

A diverse range of options

By Jade Wittmann

PEOPLE with a disability are an untapped resource in the job market, Nova Employment Rouse Hill manager Bernie Davey believes.

In 12 months the service has helped 18 people with a disability find meaningful employment, eight of them in traineeships ranging from hospitality, to business administration, retail, childcare and horticulture.

"We've put people into work in a very diverse range of industries that shows how diverse the people that we have on our books are and the skills they bring with them," Mr Davey said.

"Gone are the days where a disability meant a person was handicapped or in a wheelchair.

"Disability can mean so many things and employers are just beginning to realise that here is an untapped labour market."

Mr Davey said clients may have physical and intellectual disabilities, mental health issues or learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

"We talk about labour shortages and everybody having to work longer and an ageing workforce," he said.



Opportunity: Nova Employment consultant Debbie Black and manager Bernie Davey with client Jamila Popal.

Picture: Mike Sea

"Here we've got quite capable people that can fill these positions.

"There are people who have a severe disability and there are other services for those that are not quite capable of going into open employment.

"The people we deal with are quite capable of getting a job and working beside people without a disability."

Mr Davey said saving on recruitment costs and reliable staff were among the benefits for employers sourcing workers from the service.

"They're not paying to advertise the job or spending time interviewing numerous

candidates that may or may not be suitable," he said.

"They can come to us and say this is the sort of person we're looking for."

Mr Davey said both employers and the job-seekers have the organisation's support.

"We don't just leave them in the job, we support them and make sure everybody is happy.

"That's why we get good job retention rates at 84 per cent."

Nova Employment is at Suite 105, Level 1, The Cut-away, Rouse Hill Town Centre. Details: 8814 5076.