

# FROM SCHOOL TO WORK HOW TO ACHIEVE A SMOOTH TRANSITION

**Transitioning from school to work can be a stressful time for young people with disability and their families, however with the right planning and research it needn't be a headache. Link asked the chief executive of Nova Employment Martin Wren to give us his tips on achieving a smooth transition.**

What makes for successful transition from school student into supported employment? The answer centres on the ability of the disability employment service (DES) provider to meet the needs of the would-be worker and here it's a case of doing your homework and finding the program that's right for you.

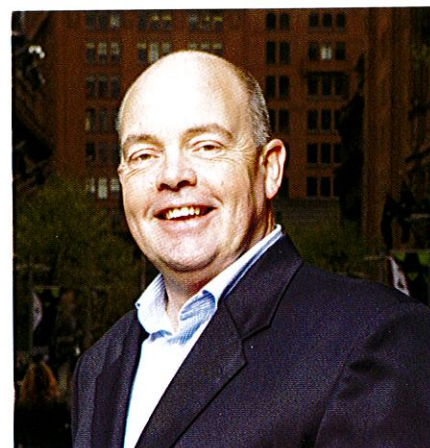
Providers can be found across Australia ([www.jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders)) and services are ranked from one 'star'


(not so hot) through to five 'star' on the basis of their relative success. You can only be registered with one provider so it pays to do your homework.

My biggest advice is to ask questions! Things like - how many people with a particular disability have you placed into employment in the last six months; what sort of work; how many hours a week; do you use incentives to gain work; what's the average length of employment; how many hours a week on average; and are employment conditions generally permanent, part-time or casual?

Make a list of the things that are important for you and get empowered, there's generally at least one other choice in every community and you don't want to waste time with a program that isn't right for you.

The most important thing for anyone



leaving school and making the move into supported employment is: don't waste time! The habits of schooling, like getting there on time, only taking scheduled breaks and following instructions are valuable qualities in employees but, if not reinforced, are lost over time. 

## BRENDAN TEES OFF

**Matthew Bailey, from Lynwood Country Club in New South Wales, says employing a person with disability has been great for morale.**

"Employing Brendan has been a really positive experience for the work shed," says Matthew. "The boys are proud of giving a young kid a go who might otherwise not have been given a chance to work. He's been great for team morale."

Lynwood Country Club employed Brendan through Nova Employment, who contacted the Club when they advertised for a groundsman.

"As soon as we identified the jobs that Brendan could do well, his confidence increased and he became a valuable team member," says Matthew.

Brendan works 20 hours a week over five days. His tasks include collecting the driving-range balls, brush-cutting bunker edges and setting up the course, such as moving markers.

"From my experience I'd recommend employers in my field employ Nova-placed workers," says Matthew. "You just have to be flexible and make sure you identify the roles the person can do."

Brendan says his new role makes him feel more confident and responsible.

"My life is much better now because I am doing something every day," he says. "I love my job because it is outside, I couldn't be cramped up in an office all day."

NOVA Employment's Transition to Work program enables trainees to participate in



a nationally recognised training program, provide exposure to a wide range of employment options and links participants with a highly effective employment program. 