

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee

RE: EMPLOYMENT: INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PAID WORK

Terms of Reference:

To inquire into and report on employment issues in both rural/regional and urban/outer suburban areas, with particular reference to:

- Measures that can be implemented to increase the level of participation in paid work in Australia; and
- How a balance of assistance, incentives and obligations can increase participation, for income support recipients.

Some measures, which can be implemented, are as follows:

- Improved training of school leavers within regional/rural communities.
This will give the community are more highly educated and employable workforce.
- Retraining of people who are unable to continue to work in their chosen field.
This will allow people who are injured whilst working in their chosen field, made redundant or farmers who are unable to continue to work in the field in which they were originally trained to be retrained so they can continue to be employable.
- Increase of businesses, commercial / industrial, to rural/regional areas.
By increasing the number of businesses to rural/regional areas, the school leavers and retrained people would be able to obtain employment without having to leave their home.
- Promotion of the valuable experience and knowledge of the older generation, so if they are made redundant they will be re-employed without discrimination.

For income support recipients the following assistance, incentives and obligations are as follows:

- Ensure that the minimum wage is much higher than what they would receive on income support.

If the minimum wage is the same as what a person would receive on income support there is no incentive for people to go out and work in a job that is going to pay less than what they would get for doing nothing.

- Instead of more tax being paid for two income families with children, less tax should be applied.

There is no incentive for the carer parent to work and not claim family support when there is a requirement to pay a higher amount of tax from being a two-income family.

- Improved and more accessible childcare facilities.

To promote the carer parent to work there would be a greater need for improved facilities for childcare that are accessible in area and payment to a greater number of families. There is no incentive for the carer parent to work if the majority of their wage is being paid to childcare facilities.

- Improved availability of jobs and training in regional/rural areas for income support recipients.

There needs to be incentives made to businesses to move to regional/rural areas so that more jobs are available to the unemployed.

- Incentives for businesses to take on more employees.

Businesses need to be given an incentive to take on more employees' and not pay or allow too much overtime to be worked, so the need to for an extra employee will be more obvious. There would be fewer unemployed people if each business owner employed one extra person.

Yours faithfully

On behalf of the Mid West Development Commission

Carolyn Fewster
Project Officer

26 August 2003