

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING PEOPLE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Darren Hedley, PhD

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DISCLAIMER

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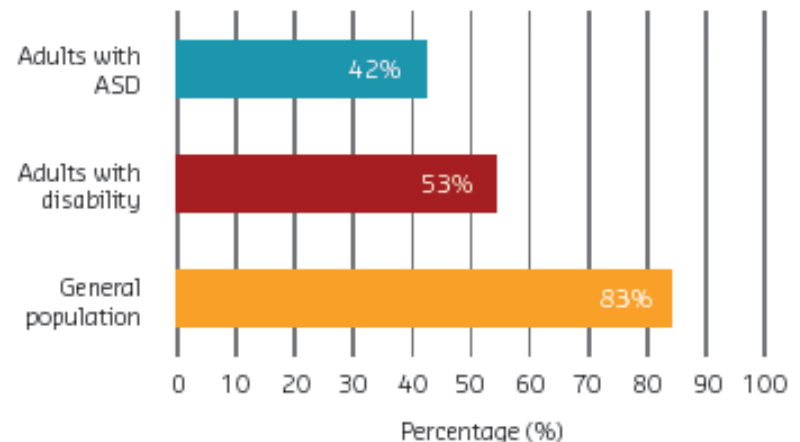
- ❖ DXC Technology
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BACKGROUND

- 164,000 Australians have autism (ABS, 2017)
- Lowest labour force participation rates (40.8%) (ABS, 2017)
- Cost of autism is AUD \$8.1 – 11.2 billion (Synergies Economic Consulting, 2011)
- Reducing employment gap between people with and without disabilities would result in rise to GDP of 0.85% (Deloitte Access Economics, 2011)
- Workforce participation provides social inclusion, economic independence, improved health and well-being to individual
- Increasing diversity within workforce may lead to broad organisational benefits

Figure 1 Labour force participation in Australia for people with ASD, people with a disability and the general population



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Autism in Australia, 2012. Canberra: ABS, 2014.

AIMS

- Identify potential benefits of employing people on the autism spectrum
 - Individual
 - Family
 - Organisation
 - Economy

METHOD

- Focus groups or 1-to-1 interviews
 - Trainees ($n = 21$)
 - Family members ($n = 6$)
 - Co-workers ($n = 42$)
- DHS co-worker survey ($n = 188$)
- Economic analysis

INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS

- **Sense of purpose**

*“...**the job provides a purpose** [...] a challenge, it's a positive challenge like the puzzle that's continually ahead of you [...] you're looking forward to getting up in the morning to go to work.”*

- **Contribution**

*“...he can be **a contributing member** to the household [...] it's massive to his self-esteem and his ability to say he can better himself, and that he has more potential than he realizes [...] he has got a very positive out-look about his future now...”*

*“...instead of becoming a financial burden, I actually **became a significant augmentation to the house income.**”*

- **Financial independence**

*“In my previous job I was getting paid the minimum wage [...] which wasn't much, barely enough to live on [...] I was barely able to keep my car serviced [...] but this one I was able to have a lot more money to **become more independent**”*

INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS cont'd

- **Self-belief**

*“...it has shown that **I can do anything**, anything regardless of my diagnosis [...] the Dandelion Program's given me a lot of things to believe in [...] anything is possible and I can do anything...”*

- **Self-esteem**

*“...with me, the change for me has been [to] **greatly increase [my] self-esteem** relating to other people...”*

- **Pride**

*“It has certainly been great to have **a cool job that you can talk about with all your friends and associates** rather than [...] the alternatives there being that you're [...] on unemployment benefits and stuff like that...”*

FAMILY BENEFITS

- Financial

*“...**he has bought a house** and moved out of home...”*

- Adaptive skills

*“...he’s [...] **more capable of going places**, getting himself to places, jumping on the transport and just going to town, and going to wherever he wants...”*

- Motivation

*“...he sets two alarms because he likes to stay in bed but I don't get him up by quarter-to, **he does get himself up....**”*

