

The Autistic Employment Crisis

Unemployment and
underemployment
of Autistic adults
in Australia.

Meaningful employment is one of the strongest indicators of quality of life and wellbeing¹, yet Autistic people remain disproportionately excluded from the workforce, being more than twice as likely to be unemployed than people with disability and more than 6 times as likely than the general population².

Autistic people want to work.

Most Autistic people want meaningful employment. While only 38% are employed, less than 15% reported that they were unemployed by choice³.

Autistic people make great employees.

Autistic people are excellent candidates for stable employment. A recent survey shows that 45% of employed Autistic people have been in their current role for five or more years, and a further 40% between one and four years³. Research shows that Autistic people are reliable employees with lower levels of absence than the general population⁴.

Together
we can create an
autism-friendly
Australia.



We are committed to making life better for people on the spectrum.

Underemployment

Autistic people have a lot to contribute and a strong desire to do so, yet many remain significantly underemployed. Of those employed less than full time, more than half wish to work more hours, and 45% believe that their skills exceed the requirements of their current roles³.

Despite having high level qualifications, Autistic employees continue to be employed well below their skill levels, often in entry level, poorly paid roles throughout their lives⁴. Up to half of Autistic people that are employed work in either segregated jobs, or perform unskilled labour that does not provide a living wage, and over 50% were considered overqualified for their roles⁵.

To make matters worse, once employed, Autistic people remain significantly underrepresented in managerial and senior roles in the workforce⁵, with a recent survey indicating that more than 20% of people would be concerned or very concerned if an Autistic person was their boss³. Additionally, only 50% of people believe an Autistic person can be a waiter/waitress, member of parliament, lawyer or doctor³, highlighting the pervasive misconceptions that limit opportunities and reinforce systemic exclusion.

What's the solution?

Research shows that increasing workplace supports and adjustments significantly improve employment success for Autistic people and in addition, all employees benefit from inclusive workplace environments⁵. Nearly a quarter of people surveyed indicated that they would like to receive training about autism³, highlighting an opportunity for employers to invest in training, creating workplaces that are more inclusive and supportive for everyone.

How Aspect Autism Friendly Employment can help

Together, we create inclusive, autism-friendly organisations that work for everyone. Through our partnership, Autism Friendly Employment brings a structured, evidence-based approach that drives lasting, systematic change, realising workplaces where Autistic people and all employees can thrive.

Barriers to employment

Despite being qualified and capable, Autistic people continue to face significant barriers to employment. Existing barriers such as difficult recruitment and interview processes, challenges with workplace culture, stigma and worries about disclosure⁴ are made worse by the lack of support to find and maintain employment, with as few as 6% of Autistic individuals receiving employment support⁵ in spite of the fact that most people believe that adjustments should be made in the workplace⁵.



References

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