

Bunbury library bookmarks Daniel Wood's shelving skills

Through the Lighthouse Project initiative, local government authorities are being supported and encouraged to increase employment of people with disability. Daniel Wood's story highlights the benefits of hiring a person with disability.

Daniel Wood has worked at the libraries of the City of Bunbury for 18 years and has his job down to a tee – he is known by his colleagues for his knowledge about literature and speed shelving books.

Before working at the library, Daniel, 43, who has autism, had a job making concrete slabs for around six years.

He then moved into library work, at the library in Withers, and joined the Bunbury Library two years ago.

Daniel receives ongoing weekly visits and support from his Disability Employment Services (DES) provider, Forrest Personnel.

Forrest Personnel Employment Consultant Donna Bastow said that she encouraged potential employers to focus on Daniel's strengths and understand that his literary competence made him a good candidate for library work.

Donna said it was challenging to find employment for people with disability in local government because opportunities were limited.

Once the person had a job, it was important that they discussed any performance, behaviour or expectation issues honestly and openly with their employer and DES provider.

In Daniel's case, when he first started working at the library and needed guidance about work attire or social behaviour, his colleagues were there to help him. This support has helped him develop into a calmer and more personable individual.

"This job has changed his life," Donna said.





Senior Library Officer Michael said new staff enjoy working with Daniel and appreciate how knowledgeable he is about literature and shelving books.

Daniel is one of several people with disability who work for the City of Bunbury. He has established good rapport with many library customers – many of whom leave him news clippings of current affairs that they have discussed.

Michael said Daniel's presence has had a positive effect on other people with disability in the community.

"We have many people with intellectual disability who come into the library and they are so excited to learn that Daniel works in the library too," Michael said.

"Daniel is a positive employee.

"I don't really know that many staff who come in every day and throw 100 per cent into the job. He wants to make sure he gets the job done."

The City of Bunbury is developing additional resources to strengthen staff understanding about working with staff with disability. Among these is a video (funded by a Lighthouse Project grant) for staff to highlight achievements by colleagues with disability and their experience working for the City.