To the Legal Section

Australian Human Rights Commission

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I support the application for temporary exemption of all existing Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) from sections 15 and 24 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA) and the Commonwealth from section 29 of the DDA. I think ADEs should be allowed to use the Business Services Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT) to assess wages for employees and pay wages to ADE employees based on assessments conducted under the BSWAT for a further three years.

This exemption will allow enough time for the government to develop and implement appropriate wage setting arrangements including an alternative assessment method and will give ADEs that have been using the BSWAT a chance to develop strategies to help them to remain viable into the future. ADEs are not for profit organisations that do not have large cash reserves or other income to cope with immediate increases to wages.

My daughter Nicole has an Intellectual and a Speech Language Impairment. She works four days a week at an ADE called MailpaQ which is run by the Wesley Mission Brisbane. Nicole and her friends enjoy their work. The fact that they are working and earning some money makes them feel very proud. Their ability to work also allows us parents to continue with our employment. I don't have a problem that Nicole only gets paid about $150 per fortnight for her work since she also receives Centrelink payments. It is definitely better for her to earn $150 per fortnight than to pay $150 a day for respite. I would hate to see her or any of her friends lose their job as a consequence of the recent court case. I strongly believe that most ADEs could not survive a sudden wage increase and must be given an extra three years to be able to make adjustments.

Yours sincerely

Karin Brown