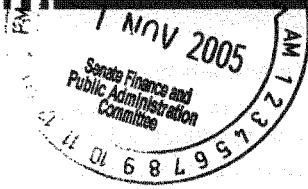


COMPREHENSIVE WORK CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

Statement of Requirements

Exposure Draft of Employment and Related Services Chapter 3



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Australian Government
Department of Human Services

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

The Australian Government, acting through and represented by the Department of Human Services (DHS), is providing an opportunity for local, regional and national organisations, together with Government agencies, to become Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessment (CWCA) providers for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008. CWCA providers will be provided in respect of eligible job seekers and people claiming an income support payment or whose income support payment is being reviewed.

This document is produced for the information of stakeholders and potential tenderers, and for the purpose of seeking comments and feedback from stakeholders and potential tenderers for the provision of Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessments.

3.1.1 For stakeholders and interested parties:

DHS is seeking your comments on this Exposure Draft.

Recognising that people face a range of barriers that impact on their work capacity, DHS would welcome feedback from interested parties and stakeholders relevant to these groups.

3.1.2 Department of Human Services

DHS was established in October 2004 to improve the delivery of social and health-related services to the Australian people. It supports the Minister for Human Services in ensuring that these services are delivered in an efficient, timely and sympathetic way. The Department is small and strategic. It directs, coordinates and brokers improvements to service delivery.

All mail queries should be directed to:

Assistant Secretary
Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessment Division
Department of Human Services
Computer Associates House, National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

All email queries should be sent to:
DHS mailbox
(CWCA.Feedback@humanservices.gov.au)

All phone queries should be directed to:
1300 136 526

3.1.3 Introduction

DHS is seeking comments and feedback from interested parties on all aspects of this Exposure Draft. These comments and feedback will be used to inform the development of policy and the Request for Tender. The Request for Tender (RFT) process is scheduled for November 2005.

DHS will also be using responses to this Exposure Draft, and other stakeholder and community consultation processes, as a basis for assessing the capacity of the private sector to deliver the CWCA services, and for determining the share of this work to be procured from non-Government providers through the open tender.

The basic principles underpinning these decisions are:

- Government agencies are expected to provide a significant proportion of CWCA providers over an initial period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008
- DHS will set an administered price, with associated timeliness standards and quality assurance of assessments. Market share will be determined by the quality and capacity of potential providers to undertake assessments under those conditions and
- All geographical areas are potentially open to the private sector. There is no expectation that the private sector will be limited to certain geographical areas.

CWCA providers will be managed directly by DHS and all queries relating to CWCA must be directed to DHS.

3.1.4 Overview of existing services

Assessments currently undertaken include:

- Medical and work capacity assessments provided as part of the *Australians Working Together Better Assessment and Early Intervention* measure
- Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) supplementary assessments completed as part of the JSCI process and
- Disability Employment Indicator (DEI) assessments used when people volunteer for disability employment assistance.

3.1.5 Welfare to Work

The Australian Government announced the new CWCA and Pre-vocational Assistance Participation Account measures as part of 2005–06 Budget Welfare to Work changes. DHS has been given the responsibility to oversee the implementation of both measures.

The Australian Government also decided that a significant share of CWCA services be provided by Australian Government agencies for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008.

3.1.6 Principles for change

Efficient and effective assessments that focus on early intervention and work capacity are key principles underpinning the new process. The assessments will focus on work capacity, with appropriate regard to a person's work barriers, including medical impairment. Assessors will be required to use appropriately skilled staff at all times. Direct referral from the CWCA provider to a service provider at the earliest possible point will promote motivation to participate in the recommended programme.

3.1.7 Overview of the Welfare to Work reform measures

Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessments

From 1 July 2006, the new CWCA process will replace and is expected to substantially improve on the existing assessment processes. The focus will be providing CWCA's that combine assessment and direct referral of a person to the most appropriate assistance pathway towards employment, where that is relevant. It is estimated that there will be approximately 372 000 CWCA's undertaken in 2006–07 with a significant proportion of the assessments to be undertaken by Australian Government service delivery agencies.

The CWCA's are to be accountable and defensible. The aim is to provide an efficient and seamless process for the person being assessed. The intent of the guidelines presented in this exposure draft about the types of assessment activities to be undertaken is to ensure that the new assessments will be of high quality, and will target the most intensive assessment efforts towards those people whose barriers to work are the most complex. Generally, a CWCA will be valid for two years, unless there is a significant change to a person's circumstances.

Assessors will be held accountable for their assessments, with DHS closely scrutinising performance to ensure the assessment process is appropriate. People will be able to appeal income support decisions which have been informed by a CWCA (i.e. where an assessment is used by Centrelink to assist in determining a person's claim for income support). Performance indicators supported by auditing procedures will provide DHS and the community with assurance that CWCA's are providing appropriate and consistent assessments, and timely referrals of people to the most appropriate services.

