Ability Pathways AUSTRALIA
Neurodiversity Consultants & Advocates

SPEAKER MEDIA KIT 2026

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GUEST PROFILE

Jodie Herbert

Data-Driven Disability Advocacy & Inclusive Employment Consultant & Author

Jodie Herbert is a disability advocate, workplace inclusion strategist and founder of Ability Pathways Australia, helping organisations, carers and people with disability bridge the gap between policy, intention and real-life implementation. After more than two decades in market analytics, Jodie combines her professional expertise with a lifetime of lived experience as a carer, including supporting family members with complex disabilities, to develop practical solutions that help people thrive at work and in everyday life.

Known for combining compassion with rigorous analysis, Jodie does not rely on opinions alone. She has produced detailed evidence-based reports that have contributed to national disability funding discussions, including a 113-page submission to the Australian Senate examining the economic and human impact of proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme reforms. Her work focuses on turning complex challenges into practical systems that organisations, leaders, managers and support networks can realistically implement and sustain.

Central to Jodie's work is The Implementation Gap: the often-overlooked space between what has been promised, planned or agreed and what is required to make it work in practice. Informed by Implementation Science, she examines the less visible conditions that determine whether workplace policies, inclusion strategies and reasonable adjustments succeed or fail during delivery. Her capacity for deep focus allows her to move beyond the main discussion and identify the missing action, responsibility, resource or practical infrastructure sitting quietly in the background.

Jodie helps translate inclusion commitments into everyday workplace practice. This includes identifying hidden barriers affecting performance and retention, improving the implementation of reasonable adjustments, strengthening manager capability and creating clearer systems of responsibility, communication and follow-through.

Jodie believes workplace inclusion is not about doing more. It is about doing things differently, with greater attention to how change will actually be implemented. From supporting employees with disability and improving workplace accessibility to helping organisations retain talented people through simple, meaningful adjustments, she demonstrates how inclusive workplaces can strengthen engagement, productivity, workforce participation and organisational performance.

Whether she is discussing the future of work, the hidden implementation barriers affecting employee retention, disability advocacy or Australia's evolving disability reforms, Jodie brings a unique perspective grounded in lived experience, data and practical implementation. Her conversations leave corporate audiences with a deeper understanding of how closing the gap between intention and delivery can create stronger workplaces, more capable leaders and better outcomes for employees and organisations alike.

Appendix. Speaking topics — full detail

7 speaking topics

01 Australia's new disability reforms could reshape far more than the NDIS

The proposed changes to Australia's National Disability Insurance Scheme are often discussed as a government funding issue, but their impact reaches families, employers, small businesses and the wider economy. After producing a 113-page Senate submission analysing the reforms, Jodie explains why reducing disability supports risks creating far greater economic and social costs than many policymakers recognise. This conversation offers Australian audiences a practical understanding of what's changing, who will be affected, and why the consequences extend well beyond the disability sector.

02 The future of HR belongs to employers who design work for real people

Traditional HR practices were built around the idea that everyone works, learns and communicates in the same way, but today's workforce is more diverse than ever. Jodie introduces the concept of closing the "implementation gap"—the space between good intentions, workplace policies and the reality employees experience every day. She explains how applying practical systems, clear communication and implementation science allows organisations to unlock talent that is too often overlooked.

03 The hidden reason your best employees keep leaving

When organisations see high turnover, they often blame the job market or employee expectations instead of examining whether their workplace is unintentionally pushing capable people away. With one in five people living with disability-and many conditions remaining invisible-Jodie explains why unrecognised workplace barriers are costing businesses far more than they realise. She shares how thoughtful adjustments improve engagement, reduce absenteeism and help organisations become employers people actively want to stay with.

04 Most workplaces don't have an inclusion problem—they have an implementation problem

Many organisations genuinely want to build inclusive workplaces, yet too many reasonable adjustments never make it beyond policy because managers don't know what practical inclusion looks like day to day. Jodie explores why accessibility isn't about expensive renovations or complex programs, but about removing the everyday barriers that quietly prevent talented people from doing their best work. Drawing on years of supporting employers and employees, she demonstrates how simple, practical systems create stronger teams, better retention and more productive workplaces for everyone.

05 What paid work can look like with significant autism

Inclusive employment audiences often talk about disability inclusion without getting specific about people with very high support needs. Jodie's 21-year-old son, who is ASD level 3 and part of a family context that includes non-verbal autism, epilepsy, and alexia, now works 16 hours a week and is paid award wages through an employment model she developed. That example opens a grounded conversation about what has to be designed differently when the goal is real paid work, not token participation.

06 Why flexibility isn't a perk anymore—it's how modern businesses keep exceptional people

Flexible working is often treated as an employee benefit, yet for many people with disability, caring responsibilities or neurodivergence, it's the difference between participating in the workforce or leaving it entirely. Having worked remotely long before it became mainstream while raising children with complex needs, Jodie offers a practical perspective on why trust-based flexibility produces stronger outcomes for both employers and employees. Listeners will discover why measuring performance by results rather than rigid routines creates healthier, more resilient organisations.

07 The review process families cannot afford to misunderstand

Families facing disability support reviews are often expected to translate complex needs into paperwork before anyone explains what is really at stake. The dangerous assumption is that the system will understand daily care, communication, safety, behavior, and family strain without clear evidence. Jodie's review preparation and advocacy work shows why families need to document real-world

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SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

01 You often say workplaces don't have an inclusion problem—they have an implementation problem. What do you mean by that?

02 Why do you believe so many businesses are unknowingly losing talented employees because of invisible disabilities?

03 What's the biggest misconception employers have about making reasonable adjustments in the workplace?

04 You've described flexibility as a business strategy rather than an employee perk. Why is that distinction so important today?

05 How can HR leaders create workplaces that support neurodivergent employees without making the process feel overwhelming or expensive?

06 You introduced the idea of the "implementation gap." Can you explain what that is and why it affects so many organisations?

07 As someone who's been both a lifelong carer and a workplace consultant, what have those experiences taught you about designing work around real people instead of ideal employees?

08 You've completed extensive research into Australia's proposed NDIS reforms. What concerns you most about the direction these changes are taking?

09 Your Senate submission estimated an $86 billion economic impact from the proposed NDIS changes. What did your analysis reveal that isn't being widely discussed?

10 If every CEO, HR leader and business owner listening today could make just one change tomorrow that would improve inclusion and employee retention, what would you tell them to do first?