



# A guide to NDIS traineeships using group training



Jobs  
Queensland

This resource was developed by the Community Services Industry Alliance on behalf of WorkAbility Qld as part of the Jobs Queensland-funded NDIS Workforce Research Project.

**For further information on the NDIS Workforce Research Project visit:**

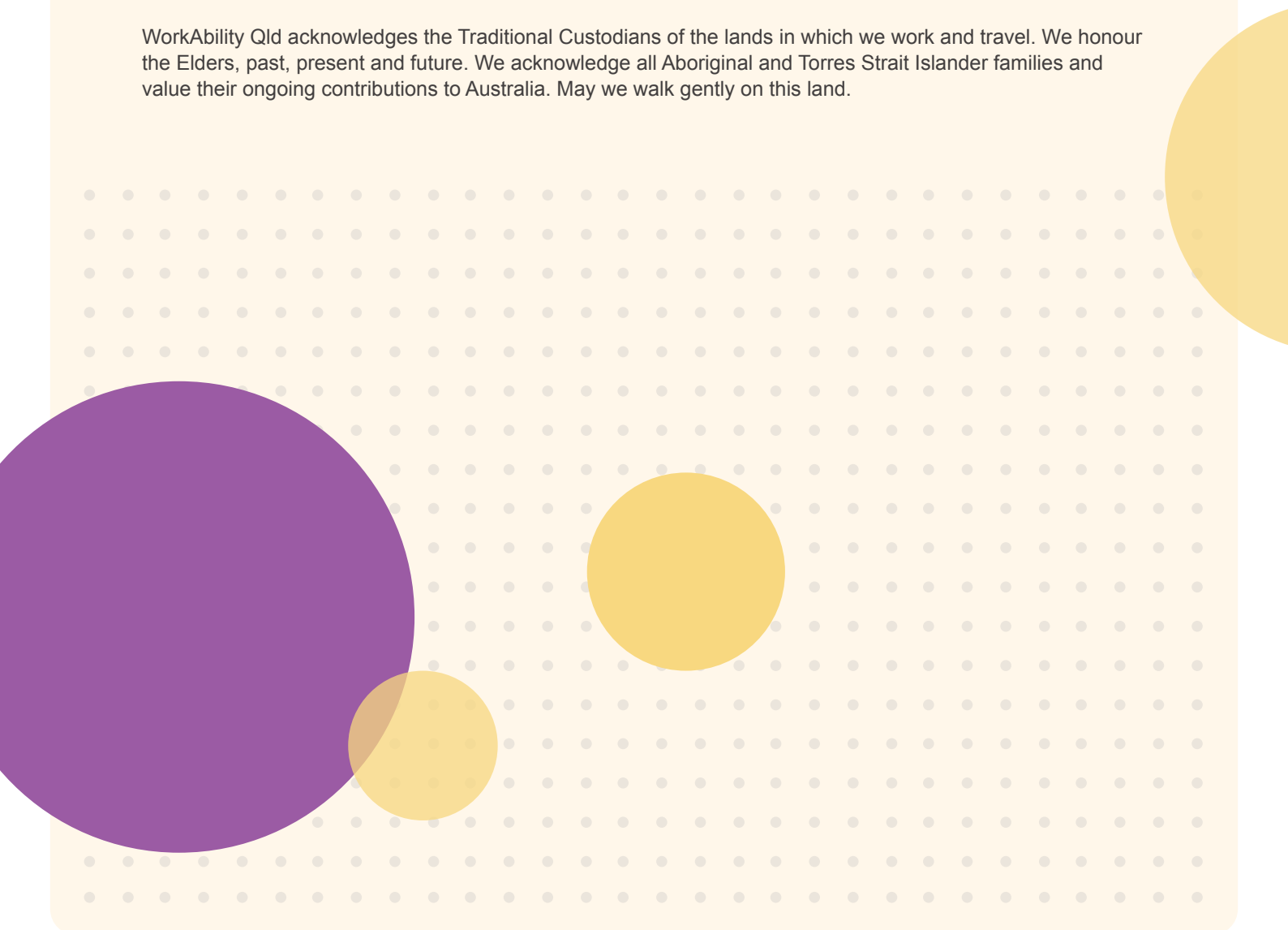
<https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/projects/ndis-workforce/> or <https://workabilityqld.org.au/>

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- CentaCare Brisbane
- East Coast Apprenticeships GTO
- Hessel GTO and Enhance Training RTO
- Liberty Community Connect
- Maxima GTO
- National Apprentice Employment Network
- Novaskill GTO
- Uniting Care Queensland

To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

WorkAbility Qld acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which we work and travel. We honour the Elders, past, present and future. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and value their ongoing contributions to Australia. May we walk gently on this land.



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# What is group training?

Group training is an approach to skilling workers in which an organisation called a group training organisation (GTO) employs a person, enrolls them in a traineeship and 'hosts' them out to employers to undertake learning in the workplace.

In a regular traineeship, the disability service provider employs the trainee directly and supports them to complete the workplace learning required to complete their qualification. These can be referred to as direct employment traineeships.

Under *group training traineeships*, the GTO is the legal employer. They are responsible for the trainee's employment requirements, such as pre-employment checks, payroll and insurance. They organise the formal training for the trainee, and arrange for the trainee to be 'hosted' by one or more service providers to work and learn 'on-the-job' under supervision.

The host employer pays the GTO a fee that is inclusive of the trainee's wage and on-costs, and a small administrative fee.




At the end of the traineeship, the host employer can choose to directly employ the graduate as a fully-qualified worker.

Traineeships can be part-time, full time or school-based (for students in Years 10, 11 and 12).

Under the group training model, the administrative burden for service providers is much less than for direct employment traineeships. The GTO also provides the trainee and the host employer with support throughout the traineeship.



# Differences in responsibilities between group training and direct employment traineeships

 <b>Responsibilities</b>	 <b>Group Training traineeship</b>	 <b>Direct employment traineeship</b>
Who organises the advertising, recruitment and selection processes?	The <b>GTO</b> <i>through consultation with the service provider and providing them with a shortlist of potential candidates)</i>	The <b>service provider</b>
Who employs the trainee and manages worker screening checks, wages, leave entitlements, superannuation and workers compensation?	The <b>GTO</b>	The <b>service provider</b>
Who's responsible for establishing the traineeship and making sure the training is happening as planned?	The <b>GTO</b> <i>with support from the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and the relevant state and territory training department</i>	The <b>service provider</b> <i>with support from the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and the relevant state and territory training department</i>
Who is responsible for the formal part of the training and learning?	The <b>Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</b>	The <b>Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</b>
Who is responsible for overseeing the trainee's learning in the workplace?	A <b>workplace supervisor</b> allocated by the service provider <i>(with guidance from the GTO as needed)</i>	A <b>workplace supervisor</b> allocated by the service provider
Who provides support to the trainee in relation to their learning?	The <b>GTO's field officer</b> The <b>Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</b>	The <b>Registered Training Organisation (RTO)</b>
Who provides support to both the trainee and service provider/ supervisor in relation to the trainee's work performance?	The <b>GTO's field officer</b>	If there is a significant problem the <b>Australian Apprenticeship Support Network</b> and the relevant state and territory training department can intervene

# What are the costs and benefits of hosting a trainee through group training?



## The cost for service providers



An hourly rate that is inclusive of the trainee's wage and all on-costs plus a small administration fee, for an agreed number of hours per four-week period



Provision of a supervisor for the trainee (which is the same requirement as for direct employment traineeships)



## The benefits for service providers



Lowered employment risk



Reduced recruitment effort



No administrative burden



The potential opportunity to share and/or rotate trainees if you can't offer sufficient hours or range of work tasks



Access to an external expert who will coordinate the various aspects of a traineeship



Additional mentoring and support



Additional oversight of the trainee's performance in the workplace and of the quality of training provided by the Registered Training Provider





# The benefits of traineeships

Traineeships provide an effective and economical long term strategy for building a disability sector (and/or aged care sector) workforce.

Employers report benefits such as:

- ✓ greater longevity/stability of employment due to the trainee committing to a 12-18 month traineeship contract, having the opportunity to 'learn while they earn', and having a sense of loyalty to the service provider that was willing to invest in their learning
- ✓ the trainee learns to work the way that aligns with the service provider's culture, value and work practices, and develops the skills the service provider needs (as opposed to service providers who report having to retrain some workers they employ who come to them with a qualification)
- ✓ providing another strategy for workforce recruitment and retention, and a model for attracting 'career changers' who need to work while they study, which contributes to a long term skills pipeline for the service provider.

