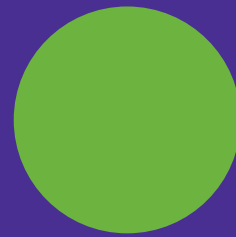
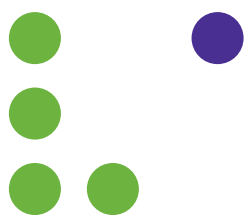


employment services



client handbook



**vision
australia**

blindness and low vision services

CONTENTS

About Vision Australia	1
Vision Australia's Employment Services	2
Your registration interview	7
The next stage	10
Once you get a job	11
If you are already employed	13
Leaving Vision Australia's Employment Services	13
Employment conditions in Australia	15
Complaints and suggestions for improvements	16
Code of Practice for Employment Services	17
Service Guarantee	20
Other organisations	25
Contact us	29

Vision Australia supports the principles and practices of workplace equity and diversity.



ABOUT VISION AUSTRALIA

Vision

Vision Australia is a living partnership between people who are blind, sighted or have low vision. We are united by our passion that in the future people who are blind or have low vision will access and fully participate in every part of life they choose.

Mission

Vision Australia will achieve this through creating a community partnership of knowledge, skills and expertise to enrich the participation in life of people who are blind or have low vision and their families. We will ensure that the community recognises their capabilities and contributions.

Services

Vision Australia assists tens of thousands of children and adults to live the lives they choose. We provide services to people at home, in our centres and in the community.

We offer a range of services that can be tailored to a person's level of vision.

Vision Australia offers advice to enable the inclusion of people who are blind or have low vision as students, employees or participants in sport and recreation. We do this by partnering with educational institutions, businesses and community groups.

VISION AUSTRALIA'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Vision Australia Employment Services is a division of Vision Australia that assists people who are blind or have low vision to find paid employment or retain a job that is in jeopardy.

Vision Australia Employment Services is committed to complying with the Disability Service Standards that define the federal government's requirements for accessible and non-discriminatory service.

Our services, partially funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), include helping people to reduce barriers that may prevent them achieving their career goals with employers who conform to legal workplace arrangements. This includes taking all reasonable steps in ensuring that wages are paid at or above the award rate.

We provide specialised employment services under the DEEWR's Disability Employment Services (DES) program.

This handbook explains how Vision Australia Employment Services operates, our standard of service, who is eligible for our services and outlines your rights and responsibilities if you begin to receive assistance from us.

Who is eligible?

You are eligible for assistance from Vision Australia Employment Services if you:

- are legally able to work in Australia
- are 14 years or older
- find that vision loss is the main barrier to achieving and retaining competitive employment
- are able to travel independently or are prepared to undertake mobility training
- have a willingness to set realistic job goals
- will consider more than one job choice if necessary
- provide Vision Australia Employment Services with relevant details of your work experience and medical, educational and employment history
- are willing and able to work at or above the working hours as assessed by your Job Capacity Assessor (JCA) in open competitive employment.
- agree to further training, if necessary

How can we help?

If you need help finding or keeping a job because of your vision impairment, Vision Australia Employment Services can:

- conduct or facilitate your vision assessment
- assess your vocational/employment skills and ascertain if you need any extra training
- assess your barriers to gaining employment and assist you to overcome these.

- suggest the best ways to look for a job and help create your resume
- help you set goals and plan your career by developing an individual plan called an Employment Pathway Plan
- provide adaptive technology assessments and training
- provide information on training, personal development, traineeships and apprenticeships that could improve your employment opportunities
- with your permission approach employers directly for employment opportunities
- meet with you regularly to assist you in your search for work
- perform workplace assessments and on the job training
- assist with applying for government wage subsidies and workplace modification funding
- support you after you have started a new job
- help to find another job if your employment ceases

What are your rights and obligations?

Vision Australia Employment Services is here to help you achieve your employment goals. You must follow certain guidelines to ensure you get the most from the assistance you receive.

