



SUPPORTED WORK PROGRAM

PAID WORK BUILT AROUND WHAT YOU LOVE

Supported employment in a community gaming venue for NDIS participants in East Gippsland - interest-led roles, accommodations as standard, and a real pathway forward.



ESPORTS COLLECTIVE
GIPPSLAND CARE COLLECTIVE

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BAIRNSDALE, EAST GIPPSLAND VIC

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

A job built around what you genuinely love - not a placement you have to squeeze yourself into. That is what the Supported Work Program offers: real, paid work in a gaming and digital community venue, designed from the ground up around the person doing it.

These roles were created in Bairnsdale because nothing like them existed anywhere in East Gippsland. They are genuine jobs - real work the venue depends on, paid through the Supported Wage System for what each employee actually contributes. For NDIS participants with a real interest in gaming, this is a pathway into paid work that simply was not there before.

WHAT MAKES THIS DIFFERENT

» THE ROLE FITS THE PERSON

Accommodations are not a special exception - they are how every role is built. The job is shaped around the employee, not the other way around.

» INTEREST COMES FIRST

Roles are built around a genuine interest in gaming, digital culture, and community - the thing that makes showing up and growing at work possible.

» REAL WORK, REAL VENUE

The venue is open to the public. Supported employees work alongside customers and other staff - not tucked away in a segregated workplace.

» ROOM TO GROW, NO PRESSURE

A four-stage pathway is there if an employee wants it. Staying in the role that fits is just as valid as moving through every stage.

MORE THAN A JOB

Work is rarely just about the wage. For many of our employees, it is the first time a workplace has felt genuinely theirs - a place where their interest in gaming is an asset, not something to set aside. A paid role brings a reason to be somewhere, people to see, a routine to build a week around, and the quiet confidence that comes from being relied on. Those things matter as much as the pay.

Because the venue is a community space, the job comes with a community attached. Employees get to know regulars, work alongside other staff, and become a familiar face in a place the wider public visits to game and connect. Skills built here - communication, teamwork, showing up, problem-solving on the floor - are real, transferable, and carry forward wherever an employee goes next.

WHERE THIS SITS

PART OF ONE CONNECTED ECOSYSTEM

Supported employment is one of five connected strands at ESports Collective - alongside social sessions, skill development, capacity building, and allied health. A participant might start at a peer-led social session and build skills and confidence over time, at whatever pace suits them. Supported work is there to be drawn on when someone is ready, not a destination everyone is pushed toward.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS FOR YOU

The Supported Work Program is for NDIS participants in East Gippsland who have workplace supports in their plan and a genuine interest in gaming. Two separate things make it work - and it helps to keep them clear from the start.

EMPLOYEE WAGES

The wage is paid by ESports Collective under the Supported Employment Services Award (SESA). For Stages 1 to 3 the hourly rate is set by the Supported Wage System - a percentage of the award rate matched to the employee's assessed productivity, never a flat or token rate.

The percentage is set by an independent assessor and reviewed yearly. Stage 4 is paid the full SCHADS rate with no assessment.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

Supported employees work with a support worker alongside them during shifts, helping with the parts of the job affected by the employee's disability - communication, moving between tasks, and customer interactions.

This is funded through the employee's NDIS plan, from Supports in Employment in the Core budget - separate from the wage, and not paid by ESports Collective.

INDICATIVE WAGES

STAGE	ROLE	SUPPORT	INDICATIVE WAGE
Stage 1	Venue Support	1:1	From \$9.94/hr
Stage 2	Front of House	1:1	From \$9.94/hr
Stage 3	Game Host	1:1	Up to \$19.88/hr
Stage 4	Peer Support	None	\$35.30/hr

Indicative starting points only - the actual hourly wage for Stages 1-3 depends on the employee's SWS-assessed productivity and the day and time of work. Stage 4 is paid the full SCHADS Level 1 casual rate. Rates are subject to annual review.

FIRST STEP

GETTING THE FUNDING IN PLACE

ESports Collective's Supported Work Program needs Supports in Employment funding in the participant's NDIS plan. If it is not there yet, it can be requested at the next plan review - a support coordinator or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) can help. We are happy to talk it through before anything is committed to.

A PATHWAY, NOT A LADDER

The next four pages set out the stages of the Supported Work Program - Venue Support, Front of House, Game Host, and Peer Support. Each is a real role with real responsibilities. The stages are designed to fit together, but how an employee moves through them is always their decision.

