House of Representatives
Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 11 August 2023

SEEK

Mr Hill on 11 August 2023, Proof Hansard page 3

Workforce Australia | Integration of commercial platforms

Question

CHAIR: …Are there any examples in Australia or overseas where commercial platforms have been integrated into a public employment services system?

Ms Banks: I'd like to answer that question more fulsomely, and I don't have that information to hand, so I might take that question on notice and do a bit more research there.

Response

To respond to this question, SEEK has undertaken an environmental scan of both domestic and international employment services systems. While there are a number of examples globally of governments partnering or contracting to the private sector for the provision of services across the employment service ecosystem – UK, Ireland, Sweden, Korea, Chile, Belgium, Germany and Latvia among others – SEEK's proposition is sufficiently innovative that we were not able to find a directly analogous example.

The closest example our research was able to identify is a data sharing ecosystem called *JobTech Development* within the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). It is the technological, systems and public-private partnership approach that is of most relevance to SEEK's proposal as opposed to the scope and range of activities undertaken – although there is cross-over with SEEK's proposal.

JobTech's objective is to develop a dynamic digital infrastructure that supports the bridge between the Swedish labour market and the world of education and training. Various pilot projects and governmental assignments have already been deployed and are ongoing within the areas of labour market information, life-long learning, job ads, and the control and portability of individual data. JobTech is an investment in the adaptation of common technical structures, solutions and standards so that a wide range of public and private stakeholders can participate in the ecosystem, including: large IT companies, small start-ups and single individuals, municipalities, other governmental organisations, major banks and insurance companies, universities, and schools, amongst others. The practical examples that have been undertaken by JobTech consist of different APIs that give the market access to the following functions and/or data:

- APIs for searching/matching engines;
- APIs for enriched job ads, collected from public and private actors;
- Taxonomy database and API with relevant labour market information, for example job titles, competence concepts, or the connection between professions and skills. Structured according to the Standard for Swedish Occupational Classification (SSYK) mapped with the standard European Skills/Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations (ESCO);

- APIs that combine various data sources for employer forecasting and career guidance services.

The key difference between Sweden and Australia however, is that in Sweden the public employment service's jobs marketplace dominates the market in terms of ad volumes. Here in Australia it is the inverse, where private sector employment marketplaces have the vast majority of unique job advertisements. The similarities to the SEEK proposition are in setting up agreed rules, standards and specifications for data sharing and also the collaboration across the public and private sectors, where each is playing to their respective strengths.

We will attach an information sheet on JobTech from the European Commission to these responses.

House of Representatives
Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 11 August 2023

SEEK

Mr Hill on 11 August 2023, Proof Hansard page 3

Workforce Australia | ILO obligations and jobs marketplaces

Question

CHAIR … My cursory understanding is Australia has a set of international obligations under ILO conventions to maintain a publicly accessible jobs board or jobs marketplace as part of its employment services system. Have you done the analysis that you want to put to us that the proposed approach you're talking about would meet our ILO obligations?

Ms Banks: We did have a look at the ILO obligations. We probably should again write up that answer and give it to you more fulsomely. We do believe there is a way that this proposal is consistent with our obligations in this convention, and we'll put that on notice to get back to you.

CHAIR: That would be very helpful.

Response

In our view SEEK's proposal is consistent with Australia's obligations under the ILO Employment Service Convention 1948 (No.88) to ensure the maintenance of a free public employment service for the following reasons:

- Article 1 envisages that cooperation with private bodies may be desirable to achieve the public policy objectives of a public employment service. These private bodies could include organisations such as SEEK and other specialist jobs marketplaces.
- SEEK's proposal envisages a non-exclusive arrangement in which the Government is at liberty to partner with multiple eligible specialist jobs marketplaces. In our view, the reference to 'free' is best considered in the context of the underlying policy objective of the convention to achieve and maintain full employment. Therefore, provided jobseekers and employers have access to at least one service which will not charge them to search for a job or post a job ad respectively (consistent with SEEK's proposition), this requirement would be met. We do not consider the reference to 'free' to preclude jobs marketplaces run by 'for profit' organisations, or which otherwise charge for their services, from also partnering with the Government to deliver a public employment service.
- In addition, Article 11 envisages that the public employment service will cooperate with private not-for-profit employment agencies. However, given the breadth of Article 1, we do not consider that Article 11 operates to prevent the public employment service from cooperating with other private 'for profit' organisations under a proposal such as that put forward by SEEK.
- Finally, SEEK believes that our proposal is consistent with our obligations in this Convention, and in fact, provides a strong example of 'public and private bodies' playing to their strengths to best ensure that as many people are in work as possible.

