

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

**2007-2008 BUDGET SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING
28 AND 29 MAY 2007
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Outcome 3: Increased workforce participation

Output Group 3.1: Working age policy

Output 3.1.1: Working age policy and legislation

Question Number: W198-08

Question:

Senator Siewert asked in writing:

Job network agencies – taking into account personal circumstances – For single mothers, to what extent if any is the need to care for dependent children taken into account in considering what constitutes a suitable job, for example night work or weekend work. Is any consideration given to personal circumstances where for example child care is not available because of cost or lack of family support?

Answer:

All Providers of Australian Government Employment Services, including the Job Network, have been provided with policy guidelines and fact sheets that contain the policy relating to how child care responsibilities determine the suitability of a job. These documents advise that principal carer parents with part-time work requirements will not be expected to take up work if that work is to occur outside school hours and no suitable care is available, or if the cost of care would result in a very low or negative financial gain from working. Similarly, principal carer parents on income support will not face any penalties if they are unable to meet their participation requirements for a period of time because their child is sick or injured.

Where a job offer would involve employment outside school hours or on school holidays, a job is generally only considered suitable if the principal carer parent can access appropriate care and supervision for their children during the hours of work, including the time it would take the parent to travel to and from work.

In cases where a job offer involves employment outside school hours or in school holidays, if the principal carer parent advises that informal child care arrangements (for example, with family and friends) are available and acceptable, then the parent will be required to take up the job offer. However, the decision as to whether informal

child care arrangements are acceptable lies solely with the parent. That is, if a principal carer parent does not want to accept informal child care and no places provided by an approved child care service are available, the parent cannot be required to accept the job offer.

Estimated cost: Using the FOI calculator, to prepare this answer it has taken approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes at an estimated cost of \$23.00.