WHY THE STAGES EXIST

Each stage is built around a different kind of work and a different level of customer contact - from behind-the-scenes tasks in Venue Support, through welcoming customers in Front of House, to running sessions as a Game Host. They are deliberately ordered so confidence and responsibility build gradually, and each stage is genuinely useful work in its own right - real jobs the venue depends on, not training exercises.

1	STAGE 1 - VENUE SUPPORT	The operational backbone of the venue - structured, hands-on work. 1:1 support throughout.
2	STAGE 2 - FRONT OF HOUSE	Welcoming customers, with accommodations built around the person. 1:1 support.
3	STAGE 3 - GAME HOST	Hosting community members on the floor, teaching and running sessions. 1:1 support.
4	STAGE 4 - PEER SUPPORT	The exit from supported employment into a paid Peer Support role. No support worker.

TWO WAYS TO USE THE PATHWAY

There is no single right way through the program. Both of the following are valid, and equally successful:

- » **Start at Stage 1 and stay there.** For some employees, Venue Support is the role that fits - structured, predictable, and away from the busiest customer-facing moments. An employee can settle into Stage 1 and make it their long-term job. Staying is not falling behind.
- » **Move through the stages over time.** For others, each stage is a stepping stone. As confidence and capability grow, an employee can move from Venue Support to Front of House, on to Game Host, and - if they choose - out of supported employment entirely into a paid Peer Support role at Stage 4.

Movement between stages is based on the employee's own capability and choice, never a fixed timeline. An employee can pause at a stage, or step back to one that suits them better. Progression is always offered, never required - whether someone stays at Stage 1 or works through to Peer Support, both are treated as a success. The pathway bends around the person.

VENUE SUPPORT

The operational backbone of the venue - structured, predictable, hands-on work that keeps the place running behind the scenes.

SUPPORT RATIO 1:1 - a support worker is present throughout the shift	WAGE BASIS SESA Grade B casual, with SWS-assessed productivity	A VALID DESTINATION For employees who do this work well and prefer it, Stage 1 remains their role long-term
WHO IT SUITS Employees who prefer structured, predictable, hands-on work over customer-facing roles		

WHAT THE ROLE INVOLVES

Stage 1 focuses on the work that keeps the venue running, behind the scenes of customer interactions:

- » Pre-session and post-session setup and pack-down
- » Cleaning equipment, surfaces, gaming stations, and common areas
- » Computer updates and maintenance - patches, drivers, and game updates
- » Restocking, and setting up lunch and refreshments
- » Stocktake, tidy-up, and general venue preparation work

A PLACE TO BUILD FROM

Stage 1 is structured and predictable by design. The tasks have clear outcomes, the routine stays consistent shift to shift, and a support worker is alongside throughout. For employees who find customer-facing work overwhelming, this is a role that can be genuinely satisfying in its own right - and for those who want to move on, it is solid ground to build confidence before Stage 2. As capability and reliability grow, the SWS-assessed percentage and pay grow with them.

WHAT STAGE 1 BUILDS

The habits formed here - turning up on time, working through a checklist, taking care of shared equipment, being part of a team - are the foundation every later stage builds on. An employee who is comfortable and confident at Stage 1 has everything they need to step toward Front of House if and when they choose to.

FRONT OF HOUSE

Customer-facing work - welcoming customers and helping them get set up - with accommodations built around the employee's working style.

SUPPORT RATIO 1:1, with increasing independence over time	WAGE BASIS SESA Grade B casual, with SWS-assessed productivity	BUILDS ON STAGE 1 A broader role, not a narrower one - venue support work continues alongside
WHO IT SUITS Employees who can do customer-facing work, often with appropriate accommodations		

WHAT THE ROLE INVOLVES

- » Welcoming customers and helping them set up at gaming stations
- » Answering questions about ESports Collective programs and services
- » Supporting after-school gaming club arrivals and session check-ins
- » Pre-session and post-session setup, restocking, and refreshments

THE ROLE IS DESIGNED AROUND THE PERSON

Accommodations apply across all stages, but they are most visible at Stage 2 because customer-facing work has the most moving parts. We design the role around the employee's working style - and we can do this because we know the people we work with.

