



# CONNECT50

- 
- > TALENT
  - > CONFIDENCE
  - > INCLUSION

Connect50 is an exciting new initiative for employers in regional Victoria which delivers the advantages of engaging skilled and talented university and TAFE students with disability.

“Connect50 puts power in the hands of employers to progress the economic participation of people with disability and discover ways to build disability confidence and capability across their business.”

**Suzanne Colbert AM**, CEO of the Australian Network on Disability

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# ABOUT CONNECT50

**Connect50 represents a unique opportunity for employers across Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Latrobe Valley to:**

- > **build disability confidence**
- > **tap into a pool of talented candidates with disability**
- > **realise the benefits of a more diverse workforce**

This initiative is part of the Victorian Government's *Every opportunity: Victoria's economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2020*.

The Australian Network on Disability (AND) was selected to deliver the project. AND will work closely with employers to identify their recruitment goals, eliminate potential barriers and equip them with tools and guidance to effectively recruit and support candidates with disability in paid internship positions.

## **THE BENEFITS**

Studies show that organisations that participate in targeted internship programs are 4.5 times more likely to hire a person with disability.

Connect50 gives managers the opportunity to:

- > develop skills in managing and supporting employees with disability

- > play an integral role in developing disability confidence across their organisation
- > gain first-hand experience in implementing workplace adjustments
- > work with their intern to develop inclusive work practices for the whole team

For interns, Connect50 can be a life-changing experience that facilitates an enhanced and sustainable pathway to employment. It will provide 'real world' work experience and a supported introduction to the workplace. Working in a team, understanding workplace practice, identifying and developing strengths, honing skills and receiving feedback on performance are essential for building a successful career.

## **WHAT IS INVOLVED?**

Organisations that participate in Connect50 commit to engaging a university or TAFE student with disability in their team for a minimum of 152 hours of paid work. A supervisor and buddy should be assigned to the intern for the duration. The internships usually take place during the winter and summer semester breaks.

**“The Victorian Government is committed to giving people with disability every opportunity to reach their potential, and to have a fair chance to work, study and make their way in business. All Victorians have much to gain from a more inclusive approach and better economic participation opportunities for people with disability”**

**The Hon. Martin Foley MP**

Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing



## THE DETAILS

To support your success and attract the best candidates for your business, AND will meet with you to gain an understanding of your workplace and recruitment goals. Following this discussion, we'll ask you to provide a job description for each of the internships on offer, including:

- > the area/business unit the intern will be working in
- > the location of the office
- > an indication of some of the tasks the intern will perform
- > the type(s) of degree that would be relevant to the role, e.g. finance, engineering, communications, etc.

Candidates will be screened and shortlisted by AND. We'll support you to conduct a formal interview and selection process.

## PROVEN SUCCESS

Connect50 is based on the enormous success of our Stepping Into™ internship program, which proves the many and sustainable benefits of a demand-led approach to employment of people with disability. Over 1000 interns have participated in Stepping Into™ since its inception in 2005. Here are examples of the type of feedback we've received about Stepping Into™ :

“The objective behind these internships was to provide young people with disability the opportunity to obtain invaluable work experience and kick-start their transition from studies to employment, and to also provide us with extra resources to deliver important pieces of work. We have definitely had a ‘win-win’ and achieved both objectives, and that’s a credit to our intern’s great attitude and also the fantastic way that the program was run by AND.”

**Garrath Vella**  
Stepping Into™ Supervisor at Telstra

“I had an amazing experience being a Stepping Into™ intern at Australia Post. Not only was I given the opportunity to work in the field I was interested in, I was able to build good relationships with my colleagues and learned a lot within a short period of time. Not many would consider a corporate work life fun, but I would like to think so! Thank you for having me as part of the program”

**Thu Diana Nguyen**  
Stepping Into™ Intern at Australia Post

## KEY DATES\*

Action	Summer	Winter
Expressions of interest	September	February
Position details confirmed	October	March
Shortlist provided by AND	November	May
Internships commence	Dec/Jan/Feb	July/August

\*Dates can be flexible. Speak to AND about alternative timeframes.

## **What does it cost?**

Connect50 is funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services until Winter 2020. There is no cost to participate, but the employing organisation is responsible for paying the intern's pro rata salary for the internship period (including superannuation).

## **Can we employ our intern for more than 152 hours?**

Absolutely. The program is designed to be flexible and to run in alignment with the university holidays in winter (July) and summer (December, January, February). The winter break is typically no longer than four weeks, so we recommend that longer placements run through the summer break.

## **What support do supervisors get throughout the program?**

AND liaises with supervisors throughout the program to provide support and guidance on any questions that arise. All supervisors are also provided with a copy of our practical 'Connect50 Supervisor's Guide', full of helpful information and additional resources.

## **How are the interns sourced?**

AND attracts eligible students through the Careers and Disability units at all Australian universities and TAFEs. All candidates attend a compulsory briefing session as part of our screening process, and eligibility is confirmed prior to shortlisting.

## **How are interns prepared?**

AND provides a briefing session to all students who apply. The briefing session enables us to determine the candidates' readiness for an internship and their suitability for available positions. AND does not shortlist applicants who have not attended a briefing session or who do not meet the eligibility requirements of your organisation.

## **Does AND check applicants' references?**

No, checking references is the responsibility of the host organisation.

## **Does AND provide training for the interns?**

No, all training, including induction training and specific workplace training, is the responsibility of the host organisation.

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## **Australian Network on Disability**

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**[www.connect50.org.au](http://www.connect50.org.au)**

## **GET INVOLVED**

To discuss how your organisation can get involved in this exciting project, contact Emma Henningsen:

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