

## **Social security (Streamlined participation requirements) Bill.**

### **Submission to Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee**

11 June 2021

**To the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee.**

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to this important enquiry.

Jobs Australia is a national organisation that supports the largest network of Not-for-Profit Members who provide diverse employment services and pathways, education, training and skills development and community and social services.

We are the Peak Body for Not-for-Profit Employment Service Providers including those organisations delivering employment pathways programs.

We are funded solely by our Members allowing us to represent them with real insight and by activating and amplifying their collective and independent voice.

Jobs Australia is a national organisation that supports the largest network of Not-for-Profit Members who provide diverse employment services and pathways, education, training and skills development and community and social services.

We provide a one-stop, tailored and value driven range of services designed to ensure our vision of a connected, influential and informed membership reducing social disadvantage in our community is achieved.

Jobs Australia notes with concern and disappointment that there has been insufficient time to properly examine and consider the full consequences of the proposed changes to the Bill.

**Jobs Australia Members endorse the following principles:**

- That all jobseekers should be treated the same regardless of the type of access-to-Government channel or channels they are to use.
- That legislation should be simple unambiguous and easy to understand.
- That Government response to people without employment is to be dependable, prompt and transparent.
- That people participating in Government provided programs have their capacity to self-determine their work-readiness and contribute to Australia society in a manner which is inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- Workplace legislation provides identical protection to those employed and those in work-like activities in the workplace.
- That throughout the participant's development towards and into employment and into employment they can support themselves in a manner that maintain their dignity, emotional health and well-being and capacity to engage in the community.

**With respect to the proposed changes, Jobs Australia Members request:**

1. Further time be provided to properly and reasonably consider the proposed changes. We recommend at least two months be set aside for that to occur.
2. That any simplification or 'streamlining' effort does not adversely reposition or impact people receiving unemployed benefits, and that a trial or pilot program is conducted to test and prove the proposed changes do not disadvantage participants prior to embedding in legislation.
3. That completion and lodgement of the initial Job Plan is not to be the determinant for receipt of first income support payment.
4. That participants in either prescribed or self-elected work-like activities as part of their development to work-readiness or employment are provided with the same workplace protection as employees.
5. Payments to participants is increased to a level beyond the current \$44 per day to \$65 per day.



6. That in any situation where a participant using digital services seeks support from the Digital Services Contact Centre “a human delegate” that there is a service level agreement installed/maximum wait time standard established to prevent protracted wait times, especially if the caller is using a self-funded Mobile Phone.
7. The draft Bill be referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights for consideration, in the same manner as is being considered for the Parents Next Program.
8. That reassurance is provided that the use of ‘artificial intelligence’ in the automation process will not disadvantage or otherwise adversely impact job seekers using digital services.
9. That a solution be provided to participants who use mobile or other personally funded device to access Services in the event that those services fail – or are stolen or otherwise rendered inoperable and therefore cannot meet their immediate contact and other access obligations.

Jobs Australia believes that the proposed Bill will have operational complexities that must be identified and resolved prior to legislation and if there is a single key message from this submission it is - ***please provide a period of 2 months to fully investigate the proposed amendments, resolve our recommendations and submit back to the Committee.***

Notwithstanding, we thank the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee for this opportunity and trust this brief response provides some, albeit brief, insight.

Thank you

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Chief Executive Officer

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