

David Hatfield
A/g General Manager
Adjudication Branch
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
Canberra ACT 2601

24th April 2008

Dear Sir

**Applications for Authorisation by Job Futures Ltd
A91084, A91085, 25th March 2008**

I am writing in support of Job Futures applications for Authorisation and Interim Authorisation.

Highlands Support Services has been operating in the Ballarat region since 1992 and provides employment and training for people with a range of disabilities and people who are disadvantaged in our community.

It is a not for profit, charity incorporated under the Incorporations Association Act, providing many social benefits over the years to a wide range of people who require some assistance.

Highlands Support Services Inc.

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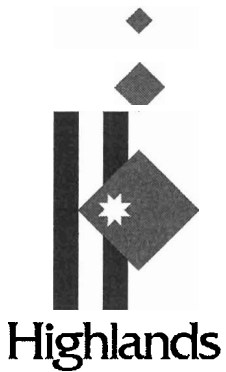
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Highlands Support Services has been a member of Job Futures since 2004.

The market for government funded employment services is extremely competitive. The contractual and performance management arrangements that operate in the sector are complex and changing. Since its creation in 1998, it has become harder for small-medium size organisations to enter and retain a place in the market – particularly in Job Network. Yet these organisations play an important role in ensuring that services for disadvantaged people meet the specific needs of local communities.

My organisation delivers a range of local programs and services to our community which are important to community well being such as running Community Jobs Projects for clients with Mental Health issues, Indigenous, people with disability and also providing services in local prisons. We are able to link these initiatives with our employment programs, delivered as part of Job Futures.

As a national provider, Job Futures is able to tender for and deliver programs that are nation or Statewide. This enables organisations like mine to



participate in delivery of these programs where otherwise we would not be able to do so. For example, until last year we have delivered the Green Corps programme – which engages 17-20 year olds in environmental projects – under sub contract to Job Futures in our community. Job Futures Ltd is contracted to deliver this across NSW, ACT, NT and Queensland.

Job Futures unique collaborative arrangement enables organisations like Highlands Support Services to deliver quality services while retaining their local focus and identity. We are able to access resources through Job Futures (like on line reporting tools, training and support) which, as a lone provider, we could not.

Highlands Support Services supports this application for authorisation and believes that the continued operation of the Job Futures model contributes to a more diverse market for government funded employment services.

Yours sincerely

Mel Warner
Chief Executive Officer
Highlands Support Services Inc.

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