



**Recruitment &
Consulting Services
Association Ltd**

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Commissioner Helen Owens
Productivity Commission
Disability Discrimination Act Inquiry
LB2 Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003
Email: dda@pc.gov.au

Re: Disability Discrimination Act

Dear Commissioner

As the leading employment services industry association, the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association Ltd, believed that it was important to contribute our point of view of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Our 3200 members comprise global, national and niche companies specialising in placing people in permanent employment, as well as on-hire employment (formerly known as labour hire) which includes casual, part time and contract employment. We provide on-hired employees to Australia's top 200 companies.

Client Demand

Our industry has seen an increase demand from clients to ensure that when employing large numbers of people into their workforce, that it reflects the diversity of the customer base and the community. This is most often the case with large organisation in the telecommunications, banking and finance sectors as well as the public service. This diversity includes people with disabilities.

In order to win these employment tenders, RCSA members must present their credentials in recruiting people with disabilities and managing the employment relationship. The outcome of these diverse workforces is that employees are found to be increasingly loyal, lower absenteeism, and more committed to the business.

Two companies who understand the value in creating diverse workplace are Diversity at Work and Kelly Services. Diversity at Work consults to RCSA members and specialises in educating HR and recruitment managers about employing people with disabilities while Kelly Services, an RCSA member, has won some of the countries large diverse workplace contract based on their ongoing relationship with Diversity at Work.

Member Programs



Business Partners



Education Programs



These two organisations are considered leaders in the industry in terms of creating and supporting diverse workplaces. They are the most active and outspoken on this topic and we consulted with them in preparing this letter for you. Their insight into employment and disabilities assisted the RCSA in researching our members on this topic.

RCSA Research

We conducted research on our members to develop relevant information for the Productivity Commission. The RCSA conducts quarterly research to track members' business confidence and key issues facing the industry, in our March survey we gathered members' view on employing people with disabilities.

We found that over half (57 per cent) of our members have recruited a candidates with disabilities for permanent or on-hire employment. Many of our members (67 per cent) understand the implementation of the disability discrimination act, particularly in terms of the on-hire or permanent placement of people with disabilities. It was welcoming to note that 44 per cent of members have clients who value their ability to source a diversity of candidates (some with disabilities) and that 40 per cent did not agree that it was risky to present a client with a candidate who has a disability. Unfortunately only 26 per cent of members agreed that it made good business sense to be actively recruiting and on-hire people with disabilities.

We also ask a question as to what would change members behaviour. We asked, *It is estimated 11% of the Australian working age population that have a disability and are ready and able to work. Which of the following options would increase your disability placement to at least 5% (please rank 1, 2 and 3).* The areas that gained greatest support were:

- Assistance to provide workplace modifications, such as large screen monitors for the vision impaired (89 per cent)
- A public awareness campaign to increase acceptance of people with disabilities (85 per cent)
- Awareness/education of where to find skilled employees with disabilities (76 per cent)

Of the other alternatives proposed, 68 per cent of members supported increased training, 66 percent believed tax and financial incentives could change behaviour while 47 percent believed mandatory affirmative action would be worthwhile.

Conclusion

To date, the push to create diverse workplaces has come from government subsidised initiatives and from large corporations who view this as part of their social responsibility to the community. We believe that it will take a major program to change attitudes in small to medium organisations. Based on our research we believe there is an opportunity to increase the level of employment of people with disabilities in Australian workplaces.

The RCSA is keen to see the result of the Productivity Commission's findings in the review of the Disability Discrimination Act, particularly in terms of encouraging and educating the recruitment industry on the value of employing people with disabilities.

Kind regards



Julie Mills
Chief Executive Officer
Recruitment and Consulting Services Association Ltd.