

Empowered  
Connections

# Job Design Candidate Toolkit

## - Discover Your Journey -

This toolkit guides you when launching into your employment journey and turns your diversity into a competitive advantage

AN INITIATIVE OF

VALUED  
LIVES

# CONTENTS

[Creating Opportunities](#) ..... [2](#)

[What is Customised Employment?](#) ..... [3](#)

[How to use these tools?](#) ..... [5](#)

[Part I – Discovery](#) ..... [6](#)

[Part II – Vocational Profile](#) ..... [18](#)

[Part III - Candidate Profile](#) ..... [26](#)

[Part IV: Task/Need Matching](#) ..... [30](#)

[Journey Overview](#) ..... [32](#)

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

## Customised Employment in Australia

In Australia, only 53.4% of people with disability (PwD) aged 15-75 participate in the labour force. For many large private sector employers, PwD make up less than 1% of their workforce (NDIS Royal Commission, 2021). Barriers to sustainable employment for PwD include perceptions of additional costs, inadequate employer training on reasonable accommodations, and a general lack of awareness about disability (Moore et al., 2017).

Customised Employment (CE) is an evidence-based, flexible process designed to tailor the employment relationship between a candidate and an employer, satisfying the needs of both. This approach allows for negotiation of tasks, work hours, location, work expectations, and key performance indicators.

The CE process involves four stages:



Valued Lives Foundation, an award-winning leader in Western Australia, excels in customised employment. They have extensive experience supporting PwD in launching and sustaining small businesses. They have also recently piloted an innovative approach to supporting school leavers in their post-school employment journey.

Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services, the LEAP project (Link, Employ, Adapt Project) developed two toolkits, both for Candidates and Employers, to increase workforce diversity and provide meaningful and purposeful employment to PwD.

# WHAT IS CUSTOMISED EMPLOYMENT?

Customised Employment (CE) is designed to help people with disability secure and sustain meaningful employment. It is built on two fundamental principles:

1. Everyone is capable of working in open employment.
2. Traditional job-seeking practices often disadvantage individuals with complex disabilities.

CE tailors job roles to match the unique abilities and strengths of individuals with disabilities, meeting the specific needs of employers. This process, known as 'Discovery,' uncovers the talents, interests, and skills of the job seeker.

The CE approach includes not only the initial job matching but also ongoing job development, training, and support. It considers various factors, such as the individual's age, type of disability, personal interests, and geographical location, as well as available support systems and resources.

Successful job matching through CE benefits both the individual and the employer, leading to higher employee retention and a more inclusive workforce. By focusing on the strengths and potential of each person, CE creates a win-win situation for everyone involved.

## Customised Employment: Bridging Talents and Opportunities

Customised Employment (CE) is a powerful approach that helps individuals with disability secure meaningful work by tailoring jobs to their unique skills and interests while meeting the needs of employers. CE involves two key stages: Discovery and Job Design.

### Discovery: Uncovering Strengths and Interests

Discovery uncovers an individual's skills, interests, and strengths through real-life experiences and settings. This person-centred process includes interviews, observations, and activities, allowing authentic self-expression without external influence. The outcome highlights vocational interests and strengths, emphasising contributions over competition.

### Job Design

Job Design uses Discovery insights to create roles aligning with an individual's skills and passions. This process involves understanding both the candidate and the employer, matching unique value to unmet business needs for increased economic profit. Techniques include vacancy shaping, task bundling, job sharing, or team redesign. Despite complex terminology, Job Design offers substantial social and economic returns

# A journey, not a destination

One of the important mindset shifts required for successful Customised Employment is for both employers and employees to see Job Design as one step, not as an ultimate destination, but as part of an ongoing career journey.

We learned that too often job placements made available to people with disability offer limited opportunities for learning or advancement or are limited to temporary work experience and voluntary work. For employers, supporting a person with disability into a job placement is seen as a success, even when little attention has been paid to that person's future aspirations and potential career trajectory. In the worst-case scenarios, people with disability lose employment once work subsidies expire.

In contrast people with lived experience, service providers and employers all describe successful customised employment as supporting someone's career journey with multiple stepping-stones along the way. Those stepping-stones are diverse and could *start* with work experience or voluntary work, if this is seen as a 'basecamp' for longer-term paid employment that aligns with the employee's aspirations. Customised employment approaches can be used at various stages along a person's career journey; from securing an entry-level position, to stepping from one role into another. It may be that the most successful customised employment opportunities come when an employer has a pre-established relationship with an employee.



## HOW TO USE THESE TOOLS?

The Job Design – Candidate Toolkit is a collection of tools designed for you when seeking meaningful and purposeful employment within the open job market in a customised role.

By using this toolkit, your skills, experiences, interests, and conditions can be identified and understood. This resource supports your journey towards a customised role within meaningful and purposeful employment.

The Discovery and Job Design process is like a funnel, taking a broad understanding who you are, understanding your skills, experiences, interests, and conditions you require to succeed in your role. From this narrowing down to define your industry of interest, roles within that industry, conducting informational interviews, ultimately developing a candidate profile, before matching you to tasks required by an employer.

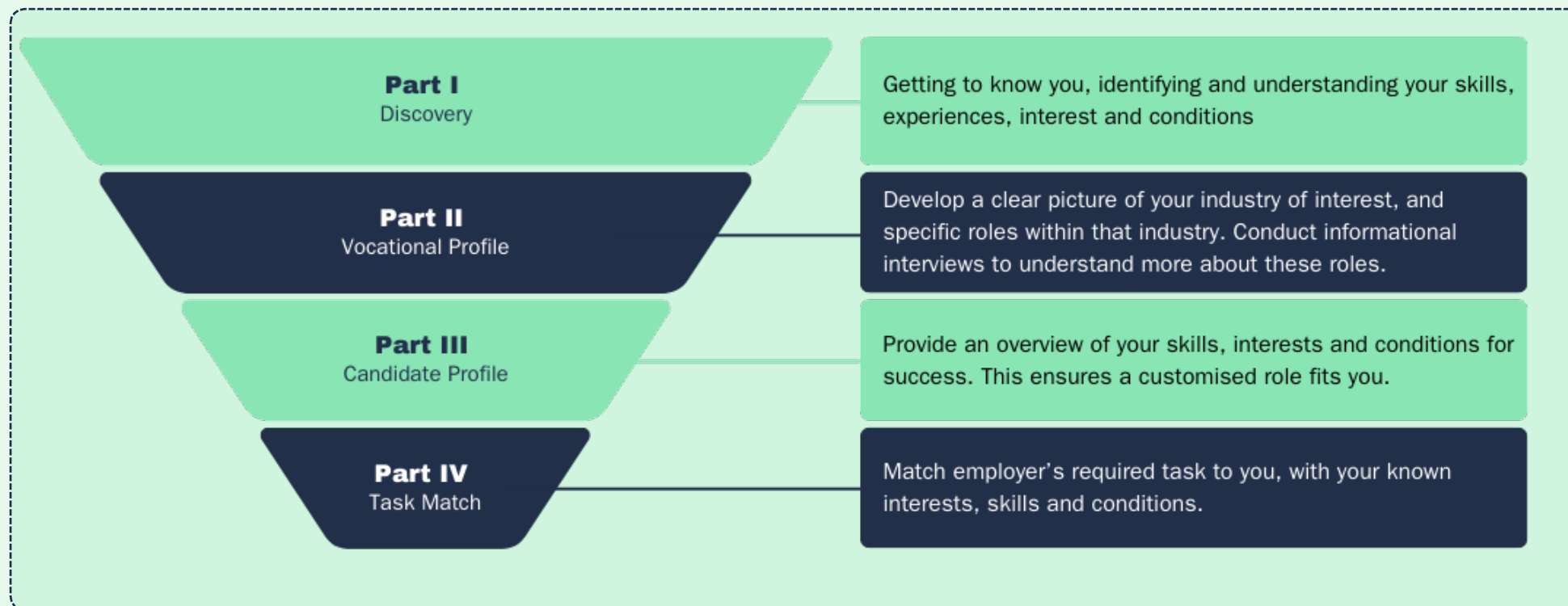


Diagram I - The Discovery and Job Design Process Funnel

# PART I – DISCOVERY

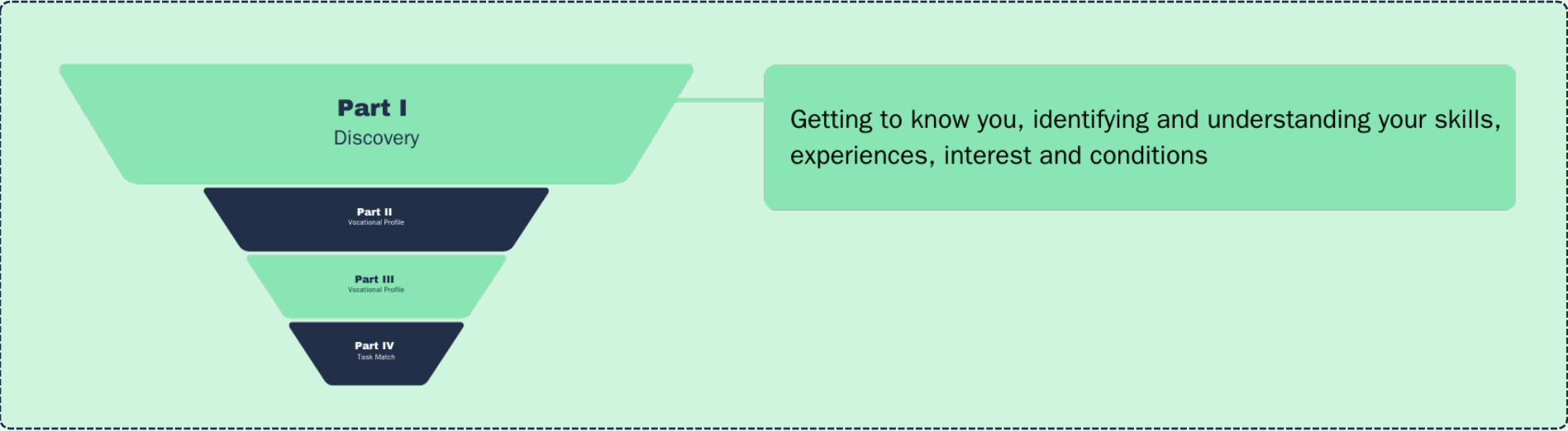


Diagram 2 - Detail of the Discovery and Job Design Process – Discovery

Name		Pronouns	
Date of Birth			
Suburb			
Phone			
Email			

## Start with your goals:

Setting goals is like having a map for your life; it helps you know where you're going and keeps you motivated to get there. Goals give you something to aim for, making it easier to see your progress and celebrate your successes.

It helps to develop SMART goals. SMART goals are:

- Specific: Clearly define what you want to achieve.
- Measurable: Include criteria to track progress and completion.
- Achievable: Set realistic and attainable goals.
- Relevant: Ensure the goal matters and aligns with other objectives.
- Time-bound: Set a deadline to create urgency and focus.

## Long Term Goals:

Setting long-term goals helps you plan your future, giving you a vision to work towards and guiding your decisions over time. They provide a sense of purpose and direction, helping you stay focused on what truly matters in the long run.

Set some goals that you want to achieve in 2-5 years:

1	e.g., Secure a fulfilling full-time job in a supportive work environment within the next two years.
2	
3	
4	
5	

