

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED: Midnight 15 April 2010

Ability Options Offers Australia's Largest Population of Aboriginal Job Seekers Unique Equal Employment Opportunities for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island People Living With a Disability

Today, Ability Options Employment which offers specialised employment services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people with a disability and non-indigenous clients (predominantly from multi cultural backgrounds), will officially open its doors to the community of Mt Druitt and surrounding suburbs in the Outer Western Suburbs of Sydney bringing exciting equal employment opportunities to clients.

In its mission to provide people with disabilities with better opportunities enabling them to enhance their lifestyles and achieve their goals, Ability Options has been working with people with a disability for more than 30 years in the areas of lifestyle, accommodation, employment, well-being and independent living.

At a ceremony featuring Aboriginal and multi-cultural entertainment including a didgeridoo spectacular, performances by Cook Island and Indian bands as well as a youth orientated Rap music performance, the official opening of the Ability Options Employment service at Mt Druitt will also be celebrating a high success rate having increased job seeker numbers by approximately 200 job seekers in its initial two month period of operation from 1 March 2010.

Ability Options Chief Executive Officer, Matt Donnelly said, "In 2009, we were very fortunate to have been offered a temporary office within the premises of the Western Sydney Aboriginal Corporation in Minchinbury to kick start services to Aboriginal people who have a disability.

"In establishing a full time office in Mt Druitt, this is a natural progression built on the great results our clients have achieved," Mr Donnelly said.

Having won a tender from the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to establish the new office located in Mt Druitt (and another in Seven Hills and Katoomba), Ability Options Employment will provide a specialised indigenous employment service for job seekers for people of Outer Western Sydney.

With Penrith Council statistics demonstrating that this Employment Service Area (as designated by DEEWR) has the highest population of Aboriginal job seekers in Australia, Ability Options are keen to continue to deliver quality outcomes for both job seekers and employers.

"Job outcomes mean the world to our staff and we thank DEEWR for their recognition of our performance to date and for their recent awarding of a new employment contract to us.

"We are very grateful to the Corporation and to local Elders for welcoming us to Mt Druitt. We won't let you down," Mr Donnelly said.

The service offers employment opportunities across multiple industry types in hospitality, retail as well as trades where Ability Options also encourage traineeships and apprenticeships which qualify to receive funding under the indigenous wage subsidies for employers program.

Ability Options Employment is also focussed on engaging support from the business community in Outer Western Sydney by providing superior job placement services to ensure employers gain the best possible candidates for jobs in companies from Small to Medium Enterprises and larger corporations offering employment across a variety of skill bases and workplace environments.

Penny Noble, Manager of Ability Options Employment Mt Druitt said, "We believe in our goal of being the best performing employment agency in the country by delivering quality outcomes for Australian citizens living with a disability and we are proud to deliver the highest quality service to the people and businesses of this large region," said Ms Noble.

"It has been proven that people with disabilities have higher retention rates and are safer in regard to OHS in the workplace and our service offers employers good, quality staff who often outperform those recruited through conventional methods.

"The team at Ability Options also aim to dispel the myth of 'disability' and barriers while giving individuals the opportunity to prove their abilities and the valuable contribution they bring to the community not just in the workplace, but in their world.

"But the most rewarding outcome is in improving the quality of life for the people we work with, both job seekers and employers.

"Through building partnerships with organisations to provide education and training and employment opportunities, we offer sustainable employment pathways and more importantly a better quality of life for our clients," Ms Noble said.

Districts in Western Sydney serviced by Ability Options Employment include: Mt Druitt-St Marys, Blacktown, Rouse Hill, Penrith, Hills Shire and Parramatta. For more information about Ability Options Employment services or to speak to an employment consultant about recruitment opportunities, please call: **Free Call 1800 447 427**

ENDS

Media Event Details

Date: Friday 16th April 2010
Time: 12noon – 3:00pm
Venue: Shop 11c, Zoe Place, Mount Druitt - (Car park off Ralph Place)

Interview & Photograph Opportunities Include:

Matt Donnelly - Chief Executive Officer Ability Options
Penny Noble - Manager Ability Options Employment Services Mt Druitt
Christine Leddy – Ability Options Divisional Manager
Ability Options clients and staff from all areas of Outer Western Sydney

Media RSVP

To attend the event or to arrange an interview or photograph opportunity, please contact Insight Communications for more information, photographs or to arrange interviews with:

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JOURNALIST NOTES



ABOUT ABILITY OPTIONS EMPLOYMENT

Objectives

- Find, secure and maintain employment for people with a disability that matches their interests, skills and abilities
- Provide an individually tailored employment program aimed at providing support whilst working towards independence
- We support job seekers, workers and employers to achieve their goals.
- We believe in being totally accountable to our funding body, our clients and the community we exist to serve

Delivering a Valuable Service to the Community

Ability Options Employment is important not only to people with disability but to anyone who has significant barriers in finding, securing and maintaining employment. We have found that once our job seekers are placed in employment their confidence grows and they are motivated to improve other areas of their life. We believe there is no greater achievement in life than gaining independence and being responsible for one's own life.

