



National Office

Dr Brendan Nelson, MP
Chair, House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Nelson

On 13 April 2000, Mr Ken Douglas and I met with your committee to discuss issues of concern to the Inquiry into Mature Age Workers.

At the meeting, the Committee members requested the following additional information:

- a copy of the Job Network information brochure for job seekers; and
- data on the number of job seekers who have completed a full period of Intensive Assistance and have been re-referred to Intensive Assistance for further assistance.

The brochure, 'Job seekers Your Guide to Job Network' is enclosed and the data requested is attached.

Further to this meeting, the Committee members requested additional information on the following issues:

- What measures are in place to ensure Job Network members are placing job seekers into a job prior to receiving payments from the Government; and
- Is information readily available on the Internet on these issues?

Our responses to these issues are attached.

Yours sincerely

Leslie M Riggs
Group Manager
Job Network

18 May 2000

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RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY SECRETARY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE INQUIRY INTO OLDER WORKERS

1. How many job seekers have completed a full period of Intensive Assistance and have been re-referred to Intensive Assistance for further assistance

For the period 1 May 1998 to 30 April 2000:

- 117,415 Intensive Assistance clients (of whom 32.5% are mature aged) completed a full period of Intensive Assistance;
- 34,020 clients who completed a full period of Intensive Assistance were re-referred to Intensive Assistance. 56.3% of re-referrals were for mature aged job seekers.

The majority of re-commencements in Intensive Assistance occurs within eight months for job seekers who are still in receipt of an Unemployment Allowance.

2. What measures are in place to ensure Job Network members are placing job seekers into a job prior to receiving payments from the Government?

The Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB) purchases employment services on behalf of the Commonwealth and seeks to foster relationships with Job Network members that promote the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective services. DEWRSB is responsible for contract management and administration.

DEWRSB's activities include:

- management of Job Network contracts;
- maintaining a service arrangement with Centrelink for the provision of registration, assessment and referral services for job seekers;
- monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating Job Network members' performance and contractual compliance (which includes verifying claims of job placements with job seekers, employers and Centrelink);
- collecting, analysing, reporting and publishing information on outcomes achieved;
- investigating complaints;
- investigating allegation or evidence of fraud by Job Network members; and
- overall monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Job Network.

As a first step, Job Network members are required to verify that that "eligible claims" are being made. Through the "claim statement", Job Network members must confirm their involvement in placing job seekers into employment. Job Network members are also required to confirm that an eligible job seeker (ie in receipt of Newstart or other eligible allowance) is being placed in a vacancy that attracts a Job Matching payment.

Once a Job Network member is satisfied a job seeker has been placed into appropriate employment, Job Network members are required to submit claims for payment (or invoices) electronically via the DEWRSB Integrated Employment System (IES). The electronic invoicing arrangements mean the Job Network members do not need to send hardcopy invoices or other paperwork to DEWRSB in order to make most claims for payments.

However, this does not mean that DEWRSB does not ask the Job Network member to provide evidence to support their claims. Part of DEWRSB's contract management and monitoring strategy involves systematic checking with employers, training providers and job seekers. Job Network members need to maintain adequate hard copy and/or electronic records to support claims lodged by electronic invoicing. Should compliance checking by DEWRSB reveal that there is insufficient evidence to support a claim and the claim is paid, a debt will be raised and action taken to recover it.

IES performs a range of checks to ensure the validity of claims. If a claim fails a validity check in IES, the DEWRSB IES system will not allow the claim to be paid.

In addition to these measures, DEWRSB has a number of post-placement activities to ensure that Job Network members have placed job seekers into appropriate employment, prior to making a payment to the Job Network member. DEWRSB checks are designed to ensure the eligibility of job seekers, the eligibility of vacancies, and the reduction of job seekers' income support. These activities include:

- DEWRSB checks samples of active vacancies to ensure that they are suitable for display on IES
- From June 2000 Job Network members will be required to sign and submit a statutory declaration each month that all claims are correct for payment.
- DEWRSB monitors payments to ensure compliance with requirements. Job Network members are required to keep documentary evidence that supports claims for payment in a secure place for a period of 2 years from the end of the contract period, and to provide DEWRSB and its agents with access to this evidence for monitoring purposes.
- A wide range of information is collected on the performance of Job Network members to ensure job seekers are being placed into employment. For example, questionnaires are sent to random samples of employers and job seekers to corroborate details of Job Network members claims. Also, job seeker complaints, queries and feedback are used to check Job Network members performance. Performance is assessed both against the contract and in comparison with other Job Network members at the employment service area (ESA) level for Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance, and at the regional level for the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme.
- At six monthly reviews, case managers discuss performance with Job Network members, with reference to a range of Key Performance Indicators;

There are a number of additional administrative checks carried out for Intensive Assistance payments, and for Job Search Training and Job Matching bonuses. For example, for some claims, DEWRSB staff check Job Network member documentation prior to approving these claims. In other circumstances, documentation may be checked as one of the post-placement verification activities. These are additional checks to those which are done through IES.

3. Is information readily available on the Internet on these issues?

General information on Job Network is available on the Internet at [http:// www.jobnetwork.gov.au](http://www.jobnetwork.gov.au). This site provides a wide variety of information on Job Network, with specific information available for employees, job seekers and Job Network members.

Specific information on the payment process for Job Network members is available through the IES Reports Page on the DEWRSB internet site for Job Network members only.