## Funding and Incentives

The Australian and state and territory governments are committed to growing and skilling the disability and aged care sector workforces and provide a range of incentives and subsidies for traineeships. They include:

- subsidised training
- incentives for employing a trainee
- wage subsidies for employing someone from a particular cohort of job seekers (e.g. such as young people, mature age people, people with disability or people who are long-term unemployed).

*"We get feedback from employers that the qualified workers coming to them have had poor quality training, that it's not covering all of the skills they need - such as medication training. They have to retrain them. And they can't put them into traineeships because they already have a Certificate III... Employers like our traineeship model because they can train the workers the way they need to."*  
(GTO)







# The benefits of group training

Group training provides an additional layer of benefit and support for service providers who host trainees.



## Lowered employment risk

The GTO is the legal employer of the trainee. If for some reason the service provider cannot offer ongoing work for the trainee, or they are not the right fit for the organisation, the GTO will find the trainee a new host employer.



## Reduced recruitment effort

The GTO does all of the upfront work in attracting and screening potential trainees. They work with the service provider to identify the type of workers being sought and then present the service provider with a shortlist of candidates to interview.

GTOs use tools like psychometric testing, industry-specific assessments and behavioural interviewing to ensure that shortlisted candidates are suited to work in the care and support sectors and are likely to be a good fit for the host employer.



## No administrative burden

The GTO takes care of arranging the training, the training contract and all of the worker checks (Police, NDIS worker screening and Working with Children), manages payment of the trainee's wages, superannuation, leave entitlements, workers' compensation insurance, provides uniforms and personal, protective equipment if required and manages any industrial relations or workers' compensation issues. The host employer simply needs to approve the trainee's timesheet and pay the invoice sent by the GTO.

The GTO also coordinates the various activities and stakeholders involved in a

traineeship, such as the Registered Training Organisation (who provides the formal training), the Australian Apprenticeship Employment Network provider (who administers government incentives), and in the case of school-based traineeships, the school.



## Additional mentoring, support and performance management

GTOs have dedicated field officers who work with specific trainees and their host employer to ensure everything runs smoothly and that the trainee has the best chance of being successful in their work and learning. This support can include:

- ✓ helping resolve any difficulties the trainee is having in their home or working life (for example, mentoring a young person as they adjust to the demands of working life; coaching a trainee in how to balance studying with work and family responsibilities)
- ✓ helping the host employer understand what good practice looks like in supervising trainees and supporting their on-the-job learning
- ✓ helping resolve any misunderstandings between trainees and their supervisors
- ✓ providing trainees with additional help to complete their studies (for example, assistance with digital skills or providing trainees with a laptop)
- ✓ monitoring the workplace performance and conduct of the trainee, providing feedback to the host employer and trainee, and working with the trainee and their supervisor to address any performance gaps
- ✓ monitoring the trainee's formal training and following up with the training organisation if it is not up to standard.

This additional layer of support provided by GTOs can widen the pool of potential workers by assisting individuals who may otherwise struggle going straight into employment or a direct employment traineeship. In fact, research has shown that trainees in non-trade occupations are more likely to complete their traineeship if they are employed through a GTO<sup>1</sup>.

of months and then moving to a different host employer to work in home and community settings. Or alternatively, rotating between hosts who support participants with different types of disabilities, or even between disability and aged care provider hosts.

The fact that the GTO is the legal employer enables the trainee to have continuity of employment, while gaining exposure to a range of different work settings.

For host employers who do not have sufficient work to offer a trainee to meet the minimum required hours, group training also enables trainees to be shared across more than one host employer simultaneously. This approach has been used successfully in traditional trade apprenticeships in rural and remote areas and by small businesses, or in times of economic downturn, when a single host cannot offer the necessary hours of employment. Once again, in this situation, the GTO provides the trainee continuity of employment and also ensures that the trainee's training continues as planned.



### Sharing and rotation of trainees

A unique feature of group training is the ability to share or rotate trainees and apprentices across more than one host employer. Rotation is very common in the traditional trades, with apprentices spending a period of time with one host employer, learning a particular set of skills and then moving to another host employer to develop skills that were not part of the scope of work of the initial host.

