

**INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS INQUIRY INTO INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PAID WORK**

• **Question:**

**CHAIR** - Perhaps we should ask Treasury (sic) at some stage what the uptake [of the Pension Bonus Scheme] is.

**Response:** At 31 December 2003, 60,509 people had registered with the scheme since it began.

- **Question:** Are there any strategic partnerships between Job Network and FaCS disability employment services? (**asked of Ms Suzanne Colbert, Employers Making a Difference**)

**Response:** In recognition of the diversity of support needs of people with disabilities, the Australian Government funds a range of employment services to help people with disabilities find work. This assistance includes:

- Job Network – mainstream employment assistance for people who do not have ongoing support needs in work;
- Disability Employment Assistance – for people who need ongoing support in work in order to maintain a job; and
- Vocational Rehabilitation – for people who need rehabilitation in order to gain or retain a job.

Job Network services are contracted and funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). Disability Employment Assistance services and CRS Australia (vocational rehabilitation) are contracted and funded by the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS).

To ensure that job seekers with disabilities are directed to the most appropriate employment assistance according to their needs, FaCS and DEWR have developed and implemented a joint eligibility assessment and referral process through Centrelink. This Disability Employment Indicators process ensures that job seekers are effectively matched and referred to the most suitable employment assistance based on an assessment of their need for support in job seeking due to the impact of their disability.

While the specific details of the funding model that each Department has adopted for funding employment service providers may vary (primarily due to the differing needs of job seeker cohorts), the overall structure and objectives of the funding models are similar: funding is based on the assessed relative need of the job seeker and is tied to the achievement of employment outcomes.

Upon accepting the referral of a job seeker for assistance, service providers accept full responsibility for assisting the job seeker to achieve a durable

employment outcome. However, providers have the ability to sub-contract with other provider organisations to deliver specific elements or services that the job seeker may require.

Where a particular provider determines that the job seeker's need for assistance is greater than they have the experience and capabilities to provide, job seekers are re-referred (either directly or through Centrelink) to a more appropriate service type. For example, a Job Network provider may determine after working with a job seeker that they will likely have a need for ongoing support once they get a job. The Job Network member would arrange for the job seeker to be referred to a Disability Employment Assistance Service (either directly or through Centrelink).

All job seekers and service providers, regardless of whether they are assisted/funded by FaCS or DEWR, can access the Australian JobSearch database. Similarly, both FaCS and DEWR service providers are eligible to be licensed as Job Placement Organisations, profiling suitable job vacancies on the JobSearch database.

Overall, the program differentiation recognises and provides for the continuum of needs for job seekers with disabilities. There is significant policy coordination and interaction between FaCS and DEWR and growing levels of local interaction and cross-referral occurring between Job Network, disability employment assistance services and CRS Australia in order to ensure that the individual needs of job seekers with disabilities are appropriately met.