OstaraAustralia
Transforming Lives Through Employment

Inclusive Employment Australia
Finding careers for people with disability

NATIONAL PANEL OF ASSESSORS (NPA)

CLIENT HANDBOOK

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

1300 678 272

info@ostara.org.au

www.ostara.org.au

Version 1.2 – 01.11.2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ostara Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to elders both past and present.

Ostara Australia is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination. Ostara Australia welcomes all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Ostara Australia are a disability service and represent the interests of people with all kinds of disabilities in particular mental health. Our services support inclusion, empowerment and celebrate people with disability.

Ostara Australia acknowledges those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, we advocate for inclusiveness and social justice through respect, compassion and valuing diversity.

Please let us know if you require the following.

- Someone to support you to understand this document.
- Access to an interpreter to assist you with understanding this document.
- A copy of this document to be provided to your guardian, carer or other support person for their reference.

What is NPA?

National Panel of Assessors (NPA) provides a range of Assessment Services to assist with the needs of people with disability in the workplace. You will be participating in one of the following:

☐ **Supported Wage Assessment**

They are designed to review all the factors involved in your working day and help your employer to reach an agreement regarding what is a 'fair wage'. These assessments take place in the workplace and in conjunctions with all parties such as DES providers, you and your employer.

All SWS agreements are forwarded to the Fair work Commission for review and approval in accordance with the relevant award.

☐ **Ongoing Support Assessment**

Ongoing Support Assessments are designed to review your current employment requirements to assess what level of support and assistance you need maintain your employment with a DES provider and in post placement support. The NPA Assessor will then make recommendations based on their observations and information provided and provide a level of flexible, moderate or high.

NPA Assessors

All our assessors have received training in completing these assessments. They have substantial knowledge in assessing people with a disability and workplaces to provide fair and accurate outcomes. They are qualified allied health professionals with current Working with Children Checks, Police Checks, Insurance, years of experience and verified references.

Program Compliance & Auditing

Ostara Australia operates under the National Standards for Disability Service (NSDS). Ostara Australia is required to undergo annual audits to verify that our processes and systems are compliant. During these audits, independent auditors may request to view participant information and may also request to speak with you about your experience. We are seeking your consent for an external auditor bound by the Privacy Act 2018 to have access to review your record to access information solely in relation to this program.

Feedback and Complaints

We would be happy to hear from you about your assessment today, you can provide feedback and complaints via our website www.ostara.org.au via email npa@ostara.org.au or by calling 1300 678 272.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Your safety, confidentiality and privacy are very important to us, please let us know if this has not met your expectations, within your assessment and throughout our conflict resolution process. Please see our privacy policy for more information.

Client Information

The Assessor will:

- Explain clearly the purpose of the assessment services, what assessment services you will receive, what we will do for you, and what you have to do.
- Deliver a professional, confidential and timely service.
- Treat you fairly and with respect.
- Ensure the information we provide is current and accurate.
- Work continually to improve our services.
- Produce an independent assessment report taking into consideration information obtained during the conduct of the assessment.

What can you expect

- Explain the purpose and procedure for the assessment.
- Make arrangements to meet with you to conduct the assessment.
- Agree any special requirements for the assessment, including access to the worksite, WHS requirements and interpreters.
- Answer any questions about the assessment.
- Obtain information that may help us to understand your employment requirements and prepare for the assessment.
- Provide our contact details to you and be available to answer questions relating to each assessment that we conduct.

When we conduct the assessment, we will:

- Describe the steps involved in the assessment.
- Discuss the relevant work tasks, and any issues that impact on performing those tasks.
- Behave in a manner that is not obstructive or stressful.
- Respect you and the work environment.
- Record appropriate information that relates to the assessment and that will assist us in preparing the assessment report.
- Ensure that your privacy and dignity are maintained.

What are your responsibilities

If for any reason you are not able to keep an appointment, you should advise us as soon as you can, and we will reschedule the appointment. To ensure that we provide an effective and efficient assessment service to you, you need to provide current and accurate information to us. If we visit your worksite to conduct assessment services, the employer should advise us of any special access and WHS requirements.