## Short Term SMART Goals

Short-term goals break down your long-term vision into manageable steps, keeping you motivated with quick wins. They help you stay on track and make progress, providing regular checkpoints to celebrate achievements and adjust plans as needed.

Set some goals that you want to achieve in the next 6 months to 1 year:

1	<i>e.g., Complete an industry-relevant certification within six months by enrolling in an online course and obtaining the certificate by the end of the period.</i>
2	<i>e.g., Determine which area of the industry I am most interested in within the next year by conducting informational interviews with at least 10 professionals in different roles, attending 6 industry-specific events, and completing 2 short online courses in various specialisations.</i>
3	
4	
5	
6	



Key Supporters:

Think about the people in your life who would be able to provide some good insight into your skills. They can be family members, friends, or professionals such as Allied Health Professionals or Teachers.

Name	Organisation	Support Function	Contact Details

## Key Supporter Insights:

Interview some of these people in your life to see what they think your skills and interests are and perhaps what you can contribute to an employer.

Name/Organisation	Q and A
Person 1	<p>e.g.,</p> <p>Q1. Tell me about the person's skills. What are they good at?</p> <p>Q2. What is the person's communication style. How would they communicate with an employer?</p> <p>Q3. What are some of the person's positive personality traits?</p> <p>Q4. Tell me about the person's learning style. How do they learn new tasks</p> <p>Q5. What environment does the person best work in?</p> <p>Q6. What could the person offer an employer?</p> <p>Q7. If you were an employer, what role would you offer this person?</p> <p>Q8. Do you know of anyone that could help us along this discovery journey?</p> <p>Q9. Would you be comfortable to do informational interview with other participants who are on their discovery journey?</p>
Person 2	See above.

Please use the note section on the back to document further Key Support Insights.

Home and Community Insights:

Think about what activities you engage in during the week both at home and in the community. This will help further highlight your interests and perhaps skills you are using without realising it.