You have the right to:

- be involved in the decisions that affect you, including the sort of jobs you apply for and the training and support you receive

- have an Employment Pathway Plan that is tailored to your needs that meets Centrelink requirements
- be treated and spoken to with dignity and respect
- have any additional needs, including medical, religious and cultural, accommodated when accessing our service
- have an advocate of your choice at meetings if you wish
- have your personal information kept in a safe place and only be used to help you find a job
- have access to your file at any time
- complain about our services if you are not happy
- have your complaint dealt with appropriately (refer to complaints and suggestions for improvements section page 16).
- join a committee and contribute to the way Vision Australia Services are run
- have written material provided in your preferred format

To continue receiving assistance from Vision Australia Employment Services, your obligations are to:

- notify Centrelink, if applicable, about income from work by you (or your partner)
- make decisions with your Employment Consultant that will help you find, retain and maintain a job
- act on the agreed obligations in your Employment Pathway Plan
- provide your Employment Consultant with relevant information that will help you to find and retain a job

- declare to your Employment Consultant all relevant information that can affect your ability to gain employment
- give your Employment Consultant any new information that might affect your training or job
- keep appointments with your Employment Consultant and arrive on time
- provide your Employment Consultant with a legitimate reason when you are unable to attend an appointment
- communicate regularly with your Employment Consultant
- make sure you understand information provided about Vision Australia and its services
- ask questions if you don't understand or you need help with anything
- respect the rights of other Vision Australia clients
- respect the rights of Vision Australia staff
- respect the rights of people at your workplace
- notify your Vision Australia Employment Consultant if you are working with another employment agency.
- sign all relevant forms as required.

YOUR REGISTRATION INTERVIEW

We would have spoken to you before the registration interview. Clients seeking employment need referral to our program from Centrelink and this must be attained before the registration interview. We can assist you through this referral process if required.

When you meet with us to register you will need to bring along school reports, academic records, training certificates, details of past work experience and your resume, if you have one. Please also bring your Proof of Identity (Centrelink card) and recent eye or medical reports.

A Vision Australia Employment Consultant will talk with you about your individual employment needs and your eligibility for our service.

If Vision Australia Employment Services cannot assist you, the Employment Consultant will explain the reasons. They will also provide you with relevant information on other agencies and, if appropriate, refer you to a more suitable service.

If we can assist you, the Employment Consultant will help you get started by preparing a resume summary and an Employment Pathway Plan

What is a Resume Summary?

Your Employment Consultant will prepare a resume summary electronically online in DEEWR's IT system which facilitates electronic job matching between DES Participants and Vacancies lodged on Australian Job Search (AJS). The initial resume summary will have your work history, types of jobs and locations and other relevant information entered and this can be updated at any time on the AJS web site.

What is an Employment Pathway Plan?

Once your Employment Consultant has discussed your needs and prepared your resume summary they will work with you to develop an individual plan of agreed actions to reach your employment goals, this is called an Employment Pathway Plan. The EPP agreement is a written agreement negotiated between Vision Australia and the Job Seeker or Worker (DES participant).

The Employment Pathway Plan sets out the activities agreed to by you and your Employment Consultant. This is an important document ensuring that you meet all the requirements under the social security law if you are an activity tested Job Seeker. If you are not an activity tested Job Seeker or worker then this is an agreement between you and your employment consultant to assist you to find employment or maintain your employment.

Some of the details that may be include in your Employment Pathway Plan:

- frequency of appointments
- the type of job you want
- if you are employed the ways to overcome difficulties resulting from your vision impairment
- the skills and training you need
- how far you can travel and if you can travel independently
- what mobility training is required
- updating of licences and qualifications
- what advocacy support is required.

Both you and the Employment Consultant will sign the Employment Pathway Plan and you may request a copy in your preferred format, for example large print or braille.

You will also need to sign consent and registration forms so that we may share information about you with other people and agencies outside Vision Australia Employment Services. This includes DEEWR and Centrelink in relation to your participation in the program we are registering you in.

