

Dear Sir/Madam

My family and I are very concerned about the implications of changing the BSWAT to determine wages for workers in Australian Disability Enterprises. Our brother has been employed at South East Industries in Victoria for almost 30 years. Due to his severe physical disabilities and subsequent personal daily needs he is not able to work in open employment. He is very proud of his work achievements and highly values the opportunities he has had in this work environment.

Whilst the BSWAT may not be the ideal tool for assessing wages in these workplaces, it concerns us that “a possible unintended consequence from future wage assessments could result in the exclusion of workers with lower productivity.” (excerpt from disability e-news – issue 207 October 2013) Due to the nature of his physical disability he does have low productivity however working for him, as with many other people with disabilities, is so much more than being employed and receiving a wage. It has provided a social and emotional environment where he has felt like a valued member of society. He receives a Disability pension and a small wage for his work efforts.

We understand there are needs to ensure people are assessed fairly and that the Department of Social Services has applied to the Australian Human Rights Commission asking for BSWAT to assess and pay wages for three years while a solution can be developed for Australian Disability Enterprises. We trust that this exemption will be granted as a sudden cessation of employment, if he were to be excluded due to lower productivity under future wage assessments, would be devastating for someone who has had to endure the ill health and passing of a parent / long-time carer and moving house, over the past few years.

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