



HEAD OFFICE
15a/56 Keys Rd
Cheltenham Vic 3192
T: 03 9555 0777
F: 03 9555 0204
E: admin@marriott.org.au

Ms Bridget Akers
Legal section
Australian Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 2001

9 October 2013

Dear Ms Akers

Application for an exemption under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Thank you for your letter of 26 September 2013 advising of an application from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and noting that the Commission is seeking submissions from interested persons and agencies about the application.

Marriott Support Services has now lodged through its peak body, National Disability Services, a request to join the FaHCSIA exemption application. The granting of the requested exemption would, in the short term, secure continuing employment opportunities for our supported employees pending the determination of suitable alternative wage setting tools. Like most, if not all, Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE), we operate in a highly competitive low margin business environment and any change to our underlying cost structures needs to be carefully planned and constructed if we are to remain viable as an employer of over 100 staff with disabilities. We are a not-for-profit organisation. None of our directors are paid. Any surpluses made by our business operations are ploughed back into the organisation. Last year we made a loss of over \$250,000.

We consider ourselves a progressive organisation, following best practices in all aspects of our governance and operations. We hold independently assessed accreditation under ISO 9001 (Quality); ISO 4801 (OHS Management); Victorian Disability Service Standards and Commonwealth Disability Employment Standards and operate in and from modern premises using contemporary technologies and logistics. Our approach to employment and engagement is inclusive. We are ever mindful of the hopes, aspirations and objectives of our local community members, including parents of children with an intellectual disability who came together 40 years ago to create an organisation that could provide a range of day activities and employment opportunities that were not provided by anyone else and would not otherwise exist. But our ADE's viability is now under severe threat and, like other ADEs, we need time to find a way forward which enables us to continue providing employment opportunities to individuals, many of who would otherwise be unable to secure work of a meaningful nature.

Please advise me if, as a party now joined in the FaHCSIA application, we need to provide anything further to assist the AHRC's consideration of the application.

Yours sincerely

Dan Romanis
Chief Executive Officer