What happens to what you tell us

We collect your information only to finish the assessment. Your details will be kept private according to the Privacy Act 1988. If you would like to see the information we store about you, or discuss any concerns, we are here to help so please reach out to us. (Learn more about the Privacy Act 1988, at: **http://www.privacy.gov.au**).

What can you do if you are not happy with the assessment service?

If you are not happy with the way we conducted the assessment service, please talk to us.
We wil provide a feedback process that is fair, and we will try to help you contact us on **1300 678 272** or by emailing **complaints@ostara.org.au**. You can also provide feedback and complaints through our website, **www.ostara.rog.au**.
NPA Feedback & Complaints or access it through the following QR code.
If you feel your complaint is still unresolved, you can contact the following departments for further support.

Ongoing Support Assessments - **1800 805 260**
Supported Wages System Assessments - **1800 065 123**

References:

- National Panel of Assessors (NPA) -National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) | Department of Social Services, Australian Government (dss.gov.au).
- (Accredited Certification Bodies | Department of Social Services, Australian Government (dss.gov.au).
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Approved Quality Auditors Scheme) Guidelines 2018.
- Job Access Website - **https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/home**

ADVOCACY INFORMATION

Disability Advocacy promotes, protects, supports and defends the human rights of people with disability.

Advocates act, speak, write or work on behalf of a person with disability to help them speak out to defend their rights and interests.

If you are in need of Disability Advocacy services, you can reach out to the following organisations:

www.dana.org.au **www.pwd.org.au**

CHILD SAFETY

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IS EVERYONES JOB!

SEE SOMETHING? SPEAK OUT!

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

Keeping children safe in the community is important. If something has or is occurring to you, you see an incident or a childs has told you they aren't safe.

1. A child reports, you observe, suspect or are informed of an incident of child abuse or neglect.
2. Please contact **000** or contact child protection in your state.
3. The Police or Authorities will provide further advice on the next steps.

MODERN SLAVERY

You may be a victim of Modern Slavery, if you:

- Are forced to work when you don't want to.
- Are forced to live in accommodation against your will.
- Have you to pay someone to give you work.
- Have your identity documents or bank account controlled by someone else.
- Your family is threatened or intimidated.
- You cannot refuse or cease work because of coercion, threats or deception.
- You are deprived of personal freedom.

WHAT ARE SUBSTANDARD WORKING CONDITIONS

- Worker can refuse or cease work but doing so may lead to detriment.
- Worker is not paid fairly and does not receive some or all entitlements.
- Worker may be required to work excessive hours.
- Workplace is unsafe.

WHAT IS DECENT WORK

- Workers' rights respected.
- Worker free to refuse or cease work.
- Worker paid fairly (at least the minimum wage).
- Workplace is safe.

RENUMERATION & UNION INFORMATION

Australian Government Fair Work OMBUDSMAN

We review all employment information using THE PACT - Pay and Conditions Calculator.
https://calculate.fairwork.gov.au/

UNIONS NSW since 1871

If you are interested in joining a union. Unions focus on workplace rights and obligations. They help in answering your questions, prevent and resolve issues about workplace entitlements and avoid disputes and penalties.
More information: **https://www.unionsnsw.org.au/**

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Inclusive Employment Australia
Finding careers for people with disability

NATIONAL PANEL OF ASSESSORS – CODE OF PRACTICE

Organisations contracted to deliver Australian Government funded employment services have agreed and are committed to observe the Employment Services Code of Practice. This Code of Practice sets out the principles and standards that underpin the delivery of employment services and other services to increase employment outcomes and participation in economic activities in Australia especially for disadvantaged client groups.

We commit to working with our clients, employees, sub-contractors, and other providers to deliver quality employment services by:

- Ensuring staff have the skills and experience they need to provide quality and culturally sensitive services to job seekers Employers and local communities
- Working in collaborative partnerships with stakeholders and communities to identify needs and how they can be met
- Behaving ethically and acting with honesty, due care and diligence
- Being open and accountable
- Avoiding any practice or activity which a provider could reasonably foresee could bring employment services into disrepute
- Sensitively managing any information collected.

We commit to helping each job seeker find their pathway into employment by:

- Meeting the Service Guarantees
- Tailoring assistance to the job seekers' personal circumstances, skills, abilities and aspirations
- Using available Government funding appropriately to support job seekers
- Treating every job seeker fairly and with respect
- Providing a fair and accessible feedback process.