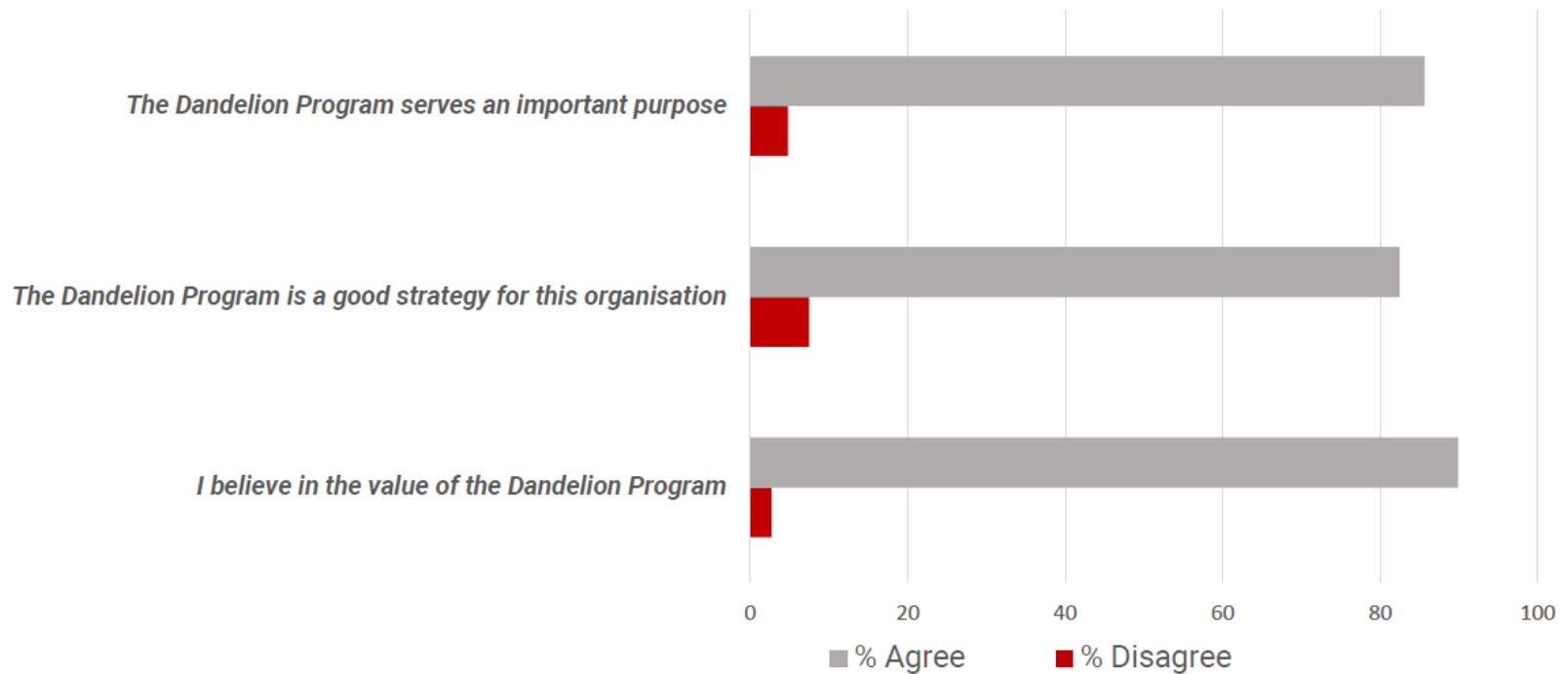
- Quality of life

*“At one point [...] **we hardly had ever gone [out] on our own** [...] we were at the point of actually cancelling our wedding anniversary. **We are able to now** and we would be more comfortable in [going out] now if we choose to...”*

ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS

Figure 1.

Co-worker perceptions of the value of the *Dandelion Employment Program* to the organisation (n = 188 responses)

