

# Webinar Q&A

**How has funding for employment related supports changed over recent times, given what's happening at the moment with the NDIS?**

We have observed several changes, including a reduction in plan reviews. Occasionally, we can prepare a quote for a change in circumstances, but unfortunately, there has also been a decrease in funding.

This is regrettable, but it underscores the importance of gathering substantial supporting evidence through reports and other documentation. To secure or extend funding, it is crucial to compile as much evidence as possible. This approach is key, as we recognise that employment brings numerous benefits beyond just financial support.

**Do all the APM providers offer the "APM futures" program? Im in Bairnsdale (VIC) - very regional, so it's so hard to find SLES providers, but we have an APM office here in town.**

We do not have it in all locations, however, if we have numbers we can employ staff in any APM office to offer these services. If we are not already in a location, we often start off doing virtual assistance (ie for Bairnsdale).

**Can we potentially utilise therapy hours for Vocational Assessment if core funding has been exhausted?**

Yes

**Can 15yr participant use these services under Core; assistance with community, social and economic participation? I'm having issues arguing with LACs to allow this, as they argue the Education Department should provide the support, but the child can't attend a public school and has medical reasons.**

Yes.

**Do you have general advice for Support Coordinators who are having push back or challenges with trying to get funding in a participant's plan?**

I think bringing this back to choice and control, if it is what the Participant wants and needs then they should have it. We've had cases of existing participants who have run out of funding, where we've been able to write a report substantiating their development and the value that the support has added. We can also create a quote for service that may assist in a change of circumstance or change to the plan.

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**I support a participant here in Perth with SLES funding who wants to be a Crypto trader. He would not be suitable for, and has no desire, to work in Woolies or Coles etc. How would you support him to find meaningful employment?**

APM Futures team work on 'job carving' and access positions as Participants are interested. A pivotal part of our service is a Vocational Assessment upon commencement, which serves to direct appointments, which are always Participant led.

**Can Employment services be accessed through the Capacity building funds allocated to Increased Social Community Participation? If not, allocated for other services?**

Absolutely.

**How does APM help participant approach employers they are interested in working with?**

There's a number of ways we could do that, including with the participant or during non-face-to-face planning time. We take a strong lead in that individualised and job-carving approach.

**Do you know the success of these reports being sent to NDIS?**

In my experience, we have been successful. The key to this success is in having that level of detail and clear evidence to demonstrate to the NDIS that there's been clear developments and capacity building for that participant.

**Does APM know about employers with inclusive recruiting policies to share with participants around developing smart goals in those planning sessions?**

Yes, absolutely. We have a deep understanding of inclusive employment and hiring practices. Taking the time to understand a participant's unique interests, strengths and aspirations is crucial, in order to establish a plan to get there and a job that is the best fit for them.

Most government and large employers, such as Coles, Bunnings, have inclusive recruitment policies. They are usually open to reduced hours of employment and are often happy to introduce workplace modifications where needed to accommodate team members with disabilities.

In the application process it usually asks if you wish to identify as someone with a disability, I would strongly encourage participants to answer this as it will assist in employers providing a workplace environment that will accommodate special needs.

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**Do you have any further information around reporting for SLES supports and strategies around tracking this?**

As a provider of Employment Supports, our reporting requirements are very different to that of a Support Coordinator. The NDIS will be able to provide you with guideline relating to your reporting requirements in this space.

**I have a question around a software company that wants to know more about trying to be more inclusive for people living with a disability. The positions are tech positions for software development, and I imagine require a high score on vocation assessment. Do you have a list of employees that are on your ally list?**

This is a tough one. As previously mentioned, 'job carving' i.e. a specific approach to a business with a particular participant in mind has been one of our most successful strategies. Unfortunately, we don't have a bank of employers in this space. We tend to target smaller businesses who may have one off vacancies. We have however, discovered that government departments have very inclusive recruitment policies and programs and are very open to having conversations about the possible recruitment of our participants who may have difficulty applying and being successful through traditional recruitment avenues.

**If a client has funding and keeping a job NDIS funding but lives rurally and does not have direct access to specific employment providers can their support workers use this funding and work with them to gain work skills etc work on a resume together or attend a volunteer work placement with support? They would obviously have to keep shift notes to demonstrate that these funds were being utilised for job related skills/capacity building in this area.**

Support workers can certainly use their time to assist participants with tasks such as resume writing and preparing for volunteer work placements. However, it's important to note that support workers may not always have the the level of skills or expertise required to provide the participant with comprehensive support in an employment supports context.

**I've worked with someone who has a university degree but never had a job (social being a limiting factor) and has not been getting any responses from applications through a disability job seeker. I ended up helping him to switch to another DES provider to get the follow ups and training with interviews etc that he needed.**

Additional NDIS Funded employment supports in conjunction with DES servicing (also known as 'dual servicing') could be very beneficial for this participant. The support that DES provides is often not intensive enough to develop capacity for work and provide the assistance that most NDIS participants need.