



## **ADDE Update**

June 2013

This update is for ADDE members to keep informed about the current work of ADDE. It comes out approximately every two weeks. Please feel free to distribute to your appropriate networks. Items of more general information will be placed on the ADDE website and face-book page. We encourage you to visit [www.adde.org.au](http://www.adde.org.au) and join ADDE's face-book page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/28577322674/>

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/disabled-maybe-but-fully-fit-to-work-20130621-2oo4q.html>

## **Disabled maybe, but fully fit to work**

Date June 22, 2013

I recently made some widely reported comments about helping more disabled people - particularly disability support pensioners - into jobs. In response, I received two death threats and about 50 emails, phone calls and letters, many from people who wished me in fairly graphic terms - how do I say this politely? - to refrain from making any further comment on the subject.

The reaction I received, far from making me pull up the drawbridge, has confirmed - more than ever - that we need to talk about this issue. And now that the national disability insurance scheme is becoming a reality, it's the perfect time to tackle the barriers that prevent disabled people from moving into the workforce in greater numbers.

So what did I say that drew such fire? Apparently it was that the hundreds of thousands of people on the disability support pension who have some capacity to work should be given the support and incentives they need to enter or re-enter the workforce.

And why? Because cutting people off from work - those who have the capacity to work - and not engaging them in any level of community participation, as is the case for DSP recipients, delivers nothing but isolation and misery.

There's plenty of research about the devastating effects long-term unemployment has on a person's health. And from Aboriginal townships in remote Australia to suburbs on the fringes of our major cities, there is abundant evidence of how welfare dependency eats away at whole families and communities.

The irony is that I seldom meet an unemployed disabled person who doesn't want to work. If only they received the support they needed. And let's be clear, we each have a role to play - governments, businesses and community organisations - in providing that assistance.

Australia has a miserable track record in this area. We rank 21 out of 29 OECD countries for our employment rate of people with disabilities. The federal government must give greater consideration to the support needed to encourage more DSP recipients into the workforce.

It has made some initial steps, with recipients able to work up to 30 hours a week without losing their benefit.

But it must go further. It should also put greater pressure on the Australian Public Service to lift its game. Only about 2.9 per cent of people working for the federal government have disabilities, down from 6.6 per cent in 1986.

And it should establish a national centre on disability employment to bring together the best research and practitioner experience to support employers in hiring, retaining and advancing the employment of people with disabilities.

Employers often have limited exposure to people with disabilities and may perceive the costs of employing a disabled person to be too high, or have an unfounded belief that an employee with a disability will mean higher workers' compensation or more sick leave.

Employers may also mistakenly believe that people with disabilities will not be sufficiently trained or have the required qualifications to do the job. Or, often, it is just fear about how other employees may react and that they may say or do the wrong thing. But examples abound of how businesses have developed their capacity to employ people with disabilities. The common ingredient is the leadership needed at senior levels to commit to the task.

The experience of US drug store giant Walgreens is particularly instructive. An initiative to have 30 per cent of new hires at a recently built distribution centre be disabled people became so successful the campaign soon spread to achieving the same across Walgreens' other 14 centres and is now an ambition across its network of 8000 stores.

Walgreens found that employing disabled people made sound business sense. It wasn't empty charity.

The turnover rate for people with disabilities was half that of non-disabled co-workers. Productivity remained the same and disabled employees were much safer.

And community organisations? We have contributions to make, too - both as employers and as those that provide employment services; we must become more sensitive to employer needs in this area.

Mission Australia is determined to do its bit and has invited Deb Russell, Walgreens' former corporate manager of diversity and inclusion, to visit Australia and meet with business leaders.

DSP recipients who are able to work have genuine barriers to employment that they need help in overcoming. But it appears too many Australians have neither the stomach to commit ourselves to the task nor the willingness to provide the proper incentives and programs needed. Let's start doing something about it.

### **Toby Hall is CEO of Mission Australia.**

This week has been a busy week in Canberra, and we have been closely following Parliamentary developments in anticipation of the passing of two key pieces of the Federal Government's not-for-profit reform agenda.

On Thursday, the statutory definition of "charity" contained in the Charities Bill was passed by Parliament. This definition will mean that there is a codified definition that will be applied by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) when assessing whether or not an organisation is a charity, removing the need to rely on 400 years of case law to determine charitable status. While the ACNC will assess whether or not an organisation is a charity, access to charitable tax concession will still be determined by the Australian Taxation Office. The definition will commence in January 2014.

The Governance Standards for registered charities also made their way through Parliament (after a motion to disallow was lifted). These Governance Standards come into effect today, 1 July 2013, and provide a governance framework for charities registered with the ACNC. In this period of transition, we encourage all registered charities to continue to take a "best practice" approach to governance, which will ensure that they meet the requirements of both the Governance Standards, and any other laws that apply to them.

