

Wide Bay services to support young people living with disability into meaningful work

yourtown's Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, and South Burnett teams will soon welcome a new group of young people through their doors—those living with disability—thanks to its selection as a provider of the Australian Government's new Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) program.

From 1 November 2025, the Bundaberg, Pialba, and Kingaroy sites will support up to 375 young people aged 15–24 living with disability to prepare, find, and thrive in employment through a strengths-based, youth-first model of support that's tailored to each individual.

yourtown Business Manager, Cheryl Graffunder said the program is about seeing the young person first—not the barrier, not the label.

"Disability is just one part of a young person's story, and our services are designed to empower, not define," Ms Graffunder said.

"We're excited to extend our support to even more young people across the Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, and South Burnett regions, especially those who've often been overlooked or underestimated when it comes to employment."

The program replaces the former Disability Employment Services (DES) and reflects a reformed national approach to inclusive employment.

yourtown already delivers the Transition to Work (TtW) program and has a strong history of supporting local young people to build their skills, confidence and independence. The new IEA stream will sit alongside TtW, offering extra support for young people living with disability as they navigate the path to employment.

"It's not just about finding a job—it's about finding *the right* job for each young person," Ms Graffunder said.

"That means discovering their interests and passions, harnessing their skills, and building the confidence and practical tools they need to succeed. Because it can be tough finding work—and even tougher finding something that fits their personality, strengths, and goals. That's where we come in."

Young people will have access to personalised coaching and job readiness support, life skills development, confidence-building activities, inclusive employer engagement and job matching, and tailored mentoring and post-placement assistance.

They'll also be connected to training, education and wraparound community services—all delivered in a welcoming youth-friendly space where food, music, social connection and safety are part of the experience.

"Every young person has potential. They just need the right support—and a community that believes in them," Ms Graffunder said.

yourtown also focuses on creating strong partnerships with local employers.

"We care about the businesses we work with just as much as the young people," she said.

"We take the time to understand what kind of employee a business is looking for, match them with job-ready candidates, and stay involved with post-placement support to make sure it works for everyone."

If you know a young person who could benefit, or you want to help create inclusive opportunities, **yourtown** would love to hear from you.

"We're calling on the whole of the Wide Bay region to get behind this, because we know that the best outcomes happen when we work together—families, schools, employers and services—so young people feel supported at every step," Ms Graffunder said.

Here's how the community can get involved:

- Families and carers: If you're supporting a young person with disability, reach out to **yourtown** Bundaberg, Pialba, or Kingaroy to learn how they can help.
- Schools and community groups: **yourtown** welcomes partnerships and referrals to ensure students get early support—even while still at school.
- Local businesses: If you're interested in creating inclusive job opportunities, **yourtown** can help you build roles that work for everyone—and support success on both sides.

For more information, visit www.yourtown.com.au/employment or contact

- Bundaberg: 4335 2400
- Pialba: 4136 7100
- Kingaroy: 3462 4170.

Media Contact

For more information or to arrange a media interview, please contact Jessica Tatzenko, **yourtown** Media & Communications Specialist.



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