- ◆ **Reading or writing is a struggle** - self-serve registration on an iPad means new customers enter their own details.
- ◆ **Non-verbal communication** - AAC devices, script cards, picture menus, and visual greetings support welcoming customers without relying on speech.
- ◆ **Numeracy or money handling** - tap-only payment removes cash and change; the system does the maths.
- ◆ **Executive function and sequencing** - visual shift checklists lay out what happens in what order, so the next step is always clear.

Accommodations are designed with the employee and, where relevant, our Speech Pathologist.

A BROADER ROLE, AT THE EMPLOYEE'S PACE

Stage 2 does not replace Venue Support - it adds to it. Employees still do the behind-the-scenes work they know, and take on customer contact gradually as they are ready. Independence builds over time, the support worker stays alongside, and there is no fixed point by which an employee has to be doing any particular part of the role.

GAME HOST

Hosting community members on the floor - teaching games, running sessions, and making the space welcoming and active.

SUPPORT RATIO 1:1 - the support worker is actively part of the role	WAGE BASIS SESA Grade B casual; most Hosts land between 60% and 100% SWS	WHERE IT LEADS A structured stepping stone toward Stage 4, Peer Support
WHO IT SUITS Employees who have built the confidence to host other community members on the floor		

WHAT THE ROLE INVOLVES

Game Hosts work alongside customers in the venue - focusing particularly on our low-cost After School Gaming Clubs, alongside other community gaming sessions. This is hosting work for community members, not NDIS peer support.

- » Teaching games to community members on the floor
- » Facilitating social gaming sessions and running After School Gaming Club sessions
- » Supporting birthday parties and group bookings
- » Helping members find a game, group, or seat that suits them
- » Sharing lived experience where it builds connection - the employee's choice

WE START WITH WHAT THEY LOVE

A new Game Host does not need to know every game. Strong on Magic but not Fortnite? We schedule them on Magic sessions. Better with adults than kids? We start them on adult-focused sessions. The role grows as confidence grows. The SWS percentage reflects capability across the whole role - comfortable with regulars while still developing with new customers - capturing overall productivity, not the best moment. The 1:1 support worker stays part of the role, stepping in to teach an unfamiliar game, support communication, or handle situations the employee is still building confidence with.

A NATURAL STEP TOWARD PEER SUPPORT

Game Host is the stage where an employee moves from being supported on the floor to helping others have a good time on it. Teaching a game, settling a nervous newcomer, keeping a session running - these are the same instincts a Peer Support Worker draws on every day. For employees considering Stage 4, this is where that path starts to feel real.

PEER SUPPORT

The move out of supported employment entirely, into a recognised Peer Support Worker role - now delivering support to others, not receiving it.

SUPPORT RATIO None - no support worker accompanying the employee	WAGE BASIS SCHADS Award Level 1 - the full award rate, no SWS assessment	CASUAL RATE \$35.30/hr (from 1 July 2025), roughly 78% above the top Stage 3 rate
WHO IT SUITS Employees ready to work directly with NDIS participants in a paid support role		

WHAT THE ROLE INVOLVES

- » Working directly with NDIS participants in capacity building and peer support contexts
- » Co-facilitating gaming groups, Dungeons & Dragons sessions, and digital mentoring programs
- » Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work or equivalent training supported

THE EXIT FROM SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Stage 4 is the most substantial change in the pathway. The employee is no longer a supported employee - they are employed as a Peer Support Worker on the same kind of contract as our other support workers. There is no more SWS assessment: they are paid the full award rate for their classification, not a productivity percentage. There is no support worker, because they are now the one delivering support. And the role is portable: Stage 4 does not have to be at ESports Collective - the employee can work as a Peer Support Worker for any NDIS provider. The pathway gives them options, not a tie to our business.

WHY THIS STAGE MATTERS

Most supported employment has no real way out - the supported role is the endpoint. Stage 4 is built to be different. It turns lived experience into a recognised, fully paid profession, and gives the employee a qualification and a job that travels with them. Reaching Stage 4 is not expected of everyone, but for those who want it, the door is genuinely open.

WAGES & THE SUPPORTED WAGE SYSTEM

Supported employees are paid under the Supported Employment Services Award (SESA), with the actual hourly wage set through the Supported Wage System (SWS). The work is real, the wage is real, and the maths is transparent.