In the disability sector, this could involve a trainee working with one host employer in a residential or day program setting for a number



*"We want to train our own workers rather than use labour hire as culture doesn't flow through to contractors."  
(Disability and aged care service provider)*

<sup>1</sup> O'Dwyer, L. & Korbel, P. (2019) *Completion rates for group training organisations and direct employers: how do they compare?* NCVER, Adelaide

# The costs and responsibilities for host service providers



## Guaranteed minimum hours of work

Host employers need to commit to providing the trainee with the minimum hours of paid employment as agreed with the GTO, and a regular roster for each work period (e.g. per fortnight). These minimum hours include some study time.

Part-time traineeships require a minimum of 15 hours per week paid employment, averaged over a four-week period, while a full-time traineeship usually involves 38 hours of work per week.

Trainees with a disability may be employed for fewer than 15 hours per week, averaged over a three-month period. School-based traineeships require 7.5 hours of paid employment per week, also averaged over a three-month period.



## Payment of the charge-out rate

Host employers pay the GTO an hourly charge-out rate that incorporates the trainee's wages and all on-costs (including leave entitlements), as well as a small administration fee. This administration fee covers the range of supports provided by the GTO, such as management of recruitment and administration processes, coordination of traineeship stakeholders, oversight of the trainees learning and workplace performance, and additional mentoring and support for the trainee and host.

Due to economies of scale and their level of expertise in traineeships, GTOs are able to provide these services at a much lower cost than many service providers are able to provide themselves.



## A workplace supervisor

Host employers need to allocate the trainee a workplace supervisor, whose role is to:

- Provide guidance, support and mentoring to the trainee in the workplace
- Be familiar with the trainee's training plan, which sets out the workplace tasks they need to complete
- Provide instructions, feedback and encouragement to the trainee in relation to the workplace tasks
- Ensure the trainee has a safe and supportive environment in which to work
- Provide feedback to the GTO on the trainee's work performance.

Some service providers also provide trainees with a 'buddy' who can provide everyday practical support.

It is a legal requirement for trainees to be supervised throughout their traineeship. However, most state and territory governments have special provisions for trainees working in community care settings that enables trainees to work under remote supervision once they have completed a suitable induction period.

## Supervision requirements in Queensland

The fact sheet, *Adequate Training Arrangements - Specified Community Care Qualifications*, sets out Queensland's requirements for supervision of trainees in community care settings.

Under these requirements, the supervisor must be available in person or by phone at all times. The trainee and supervisor must also meet face-to-face at least once a week for feedback, support and direction and to make sure that the on-the-job learning is happening in line with the trainee's training plan. The supervisor needs to gather regular feedback from the trainee and the clients they support as part of the process.





## Frequently asked questions

### **I've heard that traineeships involve a lot of work. How can I fit that in when my organisation is already so busy?**

This is where GTOs can help. They take away the administrative burden, manage the recruitment process, oversee the learning and work performance of the trainee and provide support where needed, as well as coordinate the various processes and people involved in a traineeship.

### **Am I likely to find workers who are willing to work for a traineeship wage?**

There are many trainees who work for a traineeship wage, particularly if they are younger people. However, service providers report that in the current competitive labour market they are paying their trainees above the traineeship wage in order to attract candidates. Many are also building in pay increases at certain points as an incentive for trainees to complete their training.

### **How can I guarantee a trainee the minimum number of hours of employment?**

Host employers use a range of strategies for providing trainees with the required hours of work, including:

- sharing the trainee across different parts of the organisation (e.g. a combination of residential-based support and home-based support, or a combination of disability support and aged care). This has the added benefit of exposing the trainee to a wider range of work and skill-development contexts
- establishing contingency arrangements for placing the trainee in a different part of the organisation (e.g. in the office or in a day program) for times when they are unable to work in a client's home (such as when the client is sick or away and cancels a shift).

Most host employers say that they have more than enough hours of work to offer to the right trainees. In addition, under *NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2022-23*, service providers are entitled to claim 100% of the agreed fee for short notice cancellations (less than 7 days' notice) and 'no-shows', ensuring the provider is not 'out of pocket' in such situations.

For smaller service providers and those operating in locations with smaller client numbers, group training offers the option to share a trainee with other host employers to build up the required minimum hours.

