Submission for 2008 Minimum Wage Review

Unfortunately Government policy is that those who are not capable of earning the award wage after training and experience should not work, with some exceptions e.g. those with disabilities. My reason for writing is to ask the commission to consider the problem of refugees in particular. Many speak no English and some have never been to school, should these people be unemployed until these problems have been overcome?

Possibly past policies where work subsidies for six months are provided would be helpful, even if they were not very successful for the normal person who has such problems as low ability, irresponsibility, dishonesty etc. It seems unlikely that the government would accept an expensive program considering recent election expenditure promises. Given that the government English language program of just over 500 hours are well taught they suffer the major disadvantage that participants go home and speak their mother tongue. Work experience could be very helpful in development of English skills. If the aim of being cost neutral is important consideration could be given to reduction of expensive English instruction.

Given that political problems may arise if immigrants are singled out for help that is not available to the long term unemployed, the commission could consider the following.

1. Low wages for long term unemployed and those with other problems. The balance between the wage and the award being available in the future for housing, health or superannuation, the preference for jobs in the regular labour market would be very strong as people want their rewards now not in the future.
2. a requirement that large firms take a percentage of such people

A policy where it is assumed that all people will be worth the award wage is doomed to fail. If the commission takes the attitude that they are only concerned with award it would be appreciated if this submission could be forwarded to those that have the power to coordinate appropriate solutions.

Yours Sincerely
G Taylor