

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

email: eesbc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Subject: Submission to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee on the Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill 2019

To: The Committee Secretary

I, David Kearney, Disability support worker, helper, volunteer in the social and community services area, this century,

make the following submission in support of the *Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill 2019* ("the Bill") 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.

It is widely documented that the SACS Industry is low paid, largely female and often operates in environments of high stress, crisis and trauma, with the type of work undertaken often requiring employees to have a varying level of skill up to and including some form of tertiary qualification. The Industry is sustained by short term Government funding arrangements, resulting in long term service within the industry made up of short-term contracts with multiple employers. The Decision RIS at 2.3 *The SACS Sector* reaffirmed these points.

I, over all of this, especially in paid employment, since 2006, have not just been with a single employer, but with four NGO's (different periods, except two, which I was co-employed, with Randstad for 5 years, whom provided around 8 different NGO's) and the before mentioned job agency.

I have seen many employees in all of these organisations having to leave for reasons like raising families, looking after loved ones with a disability, or multiple disabilities, better paying positions, or organisations paying what the pay rate should be around.

Also, with this social and community area, there is stress, abuse, bullying, lack of training, organisations breaching regulations/awards!

When I was with one particular NGO, being a long term collective of worker, union member, I saw many breaches of disability regulations/awards from employers to employees!

As the topic of this submission is "Long Service Leave" I had to bring to the employers attention in regards to long service leave

- Past employees who claimed they were no longer needed, not long before their long service entitlement or pro rata!

- That management was telling workers, like myself that “Casual workers” were not entitled to long service leave, even after doing fortnight rosters for many years!
- I spoke at meetings in front of co workers and management, about the Queensland legislation, giving casual workers access to long service leave since the 1990's. From the managements point of view, this fell on deaf ears, I involved the Australian workers union, over a period, which got the management to agree, about the existing legislation! So I don't know how many previous workers, missed out on LSL!

There are of course employees who choose to remain within the industry, supporting the values it generates and the clients and communities the services support. Had these employees opted to work in less philanthropic industries, such as health, local government or the private sector, they would undoubtedly be paid more, enjoy a greater sense of employment security and have a greater opportunity to achieve long service and access their leave entitlement.

As I referred to earlier, high employee mobility/turnover is a key workforce challenge for our Industry with the sector reported as having high levels of employee mobility in the Decision RIS at *2.4 Long service leave in the SACS sector in Queensland, Rates of mobility.*

Apart from the loss of expertise and continuity; employee turnover can be a major cost, draining resources from service delivery and employee development and training. The labor-intensive nature of service delivery, combined with the investment required in employee collaboration and the small size of many organisations, means that the impact of employee mobility/turnover can be more profound for SACS employers than what might be experienced in most other industries.

Employee mobility/turnover has the potential to be intensified even more where funding is driven by consumer demand such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), coupled with the required attraction of new employees to meet the increase in expected clients. It is therefore vital to find strategies to reward and retain employees, to ensure the SACS Industry's sustainability.

The Palaszczuk Government's commitment to fund pay equity rates and introduce longer term contracts is already creating a more sustainable social and community services Industry. The Bill seeks to build upon these foundations by establishing a portable long service leave scheme that would:

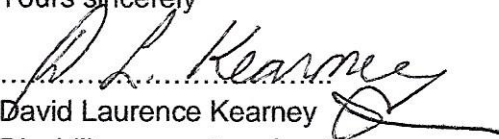
- cover all employees across the varied sectors within the Industry (listed in Schedule 1 of the Bill);
- apply to both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations in the community services Industry;
- provide workers with a PLSL entitlement after 7 years' service with accrual at the rate of the existing statutory entitlement of 8.67 weeks after 10 years' service;
- require an employer to pay a levy calculated on an employee's ordinary wages and report on an employee's service; and

- be administered by the existing PLSL Authority, QLeave (which currently administers PLSL schemes for the building and construction industry and the contract cleaning industry)

As the Industry is heavily reliant on Government funding, organisations like ours would need some form of support/ assistance, be it education or financial, in preparing for the introduction of a portable long service leave scheme and ensuring new systems and processes are in place to meet our reporting and remittance obligations.

A portable long service leave scheme is not the complete solution to the challenges faced by our Industry (most notably the attraction and retention issues already mentioned) but it must form part of the Government's Community Services Industry Strategy. It is for this reason that our organisation supports the Bill.

Yours sincerely


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David Laurence Kearney

Disability support worker 2.3

[Redacted contact information]

Monday 16th December 2019