3.1.8 Pre-vocational Assistance Participation Account

The Pre-vocational Assistance Participation Account will provide funding for CWCA providers to purchase short duration intervention services to improve the range of options available to address participation barriers. This will enable those with disabilities, illness or injuries, to realise their assessed work capacity sooner. Authority to give access to the Pre-vocational Assistance Participation Account will be limited to CWCA providers.

A small proportion of job seekers who have a CWCA and who are assessed as being able to benefit from a short, sharp intervention to prepare them for Job Network will access this Account. The Australian Government has set aside \$80 million over three years to support this measure.

This Account will commence from 1 July 2006. Service Guidelines will be provided at a later stage.

3.1.9 Labour market and service data

Information relevant to CWCA services is provided on the *Labour Market and Service Data CD*, which can be obtained by calling the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline on **1300 733 514** or by emailing **espurchasing@dewr.gov.au**.

The CD includes:

- data relating to the labour market and
- additional data that is considered particularly relevant to the services available for tender.

For CWCA, this includes data relating to:

- JSCI Supplementary Assessments (JSAs) completed
- DSP claims and
- Newstart/ Youth Allowance (incapacitated) recipients.

The data provided is intended to contribute to tenderers' business intelligence and is not intended to predict or to guarantee any CWCA provider a certain number of referrals.

Any CWCA data not available for the Exposure Draft may be included with the CWCA RFT.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF CWCA SERVICES

The objectives of CWCA services are to:

- provide a holistic assessment of a job seeker's or a payment claimant's barriers to participation in work and the interventions and assistance needed to help improve their current and future work capacity
- engage people in participation activities through a positive 'work first' focus
- where required, make specific recommendations regarding work capacity and impairment (including referencing the Impairment Tables) to help inform Centrelink's decisions about income support qualification
- make specific recommendations to help inform decisions about a job seeker's activity test requirements
- provide a comprehensive report to inform the nature of employment or pre-vocational services required to assist the service provider to tailor a programme best suited to the person's needs and
- arrange rapid referral of people to the most appropriate form of assistance.

All CWCA's will require the following steps:

- an assessment of the barriers the person faces in finding and maintaining employment (this may relate to the impact of a person's disability, medical condition and/or other disadvantage/s they have)
- an assessment of the person's work capacity (in hour bandwidth) as they are at present and in the future with appropriate interventions
- recommendations of appropriate assistance to move the person into employment or, if not suitable for employment assistance immediately, of pre-vocational or other assistance to prepare them for employment assistance, if this is appropriate
- prioritisation of assistance requirements
- direct referral and facilitation of engagement to the most appropriate assistance and
- record details of the assessment, outcomes and referrals on line.

Assessments provided in respect of people making a claim or being reviewed for Disability Support Pension (DSP) will also require recommendations on, or an assignment of impairment ratings against Impairment Tables, for permanent medical conditions.

Assessments provided in respect of job seekers seeking income support activity test exemptions on the grounds of medical incapacity will also require recommendations as to whether the terms of that exemption is satisfied.

It is also anticipated that the circumstances of a minority of people may require more complex assessments, where for example, individuals have multiple physical and/or psychological barriers. CWCA providers will be expected to be able to draw upon appropriate specialist input to provide more detailed assessments (i.e. neuropsychological assessment). It is anticipated that in these cases a higher administered fee will be payable, provided the Service Guidelines have been met.

3.2.1 Service Guidelines to assist referrals to services

CWCA providers will be given Service Guidelines that will outline a hierarchy of appropriate referral assistance. The primary focus is to achieve employment outcomes for those able to work. This may be through direct referral and engagement of the person with an employment service provider, where appropriate. In other cases, this may involve referral to a service provider of pre-vocational services, such as the Personal Support Programme (PSP), that may assist the person enter the labour market at a later stage.

DHS will provide Service Guidelines to assist CWCA providers with client referral strategies. These Service Guidelines will be flexible and may be revised for assessors within specific geographical areas as availability of services or other circumstances change.

A significant part of ensuring people are referred to the appropriate service will be the expectation that assessors are aware of the different services available within their local region and the programmes that they can offer the people they assess, whether they will be job seekers or not. It is anticipated that part of the training planned in the lead up to the introduction of CWCA's on 1 July 2006 will be to ensure that staff engaged in assessments are aware of the availability and types of services available in each ESA they service.

3.2.2 Timeliness standards of assessments

It is anticipated that CWCAs will be conducted within tighter timeframes than is currently the practice in order to ensure more rapid engagement of people to appropriate services to maximise their potential for labour market participation. DHS will be consulting with potential service providers on timeliness standards and as a benchmark is anticipating that the completion of an assessment from date of referral to the finalisation and return of the assessment report will be no more than 10 working days in metropolitan areas, with an allowance for more time in regional and remote areas or where more complex assessments are required.

Prioritisation of people for referral to a CWCA will be achieved through Service Guidelines provided to organisations that will refer people for assessment, in particular, Centrelink and employment and related service providers. DHS will review referral Service Guidelines and may update these as required.

