

27 September 2017

Bernadette O'Neill
General Manager
Fair Work Commission
Level 10, Terrace Tower,
80 William Street
East Sydney, NSW, 2011

Dear Ms. O'Neill,

Fair Work Commission: Review of the Supported Employment Services Award 2010 – AM2014/286 and the FWC BSWAT process AM2013/30

I am writing to express our concerns reading the upcoming February 2018 Fair Work Commission Review of the Supported Employment Services Award 2010 – AM2014/286, in particular, the impact on job security for employees of Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs).

About the Illawarra Forum

The Illawarra Forum is the peak body working for community services organisations and for communities in the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. We support community organisations, promote expertise and innovation in community development, foster industry development and advocate for social justice.

For more than twenty years, the Illawarra Forum has taken a leadership role in the local community services sector, which currently consists of more than 300 organisations across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas of NSW.

The Illawarra Forum works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to people living with a Disability across the region including:

- Disability Employment Services ;
- Transition to work, and Australian Disability Enterprise providers;
- Services for people with disability;
- Job Active providers;
- Community development and community capacity building programs; and
- Registered Training Organisations

The Illawarra Forum is a strong supporter of ADEs, and values the economic, social and training opportunities that ADEs provide to persons with a disability and to the wider community. For most ADE employees their job is not simply 'just a job', but a life line to access peers in a supported work environment that caters specifically for individual developmental, physical and socio-emotional needs and enables choice and participation in the local community.

Here in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions we are fortunate to have ADEs such as Greenacres, The Flagstaff Group and The Disability Trust, whom for decades have provided ongoing supported employment to local persons with a disability. These employees, due to their level of disability and various systemic challenges, have not been able to access sustainable, ongoing employment in the open employment sector.

The Illawarra Forum strongly urges that, when undertaking the Review in February 2018, the Fair Work Commission ensures ADEs continue as a viable employment option for people with disability. This will be dependent on the way in which the Fair Work Commission determines wages for persons with disability working in ADEs.

Locally, we have approximately 600 ADE employees who will be directly impacted by the Commission's decision. We urge you to consider not only the employees but their carers, and the local support and respite services who will be under-resourced to cater for ADE employees should their employment be abruptly reduced or made redundant.

Ultimately, we are seeking job security for ADE employees, together with a commitment to fair wages and business sustainability. I trust that the Fair Work Commission will uphold such goals when determining the review in 2018.

To discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact me at nicky@illawarraforum.org.au or by phone on 02 4256 4333 or 0407 933 279.

Sincerely,



Nicky Sloan
CEO
Illawarra Forum Inc