House of Representatives
Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 11 August 2023

SEEK

Mr Hill and Mr Broadbent on 11 August 2023, Proof Hansard pages 4–5

Workforce Australia | Mutual obligations and employer perceptions

Question

Mr BROADBENT: Mutual obligation requirements including job search. Could you elaborate on how existing mutual obligation requirements, including job search, are impacting on employers' perception of jobseekers and how negative perceptions of jobseekers on the Employment Services case load might be addressed?

…

Mr BROADBENT: We have heard from several stakeholders that despite increased flexibility in terms of how jobseekers can meet their mutual obligations under a points-based activation system, PBAS, jobseekers still focus on job searches over other activities. Has this also been your experience and how might this issue be addressed?

Ms Banks: This isn't a scenario or policy where we have any insight or particular point of view.

CHAIR: I think we've got a summary of the research.

Ms Banks: You do, yes, in the submission. In the submission there's a very long deck.

CHAIR: Maybe you could also take on notice to give us anything else that we're able to put in the public domain that backs up the answer that you gave on the first point, if I could precis it, that mutual obligation, the current system, does create some negative perceptions amongst employers?

Ms Banks: Yes, we can take that on notice and give the evidence from the research.

CHAIR: Yes, that would be helpful. I think your point is well made that there are costs and benefits. One of the things we've said we want to examine is the nature and the extent of the current system and whether they make people, in some cases, less employable, which seems incredibly irrational. If you could take that on notice that would be very helpful.

Response

As indicated in our appearance before the Committee, the research undertaken by Lewers Research on behalf of SEEK provides both quantitative and qualitative insights to the Chair's and Deputy Chair's question regarding perceptions of mutual obligations from the perspective of both employers and jobseekers.

We have provided a PDF attachment with the relevant research findings from the primary research undertaken by Lewers Research, on behalf of SEEK, on this point.

In summary, however more than two-thirds of employers reported that it was their perception that a majority of applications they receive do not meet the requirements of the role. Their perception was also that an applicant on Workforce Australia is 5.5 times more likely to provide an unqualified application for an advertised role. This aligns with the data from surveyed unemployed or recently unemployed jobseekers – one-third of whom reported applying for roles just to meet their obligations on at least half of their applications. More broadly, four in five jobseekers acknowledged that they had submitted at least one application for jobs they did not want or were not qualified for to comply with mutual obligations.

These findings are important given that they indicate that the perceptions of employers are that applications from Workforce Australia are non-genuine, and that currently unemployed jobseekers believe that the fact that they are unemployed of itself makes them less favourable in the eyes of employers. If Workforce Australia participants were to use mainstream specialist jobs marketplaces – as nine in 10 do – this marginalisation or perceived stigma is likely to be reduced.

House of Representatives
Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 11 August 2023

SEEK

Mr Hill on 11 August 2023, Proof Hansard page 7.

Workforce Australia | Use of Workforce Australia and use of commercial platforms

Question

CHAIR: Workforce Australia currently is, in commercial terms, one of your competitors in terms of competing for eyeballs, employers and so on. I just wanted to get that on the record, to be clear, because from the data—you put all of this out there—they're your second biggest competitor in the research from the people you surveyed. So, the proposition that you're putting forward is that we wipe out your second biggest competitor, when you already have about 50 per cent of the Australian market? I'm not having a go at you. I just think we need to be clear that's the proposition.

Ms Banks: To be specific, the data that you are looking at is specifically Workforce Australia participants from the last 12 months. When we look at our total market competition, our total market competition would look quite different, and this is publicly available information through various website tracking businesses. The top three would be SEEK; LinkedIn, which is owned Microsoft, one of the world's biggest companies; and Indeed, which is the No. 1 player in the US. Facebook and Google are active in job advertising. Our sector is extremely competitive.

…

Ms Banks: The specific research that we've referred to in our submission and in the slides you're looking at now is with Workforce Australia participants.

CHAIR: That's helpful.

Ms Taylor: Our researchers surmised Workforce Australia employment services providers were actually directing people more often than not back into Workforce Australia for careers advice and other things. I can take on notice the particular slide that talks to some of this, from their qualitative interviews with jobseekers.

