



WORKING *together*

PERFECT (JOB) MATCH

Open road to open employment

Nick is a 22-year-old worker who loves his job driving trucks and installing commercial filters with Air and Odour Management Australia (AOM), Kogarah.

For as long as he can remember, Nick has dreamed of owning his own truck and being on the road. This dream started to come true when AOM Australia's Managing Director, Sven Bolomey hired Nick.

'Nick is doing really well in the workplace,' says Sven, who hired Nick in early February 2018, when he recognised Nick's potential and saw the benefits of building an [inclusive workforce](#) (see e-zine edition 15).

Nick came to this position with plenty of work experience, including on the loading dock at Big W and as yard hand and car detailer at a car retailer. NOVA also supported him to get his forklift licence.

On the back of all of this support, Nick's returning to Kogarah High School to encourage other students in the disability unit to try NOVA. He's an example to others in achieving his career goals.



Nick's not the first employee AOM has hired through NOVA. 'Nick works side by side with another NOVA-placed worker, who mentors and coaches him on the job,' says Sven.

'There's been a few bumps in the road but our team have been really supportive of Nick,' Sven says. He sourced and provided

Nick's colleagues with information about Autism Spectrum Disorder because he wanted co-workers to have a greater understanding of the potential impact of Nick's disability.

Sven is pleased with the way it's turning out, respecting and appreciating the NOVA-AOM partnership.



A WORD FROM MARTIN

The dignity of taking risks

Successful businesses become so in no small part because they take risks. Similarly, a good disability employment service (DES) must encourage parents of job seekers to take risks on behalf of their children, where their learned tendency is to protect at all costs.

One of the downsides of protection is the loss of dignity afforded the rest of us to take risks. Being allowed to waiver. Being uncertain. To learn from failing.

Parents want the best for their children and yet DES often need to convince parents of people with disability that their charges can achieve more than they think. An effective DES ensures job seekers are protected while at the same time stretched to reach their potential.

This shift takes time and is different for each person. NOVA ensures that job seekers have personalised plans to achieve work readiness, which might include developing travel training, money management, personal grooming and social skills. By the time job seekers are put forward to employers, they've successfully faced some risks, which builds confidence and skills.

Martin Wren
CEO NOVA Employment

SORTED!

FIVE STEPS TO WORKPLACE INCLUSION – STEP 3

Create opportunities for cross-functional interaction among the team

The critical factor for long-term integration in the workplace is social integration. We're aiming to avoid going into the lunchroom one day and finding your new recruit all on their own.

Social inclusion is a strategy, not a happy accident. We need to look for touch points, such as films, books, TV, sport, food, fashion, events, people – you name it. This is exactly the same for all of our colleagues, but regularly people with disability need some encouragement to feel welcome. They may not have had the same formative experiences as the rest of your team, so can't as easily develop the social fabric that helps us maintain employment.

For example, my social skills maintain me in my role. I'm friendly with my chairperson. I treat my staff with respect. I understand the suite of social behaviours that are vital to my success. But, for example, an employee with autism might not pick up that you shouldn't refer to the boss as Davo, despite the fact that Davo's brother calls him that. These things have to be learnt. It might be down to you to explain the cues, nuances and reasons behind certain behaviours in your particular workplace.

You don't have to do much to facilitate this interaction. In fact, the simpler and more low-key actions are often most effective. Initiatives like flagging with a staff member: Mary's starting work on Monday. She's going to have to adapt to being in a large group of people. Would you make sure she doesn't do morning tea by herself?

Martin Wren, CEO
NOVA Employment



Let's do lunch!

If you're a business owner in Nepean, why not come to our 100 Jobs campaign launch?

You'll meet employer partners, NOVA staff and job seekers.

