

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

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

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No. EW0172_11

Senator Cormann asked on 31/05/2010, Hansard page 33.

Question

Assistance through Employment Pathway Fund

Ms Paul—Perhaps even better; rather than speculate at all, perhaps we could take on notice the sorts of examples that are actually in that 700. Senator CORMANN—What I am trying to understand—and again, I am not meaning to be flippant, but I am a bit surprised to hear words like ‘the sky is the limit’ and ‘it really depends on what the provider thinks is appropriate’. That is bad in two ways: it can be bad in the upward way, because people might spend more than is appropriate, but it can also be bad the other way because they might be reluctant to spend everything on one because that stops them from spending on others. I would have thought there ought to be some sort of objective criteria around how much relocation expenses you can qualify for if you are looking at shifting to get a job in Western Australia?

Answer

Job Services Australia providers receive Employment Pathway Fund credits for each registered job seeker commensurate with their level of disadvantage and other requirements. Employment Pathway Fund credits are not limited to an individual and can be used flexibly to provide services to any job seeker.

The level of assistance provided to job seekers through the Employment Pathway Fund must have regard to the person’s level of disadvantage and must be tailored to their individual circumstances. There is no fixed list regarding what can be purchased through the Employment Pathway Fund, instead a wide range of assistance is available based on the job seeker’s individual needs and vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment. This expenditure may include work related clothing and equipment, training, and relocation assistance to take up employment.

Relocation can involve moves across cities, regions, states or from one side of the country to another. Some destinations have higher costs, such as for costs of accommodation, compared with other areas. Costs may be met for an individual may also extend to their family. For these reasons the costs of relocation can vary greatly and hence the need for flexibility for providers in deciding the costs that may be met through the Employment Pathway Fund.

The Employment Pathway Fund utilises a principles based approach to enable optimum flexibility so that each job seeker receives assistance based on their individual needs and barriers to employment. The principles to which Job Services Australia providers must adhere when making purchases through the Employment Pathway Fund are described below:

1. Goods and services purchased using the Employment Pathway Fund are commensurate with the needs of the job seeker.

2. Assistance purchased using the Employment Pathway Fund complies with any occupational, health and safety laws that may apply.
3. Goods and services purchased using the Employment Pathway Fund represent value for money.
4. Goods and services purchased using the Employment Pathway Fund are capable of withstanding public scrutiny, and will not bring the Services into disrepute.