Weekly Activity	Why am I interested in this activity?	What skills am I using during this activity?	What Support I need to do this activity?
<i>e.g., I play volleyball every Wednesday evening</i>	<i>e.g., It gives me high energy, motivation and focus</i>	<i>e.g., Teamwork, coordination, physical skills, communication - I can play and communicate with my team independently.</i>	<i>e.g., I require transport to and from volleyball and assistance to communicate with the staff.</i>

## Community Asset Mapping:

Think about key people and places in your life. Who do you know in these places and how can they potentially assist you towards discovering a valued role? You may find you have a larger network than you first thought.

<i>Individuals e.g., Neighbors Sport Coaches/Managers Work Experience Supervisors Activity (camps/youth groups) Leaders Family Members/Friends of... TAFE/University Lecturers</i>	
<i>Institutions e.g., Schools Employers Training Organisations TAFE/University</i>	
<i>Places e.g., Cafes Restaurants Hobby Shops Sporting Clubs Unions Gyms/Pools</i>	

## Community Asset Visits:

Think about the places that you go and the people you connect with throughout your week. This could be a café, a restaurant, a hobby shop, use the Community Asset Map for idea.

### Community Visit 1:

Place of Interest	<i>Bearly Jan's Cafe</i>	Activity	<i>Ordering a coffee and having a chat</i>
Suburb	<i>Canning Vale</i>		
Community Connector	<i>Staff member who always serves person</i>		
Key Insights	<i>Great Face-to-Face communication, cash handling, enjoys busy environment</i>		
Observational notes	<i>Enjoyed talking to people and seemed to be energised by the presence of other people. Spoken to the barrister about the football.</i>		

Community Visit 2:

Place of Interest		Activity	
Suburb			
Community Connector			
Key Insights			
Observational notes			

Past Education and Vocational Insights:

Think about what activities you have previously engaged in during education or previous work history. This will bring forward transferrable skills that you have used in the past.

Education/Occupation	What activities I performed during this period?	What skills I used during this period?	What Support I needed during this period?
<i>e.g., I completed a school-based traineeship in Hospitality</i>	<i>e.g., I did food prep in the kitchen, washed dishes, baked goods in the oven and made coffee</i>	<i>e.g., Teamwork, fine motor skills, cleaning, attention to detail, following a recipe or repetitive process</i>	<i>e.g., I required prompting around food safety and hygiene, PPE and a visual aids for processes and recipes</i>

# Skill Development and Capacity Building

Think about the key insights that have been highlighted thus far in the discovery journey. Are there any skills you would like to develop further as a result? Or new skills? If so, how will you do this and who will support you to do it?

What skill do I want to develop?	How will I develop this skill?	Who will support me?



Skill Development Notes:

