

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.EW0841_10

Senator Cash provided in writing.

Question

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

9) It is also stated that “this model” referring to flexible ongoing support – “better supports participants with mental health and other episodic conditions”. What qualitative and quantitative criteria were used to determine that this model will provide better support to people with mental health and other episodic conditions?

Answer

As part of the Review of Disability Employment Services, submissions were received that provided feedback on previous disability employment service arrangements. Respondents expressed concern that the previous arrangements did not respond to the less predictable needs of people with mental health or other episodic conditions. These submissions stated that inflexible ongoing support arrangements encouraged risk averse behaviour, such as keeping job seekers connected to intensive, ongoing support services as a safety net. Existing providers of disability services also expressed concern that they were often faced with the difficult prospect of exiting job seekers they considered might require further assistance in the future.

Flexible Ongoing Support enables Disability Employment Services providers to offer Ongoing Support to participants in the workplace as it is needed, including short bursts of intensive support. Flexible Ongoing Support provides a safety net for job seekers whose future support needs are less predictable.