**Call for Papers**

**Disability at Work conference**

**Disability at Work- Unleashing potential**

**Date: 15-16 May 2017**

**Venue: Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre**

National Disability Services (NDS) invites you to assist in “unleashing the potential” of people with disability.

The Federal Government continues to explore options for the design of a new DES contract from 2018 that will include changes aimed at enhancing the program’s performance and the rebadging of supported employment continues under the Buyability banner.

A tight labour market has resulted in a shortage of low skilled vacancies, exacerbated by high demand for these jobs from both the unemployed and underemployed. For people with disability, gaining access to employment is even more difficult. However, many people with disability have the potential to gain and maintain employment if they receive assistance with skills acquisition and targeted on the job support.

The redesign of DES, the ongoing implementation of the NDIS and the Buyability Campaign all offer an opportunity to focus on unleashing the potential for people with disability to access quality employment options in greater numbers. To achieve this, there should be a focus on:

* Vocational skills development and training
* Early intervention supports through to transition to work models
* An employment first model for design of NDIS participant plans
* Career development
* Enhancing access to a range of employment models and settings
* DES co-design

This two-day national conference will examine innovative ways to activate and engage people with disability along a continuum of employment opportunities. It is designed for employment service providers (open, supported and social enterprises) and professionals interested in the promoting a broad range of employment opportunities for people with disability.

NDS is calling for the submission of abstracts of presentations that will shape the delivery of employment supports for people with disability. The focus will be on enhancing access to employment, best practice and practical solutions.

**Abstract Topic Area**

* Enhancing access to employment
  + New approaches to supporting people with disability in employment
  + Measuring the quality of employment outcomes
  + Stories from employees who are achieving their employment goals
  + Stories from employers that are making a difference
  + New approaches to upskilling jobseekers and employees
  + Developing career pathways and enhancing career choice
* Business and management
  + Engaging employers
  + Building a diverse and strong governance structure
  + The benefits of diversifying income streams
  + Business models that enhance financial viability
  + Being competitive without rejecting cooperation
  + What are the benefits and pitfalls of mergers?
* Marketing and promotion
  + Promoting the benefits of employing people with disability
  + Marketing Supported Employment Enterprises and their products
  + Marketing Disability Employment Services
  + Effective employer, customer and partner engagement

**Submission of abstracts and enquiries**

Abstracts, no more than 300 words in length, must be submitted by 28 February 2017 to:

Kerrie Langford

National Disability Services

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Email: [kerrie.langford@nds.org.au](mailto:kerrie.langford@nds.org.au)

Website: [www.nds.org.au](http://www.nds.org.au)

Abstracts may be submitted electronically, as an email attachment, or by post on PC-compatible disc. They must be in MS Word or Word-readable format. They will be assessed for suitability for inclusion by a peer review panel. It is anticipated that presentations will generally be 30 or 45 minutes in length. Include your name, organisation, contact details and a brief presenter profile of no more than 150 words.

**Additional information**

Presenters are invited to attend the Conference as our guest on the day of their presentation. The cost of attendance at the Conference on an additional day and any travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of each presenter.

The Conference organisers reserve the right to edit the abstract and/or presenter profile for use during the Conference.

**National Disability Services (NDS)** is Australia's peak body for non-government disability service organisations, representing more than 1,100 non-government service providers. Collectively, NDS members operate several thousand services for Australians with all types of disability. NDS provides information and networking opportunities to its members and policy advice to governments.