### **How can I supervise a trainee when they are working in a client's home?**

Most states and territories have special arrangements that allow trainees to work under remote supervision when they have a level of skills and experience that enable them to do so safely. This includes completing a certain number of units of competency from their training plan, which provides formal recognition of their skills and knowledge in areas such as health and safety and client communication. Host employers have a range of approaches to providing trainees with the level of supervision they need. For example:

- some service providers initially provide the trainee with work in a residential or day program environment where they can have direct supervision as they build their skills and confidence and then rotate them to their home care support services where they can work under remote supervision
- trainees (and in fact, most new employees) work on 'buddy shifts' when they first begin to deliver support services in clients' homes. Once they completed a suitable amount of training they can transition to remote supervision
- some trainees continue to work in buddy shifts, with the service provider adjusting the way they deliver their support services to make this viable (for example, a service provider who delivers cleaning services provides clients with two workers for a 45min shift (one of whom is a trainee), rather than a single worker for a 1.5hr shift).

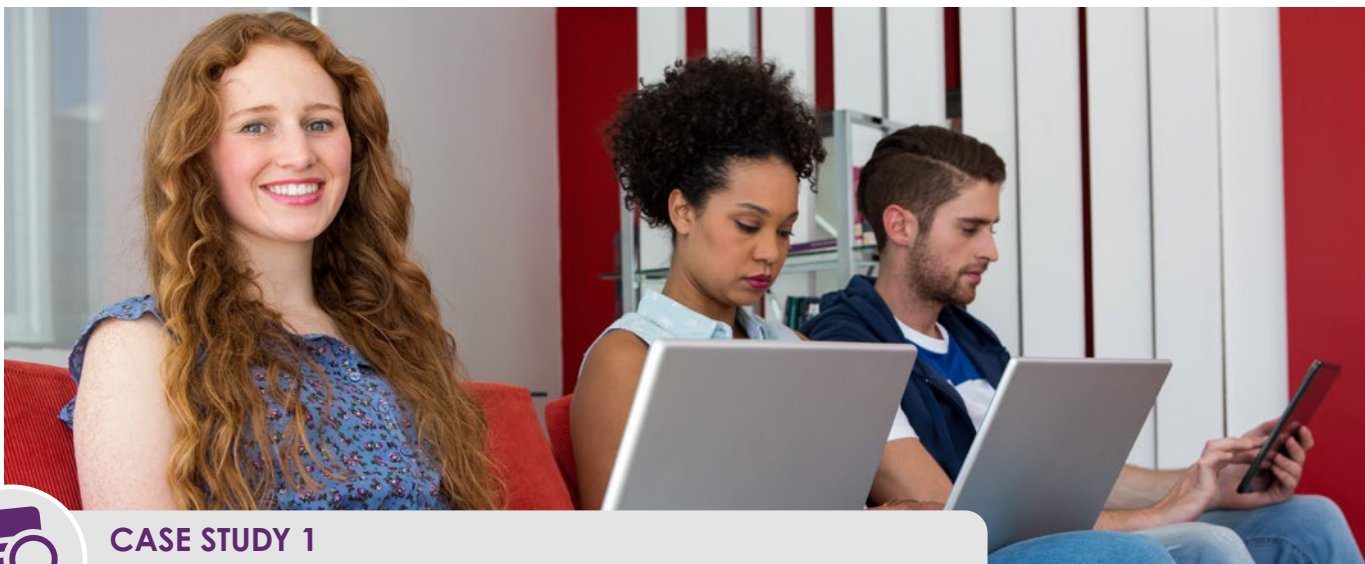
### **I need to employ workers who are able to work productively from day one. Is a trainee able to do that?**

Several GTOs have developed traineeship models that include a period of up-front training that takes place before the trainee commences work in the service provider's workplace.

*"This model of upfront training reduces the health and safety risk for the employer and helps trainees to be confident, safe and productive when they first enter the workplace."*  
(GTO)







## CASE STUDY 1 Apprenticeship Careers Australia | *More Jobs, More Care*

Apprenticeship Careers Australia is delivering a project funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and Department of Education and Training, to recruit and train around 2,000 support workers for the NSW NDIS workforce.



### Screening and Recruitment

Potential candidates are sought from non-traditional candidate pools so as to not detract from existing employment and training pathways for the sector.

Candidates participate in an online information session about the disability support sector, then undergo an assessment of personal attributes and a one-on-one telephone interview and apply for required worker checks (such as police, NDIS worker screening and Working with Children checks), with costs reimbursed by the program.



