


**REQUEST TO JOIN EXEMPTION APPLICATION LODGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS) UNDER S55 OF THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (1992) (CTH)**

I/We seek to join/support the exemption application submitted by DSS as follows:

- I/We seek a conditional one year extension of the exemption for all existing ADEs and the Commonwealth (and officers of the Commonwealth) from sections 15, 24 and 29 of the DDA, for a period of one year from the expiration of the current exemption on 29 April 2015.
- The proposed exemption would apply while alternative wage setting arrangements are implemented by ADEs that have not adopted a wage assessment tool other than the BSWAT.
- The proposed exemption would apply while alternative wage setting arrangements are being devised and/or established and implemented by DSS.

<b>NAME:</b>	Phillip Toovey
<b>ORGANISATION:</b>	The Bridge Inc.
<b>POSITION:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>SIGNATURE:</b> By signing this document I certify that I have authority to sign on behalf of the organisation named above	 <span style="float: right;">8.5.2015</span>

**COMMENTS**

The Bridge Inc. strongly believes that the development of a suitable wage setting tool for disability enterprises is vital to provide certainty and integrity for the supported employment sector, which remains an appropriate alternative employment option for people with a disability who are unable to fully participate in the mainstream labour market.

The current situation is complex and confusing for both employment providers and supported employees, propagating insecurity and apprehension for affected employees and their families and carers. With the coming transition to the NDIS, it is essential to have a supported employment sector that people can be confident will employ people legitimately, free of the ongoing uncertainty that has now plagued this sector for years. It is critical to determine a wage assessment tool that is fair, practical, and appropriately constructed to apply to the employment circumstances of supported employees, particularly those with cognitive impairments or intellectual disabilities.

To achieve this, it is important to allow sufficient time. Based on the current state of trials of proposed new tools, clearly more time is required, therefore our organisation supports a one year extension of the exemption.