As is currently the case, attendance at the assessment will be compulsory under the *Social Security Act 1991*.

3.2.3 Target groups

From 1 July 2006, job seekers who are identified as having specific barriers to employment as well as claimants for a disability payment or job seekers applying for an exemption from the activity test because of an incapacity or illness, may be required to attend a CWCA. It is anticipated that CWCA referrals will be drawn from the following groups:

- job seekers who face a range of employment barriers and whose circumstances, via the JSCI, trigger a requirement for a CWCA
- Disability Support Pension (DSP) claimants
- Newstart (NSA)/ Youth Allowance (YA) recipients lodging medical certificates and seeking exemption from activity testing requirements
- DSP recipients whose qualification is being reviewed
- Parenting Payment recipients or claimants lodging medical certificates seeking exemption from activity testing requirements
- Very Long Term Unemployed (VLTU) and Mature Age job seekers lodging medical certificates seeking exemption from activity testing requirements or who may need to have their work capacity assessed and
- voluntary job seekers who may be income support recipients seeking employment but who have no activity test requirement to do so.

It is expected that priority for CWCAs will be given to those individuals whose income support determination or activity test obligations are dependent upon an assessment being undertaken.

3.3 SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Within the broad operational parameters discussed above, DHS is seeking the following services to be supplied by providers:

- pre-assessment administrative services
- assessment services
- referral services
- assessment reporting services and
- post-assessment administrative services.

These service requirements are discussed in detail in the following sections. CWCA providers will be required to access DEWR's IT system (refer to Appendix A for further information).

3.3.1 Pre-assessment administrative services

The CWCA provider will need to manage the flow of referrals, assessments and assessment reports and related queries from and to Centrelink and employment and related service providers.

Centrelink Customer Service staff will undertake the following actions prior to the CWCA provider becoming involved in the provision of the required services:

- handle initial inquiries on income support payments, including the issue of claim packs
- undertake initial appraisal of claims and activity test exemption applications with claimants and job seekers requiring CWCA prior to being referred to the CWCA provider
- check for previous assessments and their useability
- provide people being referred for assessment with information about the purpose of the assessment and their requirement to attend
- advise people of their right of appeal pending outcomes of income support decisions by Centrelink staff and
- complete an electronic diary booking for referrals to the CWCA provider.

Prior to referral to a CWCA, from an employment or related service provider, the following actions will have occurred:

- a check for previous assessments and their useability
- completion of an electronic diary booking of job seekers to the CWCA provider where the job seeker approaches them directly for employment

assistance or is receiving assistance from them and

- providing job seekers with information about the purpose of the assessment and their requirement to attend.

The CWCA provider is expected to undertake the following activities as requirements of the pre-assessment administrative services, i.e. the services to be undertaken prior to the CWCA being performed:

- entering details of available assessment sessions into the electronic diary
- regular monitoring of the electronic diary appointments and ensuring staff availability to undertake booked assessments within the specified time frame
- making all efforts to facilitate attendance at assessments, including, if possible, contacting the person to be assessed prior to the assessment appointment to remind them of the appointment
- when arranging the appointment venue, considering the circumstances and convenience of the person to be assessed, having particular regard to the needs of people who have a physical, sensory, intellectual or psychiatric impairment. Venues and services must be accessible by people with disabilities
- organising collection and return of case documentation from Centrelink or referring employment and related service providers
- ensuring all available information relating to the person has been read and the CWCA provider is fully prepared and cognisant of the presenting issues prior to performing the assessment
- in some cases, where people reside in remote locations, the CWCA provider may have to travel to conduct the CWCA. (The costs of any such travel are to be borne by the CWCA provider) and
- interpreter requirements are to be identified and sourced prior to the appointment.

3.3.2 Other pre-assessment activities required

Handling of information and documentation

CWCA providers will be required to keep and maintain information and documentation in a secure and confidential manner in accordance with the *Information Privacy Principles* (IPPs) which are set

out in Section 14 of the *Privacy Act 1988*. The IPPs provide detailed instructions on the obligations of record-keepers of confidential information and form part of the CWCA Service Guidelines.

Organisations subject to the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* will need to comply with the National Privacy Principles (NPPs) or an approved privacy code when handling personal information.

Management of the collection, delivery and return of case documentation from Centrelink or the employment and related service provider, and the internal distribution to the relevant CWCA provider personnel will be the responsibility of the CWCA provider.

The CWCA provider is to implement a secure tracking system for personal information and the movement of case documentation whilst under their control to assure confidentiality is maintained. The system is to include a monitoring process for identifying the location of case documentation at any one time. The CWCA provider must arrange for the secure and confidential transportation and storage of information whilst it is in their control.

Further information on the secure and confidential handling of documentation will be provided in the Service Guidelines.

It is the responsibility of the CWCA provider to ensure that any information accessed by its personnel, including interpreters, is retained by the CWCA provider and is protected at all times from:

- unauthorised access, alteration, disclosure or use
- use by a third party and
- misuse, damage or destruction by any person.

