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New pilot plan to help people living with disabilities get into the workforce

The Federal Government and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) have signed an agreement to expand job opportunities for Australians living with disabilities as part of a broader plan to create 250,000 new jobs.

Minister for Social Services, Amanda Rishworth, says the new disability employment pilot will improve employment outcomes for people with disability.

“There are 2.1 million Australians with disability of working age, but only 53.4 percent are in the labour workforce,” Minister Rishworth said.

“We also know 93 percent of working-age people with disability face difficulties finding work due to the lack of suitable employment and perceived limitations of their disability.

“This new employment pilot seeks to address this and provide significant benefits to people with disability, employers and businesses, the economy and the broader community,” she said.

Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia, Francis Sullivan said the pilot program with the BCA is an important step in helping people living with disabilities get into the workforce.

“A project like this has the capacity to help people living with a disability get into the workforce and help them reach their full potential.”

“There are currently around 250,000 Australians with a disability who are not in the workforce but are *job-ready*. Any initiative that makes it easier for them to get into the workforce needs to be applauded.”

The Memorandum of Understanding will see the BCA work with the Department of Social Services to set up a ‘demand-driven model’ that will link people with disabilities to major employers looking for workers.

It will also test new ways to drive organisational cultural change and develop a corporate capacity to open up development and advancement opportunities for people living with disabilities.

The \$3.3 million agreement binds BCA member organisations to create an inclusive environment for people living with disabilities and ensure strategies are in place for pathways to leadership positions.

BCA members include the major banks as well as Woodside, BHP, Woolworths Group, Telstra, Stockland, Coles Group and Australia Post.

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