HOW A WAGE IS WORKED OUT

The Supported Wage System pays a percentage of the relevant award rate, matched to the worker's assessed productivity in the actual job. Someone assessed at 70% productivity is paid 70% of the award rate. The assessment is carried out by an independent assessor accredited under JobAccess - never by us - who visits the workplace, observes the employee doing the real role, and produces a productivity percentage. It is reviewed annually, and the percentage changes as the employee's capability grows.

WORKED EXAMPLES - GRADE B CASUAL, FROM 30 JUNE 2026

SWS %	WEEKDAY (\$19.88)	EVENING (\$22.86)	SATURDAY (\$29.82)
50%	\$9.94	\$11.43	\$14.91
60%	\$11.93	\$13.72	\$17.89
70%	\$13.92	\$16.00	\$20.87
80%	\$15.90	\$18.29	\$23.86
100%	\$19.88	\$22.86	\$29.82

The Grade A casual rate (\$9.94 weekday) acts as a practical floor. Award rates rise each July through the Annual Wage Review.

BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT

THE TRIAL PERIOD

Employees work a trial of 13 to 26 weeks before the SWS assessment is finalised. During the trial, ESports Collective commits to paying 50% of the Grade B casual rate, regardless of where the eventual assessment lands - a predictable, fair wage that reflects our commitment to paying meaningfully above the legal minimum. After the trial, the wage moves to the SWS-assessed rate.

SHIFTS, HOURS & NDIS SUPPORTS

All Supported Work Program roles are casual. The award sets a minimum shift length but no minimum weekly hours - which means a role can start small and grow with the employee.

HOW THE SHIFTS WORK

The venue day is split into three shift blocks of 3 hours each, running weekdays and Saturdays. A shift is one block (3 hours, the minimum) or two consecutive blocks (6 hours). There is no minimum weekly hours requirement, so a role can start at a single 3-hour block per week and grow up to around 15 hours per week as the employee's capacity and confidence build. Each block has a different pace and customer mix, so shifts can be designed around the blocks that suit the employee best.

SHIFT BLOCK	SESSION TYPE	STAGES IT SUITS
12–3 PM	Daytime support and venue prep - quieter, structured, behind the scenes	1 2 3 4
3–6 PM	After-school gaming sessions - busier, school-age customers and clubs	2 3 4
6–9 PM	Evening and community gaming - mixed, older customers and community sessions	3 4

Blocks run Monday to Saturday. Available shifts depend on customer demand - as the venue grows, we expect the number of shifts on offer to build up over time. The shifts available are confirmed with each employee when their roster is set, and the stages shown are a guide rather than a fixed rule.

WHY SUPPORT IS NEEDED, AND HOW IT'S FUNDED

Supported employees have a support worker present during their shifts - helping with communication, task transitions, customer interactions, and the parts of the role affected by the employee's disability. That support worker is funded through the participant's NDIS plan, from Supports in Employment in the Core budget (registration group 0133), not by ESports Collective. This funding must be allocated in the plan before it can be used for support at work.

TWO SEPARATE THINGS

THE WAGE AND THE SUPPORT

The wage you earn and the support worker who helps you do the job are paid for separately. Your wage comes from ESports Collective under the SESA award. Your support worker is funded from your NDIS plan. The NDIS rate is not comparable to your wage - it pays for a different person doing different work.

Most supported employees receive the Disability Support Pension alongside their wages. Centrelink's free Financial Information Service can help model how wages and DSP fit together before committing to a shift pattern.

WORK BUILT AROUND YOU

We don't know of another supported employment provider doing what we are setting out to do. Four things make this program distinct - and none of them work without the others.

1

INTEREST COMES FIRST

Every role is built around gaming, digital culture, and community. For many neurodivergent people, deep interest is what makes engagement, learning, and stamina at work possible at all.

2

EVERY STAGE IS A REAL ROLE

Venue Support and Front of House are not holding patterns on the way to something else. They are full roles with paid work and real responsibilities. Progression is available when an employee wants it - never the only valid path.

3

ACCOMMODATIONS AS STANDARD

We change how the work is done so the employee can do it, rather than expecting the employee to fit a fixed process. The accessibility of the role is how the role is designed - not a favour.

4

A GENUINE PATHWAY OUT

The four-stage progression is built so an employee who wants to can move into a SCHADS-paid Peer Support role. Many supported workplaces have no real exit route. Here, the option is real and the steps are concrete.

LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT MIGHT FIT

We're happy to talk to participants, families, support coordinators, and Local Area Coordinators about whether supported work might suit - a phone call or email is the best first step.

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