that they were valuable allies and implied that a positive attitude and understanding on their part was an important contributor to the worker's success in his or her new apprenticeship or traineeship.

Negotiations with key personnel included discussion about any concerns they had regarding apprentices or trainees with disabilities. Concerns raised by supervisory staff included: allowing the worker to operate machinery; the reaction of co-workers; how to communicate with the worker; how to supervise the worker; and whether the worker could produce quality work. These concerns were dealt with by the Project Manager and Job Co-ordinator at the pre-commencement meeting and followed-up post-commencement to ensure the concerns were adequately resolved.

Negotiations with key personnel also provided the Job Co-ordinator with an opportunity to begin facilitating natural supports in the workplace, which involves tapping into the existing networks in the workplace to support the worker. All workplaces provide some form of

support to new employees. This support may be formal or informal, comprehensive or elementary, individual or team-based. Receiving this natural support (no matter what form it takes) assists the worker to understand the workplace culture, modify his or her behaviour to fit the social norms in that workplace and develop a role that is valued in the workplace. Building in natural supports is the first step to effecting the worker's inclusion into the workplace. Being included gives the worker a sense of belonging, accomplishment and pride - feelings that will nurture and sustain motivation. The utilisation of natural supports in the workplace assists the worker, the co-workers and the supervisors to come to know and respond to each other as members of the one team and to develop appropriate and positive communication.

An important contribution that the employer can make to the success of the worker within the company is to clarify the nature and extent of the duties that management has in mind. The following questions were raised by the Job Co-ordinator and negotiated with management.

- What duties will the worker be expected to perform?
- When will the worker be expected to perform these duties?
- Are certain tasks of higher priority?
- How frequently must each task be performed?
- Are these duties likely to change in the near future?
- Who will give directions to the worker?
- Who will check the quality of work?
- What should the worker do in the event of having insufficient work?

The presence of another person on the job-site (the Job Co-ordinator) was an unfamiliar experience to many of the employers and had the potential to cause confusion in the workplace. Left to their own devices, employers can cast Job Co-ordinators into a variety of different roles - the majority of which are inaccurate or unreasonable. Some employers may automatically expect the Job Co-ordinator to be available to the company as an "extra pair of hands". Other employers may expect the Job Co-ordinator to take on line management responsibilities and operate as a surrogate supervisor for the worker. Some employers may see the Job Co-ordinator as a company-wide human resource consultant. Other employers may see the Job Co-ordinator as simply offering a welfare service to the worker. Some employers may see the Job Co-ordinator as superfluous and more likely to get in the way. These and other false assumptions were identified by the Job Co-ordinator and resolved before the job commenced.

In the initial discussions with key personnel the Job Co-ordinator also clarified the nature, frequency and extent of support that would be provided by Edge Employment Solutions. It was explained that the Job Co-ordinator's primary objective in being on-site is to ensure that the worker is meeting the employer's expectations, is continuing to make satisfactory progress through the apprenticeship or traineeship, is socially integrated and is satisfied with the job and the workplace.

Edge Employment Solutions recognises that co-workers and supervisors should play the major role in training and supporting co-workers with disabilities. The Project Manager offered employers an opportunity to send involved supervisors and co-workers to its nationally accredited training program: *Supporting Co-Workers with Disabilities*. This program provides co-workers with the skills to train and support their colleagues with disabilities. The training program can be delivered on-site or off-site at no expense to the employer. Whilst this offer was only made to one employers in the first year of the pilot project (and was taken up by the employer), it was offered to all employers as a matter of course in the second year, with several more taking up the offer.

The worker's family and/or other important people (collectively referred to as “significant others”) form the support network in the worker's life. As such, they are significant not only to the worker, but also to the worker's prospects in the apprenticeship or traineeship.

After meeting on-site the Job Co-ordinator met with the worker’s support network. The support network, in common with the worker, the employer and the agency, shares an equal responsibility in ensuring that the worker has the best chance of achieving the training outcome.

As was the case with key personnel, the support network may have concerns in relation to the worker successfully completing an apprenticeship. Concerns expressed by the support network have included: the worker's ability to complete the apprenticeship or traineeship; the pressure that may be placed on the worker and risk of exploitation by co-workers. Any concerns held by members of the support network were addressed by the Project Manager and/or Job Co-ordinator.

Next, Centrelink was advised that the worker had commenced an apprenticeship or traineeship so that appropriate adjustments could be made to the disability support pension.

The final task that the Job Co-ordinator completed before the worker commenced the apprenticeship or traineeship was to undertake a thorough analysis of the job and the agreed duties. Job analysis proceeded in three sequential stages: job observation, job evaluation and job description. Completing a job analysis ensured that the Job Co-ordinator understood the full extent of the job, the challenges it may present to the worker, the most efficient method of performing the job, the safety demands of the job and how best to support the supervisor and co-workers in training the worker.

Where required (as a result of task complexity and/or the worker’s level of disability), the Job Co-ordinator task analysed various aspects of the job into easy-to-teach and easy-to-learn steps. Each task analysis was entered into a standard Production Form (see Appendix Seven).