Ms Banks: The other piece to note, though, which again we can share on notice, is that 9 in 10 of those who said they use Workforce Australia were also using SEEK. It's very common practice to use multiple job sites in job searches.

Response

To reiterate the point Ms Banks made during SEEK's appearance, the research that is referenced in SEEK's submission is specific to jobseekers who met the following criteria:

- Unemployed and actively seeking work or recently unemployed (last 12 months); participating in Workforce Australia
- Using/have used recruitment websites such as SEEK or similar platforms) and/or other resources as part of their job search

- Working population 18-64 years
- Representative mix of Full Time, Part Time and casual working status

The criteria for employers to participate in the research were:

- employers with 2-200, 201-1,000 and 1,001+ employees
- Have recruited/hired one or more employees in the past 12 months (65% of those surveyed had employed a Workforce Australia participant in that same period)
- A mix of those who are or have in the past used Workforce Australia as a recruitment source
- Some employers who have considered but decided not to use Workforce Australia
- Range of industries
- Businesses Australia wide

We have provided a PDF attachment with the relevant research findings from the primary research undertaken by Lewers Research, on behalf of SEEK, on why the use of Workforce Australia by jobseekers may be overstated.

Regarding the broader point on the competitive landscape for online jobs marketplaces in Australia – for all jobseekers not just Workforce Australia participants – SEEK's competitor analysis shows that SEEK is number one terms of visit share, followed by Indeed, LinkedIn and Jora. Workforce Australia is number five, with less than six percent of the visit share of SEEK and less than 14 per cent of Indeed's share. It should be noted that, this is all visits to the website so for Workforce Australia, this would include participants visiting the site every month to record their mutual obligations (see Slide 15 of Attachment A).

House of Representatives
Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 11 August 2023

SEEK

Mr Hill on 11 August 2023, Proof Hansard page 8.

Workforce Australia | Wages for jobs advertised on SEEK

Question

CHAIR: Can employers advertise a job on SEEK for below minimum wage?

Ms Banks: Employers can choose whether or not they make a salary visible on their job ad. Many employers choose not to display a salary.

CHAIR: So, can I advertise a job to pay someone $15 an hour?

Ms Banks: I'd have to take that on notice in terms of how the salary functionality on the site works.

Response

It is difficult for any jobs marketplace to have a compliance approach to policing rates of pay on its platform, this would be particularly the case for marketplaces like Workforce Australia, Indeed and others that aggregate / scrape job ads from other internet sources.

SEEK's approach is to take an educative role for both sides of our marketplace – employers and jobseekers.

On the employer side of our marketplace we have the following measures and product features in place to ensure our employer customers are aware of their responsibilities and receive prompts in our product flow.

Terms and Conditions – Employers must agree to the SEEK's Terms of Use before posting their job ad (https://talent.seek.com.au/support/termsconditions). This includes Section 36 that states:

36. You must ensure that all advertisements on the Site (including Listings) comply with all applicable legislation, regulations, by-laws, ordinances and codes of conduct, including but not limited to the:
    a. Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth) including but not limited to Stack 31 of Schedule 2 which requires that if you are a company you must not mislead persons seeking employment as to the availability, nature, terms or conditions or, any other matter relating to the employment opportunity being offered;
    b. Fair Trading Act's in all applicable States and Territories;
    c. Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) including the Australian Privacy Principles;
    d. Estate Agent Acts in all applicable States and Territories;
    e. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth);
    f. all anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation applicable in the State or Territory in which you do business; and

g. Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) and all employment related legislation and regulation applicable in the State or Territory in which you do business.

Salary tool-tip messaging – SEEK provides all employers who place on ad on our site with messaging around their responsibilities regarding ensuring that they pay appropriately and in compliance with legal requirements. The screenshot below shows what is displayed.

Low salary indicator and salary suggestion – SEEK provides information on how the salary inputted by the employer compares to the average for that role and location. If the employer enters in a salary that is lower than the average for that role and location, they are notified with a Low Salary Message – see screenshot below.

On the jobseeker side SEEK aims to provide tools and information to ensure candidates looking for work on our marketplace are informed about the salary they should expect for roles they are considering.

SEEK's Salary Compare Tool – SEEK's Salary Compare Tool (https://www.seek.com.au/career-advice/explore-salaries) allows jobseekers to compare their job's salary against the average for that particular role and location. This is useful for both jobseekers and those currently employed in a role. The screenshots below show what is displayed.