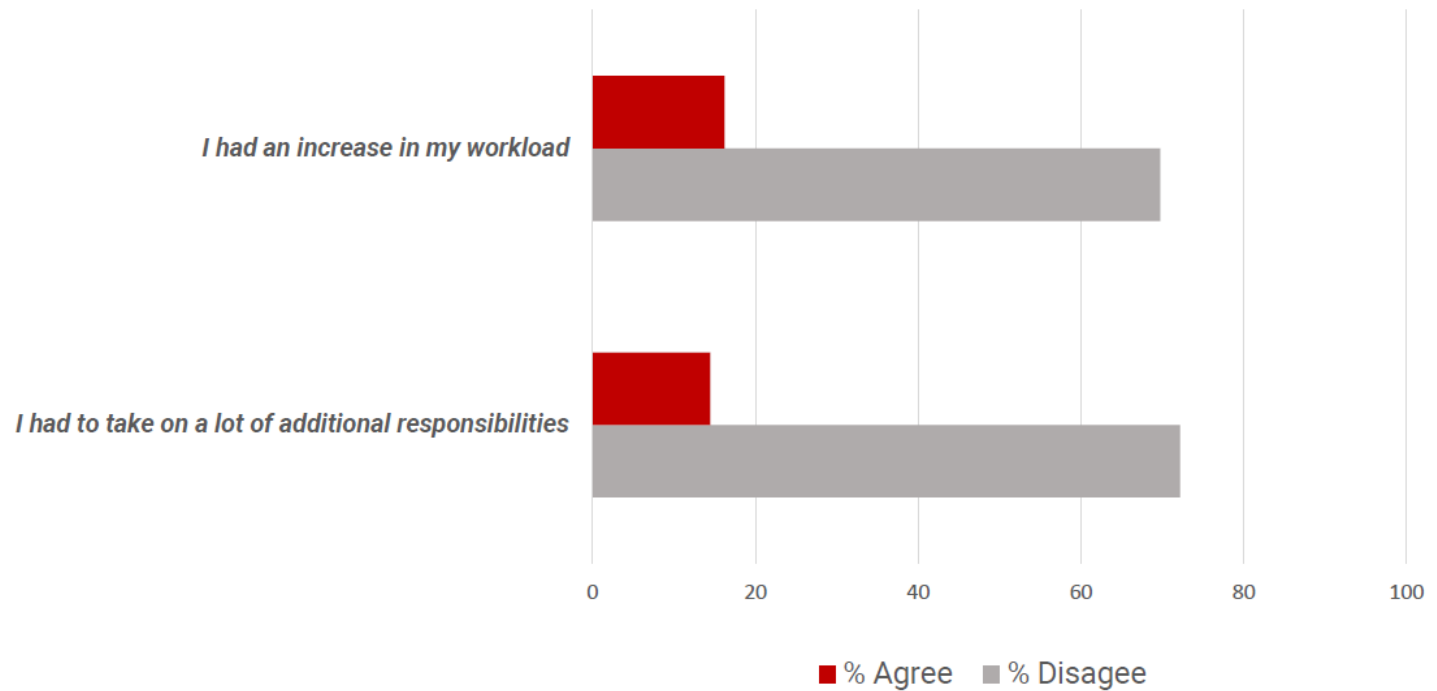


ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS cont'd

Figure 2.

Co-worker perceptions regarding impact on their own work resulting from implementation of the *Dandelion Employment Program*

(n = 187 responses)



ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS cont'd

*“Talking to other staff **I've heard only good things**. I think it's a great program...”*

*“I'm a massive supporter of the Dandelion project. **It fits with our culture of inclusivity and diversity...**”*

*“I've always known that DHS is a supporter of diversity and our culture is of inclusivity. To me personally I'm very happy that the Dandelions are here. **They give us an extra length and breadth...**”*

*“**I like what its vision is**, I guess for the future [...] it's a great opportunity for the men and women that have been involved...”*

*“They've actually helped sharpen up some of the thought processes amongst the teams. **They'll ask questions where others fear to tread...**”*

*“I feel like **I'm working for a happier place...**”*

*“**I'm always proud to say that I work in an organisation that accepts diversity** and in fact looks at it as an advantage...”*

INNOVATION, PRODUCTIVITY, & PERFORMANCE

*“...the quality of the work that that team did for testing was absolutely fantastic [...] focused, driven, competitive in a good way [...] I have some comparative data to be able to compare that to in terms of previous projects and testing results that we've achieved. **It was very, very good quality.**”*

*“...much of the process is quite repetitive and some of the Dandelion staff have actually built tools that we can use whilst we're performing our job and that's actually **made my job easier.**”*

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS

- Economic modelling of current Dandelion DHS implementation
 - **38 individuals** started program, 30 remain (79%)
 - Reasons for leaving: Graduate program in DHS ($n = 2$), external competitive employment ($n = 1$), return to study ($n = 1$), did not pass probation ($n = 1$), personal reasons for leaving ($n = 3$)
 - Previous employment HX = part time, 12 hrs/week (median)
 - Current = 30 hrs/week (average)
- Government savings over 3 years (58% baseline unemployment, average work hours, previous employment, education)
 - Welfare savings = **AUD \$550,592**
 - Tax gains = **AUD \$712, 868**
 - Unemployment services savings = **AUD \$102,600**
 - **Total savings = AUD \$1.4 million over 3 years**

SUMMARY

- Impacts exist on multiple systemic and inter-related dimensions, including the individual, family, organisation, and community.
- We identified and provided support for benefits to the individual, their family, the organisation and colleagues at work, and savings to the government.
- Each employee on the autism spectrum brings a unique set of skills to the workforce leading to unique opportunities to organisations that are willing to support and embrace diversity @ work.
- Our results provide a framework for future research assessing the benefits of increasing employment opportunities for those on the autism spectrum, who have traditionally been disadvantaged in obtaining meaningful employment.

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PUBLICATIONS

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