We commit to assisting Employers meet their skill and labour shortage needs by:

- Working with Employers to identify job and industry specific training needs and how they can be met
- Referring the most appropriately qualified and experienced job seekers available
- Providing a timely response to Employer inquiries.

The Australian Government will support National Panel of Assessors providers in achieving these standards by:

- Evaluating and sharing best practice to enable continuous improvement in the delivery of employment services
- Providing a customer service line on free call 1800 805 260 for job seekers who cannot resolve any concerns or problems they have with their provider. Participants of Disability Employment Services can also contact the free Complaints Resolution and Referral Service on 1800 880 052
- Providing an Employer Hotline on free call
- 13 17 15 for businesses to access providers.

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Inclusive Employment Australia
Finding careers for people with disability

National Panel of Assessors (NPA)
Client Service Guarantee

The Australian Government's Disability Employment National Panel of Assessors provides assessment services to enhance employment participation and support for people with disability. National Panel of Assessors will work cooperatively with clients including people with disability, employers and Disability Employment Service providers. We will:

- explain clearly the purpose of the assessment services, what assessment services you will receive, what we will do for you, and what you have to do
- deliver a professional, confidential and timely service
- treat you fairly and with respect
- ensure the information we provide is current and accurate
- work continually to improve our services
- produce an independent assessment report taking into consideration information obtained during the conduct of the assessment.

What can you expect?

We will work with you to conduct the following assessments:

- Ongoing Support Assessment for Participants of the Disability Employment Services program
- Supported Wage System Assessment

Prior to conducting the assessment we will:

- explain the purpose and procedure for the assessment
- make arrangements to meet with you to conduct the assessment
- agree any special requirements for the assessment, including access to the worksite, WHS requirements and interpreters
- answer any questions about the assessment
- obtain information that may help us to understand your employment requirements and prepare for the assessment.
- provide our contact details to you and be available to answer questions relating to each assessment that we conduct.

When we conduct the assessment, we will:

- describe the steps involved in the assessment.
- discuss the relevant work tasks, and any issues that impact on performing those tasks
- behave in a manner that is not obstructive or stressful
- respect you and the work environment
- record appropriate information that relates to the assessment and that will assist us in preparing the assessment report
- ensure that your privacy and dignity are maintained.

What are your responsibilities?

If for any reason you are not able to keep an appointment, you should advise us as soon as you can, and we will reschedule the appointment.

To ensure that we provide an effective and efficient assessment service to you, you need to provide current and accurate information to us.

If we visit your worksite to conduct assessment services,the employer should advise us of any special access and WHS requirements.

What happens to what you tell us?

The information we collect from you is only used to complete the assessment.

We will keep all information that you provide in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

If you ask, we will usually be able to show you the information we hold about you. If you have any concerns about the way in which information about you is being managed, you can discuss your concerns with us.

More information about the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) can be obtained from the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner's website at http://www.privacy.gov.au

What can you do if you are not happy with the assessment service?

If you are not satisfied with the way we conducted the assessment service, you should first try to talk to us.

We will provide a feedback process that is fair, and we will try to resolve your concerns – contact us on 1300 678 272 or by emailing complaints@ostara.org.au.

You can also provide feedback and complaints through our website, NPA Feedback & Complaints or access it through the following QR code.

If you feel your complaint is still unresolved, you can contact the following departments for further support.

Ongoing Support Assessments – contact the Australian Government's Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260

Supported Wage System Assessments – contact the Assessment Team on 1800 065 123

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

National Panel of Assessors Privacy Notification and Consent Form

Privacy and your Personal Information

Your personal information is protected by law. Under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (Privacy Act), the Department of Social Services (the Department), its employees, agents, and contracted service providers is regulated in the ways they collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information.

Your National Panel of Assessors provider (Provider) is obligated under the terms of its agreement with the Department to comply with the Privacy Act when collecting, using, and disclosing your personal information collected on behalf of the Department.

Your personal information (including sensitive information) is collected by your Provider and their Assessors, the JobAccess Provider, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the Department for the primary purpose of administering and managing the National Panel of Assessors (NPA) program.

