

Productivity Based Wage System

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- Most people who have disability are able to participate in the open workforce do so at full rates of pay. However, there are some people who are unable to find or keep a job at full wage rates due to the effect of disability on their workplace productivity.
- A Productivity Based Wage system allows for these people to participate in the open labour market.
- In Australia this is referred to as the Supported Wage System (SWS).

Introduction

- Legislation passed in Australia parliament in 1986 during international year of the disabled regarding rights for people with disability including employment in open labour market.
- Supported Employment agencies contracted and receive first funding to deliver services to assist persons with a disability into open employment labour market 1989.

History SE Sector

- In the early 90s it was identified by disability peak bodies and SE agencies that due to some peoples level of disability and therefore potential inability in some workplaces not to produce the volume of work of non disabled co workers that these people with a disability would have much more difficulty realising their goal to work in open employment.
- Round table discussions commenced with government, employers, unions and disability peak bodies on how to address this.

History 1: Productivity based wage

- All groups in agreeance that persons with severe disabilities should be given opportunity.
- Legislation changes needed to labour code to allow for less wages than award wages.
- Buy in by government, employers, unions and NGO sector to make this happen.
- Initial productivity base wage system through approval by all parties and signed off by a judge of the court, that was binding.

History 2: Productivity based wage

- Early 90s federal government commits to support in legislation and to provide funding of system.
- Employer groups and Unions along with NGO's working with People With Disability (PWD) all support and agree.
- Government in co ordination with all stakeholders put together a training course to accredit independent SWS assessors.

SWS Commencement

- 1. The employer or the Disability Employment Service completes and submits the application form.
- 2. The Government officer confirms the applicant's eligibility.
- 3. Government approves the application online and advises the applicant.
- 4. The employee commences a trial period on at least the current Supported Wage System minimum weekly wage.

The Supported Wage System process

- 5. The employee receives on the job training during the trial period.
- 6. Government requests that a Supported Wage System assessor conducts a workplace productivity assessment.
- 7. The productivity assessment is completed and the parties agree and sign a Supported Wage System Wage Assessment Agreement.
- 8. A review of the employee's workplace productivity must be completed annually, or earlier, if there is a significant change in duties or productivity.

The Supported Wage System process

- There are many variables in the SWS as every person and employment environment being considered and applied for under the SWS is different.
- I will present the main components of the technicalities but there will be many more specific components that will arise in every individual SWS assessment. To drill down to the detail of every possibility would be outside the scope of the time of this discussion. I will present some real case studies for discussion to give you the best idea possible.

SWS Technicalities

- Chosen via application. Normal qualification human service at bachelor level and SE experience or alternatively long term SE sector experience.
- Must complete a live in course of 3-5 days convened by government office. Only delivered as required.
- Complete full police and background checks.
- Normally NGO sector employee or ex NGO sector now self employed.
- Paid on an hourly basis to a maximum number + travel costs.

SWS Assessor

- Must be in receipt of a disability pension or at least eligible for a disability pension.
- Must agree to want to work on a SWS and fully agree to the process after in depth explanation.
- If under 18 years must have consent of parent or guardian to participate in SWS.

PWD Eligibility for SWS

- The position must be a position that is of at least 8 hours work per week and no more than 40 hours per week.
- Must be an ongoing role and not temporary as process takes including training period 12 weeks.
- Will allow SWS assessor on site and likely SE worker to assist.
- Wage must be above the minimum wage under the industrial instrument.

Employer and SWS job.

- SE staff member generally does all the communication with client, employer and government to set up SWS process.
- Completes all the administration tasks and submits paperwork for SWS to government with client and employers agreeance before the client can commence in the training period on the work site.
- Undertakes task analysis of role, does some preliminary timings against co workers and makes determination with stakeholders on SWS training rate

SE Agency staff + employer

- After all approvals received in writing from government SWS training period begins.
- Duration must be over 4 weeks and less than 13 weeks. (can be extended with application 4 weeks).
- Agreement made about levels of client support necessary during training period to ensure they are able to get best % result at assessment time.
- Potential discussion regarding any necessary workplace modifications.

SWS Commencement

- Client, employer and SE agency staff member work towards getting highest level of productivity achievable for client.
- Integrate the client into worksite effectively.
- Ensure client focusing on identified task analysis of roles they will be assessed against.
- Practice timings to get client comfortable with process.
- Arrange 4 weeks out from end of period SWS Assessor attendance time.

SWS Training period

- Assessor becomes familiar with task analysis and duties of roles (may even perform them himself).
- He will attend employment site on at least on 3 occasions and conduct timings of tasks by client and co worker. Sometimes by unseen observation and also when client not on site.
- Has discussion with employer about client and level of supervision required. Also discussion with SE worker who has been supporting on site.

SWS Assessment

- Assessor presents productivity findings to all stakeholders (employer, client, guardian, SE worker).
- Explains how timings were reached and explain process.
- Will advise of recommendation of % productivity based wage. (Allowance of supervision 10%) and will inform all of what this means as an hourly rate.
- All parties have to agree and sign off prior to lodgement.

SWS Assessment Agreement

- SWS Assessor lodges SWS application and findings with industrial commission.
- Unless some objection by commission paperwork returned in a maximum of 14 days.
- Re assessment of SWS % productivity must happen at least every 12 months.
- Either party ,client or employer can request a reassessment of productivity if they believe this has changed since SWS.
- All stakeholders receive copy of SWS agreement.

SWS Lodgement

- Government sends out notification of timing requirements for reassessment at least 4 weeks prior to agreed reassessment period (12 months max).
- SE staff member in co ordination with client and employer agree to date for reassessment.
- Liaise with SWS assessor for attendance on site for reassessment.

Re Assessment SWS

- A productivity based wage system allows for those persons with a disability who otherwise due to their limitations would be excluded to participate in the open labour market.
- It is effective for all parties if done correctly.
- Some practical examples.
- Thanks

Effective