# PART II – VOCATIONAL PROFILE

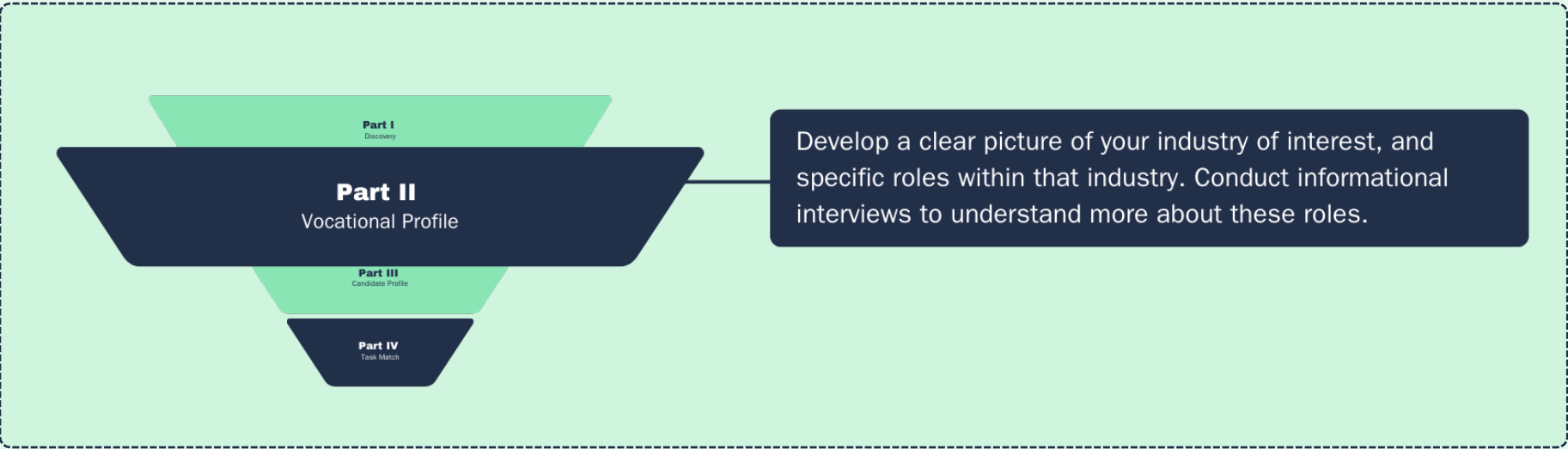


Diagram 3 - Detail of the Discovery and Job Design Process – Vocational Profile

Name		Pronouns	
Date of Birth			
Suburb			
Phone			
Email			

## Summary of Industry and Vocational Themes:

Look back on Part I – Discover and identify some key themes, industries, educational requirements, and connections you have within that industry of interest.

Theme	Industry	Education	Connections
<i>e.g., troubleshooting and repairing technological items using a soldering iron</i>	<i>e.g., Electronics, Information Technology, Facility Maintenance</i>	<i>e.g., Cert II in Electronics</i>	<i>e.g., My volleyball coach is an electrician. He may have connections in the Electrotechnology space</i>
<i>e.g., making thorough reports on work that has been conducted</i>	<i>e.g., Allied Health, OHS, Human Resources</i>	<i>e.g., Cert II Business Admin</i>	<i>e.g., My Occupational Therapist may have contacts here</i>
<i>e.g., Teaching young people how to use a soldering iron and a bread board</i>	<i>e.g., Training and assessing, hackerspace/makerspace, alternative education</i>	<i>e.g., Cert IV Training and Assessing</i>	<i>e.g., My old lecturer at TAFE may know how I can get started</i>

## Job Development:

### The Power of Ten Places:

Sometimes we might not know what jobs are out there. This activity is a brainstorm to develop a list of employers within your industry of interest. Use your current understanding of the industry, interviews with your support people and internet searches to develop this list.

	Employer	Can I see myself working here (Y/N)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

The Power of Ten Roles:

For those employers that you can see yourself working with, write down a few roles within that employer. This will help you narrow down an employer and a role you can complete an informational interview about.

	Employer	Role
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

## Informational Interviewing:

Select two places and roles from your Powers of Ten to investigate further by conducting an informational interview. Organising this with an employer will allow you to work out whether your expectations of these places and roles match what they look like in practice. Remember, this is not a job interview, but more of an opportunity for education around the world of work and the industries you are interested in, to see what's right for you.

Employer	<i>Mosaic Community Care</i>	Key contact	<i>HR Coordinator</i>
Suburb	<i>Jandakot</i>		
Areas of the Business Observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Human Resources</i></li><li>• <i>Corporate Services</i></li><li>• <i>Administration</i></li></ul>		
Questions asked at Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Can you give an overview of your role title, duties and tasks that you do on a day-to-day basis?</i></li><li>• <i>What skills are most important to have to perform these tasks?</i></li><li>• <i>What positive personality traits would one need to do this work?</i></li><li>• <i>Do you recommend any education pathway prior to applying for a similar job?</i></li><li>• <i>What other organisations are out there that may employ people to do these same tasks/duties?</i></li></ul>		
Key Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>HR Team needs support with Data Entry on Fridays</i></li><li>• <i>Staff appear to be too busy to set up meeting rooms.</i></li><li>• <i>OTs are keen for someone to create visual aids for their clients.</i></li></ul>		
Observational notes	<i>The HR team needs support with data entry on Fridays; staff are too busy to set up meeting rooms, causing delays; OTs require someone to create visual aids for clients to improve therapy outcomes.</i>		

Employer		Key contact	
Suburb			
Areas of the Business Observed			
Questions asked at Interview			
Key Insights			
Observational notes			

Skill Development and Capacity Building:

While engaging with employers during informational interviewing, you may be offered an opportunity to develop your skills and capacity for paid employment through work experience and/or volunteering. If this is right for you and you accept to undertake this it may be useful to document insights from these experiences below:

Employer		Key contact	
Suburb			
Areas of the Business Observed			
Key Insights			
Observational notes			



Employer		Key contact	
Suburb			
Areas of the Business Observed			
Key Insights			
Observational notes			

Additional Notes:

# PART III - CANDIDATE PROFILE

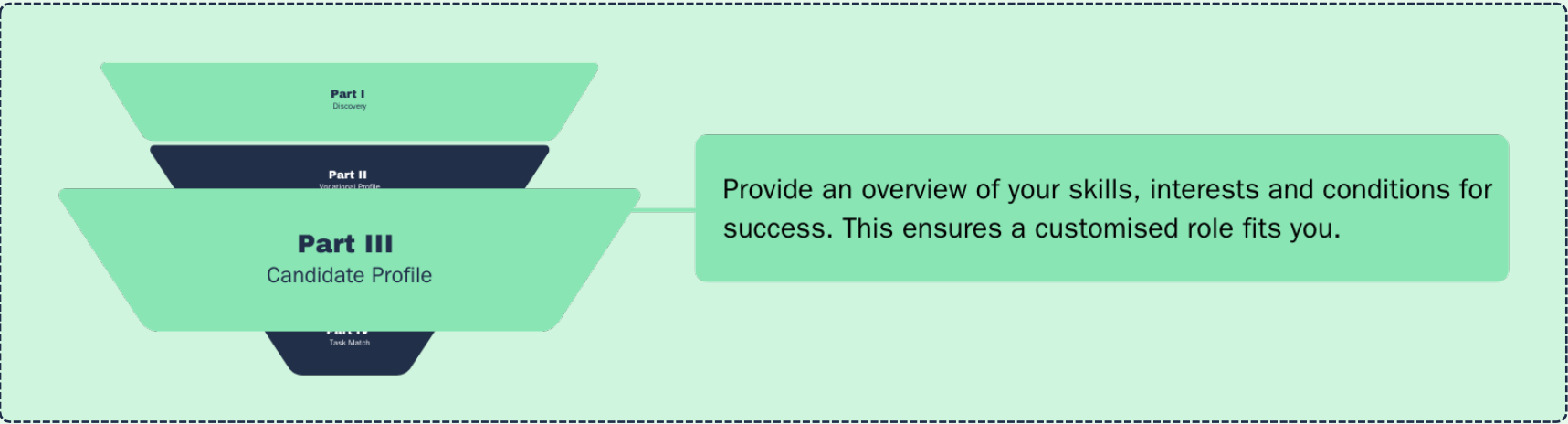


Diagram 4 - Detail of the Discovery and Job Design Process – Candidate Profile

Part III – Candidate Profile is a tool that you can use to develop a tailored profile for when you are engaging with an employer. This tool will allow you to tailor the focus of your skills and conditions to ensure that the employer has the best picture of you and what you can bring to the workplace.

When engaging with an employer Part III – Candidate Profile and Part IV – Task Match will be combined to support you to secure a customised role.

Name		Pronouns	
Date of Birth			
Suburb			
Desired Work Type: Full Time, Part Time or Casual			
Employer(s)			
Portfolio Link (URL)			

## Interests and Skills

Everyone has interests and skills. Write down what your interests and skills and explain then how you think these can contribute to the customised role that you are interested in engaging in.

Interests/Skills	Contributions – <i>How does this bring value to an employer</i>
<i>e.g., I have great attention to detail</i>	<i>Attention to detail will allow me to ensure that the task that I am completing is to the best standard. This is useful for tasks like pastry baking.</i>

# Conditions

You may have conditions that you require to be in place for you to be your best and achieve your tasks within your new role. Please write these down and provide more detail or provide examples. This will help the employer understand you and make sure you have what you need.

Condition	Details or Examples
<i>e.g., simple instructions and demonstration of the task</i>	<i>e.g., I learn best when I am given simple instructions and then the task is demonstrated for me and then I have an opportunity to try before I do it on my own.</i>