Your personal information is collected and held for different purposes relating to our activities and functions, including:

- Program management – such as administering the NPA program and services (including Ongoing Support Assessments (OSA), Supported Wage System (SWS) Assessments and Workplace Modification Service (WMS) assessments
- an Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) application
- contract management
- handling complaints and public enquiries
- investigations and audits, frauds and compliance.

Information collected

The following categories of personal information (including sensitive information) may be collected:

- your contact details, such as your name, phone number, email address, residential address and postal address
- your personal circumstances
- copies of your identity documents certain identification numbers e.g. your Services Australia Customer Reference Number (CRN)
- your date of birth
- your advocate or nominee's contact details
- your employment status, history and information, such as work experience
- education and training history
- your participation in other employment programs or activities

- your culture and/or ethnic background
- your Australian residency status
- the languages you speak
- your health, disability and medical information
- your workplace tasks and duties
- any help or supports you need
- income support or allowances.

How your personal information will be used and disclosed

Your personal information may be used or disclosed for the purpose of administering and managing the NPA program to provide independent Assessments to support the needs of people with disability in the workplace.

- to verify your identity and information provided
- to provide information to a nominee, interpreter or any other person authorised to act on your behalf
- by your Employment Services Provider or Employer to obtain NPA program services and assessments
- by your NPA provider to conduct OSA, SWS, and WMS assessments
- by the JobAccess Provider to assess and allocate SWS and WMS assessments
- as part of EAF applications
- help to manage and resolve complaints made by you
- by the Department to undertake fraud, compliance, reporting, evaluations or other regulatory functions as required by law and the NPA program to ensure the integrity of the program
- to manage and process payments for Providers and Assessors
- by the DEWR to provide ICT support services on JobAccess Secure and Workforce Australia Online
- include you in surveys or research conducted by the Department or on behalf of the Department
- support broader research and policy development being undertaken by Government agencies or other organisations and third parties (such as Universities) to better understand and meet the needs of persons with disability
- undertake other functions authorised or required by law, including but not limited to the Social Security Act 1991, the Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023 and the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

Your personal information may be collected from, and disclosed to, third parties, including:

- Inclusive Employment Australia providers, JobAccess Provider or other employment service providers
- Health care professionals including NPA Assessors, JobAccess Professional Advisors or other qualified health and allied health professionals, including those conducting assessments
- actual and potential employers
- the Department, Services Australia, the DEWR, their respective contracted service providers, and their respective portfolio ministers
- other Commonwealth agencies, or entities as necessary, authorised or required by law

- contracted providers of government agencies or other entities and services funded to provide services as part of NPA program, JobAccess, the National Customer Service line, the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service, and any other complaint and query handling and service delivery bodies
- a nominee, interpreter or any other person authorised to act on your behalf or provide services to you in relation to the NPA program
- Government agencies (including their contracted service providers) and other organisations and third parties (for example, Universities) collecting data for research, policy development, delivery of services and reporting purposes.

Your personal information may also be used by the Department or given to other parties where you have agreed, or where it is otherwise permitted, including where it is required or authorised by or under and Australian law, such as social security law, a court or tribunal order, or where a duty of care exists.

Consequences of not providing personal information

If you do not provide some or all your personal information, you may not be able to receive services under the NPA program suited to your needs, and you may ultimately be prevented from receiving services as part of the NPA program.

Withdrawing consent

You can withdraw consent at any time. Talk to your NPA assessor about how to do this. Please note, not providing personal information and withdrawing your consent may limit the services your assessor can offer, and you may ultimately be prevented from receiving services as part of the NPA Program.

Further Information

The Department of Social Services website contains more information about the NPA program and how your information will be handled.

The Department's Privacy Policy contains more information about the way the Department will manage your personal information, including information about how you may access your personal information held by the Department and NPA, and update your details. The Privacy Policy also contains information on how you can complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how the Department will deal with such a complaint.

The Department's Privacy Policy is available on the Department's website: Privacy Policy. You can also request a copy from the Department via email at enquires@dss.gov.au.
If you have any questions about this document, you may reach out to your NPA Provider or contact the Department at:
Email: complaints@dss.gov.au
Call: 1800 634 035

Write to: DSS Feedback
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601