Edge Employment Solutions utilises “total task training” as its primary on-the-job training strategy. Total task training exposes the worker to the entire step sequence from the outset. The steps are performed in the order required and the Job Co-ordinator, through the supervisor, provides instruction for each step as it is being performed by the worker.

As the worker learns each step and external assistance is reduced, the worker begins to chain the responses together without interventions between steps. The worker is usually still learning some steps while beginning to chain two or three other steps in the same task. Therefore, total task training maximises the worker's independence early in training, especially if some steps are already familiar. Total task training is suitable for workers of all abilities (and disabilities), it can be successfully applied to all jobs and it mirrors what naturally occurs in the workplace. Total task training is also suitable for workers of all ages. This is because it embodies the principles of adult learning.

Drawing on the principles of adult learning, a six step training method, that incorporates total task training, was utilised:

- Step 1:* name the task to be performed and explain reason for doing it,
- Step 2:* outline how the Job Co-ordinator or supervisor planned to teach the task to the worker,
- Step 3:* silently demonstrate the whole task at the correct speed (but without any comment about the speed),
- Step 4:* return to the first step and then go through each step one at a time,
- Step 5:* ask the worker to tell you how to do it,
- Step 6:* let the worker perform the task.

Thus, the worker had heard and seen the job performed three times - the recommended repetition for all adult learners. The worker was then in a position to learn most effectively and efficiently by performing the task with regular supervision and encouragement.

Another advantage of task analysis is its capacity to provide real-time and objective (i.e. measurable) information concerning the worker's specific strengths and weaknesses in relation to the job being performed. This information was used by the Job Co-ordinator to continually adjust the training focus and to immediately target areas of greatest training need.

The procedures outlined above are described in greater detail in Lewis, Robertson and Drenen (2001).

Over the two years of the project 28 apprenticeships were commenced, of which 17 were still continuing at the end of the project reporting period. Four of the five traineeships had been successfully completed, and the other traineeship was continuing. Thus, 21 of the 33 New

Apprenticeship placements that have commenced are still continuing or have been completed, which represents a retention rate of 67%.

Six of the apprenticeships did not continue beyond the probationary period. Three were terminated by the employers and three by the probationary apprentices. A further four apprenticeships did not proceed beyond the first year. Two were terminated by the employers and two by the apprentices. One apprenticeship was terminated by the apprentice as he moved to the eastern states with his family. At the end of the project it was not clear whether he intended continuing his apprenticeship.

6.2 OFF-THE-JOB SUPPORT

Off the job support refers primarily to the support provided to an apprentice or trainee in undertaking the study elements of their training. All trainees on the project undertook their training on-the-job, therefore this section only refers to apprentices.

All except one apprentice undertook the off the job training component of their apprenticeship at TAFE. The choice of TAFE college and campus was often determined by the apprenticeship that the worker was undertaking, as the associated study elements may only be offered at one campus. Choice of campus in some cases was in part determined by where the apprentice lived.

It was apparent that for many of the apprentices, the off site (study related) aspects of the apprenticeship were at least as, and in some cases more, challenging than the off site (work related) aspects.

Approximately half of the apprentices supported in 2001 were in their second or later years of their apprenticeship studies at TAFE. Two apprentices completed their TAFE studies in 2001. One apprentice had been previously placed and supported in an apprenticeship, indentured to a GTC, by Edge Employment Solutions and transferred to the project at the end of his second year. This apprentice undertook his training through the GTC and completed his off-the-job apprenticeship training in record time. He has since enrolled in extra night courses at TAFE whilst he completes his apprenticeship term. The second apprentice joined the project having already completed two years of an apprenticeship, but had been terminated due to ongoing conflict with co-workers. After he joined the project, the Project Manager negotiated a recommencement with his former employer. He has subsequently successfully completed his training at TAFE will become a qualified auto mechanic when he completes his apprenticeship term in December 2001.

The type and intensity of study support that each apprentice received varied considerably from individual to individual. However, support generally included: orientation and transition of the

apprentice to TAFE; Monitoring the apprentice's progress at TAFE; arranging and facilitating any additional training supports required, assisting the apprentice with any training issues that may arise; and co-ordinating on-the-job and off-the-job training aspects of the apprenticeship.

Many apprentices were initially nervous about the off-the-job training component of their apprenticeship. A thorough orientation was very important in assisting in their transition to adult learning at TAFE. This orientation stage usually involved the Training Co-ordinator carrying out the following steps prior to the apprentices commencing their training at TAFE.

- Meeting with the apprentice and their family and discussing what training supports may be required.
- Orientating the apprentice to the TAFE college and campus
- Introducing the apprentice to the lecturer(s) and Disability Services Officer and explaining each person's role in supporting the apprentice.
- Assisting the apprentice with purchasing books, equipment etc
- Assisting the apprentice with planning travel between home, TAFE and the workplace

The Training Co-ordinator kept in regular contact with all apprentices being supported through the project, their lecturers and other support staff (such as their tutors and mentors). The purpose of this closely monitoring the apprentice's progress at TAFE was ensure that any training issues that arose were addressed and resolved as quickly as possible and before they could threaten the continuation of the apprenticeship.

It was evident before commencing TAFE, that a number of the apprentices placed through the project would require extra training supports. These additional supports were discussed with the TAFE Disability Services Officer and involved TAFE lecturers and were arranged prior to or immediately after they commenced at TAFE. In some cases the need for training supports only became apparent once the training commenced or was only required at particular stages throughout the training.