## Preferred times of work:

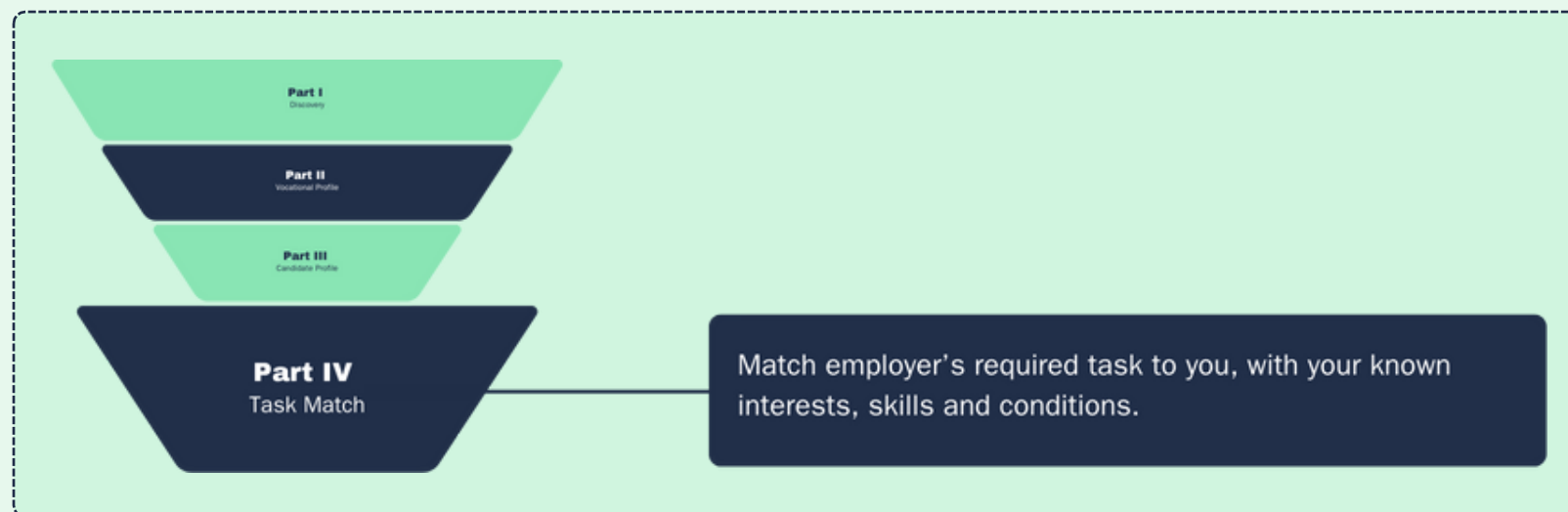
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM							
PM							

Key Contacts or References:

Name	Organisation	Role	Contact Details

Additional Notes:

## PART IV: TASK/NEED MATCHING



*Diagram 5 - Detail of the Discovery and Job Design Process – Task/Need Matching*

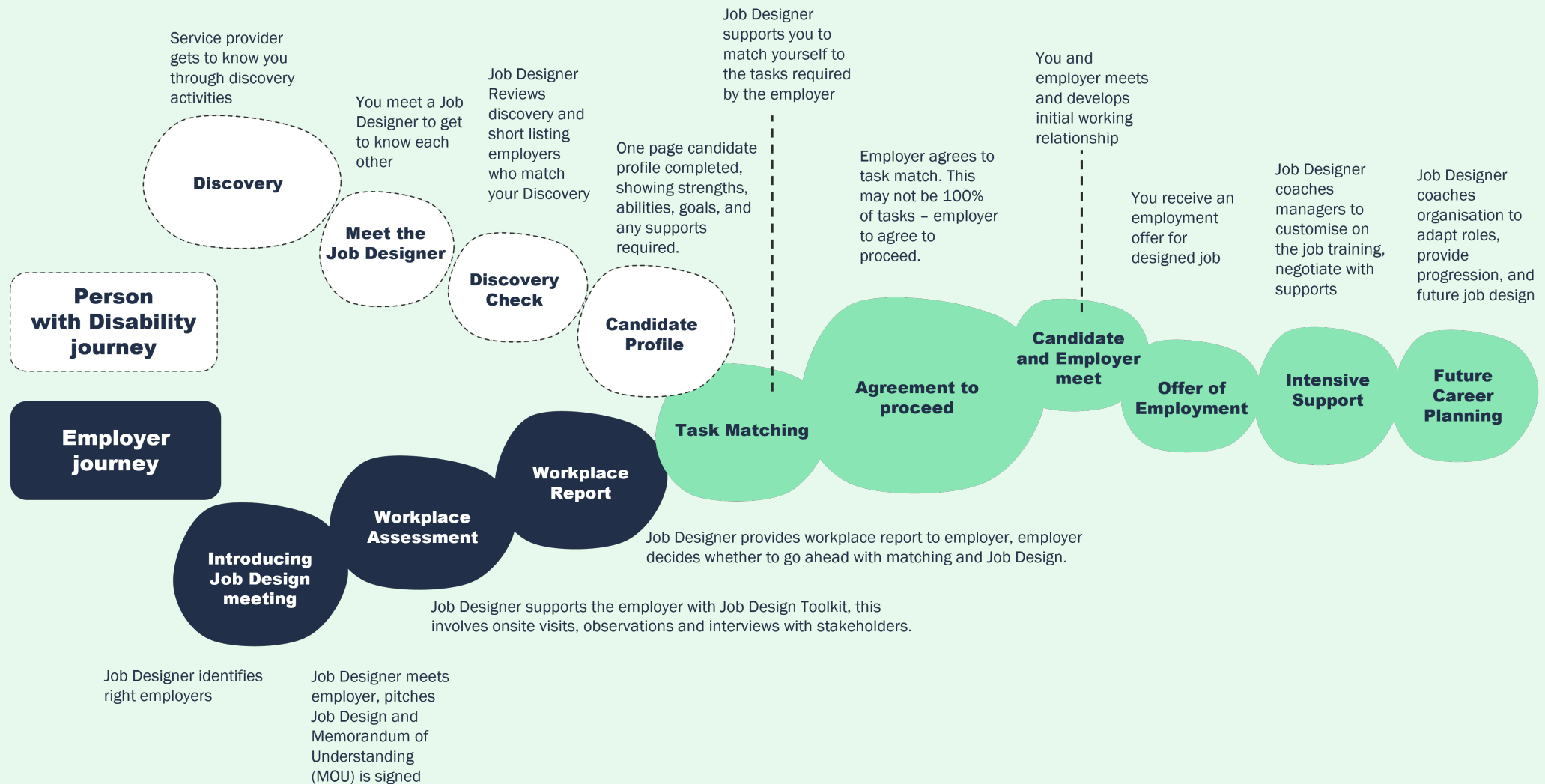
This Task List is a summary of the tasks that the employer needs to be filled within the customised role. This tasks list is developed through the utilisation of the Employer Toolkit and is the accumulation of the tools used, including Vacancy Task Analysis, Project Task Analysis, or Employer Self-Assessment.

