

Supporting Success for People with Cerebral Palsy

Zane McKenzie

Chair, Cerebral Palsy Australia

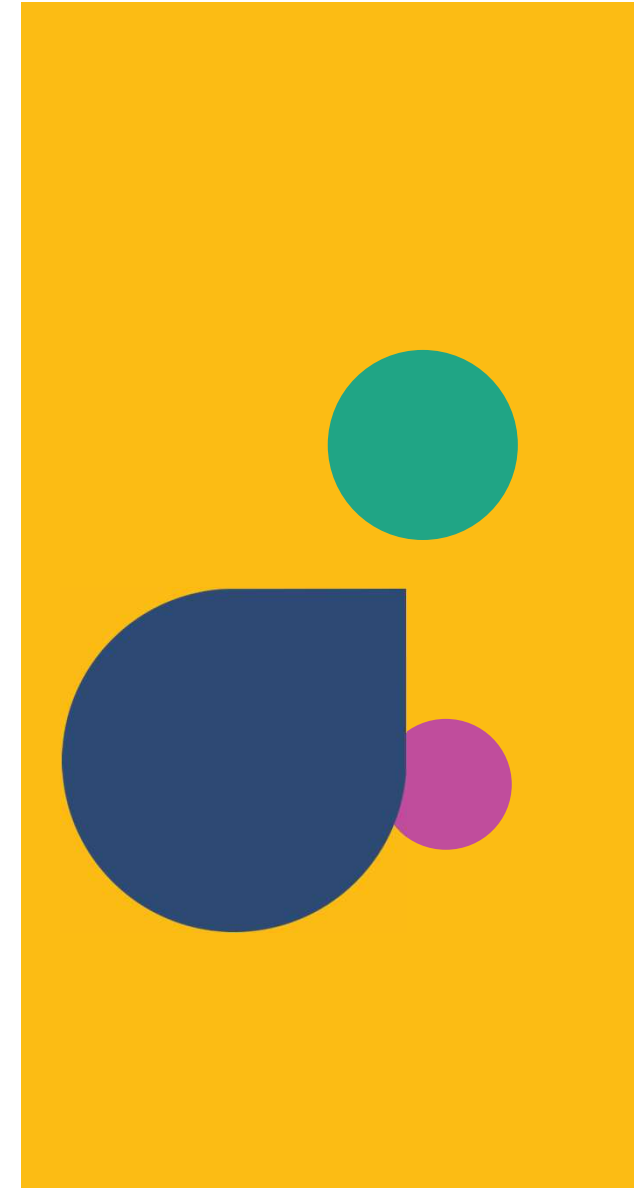
Wade Costley

Board Director, Cerebral Palsy Australia

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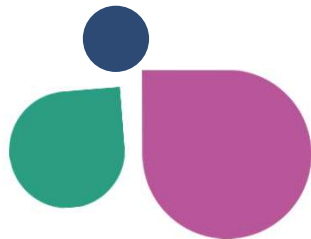


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Agenda

- Understanding Cerebral Palsy
- Common Workplace Barriers and Challenges
- Why Employment Matters for People with Cerebral Palsy
- Tips for best practice employment supports
- **My CP Guide** and other resources



Understanding Cerebral Palsy

5 minutes



What is Cerebral Palsy?

If you have met one person with cerebral palsy, you have met one person with cerebral palsy.

About cerebral palsy:

- A lifelong physical disability caused by damage to the developing brain.
- Primarily affects movement, posture and coordination.
- Varies significantly between individuals.
- Some people may have mobility support requirements, speech differences, fatigue or pain.
- Others may require few or no workplace adjustments.



Cerebral Palsy in Australia — Key Facts

37,000

Australians live with cerebral palsy (2025)

28,000

adults with CP — around 75% of the CP population

259,000

people impacted, including family, friends and support providers

\$5.4 billion

estimated annual cost of CP to the economy (2025)

438

babies born with CP each year — one every 20 hours

47,000+

projected to be living with CP by 2060 (\$6.9B cost)

Globally, an estimated 50 million people live with cerebral palsy, with around 350 million family members and carers directly affected.

Sources: Deloitte Access Economics, *The Cost of Cerebral Palsy in Australia* (2018); Cerebral Palsy Australia key facts, 2025.

Living with Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy affects everyone differently and requires tailored, ongoing support.

1 in 3

cannot walk

1 in 3

cannot use their hands to
manipulate objects

1 in 4

do not use speech to
communicate

3 in 4

live with chronic pain

Commonly co-occurring conditions

50%

intellectual impairment

25%

epilepsy

25%

behaviour disorder

20%

sleep disorder

10%

vision impairment

The diversity of challenges faced by people with CP highlights the need for tailored support and resources to enhance quality of life.

