

Ms Bernadette O'Neill  
General Manager  
Fair Work Commission  
Level 10, Terrace Tower  
80 William Street  
EAST SYDNEY NSW 2011

Date: 18 October 2017

Dear Ms O'Neill

**Fair Work Commission: Reference AM2014/286: Supported Employment Services Award 2010**

I am writing to express my concerns regarding 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).

The Illawarra is home to three ADEs - Greenacres Disability Services, the Disability Trust and The Flagstaff Group, who provide a much needed service supporting more than 500 people with disabilities in employment.

For people with a disability, working is about more than just receiving a wage. These workers not only earn an income, but they build strong social connections, increase their self-esteem, gain independence and feel valued. Employment also provides their families and carers with access to respite, reduces social isolation, and enables them to work or undertake independent activities. Most importantly, for people with disability, work provides a place to make friends and build relationships and provides a purpose, routine and a sense of security.

However, ADEs face a challenging decision from the Fair Work Commission in February 2018. Changes to the way wages are determined will compromise the capacity of ADEs to offer this type of employment. Requiring an ADE to pay higher wages for a simple task or small job will make their business model unsustainable into the future. This will destroy the economic viability of the system for workers with a disability and have a devastating impact on the Illawarra region, which already has a higher than average unemployment rate.

If an ADE were forced to close, the majority of supported employees would not be able to find work in the open market, as mainstream employers do not provide the additional support required. These workers would see their wages fall and see increased stress on families. Workers would lose access to their supported networks and social networks and the economy would lose productive workers and see an increase in welfare and support payments.

On Tuesday 26 September 2017, I attended a rally in Wollongong organised by Greenacres Disability Services, alongside a number of local MPs to protest against any changes that would impact on job security for employees of ADEs. There were hundreds of people who attended the rally - employees, their families and members of the public who all recognise the important role that ADEs play in our local community.

I urge the Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission to carefully consider how many changes to the system will impact on the profitability of ADEs and in turn, their ability to continue to employ people with disabilities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Bradbery', written over the printed name.

Lord Mayor  
Councillor Gordon Bradbery OAM  
Wollongong City Council