3.3.3 Case documentation

The information supplied to the CWCA providers will vary depending upon the reason for referral.

DSP claimants are required to provide Centrelink with a range of documentation which will include a Treating Doctor's report, modules from the payment claim form in which the claimant provides information about their disability or medical condition. Previous assessment reports (e.g. medical, work capacity or capacity for participation reports) may be available. Some claimants may also provide specialist's reports.

People on DSP and under qualification review will have a Review Form completed by their Treating Doctor. They may have the range of reports noted for DSP claimants above.

NSA/YA job seekers lodging medical certificates may have one, several or many medical certificate/s. If they previously lodged a claim for DSP, they may have the same documentation available as DSP claimants.

NSA/YA recipients, who are exempt from the activity test because of an incapacity and are being reviewed, will have the NSA/YA Review form, which is a self-assessment of the impact of their condition/s. They may also have a medical certificate/s. If they have previously lodged a claim for DSP, they may have the same documentation available as DSP claimants.

3.3.4 Appointment notification

The referring organisation will book an appointment through the electronic diary system. The intention of this process is to ensure a prompt connection to the CWCA provider.

3.3.5 Changes to appointment times

Neither the person referred to the CWCA provider nor the CWCA provider is to change appointment times, unless this is unavoidable. In the case of a change in appointment time, the CWCA provider must re-book the appointment at a time convenient to the person, but this must be no later than two working days from the initial appointment date.

If a person does not attend an appointment, the CWCA provider is required to make two contact attempts. If the person is not contactable by phone the CWCA provider will be required to contact them in writing (using standard letters approved by DHS in conjunction with DEWR). The CWCA provider is to re-book the appointment at a time convenient, within two working days of when the contact occurs.

If the person does not attend a second appointment, the CWCA provider is to advise the referring organisation via the electronic diary, and return any case documents to the referring organisation. No fee is payable under these circumstances. DHS has taken into account the potential numbers of 'did not attend' cases and has built this into the associated structure costs.

3.4 ASSESSMENT SERVICES

The CWCA provider is required to provide the following services:

- Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessments of job seekers and claimants for or recipients of income support payments, including liaison with treating doctors and other relevant health professionals as required
- to facilitate chaperone/advocate/nominee and/or interpreter services for people being assessed, as required and
- to complete the online system coding, reporting and referral process.

The CWCA provider must explain to the person the:

- the reason for the assessment
- the purposes for which the information they provide will be used
- the limits of any confidentiality issues in relation to privacy legislation and
- obtain the person's written confirmation that they have been advised how their personal information will be used (i.e. that the assessment information will be provided to Centrelink, employment and related service providers and/or other services to which they are referred).

For NSA/YA job seekers who are temporarily incapacitated due to illness or injury and are unable to look for work, or who have been selected for a CWCA through the JSCI, or where an employment and related service provider is referring a job seeker under DHS developed Service Guidelines, the CWCA provider will be required to provide the following:

- identification of key barriers affecting the person's ability to work
- an assessment of the current capacity for work and potential capacity for work, both with and without interventions, within the next two years
- an assessment of the person's current work capacity in hour bandwidths (<8, 8-14, 15-29, 30+) per week
- an assessment of the person's future work capacity in hour bandwidths (<8, 8-14, 15-29, 30+) per week
- referral to interventions that may help the person improve their ability to work
- prioritisation of assistance types and

- identifying where the job seeker is already participating in appropriate assistance and further referrals are not appropriate. Where this is identified, a timeframe for on-referrals once this assistance is completed should be provided.

For DSP claimants and reviews, CWCA's will need to provide the following information:

- an assessment of the impact of the person's medical conditions on work capacity
- identification of key barriers affecting the person's ability to work
- an assessment of the current capacity for work and potential capacity for work, with or without interventions, within the next two years
- an assessment of the person's current work capacity in hour bandwidths (<8, 8-14, 15-29, 30+) per week
- an assessment of the person's future work capacity in hour bandwidths (<8, 8-14, 15-29, 30+) per week
- an opinion about the appropriate rating under the Impairment Tables for permanent medical conditions
- referral to interventions that may help the person improve their ability to work
- prioritisation of assistance requirements and
- identifying where the person is already participating in appropriate assistance and further referrals are not appropriate. Where this is identified a timeframe for on referrals once this assistance is completed should be provided.

CWCA recommendations will inform Centrelink and employment and related service providers to develop Activity Agreements and/or service provision.

3.4.1 Income support qualification and activity test exemption advice

While the CWCA provider is able to discuss their recommendations with the person (and refer them to other services), the CWCA provider has no authority to, and must not, indicate to the job seeker or claimant for income support, the likely outcome of the assessment as it applies to income support or the seeking of an exemption from the activity test.

3.4.2 Undiagnosed conditions

CWCAs involve the investigation of the impact of diagnosed medical conditions on a person's ability to work, based on information provided by the person and by their treating doctor. The onus is on the claimant or the income support recipient being reviewed to provide all relevant medical information in support of their qualification for income support payments or activity test exemption.

