

# SUPPORTED WAGE SYSTEM

A fact sheet for  
employers

## What is the SWS?

The Supported Wage System (SWS) aims to increase employment opportunities for some people with a disability by providing an industrial relations framework that allows the legal payment of wages based on an individual's productivity.

Employers are able to legally pay a wage that matches the employees assessed productivity. The assessment is usually completed in the workplace & takes into consideration the various tasks & time spent on each task to determine productivity.

On commencement of employment, an individual's productivity is usually a negotiation between all parties. After approximately 12 weeks in the job, an assessment is completed & an actual productivity rate determined. This level of productivity determines the rate of pay for the next 12 months. An annual assessment is completed & rate of pay adjusted accordingly to reflect any change in assessed productivity (resulting in an increase or decrease).

People with a disability, employed under the Support Wage System, have the same conditions of employment as their co-workers & the assessed percentage of productivity applies to the wage rate only.

To facilitate & support these workers, the Australian Government contracts a panel of independent Supported Wage System Assessors to conduct work place productivity assessments for employers.

A person is eligible to participate in the Supported Wage System if;

- The job under consideration must be covered by an Award or Enterprise Agreement which permits employment under SWS.
- The person is an Australian Citizen & aged 15 years or over.
- The person has no outstanding workers compensation claim against the current employer.
- The person meets the impairment criteria for receipt of the Disability Support Pension.



Hailey, KFC  
East Maitland  
Store Manager  
with Diana, who  
is employed by  
KFC accessing  
the SWS wage  
structure.

# THE SWS PROCESS

## STEP 1

An application is submitted by the Disability Employment Service provider (Mai-Wel LabourForce Solutions).

## STEP 2

The application is processed & approved by the Supported Wage Management Unit.

## STEP 3

The employee commences work & is paid a percentage of the hourly rate as negotiated and agreed on by all parties (noting the minimum wage is \$87 per week).

## STEP 4

After approximately 12 weeks in work, an independent Assessor conducts a workplace productivity assessment.

## STEP 5

The assessed productivity is agreed on by all parties & paperwork signed off.

## STEP 6

The employee's current rate of pay is adjusted to match the assessed productivity.

## STEP 7

An annual review of the employee's workplace productivity is completed & wages adjusted accordingly.

# MEET GABBI

## A MWLFS Success Story

Gabbi was looking to secure employment in the open labour market however her disability was impacting on her ability to achieve full productivity rates. In turn, this was affecting Gabbi achieving her employment goals.

The SWS process provided Gabbi the opportunity to participate in work, without the pressure of meeting productivity demands of the role. She is able to work to a level that is comfortable & achievable & earn a wage that is representative of her productivity.

Mai-Wel LabourForce Solutions secured a position at Maitland Regional Art Gallery's Seraphine Café, where Gabbi is currently enjoying working two mornings a week - a role that is possible thanks to SWS arrangement.

Owner, Jenny Benning believes that it has been a positive experience having Gabbi as part of the team.

"Gabby always comes to work with a smile and her calming, happy presence actually makes the staff more mindful in what is a fast-paced and sometimes stressful environment. I am grateful for the support MWLFS have provided to ensure this works well for everyone involved".



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