What do you need to know in your role?



The most important takeaway

Never assume capability based on appearance, mobility, communication style or support needs.

A few key points:

- CP **does not** determine a person's intelligence, capability, qualifications or career potential.
- Functional impacts differ greatly between individuals.
- The person is the expert in their own experience.
- Focus on **strengths, goals and support requirements** rather than diagnosis.

Common Challenges and Barriers

7 minutes



Recruitment Barriers

Low expectations and bias

- Assumptions about capability and productivity, with a focus on disability rather than skills.
- Limited employer understanding of workplace adjustments.

Inaccessible recruitment processes

- Inaccessible interview locations and inflexible assessment processes.
- Practices that disadvantage people with mobility or communication differences.

Reduced access to work experience

- Fewer opportunities to build workplace experience and professional networks.
- Lower exposure to career development opportunities.

Workplace Barriers

Physical accessibility

- Building access, parking and transport, workstation design and meeting room accessibility.

Fatigue and energy management

- Tasks may take more physical effort and fatigue can fluctuate, so flexibility is often critical to performance.

Communication assumptions

- Speech differences can be wrongly interpreted as cognitive limitations; communication style is never a measure of competence.

Delayed or absent adjustments

- Many barriers exist because environments are not designed inclusively, yet simple adjustments often remove significant obstacles.

Why Employment Matters

5 minutes



Employment Provides More Than Income

Economic participation

- Financial independence, greater choice and control, and reduced poverty and social exclusion.

Identity and purpose

- Opportunity to contribute, professional achievement and personal growth.

Social connection and belonging

- Relationships and networks, community participation and increased confidence.

Self-determination

- Greater independence, stronger self-belief and enhanced quality of life.

Employment is not a therapy outcome. It is a human right, an economic opportunity and a pathway to belonging.

Best Practice Employment Support

10 minutes



Five Principles of Employment Support

1. Lead with strengths

- Focus on skills, experience, qualifications, interests and aspirations rather than disability.

2. Understand functional impact

- Explore how CP affects tasks, what has worked before and what adjustments enable success. Individualise every plan.

3. Normalise workplace adjustments

- Flexible and hybrid work, accessible workstations, adaptive equipment, voice recognition, breaks and parking create equitable participation, not special treatment.

4. Build employer confidence

- Help employers focus on capability, understand adjustments and recognise the business benefits of inclusion.

5. Provide ongoing support

- Pre-employment planning, onboarding, adjustment reviews, check-ins and career development. The goal is sustainable employment, not just placement.

Recommended Resources

JobAccess Australia

- Workplace adjustment guidance, the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF), and employer and employee resources. [Welcome to JobAccess - your guide to disability employment | JobAccess](#)

Cerebral Palsy Australia

[Work pathways and employment experiences of young people with cerebral palsy](#)

My CP Guide

<https://www.mycpguide.org.au/info-resources/work/employment-journey-handbook>

<https://www.mycpguide.org.au/info-resources/work>

My CP Guide

mycpguide.org.au





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Welcome to My CP Guide

Understanding cerebral palsy across all stages of life

My CP Guide is a comprehensive online resource of credible information collected, reviewed and assessed by experts, relevant to all experiences of cerebral palsy

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The employment journey for people with cerebral palsy



An employment handbook for people with CP

Challenges of employment for people with CP

Employment is important for people with CP, just like it is for everyone.

Having employment that is productive and meaningful is a basic human right, yet people with disability experience a higher level of unemployment than the rest of the population.

Having a job provides

income social connections personal growth independence sense of purpose



The ability of someone with CP to find and maintain a job depends on a number of things, such as the quality of access to education, skills development programs, employment opportunities, and the right support and services to maintain a job.



Employment challenges

- Inadequate pathways to employment
- Lack of transitional support
- Low expectations of people with CP
- Discrimination
- Insufficient support and services in the workplace

Transitioning from school to work

For young people with CP, one of the most important parts of transitioning to adulthood is making sure they have access to resources and support, which can provide information on higher education, job and vocational training, and employment opportunities. They also need to feel supported and feel confident to talk with family, friends and other trusted relationships, to help make decisions.

During the final years of high school, there may be conversations with school teachers, careers counselors and support services about options and opportunities beyond school. This road ahead may be filled with excitement, fear, nervousness or concern.



