

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE 1990-1992

I was employed with the Department of Defence in 1990, after completing tests held by the Department of Social Security for people with disabilities to re-enter the workforce. On completion they advised me that the only position available was at Garden Island. I accept the position as I was keen to re-enter the workforce.

Whilst employed in this position, I was able to do more within the department than I originally thought possible. They advised me that I should apply for a ASO2 position rather than the ASO1 - the position I was currently holding (which is the entry level).

I felt that the treatment that I received was less than adequate and had cause to feel that the epilepsy was not fully understood. I had one seizure whilst employed, and any other seizures were on weekends - whilst at home,

It was a general consensus that being, "epileptic was not something that this department took kindly to - and I was being pushed to find other employment. I was sent back and forth to the medical officer to see if I was fit enough to work.

Eventually, I was sent to Zetland not into a higher position but was so relieved to be free of the constant harassment at Garden Island.

In October 1992 I was sent to the Chief Medical Officer, who did evaluate that I wasn't fit enough to work - in December 1992 I was dismissed by the Department of Defence.

I was advised to go to Social Security so I could get help till I found a new position. I was told I should be on a Disability Support Pension after reading my termination letter but, I would have to see their Medical Officer. The other statement they made was that it was "Discrimination". So I asked if anything could be done about it but I was told "No it's a Government Department" so I did not pursue it.

When I saw the Medical Officer, a lady, she told me that I was 'too fit" for a Disability Support Pension. So I was left in the middle too fit for one too sick for the other. The disability panel there was not impressed with her treatment of me and got in a psychologist to talk to me. After I spoke to the psychologist and told them about the treatment I received from the Department of Defence they said I was getting the Pension, in June 1993 - I was started on the Disability Support Pension. I have my file with all the details if dates and other information if you need it.

I have been activity looking for work ever since. I have done voluntary work for ten years now, courses, hopefully doing something else besides office work. I have been with Employment Companies such as CRS, C.A.R.E. and, now BreakThru Employment Solutions who specialise in helping people with Epilepsy and other neurological problems. I believe since the Occupational Health and Safety Act came in its become even harder for people with these type of medical conditions to find work as Employers don't want anyone with health problems due to liability. I had no choice but to accept what was given in the way of the Disability Support Pension. I have seen advertisements regarding employing the disabled but they only show those in wheel chairs, the other disabilities seem not to exist.

Since my termination, I feel that my self imagine has suffered as a consequence of these actions. I feel that had these events not occurred that my employability would have been far better as I now do not feel I have the skills and confidence to apply for the positions that are of a more technical nature, even though I believe with training my health would not be an issue in being able to complete tasks of a high standard.