

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

**2005-2006 ADDITIONAL SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING
16 FEBRUARY 2006
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Outcome 1: **Efficient and effective labour market assistance**

Output Group 1.2: **Labour market programme management and delivery**

Output 1.2.2: **Employment Services**

Question Number: **W683-06**

Question:

Senator Wong asked in writing:

What is the process for educating customers/clients about their rights and obligations with regards to employment services providers?

Answer:

Activity Agreement

All job seekers in receipt of an unemployment allowance are required to enter into, and comply with, an Activity Agreement. Currently, this means entering into a Preparing for Work Agreement with Centrelink when the job seeker's allowance is first granted and a Job Search Plan with a Job Network member when the job seeker commences Intensive Support services.

When the Preparing for Work Agreement /Job Search Plan are printed out for the job seeker to sign, an information sheet titled, "Information You Need To Know" is also printed for the job seeker to read. The "Information You Need To Know" document provides an explanation of the various terms in the Activity Agreement and clearly outlines the rights and responsibilities of the job seeker under the *Social Security Act 1991*. In addition, this document also contains information on the steps a job seeker can take if they are not satisfied with the quality of the services being provided, as well as information on a job seeker's review and appeal rights.

Information provided by Centrelink

Centrelink provides job seekers with, and displays in each Customer Service Centre, information about Job Network services and employment assistance. Centrelink also

provides counter, telephone and other services to answer queries about employment assistance and Job Network services.

Information is provided during a job seeker's first contact appointment and at subsequent appointments if required. Some or all of the following information may be provided at the various contact points:

- (i) Job Network services;
- (ii) local Job Network members and their locations;
- (iii) complementary services;
- (iv) other services including PSP, rehabilitation or disability services;
- (v) roles and responsibilities of job seekers, Centrelink, Job Network members, Job Placement organisations and other providers;
- (vi) information about Preparing for Work Agreements;
- (vii) information about Job Search Plans;
- (viii) job seeker rights and obligations, including feedback (complaints, comments and suggestions) process;
- (ix) Centrelink's job search facilities;
- (x) how to use the JobSearch touch screens; and
- (xi) the privacy obligations of Centrelink, the department and Job Network members.

Information provided by service providers

Currently, Job Network members provide job seekers with a copy of the Job Network Service Guarantee and the Employment and Related Services Code of Practice (the Code). The Service Guarantee informs job seekers about the services they can expect to receive from their Job Network member. The Code explains to job seekers each Employment Service Provider's commitment to observe the highest standards of fairness and professional practice as they deliver the services and obligations outlined in their respective contractual arrangements with the Australian Government.

Both documents also explain how job seekers can raise concerns regarding the services they have received or questions regarding their rights and responsibilities. The Employment and Related Services Contract and funding deeds 2006-2009 require all service providers to meet the same obligations already applied to Job Network members with respect to issuing the Code and Service Guarantee.

The Job Network Service Guarantee and Employment and Related Services Code of Practice documents are available on the workplace.gov.au website at:

Job Network Service Guarantee:

http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/4BF65597-2564-4DF9-8E28-783E7C48AE5B/0/service_guarantee.pdf

Employment and Related Services Code of Practice:

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/3542D270-00ED-4AA5-A3F4-449819C96AD4/0/CodeofPracticepdf.pdf>

The Service Guarantee and Code of Practice are available in 20 community languages.

Information provided by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Job seekers can also find out about their rights and obligations in relation to their provider by calling the department on 1800 805 260.