The types of additional supports arranged included:

- Home Based tutors
- TAFE Based tutors
- On-line equipment at home
- Scribes in class
- Modifications to equipment
- Mentors
- Alternative (oral) assessments

Each TAFE college has its own budget allocation to assist students with disabilities to complete TAFE studies. However, this source of funding was not always adequate to meet the level of support required by some of the apprentices with disabilities at TAFE. On these occasions the Training Co-ordinator assisted the TAFE Disability Services Officers to access DAWS funding for eligible apprentices by preparing the DAWS funding application forms and procuring the supporting documentation (see section 5.3). DAWS funding of up to \$5,500 per annum is available to eligible students for tutorial assistance.

The most common training issues that arose for apprentices placed through the project were: adjusting to the adult learning environment of TAFE (e.g. self advocacy and taking responsibility for own learning); academic difficulties, requiring additional tutorial support; difficulties with practical components of the course, requiring a mentor with practical skills in that trade area; and difficulty in applying theory to practical work.

It is not uncommon for all apprentices at times to struggle to see the relevance and applicability of some aspects of their off-the-job learning at TAFE to their jobs. For some apprentices with disabilities the challenges of transferring information and skills from TAFE to the workplace were magnified when what the apprentice was learning at TAFE had not yet been experienced in the workplace or when TAFE required the apprentice to learn a skill or task that was not commonly used or required in the workplace. Problems also arose when the equipment and technology used at TAFE was different from that used in the workplace. On some occasions, the standards and requirements of lecturers differed from that of the apprentice's employer (i.e. they were required to perform a task in a certain way at work and another way at TAFE)

In an effort to minimise these potential difficulties in transfer of learning, the Training Co-ordinator kept the workplace and the Job Co-ordinator regularly informed of what and how the apprentice was being taught at TAFE. The Training Co-ordinator also encouraged all parties to make the learning objectives and learning environments as similar as practicable.

More information about the employment and study support provided to individual job seekers can be found in the five case studies that are included in Appendix Five.

7. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The pilot project was designed with two purposes in mind. The first was to establish that people with varying disabilities could secure and successfully undertake a range of apprenticeships and traineeships (see chapters 4 –6). The second purpose was to draw on the experiences gained through the operation of the pilot project to attempt to answer the following research questions.

7.1 In what industries are people with disabilities seeking traineeships and apprenticeships?

The types of industry and types of apprenticeships that project registrants have sought to enter are quite diverse. Thirteen different trades were represented amongst the 28 apprenticeships commenced during the pilot project:

- Auto Mechanic (7 positions)
- Bread Maker (4 positions)
- Boilermaker (3 positions)
- Chef (3 positions)
- Hairdresser (3 positions)
- Core and Mould Maker
- Optical Mechanic
- Plumber
- Cabinet Maker
- Plasterer
- Electrical
- Auto Panel & Paint
- Turf Management

Apprenticeship commencements through the pilot project were compared with all Western Australian commencements in apprenticeships (NCVER, 1998). A comparative analysis appears in Figure One and reveals that apprentices with disabilities placed through the project secured a:

- significantly higher proportion of commencements in Automotive, Food and Hairdressing
- similar proportion of commencements in Agriculture & Horticulture, Hairdressing and Mechanical & Fabrication Engineering
- significantly lower proportion of commencements in Electrical & Electronic, Construction and Other Trades

Figure One. Commencements by all WA apprentices compared with apprentices with disabilities placed through the pilot project (trade classifications drawn from the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations)

Figure One is a bar chart comparing the number of commencements for all WA apprentices and apprentices with disabilities placed through the pilot project across various trade classifications. The chart shows that people with disabilities are seeking apprenticeships across all industries and trade areas.

The pilot project placement activities (especially given that traineeships were not pursued in the second year of the project) were unable to shed any real light on the types of traineeships that people with disabilities might seek. All traineeships secured through the pilot project, prior to cessation of the activity, were in the area of office administration.

However, the Project Director has recently surveyed (as part of a national research project auspiced by Group Training Australia and funded by the Australian National Training Authority) 23 GTCs, out of more than 200 GTCs Australia-wide, that were known to have had the greatest involvement with New Apprentices with disabilities (Lewis, research in progress). Between them the surveyed GTCs had placed trainees with disabilities in a broad range of traineeships including (not in any specific order of magnitude): hospitality, retail, rural, textile, small business, information technology, office administration, aged care, engineering, information technology, warehousing, automotive, child care, building, business administration, spare parts interpreting, swimming, and aquaculture.

7.2 What obstacles exist for people with disabilities entering traineeships and apprenticeships of their choice?

Perhaps the greatest obstacle confronting people with disabilities securing New Apprenticeships of their choice is finding a suitable agency that will be willing and able to provide the necessary placement and post-placement assistance. People with more significant disabilities are typically referred by Centrelink to a Competitive Employment Training and Placement (CETP) agency or CRS Australia (the former Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service), both of which are funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. People with less significant disabilities are more likely to be referred to a Job Network provider funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business to provide Intensive Assistance services to disadvantaged job seekers. None of these provider groups have any significant involvement in the vocational education and training sector, are not required or funded to place a proportion of people on their register in New Apprenticeships and are generally not skilled or inclined to actively seek New Apprenticeship placements.

