



EASTCOAST

Training & Employment

SENT ON FROM
CANBERRA

30 MAR 2000

Ref: EXE 3/10/1

Dr Brendan Nelson, MP
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Employment, Education and Workplace Relations
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

22 March 2000

Dear Dr Nelson,

On March 21st, I observed the discussion on *Improving Retrenchment Processes* and accept your invitation to offer the following observations:

- The discussions seemed to focus on "the cure" and did not explore the value of "prevention". Many of the circumstances identified with those retrenched mature aged people could be minimised if action was encouraged by both employer and employee throughout one's working life. Policies should promote life-long learning and formal recognition of those acquired skills and knowledge, foster participation in career change/re-settlement seminars and encourage workers to prepare for change etc.
- The discussion that reflected on a *Code of Conduct* begged the question, *Is this not already a centrepiece of most Industrial Awards detailing the obligations of employers when moving towards retrenchment?* Perhaps the intent to improve these processes could be achieved by encapsulated improvements under current Industrial Award requirements.

Finally, I believe that what will drive the whole process of retrenchment programs is economics. The larger company has more flexibility in this regard and it is in their long-term interest as discussed yesterday. The small business is often fighting for economic survival or having already lost that fight is seeking cost-effective shut down. Extensive support is beyond delivery and hence my interest in *preventative measures*. These can be delivered while there is life and not become an unrealistic expectation after death.

HEAD OFFICE STRATHPINE

2 Jockers Street
Strathpine Q 4500
PO Box 5370
Brendale Q 4500
Ph: (07) 3881 3166
Fax: (07) 3881 3421

REDCLIFFE

3/238 Anzac Avenue
Kippa Ring Q 4021
Ph: (07) 3889 4917
Fax: (07) 3889 4937

MAROOCHYDORE

Shop 15, "Collins Place"
Duporth Ave
Maroochydore Q 4558
Ph: (07) 5479 4711
Fax: (07) 5479 5764



ALAN J. SPARKS
CEO