Disability Employment Research

10 June 2022

Research Methodology

- This study was conducted online between 30th May – 6th June 2022.
- The sample consisted of a nationally representative sample of 501 Australian middle managers and above and HR professionals in Australian capital cities (excluding Hobart and Darwin) within a business of more than 5 employees.
- For brevity, these Australians may be referred to as 'managers/HR professionals' throughout the report.
- YouGov designed the questionnaire (in consultation with Jigsaw's parent organisation Fighting Chance), a copy of which has been included in the full report available [here](#).
- Following the completion of interviewing, the data was weighted by state and business size.

Key Findings

Whether the individual has ever hired/worked with a person with a disability (Q1)
- One in two (50%) Australian managers/HR professionals have never hired or worked with a person with a disability before.
- Sydney-based managers/HR professionals are nearly twice as likely as those in Melbourne to say they have never hired or worked with someone with a disability previously (72% compared to 37%).
- Managers/HR professionals working for an organisation without a diversity and inclusion policy are more likely than those working for an organisation with a policy to say that they have never hired or worked with a person with a disability previously (55% compared to 41%).

Organisation's approach to diversity and inclusion when hiring and working with people with disabilities (Q2)
- Nearly one in two (48%) Australian managers/HR professionals say that their organisation has a written policy for diversity and inclusion, including one in three (34%) who say that it is closely followed and one in seven (14%) who say that it isn't always followed.

- More than two in five (44%) say that their organisation doesn't have a written policy for diversity and inclusion, although three in ten (28%) say that it is considered/discussed in decision making.

What organisation has used to hire a person with a disability (Q3)
- Two in five (41%) Australian managers/HR professionals say that their organisation has never hired a person with a disability before, including nearly one in ten (8%) who aren't open to doing so in the future.
- Amongst the 59% who say that their organisation has hired a person with a disability:
    - Two in five (40%) report using internal recruitment to hire a person with a disability, while one in four (26%) used an external recruitment agency and a similar proportion (23%) used an alternative non-Government program/pathway.
    - Other commonly used avenues for hiring a person with a disability included a DES provider (21%), another Government program/pathway (20%) and the ADE program (18%).

Challenges the organisation has faced with using DES to hire a person with a disability (Q4)
- Nine in ten (91%) Australian managers/HR professionals who have used DES say that their organisation has faced challenges with using DES to hire a person with a disability.
- Amongst those who say their organisation has faced challenges with using DES to hire a person with a disability:
    - More than half (53%) reported that the person with a disability wasn't a good match for the job, while nearly half (46%) cited inadequate support for them as an employer.
    - More than two in five cite the person with a disability not having adequate prior experience/training (43%) and too much administration and/or paperwork involved (41%) as challenges.

Whether the most recent person with a disability hired was job ready (Q5)
- More than two in five (42%) Australian managers/HR professionals who have hired someone with a disability previously say that the last person with a disability they hired wasn't job-ready.

Which person with a disability would be hired (Q6)
- If they had to choose one, nearly one in two (48%) Australian managers/HR professionals would prefer to hire a person with a disability who has the required soft skills but requires more training in the required hard skills for their organisation.

- Conversely, a third (33%) would prefer to hire a person with a disability who has the required hard skills, but requires more training in the required soft skills.

Barriers to hiring a person with a disability (Q7)
- Seven in ten (71%) Australian managers/HR professionals who have never hired someone with a disability before have faced barriers when hiring a person with a disability in their organisation.
- Amongst those who have faced barriers when hiring a person with a disability in their organisation:
  - More than half (51%) admitted that nobody with a disability has applied to work for them, while a third (35%) would be worried about their ability to adequately onboard and support a person with a disability in the workplace.
  - Nearly one in four (23%) believe that there would be more occupational health and safety (OHS) risks associated with employing a person with a disability.
  - Other barriers faced include not knowing how to access job-ready candidates (15%) or where to start in terms of hiring a person with a disability (13%), having little to no employer support available for hiring a person with a disability (13%), not having the capacity to handle the paperwork/ admin involved in the process (12%) and believing it would cost more to hire a person with a disability (11%).

Whether COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in worker shortages to organisation (Q8)
- Nearly two in three (64%) Australian managers/HR professional say that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in worker shortages in their organisation, including three in ten (29%) who state that it resulted in mid-level (non-management) role shortages and one in four who say that it resulted in middle management (25%) or entry-level/junior role shortages (24%).

Agree/disagree statements about creating a more diverse workplace with hiring people with disabilities (Q9)
9.1 We are committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- More than four in five (82%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that they are committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace, including more than two in five (43%) who strongly agree.

9.2 We are unsure on how we can create a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- However, more than one in two (54%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that they are unsure on how they can create a more diverse and inclusive workplace, including nearly one in five (18%) who strongly agree.

9.3 We need more guidance and support in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- Seven in ten (71%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that they need more guidance and support in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace, including more than one in five (27%) who strongly agree.
- Sydney-based managers/HR professionals are more likely than those based in Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane to agree that they need more guidance and support in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace (82% compared to 69%, 61%* and 64% respectively).

Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about persons with a disability?

10.1 Job-ready persons with a disability will help address worker shortages in Australian organisations
- Four in five (79%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that job-ready persons with a disability will help address worker shortages in Australian organisations, including three in ten (30%) who strongly agree.

10.2 We are unsure how/where we can access job-ready candidates with a disability
- Two in three (65%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that they are unsure how/where they can access job-ready candidates with a disability, including nearly one in four (24%) who strongly agree.
- Those who have never hired or worked with a person with a disability are more likely than those who have to agree that they are unsure how/where they can access job-ready candidates with a disability (73% compared to 56%).

10.3 We need greater access to job-ready candidates with a disability
- Four in five (79%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that they need greater access to job-ready candidates with a disability, including nearly three in ten (28%) who strongly agree.

10.4 We would be more confident to hire a person with a disability if we had the chance to engage them on a short-term trial before deciding whether to offer them an ongoing role
- More than four in five (82%) Australian managers/HR professionals agree that they would be more confident to hire a person with a disability if they had the chance to engage them on a short-term trial before deciding whether to offer them an ongoing role, including more than a third (35%) who strongly agree.

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