



Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

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Senator The Hon Joe Ludwig
Minister for Human Services
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Ludwig

Thank you for the opportunity for the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) to respond on behalf of its members on the review of Job Capacity Assessments (JCA).

AFDO is keen to see changes made to the current system to prevent the ongoing disadvantage experienced by people with disabilities who want to enter the workforce, want to remain in the workforce or need to exit the workforce.

We see the following as 'Priority Changes' that can improve the current JCA program.

1. review the JCA guidelines, involving all stakeholders including people with disability, with a view to achieving:
 - o more skilled assessors
 - o focus on identifying individual needs
 - o adequate recognition of the impact of non-medical factors on work capacity
 - o adequate recognition of episodic conditions

- appropriate follow up of conditions that have not been assessed by a medical practitioner or specialist and
 - a respectful culture
 - appropriate weightings given to voluntary activity
2. commence development of an effective evidence-based tool to assess the impact of impairment on participation and the need for support
 3. improve training of assessors
 4. introduce a quality assurance/feedback mechanism for people referred to pre-vocational services
 5. improve quality assurance of assessments and the assessment process overall, including external review

AFDO strongly recommends that people with disabilities be fully involved in the consultation around proposed changes to the JCA and Job Capacity Account programs. Lessons learnt from the past have been that policies have been developed and implemented without sufficient and relevant input from the disability sector.

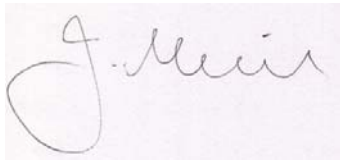
To compliment any changes to JCA within the National Disability Employment Strategy, AFDO recommends the following priority changes.

1. amend Work Choices to remove the special minimum wage for employees with disability (Sections 7J (110) and 90P)
2. form a multi-sector reference group to develop the Strategy including representation from people with disability, employers, employment service providers and relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory governments
3. focus the Strategy on employment retention and on identifying strategies to increase workforce participation among people outside the labour market

4. undertake research to compare consistency of pay outcomes across wage assessment tools used in business services

Further to the information above I have attached a response prepared by AFDO for the previous government. This response also indicates some of our concerns with the JCA and the Job Capacity Account.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Muir". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "Muir".

Jeremy Muir
CEO