On the other side of the coin, GTCs operate extensively and effectively within the VET sector. However, most claim to lack the expertise or resources to recruit, indenture, place and support New Apprentices with disabilities. Even if they were willing and able to support more people with disabilities, GTCs operate primarily in the small to medium business sector and place only 14% of all New Apprentices nationally. Many people with disabilities aspire to undertaking a New Apprenticeship with larger companies or in the public sector. This is, in part, due to the fact that these categories of employer usually offer greater job security, opportunities for job transfer and greater promotional prospects. Thus, even GTCs that are willing and able to indenture people with disabilities are only able to offer a limited range of host employer choices.

It would be a mistake for the state government to direct all of its future efforts to improve access to New Apprenticeships for people with disabilities through GTCs for the reasons discussed above. For example, in other states of Australia (notably New South Wales and Victoria) the respective state governments have developed specific public sector New Apprenticeship initiatives for people with disabilities. These initiatives greatly increase the New Apprenticeship access opportunities for people with disabilities.

The next barrier to New Apprenticeships that people with disabilities confront is convincing prospective employers that are capable of completing a New Apprenticeship and, in the case of apprenticeships, becoming a competent tradesperson. Many employers, particularly those who have their New Apprentices supplied through GTCs, have been conditioned to demand and expect an increasingly higher standard of New Apprentice. Most people with disabilities (or

people from other equity groups) do not fit most employers' conceptions of the 'right' New Apprentice.

When marketing job seekers with disabilities through the project, the Project Manager had first to identify and then overcome employers' misconceptions and stereotypical attitudes about people with disabilities as productive employees. The Project Manager then had to describe the additional support and back-up that would be provided through the project both in the workplace and at TAFE. Depending on the nature and extent of the disability, the Project Manager would also discuss the possible availability of the DAWS wage subsidy.

When a placement was secured the next obstacle that often arose was dealing with co-worker misconceptions and disability stereotyping. Most of the workplaces that apprentices with disabilities entered through the pilot project also employed other apprentices. Because of their relative youth and inexperience, other apprentices do not necessarily make ideal co-workers for a person with a disability. They often have their own 'initiation ceremonies' for the new employees, they may take the opportunity to make fun of the person and/or their disability or they may be fearful of the implications of working with a person with a disability. While many of these issues can be addressed through effective on-site negotiations by the Project Manager and good on-site support by a Job Co-ordinator, the reality is that many apprentices with disabilities (outside of this pilot project) do not have access to this on-site support and advocacy.

In its current form and process the DAWS scheme can also act as an obstacle to people with disabilities entering apprenticeships of their choice. As was discussed in section 5.3 the waiting time for DAWS has averaged 12 weeks during the course of the pilot project. Whilst there are provisions for paying the subsidy in arrears, employers are often unwilling to wait up to three months to receive their first wage subsidy payment for an apprentice with a disability.

Difficulties with inclusion and acceptance of apprentices with disabilities can also arise at TAFE colleges, where the majority of apprentices fulfil their study requirements. Overcoming misconceptions and prejudices in TAFE settings is more problematic because fellow students are widely dispersed in the industry (only coming together for lectures and practicals), making it difficult to get to know fellow students or to intervene systematically and effectively.

Another access obstacle for people with disabilities is transport. Many young people with disabilities do not have access to private transport, which is vital to apprentices who have to move regularly between home, work and TAFE – all of which may be some distance apart. This is exacerbated by the fact that a number of apprenticeship courses in Perth are only taught at one TAFE campus.

Finally, many apprenticeships have inflexible hours and times of work. It is usual practice for apprentices to work full-time (i.e. 35-40 hours per week) and often overtime. For apprentices with physical disabilities (or even learning disabilities requiring intensive concentration to keep pace with workplace instructions), the physical or mental work demands can be a significant obstacle in the early stages of a new apprenticeship.

7.3 What attitudes and experiences do Group Training Companies have with respect to promoting people with disabilities as apprentices or trainees?

Early observations about GTCs' attitudes and experiences are drawn from several informant groups. The first informant group was the pilot project reference group, the members of which have a range of involvements and connections with GTCs. The second informant group was the two partner GTCs, which afforded the Project Manager the opportunity to physically base himself in the GTCs in the early stages of the project and gain first hand information about the experiences and attitudes of GTC management and staff. The third informant group was the Group Training Australia (WA) network, to which the Project Manager gave a formal presentation on the pilot project and sought reaction from the participants. The fourth informant group was the other (non-partner) GTCs with whom the Project Manager has been directly involved in sourcing and/or securing apprenticeship placements. The fifth, informant group was the 23 GTCs around Australia that were surveyed by the Project Director as part of an ANTA funded search for disability best practice exemplars in GTCs (Lewis, research in progress).

As a general observation, most GTCs express a willingness to place and support apprentices with disabilities. However, they also claim that they do not have the experience or the skills to support such placements. Not surprisingly, given their self-assessment, they also report that they have few people with disabilities on their register.

