**Employment of People with Disability**

**Submission to Human Rights Commission Inquiry 2015.**

Let’s start by going back to first principles.

For anyone to secure and hold a paid job, several essential elements need to be in place. Some of these are internal to the person, some external. And some elements are a combination – i.e. internal elements that can be modified by the environment.

**Internal elements can include:**

* Intelligence
* An expectation to work
* Motivation to work
* Need for achievement
* Interest in the available jobs
* Skills to do the available jobs
* Ability to work with others
* Sufficient energy/strength to do the work
* Reliability (to turn up, to follow orders, etc.)

**External elements can include:**

* Family and or peer influence that is positive towards working
* Geographical location (city, suburb, town, rural, remote)
* Available suitable jobs
* Accessible, reliable, affordable transport
* Availability of Education and training
* Availability of assistive equipment
* Availability of reliable personal assistance at the time required, both at home and on the job
* Supportive attitudes by prospective and current employers
* Effect of employment on existing or future welfare benefits (in particular, pension tapering, and health care benefits)

There may be other elements that I’ve overlooked in my haste to produce this submission.

**Discussion**

None of these elements is, of itself, the “magic bullet” which, if adequately addressed, will result in equitable increases in employment of people with disability.

But, at the same time, the absence of any one of them (or an inadequate quantum of it) can often result in a person being unable to find and hold employment.

One may argue that this is not about discrimination, but I would not agree.

If a government has the power to put in place measures that address or mitigate all of these factors as they apply to people with disability, and fails to do so, then that, in my opinion, is discriminatory.

**Recommendation**

I urge the Commission to report to government that it should take immediate steps to address all of these elements in an appropriate manner, such that external barriers are removed and internal ones, where needed, are mitigated by any of a range of actions (like job design for people with intellectual disability or severe physical disability, training courses that aim to increase motivation, expectations of work, self-esteem, planning and problem solving ability, etc.).

Some training may well be directed at parents of younger people in an effort to raise their expectations of their child.

We may not end up with every person with a disability who could work actually in work, but we would achieve a lot more that we do now.

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