PilchConnect supports all efforts to simplify the regulation of charities and not-for-profits, and we hope these developments continue to progress, regardless of which party is in Government later this year. In particular, PilchConnect encourages State Governments to continue to collaborate with the ACNC on the regulation of charities so that it can fulfil its mandate as a one-stop-shop regulator for the benefit of the sector.

You can read a joint statement signed by PilchConnect urging the Parliament to pass the Charities Bill [here](#). Further, you can read the ACNC's outline of its approach to the Governance Standards [here](#).

Pay rates being offered under the national disability insurance scheme, DisabilityCare Australia, are so low the program is unlikely to attract the necessary number of qualified staff, according to an industry expert.

A spokesman from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs said the pricing for services reflect local markets in each launch site around Australia. The rates are consistent with the estimates from the Productivity Commission which developed the national disability insurance scheme and have been independently checked. Prices will be reviewed annually and DisabilityCare Australia will consider feedback from services providers involved in the scheme.

The taxi industry is ripe for reform. High fares and the skyrocketing value of taxi plates ensures big returns for the big players—like Cabcharge—but passenger numbers are in decline and drivers' wages have collapsed. What's needed is an injection of real competition and choice.

## Board and Independent Advisory Council of DisabilityCare Australia

**Source:** Government Media Release

**Author:** Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Minister for Disability Reform

The Australian Government has appointed a long-standing champion of disability reform in Australia, Bruce Bonyhady AM, as the inaugural Chair of the Board of DisabilityCare Australia.

The Board will set the strategic direction of DisabilityCare Australia and play an important role in safeguarding its financial sustainability, including by commissioning and considering actuarial advice in its decisions.

Mr Bonyhady brings considerable expertise to the position of Chair of the Board, including through his work as Convenor of the Independent Panel that advised the Productivity Commission and Government during the Inquiry into Disability Care and Support and as a Member of the Disability Investment Group.

The board members appointed by the Australian Government have extensive experience in the disability sector, insurance matters, financial management and corporate governance. The appointments have been endorsed by all States and Territories.

Members of the Board are:

Dr Rhonda Galbally AO, Deputy Chair of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group  
Ms Geraldine Harwood, former CEO of Optia Incorporated, a specialist disability service in Tasmania  
Sir Leo Hielscher AC, Foundation Chairman, Queensland Treasury Corporation  
Mr John Hill PSM, former board member of the Motor Accident Commission of South Australia  
Mr Glenn Keys, CEO and Managing Director of Aspen Medical and a parent of a child with an intellectual disability  
Mr Martin Laverty, CEO, Catholic Health Australia  
Ms Fiona Payne, Foundation Co-Lead, WA Disability Health Network  
Mr John Walsh AM, Associate Commissioner to the Productivity Commission inquiry into long-term care and support for people with disability in Australia

The Board of DisabilityCare Australia will receive advice from an Independent Advisory Council established by the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act.

The Australian Government has appointed Dr Rhonda Galbally AO as the Principal Member of the Independent Advisory Council.

Dr Galbally is a long-standing and passionate advocate for the rights of people with disability. She is a Deputy Chair of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group, Chair of the National People with Disability and Carer Council and Chair of the National Disability and Carer Alliance. Her joint role as Member of the Board and Principal Member of the Independent Advisory Council will ensure a strong and dynamic relationship between the two bodies.

Members of the Independent Advisory Council are:

Dr Ken Baker, Chief Executive of National Disability Services, the peak association for non-government disability services  
Mr Dean Barton-Smith AM, Chief Executive Officer of LINK Community Transport, a non-profit organisation providing community transport solutions assisting people with disability and their carers, and past Chair of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations  
Ms Michele Castagna OAM, first person with disability to be elected to Alice Springs Shire Council  
Ms Jennifer Cullen, Chief Executive Officer of Synapse in Queensland  
Mr Kurt Fearnley OAM, prominent paralympian and advocate  
Ms Lois Gatley, Carer, Ambassador for Carers Australia and Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Ms Sylvana Mahmic, Chief Executive Officer of Pathways Early Childhood Intervention Inc  
Ms Joan McKenna Kerr, Chief Executive Officer of the Autism Association of Western Australia  
Ms Janet Meagher AM, current member of National Mental Health Commission  
Dr Gerry Naughtin, Chief Executive of Mind Australia, one of the larger community based mental health NGOs in Australia  
Mr Dale Reardon, founding President of the Blind Citizens Australia (Tasmanian) Committee and former Director of Royal Guide Dogs Association  
Mr Michael Taggart, Inclusion Project Officer with the City of Salisbury in South Australia

The Board and Council will be convening soon for inaugural meetings.

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