

Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

26th August 2011

Ref: Inquiry into The administration and purchasing of Disability Employment Services in Australia

Dear Senators

This brief submission will be followed by a more detailed complaint about the administration of Disability Employment Services.

NOVA Employment and Training Inc operate Disability Employment services from 21 sites in New South Wales and 3 in Queensland. The program has operated for more than 20 years.

Below is an 'advertisement from a current (and competing) DES provider.

The govt has brought in a scheme where they pay 8 hours employment for people with a minor di (employer only pays tax + super) Yr 10- Yr 12 students to encourage them to work. Can do things like pointer signs / shredding / cleaning. You can specify they have a drivers license. Call if you are interested.

Working with Ability

At NOVA our professional staff's mission is to help people with a disability find and keep satisfying jobs of their choice.

Level 1, 50 Chapel St St Marys NSW 2760
(PO Box 795 St Marys NSW 1790)
Ph 02 9833 2500 Fax 02 9833 2499
www.novaemployment.com.au

You will see it essentially offers a free worker – a person with a ‘minor disability’ who will be a fully funded employee (there’s unlikely to be tax or super on a days pay for a junior).

The government scheme mentioned is the commencement and outcome fees available for the person who is attached to the DES after the position is acquired.

The effect on the so called ‘Star’ ratings is obvious – fast commencement to employment and a virtually guaranteed outcome.

The effect on the business owner might well be to use DEEWR funding to subsidise their business (there’s no limit on the number of persons that might be so engaged). I appreciate there’s an ‘outcome’ but am completely unable to identify how that might be of benefit to the Commonwealth, other and competing local business or people who have a disability.

The Star ratings presently shown reflect substantial and widespread similar tactics.

These appear to be winked at by DEEWR.

I have a staff of 180 desperately trying to get their job seekers off welfare dependency and engage employers on the basis of their intrinsic worth.

The Senate inquiry looks at the effects of the Star Ratings on DES. Unless there is an immediate recognition the data being used to evaluate programs is deeply flawed, it need not bother. The next ‘Star Ratings and the tender process will cement the flight of profit from Australia to overseas, destroy the work of 20 years and leave people who have a disability at the mercy of untrained, unscrupulous profiteers.

As stated I am working to develop a comprehensive response to the Senate inquiry. This is sent in reply to eth receipt of yet another morale crushing example of present state of play.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Wren". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Martin Wren
Chief Executive Officer
NOVA Employment & Training Program Inc.