



Physical Disability Council of Australia Ltd (PDCA)

P O Box 38  
Willawarrin. NSW. 2440  
02 6566 9232  
1300 781 786  
[pdca@pdca.org.au](mailto:pdca@pdca.org.au)  
[www.pdca.org.au](http://www.pdca.org.au)

Senator Troeth  
Chair, Senate Standing Committee on  
Employment, Workplace Relations  
and Education  
Via email to: EET.Sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Troeth

*Inquiry into the Social Security Amendment (2007 Measures No. 2) Bill 2007*

We thank the Committee for this opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry. Please accept this letter as a submission to the Inquiry into the Social Security Amendment (2007 Measures No. 2) Bill 2007.

The Physical Disability Council of Australia (PDCA) is the national peak organisation representing the interests and views of people with physical disability across Australia. We are a unique organisation in that we are run by and for people with physical disability.

Our comments relate to one particular area of the Bill: that of Job Capacity Assessors determining the work capacity of people with disability.

In the experience of PDCA members, the job capacity assessment system has proven unequal to the task of accurately and sensitively assessing the work capacity of many people with disability especially those with a physical disability.

Many people will present on the day as being physically challenged by their condition and little else, but this is not necessarily the case.

For many people with a physical disability, it has taken hours to meet appointments, required the services of a support worker to dress, eat, bathe or get out of bed, but this will not be evident to a Job Capacity Assessor on the day and most definitely does not and will not reflect a person's ability to work. Nor does this reflect the inability to access the environment without a great deal of pre-planning and time, which would impact on the capacity to undertake employment.

PDCA believes that JCA's do not have the necessary skills and/or experience to

determine the work capacity of someone who has either had a disability since birth or an acquired physical disability, and that medical professionals alone are also not able to make these instant decisions. It takes weeks of therapy to determine capacity in many cases, having to take into account stamina, overall health implications, and capacity to work sustained hours. often taking months of knowing a person and their abilities from one day to the next . In many cases treating professionals need to know a person for long periods of time to gain an overall perspective of capacity and health.

PDCA therefore urges the Senate Inquiry to take these issues into account when making decisions on this Bill.

Yours sincerely

Sue Egan  
Executive Officer  
Physical Disability Council of Australia Ltd (PDCA)

14<sup>th</sup> September 2007.