Where a person presents with, or the CWCA provider suspects, an undiagnosed or untreated condition/s, the CWCA provider should recommend the person contact their treating doctor for further diagnosis or treatment, if appropriate. The CWCA provider should indicate this in their assessment to Centrelink or the employment and related service provider.

Where the impact of a person's undiagnosed or untreated condition is unlikely to impact/affect the outcome, the CWCA should be completed.

3.4.3 Consultation with treating doctors/health professionals

CWCA providers may need to consult with treating doctors and other health professionals in order to clarify information provided in reports by these professionals and/or their own findings.

It may also be appropriate for CWCA providers to discuss suspected undiagnosed conditions with treating doctors.

3.4.4 Specialist referrals

It is expected that input from specialists (for example, specialist psychological or specialist medical input) will only be required for a small number of CWCAs in exceptional circumstances, and would generally only involve a small proportion of claimants.

The CWCA provider may seek a report from a specialist (who must be independent from the person's treating doctor or specialist) only where:

- such advice is needed in respect of a medical condition which may specifically impact on the person's work and training ability or may significantly contribute to the critical impairment rating and
- the information being sought is essential for the CWCA provider to complete the assessment and cannot be obtained more readily from another source, such as the person's treating doctor.

DHS will put in place a process for approval and reimbursement of the cost of specialist referrals. DHS will closely audit CWCA providers based on historical data and on the number and range of specialist referrals from existing medical and work capacity assessments. Further information will be provided in the RFT.

Any specialist referrals are to be made in a manner that would minimise inconvenience to the person.

3.4.5 Other relevant medical information

When preparing the Assessment Report, the CWCA provider is to consider all relevant medical information that the person may provide during the course of the assessment.

3.4.6 Interpreter and chaperone/advocate/nominee services

Interpreter requirements are to be identified by Centrelink or the employment and related service provider prior to making the referral to the CWCA provider. The CWCA provider will be required to arrange for a professional interpreter to be present at the CWCA.

The use of family members or friends of the person being assessed or other unqualified interpreters is not acceptable. Interpreter services used must be accredited to National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) standards.

The CWCA provider must provide interpreter services:

- in accordance with the AUSIT Code of Ethics
- at a high professional standard
- in a prompt and cost-effective manner and
- exercising high professional standards of skill, care and due diligence.

Refer to Payment Model Section for further details (see section 3.8.4).

Some people may wish to have a chaperone, advocate or nominee (as currently defined see: [centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/filestores/rt008_0307/\\$file/rt008_0307en.rtf](http://centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/filestores/rt008_0307/$file/rt008_0307en.rtf)) accompany them to an assessment. CWCA providers are required to ensure that chaperones, advocates or nominees are accommodated appropriately.

3.5 REFERRAL SERVICES

The anticipated outcome from the CWCA is early connection of the job seeker or the income support claimant with the most appropriate form of assistance. DHS will provide a hierarchy of employment related referral options to guide assessors in referral determinations. The CWCA provider will work within that framework for referral with the primary outcome focus on obtaining employment where a person is assessed as capable of work.

Direct referral to appropriate employment and related service providers will be completed through an electronic diary booking system. It is expected that the CWCA providers will facilitate engagement with an employment and related service provider or other appropriate referral options following the assessment. Once a referral is accepted the CWCA process is complete. Service Guidelines around this process will be available in the RFT.

Pre-vocational assistance will include referrals under the Pre-vocational Assistance Participation Account and also to longer term pre-vocational interventions such as the Personal Support Programme.

3.5.1 Service reassessment

Service providers will be able to request a short service reassessment to review the CWCA provider's decision to refer the person to their service if they believe that the referral was inappropriate (refer to post-assessment administrative services section 3.6). Service Guidelines around this process will be available in the RFT.

3.5.2 CWCA reports

DEWR has advised that completion of the CWCA reports will be available on line as part of the integrated IT solution. The current report format will be enhanced and will include modules related to the new CWCA requirements. The completed assessment report will:

- be internally consistent (i.e. no conflict is to exist between the Impairment Ratings and work ability assessments without proper justification) and facilitate the decision-making process
- be comprehensible to a non-medical person
- be free of inappropriate language and comment and

- include a response to all questions on the report (including nil responses).

CWCA providers will also be required to include in reports any indications of a person's vulnerability, as determined by Service Guidelines.

3.5.3 Timeliness

The CWCA provider is to ensure that the on line CWCA report is finalised and all system coding completed no later than two working days after the person attended the assessment in the majority of cases.

3.6 POST-ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

3.6.1 Advisory services

The CWCA provider is required to provide an advisory service including, but not necessarily limited to:

- telephone access for Centrelink and other service providers in relation to the assessment, intervention and recommendations stated in the assessment report
- information to assist in the administration of appeals of income support decisions and activity test requirements and
- clarification of the CWCA's, where necessary.

