

Community Affairs References Committee
Planning Options and services for people ageing with a disability
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
18 February 2011

Question No: 4

Topic: Special Disability Trusts (SDT)

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Senator Siewert asked:

How do you deal with the SDTs in mental health and mental illness? The criteria does not work for people caring for somebody with a mental illness.

Answer:

Special Disability Trusts do not preclude people with mental illness from being beneficiaries provided their illness or disability is such that they satisfy the relevant requirements.

In response to the Senate Community Affairs Committee Report '*Building Trust: Supporting Families through Disability Trusts*', the Government has passed legislation allowing beneficiaries of a Special Disability Trust to work up to seven hours a week at or above the relevant minimum wage. Relaxing the work capacity test will allow severely disabled people, including those with psychiatric disabilities, to undertake paid employment and remain eligible to be a beneficiary of a Special Disability Trust.

Centrelink has advised that approximately 20-25 per cent of Special Disability Trust beneficiaries have a mental illness.