

## **Building Employer Confidence to recruit and retain employees with communication disability and low literacy.**

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### **Aims/Objectives: What was the purpose what you did? Why is your topic important? What did you want to change? What difference did you want to make?**

Approximately 1.2 million Australians have communication disability and 44% of Australians have low literacy. Employers struggle to recruit/retain employees with communication disability and low literacy because they are unsure of relevant access requirements and how to adapt processes and resources. This project aims to increase employment opportunities for this cohort.

### **Methods/Process: Who was involved? What did you do? (100 words)**

Scope partnered with Thriving Communities Partnership (TCP) to deliver this project. Through TCP's member network, 5 pilot organisations from diverse sectors (finance/ banking, telecommunications, utilities) were recruited to co-design the training and resource package.

1. Establishment: recruit pilot organisations.
2. Discovery: identify barriers and facilitators to successful recruitment/ retention of employees with communication disability and low literacy.
3. Co-design: develop package with pilot organisations and people with communication disability and low literacy.
4. Pilot & Implementation: trial package with the 5 pilot organisations.
5. Evaluation: evaluate impact of package.
6. Launch & Promote: promote package to other organisations.

### **Results: What did you find? What changed? What difference did you make? What did you learn?**

While there are many resources available for employers to facilitate access and inclusion for people with physical and sensory disability, resources to support employees with communication disability and low literacy are limited.

A comprehensive training and resource package was developed as the primary output of this project, with resources identified to support all stages of the employment lifecycle including attraction, recruitment, onboarding, development and retention, and offboarding. Resources are

needed to provide both practical and logistical support e.g., how to adapt processes and procedures, and facilitate cultural change by breaking down myths and changing employers' perceptions and attitudinal barriers.

**Conclusion: How could other people use what you found out? What would you recommend other people do based on what you did and what you found out?**

With communication access being a relatively new frontier for employers, further work is needed to support employers to recruit/ retain people with communication disability and low literacy across a variety of sectors. Communication access is an important, but complex and multifaceted access requirement, with ongoing investment and support needed to ensure successful implementation. This project has resulted in a toolkit for employers looking to start their journey in communication access.

**Alignment with the Conference Theme: How does your proposal address the conference theme of 'New Frontiers'? How does your proposal showcase something new we can do to make the world a better place for people with disability? (50 words)**

Communication access is a relatively new frontier for employers. The outputs of this project will enable mainstream organisations to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to recruit/retain employees with communication disability and low literacy. Increased employment opportunities will contribute to improved social and economic outcomes for people with disability.