3.6.2 Corrections, reviews and reassessments

The CWCA provider may be required to correct, review and/or update a completed assessment for a number of reasons, including:

- the content of the original CWCA report is not suitable for Centrelink to use in making a decision about income support payments
- issues with the original report are identified in the Quality Assurance process
- the service provider disagrees with the referral made to their service
- post assessment, the person provides more information relevant to the assessment and
- an appeal lodged by the person prompts the reviewer to query the CWCA report.

In the above situations, the original CWCA provider will be responsible for this action and Service Guidelines will be developed by DHS for each scenario.

Where there is a significant change to a person's circumstances, a full reassessment may be required. This may be done by a new CWCA provider. DHS Service Guidelines will outline how this work will be allocated.

3.6.3 Other requirements

The CWCA provider will be required to participate in meetings with DHS, DEWR, Centrelink and employment and related service providers as required. In the first 12 months, these meetings would be expected to be monthly. Given DHS responsibility for managing all aspects of the CWCA process, such meetings should only occur with the agreement of DHS.

3.6.4 Co-ordination and liaison

The CWCA provider will be required to participate in regular formal and informal meetings with DHS as they apply to the delivery of the required services and the meeting of the CWCA provider's associated obligations. This may include meeting with the audit team as part of the Quality Assurance process.

3.6.5 Interactions with other organisations

It is expected that Centrelink and employment and related service providers will make direct referrals for a CWCA through an electronic diary booking service common across CWCA providers, Centrelink and employment and related service providers.

3.7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management will be conducted by DHS in two ways:

- monitoring the performance of individual service providers and
- evaluating the effectiveness of the market in achieving government objectives.

CWCA providers will be required to supply information for monitoring, investigation and evaluation purposes. All information gathered by DHS may be used to assess the CWCA provider's performance and compliance. Performance will be assessed both against requirements and, where relevant, in comparison with other CWCA providers.

Monitoring of activities will start from the date on which the services commence.

DHS will provide the CWCA provider with regular reports for the Employment Service Areas (ESAs) served by the CWCA provider. The reports will form part of performance monitoring and reporting.

DHS will assess CWCA provider performance through:

- independent audits of assessment reports
- client satisfaction surveys (e.g. employment and related service providers and job seekers/DSP claimants)
- CWCA provider timeliness and other data and
- audits of document tracking to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

The CWCA provider is required to provide DHS with reports on an agreed basis on progress and on the achievement of the required performance standards. These reports are to be provided on a bi-monthly basis in a format acceptable to DHS, or for such other periods as agreed.

It is anticipated that data will be able to be drawn from the DEWR's IT system to assist DHS to monitor CWCA provider performance.

As part of a continuous improvement process, the CWCA provider is also to provide feedback on best practice. The reports are to be provided in a format agreed by DHS and CWCA providers.

Management information reports from CWCA providers are expected within 14 calendar days after the end of the reporting period.

3.7.1 The Quality Assurance Framework

The Quality Assurance Framework represents an overarching framework within which the CWCA providers operate. It assures DHS that a certain level of service delivery is being met and it outlines for the CWCA providers the standards they need to meet when delivering the service. The framework also provides a clear and user friendly structure to assist CWCA providers to engage in continuous quality improvement.

The framework comprises of two elements:

- Foundational quality—the set of Service Guidelines prescribed by DHS with which all CWCA providers are required to comply and
- Continuous improvement—the effort CWCA providers apply to continuously improve the quality of their services.

3.7.2 Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the main measures that will be used to assess CWCA provider performance.

CWCA providers will be expected to maximise performance against the KPIs set for each site or LMR/ESA, as appropriate.

Each CWCA provider will adhere to the following KPI framework:

KPI	DESCRIPTION	MEASURES
KPI 1 Efficiency/ timeliness	Dependent on programme requirements, e.g. time taken to assess people, or time taken to return assessment report to Centrelink or to relevant employment or related service provider, to which the person is referred.	Efficiency and timeliness measures as specified in the relevant Statement of Requirements. Available electronic diary appointments to enable timely referral to CWCA. Number of appointment reschedules.
KPI 2 Effectiveness/ utilisation	To maximise programme outcomes for eligible participants.	Referral outcomes to employment assistance including acceptance and non-acceptance rates. Referral outcomes to pre-vocational and other forms of assistance. Percentage of inappropriate referrals/returns for reassessment or service reassessments.
KPI 3 Quality	Extent to which providers offer a service to participants that is in accordance with requirements and to which they provide quality assessments for Centrelink and employment or related service providers to which the job seeker/person is referred.	DHS satisfaction with the delivery of services. Levels of participant satisfaction with the assessment and referral outcomes. Centrelink satisfaction with appropriate level of information to inform income support decisions. Levels of provider satisfaction with the suitability of people referred to them for assistance. Quality of the information in the assessment reports. Number/type of deficiencies identified in site visits or quality audit projects. Robustness of information to support outcomes of appeals against Centrelink income support decisions.

