

THE ONLOOKER INVESTIGATIVE NEWSLETTER ISSN 038-183X (National) now in its 12th year of national & International circulation : Memo from Editor:

BY SPECIAL DELIVERY EXPRESS

Thursday, June 17 2003 TO:

Paul Belin,
Deputy-Commissioner, PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION,
Locked Bag No.2 Collins Street East, MELBOURNE 8003

Dear Mr Belin:

Disability Discrimination D.D.Act 1992 - Elimination of Disability Discrimination

This publication welcomes the opportunity to offer our published national findings over more than a decade into the plight of handicapped disabled persons (ranging in age from teens to elderly). We have explored, factually and visually, the misuse of some hundreds of persons toiling under the banner of 'sheltered workshops'.

I am sorry to say that these investigations proven correct, did NOT interfere for long with the ongoing malpractice. The practice is wide-spread in Australia, and usually associated with some Church or charity organisation. Profits *as you will read in the VATMI report (enclosed) are enormous and CEOs are richly rewarded!

We trust you are aware of the largest employer of Disabled workers in Australia. V A T M I ... I enclose a copy of their financial report. This VATMI ensures that no trade unionist etc., or media cameras are allowed 'on site'. My infiltration was frank and I took a photographer with me. "theme was Rehabilitation..." e.g., Convent of the Good Shepherd Laundries is a world wide-laundry organisation, specialising in five star hotels' dirty linen. One such convent laundry exploded (killing two workers - both retarded) in Hobart. They use old methods and probably still do... It started my inquiries.. (I enclose my article) The name Dorothy Walsh was used since the then-Sunday Press column size could not fit in my full surname Wentworth-Walsh). I devoted two issues of T O I N L to it.

You will find attached factual evidence, published by the employers of these disabled workers, that the goods produced are top class & ordered by major chain stores. Consumers have NO idea, or reference, in price or labelling that these class-A goods are produced in Australian 'factories' (ie sheltered workshops) by employees working regular hours (often holidays without holiday-pay SEE article enclosed). Pay is a pitiful allowance, whether the work done is welding, electrical goods or packing pegs, in the chain-stores, there is no reference to their manufacturing 'origin' and they compete at 'normal prices' very favourably. No reference is made to source-factories. The goods are first-class and compete v. favourably with overseas,' mass produced goods. (There is no tag saying _made by handicapped people, cheaply!). *,see attached Aust & o/seas journalist roles with ABC BBC, press & TV et seq.

ALL VATMI FACTORIES AND SHELTERED WORKSHOPS ARE 'OFF LIMITS TO MEDIA' AND CLIENTS... for obvious reasons! We managed to obtain entry by stating frankly we were doing coverage on Rehabilitation e.g. Convent of the Good Shepherd Laundries (see article) which did five starhotels (world wide inc;) & Australia) linen laundry etc. Retarded girls spent their lives washing 'dirty linen'.

Would you kindly ensure VATMI reports etc., are returned, after copying or use, by your officers. Pls. use the following address for all correspondence as usual. We do NOT employ the Internet or Web sites. This is deliberate policy.

Churches and quasi-religious institutions as well as charity organisations all use mentally handicapped persons and there is NO variation in pay e.g. a computer assembly work performed by some less-retarded workers were paid the same as the rest. NB., Church factories e.g, Methodist usually have their workers 'living closeby'. I verified this on 18/6/03 that VATMI Industries are "still going strong" and VATMI are sending me a current 2003 price brochure.

One factory manager laughed when I asked "Do your workers get public holidays"? Reply: "Their whole life is a holiday... they wouldn't want to miss a day's work" (see article Sunday Press and Observer attached).

Please DO PHOTOSTAT what you need and in due course, return my originals.

Best wishes with this vital and long overdue inquiry by the Commission.

I look forward to your comment in due course,
D. Wentworth-Walsh Nat. Ed., T O I N L

I enclose some personal career references for your file.

D. Wentworth-Walsh Nat. Ed.,
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We were surprised to learn that at last the Commission will be able to inquire into the operation of these highly-profitable factories.

It is important that one realises multiple - factories produce engineering goods/services, ranging from welded components to multiple - ranges of products which are IN-distinguishable from overseas' quality imports. The appeal, eg. VATMI is that these prices are minimal, the workers receive a pittance and there is NO distinction in the retail stores eg., Coles/Woolworths/Safeways to indicate which goods are manufactured by disabled/ handicapped-workers who receive 'pocket money'.

PS my clerical staff (2) both have flu!!