



The Hon Wayne Swan MP  
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House of Representatives  
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Dear The Hon Wayne Swan MP

Subject: **Business Council of Australia simplistic views on disability**

The view of the Business Council of Australia (BCA) on people with a disability is simplistic and economically unsound. Please ignore their views.

The media contains numerous recent reports that the Business Council of Australia in its budget submission (see <http://www.bca.com.au/DisplayFile.aspx?FileID=703>) wants the Government to cut the Disability Support Pension. For example ...

The Business Council of Australia has flagged cuts to disability services and foreign aid as options to pay the flood reconstruction in Queensland and Victoria.

from <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2011/s3137792.htm>

THE Business Council of Australia has urged the Government to consider making cuts to the disability pension to pay for flood damage in Queensland and Victoria.

from: <http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/floodrelief/business-council-of-australia-urges-government-to-stick-with-plan-to-have-budget-in-surplus/story-fn7ik2te-1226005498241#ixzz1E40RnKsO>

Subsequently, the BCA put out a news release headed “BCA Not Calling for Disability Support Pensions to be Cut” (See <http://www.bca.com.au/Content/101795.aspx>).

The BCA’s news release says “the federal government should first focus on reducing or resequencing spending on programs that give least value for money”.

Clearly the BCA does not understand that the Disability Support Pension will never be a “value for money” proposition. So the BCA is still calling for cuts to the Disability Support Pension, albeit indirectly.

The BCA does not understand disability issues.

- The number of people with severe or profound disability is growing ... for a range of reasons. Disability is becoming more severe and people with a disability are living longer. So demand for disability support is increasing. And the cost will increase. This is the cost of civilisation and improving health care.
- Most people with a severe or profound disability want to work. They would work if BCA members allowed them the opportunity ... if BCA members were even slightly interested in community (and long-term goals) rather than their myopic focus on “value for money” and end-of-year executive bonuses.

- People with disabilities are hurt deeply and repeatedly through the claims of cruel politicians and organisations like the BCA suggesting that people with a disability do not make sufficient effort and are just lazy.

The BCA's thinking on this issue is embarrassingly shallow. Surely, advice from Australia's top 100 companies should be better than this. The BCA does not appreciate that people with disabilities want to work and will often work for exploitative wages. These people typically endure the highest marginal tax rates.

BCA members, Australia's "top 100" companies, should look elsewhere for guidance on how they address the growing issues relating to people with a disability. If they cannot individually improve economic participation of people with a disability and their carers, they can work better with specialist disability employment agencies, with our government and with international experts such as Specialisterne (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specialisterne>).

The BCA's simple-minded approach to human resources and its focus on short-term profitability narrows the workforce and diminishes the productivity of carers among its member's employees.

The BCA is not a good corporate citizen. It's members should be embarrassed. The BCA is incredibly lazy in taking these cheap shots at the most vulnerable members of our community. Its policy suggestions are morally bankrupt, shallow and contemptible.

Yours sincerely,



Bob Buckley  
Convenor

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