3.8 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SELECTING CWCA PROVIDERS

This section provides details about the proposed arrangements for selecting CWCA providers.

3.8.1 Selection methodology

It is expected that Government providers will undertake a significant share of CWCA services. In respect of non-Government providers, consultation arising from this Exposure Draft will seek to inform decisions regarding the share of business undertaken by the private sector, and to identify any issues to be taken into consideration. It is expected that organisations applying for business will be required to specify a preferred maximum and minimum level of referrals to be serviced within the market shares available. In the RFT process DHS may negotiate with applicants on business levels outside of the specified bid range, to allow for adjustments necessary to ensure diversity.

DHS will provide estimates of expected numbers of referrals. This information will be available in the RFT documentation.

3.8.2 Considerations

It is anticipated that in preparing submissions to become CWCA providers, organisations would need to give consideration to financial viability which should include, but not be limited to:

- referral volumes
- nature of referrals
- professional expertise required of staff
- location and types of service delivery
- timeliness and
- other requirements such as IT systems and infrastructure (offices etc).

3.8.3 Number of referrals

It is expected that DHS would not guarantee any minimum number of referrals to any CWCA provider. It is estimated that approximately 372 000 CWCA's will occur in 2006–07.

In the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008, a significant proportion of this business will continue to be carried out by Australian Government service delivery agencies.

It is expected that CWCA providers will be allocated a proportion of market share for specific ESAs.

A proportion of the market share may be offered to existing providers of assessment services, or to new providers in order to fill gaps in service delivery within an LMR/ESA.

It is anticipated that estimates of expected numbers of referrals will be allocated to LMRs/ESAs on the basis of:

- the historical number of job seekers identified for a face to face supplementary assessment as a result of their responses to the JSCI
- the historical number of Better Assessments and
- the population of the Welfare to Work measure claimants and recipients likely to require a CWCA.

The indicative numbers of referrals and payment level will be included with the RFT document.

3.8.4 Payment model

The general payment structure for CWCA encompasses:

- a Standard Base Price for providing CWCA
- a Complexity Loading for providing CWCA for people requiring Impairment Rating assessment
- a tendered Interpreter Loading and
- a tendered Rural/Remote Loading.

DHS will provide indicative fees in the RFT. These fees will cover provision of all services (as outlined in section 3.3 on CWCA provider Service Requirements), and customer cohorts. The fees are tiered with regard to complexity, rural/remote servicing, and interpreter requirements.

Table 1—Payment model (GST exclusive)

Payment Model	
Standard Base Price	\$180–\$230* range (estimated 70% of total referrals)
Complexity Loading	\$80–\$110* range (estimated 30% of total referrals)
Interpreter Loading	\$ to be determined through competitive tender process
Rural/Remote Loading	\$ to be determined through competitive tender process

* DHS to provide fixed figure in final RFT exclusive of GST

3.8.5 Rural/Remote Loading

Recognising the difficulties in providing services in rural and remote areas, a rural/remote loading will be available to CWCA providers for services delivered in areas that have been designated rural or remote. It is anticipated that organisations responding to the RFT would submit a price based on their own estimates of costs for service delivery in each LMRs/ESAs they are bidding for. When assessing tendered fees, DHS will consider the total funding available for CWCA, along with responses to the selection criteria.

The classifications applied to LMR/ESAs are derived from the Department of Health and Ageing Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). Where an LMR/ESA contains both accessible and rural/remote postcodes or areas, the loading will only be paid for those referrals in areas covered by these postcodes.

It is anticipated that CWCA providers would also be able to submit a request to DHS to extend the remote classification to individual people and/or postcodes that they service and can justify as having similar characteristics to rural/remote areas. DHS will assess each request on its merits and is under no obligation to agree to any individual request.

3.5.6 Interpreter Assistance Loading

In recognition of the need to provide interpreter services to some people, an Interpreter Loading will be available to CWCA providers. It is anticipated that organisations responding to the RFT would submit a price based on their own estimates of costs for providing Interpreter assistance in each LMR/ESA for which they are bidding. When assessing tendered fees, DHS will consider the total funding available for CWCA, along with responses to the selection criteria.

3.5.7 How payments are made

DHS will have an automated payment system in place. Most payments will be made following entry of claims on the DEWR's IT system. These payments will be verified by the relevant DHS officer before payment occurs.

3.9 SELECTION CRITERIA

DHS is intending to evaluate organisations against the selection criteria outlined in this section. The tendered Rural/Remote Loading and Interpreter Loading will also form part of the overall assessment.

It is anticipated that the following framework will be used for assessment tender bids:

3.9.1 Criterion 1

Demonstrated performance in delivery of CWCA or similar services

- 1.1 Describe the services you have delivered in the past three years that are most relevant to delivering the CWCA.
- 1.2 Provide information about your performance in delivering CWCA's or similar services over the past three years, including performance levels or outcomes.
- 1.3 Describe how achievement of these performance levels or outcomes demonstrates your ability to deliver the CWCA services.
- 1.4 Describe and provide evidence of your organisation's experience over the past three years working with the potential participant groups eligible for CWCA.
- 1.5 Describe the strategies for ongoing development/training of staff, including for replacement staff or subcontractors if your organisation proposes to use these.

