

**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**2004-2005 ADDITIONAL SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING
17 FEBRUARY 2005**

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Outcome 3: Increased Workforce Participation

Output Group: Working Age Policy Group

Outputs: Working Age Policy and Legislation

Question Number: W258-05

Question:

Senator Wong asked at *Hansard* page 28: “Can the Department provide detail on the procedures and guidelines developed between FaCS, DEWR, Centrelink and Job Network to ensure job seekers are not subject to multiple breaches for the same act of non-compliance?”

Answer:

DEWR, FaCS and Centrelink signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in September 2003 as a result of a review of participation reports. This MOU reinforced the need for a robust compliance regime to support the *Active Participation Model* as well as the need to streamline processes for the submission of participation reports and reduce the number of duplicate reports.

Under these arrangements, rescheduling an appointment with a Job Network Member occurs for the majority as soon as contact is made with the job seeker, but is not contingent on the finalisation of the breach decision process. Within 16 days of the participation report being lodged all job seekers either have an interview rescheduled, payment suspended to initiate contact where the job seeker cannot be contacted or are identified for more appropriate assistance. Other elements incorporated as part of the participation reporting process were:

- additional participation reports are not submitted by the provider until the initial report is resolved, unless there is a separate incident;
- a stronger focus on quality assurance through improved training in participation reporting for employment service providers and Centrelink; and
- improved information flows between Centrelink and employment service providers to ensure timely access to relevant information.

Following the transfer of responsibility for working age income support payment policy and programme management from DFACS to DEWR under the October 2004 machinery of government changes, DEWR is now the single agency responsible for policy administration to Centrelink on job seeker compliance with obligations .