

J Love, Lake Cathie NSW

13 February 2008

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Employment
Participation
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir

With regards to your letter received 7 January 2008, thank you for inviting suggestions on the review of the current range of employment services.

My name is Joanne Love and I am currently employed by a Fee for Service Recruitment consultancy which is also a Job Placement Organisation in Port Macquarie. This letter however, represents my views as an individual rather than those of Joanne, the employee.

My history in recruitment spans 18 years. I initially recruited for the private sector from 1986 – 1996. And since moving to Port Macquarie in 2000 I have recruited for Job Network Employment Agencies including ETC, WorkDirections and currently Temps At Work. The transition from private sector recruitment to the Job Network system was definitely an eye opener, and exposed me to the plight of those in our community who were, for whatever reason, less equipped to participate in the workforce on a continual and long term basis.

Having spent the last 8 years working in the Job Network arena, I am pleased to have this opportunity to present my observations. I hope they are a useful contribution to the bigger picture.

Working for WorkDirections, I once had the opportunity to meet Therese Raine who started her business through a passionate desire to assist disadvantaged community members. She was inspiring. I also had the same desire. Once starting in the Job Network field however, it was clear to me that whilst the service delivery assisted many jobseekers, a growing number of participants did not receive any real or lasting results for the following reason:

- 1 DEWR KPI's were set to short-term outcomes ie, 15 hour JPO claims and/or 13 week Intensive Assistance claims often with employer incentives attached.

The KPI's were not geared toward life-long change for the jobseeker but rather focused on short term outcomes which often meant the jobseeker would be left to the wolves once the claiming period was over. Although these outcomes looked great as Government statistics for unemployment levels, individual lives had not been greatly impacted.

Service delivery was not geared toward getting to the core issues of unemployment but rather was centred around meeting KPI's which would produce these 15 hour and 13 week outcomes ie, whilst basic training was provided in resume writing and interview techniques, the jobseeker often presented to an interview with minimal self-esteem, no drive, no direction, no real sense of purpose, and no skills. How well can you perform under these circumstances?

I understand that we have a responsibility to use wisdom when allocating funding for services to the community. Without addressing some of the core issues associated with unemployment, we will continue to spend funds without gaining lasting results in this area. That does not seem wise to me. We will just keep the merry-go-round spinning with increasing pressure as time goes by.

I envisage a program that would provide a real opportunity to promote a greater sense of self-esteem, direction and purpose for the client. I believe this would create the momentum, desire and ultimately the opportunity for life long change. Programs designed to address the real issues in the lives of jobseekers like self-worth and self-respect, accountability and responsibility, coupled with skills to contribute to the workforce would, I believe, have a greater benefit to our society as a whole than what we provide now.

Perhaps this approach sounds like 'fairy floss' to some and a waste of time and money. However I would argue that our current system has not worked for the majority and we have spent millions on it.

I believe that by addressing problems at the core, each and every dot point you listed would be impacted positively. I thank you for providing this opportunity – and I certainly hope and pray that the right decision is made for our future generations.

Sincerely

Joanne Love