3.9.2 Criterion 2

Proposed strategies to achieve outcomes for CWCA services

- 2.1 Proposed service delivery strategy for managing fluctuating volumes of assessments from multiple referral points.
- 2.2 Proposed strategies for meeting timeliness standards.
- 2.3 Proposed management and administration support including security measures to maintain privacy of information.
- 2.4 Proposed performance management and quality assurance strategies and processes.

3.9.3 Criterion 3

Strategies to promote, sustain and enhance the delivery of the CWCA services at an ESA level

- 3.1 Proposed strategies to address the unique characteristics of the ESA for which you propose to bid. Include your understanding of related service provision across the range of Commonwealth, State, Local government and relevant community organisations and special needs of potential client groups in the ESAs in which you propose to tender.
 - Describe and provide evidence of strategies your organisation currently uses, or will use, to establish and maintain community/stakeholder linkages in the ESA.
 - Describe the qualifications, skills and experience of the people in your organisation who will be undertaking assessments or who you propose to employ/sub-contact in each ESA.
 - Demonstrate the accessibility and suitability of the site(s) or proposed sites within the ESA for delivering assessment services to potential client groups.

3.9.4 Tendered Loadings—Rural and Remote and Interpreters

It is anticipated that organisations responding to the RFT will submit a separate tender price for:

- Rural and Remote Loadings and
- Interpreter Loading.

This price should be based on an organisation's own estimates of costs for service delivery in each LMRs/ESAs for which they are bidding. When assessing tendered fees, DHS will consider the total funding available for CWCA's, along with responses to the selection criteria.

3.9.5 Skills, qualifications and experience of CWCA service provider personnel

It is anticipated that CWCA providers will be drawn predominantly from a range of allied health professionals. Where assessments require the application of Impairment Ratings or recommendations made for an incapacity exemption this is a requirement.

All CWCA providers will have experience in:

- assessing the impact of medical conditions on a person's capacity to work
- determining appropriate forms of assistance to move people into employment
- facilitating workforce attachment for people with disabilities, injury or illnesses and
- facilitating the attachment of unemployed job seekers to appropriate programmes to enable them to move into, or back to, employment.

CWCA providers will demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of:

- Commonwealth, State, Local Government and community service provision for people referred for a CWCA including people with disabilities, illness or injuries
- appropriate employment programmes and service provision which will assist job seekers and people who volunteer for employment assistance to move into employment and
- referral options for job seekers and people with a disability who require pre-vocational assistance prior to moving into mainstream employment assistance.

CWCA providers who have relevant allied health related qualifications will be expected to meet the following criteria:

- health professionals are expected to have current registration (or intend to register with) with their board or other professional associations in the state or territory in which they practice
- appropriate supervision protocols in line with professional guidelines are to apply at all times

- adherence to the standards of training, practice and ethical principles of professional conduct endorsed by their professional bodies
- the safeguard and welfare of people who are being assessed must be of primary consideration when conducting the Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessment and
- adherence to the National Privacy Principles.

CWCA providers must have strategies to ensure ongoing availability of appropriately qualified and skilled personnel, including CWCA provider personnel and sub-contractors if these are to be used. These strategies will include:

- the strategy for acquiring new personnel, as and when required, to provide the services
- the strategy to provide supervision of assessment work
- the strategy for ensuring all personnel will be available to undertake DHS training prior to the commencement of service delivery and commitment to accessing relevant training developed by DHS
- details of any other ongoing training or professional development arrangements which will be undertaken by the CWCA provider which are relevant to the provision of the services
- the strategy for covering the absence of managerial, supervisory and other personnel without reduction in the standard of performance
- a Curriculum Vitae for the service delivery manager and
- details of the responsibilities of the service delivery manager, including the proposed process for interfacing with DHS.

3.9.6 Implementation and training

Prior to 1 July 2006, DHS will provide a training package and conduct a training session or sessions. This will include information on the nature and purpose of Centrelink payments/services, the roles played by CWCA providers in the assessment process including in informing payment qualification, providing advice for determination of activity test requirements and Australian Government programmes to which CWCA providers will refer. The session/s will also provide information on cross-linkages between Centrelink, CWCA providers, employment and related service providers and other providers, cover the use of the IT systems in place for transfer of information between agencies and procedures required for providing services.

The CWCA provider will be responsible for organising staff access to these sessions and providing further training as required to staff to ensure they are able to undertake the required services. The CWCA provider is responsible for training as necessary on other occasions, such as when new personnel are employed.

CWCA providers will need to cover the costs of their personnel attending the initial training session/s. It is expected that the initial training sessions would be of one or two days. CWCA providers will be responsible for the costs of their personnel attending any subsequent training sessions arranged between the parties.