

Workability International Oceania



Oceania

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From the Chair

Workability Oceania Seminar

“Not for Loss is not negotiable even in a recession”

Against the backdrop of a global economic recession and a mid winter cold snap in Wellington, New Zealand it was great to attend this informative seminar and catch up with many members.

Presentations ranged from managing businesses in tough times to an overview of the implications of individualised funding – and just about everything in between.

A Price Waterhouse Cooper representative provided some good commonsense strategies to manage businesses during a recession. These included developing a “cost culture” in your organisation where all staff are actively looking at ways to save money, to ensuring all Managers are communicating to all key stakeholders on what the challenges are, and what organisations need to do to remain viable. Strong leadership is critical in these times.

There was also a presentation from the Employers and Manufacturers Association and one on how to structure “strategic pay”. It was outlined that many niche businesses thrive in tough times and food in particular is one that doesn’t necessarily experience a downturn (people still have to eat). There were three presentation from members who manage businesses that are closely aligned to their local communities. The presentations demonstrated that even in tough times services are more resilient if they draw on the support of their communities and where their businesses meet local needs.

A representative from National Disability Services (NDS) outlined the issues and challenges in moving to a more individualised funding environment. This included lessons and research from other areas in the world, particularly the UK.

Finally the seminar ended in the “Tasman Challenge” Debate. The topic was “Duality of roles doesn’t work” and the winners were the Australian team that argued for the affirmative. Whilst at times light hearted the debate drew out some important issues for the industry.

There is no doubt that all attending got great value and came away with some very useful information. As well people from both sides of the Tasman caught up and swapped notes on how things are going.

In particular many of the presentations and discussions demonstrated a resilience and determination amongst members that will ensure “Not for Loss” is not negotiable.

Now we are rapidly approaching the 2009 WI Conference in Sydney. This will be a great opportunity for members from Oceania to catch up and showcase our region to the rest of the world. I hope to see you there.

**Tony Lund
Chairperson**

Southland Enterprises a Winner

As reported in the last edition of the Oceania Newsletter, Southland Enterprises in New Zealand was a finalist in two categories of the Vero Excellence in Business Support Awards 2009.

The Awards were presented by Prime Minister Hon John Key at a Black Tie Gala Dinner held on 28 May in Auckland and Southland Enterprises took out top honours in the Sustainable Development in Business category.

Established in Invercargill in 1974 as an industrial work training unit for disabled people, the lifeblood of Southland Enterprises is now recycling. Whether it's wooden pallets they dismantle and turn into firewood and kindling (plus selling the nails to scrap metal dealers) or processing kerbside collection items, the organisation strives to ensure that products that are of minimal value to anyone else become their 'gold'. They also collect products for recycling from commercial businesses and recycle plastic products not included in kerbside collections.

"My business was unable to engage in recycling of paper and plastics without active help and support from Southland Enterprises," Neville Cook, from Reading Cinemas, Invercargill said. "They have provided an opportunity that has saved a significant amount of rubbish going to landfill in a cost-effective service."

In its award application Southland Enterprises said they do not accept second best and set high ethical standards in their working environment.

Excellence in business is more important than anything else Roger Bell, Chief Executive of Vero Insurance, the Foundation Sponsor of the awards, said. "The point of these awards is that our winners don't end up just being excellent on one aspect of business – it goes right across the business – across leadership, strategy, people, processes and the results from all of those things. So it's not just narrowly defined."



Pictured (from left) Peter Brown, Vero Chief Financial Officer; Craig Lamberton, BDO Spicers; Prime Minister John Key; Ian Beker, Southland Enterprises; Sarah Trotman Bizzone; Nevil Gibson, Editor National Business Review.

2009 Workability International Conference — Sydney, Australia



The Workability International Annual Conference 2009 will be held in conjunction with National Disability Services Australia (NDS) from the **6th to the 9th of September 2009** at the Hilton Hotel, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

The theme of the conference is the building of business partnerships, service strategies and a policy environment conducive to the creation of employment opportunities for people with disability – against the stark backdrop of a worsening international economic climate. The conference will attract an estimated 800 people from around Australia and overseas.

To register or for further information go to www.nds.org.au or contact Sarah Maguire on phone +61 2 6283 3200 or email sarah.maguire@nds.org.au.

**Please Note:
The Workability International
Annual General Meeting
will be held on the afternoon of
Tuesday 8th September 2008**

Australian Disability Enterprises Website Granted Triple A Compliance

The Australian Disability Enterprises website, www.australiandisabilityenterprises.com.au, has been granted Triple A compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, after a review by Vision Australia on 23 April 2009. The guidelines set out strict accessibility requirements to ensure the website is accessible to people using assistive technology, including screen readers and keyboard navigation.

The website includes features that enable users to easily increase and reduce the text size, skip navigation—which is particularly useful for people using screen readers, and a flexible page layout to allow the main content area to be resized down to suit smaller window sizes, allowing users to adjust the text line length for easier reading.



Workability Europe—Bucharest Declaration

On 25-29 May 2009, Motivation Romania and the Shaw Trust together with Workability Europe hosted Workability Europe's annual conference on "Financial and Economic Challenges: 2009 and Beyond" in Bucharest.

The organizers are grateful for the support of the Romanian National Authority for People with Disabilities and would also like to acknowledge the significant role played by participants and speakers. Participants from 30 member organisations from 17 countries as well as officials from the Romanian government, the European Union and other non-governmental organisations were present during the conference.

1. The presentations and discussions of the conference show a common concern among participants about the future operations of the sector in these times of economic turmoil. Most members of Workability Europe report that they are directly affected by the global recession. Some national member organisations report a loss of jobs of up to 30% and income, jeopardising the sustainability of the ongoing operations during these economically difficult times. This holds especially true for jobs in the industrial sector.

2. Participants of the conference express their concern that achievements of the last years, even decades, are currently under threat, especially the statement of the Reykjavik Declaration of 2003 of equal opportunities of employment for people with disabilities. Workability Europe and its members want to remind governments and the European Institutions that social systems are also social stabilisers and that in times of economic uncertainty these systems are of increased importance to society. We therefore offer our expertise and cooperation to the relevant authorities in order to provide solutions and mechanisms to address this issue with our knowledge of the various models of employment, such as sheltered employment, supported employment, social enterprises, vocational training programmes and re-integration programmes.

3. Participants agree that further action has to be taken to encourage disabled people to enter - and retrain and retain in - the labour market. The current efforts of Governments, Companies and non-profit Organisations therefore should be increased.

Namely:

- More and better training possibilities for people with disabilities,
- Advocacy to get employers to recognise the capacities of people with disabilities,
- Optimise the opportunities for employment for people with disabilities to enter/re-enter the workplace by providing sustainable employment, in our own organisations as well as in open employment

4. Workability Europe is nevertheless convinced that the current economic challenges also present opportunities to its members to build stronger and more sustainable organisations.

Some of the key strategies agreed on by the participants are:

- Reviewing operations and seeking innovative solutions,
- Stimulating cross-border partnerships to secure the development of employment opportunities for people with disabilities,
- Exchanging good practices through networking.



Ultimately, only sustainable and competitive organisations will ensure the human right to work including for people with disabilities.

5. Workability Europe is expressing the need for all relevant stakeholders (in government, the economy and civil society) to increase their work together, in order to overcome this crisis and enable people with disabilities to lead productive and independent lives.