As previously discussed, a disappointing aspect of the pilot project has been the relative paucity of apprenticeship openings for people with disabilities through the GTCs. The recent survey of 23 disability best practice GTCs around Australia revealed that only 1.6% of all apprentices and 3.3% of all trainees had a disability (Lewis, research in progress).

As unspectacular as the outcomes for people with disabilities through GTCs appear, they are superior to the outcomes achieved by people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships where GTCs are not involved.

Another disappointing aspect of the association with GTCs is that only one of the 28 apprentices placed had been indentured to a GTC. All of the others have been indentured by the employer. This finding would seem to suggest that, whilst a number of GTCs have voiced

support for the project, this support has not extended to indenturing apprentices with disabilities (even though indenturing apprentices is a primary reason for their existence).

It seems apparent that GTCs accept that they have certain responsibilities to assist people with disabilities (along with other equity groups) into apprenticeships. Thus, they appear to *want* to change.

Where they are stalled is that most don't know *how* to change. In such circumstances, additional funding (be it through existing schemes such as DAWS or incentive funding offered by the state government) will only have a minimal impact because they only address one part of the problem: the funding issue.

Unless GTCs recruit staff with relevant disability knowledge and skills, provide staff with practical training in promoting and supporting New Apprentices with disabilities, and utilise a case management approach in pre-placement and post-placement support to New Apprentices with disabilities, additional funding will do little to improve placements or outcomes. Beyond recruiting and training their own staff and adopting a more individualised approach to supporting its New Apprentices with disabilities, GTCs would do well to develop close partnerships with one or more disability employment agencies in their area of operation. Six of the seven most successful GTCs in Australia (from the perspective of placing New Apprentices with disabilities with host employers) had developed such partnerships in recent years (Lewis, research in progress).

In the same manner that GTCs feel they are under-skilled and under-funded to adequately support people with disabilities, disability employment services feel under-informed and under-funded to support people with disabilities through a four-year apprenticeship (disability employment agencies currently receive the same funding if they place and support a person in an eight hour per week menial job or a 40 hour per week apprenticeship).

There are obvious synergies in GTCs and disability employment agencies coming together and pooling their expertise and resources – to the advantage of both agencies.

7.4 What information and resources do Group Training Companies require to successfully promote people with disabilities as trainees and apprentices?

In the first instance, GTCs need to have people with disabilities on their registers so that they can promote them to prospective host employers. Thus, they need information on where and how to attract New Apprenticeship seekers with disabilities. In the process of registering people with disabilities the GTCs need to collect the necessary information

Having attracted people with disabilities onto their registers, GTCs then need to collect necessary information about people with disabilities (see section 4.4) so that they can target suitable New Apprenticeships.

Having identified suitable New Apprenticeships in conjunction with the candidates, GTCs need promotional materials to promote New Apprenticeship seekers with disabilities to prospective host employers. These promotional materials may take the form of an information sheet or a professional brochure. These promotional materials will give GTC representatives accurate information about people with disabilities in the workforce and, as a result, greater confidence and belief to promote them to host employers.

GTCs are still likely to profit from expert advice from an experienced marketer of job seekers with disabilities to employers. In addition to marketing advice, the success rate of GTCs in placing people with disabilities may be further enhanced by arranging joint employer visits with a partner disability employment agency.

Disability employment agencies also have their own employer networks. A number of these employers may be open to a joint approach from a GTC and disability employment agency to recruit a New Apprentice with a disability and enjoy access to the services of both agencies.

Finally, there would appear to be a widespread need amongst GTCs for access to a disability support help-desk that they contact whenever an apprentice with a disability begins to experience difficulties in the workplace. Ideally, the help-desk should be operated by a suitably credentialed disability employment agency that could offer rapid and relevant response and appropriate follow-up.

7.5 What marketing support do Group Training Companies require to successfully place people with disabilities in traineeships and apprenticeships?

Less than 20% of the 28 apprenticeship placements secured through the pilot project could be fully or partly attributed to GTCs. Of these, only one New Apprentice with a disability was indentured to the GTC. The Project Manager secured 22 of the 28 apprenticeship placements through his own efforts, or in concert with other marketing co-ordinators at Edge Employment Solutions.

There was an apparent reticence on the part of GTCs (approached through the project, at least) to indenture people with disabilities as apprentices. A number of GTCs had encountered difficulties in the past indenturing people with disabilities. Many indentured apprentices with disabilities were reported to have performed badly due to a number of factors. These included the need for extra support in the workplace beyond that which a Field Officer could provide, inadequate knowledge and skills possessed by the Field Officer to support an apprentice with a

disability, and the need for extra tuition to keep up with the theoretical/academic requirements of the apprenticeships. The GTC was then left with an unhappy host employer and an out-of-work apprentice with a disability who would be even harder to place with another host employer.

The concept of placing and supporting people with disabilities is still novel to most GTCs. The two GTCs that were initially approached to become partners in the pilot project were deemed to be most familiar with and responsive to people with disabilities. However, neither of the partner GTCs would claim to be an expert in marketing people with disabilities in apprenticeships or traineeships.

