

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.EW0970_11

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

CENTRELINK PROCESSES FOR PARTICIPATION REPORTS

Is it correct that Centrelink processes for participation reports subject to penalties are different for Indigenous clients in remote communities than other clients?

- a. What are those differences?
- b. Have you received recommendations to change these processes and by whom?

Answer

Centrelink processes for investigating participation reports are the same for all job seekers, including Indigenous job seekers. All investigations are required to take into account the full range of the job seeker's individual circumstances and their reason/s for not complying with a requirement before a decision on the matter is made.

Centrelink Participation Solutions Teams have access to a range of specialist staff, including Social Workers and multicultural specialist staff, to help ensure the correct decision is made. Where the job seeker's explanation for non-compliance suggests that cultural reasons may impact on the determination, consultation with Indigenous specialist staff may occur to inform the assessment of whether a job seeker has a reasonable excuse.

Centrelink's service delivery arrangements are aimed at ensuring integrity and consistency for all non-compliance investigations. Thus, the majority of decisions for Indigenous job seekers in remote communities are directed to Participation Solutions Teams in Area North Australia and Central North Queensland who are trained in Indigenous matters, abreast of local issues and events, and able to ensure a full investigation occurs.