Other than this, only the staff members working with you will access your file, which is both electronic, stored on Vision Australia's secure Integrated Client Volunteer Management System (ICVMS) and hard copy, which will be kept in a locked cabinet in your local Vision Australia office to protect your privacy.

Your goals will be reviewed on a regular basis. If things change about anything you have agreed upon, or your circumstances change, you need to inform your Vision Australia Employment Consultant so that your EPP can be updated.

THE NEXT STAGE

After we have assessed your needs and agreed on a plan to help you move forward, Vision Australia Employment Services may provide the following services.

Developing your job search skills

Your Vision Australia Employment Consultant will offer advice and practical assistance in job searching.

Vision Australia Employment Services provides:

- Job Search Preparation
 - Includes: ▶ Resume preparation
 - ▶ Interview techniques
 - ▶ Marketing yourself to employers
 - ▶ Techniques in targeting your skills to employers
- assistance with regular job search from our offices
- open access facilities available including adaptive technology to assist with individual job search
- electronic job matching between you and vacancies lodged on Australian Job Search. You can access and update your resume summary at anytime using the Australian Job Search website.
- your Vision Australia Employment Consultant can assist your potential employer to apply to the Government for a wage subsidy or other benefits.

ONCE YOU GET A JOB

Once you get a job Vision Australia will:

- support you while you are settling into your new role
- provide on the job training
- provide information, support and assistance to your employer
- work with you to resolve any problems you may have at work

Depending on your eligibility, Vision Australia will assist you and your employer to access a range of other support services including training, workplace modifications and the supported wage scheme.

Workplace training

If you have just started a new job or you would like to improve your performance in your current position, you may be able to undertake additional training either at work or at the facilities of such recognised training providers as TAFE or Vision Australia. Your Employment Consultant can discuss this possibility with you and your employer.

Workplace modifications

Vision Australia may be able to assist you and your employer to apply for funding from the Australian Government's Employment Assistance Fund. This helps pay for modifications to overcome barriers in the workplace that are related to a worker's disability. If your application is

successful, it will pay for some or all of the modifications you require to do your job effectively. Modifications may include computer-based adaptive technology, low vision aids such as magnifiers, or other equipment.

Wage subsidy

Vision Australia may be able to assist employers to apply for funding from the Australian Government's Wage Subsidy Scheme. This scheme offers financial assistance to employers who employ eligible workers with a disability.

Ongoing support

Your Vision Australia Employment Consultant will maintain regular contact with you to provide post placement support for a minimum of six months after you commence in your new job. This is to ensure that all your workplace needs or issues are addressed.

If your support requirements are greater than 6 months an assessment will occur to determine your ongoing support.

IF YOU ARE ALREADY EMPLOYED

If you already have a job, and issues caused by your vision impairment are placing you in jeopardy of losing your position, an Employment Consultant can work with you and your employer to address these issues. This may involve assessments in the workplace and recommendations about modifications and the purchase of equipment. As already mentioned, additional training may also be suggested.

To be eligible for funding you need to have worked for a minimum of 13 weeks consecutively – however discuss this with Vision Australia Employment Services for clarification of how we can support you.

LEAVING VISION AUSTRALIA'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

You can decide to stop receiving assistance from Vision Australia Employment Services at any time. Support may stop because your needs have been met, or you:

- no longer want us to help you find a job
- need more help and support than we can provide
- decide you don't want a job
- have changes in personal circumstances (for example, health problems)
- don't respond to letters or phone calls from Vision Australia Employment Services

- change address and we cannot contact you
- do not act according to the agreements within your employment pathway plan
- agree with the Employment Consultant that other Vision Australia services are required before you receive assistance from Vision Australia Employment Services
- do not adhere to workplace health and safety requirements at work
- are found guilty of sexual harassment or other illegal activities
- are violent towards Vision Australia staff members or co-workers
- do not tell Vision Australia Employment Services about any other disabilities that may affect your ability to work

If you choose, you can meet with your Employment Consultant for an Exit Interview, in relation to your withdrawal from the program.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Employers and their employees can be covered by either the federal or state industrial relations legislation. These determine your wages and conditions of employment. To find out the legal wage rate or conditions of employment at your workplace, your industry award must first be determined. In some circumstances, a workplace may not be subject to the award system.

