

**Community Affairs References Committee**  
**Planning Options and services for people ageing with a disability**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**18 February 2011**

**Question No: 4**

**Topic:** Special Disability Trusts (SDT)

**Hansard Page:** CA31/32 /33

**Senator Siewert** asked:

How do you deal with the SDTs in mental health and mental illness? The criteria does not work for people caring for somebody with a mental illness.

**Answer:**

Special Disability Trusts do not preclude people with mental illness from being beneficiaries provided their illness or disability is such that they satisfy the relevant requirements.

In response to the Senate Community Affairs Committee Report '*Building Trust: Supporting Families through Disability Trusts*', the Government has passed legislation allowing beneficiaries of a Special Disability Trust to work up to seven hours a week at or above the relevant minimum wage. Relaxing the work capacity test will allow severely disabled people, including those with psychiatric disabilities, to undertake paid employment and remain eligible to be a beneficiary of a Special Disability Trust.

Centrelink has advised that approximately 20-25 per cent of Special Disability Trust beneficiaries have a mental illness.