

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2015-16 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 5.1 Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme**

**Question No: SQ15-000727**

**Topic: Disability Employment Services**

**Hansard page: Written**

**Senator Siewert, Rachel** asked:

I understand that introduction of a new employment benchmark will ensure DES participants who have been assessed as having the capacity to work between 23 and 29 hours per week are supported to do so. How was the 23 -29 hours arrived at?

**Answer:**

The 23-29 hours category was chosen to replicate the work capacity bandwidths used by the Department of Human Services' Assessment services for people accessing Disability Employment Services (DES). Work capacity is assessed as either 0-7, 8-14, 15-22, 23-29 or 30+ hours per week. An Employment Benchmark is the number of hours a DES participant is expected to work in order for a DES provider to claim Job Placement and Outcome fees. Currently, there are only three Employment Benchmarks in DES – at 8-hours, 15-hours and 30-hours. This means that for a DES participant with an assessed work capacity of between 23 and 29 hours per week, a DES provider can claim Job Placement and Outcome fees for placing them in a job of only 15 hours per week. The new Employment Benchmark of 23 hours ensures that all the work capacity bandwidths are matched by a corresponding Employment Benchmark.