A particular difficulty for marketing staff in GTCs is that, when an apprenticeship vacancy arises with one of their host employers, they would traditionally offer the host employer a selection of pre-screened candidates. Simply adding a person with a disability to a list of recommended candidates is unlikely to result in a placement outcome for that candidate. Employers will almost always be drawn to the candidate who ‘looks’ and ‘feels’ right for the position.

Edge Employment Solutions has successfully marketed job seekers with disabilities for the past 16 years by utilising an individualised marketing approach – that is, presenting just one candidate to an employer. Interestingly, disability best practice GTCs also report that they use a case management approach to marketing people with disabilities as potential New Apprentices. These GTCs also approach host employers with whom they already have a long-standing relationship, who they consider to be good employers and who would be willing to embrace diversity within their workforce. The employer already knows and trusts the GTC, so is knows that the prospective a New Apprentice is coming with the full support and back-up of the GTC. Importantly, also, the host employer also knows that if it doesn’t work out the GTC will take the New Apprentice back and place him or her with another host employer.

The challenge for GTCs in Western Australia is to make the initial commitment by indenturing New Apprentices with disabilities. This show of faith will not be lost on prospective host employers and will give them greater confidence (knowing that the GTC is standing with them as the employer of record) to take on a New Apprentice with disabilities. The host employer is also likely to respond more favourably if a disability employment agency is working in partnership with the GTC to resolve help any technical training matters in the workplace.

7.6 What on-site training support do people with disabilities need to successfully complete traineeships and apprenticeships?

An important success factor in successfully placing and supporting people with disabilities in open employment has been the ability to replace certain tasks in the duty statement that may

prove difficult for the person to perform (due to the disability) with other more suitable tasks. This is not as simple in many New Apprenticeships because the work and learning requirements are more structured.

Because the duties and the learning requirements are more formalised and comprehensive in a New Apprenticeship than in most unskilled jobs, there is more pressure on the Job Co-ordinator from the disability employment agency to keep abreast of the task requirements and learning objectives and the timelines associated with each. Thus, Job Co-ordinators would need to be more familiar with individual New Apprenticeship requirements (through experience or training) than with entry-level jobs. Job Co-ordinators would also need to work at a lower staff to client ratio (perhaps 1:12) than would be the case with unskilled positions.

Apprenticeships typically demand a higher level of literacy, numeracy, analytical ability and autonomous decision making than is the case with unskilled jobs. Job Co-ordinators and other company training personnel need to be more innovative in developing cues and aids that assist the disabled New Apprentice to perform at the requisite level of competency and autonomy.

Depending on the nature of the disability, there may be a greater demand for workplace modifications and assistive equipment to enable the apprentice to perform the full range of duties competently, efficiently, safely and independently.

The funding contract that GTCs enter into requires that they undertake eight site visits per year for each New Apprentice. These site visits have traditionally had a pastoral care focus (although some GTCs are beginning to move away from this concept). A six-weekly site visit with a primary focus on pastoral care will not be sufficient to meet the ongoing support needs of many New Apprentices with disabilities. The collaborative support of a competent disability employment agency, with the additional funding that it receives for post-placement employment support of people with disabilities, will be a crucial resource to GTCs, host employers and New Apprentices with disabilities in successfully completing their training.

Indeed, the additional training demands that are associated with most New Apprenticeships, can also place a significant resource burden on disability employment agencies. In order that these costs are kept under control it is important that GTCs and/or disability employment agencies take full advantage of the training resources and natural support networks in the host employer's company. This can be best achieved by involving supervisors and immediate co-workers in appropriate training. An example of appropriate training is the training course "Supporting Co-Workers with Disabilities", which is run by Edge Training Solutions.

7.7 What workplace accommodations do host employers need to make to enable people with disabilities to enter into traineeships and apprenticeships?

During the course of the pilot project there has been no need to modify any of the workplaces (e.g. addition of ramps, wheelchair accessible toilets, etc) to accommodate a New Apprentice with a disability. There has also been no need to modify any of the TAFE campuses or workshops to improve access for students with disabilities.

A number of equipment modifications have had to be made at several work sites. All modifications were for apprentices or trainees with cerebral palsy. The apprentice plumber required the most extensive modifications to equipment. Modifications, which are described in Case Study One (see Appendix Five), were made to a pipe-bender, engineer's jaws, log and pole gripping jaws, a metal stand and triton super jaws. One of the apprentice bread makers required modifications to the mixing tray at the bakery. One of the office administration trainees was supplied with an ergonomic chair.

Assistive equipment was provided to one apprentice and one trainee. One of the apprentice chefs, who had acquired brain injury, was provided with a computer to assist him with his TAFE studies at home. One of the office administration trainees, who had a hearing impairment and cerebral palsy, was provided with a hearing loop for TAFE and an interpreter as well as an ergonomic chair in the workplace.

Thus, workplace modifications and specialist equipment have not been a major consideration for New Apprentices placed through the pilot project. This is despite the range of trades and array of disabilities amongst New Apprentices in the project. Where workplace modifications and specialist equipment were required, several sources of funding are available. Disability employment agencies can apply for funding of up to \$5,500 from the Commonwealth Department Family and Community Services (another argument for developing strategic partnerships between GTCs and disability employment agencies). The DAWS scheme also provides for one-off funding of up to \$5,500.