The main business activity of your employer and/or the type of work you do will determine which award applies to you. Wage rates are determined by your classification (or job type/level). To find out more about wage rates and your entitlements contact the NSW Office of Industrial Relations on **131 628** or the Fairwork Infoline in Victoria on **13 13 94** or Fairwork in Queensland on **1300 369 945**. This organisation also operates a Help Desk to help you find out your award.

If awards don't apply in your workplace, your wages and conditions are negotiated directly with your employer.

The Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Act 2005 also outlines employment conditions for employers and employees. For more information, contact the Fairwork Infoline on **13 13 94**.

Your Vision Australia Employment Consultant can also provide you with information on your rights at work, and help you to check that your wages and employment conditions meet the minimum legal standards.

COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Please notify Vision Australia if you are unhappy with any of its services.

You can make a complaint or suggestion of improvement by calling Vision Australia on **1300 84 74 66**.

Vision Australia ensures that complaints handling is confidential, impartial and free of repercussion. A staff member will talk to you about the problem and note your feedback onto a form. A Vision Australia staff member will contact you and try to resolve the problem.

Only people directly involved with your problem will be made aware of it unless you direct otherwise.

You may choose to make a complaint to an external agency. You may make a complaint directly to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relation's Customer Service Line on **1800 805 260** or Complaints Resolution & Referral Service on **1800 880 052**.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Reference: DES Deed 2010-2012 Annexure C1

At all times our priority is to help clients to achieve the best outcomes. We will deliver services and programmes to clients to the best of our ability and with adherence to contracted requirements, service guidelines and relevant participation requirements.

1. We operate the services and programmes we deliver in a manner that:
 - Upholds the integrity and good reputation of the services and programmes by:
 - ▶ acting with honesty, due care and diligence
 - ▶ behaving ethically and professionally and being openly accountable for our actions
 - ▶ avoiding any practice or activity which could reasonably be foreseen to bring the services and programmes into disrepute
 - ▶ complying with all relevant Australian laws, including privacy, fair trading, trade practices and anti-discrimination laws.

2. Demonstrates our commitment to clients by:
 - Being supportive and helpful to clients:
 - ▶ in their pursuit of employment
 - ▶ in their efforts to improve their employment prospects, including education and training

- ▶ while they undertake their mutual obligations
- ▶ while they undertake voluntary or community participation
- ▶ while they stabilise their life situation and overcome personal and society barriers to community participation
- ▶ helping clients to achieve the best outcome
- ▶ treating clients fairly and with respect
- ▶ considering clients' individual circumstances and backgrounds
- ▶ ensuring cultural sensitivity in dealing with indigenous clients and clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- ▶ including advocacy where appropriate
- ▶ delivering assistance in accordance with service guarantees.

3. Is accurate and relevant by:

- giving ongoing assistance to clients for the duration of our service to them
- providing information about programmes and services that may help them to achieve the best outcome
- ensuring we have appropriate premises and facilities to deliver services with privacy and dignity
- ensuring the information we collect about clients is relevant and necessary
- ensuring information is recorded in a timely manner and is kept confidential

- tailoring assistance to clients with consideration of their individual needs and relevant participation requirements
- demonstrating flexibility in service delivery as clients' circumstances change.

4. Is communicated clearly and effectively by:

- ensuring clients are aware of their rights and obligations
- providing information to clients with a disability in an accessible format
- providing timely feedback and information to clients about decisions we make that could affect them
- on request, providing clients with appropriate access to relevant records we have about them.

5. Encourages feedback without bias by ensuring that

- we have a complaints process that clients know about
- staff seek and appropriately respond to clients' feedback with the aim of continuously improving services
- staff support clients when resolving any issues or concerns they may have
- we advise clients of the free DEEWR Customer Service Line and, for clients of Disability Employment Network Services and Vocational Rehabilitation providers, the free Complaints Resolution and Referral Service.

