To whom it may concern,

I write in relation to a letter I recently received from the Dept. of Social Services (enclosed).

I am an ADE employee who feels insulted by this letter, as do many of my colleagues. We cannot understand why it will take the DSS three years to work out a viable solution. It appears to me that there is a desire to keep disabled people in Australia amongst the poorest of the poor.

In our ADE we are continually pushed to work faster, to get the product out, to meet deadlines. We work under conditions few ‘normal’ Australians would endure, including being yelled at and demeaned by supervisors on a daily basis. We also work beside people with very challenging behaviours – people with psychosis, autism, etc. – And we do this for well under the minimum wage. Recently our ADE has merged with the Endeavour Foundation and we have been told how wonderful that will be for us employees. We, however, are sceptical and worried. In the past, changes have meant a worsening in conditions for us, generally because there is an increase in focussing on money-making.

The BSWAT is not an accurate gauge of skills and worth. We are baffled by how the assessors arrive at different wage levels for employees. It is a simplistic system riddled with inadequacies and it needs to be overhauled.

Yours sincerely,

Colleen Egan

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