

**REQUEST TO JOIN EXEMPTION APPLICATION LODGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS) UNDER S55 OF *THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (1992)* (CTH)**

I/We seek to join/support the exemption application submitted by DSS as follows:

- I/We seek a conditional one year extension of the exemption for all existing ADEs and the Commonwealth (and officers of the Commonwealth) from sections 15, 24 and 29 of the DDA, for a period of one year from the expiration of the current exemption on 29 April 2015.
- The proposed exemption would apply while alternative wage setting arrangements are implemented by ADEs that have not adopted a wage assessment tool other than the BSWAT.
- The proposed exemption would apply while alternative wage setting arrangements are being devised and/or established and implemented by DSS.

<b>NAME:</b>	Bob Campbell
<b>ORGANISATION:</b>	Holy Cross Laundry Ltd
<b>POSITION:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>SIGNATURE:</b> By signing this document I certify that I have authority to sign on behalf of the organisation named above	

**COMMENTS**

The current circumstances leading to the closure of Australian Disability Enterprises will disadvantage those people with the highest level of impairment. Many of these people will not be able to find employment because of their high support needs. The argument put forward is that if they are unable to gain employment they can be cared for in day respite centres, social activities etc.

All of these are great opportunities and provide a fantastic outcome for the participants.

However this ignores two fundamental principles:

1. A philosophy that they are a part of our community and our obligation is to provide them with an opportunity like everyone else i.e. get a job; and
2. The right of people with a disability to have a choice.

These two fundamental principles come with an overarching principle that “no one in society should be open to exploration”.

**The current debate is healthy in establishing a framework which achieves the best practical outcome which incorporates these principles.**

**However if the timeframe required is not reasonable to meet the desired outcome it needs to be extended. The achieving of the best outcome is too important to “short change” those who will bear the consequence of the current debate. Given the number of years taken to develop the Business Services Wage Assessment Tool surely it is evident that the currently promoted timeframe to find a replacement is unreasonable.**

**To ignore the reality of the promoted timeframe suggests:**

- **A high degree of arrogance that those currently reviewing the situation are able to do so in a shorter timeframe than their predecessors who after a great deal of reflection and consultation developed the BSWAT;**
- **The establishment of an alternative wage assessment tool is not in itself the issue. As a society we are on a continuous improvement program as we should be. The issue is if under the focus of continuous improvement we see the need to develop another wage assessment tool to replace the BSWAT given the complexity of the task let’s provide the timeframe to achieve the best outcome;**
- **The Social Reform Agenda with the introduction of the NDIS is significant task for the Australian community. The enormity of this change requires a long gestation period. This program about life time support based on user choice needs to dovetail into the availability of employment options;**
- **It is too easy to say that if ADE’s can’t be financially viable they should close. It follows the same theme that if people with a disability cannot get a job “too bad”. To work on a principle which is impractical can only leave the most vulnerable on the margins of society at risk. Can’t we allow ourselves the time to come up with the best possible solution to protect those who will obviously become the victims when practicality is ignored; and**
- **It is interesting that the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 is four days after the 100 years of ANZAC day when we celebrate those qualities which we see as defining our nation. One of these being given everyone a “fair go”. Can’t we establish a commonly agreed structure which gives everyone a “fair go”. To impose a timeframe which is unreasonable given the magnitude of the task does not accord with the “fair go” PRINCIPLE.**

**Please extend the timeframe knowing that not to do so will disadvantage to most disadvantaged in the community .**