SERVICE GUARANTEE

Disability Employment Services Programs – your service guarantee

As your Disability Employment Services Provider we will:

- Explain clearly what services you are eligible to receive, what we will do for you, and what you have to do, including how often we will meet
- Provide assistance to help you find and keep a job, and provide ongoing support while working if you need it
- Treat you fairly and with respect, in line with the Disability Services Standards
- Take account of any impact your disability, injury or health condition may place on your ability to find and keep work, as well as any other recognised limits such as parenting or caring responsibilities

What help can I expect?

We will work with you to agree on your Employment Pathway Plan that will include any assistance that will help you find and keep a job.

We will work with you to help you deal with any issues that might be making it hard for you to look for work. The help we give you may include:

- Looking at what work you have done before, and what work is available in your area

- Looking at what skills and education you have and what skills and education might help you get work
- Providing you with help which may include training, work experience or other services that will help you overcome any work barriers and to find and keep a job
- Helping to build your capacity to work
- Assisting you to access other support services you may need
- Assistance in preparing a resumé
- Advice on the best ways to look for work
- Information about access to Jobsearch and computer facilities and about how to use them to look for work
- Access to an interpreter if you need one

Once you find a job, we will continue to support you and will develop a plan with you to help you keep your job. The on and off job support available includes:

- To assess the suitability of this work in regard to your condition and injury
- Support to help you settle into your job
- On the job training
- Information, support and training for your employer and/or co-workers
- Help to resolve any problems you may have at work
- Provide ongoing support appropriate to your needs, which may include meeting with you regularly, or short bursts of intensive support

Depending on your circumstances, we can help you and your employer access a range of other support services which may include:

- Modification of your work area
- Purchase of specialised technology
- Other services under the Employment Assistance Fund
- Access to additional assistance if your job is in jeopardy

What are my responsibilities?

If for any reason you are not able to keep an appointment, you should notify us as soon as you can to reschedule the appointment. If you have missed an appointment, you need to contact us as soon as possible and explain why. You should also do this if you can't do or haven't done something your Employment Pathway Plan says you should do.

To ensure that you are getting the right support you should let us know if something in your life changes such as health, parenting responsibilities, personal crisis, education, voluntary or paid work.

If you are entitled to compensation or damages from someone for the disability, injury or illness for which we are providing employment assistance for, you should let us know.

If you are on Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance there are also some things that you will have to do if you want to keep receiving income support:

- Make every effort to get a job, and accept any suitable job you are offered

- Do your best at every job interview
- Do everything that you have agreed to do in your Employment Pathway Plan, this includes going to all appointments

What happens to what I tell you?

We will collect information about you for the purpose of providing disability employment related services to you.

We will keep all information about you in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

If you ask, we will usually be able to show you the information we hold about you. If you have any concerns about the way in which information about you is being managed, you can discuss your concerns with us.

More information about the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) can be obtained from the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner's web site at **www.privacy.gov.au**

Disability Services Standards

We will advise you about the Disability Services Standards which set out the quality of services we will deliver to you. These can be found at **www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/standards**.

All Disability Employment Services Program Providers are assessed by independent auditors as meeting the Disability Services Standards.

What can I do if I'm not happy with the service I receive?

If you think you aren't receiving the right help, you should first try to talk to us. We will provide a feedback process which is fair and we will try to resolve your concerns.

If you can't do this, or you are still not happy, you can access the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service through the Government's Customer Service Line on **1800 805 260** (free call).

