

SACS Portable Long Service Leave Consultation
Office of Industrial Relations – IR Policy
GPO Box 69
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Madam/Sir

Re Portable long service leave scheme for the Social and Community Services Industry.

I have been working as a volunteer and for wages in the community sector continuously since 1988. I have worked casually, on contract, and in both part and full-time permanent positions in more than ten Brisbane and Logan workplaces.

My longest service was for 13 years in a part-time permanent position - while I raised my children. My shortest service was a number of different two to four week locum stints where I filled-in for other people on leave. I have been in my current full-time position since June 2011, on a contract renewed annually.

In thirty years, I have had long service leave only once, at the workplace where I served 13 years. It has been argued that portability would turn long service into just another entitlement, extinguishing the employee's incentive to remain loyal and earn the leave by staying for the full 10 years.

My experience has been the opposite. Taking long service strengthened my sense of belonging and obligation to the organization, and I stayed in that particular job for another six years, until just a few months before I was due for a second long service leave entitlement.¹

In 30 years, I have had no other opportunity to claim long service leave.

The services sector is not highly paid. Despite relevant professional qualifications and a higher degree, my full-time earnings are just (~1.7%) above the average Australian wage. The organization I work in has 20 employees, only three of whom work full time. For me, there is no prospect of advancement within the organization, so I can expect no wage increase outside of award entitlements unless I move to another workplace.

The administrators of the program that funds my current position have advised my employing organization that my position will likely be defunded at the end of June 2020, less than 12 months shy of the 10 years of service that would entitle me to take long service leave. If this happens, it will be the second time in 30+ years that I have missed long service leave by less than a year.

Because the wages are not high, and job status, security and prospects of advancement are low in this sector, every benefit is important to me. Aside from the personal benefits that come from extended time to spend at rest, with family or pursuing personal interests, portability helps to legitimise the sector and attract quality people to it.

¹ The industrial agreement at that workplace allowed long service at seven years' service.

Yours sincerely

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