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Vocational education for students with disability

The Federal budget attempts to secure funding for the NDIS, but it does little for people with disability who are looking for work. While it is encouraging to see Premiers Andrews, McGowan, Palaszczuk and Weatherill calling on Malcolm Turnbull to increase funding for a new National Partnership on Skilling Australians, the Prime Minister and Premiers their message has not included the imperative that vocational education holds for people with disability.

'Participation rates for people with disability have not increased in line with the participation of people without disability which has increased dramatically over the past two decades from 77% to 83%.' The statistics reveal that only 55% of people with disability are engaged in the workforce and this is likely in decline." said QAI's Michelle O'Flynn.

'Some people with disability will require some support to perform certain types of work but this should not exclude people from pursuing paid employment that has purpose.'

"There's a misconception that hiring people with a disability is costly; with some employers reluctant to consider candidates for work they are either qualified for, or could be trained to do. There is a myth abounding regarding suspected costs associated with the need to make physical adjustments to the workplace; or a perceived loss of productivity; or higher costs of insurance, workers' compensation and occupational health and safety.'

'However, research and reports indicate that people with disability have a range of skills, are loyal and dependable employees, take less sick leave, and foster healthy workplace morale.'

A natural pathway to apprenticeships, traineeships, and employment for people with disability is through Vocational Training.

Today Queensland Minister for Training and Skills Yvette D'Ath said the funding in the Federal Budget was not adequate. "The funding in the Federal Budget relies on foreign workers to come in to fund it. This is a flawed funding model and will not replace all of the funding and programs that have been slashed over the past four years by the Federal Government," Mrs D'Ath said.

The Australian Government has made a commitment. The National Disability Strategy and the National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy put employment front and centre.

"The difficulties faced by people with disability trying to get a job are a national scandal, and by not investing in Vocational Education and training, the government will consign far too many people with disability to entrenched welfare dependency."

Michelle O'Flynn 0481 318528

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