
26 September 2011

To the DES Senate Enquiry - 2011

As a Centrelink Disability Officer for East and West Kimberley 1987 – 2010, I have extensive experience in understanding and marketing people with Disabilities for employment. You need to consider the following aspects:-

- I don't believe that this is the time to abandon DES functions due to the large numbers – approx 50 % - of DSP clients nationally, who will be transferred back to NSA as a result of pre 1/7/06 clients now being reviewed and subsequently post 1/7/06 clients being reviewed under the new Impairment Tables. The reduction in DSP numbers is becoming very evident with Work Capacity benchmarks coming through as 15-22 hr/wk and 30+hr/wk which sets up auto DSP cancellation in 42 days.
- DES organisations should be accredited for linking clients to TAFE study for job readiness programs, the same way that JSAs are already accredited. Clients with Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities need substantial preparation for return to the Workforce. This doesn't happen in 13 weeks!!!
- The cost of Tendering for new contracts by approx 80% of DES organisations would be prohibitive. Additionally the large numbers of redundant staff and broken tenancy agreements would be extensive.
- Given the above contingencies, I would suggest continuing DES for another 3 year round of contracts until the current DSP review process has been completed and the new Impairment Tables bedded down from 2012.

Kind regards

Employment Consultant