Salary insights on candidate search experience – While candidates are searching for a job, they can see salary insights for their particular job search pop up. The screenshot below shows what is displayed.

Articles and information – SEEK also publishes

articles to help educate and inform employers and jobseekers on salary. The links below share some such examples.

- A guide to salary averages in Australia in your industry
- Ready for a pay rise? These in-demand jobs are paying more
- How to answer: What are your salary expectations?

Referrals to Fair Work Ombudsman – Where a jobseeker reports a job ad or contacts SEEK with concerns regarding pay or conditions of a role they found on our marketplace, SEEK's Trust and Safety team provides the person with contact details for the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Attachments

Attachment A – Information sheet on JobTech from the European Commission

Attachment B – Research findings relevant to Questions on Notice

European Commission

AN OPEN, FUNCTIONAL, AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE SWEDISH EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEMS.

JobTech Development

Publication date: October 2021

SWEDEN

JobTech was implemented as a response to the lack of a unified, open, and functional digital infrastructure for both the Swedish labour market and the educational system. Additionally, the practice addresses the challenges of improving skills development and expanding lifelong learning opportunities, while reducing skill mismatches. The infrastructure also aims to create a functioning person-centred data ecosystem whereby the individual can reuse verified data across platforms and services. This helps to increase labour market transparency and to strengthen the connection between employment and educational systems.

Name of the PES	Arbetsförmedlingen (Swedish Public Employment Service)
Scope of measure (a pilot project or a national reform)	National
When was the practice implemented?	The JobTech unit was established in April 2018. JobTech Development has been implemented through a lean start-up method and is now an established part of the Swedish Public Employment Service. The idea began in 2016 as an initiative to improve cooperation around open data. The initiative, now run and driven by Arbetsförmedlingen's JobTech Unit, is still evolving today.
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	The (Swedish) labour market is changing faster than ever and offers hundreds of digital guidance and matching services. To help people navigate and find each other, the services need to communicate and adapt to new needs. This requires a new form of digital infrastructure. JobTech Development is Arbetsförmedlingen's investment in a sustainable and common infrastructure for digital matching services in Sweden. It is based on the idea of bridging the various data silos through the adaptation of common technical structures, solutions, and standards. It is a transformation "from ego to eco"! At JobTech Development, we gather matching actors in an open network to collaborate and share data. Here you will find and develop open data, standards, and open-source code that is freely available for everyone to use. Through our community there is the opportunity to discuss, ask questions, show cases, exchange ideas, and contribute to and partake in learnings. The idea to introduce an open and dynamic digital infrastructure for the Swedish employment and educational ecosystems was developed by Arbetsförmedlingen to better support transitions into the labour market.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	Today, around 500 organisations are involved in the implementation of JobTech, ranging from large IT companies, small start-ups and single individuals, to municipalities, other governmental organisations, major banks and insurance companies, universities, and schools, amongst others. JobTech has recently received two new governmental assignments: the first focusing on skill supply and lifelong learning; the second on building a national infrastructural building block for personal data portability, reuse, and control.
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	JobTech Development is primarily aimed at two main groups of actors: those within the labour and educational ecosystems. We also collaborate with researchers and other actors who require in-depth insight into the labour market through the utilisation of data or technical innovation.
What were the practice's main objectives?	JobTech's objective lies in the development of a dynamic and highly functional digital infrastructure that supports the bridge between the Swedish labour market and the world of education and training. The newly established digital infrastructure is meant to grow and develop in collaboration with the stakeholders that build their services on the infrastructure. Improving skills development and expanding lifelong learning opportunities, whilst reducing skill mismatches, constitute some of the goals pursued by the practice. Ultimately, the practice aims to support the Swedish labour market. The development of a person-centred data infrastructure has implications outside of the labour and education ecosystems. The application of the technology has the potential to create a new data market across all sectors.

What activities were carried out?

Various pilot projects and governmental assignments both deployed and ongoing within the areas of labour market information, life-long learning, job ads, control and portability of individual data were carried out so far.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

JobTech Development is managed and developed by an X-Unit within Arbetsförmedlingen. The division consists of around 40 employees.

What were the source(s) of funding?

Funding comes primarily from Arbetsförmedlingen's budget, though in the future funding will also be provided through the Swedish Government Innovation Partnership Programme.

