



Colin Barnett Premier; Minister for State Development



Simon O'Brien Minister for Finance; Commerce; Small Business, Disability Services

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People with disabilities the winners from tender exemption decision

Portfolio: Premier, Disability Services

People with disabilities will benefit from a State Government move to exempt some registered businesses that employ people with a disability from aspects of government tender processes.

Premier Colin Barnett and Disability Services Minister Simon O'Brien said the exemption, now included in State Supply Commission policies, meant government agencies would not have to go to public tender when there was an opportunity to award the work to Australian Disability Enterprises (specialist employers of people with a disability).

The announcement was made in conjunction with the release of the Liberal-National Government's extensive 'Count Me In - Disability Future Directions' plan which outlined a 15-year strategy to tackle the challenges and barriers facing the more than 400,000 West Australians living with a disability.

Mr Barnett said the exemption was a positive step forward in supporting people with disabilities throughout the State.

"Some organisations are set up with the prime purpose of providing employment for people with disabilities but they sometimes struggle to win Government work in a competitive tender environment," the Premier said.

“The change to this policy will support these organisations and the excellent work they do. It will also help create more jobs for people with disabilities. These jobs provide people with more than a wage - they provide an opportunity for engagement in community life”.

“There are many organisations in this sector that are often the unrecognised ‘glue’ that holds our community together. The Liberal-National Government will continue to make a real difference to the way these organisations work with government to deliver services.”

Mr O’Brien said the new system fixed long-established problems.

“Earlier this year, a contract with local company Westcare Print, which employs people with disabilities, lost a contract with the Health Department. It was not successful in re-tendering based solely on economic grounds and a strict tender assessment process.

“The Liberal-National Government has now fixed this situation.”

With the change, a public authority will not be required to comply with the minimum competitive requirements for a procurement where the Accountable Authority considers that exceptional circumstances exist for that procurement and justification for that decision is documented.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- there is a bona fide sole source of supply
- there is an opportunity to purchase from a business that primarily exists to provide the services of persons with a disability and the business is a registered Australian Disability Enterprise
- a public authority has awarded a contract for a similar requirement through a competitive process within the previous 12 months and there is a reasonable expectation that the market has not changed
- a public authority requires the use of goods and services from a particular supplier that must be integrated within an existing contractual arrangement, project or ICT standard operating environment and an alternative product is not suitable.