

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates, 1 to 4 June 2004

**Question: Bud 36**

**Topic: Cuts to Mature Age Labour Market Assistance**

**Hansard Page: E127**

Senator Conroy asked:

Can you confirm for me that the cuts to mature age labour market assistance in 1996 were the largest ever cuts in Australia's history and that these cuts have never been made up?

Answer:

It has been assumed that this question is referring to the previous Government's *Working Nation* Program. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has advised that *Working Nation* comprised around 15 individual programmes with only one, Mature Workers Centres (available as a specialist service under SkillShare), targeting mature-age people.

Across all programmes in 1995-96, mature age job seekers (those aged 45 years or more) received around 109,000 or 16 per cent of commencements. In 2003-04 Job Network members recorded more than 200,000 commencements for mature age job seekers, with a total of over 24,000 additional commencements occurring in the complementary Transition to Work, Work for the Dole and New Enterprise Incentive Scheme employment service programmes.

The Department further advises that post programme monitoring has shown that, compared to a job outcome rate of 27 percent for the *Working Nation* programmes it replaced, in 2002-03 the Job Network, Intensive Assistance service, had a job outcome rate of 46 percent. The new employment service arrangements are also more cost effective with, for example, a cost of around \$5,100 per job outcome for Intensive Assistance - less than half the cost per job outcome (\$12,800) of the *Working Nation* programmes it replaced.