All but one of the apprenticeships secured through the pilot project has included a TAFE study element. Disability Services Officers at TAFE have played an important role in arranging necessary on-campus supports. The additional funding provided in the second year of the project by the WA Department of Training enabled the appointment of a second full-time project member who concentrated solely on supporting New Apprentices through their studies. Funding was made available through TAFE and/or DAWS and used for the following purposes:

- Home Based tutors
- TAFE Based tutors
- On-line equipment at home
- Scribes in class
- Modifications to equipment

- Mentors
- Alternative (oral) assessments

Each TAFE college has its own budget allocation to assist students with disabilities to complete TAFE studies. However, this source of funding was not always adequate to meet the level of support required by some of the apprentices with disabilities at TAFE. On these occasions the Training Co-ordinator assisted the TAFE Disability Services Officers to access DAWS funding for eligible apprentices by preparing the DAWS funding application forms and procuring the supporting documentation (see section 5.3). DAWS funding of up to \$5,500 per annum is available to eligible students for tutorial assistance.

The most common training issues that arose for apprentices placed through the project were: adjusting to the adult learning environment of TAFE (e.g. self advocacy and taking responsibility for own learning); academic difficulties, requiring additional tutorial support; difficulties with practical components of the course, requiring a mentor with practical skills in that trade area; and difficulty in applying theory to practical work.

7.9 What are the total costs of placing and supporting people with disabilities in traineeships and apprenticeships?

For the purposes of answering this research question, total costs have been divided into four categories (see below).

- registration costs (includes advertising for registrants, dealing with inquiries, interviewing applicants, and developing Individual Plans),
- placement costs (includes preparing promotional material, delivering presentations to GTCs and negotiating positions with prospective employers),
- post-placement support costs (includes visits to worksites by the Project Manager, on-the-job support provided by Edge Employment Solutions Job Co-ordinators, discussions between the Project Manager and Job Co-ordinators, follow-up with employers, training support provided by the Training Co-ordinator, discussions with TAFE lecturers and Disability Services Officers, and recruiting and supporting tutors and mentors),
- administration costs (includes all other administration costs associated with the pilot project).

All of the support hours have been derived from staff hours records kept by all Edge Employment Solutions staff, including the Project Manager and Training Co-ordinator, and have a high degree of accuracy. Research hours (expended primarily by the Project Director) have not been included in the total program costings.

Registration costs

Over 250 telephone inquiries from people with disabilities have been dealt with by the Project Manager over the course of the pilot project. These inquiries were generated through the newspaper advertisements. Most of the remainder were generated through other disability employment agencies, schools, GTCs, Centrelink, TAFE Disability Services Officers or word-of-mouth. The average duration of a telephone enquiry followed by organising appointment times and confirming appointments was 30 minutes.

A total of 135 applicants were interviewed face-to-face by the Project Manager and the Managing Director of Edge Employment Solutions. The average duration of an interview (including constructing an Individual Plan for each of the successful applicants) was one and half hours. Resumes were developed for each of the 70 people who are registered with the project. The average time to develop a resume was 2.5 hours.

Thus, the additional costs of registering of 70 New Apprenticeship seekers with disabilities (expressed as staff hours) was 740 hours, comprising 538 hours on the part of the Project Manager and 202 hours by the Managing Director of Edge Employment Solutions (202 hours). This equates to 10.5 hours for each person eventually registered with the project.

Placement costs

The Project Manager expended 620 hours over the two-year pilot in the pilot project seeking placement for project registrants. The Training Co-ordinator expended 39 hours and Marketing Co-ordinators employed at Edge Employment Solutions expended a further 77 hours. Thus, a total of 736 hours was expended in securing 24 apprenticeships and five traineeships (the other four apprentices having been 'apprenticeships in jeopardy'). This equates to 25 hours per New Apprenticeship secured. There was little variation in the time taken to secure an apprenticeship placement (26 hours) versus a traineeship placement (21 hours).

Whilst using an individual case management approach is undoubtedly more effective than traditional approaches utilised by GTCs, it is also more expensive. GTCs would need to take account of the extra resources required to successfully place New Apprentices with disabilities when assigning case loads to Field Officers.

Post-placement support costs

DAWS applications were made for 19 of the 28 apprentices. The average time the Project Manager expended in seeking the necessary reports from a medical practitioner and an occupational therapist, for the occupational therapist (employed by Edge Employment

Solutions) to complete the reports, and for the other accompanying information to be assembled and provided to the NAC was 25 hours.

Four apprentices who are in receipt of DAWS have moved into their second year, and re-applications have been submitted. The average time it took the Project Manager to seek updated reports, for general practitioners and occupational therapists to complete the reports, and for the other accompanying information to be assembled and provided to the NAC was 22 hours.

Thus, the Project Manager and Occupational Therapist expended 563 hours in co-ordinating, constructing and submitting the 23 DAWS applications.

The 33 apprentices and trainees supported through the project accumulated, between them, a total of 302 months of apprenticeship or traineeship employment during the pilot project. Edge Employment Solutions Job Co-ordinators provided a total of 2,569 hours of on-the-job support during this period. The Project Manager provided 959 hours of post-placement related support and the Training Co-ordinator provided 1151 hours of TAFE and study related support. This translates to average post-placement support per New Apprentice of 16 hours per month – or 192 hours per year.

