

## Equine Assisted OT – “Working” with Horses program

Hills Occupational Therapy and Take the Reins Occupational Therapy have collaborated with the HorsePower Hills group to offer a limited number of placements in our 8-week hands-on workplace skills program.

Employability is so much more than having a qualification. You may get a job and be able to perform the work: but if core skills and abilities are challenging your ability to participate within a workplace it is so much more difficult; leading to frustration, compromised work performance and difficulties with co-workers and business customers.

As occupational therapists, Jacqui, and Jane have specialist skills in assisting clients to recognise their employability skills, strengths, and challenges, along with experience and skills in horse management. Based on a 1:1 assessment, we will develop an individualised program and work directly with you to develop skills and strategies to participate more comfortably and effectively to support your current or future work experience, volunteering, or paid employment. Program activities are carried out within a larger group, where you will be given support by the therapists and therapy assistants to develop your skills with 1:1 assistance.

HorsePower Hills group, based in the Mundaring Shire, offers a welcoming venue with a range of practical and motivating activities to practice and refine workplace skills and strategies. HorsePower is a charitable organisation that offers horse-related activities to people who have disabilities and other special needs. Participants in the workplace skills program will need to register as a member for insurance coverage at this venue. As skills and interest allows, opportunities may arise for participants in the work skills program to volunteer at other times, supporting practice of the skills they have learned.

**Our aim is to provide a real-life group-based opportunity for individuals to identify and explore their core work skills, strengths, and challenges; to determine strategies to overcome challenges or identify accommodations; and to develop the skills, capacity & confidence to participate in employment, utilising engaging horse-related activities.**

### Core skills are targeted in the following categories:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem solving skills
- Planning and organisation
- Self-management & personal presentation
- Use of technology & equipment
- Learning and personal development
- Initiative & enterprise
- Work health & safety

## Program structure:

Assessment occurs 1:1 with either Jacqui or Jane, to identify your goals and guide program activities. You will be provided with a Work Experience workbook, and preliminary workplace information will be provided at this point. A suitable time will be negotiated, and the location of this assessment may be at a different location to the Workplace skills program.

Workplace group sessions are anticipated to occur weekly on Tuesday between 5<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 (8 sessions). Sessions last for 3 hours, between 8.30 and 11.30am. *These details may be adjusted by negotiation with the group.*

Each participant is supported by a therapist or therapy assistant on a 1:1 basis for the duration of the group. Participants' individual support workers are welcome to observe sessions to help generalise and practice skills and are required if needed to assist the individual to participate, for example for personal care or communication needs. Groups have a minimum of 3 participants and a maximum of 6.

Each participant also attends 1:1 sessions with Jane or Jacqui for 1 hour per week for self-reflection on their participation in the group, their progress toward goals and assistance with job or work experience seeking activities. These sessions will be negotiated and may occur at a different location to the workplace skills program.

Following the completion of the 8-week program, a report with ongoing strategies and recommendations will be provided. Participants will be presented with a certificate of completion with an outline of the skills they have developed. Referee support for applications for jobs and work experience opportunities will also be available. Within this program, participants may also be afforded the opportunity to work toward horse management certificates and can attain a certificate of attendance in manual tasks relevant to this setting.

## Participants:

- Adolescents and adults who are interested in developing workplace and employability skills in a horse-related setting and activities
- Minimum age 14
- Must pay membership to Horsepower Hills group (personal cost not covered by NDIS funding, approximately \$45 for one term)
- Must be able to **reliably** follow instructions for their own and others' safety
- Be comfortable around animals and outdoor settings – no unmanaged allergies, ok with dust, dirt, bugs, inclement weather
- Be comfortable wearing safety clothing and sun protection
- Please note the following conditions. Further information may be required to manage any of these if they are considered a risk to the participant or others:
  - Risks to breathing or respiration (e.g., allergies, asthma)
  - Chronic joint disorder (e.g., arthritis, joint replacement, arthrogyrosis)
  - Chronic skin or circulation disorders (e.g., loss of sensation, Ehlers-Danlos, hemophilia, amputations, peripheral artery disease, diabetes, vasculitis, chronic venous insufficiency)

- Low bone density (e.g., pathological fractures, osteoporosis, osteogenesis imperfecta, bone cancer)
- Medical devices required for function (e.g., hearing aids, shunt, glasses, oxygen, PEG outlets, nasogastric tubes, pacemakers, internal pumps, indwelling catheters, colostomy bags, orthoses, walker, power or manual wheelchair, crutches/sticks)
- Unexpected loss of consciousness (e.g., epilepsy, blackouts, fainting episodes)
- Muscle or movement disorders (e.g., hypertonia, hypotonia, uncontrolled movements)
- Degenerative or progressive conditions (e.g., rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy)
- Does the participant demonstrate behaviours with potential risk to self or others, including animals (e.g., pathological lying, animal abuse, fire setting, violence of self or others, oppositional behaviours, acute psychosis)
- Experience of trauma or mental health triggers (e.g., history of sexual abuse, domestic violence, harassment or bullying, fear of animals)
- Thermoregulatory disorders
- Eating disorders
- Medication that impacts alertness for working with heavy machinery

## Costs:

This program is a set Program of Support, as such, fees are paid in full **prior** to attending and participants attend the full program. Information for group sessions missed unavoidably will be provided within 1:1 sessions. Costs are shared between the group participants, with the exception of mandatory payment of membership to the Horsepower Hills group. The table below outlines the maximum cost for the 8 sessions, based on the minimum of 3 participants, with more participants decreasing the total cost of the program. Final rates will be provided once applications are received. Application for registration in the program indicates a commitment from which all participant's fees are calculated. Unless there is a waitlist, refunds will not be given and only prior to the program starting.

	rate	Frequency	Cost
2-hour initial assessment, 1:1 with occupational therapist	\$193.99 x2 hours (plus, travel if negotiated to max \$97.00)	One-off	\$387.98 (or \$484.98 with travel)
3-hour Group session with occupational therapist and therapy assistants	\$193.99 x3 hours/3 participants \$56.16 x 3 hours	8 sessions	\$2899.76
1-hour 1:1 session with occupational therapist	\$193.99 x 1 hour (plus travel if negotiated to max \$97.00 per session)	8 sessions	\$1551.92 (or \$2327.88 with travel)
Written report	\$193.99 x3 hours	One off	\$581.97
<b>Total – <u>maximum</u> cost</b>			<b>\$5421.63 (or \$6294.59 with travel)</b>

## Funding:

Participants utilising NDIS can claim program costs if they have funding under the following categories (as per the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2025-26 guide, Version 1.0:

Item Number	Item Name and Notes	Unit	National
10_617_0128_5_3	Employment Related Assessment, Counselling and Advice - Occupational Therapist	Hour	\$193.99
15_617_0128_1_3	Assessment Recommendation Therapy or Training - Occupational Therapist	Hour	\$193.99
15_052_0128_1_3	Therapy Assistant - Level 1 Support must be delivered by a therapy assistant working under the delegation and direct supervision at all times of a therapist.	Hour	\$56.16

Please note, membership of horsepower is a personal cost and cannot be claimed under NDIS.

RSVP: Registration forms must be submitted by 14 April 2026 for program between May and June 2026.

For further information or to register your interest, please contact either: