

Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

From: Carly Hanson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 11 December 2019 1:21 PM
To: Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
Subject: Submission to EESBC on the Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill 2019

To: The Committee Secretary,

I am an employee working in the social and community services industry and I support the *Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill 2019* which has been tabled following the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme for the Social and Community Services Sector, Decision Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS), October 2019.

I identify as a female, and have worked within the community legal sector, part of the social and community services industry, for close to 6 years. Much of my work was with organisations who provided services to women experiencing domestic and family violence, employment and discrimination issues. In that time, I have worked for 3 different employers and each time I started with a new employer, my long service leave accrual was reset. I left each employer due to either funding cuts or contracts being ended and not renewed due to funding uncertainty/deficits.

I am fortunate to have had better conditions with each of these employers than the current Industrial Relations Act provides, namely earlier access to long service leave (access between 5 and 7 years of employment, rather than 10 years). Even still, I have not been able to access any long service leave.

A portable long service leave scheme in Queensland that covers all employees working in the social and community services industry is needed, as the ability to achieve 10 years continuous services with one employer is very difficult, despite the likelihood of working 10 or more years within the industry as a whole.

This is also an industry that is characterised as low paid; largely female; and sustained by short term funding arrangements - resulting in short term tenure for employees through no fault of their own; often with multiple employers.

The Decision RIS at Part 7 set out recommendations for a portable long service leave scheme for the social and community service industry, which I support, and has resulted in the tabling of this Bill.

This Bill would establish a portable long service leave scheme that would allow access to long service leave from within the scheme after 7 years. The industry often sees employees exposed to high stress; crisis; trauma environments, so access at 7 years would greatly assist in the prevention of burnout and the retention of skilled employees, and is much more achievable than the current 10 year requirement, and offsets the lack of access to retrospectivity in the scheme.

Two of my former colleagues have left the industry due to burnout, and neither of them were able to achieve their long service leave, even though they spent many years with the sector. They are still working in similar roles but now with government based organisations. This happens time and time again, and it is a huge loss to our sector in terms of their knowledge, experience and continuity of service and care to their clients.

Allowing for a 4 year break from the industry to pursue other employment. For community legal centre workers, this often means a jump to Legal Aid for a couple of years, or to the private legal profession, and generally results in the worker coming back to a community legal centre, as the worker's values are in alignment with the values of NFP organisations. In addition, this break allows people to have time away for caring/family responsibilities (which largely falls to women) is also a huge benefit of the Bill, as this provides an additional avenue for women to be financially stable and put us on a more equal financial footing when it comes to gender.

The Bill also ensures that the scheme is inclusive, making sure all employees working across the whole industry are covered, not just certain roles within an organisation. This is very important, not just from an administration perspective, but from the perspective of how employees in this industry are valued. It also reflects the fact that many

employees in this industry move between frontline/client-facing roles to back end or management roles as opportunities to progress arise, or for a break from the vicarious trauma that may be experienced when working with highly disadvantaged and vulnerable clients. Working in a peak body, my role may not be classified as frontline, as we do not have clients, but instead are a professional body with organisations as our members - this would mean I am excluded from such a scheme, which would be a problematic outcome!

The scheme as provided for by the proposed Bill would reward employees for their service and dedication to the industry, demonstrate the value of the service they give and offset some of the many challenges employees in this industry face. This in turn will make the industry more attractive to new employees; provide employees with an opportunity to plan for their long-term career, knowing they would have access to a block of paid leave to rest and rejuvenate like other employees in similar occupations in other industries.

I urge the Committee to make a final decision that would call for the establishment of a portable long service leave scheme for the social and community services industry as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,



Carly Hanson

