



Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

The future of wage assessment in Supported Employment

A summary of what people told us

Easy Read version



How to use this document

This information is written in an easy to read way.

Some words are written in **bold**. We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words starting on page 15.

You can ask for help to read this document.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

This Easy Read document is a summary of a longer document.

You can find the longer document on our website at

www.fahcsia.gov.au

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What is this document about?

This document is about changes to the way we work out how much people in **supported employment** get paid.

Supported employment is the way that the government works with some businesses to create jobs for people with disability.

Many of these jobs are in **Australian Disability Enterprises**.

Australian Disability Enterprises are businesses that receive money from the government to help people with disability do their jobs.

We want to change how we work out rates of pay for people with disability who work in supported employment.

We call this **wage setting**.

This document is a summary of what people told us should change with wage setting.

Thanks for your ideas

In July this year, we talked to many people about what they think pay rates should be.

We held 59 meetings across Australia.

In total, we spoke to 317 people.

These people included:

- people who work in supported employment
- parents of people who work in supported employment
- people who care for people who work in supported employment.

We also received 126 letters.

We also talked to:

- people who run Australian Disability Enterprises
- anyone else who is interested in the way wages are worked out for people with disability.

What did we ask people?

We asked everyone questions about what they think about wage setting.

Our questions related to our goals for supported employment.

Our goals for supported employment are that:

- everyone who works in supported employment will have better wages
- everyone who works in supported employment will have more working hours if they want to
- businesses that offer supported employment can pay higher wages
- it will be easier for people with disability to be part of the community
- more people with disability will work for the government and for businesses
- there will still be places like Australian Disability Enterprises that can offer better working conditions for their workers.

What did people think about our goals?

We asked people whether they thought that we were any closer to reaching our goals.

You can read about our goals for supported employment on page 6.

Most of the people we spoke to said that people who worked in supported employment have been getting better wages than they used to.

They said that things had improved overall, especially in:

- wages
- working conditions
- keeping your workplace safe from things that could hurt or injure you.

We asked people what else they thought we should be doing to help reach our goals.

Some of the things people said we should do were:

- improve how much money people in supported employment are paid
- make sure that everyone is paid fairly
- make sure that everyone is able to have training.

Over a quarter of the people we spoke to said they think that it's important that Australian Disability Enterprises have strong businesses.

This will mean that more people with disability can keep working.

Everybody we asked said that they agreed with our list of goals.

We asked people if they thought there should be any other goals.

Nearly half of the people we spoke to said that they think that the most important thing is that everyone is paid fairly.

They also thought that it is important that employers:

- have a good plan to make sure their business is successful
- recognise the skills that their workers have
- give their workers extra training if they need it.

What did people think about our ideas?

We had some ideas about new ways to decide wage settings.

We asked people what they like and don't like about our ideas.

We discussed 4 main ideas:

- Use the **supported wage system** to decide how much people are paid. Some people liked this idea.
- Develop a new test to show how well a worker does their job. This idea was the least popular.
- Make changes to improve one of the work assessment tests we already use. This idea was the most popular.
- Change the law to say that the **Business Services Wage Assessment Tool** can continue to be used. Some people liked this idea.

We explain each idea in more detail below.

Idea 1

Idea 1 was that we use the **Supported Wage System** to decide how much people can earn.

The Supported Wage System is a test. It works out how well a person with disability does a job compared to someone without a disability who is doing the same job.

Some people working under supported employment already use the Supported Wage System.

Some people don't want to change to a new system.

Some people are worried that their knowledge and skills won't be recognised if they change to the Supported Wage System.

Idea 2

Idea 2 was to develop a new test that will show how well a person in supported employment does a job.

A lot of people told us that they don't like this idea.

Many people are worried that a new test:

- could be worse than the old one
- could take a long time to make.

Idea 3

Idea 3 was to make changes to improve one of the work assessment tests that we already have.

Many people told us that they like this idea.

They said that they want to keep the good parts of our current wage setting methods.

They also said they wanted to make it fairer.

Idea 4

Idea 4 was to change the law to say that we can continue to use the **Business Services Wage Assessment Tool**.

The Business Services Wage Assessment Tool is one of the tests used by Australian Disability Enterprises to decide rates of pay.

Most people told us that they think it's ok to keep using this test to decide rates of pay, but only for a short time.

They said that work should begin on a new and permanent solution instead.

Other ideas

Some people also had other ideas.

One idea was to make sure that wages do not go down while we're making all these changes.

Another idea was to make sure workers can access training and support if they want to work in **open employment**.

Open employment is a job where you don't receive help from the government to keep working.

Some people said that there needs to be better ways for workers to have a say in how much they're paid.

Other people said that there has to be a **minimum wage**. The minimum wage is the lowest wage that the law says a worker can be paid.

How can we help Australian Disability Enterprises make these changes?

Many people told us that they think Australian Disability Enterprises need to have more money from the government.

This way they can be sure that people who are working in supported employment will be able to keep their jobs.

Many people told us that they think the government should give Australian Disability Enterprises enough money to:

- teach their workers how to do their jobs
- improve their services
- replace their equipment when it breaks.

How can we help workers get used to the changes?

Many people said that they want to be told more often about what is happening with the changes.

They also want to be able to have their say about the changes that are taking place.

Some people said they would like more training to develop their work skills.

Other people said they would like to try open employment without having to give up supported employment.

Some people also thought we should:

- let workers earn more money without it affecting their pension
- get rid of the costs of getting to and from work
- provide more support to carers who have to work
- increase payments to a worker's **superannuation**.

Superannuation is money that is put aside for you to use during retirement.

What happens next?

We now have to go away and think about everything we have heard.

We will come back to talk about what we might do next later in 2013.

We are going to send a letter to everyone who works in an Australian Disability Enterprise.

This letter says that if you have any questions about how we're changing wage settings, you can call us.

Please call us on 1800 880 052

If you need a Translation and Interpretation Service, you can call

13 14 50

If you use a Teletypewriter, you can call:

1800 301 130

If you need to use the National Relay Service, you can call:

1800 555 677

You can send us fax us on:

(02) 8412 7199

You can email us at:

crrs@workfocus.com

Wordlist

Australian Disability Enterprises

Australian Disability Enterprises are businesses that receive money from the government to employ people with disability.

Minimum wage

The minimum wage is the lowest wage that the law says a worker can be paid.

Open employment

Open employment is an ordinary job that doesn't have help from the government like supported employment does.

Superannuation

Superannuation is money that is put aside for you to use after you retire.

Supported employment

Supported employment is the way that government works with some businesses to create jobs for people with disability.

Supported Wage System

The Supported Wage System tests how well a person with disability does a job compared to someone without a disability doing the same job.

Wage setting

Wage setting is how we work out rates of pay for workers.

Contact us

1800 880 052

[**bswat@fahcsia.gov.au**](mailto:bswat@fahcsia.gov.au)