You will select which tasks they would like to complete within the workplace. It is important to note that ALL tasks need to be matched and that it is up to the employer to agree to take you on board based on the tasks you can complete.

It is also important to understand that customised employment involves job growth, so unmet tasks now may be matched later as you continue to develop your skills and knowledge.

	Employer Task List	Candidate Match (Y/N)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

# Journey Overview





# Success stories



## Swick Mining Services

Swick Mining Services, a leading mineral drilling contractor, sought to diversify its workforce but didn't know where to start. Partnering with Empowered Connections and using the Job Design Employer Toolkit they identified inefficiencies in their warehouse. These tasks, though not enough for a full-time role, were significant. Thomas, who discovered his interest in warehousing and mining through his Discovery journey, was a perfect fit. A role was designed for him, and he now works three days a week, improving warehouse efficiency. His excellent performance earned him Employee of the Month, highlighting his value to the business. This initiative boosted operational efficiency and reinforced Swick's reputation as a socially responsible employer valuing diversity.



## Mosaic Community Care

Mosaic Community Care recognised the importance of increasing diversity within their People and Culture team, believing that a more diverse team would enhance overall inclusion. Seeking to fill a part-time position, they approached Empowered Connections for assistance. Using the Job Design Employer Toolkit, an Empowered Connections Job Designer guided them, then analysed the tasks of the vacancy and found a suitable candidate. Grey, who had faced challenges in finding fitting office roles, matched eighty percent of the tasks and was eager to learn the rest. Mosaic gave Grey the opportunity, and they began working three days a week. Within weeks, Grey felt welcomed and connected. After three months, he transitioned to a full-time role, excelling within Mosaic. Grey has become an integral part of the team, and this success story highlights Mosaic's commitment to inclusion and the positive impact diversity can have on organisational culture and performance.

## Useful resource web links

1. Empowered Connections Website for information and resources - [Empowered Connections \(Powered by Valued Lives\)](#)
2. Harvard Business Review article exploring the valued of disability inclusion - [Disability as a Source of competitive Advantage](#)
3. Curtin University research report - [Increasing disability employment could boost national economy by billions - News at Curtin - Curtin University, Perth, Australia](#)
4. Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, report on what needs to change - [EMPLOYMENT AND DISABILITY IN AUSTRALIA \(bcec.edu.au\)](#)
5. Imagine More for information and resources - [Customised Employment explainer video](#)
6. Marc Gold and Associates Resources for evidence-based information and resources - [Marc Gold and Associates](#)

# Empowered Connections

At Empowered Connections, we are a dedicated capacity building organisation focused on strengthening the capabilities and voice of people with disability. Based in Perth, Western Australia, our initiatives focus on promoting inclusion and enabling people with disability to live their best lives as valued citizens. Guided by principles centred on social, economic and community inclusion, we enable individuals with disability to lead fulfilling lives and engage in their communities.

We do so in collaboration with families and allies, ensuring that they have equal opportunities and access to the same pathways as other citizens. We are an integral branch of Valued Lives Foundation, united in our vision, purpose, values, and principles. At Empowered Connections, our goal is to create a community that wholeheartedly empowers people with disability and their support.



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