Administration costs

The Project Manager expended 1,236 hours over the two years of the pilot project on program administration. The Training Co-ordinator expended 730 hours in the second year of the project. Thus, the two project staff spent approximately 66% of their time in client placement and post-placement support and the remainder in management and administration activities.

Total pilot project costs

The total pilot project inputs (excluding research activities), as provided by project staff and Edge Employment Solutions staff, are summarised below:

Pilot Project Funded Staff:

Project Manager	3,840 hours
Training Co-ordinator	1,920 hours

Edge Employment Solutions Staff:

Managing Director	70 hours
Marketing Co-ordinators	77 hours
Job Co-ordinators	3,582 hours

On an annualised basis this equates to a total human resource input of 4,709 hours, equivalent to 2.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. This was made up of 1.5 FTE through project funding plus 1 FTE contributed by Edge Employment Solutions.

The total project costs indicate that a ratio of one staff to 12 New Apprentices with disabilities placed in New Apprenticeships annually would be required to register, place and support New Apprentices with disabilities. Naturally, this ratio would vary in accordance with the type and level of disability and the complexity of the New Apprenticeship.

It needs to be remembered that 85% of all placements in the pilot project were into apprenticeships. With the exception of one problematic traineeship, the average monthly support for a trainee was eight hours— half that of an apprentice. If these support estimates held true across a larger sample of trainees in a wider range of trainees, it would be reasonable to expect a disability employment agency to be able to place and support trainees within their existing funding arrangements.

The same does not hold true for apprentices. To better portray and quantify the projected funding shortfall, the remainder of this cost analysis is based on resources required to support people in apprenticeships only.

A typical Western Australian disability employment agency, based on the most recent national census (Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, 1999), would have a field staff to client ratio of a little under 1:11. Seven of those clients would currently be in employment and four would be job seekers. Three of the employed clients would have an intellectual disability, two would have a psychiatric disability, one would have a physical disability, one would have a sensory disability (vision or hearing) and one would have either an acquired brain injury or a specific learning disability (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Significantly, from a post-placement support standpoint, an employed client would work an average of 24 hours per week. Only one-third of the employed clients would be working more than 30 hours per week and one-third would be working less than 16 hours per week.

The above data suggests that most disability employment agencies would struggle financially to support more than a handful of apprentices within their existing operations. It is unlikely that many disability employment agencies would establish a significant apprenticeship program without additional financial incentive – either from their own Commonwealth funding body or from the State government. This is borne out by the fact that there are no more than a handful of disability employment agencies (amongst 300 service outlets Australia-wide) that are currently supporting more than 10 apprentices.

Establishing partnerships with GTCs does negate those additional costs. Candidates still need to be located, registered and readied for interview (a resource cost of 10.5 hours in the pilot project). Disability employment agencies will still play a lead role in these activities.

Host employers still need to be approached and convinced to take on a New Apprentice with a disability. Even marketing in partnership with a GTC, a disability employment agency is likely to expend the most part of the 25 hours expended in the pilot project for each successful placement.

There is also likely to be little variation in the amount of post-placement support provided by the disability employment agency. This is because the primary activities undertaken by GTC Field Officers in their 6-8 weekly site visits is monitoring the group training arrangements and providing any needed pastoral care to the New Apprentice. The disability employment agency's role is different, although complementary, having a strong work skills development and work behaviour focus. The involvement of the GTC Field Officer will have minimal impact on these activities.

Without additional funding initiatives on the part of governments, there is unlikely to be a significant improvement in placement and completion outcomes for people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships in Western Australia.

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (which funds disability employment agencies) could provide a major stimulus by applying a weighting to apprenticeship placements. Based on the above cost analysis, an apprenticeship should carry a weighting of 100% (i.e. each apprenticeship placement counts for two standard placements).

The State government could provide an additional incentive to GTCs (perhaps equivalent to the usual incentives that are lost to GTCs when DAWS funding is secured) to encourage them to indenture and place apprentices with disabilities. That same financial incentive could be offered to disability employment agencies that place and support people with disabilities in New Apprenticeships where GTCs are not involved (which comprises 86% of all New Apprenticeship commencements)

The State government could also follow the lead of two other State Governments in stimulating New Apprenticeships for people with disabilities in the public sector. The New South Wales government has operated an apprenticeship program for people with disabilities since 1981. Through that program, 20 apprentices with disabilities are recruited into the public sector each year and the State government covers the full salary (less the DAWS wage subsidy) for the duration of the apprenticeship. Thus, the individual government department is not required to meet any of the salary cost. This is on the condition that the department employs the apprentice

once they have qualified. In 2001 the scheme was expanded to include 20 trainees per year in addition to the 20 apprentices per year.

The Victorian government has set aside 30% of all public sector traineeships for people from equity groups, which includes people with disabilities. The State government covers \$12,500 of the annual salary of each traineeship, leaving the individual government department with a salary shortfall of just \$6,000 - \$8,000 per trainee.

8. REFERENCES

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9. APPENDICES

Specific appendices referred to in the report are available from the Project Director, Dr Greg Lewis, at greg@edge.org.au