Ramping up 4 work

Employing a person living with limb loss

Ramping Up 4 Work aims to encourage, empower and motivate people living with limb loss to gain and/or maintain employment, by providing them with information, advice and one-on-one peer support mentoring. Employers can also be supported by speaking to Limbs 4 Life to learn more about limb loss, why employing a person with this disability can bring workplace benefits, and the assistance and funding available to businesses.

About limb loss and amputation

- Limb loss and amputation is more common than many people realise, with close to 200,000 Australians living with some type of limb loss.
- People living with limb loss represent a significant and growing disability cohort in Australia with around 9,000 amputations occurring each year (around 28 amputations occur each day).[1]
- The vast majority of people living with limb loss wear artificial limbs; prosthetic legs or arms designed specifically for the individual which greatly enhances mobility, functionality and ability to perform tasks in the home, workplace and community.
- Chances are that a person with limb loss has walked past you in the street and you haven't even noticed.

Benefits of hiring a person living with limb loss

- Considerable research in both Australia and overseas point to the employment of people living with limb loss, and disability more broadly, as being of significant benefit to the person and the business they work in.
- Research has shown that people living with limb loss emphasise the importance of working as a means of providing self-respect, giving meaning to life, providing a stable income, and that return to work is quite common following an amputation. [2,3]
- Research highlights that hiring anyone with a disability can:
- assist in attracting and hiring new talent
- build inclusive workplaces which are likely to be more engaged, motivated and productive
- build a business' reputation and brand, as employees and customers are more loyal to organisations that value diversity and inclusion and this can also be taken into consideration when awarding contracts
- improve marketing and customer retention as demonstration of diversity, which is reflective of the wider community, is likely to lead to greater customer loyalty and gain an edge over competitors
- demonstrate good corporate social responsibility
- mitigate risk as workers with disability have been shown to have lower absenteeism, employee turnover, low incidence of workplace injury
- reduce the likelihood of workplaces breaching discrimination law. [4,5,6,7,8]

Employing a person with limb loss

- Many people with limb loss have completed tertiary education, attained vocational qualifications and/or have significant workplace experience which can benefit your company.
- People with limb loss can be found working in most industries across Australia including medical, allied health, education, airlines, law, trades and transport to name but a few.
- As an employer you may also be surprised to know that the average out of pocket cost is fifty dollars.

Disability employment funding and support

Australian businesses can access an array of government programs, funding and supports when hiring a person with limb loss. These can be accessed whether a person is returning to work after an amputation or starting a new role.

- **Job Access** is an information and advisory service that provides information about government services and incentives for employing people with disability. JobAccess provides information and advisory services offering practical workplace solutions for people with disability and their employers. For more information visit www.jobaccess.gov.au
- **Disability Employment Services** provides specialist help for people with disability, injury or health condition who require support to find and maintain sustainable employment. You can lodge a job vacancy for a person with disability through a Disability Employment Service (DES) provider. To find a DES provider in your local area visit https://jobsearch.gov.au/service-providers/
- **Employment Assistance Fund** gives financial help to employers for work-related equipment, modifications and services to adjust the workplace to suit employees with disability. To find out more visit www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf
- **Motor Injury Insurance** if a person is returning to work following a motor vehicle accident the Motor Injury Insurance provided by the WA Department of Transport may fund the costs of supports for a person seriously injured. There may also be employer benefits by supporting an injured person to return to work.

[1] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). National Hospital Morbidity Database, 2014.
[2] Whyte, A and Carroll, L. (2002) A preliminary examination of the relationship between employment, pain and disability in an amputee population, Disability and Rehabilitation, 24:9, 462-470.
[3] Schoppen, T., Boonstra, A., Groothoff, JW., de Vries, J., Go¨eken, LNH., and Eisma, WH. (2001). Employment status, job characteristics, and work-related health experience of people with a lower limb amputation in The Netherlands. Arch Phys Med Rehabil 2001; 82:239-45.
[4] Australian Network on Disability. (2018). Benefits of hiring people with disability.
[5] Kantar Public. (2017). Building Employer Demand, Research Report. Kantar Public report prepared for Department of Social Services.
[6] Australian Human Rights Commission. (2019). Economic and social benefits of employing people with disability.
[7] PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2011). Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia.
[8] Australian Public Service Commission. (2007). Ability at work: Tapping the talent of people with disability.

Of all people with disability, people with physical disability (11%) are the least likely to require special working arrangements which mostly takes the form of special equipmentwhich is usually simple and inexpensive.

Remember: not all people with limb loss will require workplace modifications or adjustments, and some may only require minor adjustments.