Unique, All Inclusive Program

Ability Options Employment is unique from other providers because we provide an all inclusive program where, although the ultimate aim is to find and maintain employment, all areas of life are addressed and support is provided according to each individual's needs.

This is because we understand it is difficult to maintain employment when there are issues that need to be addressed in other areas of the people's lives. We recruit staff members from a number of different backgrounds, cultures and work experience so our job seekers always receive the highest quality service provided by a case manager that they feel comfortable to work with.

We build valuable relationships with large corporations to educate them on recruiting people with disability and fulfil their corporate social responsibility requirements.

Closing the Gap for Indigenous, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

We work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop strong links with their communities and work closely with Aboriginal Elders and our Aboriginal staff to ensure all support networks are established to guarantee success.

Working alongside people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal people is about 'closing the gap' and building bridges to make a difference in our community.

We also work toward '*Halving the education and work opportunity gap between indigenous and non-indigenous young people. Having now begun the process of accepting our shared responsibility for past failures, we now need to focus on developing our joint capacity for success.*' **Ass Prof. Dodson**

WESTERN SYDNEY SUBURBS WHERE SERVICES ARE OFFERED

Acacia Gardens	Dean Park	Kingswood	Parklea	St Marys East
Arndell Park	Dharruk	Lalor Park	Pemulwuy	St Marys South
Baulkham Hills	Doonside	Lethbridge Park	Pendle Hill	Stanhope Gardens
Beaumont Hills	Eastern Creek	Llandilo	Plumpton	The Ponds
Bella Vista	Emerton	Maraylya	Prospect	Toongabbie
Berkshire Park	Girraween	Marayong	Quakers Hill	Toongabbie East
Bidwill	Glendenning	Marsden Park	Riverstone	Tregear
Blackett	Glendenning Dc	Mays Hill	Rooty Hill	Vineyard
Blacktown	Glenwood	Minchinbury	Ropes Crossing	Wentworthville
Blacktown Westpoint	Greystanes	Mount Druitt	Rouse Hill	Werrington
Box Hill	Hassall Grove	Mount Druitt Village	Schofields	Werrington County
Cambridge Gardens	Hebersham	Nelson	Seven Hills	Werrington Downs
Cambridge Park	Huntingwood	North St Marys	Seven Hills West	Westmead
Claremont Meadows	Kellyville	Oakhurst	Shalvey	Whalan
Colebee	Kellyville Ridge	Oakville	Shanes Park	Willmot
Colyton	Kings Langley	Old Toongabbie	South Wentworthville	Winston Hills
Constitution Hill	Kings Park	Oxley Park	St Marys	Woodcroft

ABOUT ABILITY OPTIONS

For more than 30 years Ability Options have provided a range of quality options for people with a disability and is recognised as being the best service provider in Australia ensuring people with disabilities have better opportunities to enhance their lifestyles and achieve their goals.

With the focus on lifestyle, accommodation, employment, well-being and independent living, the services Ability Options provides are tailored to meet the needs of individuals living throughout NSW.

Ability Options Provides Support For:

- Individuals
- Families with children with disabilities
- Families to work with their son or daughter, friends and their local community to plan and design programs that will meet their needs and create greater resilience allowing clients to live their lives with confidence and resilience
- New parents who have a son or daughter with a disability to create plans to give them an early start in life
- Long term accommodation assistance enabling people to live fulfilling lives in their local communities

Ability Options Services Include:

- **Employment** - Offering a high success rates in assisting people to get the job of their choice in the open market
- **Community Lifestyles** – Case Management and Self Management programs promoting independent, quality lifestyles
- **Client Development and Training** – Independent Living skills and Transition to Work programs
- **Accommodation Services** – Enables people to live independently in their own homes
- **Wholesale Nursery** – Provides employment and training opportunities