



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Calls for national plan to support young people with disability into employment**

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Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) are calling for political parties to commit to developing a national plan to streamline the employment system for young people with disability.

CYDA CEO Mary Sayers says “Young people with disability are one of the most disadvantaged cohorts in the labour market which has been compounded by the pandemic – and we cannot address this without an evidence-based, nationally consistent approach to employment.

“The Federal Government currently invests in different programs to improve employment opportunities for young people with disability – however the system is complex, difficult to navigate and lacks a streamlined approach.

“At best, these programs are operating in siloes, and pockets of good practice are being lost or underutilised. At worst, there is money going into programs that punish young people with disability and create further barriers.

“We urgently need a national plan that is curated alongside young people with disability and has an evidence-based approach.

“There is an extraordinary lack of data and information about the experiences of young people with disability in the employment system – so having a streamlined national approach would help the Government to make our system better and more accessible.

Chloë Polglaze, who is autistic, says that the current disability employment schemes are complicated, fragmented and difficult to navigate. Chloë now works for Amaze, a peak body for autistic people and their supporters in Victoria.

“I entered disability employment services very hopeful and excited to find my first job. Unfortunately my needs and skills were not well understood and I feel that only by luck I ended up with meaningful employment that matched my talents and expertise.”

Sam Martin is deaf and uses Auslan, and wants the pathway for jobs made easier for other young people with disability. Sam works as a Community Impact Coordinator at Deaf

Connect in Victoria and wants other young people with disability to be able to access jobs across all sectors in a streamlined way.

Sam Martin says “Working for Deaf Connect allows me to work within an accessible workplace. However, if I wanted a career in a different sector, there is no doubt that as a young person with disability, the barriers would be significant and employment opportunities scarce. The need for political parties to develop a national employment plan for young people with disability is more crucial than ever.”

This call from CYDA is part of the *Clearing the Roadblocks: Promoting equitable pathways and opportunities* report released today, which outlines CYDA’s Federal Election asks. [link to election platform]

The report includes nine key recommendations to improve the education system, the workforce and support systems for children and young people with disability in Australia.

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**Media case studies**

Young people who are members of CYDA’s Youth Council are available for comment

**Copy of Election Platform report:** <https://www.cyda.org.au/resources/details/310/cyda-federal-election-platform-2022>