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

Our products are mostly Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) as well as the underlying data these APIs give access to. Most outputs can be accessed through our landing site, along with testimonials from some of our users.

Other specific pilots, especially those around the individual's control and management of data, are tested in a Proof of Concept (POC) and followed by pilot initiatives. Currently, there are three deployments in production aiming to scale and standardise the underlying standards and protocols. This work is ongoing in a more recent governmental assignment to develop a common data infrastructure for skill supply and lifelong learning.

What outcomes have been identified?

As of today, we are unable to provide a full cost/benefit analysis. We have extensive collaboration with the Swedish Agency for Digital Government (DIGG) especially concerning API management and data about individuals. We also collaborate with Lund University and the Stockholm School of Economics with regard to analysis. The work is ongoing. DIGG has been doing some estimates about how much the Swedish government can save working with a common digital infrastructure, as well as the increase of GDP as a result of new markets being created.

Our practical examples consist of the different APIs that give the market access to the following functions and/or data:

- APIs for searching/matching motors;
- APIs for enriched Job-ads, collected from public and private actors;
- Taxonomy database and API with relevant labour market information, for example job titles, competence concepts, or the connection between professions and skills. Structured according to the Standard for Swedish Occupational Classification (SSYK) mapped with the standard European Skills/Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations (ESCO);
- APIs that combine various data sources for employer forecasting and career guidance services.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The importance of a lean-agile and open approach to work, where the goal is to facilitate, not to colonise. The underlying unit exists solely for the benefit of the ecosystem and its actors, and must not become a self-serving organisation. Transparency and openness are essential, both in culture and operations. Focus on understanding problems at first. Solving these problems is secondary after understanding, and should always occur as a mutual and collaborative initiative. The culture within the unit aims to continually challenge our assumptions and provide proof of value for the ecosystem. This needs to be done as efficiently as possible in line with lean start-up principles, thereby ensuring a cost-effective investment practice as well as the ability for the underlying systems to maintain a dynamic in line with the development of the various ecosystems involved.

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Extracts from Lewers Research

seek and you shall find

seek

Question from pages 4-5 of Hansard

Employers perceptions of mutual obligations

seek

More than two-thirds of employers report that the majority of applications they receive do not meet their requirements.

An applicant via Workforce Australia is 5.5 times more likely to provide an unqualified application for role (this aligns with the claims that one-third of jobseekers reported applying for roles just to meet their obligations on at least half of their applications).

Unmet requirements

Total sample (n=436)

Non-genuine applications by platform

Total sample (n=436)

Note: Small sample <30 for local newspapers and Workforce Australia, interpret categories with caution.

D5. How often do you/your company receive applications from jobseekers that do not meet the requirements specified (e.g. experience, education, technical skills. Etc.) in your job ads? D7. Thinking about the job sites you/your company use most, how often do you receive applications from jobseekers that you think may not be genuinely interested in the role you are recruiting?
Base: Completes, n=436. SEEK users, n=373, Local newspapers/noticeboards users, n=26*, WFA users, N=12*, LinkedIn users, n=72, Facebook users n=78, Indeed users, n=32

Meet Ian:

Leads the HR function for a large corporate employer in Queensland

20+ years of experience

Hired 20+ people in the last 12 months ranging from entry level to senior manager and executive roles

Lapsed WFA user

Note: Name and image have been changed to protect respondent privacy.

*'**I don't think it has ever been harder to recruit than it is right now.** For senior roles we usually go looking. There are not enough applications that are qualified and local. For entry level and unskilled roles, we get applications, but most don't really want the job. They don't reply if we call them or email them. Filling those roles is a real challenge.*

*'**We don't really use Workforce Australia's job board anymore.** We don't like that you need to link the company recruitment account to someone's MyGov account. There is no need for that. We have tried to get other people set up, but it doesn't work, and I can't share my login details because it gives access to my personal details.'*

*'**In my experience, the applicants from Workforce Australia aren't really looking for a job.** We've had too many experiences where people don't respond. One guy has applied for more than 50 jobs but always has an excuse. We offered him a job to see what he would do and when he said no, we complained to Centerlink, but they didn't seem to care either.*

Qualitative Snapshot

Employers want to hire people who want a job but too many applicants don't seem genuinely interested

As the HR leader in a large business, Ian has a lot of jobs to fill across a lot of different roles, levels and locations. Some jobs require special skills, training and experience, but lots don't. For unskilled roles, Ian and his team are always on the lookout for people who wants to work.

