

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2013-14 Additional Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 5

**Question No:** 681

**Topic:** Business Services Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT)

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Siewert** asked:

- (a) The application to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) for an exemption under the Disability Discrimination Act was made while the Government was in the caretaker mode prior to the 2013 federal election. Did the Minister at the time approve this action?
- (b) On what basis was the action taken and why was it taken during caretaker period?

**Answer:**

- (a) The application was made by the Department on 5 September 2013.

The Department decided to proceed during the caretaker period without ministerial endorsement given the need to submit the application urgently to reduce the risk of ADEs closing, potentially leaving supported employees without secure employment.

- (b) It was necessary to submit the application urgently during the caretaker period to reduce the risk of ADEs closing, leaving employees with disability jobless.