### Pre-employment training

Successful candidates move on to pre-employment training, which involves completion of a number of units of competency from the Certificate III in Individual Support, as well as accreditation in first aid and infection control.

Candidates may complete the training flexibly, with both day and night options available, so that they can stay working in their current job while they complete their training.



### Entry to a traineeship

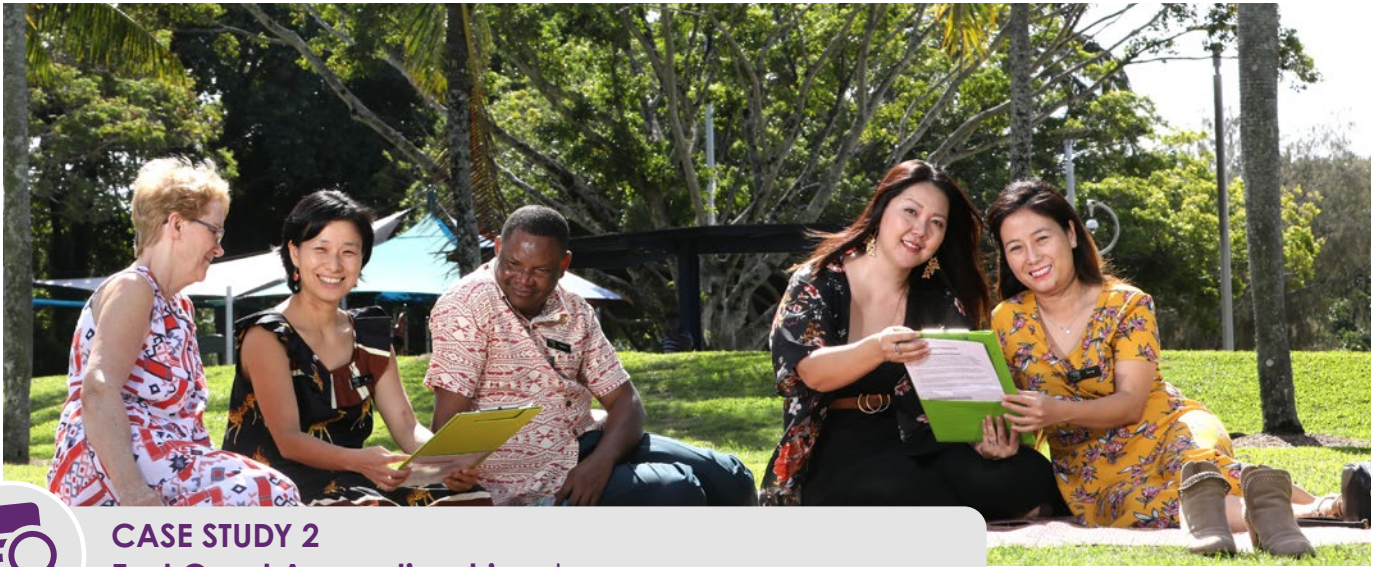
Apprenticeship Careers Australia implemented a statewide education campaign for NDIS service providers to build awareness of traineeships, and is providing traineeship information to graduates of the pre-employment training. Those who are interested can then enter a traineeship through a GTO or disability service provider. Others seek direct employment.

In an effort to reduce attrition from the sector, the project is providing payments to NDIS service providers who employ graduates of the project. For those entering a traineeship, the payment enables service providers to cover the costs of a qualified worker to complete buddy shifts with the trainee during their first 3 months in the workplace. The project also provides induction support and mentoring for trainees.

Employers/host employers who are offering traineeships are generally paying well above award wages, which can be appealing to people who have previously been working as casuals in some other industries.

The More Jobs, More Care Project expects to commence around 300 traineeships, with around 150 of these to be under the group training model.





## CASE STUDY 2 East Coast Apprenticeships | Enhanced Training Pathways

Drawing upon their years of experience in the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships, East Coast Apprenticeships have designed a delivery model that addresses factors preventing successful completion of traineeships.



### Robust Recruitment

The model begins with a series of processes designed to identify candidates who are committed to a career in the industry, who have the necessary personal attributes and who are a good match for the host employer's clients.

Following a telephone screening process, eligible candidates are invited to an information session with the GTO, host employer and RTO, where they learn about the industry and the traineeship opportunity. Those who are interested enter a formal selection process, which involves:

- Psychometric testing (which tests for elements such as emotional intelligence, empathy and compassion)
- Behavioural interviewing
- Language, literacy and numeracy skills assessment
- Situational safety awareness assessment.