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THE EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY FOR PEOPLE WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

Transitioning from school to work

- Establishing early foundations
- Working with teachers
- Pursuing tertiary education
- Employment support programs

Tips for job seekers

Tips for job seekers

Looking for employment

A common way for someone to find a job is by using online employment platforms such as:

- **Toozly** – Australia's largest job search website for people living with disability at: <https://www.toozly.com.au/>
- **Workforce Australia** – where Australians can search and apply for jobs, or find more information on their pathway to employment at: <https://www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/>
- **The Field** – an employment site connecting people with disability who want to work with organisations that want to hire more inclusively at: <https://www.thefield.jobs/job/Home>
- **Ethical Jobs** – shares jobs from around 8,000 Australian charities, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises at: <https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/>
- **SEEK** – one of the largest job sites in Australia and New Zealand at: <https://www.seek.com.au/>

Other ways that someone can find out about job opportunities include:

- asking friends and family members
- recruitment agencies
- community job pages on Facebook
- community noticeboards
- asking local groups they are involved with

Eligible National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant job seekers may be able to use NDIS funding to learn or strengthen the skills they need to find and keep a job. Visit the NDIS website at: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/finding-keeping-and-changing-jobs>



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THE EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY FOR PEOPLE WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

- The importance of setting goals
- How volunteering can be a useful pathway to employment
- Ways to find out about job opportunities
- Advice on disclosing that you have CP
- How to prepare for an interview
- How to discuss the supports you require

For employers

Tips for employers

Hiring a person with CP

There are many reasons to create an inclusive workplace that welcomes employees with CP.

Organisations that promote diversity help to develop a culture of respect and inclusivity. This leads to a more productive and motivated workforce, as employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions.

Hiring a person with CP can provide a valuable perspective on accessibility. They can offer insight into how to improve the workplace environment to better support others with disability and create a more inclusive culture. This not only benefits other employees with disability, but also the wider workforce and customers.

Because people with disability often face multiple barriers in everyday life, many have strong skillsets in innovation and problem-solving.

Employees with disability can also positively impact an organisation's bottom line. Studies have shown that employees with disabilities have lower absenteeism rates, higher job retention and lower turnover, leading to cost savings and increased productivity.

Legal requirements

Creating an inclusive workplace helps employers comply with legal obligations to provide equal employment opportunities and accommodations under disability discrimination laws. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, a person with disability has a right to the same employment opportunities as a person without a disability, provided they can do the main requirements of the job.

If a person with disability can do the main activities or requirements of a job, then they should have an equal opportunity to do that job.

Find out more about the Disability Discrimination Act at: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/know-your-rights-disability-discrimination>

"People with cerebral palsy can work if they are given the opportunity" An adult with CP



Tips for employers

- The benefits of having an inclusive workforce
- Legal obligations
- Misconceptions about hiring people with CP
- Employer supports for hiring people with CP
- Types of reasonable adjustments in the workplace
- Funding for reasonable adjustments

Multiple languages



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The employment
journey for people
with cerebral palsy



脑瘫患者就业之路



सरीब्रल पाल्सी से ग्रस्त लोगों
के लिए रोज़गार यात्रा



Il percorso lavorativo
delle persone con
paralisi cerebrale



Hành trình việc làm cho
những người mắc bệnh
bại não



The handbook is also available in simplified Chinese, Hindi, Italian, and Vietnamese.

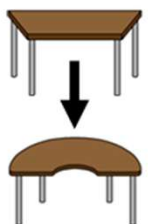


You want to work

Easy English resource about employment



You have rights at work



You must have what you need.

It may be you need a different desk.

It fits your wheel chair.

You can reach the things you need.

You can do your job.

