

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Centrelink

Budget Estimates 26 May 2005

**QUESTION NUMBER:** HS20  
**DATE ASKED:** 26/05/2005  
**DATE DUE TABLING:** 08/07/2005

**SENATOR WONG** asked on 26 May 2005:

Senator WONG—I have a question about the DSP rapid connection and reconnection initiative, which Ms McGregor could take on notice. There is a reference to questions and answers on that in the scripts which I have been provided with. Could you provide the script and/or the question and answers which are utilised in the rapid connection initiative. They are referred to in the script. I would prefer it if you could provide the answer soon so that we have the opportunity to look at it during the estimates period.

Mr Whalan—We will take that on notice.

**Answer:**

The script from the Disability Support Pension rapid connection and reconnection initiative was tabled in the response to question on notice HS42 from Additional Estimates 2004-05.

The scripts tabled at the Budget Estimate Hearings on 26 May 2005, recorded in the Hansard at F&PA 69, included reference to a *‘Questions & Answers’*. The *‘Questions & Answers’* referred to in the script used in the Parenting Payment Outbound Call Strategy are at Attachment A.

## Attachment A

- **What is Job Network?**
  - Job Network is the national network of more than 300 private, community and government organisations which specialise in connecting unemployed people to the appropriate job vacancies. 001.02000 - Employment Assistance and Job Network
- **Who decides when I have to start looking for work (e.g. customer, Centrelink, JNM)?**
  - Once you are registered you can decide when you commence looking for work. If you are not ready to look for work now we can organise an appointment for a more convenient time in the future.
  - However, the Government has just announced changes to requirements and services for Parenting Payment and Disability Support Pension customers. These changes will not come into effect until July 2006.
- **Do I have to register as a jobseeker?**
  - No, it's not compulsory at this time, but being registered with a Job Network Member has many benefits. Job Network is a free service that gives you access to a wider range of employment opportunities. For example, assistance with developing a resume, improving interview techniques, referral to employers with vacant positions, training courses.
- **When will I have to register as a jobseeker?**

Parenting Payment Single or Partnered customers granted prior to 1 July 2006 with youngest child aged 6-15 will have a part-time participation requirement from 1 July 2007.

Parents can satisfy their participation requirements by working part-time (15 hours a week); or by searching for part-time work and participating in Job Network or other specialist services.

Parents who are not working will be required to undertake an annual Mutual Obligation activity of 150 hours over a six month period. If they do not select an activity they will undertake Work for the Dole as the default activity.
- **If I don't register, will my rate of payment be affected?**
  - Not registering as a jobseeker will not have any impact on your payment at this time.
- **If I don't register, will I be penalised in some way (e.g. Breached)?**
  - No, it is still voluntary so you won't be penalised if you don't register as a jobseeker.
- **What happens when a Parenting Payment Customer does not comply with their obligations (post July 2006)?**
  - Their payment could be suspended in line with the new suspension policy.
- **If I start work, how will my rate of payment be affected?**
  - Depending on how much you earn, you may still be entitled to receive payment as well as having income from employment. (Refer to income tests and Centrelink Rates Estimator). Also, if you have access to Working Credit you may be able to keep all of your payment when you first start working.

- **Am I entitled to any additional payment/supplement if I do register?**
  - There are additional supplements and payments available, depending on what sort of activity you undertake once you are registered (e.g. Language, Literacy and Numeracy Supplement), or if you enter paid employment (e.g. Employment Entry Payment). You may also be able to access a Training Account through your Job Network Member, if you register to receive assistance from Job Network.
- **If I don't register today, can I still register later?**
  - Yes. But you can also register now and start looking for work at a later date. If you would like to register later, call Centrelink and we can register you over the phone.
- **I already have a casual/part time job - why should I register (i.e. what benefits are there for people already doing some work)?**
  - Job Network is a free service that gives you access to a wider range of employment opportunities, as well as access to other services to help you enhance your future jobseeking prospects.
- **I'm not obliged/don't have to look for work; why should I have to register with a JNM?**
  - Although it's not compulsory for you to register now as a jobseeker, it may be in the future. Registering now and looking for work to suit your current circumstances will better prepare you for the future.
  - {see 'When will I have to register as a job seeker?}
- **What about child care - my kids are about to start school holidays?**
  - As you are receiving an income support payment, you are entitled to receive Child Care Benefit which provides assistance with the cost of having your children in care. You may also be able to access JET Child Care to receive extra assistance with child care fees 101 08700 - Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care.
- **But I've been seeing a Jet Advisor or Personal Advisor. Why should I do this as well?**
  - Registering with the Job Network will not have any impact on your interaction with your Jet Advisor or Personal Advisor, as this is an additional service that you are entitled to. In fact, being registered will help to indicate to your Jet Advisor or Personal Advisor that you are looking for work.

**Some possible issues customers may raise:**

- I don't have time to register right now/before Christmas/during the school holidays etc..
- See Q & A "Do I have to start looking for work immediately?"
- I'm not interested in looking for work.
- See Q & A "Do I have to register as a jobseeker?"
- I'm happy to look for work on my own; I don't need help from a JNM.
- See Q & A "Do I have to register as a jobseeker?"

- I've tried using "agencies" before; they weren't any help.
- Organisations that form the Job Network must meet certain standards (set by the Government) in terms of the assistance they are expected to provide to customers. Additionally, feedback regarding service (or lack thereof) you have received from a Job Network Member, can be provided via the Job Network Member complaints line: 1800 805 260.
- I've been registered with a JNM before; they weren't any help
- See Q & A "I've tried using "agencies" before; they weren't any help."
- I can't afford to work; child care is too expensive.

See Q & A "What about child care - my kids are about to start school holidays?"