They want someone who has taken the initiative to write a cover letter that says why they want the job and why they want to work at his company. It helps if it also gives a short explanation of the candidate's employment/unemployment history.

In Ian's experience, most of the candidates applying through SEEK, LinkedIn or Indeed try to do this and provide a proper resume. That is not always the case with the Workforce Australia job board. Ian's team has received many applications that don't have cover letters or even resumes attached. For Ian, the Workforce Australia job board is a waste of time and too many applications are made just to meet quotas, not because they want jobs.

The need to link Workforce Australia to an individual MyGov account also makes it difficult to use. Sharing the link with other team members doesn't always work and he has concerns over the privacy and security of his own data when sharing access.

Jobseekers perceptions of mutual obligations

seek

Job plans and obligations are viewed as being relatively flexible to find secure, meaningful, decent paying work.

People are relatively undecided about whether their job plan gives them enough flexibility to find secure, meaningful, decent playing work (rated 6/10 on average).

Significant differences were observed across:

Employment status
- Recently Unemployed people believe there is more flexibility than those unemployed

Age
- Younger people believe there is more flexibility than older people.

C17. Do/did you feel there is enough flexibility in your Points Target/job plan to get a secure, meaningful and decent paying job?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app (do not rely on an ESP), n=643, Recently Unemployed, n=325, Currently Unemployed, n=318, 18-34, n=341, 35-49, n=168, 50+, n=134

Notable variation in flexibility ratings is evident across minority subgroups.

Significant differences were observed across:

Disability Status
- People with disabilities think there is less flexibility than those without

LOTE
- Those from LOTE households believe there is more flexibility than those from English speaking households.

C17. Do/did you feel there is enough flexibility in your Points Target/job plan to get a secure, meaningful and decent paying job?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app (do not rely on an ESP), n=643, Disability, n=114, ATSI, n=47, LGBTQIA+, n=103, LOTE, n=37

Two-thirds of jobseekers completed an application to meet their obligations, with half attending an interview. 3 in 10 have started a job.

Around 1 in 10 completed any additional qualifications or certifications or sourced voluntary work as part of meeting their job plan obligations.

Job plan tasks completed

Jobseekers using WFA Website / App (n=643)

Significant differences were observed across:

Recently unemployed jobseekers were:

- More likely to do online learning modules (31%)
- More likely to attend a job interview (56%)
- More likely to start a job (43%)

Currently unemployed jobseekers were:

- Less likely to do online learning modules (21%)
- Less likely to attend a job interview (44%)
- Less likely to start a job (15%)

Gender

- Males more likely to attend a Jobs Showcase webinar (15%)
- Females less likely to attend a Jobs Showcase webinar (6%)

ATSI

- ATSI individuals more likely to attend a job fair (28%), Showcase webinar (21%), or get a work-related license (23%)

C15. Which of these have you done/did you do to meet your monthly Target/Job Plan obligations?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app (do not rely on an ESP), n=643

4 in 5 jobseekers surveyed admit to submitting at least one application for jobs they do not want / are not qualified for to comply with mutual obligations.

Nearly one-third of jobseekers reported applying for roles just to meet their obligations on at least half of their applications.

Applying to Meet Obligations

Jobseekers using WFA Website / App (n=643)

Different cohorts showed the same pattern of behaviour.

C19. Due to mutual obligations put onto you by the government to receive your benefits, have you ever applied to roles just to meet these obligations?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app (do not rely on an ESP), n=643

Qualitative Snapshot

Many jobseekers find their 'points' obligations confusing, with most focusing solely on job applications

Jobseekers felt obligations were generally reasonable but admitted that they often only know how many jobs they need to apply for. Most don't know other ways to meet points targets

- Applying for jobs (often any jobs) is the key action taken by job seekers to earn their required monthly points
- In interviews, all respondents admitted to applying for roles that they did not want or were not qualified for, driven by the need to hit targets to keep receiving payments. This happens for a variety of reasons:
  - Not enough jobs that they are qualified for
  - Not enough jobs that they can get to (not local or limited transportation issues)
  - No jobs that meet the needs of their personal circumstances such as childcare needs, physical limitations, work hours, etc.
- In some cases, the ESP was helpful in providing other avenues for earning the points necessary, suggesting other activities that would count, or working with the jobseeker to adjust/reduce targets but most reported a lack of understanding of the system and the constant emphasis on job applications by ESPs
- Jobseekers believe that the system is '*stacked against them*'. The constant need to apply for jobs wastes time, limits their ability and willingness to look for more appropriate jobs and take the time to submit good applications and, in some cases, forces them to apply to multiple jobs with the same employer creating a bad impression

My service provider talked to me about the points thing but said not to worry about it. I just need to apply for 12 jobs a month and that's all I need to do. I don't know how many points I need. I just make sure I apply for those 12 jobs every month.