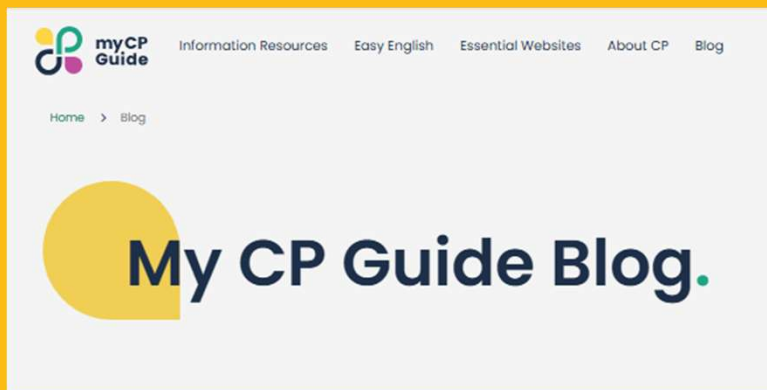


You may need tools. Like a switch to

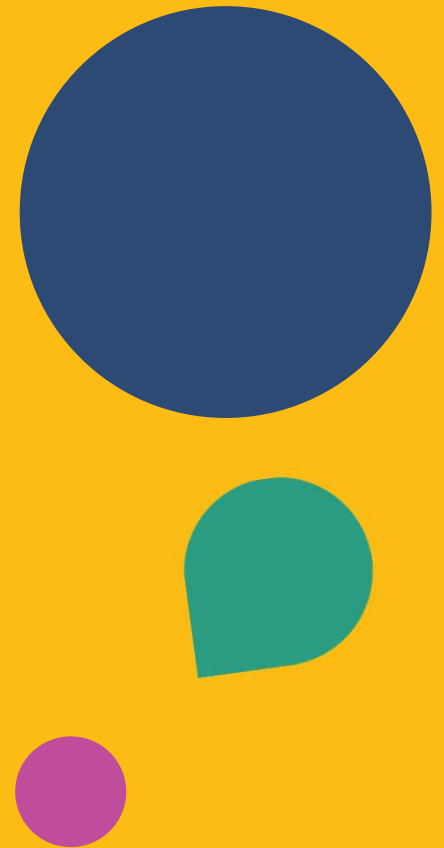
use the computer.

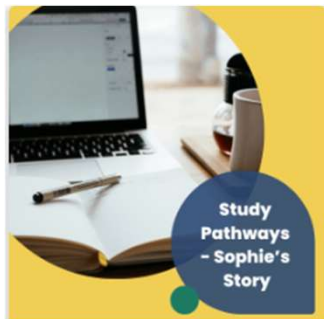
This Easy English resource explains:

- The benefits of work
- Some challenges of work
- Your rights in the workplace
- How to self-advocate at work
- External supports to help you
- What to do when you can no longer work



Personal stories about employment





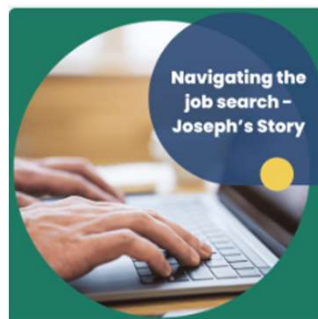
Study
Pathways
- Sophie's
Story

Personal View

Finding the Right Path Through Study and Work –...

Sophie, an adult with cerebral palsy, shares her story about navigating the challenges of tertiary education and...

Sophie Geeves



Navigating the
job search -
Joseph's Story

Personal View

Navigating Challenges in the Employment Journey ...

Joseph, an young adult with cerebral palsy, reflects on his experiences with employment services, internships, and his...

Joseph Issa



Briar's Blog

Personal View

The Battle for Employment

Briar, an adult with CP, shares her experiences of working towards her dream career, the obstacles put in front of her,...

Briar Thompson



Meet
Wade

From our authors

Travelling far and wide with a global career – Wade's...

Wade Costley, an adult with CP, shares his story about a career that took him on a journey around the world.

My CP Guide

People with CP share insights into their own employment journeys

- Overcoming obstacles at uni
- Managing challenges of finding work and long-term employment
- Persevering to find the right job
- Thriving in a fulfilling career

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Please provide your preferred name

Preferred Name

Email (Required)
Please enter an active email address

email@example.com

What best describes you (Required)
Please select Cohort Type

What best describes you

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Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? (Optional)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

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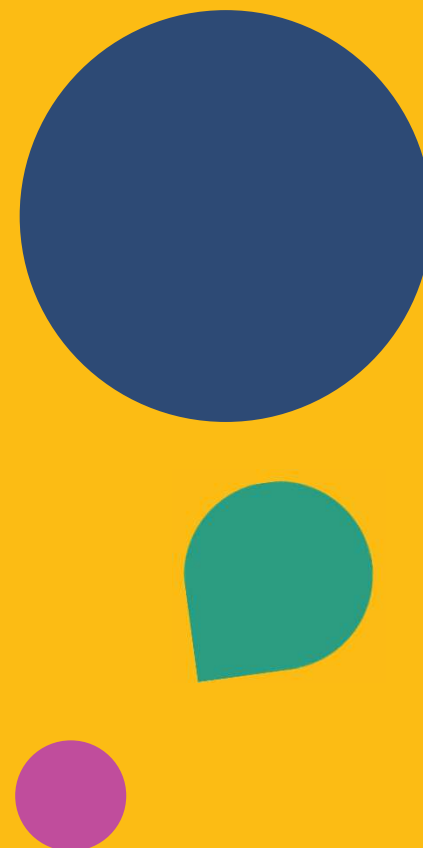
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