



## Media Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **EnABLED Business Program: A Milestone in Inclusive Employment Attains Success**

Spinal Life Australia, a leading advocate for disability inclusion, is thrilled to announce the triumphant completion of the EnABLED Business Program pilot, a pioneering initiative designed to foster confidence and capacity among businesses to attract, employ, and retain individuals with disabilities as valued team members.

The EnABLED Businesses Program was a first-of-its-kind endeavour in Queensland and proudly funded by the Queensland Government. It encompassed a comprehensive approach featuring knowledge enhancement, training for deeper understanding, and one-on-one mentoring to develop practical strategies. This multi-faceted approach has shown exceptional promise in achieving concrete outcomes, including increased labour market participation for people with disabilities and enhanced business resilience.

The pilot program, which was initiated in Moreton Bay, provided a robust testing ground to measure its efficacy prior to a broader implementation. A total of 145+ businesses were engaged through various channels including email outreach, phone consultations, and face-to-face meetings at conferences and events. Out of these, an impressive thirty-six businesses actively participated in the pilot, supported by key stakeholders including Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism, the Department of Youth Justice Employment Small Business and Training, Regional Development Australia Moreton Bay, and City of Moreton Bay.

Dane Cross, Senior Advisor - Access & Advocacy at Spinal Life Australia, praised the participating businesses.

"We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the businesses that embraced this program. Your efforts are instrumental in creating a more inclusive and equitable workforce. Together, we are building a future where every individual, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive in the workplace."

Natassia Wheeler, CEO of Moreton Bay Region Industry & Tourism, emphasized the city's commitment to inclusivity.

"The City of Moreton Bay is rapidly gaining recognition as one of the most liveable regions in Southeast Queensland. We are proud of the strides we are taking, alongside the wider

community, to enhance accessibility and inclusiveness. The EnABLED Business Program is a testament to our collective dedication towards a more inclusive future."

Brendan Somerville, Business Inclusion and Diversity Officer for Spinal Life Australia is proud of the outcomes achieved by the pilot program.

"Throughout the EnABLED Business Program 2022-2023 I used my life experience as a person living well with Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus and my Human Resources skills to Mentor my peers in business and to provide support to their staff to develop inclusive customer and or employee practices."

"I am most proud of the fact that the program helped Businesses to realise the potential of staff with Disabilities and that fourteen new jobs were created during this project for people with Disabilities across the Moreton Bay Region."

### **Noteworthy achievements from the EnABLED Business Pilot include:**

Twenty-Two Businesses proactively implemented recommended workplace improvements suggested by the Business Inclusion and Diversity Officer. These enhancements ranged from upgraded signage to the procurement of bed raisers and more.

Eleven Businesses pledged to adopt more inclusive policies after consulting the provided Inclusive Policies checklist. Remarkably, one business even incorporated a Ted Talk addressing the management of low expectations into their induction process.

### **Additional Program Highlights:**

Research findings indicate that 75% of respondents acknowledged that the EnABLED Business Service delivered immediate, actionable Access and Inclusion Recommendations.

Furthermore, 66.6% of participants conducted a self-audit of their worksites and identified areas for improvement that they believe can be rectified within the next 12 months

For further information about the EnABLED Business Program or to explore opportunities for partnership, please contact:

Dane Cross

Senior Advisor – Access & Advocacy



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Spinal Life Australia

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### ENDS

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### About Moreton Bay Region Industry & Tourism (MBRIT)

Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism (MBRIT) is the official Local Tourism Organisation (LTO) for the City of Moreton Bay. MBRIT is committed to delivering and supporting community initiatives, and promoting the City of Moreton Bay as an enviable and attractive destination.

### About Spinal Life Australia

Spinal Life Australia is a leading advocate and support organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals living with spinal cord damage or related physical disabilities. Through a range of services, resources, and initiatives, Spinal Life empowers individuals to achieve independence, inclusion, and a high quality of life. Their mission is to create a more accessible and equitable society for all.