Female, late 50s, Melbourne

Those currently unemployed are more likely to feel that employers have an unfavourable opinion of their unemployment.

Perceived Stigma of Being Unemployed (from unemployed and recently unemployed jobseekers)

Qualitative Snapshot

- The simple fact of being unemployed is something that most people feel impacts their ability to find another job.
- There is a perception that, if not currently working, potential employers will think that there is "*something wrong with me*."
- Many jobseekers feel that this stigma has been amplified in the current low unemployment environment
- Some jobseekers feel that if they can't get a job in this market, they won't ever be able to get a job

A12. What do you think a employer's perception is towards you because you are/were unemployed?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app (do not rely on an ESP), n=643, Recently Unemployed, n=325, Currently Unemployed, n=318, Disability, n=114, ATSI, n=47, LGBTQIA+, n=103, LOTE, n=37

And this perception strengthens the longer they have been receiving benefits.

Perceived Stigma of Being Unemployed (from unemployed and recently unemployed jobseekers)

Qualitative Snapshot

- Participants with extended periods of unemployment felt they were particularly vulnerable to '*discrimination*' by employers.
- Jobseekers also talked about the need to explain extended periods of unemployment and the idea that some reasons will be considered more valid than others by a prospective employer.
- Some noted that the acceptability of reasons for unemployment is influenced by the age and gender of the jobseeker, with, for example, carer duties a more acceptable reasons for older women than for men.

A12. What do you think an employer's perception is towards you because you are/were unemployed?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app (do not rely on an ESP), n=643, Benefits <6m, n=209, Benefits 6-24m, n=206, Benefits >24m, n=219, 18-34, n=341, 35-49, n=168, 50+, n=134

seek

Question from page 7 of Hansard

I use a few different sites but SEEK is the main one. I like that I can find jobs that I want and in my area. It is also great that I can store several resumes and cover letters. Compared to Workforce [Australia], it [Seek] is just better. And its easy enough to add the details to Workforce for jobs I do apply for on other sites.

Male, late 20s, Tasmania

Qualitative Snapshot

SEEK is the go-to resource for most jobseekers, providing more job options than other resources

The use of Workforce Australia's job platform is likely overstated, with jobseekers confusing using it for reporting purposes with using it as a job search platform

- The availability of jobs on Workforce Australia is considered very limited, especially for jobseekers in regional areas
- Workforce Australia was mentioned regularly as a source for materials on resume writing, interview skills and tips on job search
  - Workforce Australia is often the recommended option by ESPs, supporting its use for these types of activities
  - Some jobseekers noted that using these services on Workforce Australia can count towards the monthly points total that they need to meet their obligations
- All jobseekers interviewed use SEEK as their most frequent and important source to look for jobs
  - Good listing of jobs in most geographic areas
  - Easy to use
- SEEK and other services were used less for support features partly because jobseekers are encouraged to use Workforce Australia and there is an assumption that much of the information will be a duplicate of what they have already seen.
  - For those jobseekers using resources on SEEK, the feedback is positive, and the material is considered useful and helpful.

Despite the need for jobseekers to record Job Plans and Mutual obligations within Workforce Australia, it is not frequently used to search or apply for jobs and is rarely considered the most important platform.

SEEK is more commonly used to search and apply for jobs and is considered the most important platform by 1 in 2 jobseekers. Of those who have used WFA to search or apply for jobs, 9 in 10 also used SEEK.

Most Important Job Site

Responses for "Facebook, jobsearch, Jora, Career One, Gumtree, Local newspapers, Adzuna, Twitter, Spotjobs" grouped into other as <3%

Note: Respondents had to be aware of WFA to qualify.

B1. Which job website, app or other resource is/was the most important to you when looking for a job?
Base: Jobseekers using WFA website / app n=643. Recently Unemployed n= 325, Currently Unemployed n=318

Thank you

seek and you shall find

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

[redacted]