

Senate Community Affairs Committee
Public Hearing
Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 – Schedule 3
(Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables)
Tuesday 6 September 2011

DEEWR Responses to Senator Siewert

Question 4: Adequacy of employment assistance

- a. **The adequacy of programs of support and employment assistance for people with a disability was raised in some submissions, and also in the introductory remarks by the NWRN.**

The open employment services in Australia are designed to provide tailored and individualised services to meet the vocational and non vocational needs of job seekers to assist them into sustainable open employment. The employment services models are demand driven, so all eligible job seekers can receive immediate employment services – there are no waiting lists. The flexibility of the employment services model enables major government reforms to be incorporated.

The contracting of open employment services ensures that organisations deliver services across thousands of sites in Australia. The performance and fee structures of these organisations are driven by the achievement of sustainable employment outcomes with the overall objectives being to ensure that job seeker's barriers to employment are addressed and that they are assisted into sustainable employment, so they can contribute and be active members of the labour market.

Ongoing Support for people with disability is an important component of the Disability Employment Services model as the Australian Government recognises that there are some people with disability that require regular support in the workplace to ensure their job remains sustainable.

Can the Department provide a breakdown of the various employment supports listed in the Anglicare Australia submission?

Can the Department also examine a similar issue raised in the NWRN submission, which asks for a breakdown of the various programs of assistance and support that will be available for people with a disability whose payments for DSP are rejected under the revised impairment tables?

The DEEWR employment and related programs available to people affected by this measure includes access to assistance from Disability Employment Services, Job Services Australia and the Indigenous Employment Program.

Disability Employment Services provide eligible job seekers with disability, injury or health condition access to individually tailored employment services better suited to their needs, with strong links to training and skills development, particularly in areas of local skills shortages and includes the following employment services components:

- Disability Employment Services—**Disability Management Service**

- For job seekers with disability, injury or health condition who require assistance but are not expected to need long-term support in the workplace.
- Disability Employment Services—**Employment Support Service**
 - For job seekers with permanent disability and with an assessed need for more long-term, regular support in the workplace.
- The **Employer Incentives Scheme** provides the following support for Employers of people with a disability:
 - The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator service aims to increase the number of job vacancies available to Disability Employment Services for people with disability.
 - The Supported Wage System aims to increase employment opportunities for people with disability by providing an industrial relations framework that enables the legal payment of a productivity-based, or pro-rata wage. The Supported Wage System is a process that allows employers to pay a productivity-based wage that matches an independently assessed productivity rate.
 - The Wage Subsidy Scheme aims to encourage employers to provide sustainable employment to workers with disability. The Scheme enables Disability Employment Services to offer financial assistance through wage subsidies to employers who employ Disability Employment Services participants. The employment must be under open employment conditions—that is, under a legal industrial agreement that complies with minimum standards established under Commonwealth, state or territory law). It must also guarantee the worker a weekly award-based wage, for example: no commission based or subcontracting type positions.
 - The Employment Assistance Fund provides help for people with disability and mental health condition by providing financial assistance to purchase a range of work-related modifications and services for people who are about to start a job or who are currently working, as well as those who require assistance to find and prepare for work.

Job Services Australia includes the following employment services components:

- Stream Services
 - All people participating in employment services work with their provider on a regular basis to develop and implement a plan which will assist them into employment. This plan would include (for example) training, non vocational assistance, job searching and work experience. During regular contacts with their provider, the participant is able to review and update their plan and gain assistance from their provider in receiving the support they need. Providers also help in securing job opportunities or work experiences for their participants including on-the-job support if required. Participants in employment services are supported by a Service Guarantee which outlines the level of support they should receive from their provider.
- New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)

- NEIS provides eligible job seekers interested in starting and running a small business with the assistance they need. NEIS services are provided for the first 12 months of the business operation. These services are sensitive to the individual's circumstances and background.

Indigenous Employment Program aims to increase Indigenous Australians employment outcomes and participation in economic activities, contributing to the Government's commitment to halving the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment outcomes within a decade. The Indigenous Employment Program supports a broad range of activities that are responsive to the needs of employers, Indigenous Australians and their communities.

Question 5: Outcomes evaluation

- a. **Many submitters raised concerns about the potential outcomes of the draft revised impairment tables, specifically whether those moved onto Newstart Allowance will find employment, and if they do, whether the employment will be “sustainable”.**

How does the Department respond to this claim?

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The contracting of open employment services ensures that organisations deliver services across thousands of sites in Australia. The performance and fee structures of these organisations are **driven by the achievement of sustainable employment outcomes** with the overall objectives being to ensure that job seeker’s barriers to employment are addressed and that they are assisted into sustainable employment, so they can contribute and be active members of the labour market.

Ongoing Support for people with disability is an important component of the Disability Employment Services model as the Australian Government recognises that there are some people with disability that require regular support in the workplace to ensure their job remains sustainable.