

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE: 20 July, 2010
RE: Supported employment for people with disabilities
FROM: Daryl Starkey, CEO Karingal

“Karingal provides its supported employees with meaningful employment, intensive guidance, training and support based on the needs of each individual. This kind of intensive support is not readily available for people working in open employment.

As part of normal practice, every three years FaHCSIA (Federal Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) require all supported employees working at around 600 Australian Disability Enterprises across Australia, who receive a disability pension, to be assessed on the minimum wage. Every three years the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services (CRS) conducts this assessment for Karingal. Karingal always uses independent assessors.

The assessment, which is done individually and on site, measures the capacity of work that can be performed by the supported employee with a disability against that of a person without a disability. That will vary from person to person and capacity can vary from assessment to assessment. That then translates into a supported wage.

Where a person’s capacity to work has diminished Karingal offers training to assist in lifting the supported employee’s skill levels. This not only aims to boost the confidence and job-satisfaction of the employee, but gives them new and improved skills to possibly receive a wage increase.

A supported employee receives their wage payment on top of their disability pension and if their capacity to work translates to more than \$142 per fortnight, their pension will then be reduced.

All supported employees have differing skill levels and interests, and are therefore assessed individually to ensure they are completing work which both matches their experience and are tasks they enjoy doing.

Employment at Kommercial also serves as an important social tool for all its supported employees. All supported employees are encouraged to participate in Karingal activities, form friendships, build confidence and be a part of the community. Without supported employment, many people can become isolated.



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We currently have 116 supported employees working across a number of facilities who have a range of disabilities including intellectual and physical disabilities and mental illness.

Karingal's supported employment service, called Kommercial, has been operating in Geelong for over 50 years."

ends

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