



**INTERACT
INJURY
MANAGEMENT**
PTY LTD ARN 14 070 034 847

127 Byng Street
PO Box 2018
ORANGE NSW 2800

Telephone: (02) 6361 8868
Facsimile: (02) 6362 9623
Email: orange@iim.net.au
Web: www.iim.net.au

Offices in Dubbo, Lismore,
Tamworth, Coffs Harbour &
Port Macquarie

12 February, 2008

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

Dear Mr O'Connor

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on how Australia can achieve its social inclusion agenda.

As a Provider of Australian Government Employment Services (PAGES), and an occupational rehabilitation company, we are committed to "*helping people to work....safely*", and fundamentally believe that work, along with community and family, gives meaning to life.

To achieve the clear objectives as outlined in your letter dated 7 January 2008, I would like to provide the following feedback based on our experience as a provider of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) services.

1. I would like to recommend increased collaboration on high risk school students and match them to the appropriate services early. We have found a large number of our socially excluded job seekers have had no services since leaving school. Through greater collaboration, these students can be referred early into a JCA and matched with the necessary services.

We believe strongly in the benefits of the Job Capacity Assessment, and see the relevance and importance of this assessment to quickly and comprehensively connect job seekers with the right services. We feel however, that if we could access the job seeker earlier (e.g. before leaving school for high risk students, before release from gaol), we could have a profound effect on decreasing social exclusion.

2. At the present time a number of clients attending for JCA's can not be referred to the services that are most suited to their needs due to:
 - a. Wait lists for Personal Support Program (PSP) and VRS.
 - b. The assessment requires us to refer to a program that they are eligible for. This is not necessarily the service that will meet their needs.

Therefore we are recommending that the number of placements be increased for PSP and VRS to reduce waitlists.

3. I would like to recommend changes occur to the eligibility for entry into programs for job seekers. We are aware of reports by Disability Employment Network (DEN) providers that adequate numbers are not being referred into their program. This is due to the job seeker not being eligible for the program, even though we are of the opinion it will best meet the job seekers needs.

As well as being able to meet with the job seeker earlier, if we were able to refer the client to the service that best meets their needs, not just what they are eligible for, it would ensure that the employment services are more relevant to the job seeker.

Interact Injury Management is committed to providing the highest quality, outcome driven services. We therefore welcome the opportunity to work with the relevant Government departments to continually improve the system for all stakeholders.

Thank you again for the opportunity of providing this feedback.

Yours sincerely

Nikki Brouwers
B. App. Sc. (O.T.)
Occupational Therapist
Managing Director

Email: nikki@iim.net.au