The host employer, GTO and RTO together make decisions about successful candidates.



### Pre-employment training

Those who are successful undergo an induction with the host employer, as well as with the GTO, who arranges the employment contract and training contract. They then commence pre-employment training.

The content of this training can be adapted to meet the host employer's needs, but it generally involves trainees completing 6 units of competency from the Certificate III in Individual Support, including First Aid/CPR.

The up-front training can also include non-accredited training in areas such as PEG, BGL and stoma, epilepsy, mental health and dementia.

This initial period of training ensures that trainees are well-prepared to start work and are safe and productive when they enter the workplace.



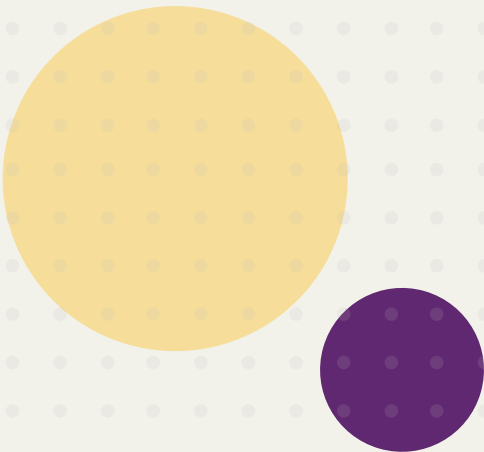
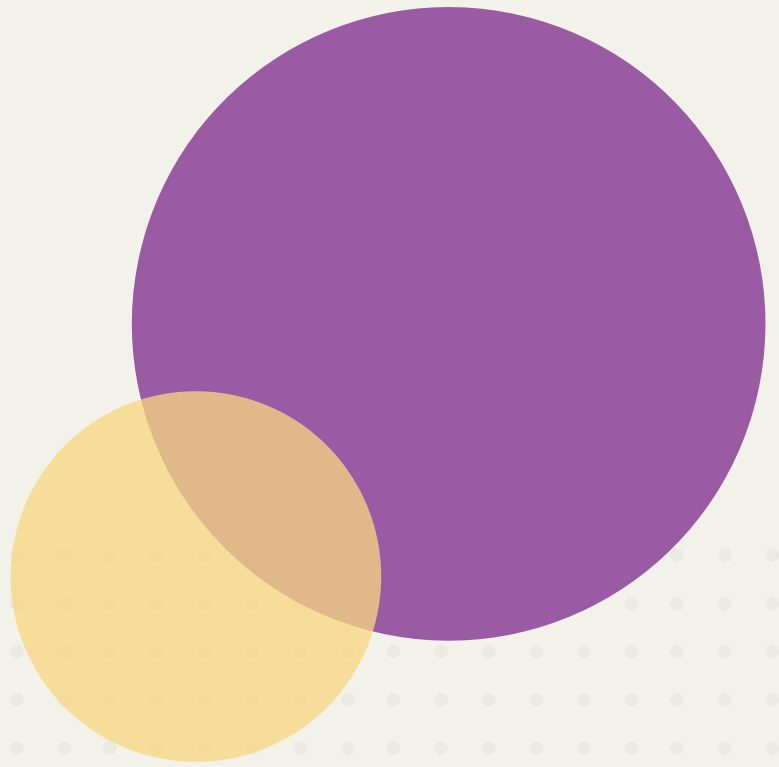
### Completion of a traineeship

Trainees then complete the remainder of their traineeship in the host employer's workplace. They are supported by their GTO field officer (who visits every 4-6 weeks, and is available whenever needed), their workplace supervisor (who is allocated by the host employer), and their trainer (who visits the workplace every 6 weeks to do assessments).

## Want to know more?

The **Australian Apprenticeships website** contains further information about traineeships, as well as a searchable list of GTOs in your local area. Note that not all GTOs offer traineeships in individual support, so click on the plus sign next to the name of the GTO to find out what industries they service.

The National Apprentice Employment Network, the peak body for GTOs, also provides information on traineeships and group training, including a **GTO directory** that allows you to search by industry and state.



[www.workabilityqld.org.au](http://www.workabilityqld.org.au) | [info@workabilityqld.org.au](mailto:info@workabilityqld.org.au)