The Complaints Resolution and Referral Service can also be contacted directly on:

1800 880 052 (free call)

TTY: 1800 301 130

The National Relay Service: 1800 555 677

Fax: 02 9318 1372

Email: email@disabilityhotline.org

Web: www.disabilityhotline.org

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Vision Australia Employment Services can also provide you with information on other services/training available and how to access other organisations such as:

National Organisations

- **Australia Job Search**

Web: www.jobsearch.gov.au

- **Blind Citizens Australia**

Phone: 1800 033 660 or (03) 9654 1400

Email: census@bca.org.au

Web: www.bca.org.au

TTY: 03 9639 1728

- **Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office**

Phone: 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Web: www.ombudsman.gov.au

- **Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Customer Service Line**

Phone: 1800 805 260

- **Disability Discrimination Commissioner and Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission**

Phone: (02) 9284 9600 or 1300 656 419

Email: disabdis@humanrights.gov.au

Web: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/>

- **Job Access**

Web: www.jobaccess.gov.au

- **National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline**

Phone: 1800 880 052

Email: email@disabilityhotline.org.au

Web: www.disabilityhotline.org/

- **People with Disability**

Phone: (02) 9370 3100 or 1800 422 015

Email: pwd@pwd.org.au

Web: www.pwd.org.au

- **Fairwork**

Phone: 13 13 94

Web: www.fairwork.gov.au

Australian Capital Territory Organisations

- **ACT Disability Discrimination Legal Service**

Phone: (02) 6247 2018

Web: www.ourcanberra.com

- **Australian Industrial Relations Commission, ACT**

Phone: 02 6209 2400

Email: Canberra@air.gov.au

Web: www.airc.gov.au

- **ACT Ombudsman**

Phone: 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Web: www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/

New South Wales Organisations

- **Association of Blind Citizens NSW**

Phone: 102 9744 1516

Email: admin@asnblind-nsw.org.au

Web: www.asnblind-nsw.org.au

- **Disability Council of NSW**

Phone: (02) 9211 2866 or 1800 044 848

Email: disabilitycouncil@dadhc.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.disabilitycouncil.nsw.gov.au

- **NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre**

Phone: (02) 9310 7788 or 1800 800 708

Web: www.ddlcnsw.org.au

- **NSW Ombudsman**

Phone: (02) 9286 1000 or 1800 451 524

Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

- **Office of Industrial Relations**

Phone: 131 628

www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au

Queensland Organisations

- **Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland**

Phone: 1300 130 670

Email: info@adcq.qld.gov.au

Web: www.adcq.qld.gov.au

- **Disability Information Service**

Phone: (07) 3224 8444

Toll Free: 1800 177 120

TTY: (07) 3896 3471

Toll Free TTY: 1800 010 222

Email: disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au

Web: www.disability.qld.gov.au

- **Queensland Blind Association Inc**

White Cane House

26 Warwick St, Annerley Qld 4103

Phone: (07) 3848 8888

Freecall: 1800 753 253

Email: qba@qba.asn.au

Web: www.qba.asn.au

Victorian Organisations

- **Industrial Relations Commission Victoria**

Phone: (03) 8661 7777

Email: mebourne@fwa.gov.au

- **Victorian Disability Discrimination Legal Service**

Phone: (03) 9654 8644 or 1300 882 872

- **Victorian Ombudsman**

Phone: (03) 9613 6222 or 1800 806 314

Email: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Web: www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

- **Villa Manta Legal Service**

Phone: (03) 5229 2925

Freecall: 1800 014 111

Email: legal@villamanta.org.au

Web: www.villamanta.org.au/

If you do not understand any of your rights and responsibilities, please phone Vision Australia.

CONTACT US

Call **1300 84 74 66**

TTY: 02 9334 3260 **Fax:** 02 9747 5993

ACT:

2nd Floor, 22 East Row, Canberra ACT

NSW:

4 Mitchell Street, Enfield NSW 2136

QLD:

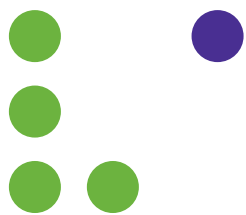
37 Kent Street, Woolloongabba Qld 4102

VIC:

454 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong, Vic. 3144

or visit: **www.visionaustralia.org**

Combining the skills and resources of several leading blindness organisations to create one national voice, Vision Australia is committed to delivering exceptional and efficient services that open up exciting possibilities for our community.



**vision
australia**

blindness and low vision services