

Australians Working Together

Helping people to move forward

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY:

Report on the outcomes of the community consultations on Australians Working Together



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May 2002

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Ministerial Statement

Australians Working Together is the Government's first big step in modernising Australia's welfare system.

We thank the many people who contributed to the consultations and are pleased to report back to the Australians who are helping us to get it right. These consultations confirmed that improving and modernising our social support system is important to the community.

We hope you will see this report as a demonstration that we are listening. We are now taking your ideas and advice into account as we implement the *Australians Working Together* initiatives in 2002 and beyond.

We wanted to make sure the detail is right as well as to ensure our direction on welfare reform was right for Australia.

We continue to listen and learn as we implement *Australians Working Together*.



Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone
Minister for Family and
Community Services



The Hon Tony Abbott MP
Minister for Employment and
Workplace Relations

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Executive Summary

This report on the outcomes of the *Australians Working Together* consultations describes the framework for the consultations, summarises the way we have adopted what Australians told us, and describes the areas that could be addressed in the longer term.

The Government embarked upon welfare reform in order to modernise Australia's social support system so that it could meet the needs of Australians today. We wanted to build a system that would be more flexible, active and individualised in the way it delivers support to Australians of working age.

We have undertaken a step-by-step approach, involving extensive consultations with the community and substantial investigations into the best way forward. We designed the *Australians Working Together* package as the first stage of reform. With an investment of \$1.7 billion, the package aims to help people move forward through a balance of incentives, assistance and obligations.

Upon the release of *Australians Working Together*, we went back to the community and undertook extensive consultations so that we could refine the direction of welfare reform. We listened to people's views on how we could better implement the package as a whole and the specific initiatives within the package.

Australians welcomed the chance to have a say. They supported *Australians Working Together* and told us the core concepts and concrete actions they thought worked best and should be preserved. People also highlighted the things that they believed could limit the successful delivery of *Australians Working Together* in their local communities and made helpful suggestions for improvements.

The breadth of the welfare reform agenda has meant that not all issues raised in the consultation process can be adequately addressed in the short-term. Nor can we report on all aspects covered in the consultations in detail. However, all views will help us as we begin implementing the initiatives in *Australians Working Together*. We will address other views raised in the consultations as we move forward with the long-term welfare reform agenda. Feedback and dialogue on this agenda is vital and will continue.

The first major group of initiatives under *Australians Working Together* will take effect from 1 July 2002 with major initiatives also planned for September 2002 and April and July 2003. The Government will continue to consult with the community as we implement the package and move into the next stage of welfare reform.

Australians Working Together was released by the Government in the 2001–02 Federal Budget after a careful investigation into how to improve Australia’s social support system. We recognised that the current welfare system was out of step with the needs of Australians today, so we set out to rethink how we could provide a safety net while also helping people to achieve independence.

1. Why Change is Needed

Australia has been experiencing profound changes in its economic and social circumstances. New jobs have been created, requiring new skills and different work patterns. Families have changed shape, with more women choosing to work and more sole parent families, and our population is ageing.

These far-reaching changes have been placing new demands on our social support system. Instead of being responsive to individuals, it has often delivered support in an uncoordinated approach. Importantly, no coherent incentives have been in place to help people build their self-reliance.

Around one in five people of working age is now dependent on social security payments. This proportion continues to increase despite Australia’s very strong economic growth in recent years.

Welfare dependency is not only a problem for this generation, but for future generations. The number of jobless families in Australia is towards the highest in the OECD, with one in six Australian children living in families where there is no one in paid work. Children in families on income support have a far higher risk of joblessness themselves.

Clearly, Australians needed to start addressing these problems, or risk entrenching social and economic disadvantage.

2. The Listening, Participative Approach

Our approach has been to embark upon major reform in a step-by-step way, working in partnership with the community. Hundreds of people from all sections of the community have been involved, even before *Australians Working Together* was designed.

In late 1999, the Government appointed a special Reference Group including representatives of peak welfare organisations, business, academic and government to provide advice on the steps that we could take to reduce welfare dependency among working age people.

Chaired by Mission Australia CEO Mr Patrick McClure, the Reference Group consulted widely with people in meetings around the country. More than 360 individuals and groups contributed through written submissions.

MEMBERSHIP OF WELFARE REFORM REFERENCE GROUP

Mr Patrick McClure

Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Mission Australia

Mr Wayne Jackson

Deputy Chair
Deputy Secretary
Department of Family and
Community Services

Professor Peter Dawkins

Director
Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic
and Social Research
University of Melbourne

Mr Jim Longley

Senior Finance Executive
Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Professor Mark Lyons

School of Management
University of Technology, Sydney

Ms Elizabeth Morgan

Social Policy Specialist
Morgan, Disney and Associates

Ms Jane Schwager

Chief Executive Officer
Benevolent Society of New South Wales

The final McClure report was far-reaching, proposing that the social support system should actively engage the participation of people both socially and economically to reduce the risk of disadvantage. The McClure report set down strategic directions for fundamental change over the short, medium and long term.

We foreshadowed our intentions in December 2000, consistent with the broad direction of the McClure report, with attention to individualised service delivery; a simplified payment system; incentives and assistance; mutual obligations; and community partnerships.

To continue our participative approach, we set up an independent Consultative Forum to help us develop and refine the policies that would start to make the vision of welfare reform a reality. Throughout this period, we tested ideas through pilots and trials to help shape our ongoing approach to welfare reform.

MEMBERSHIP OF WELFARE REFORM CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Senator The Hon Amanda Vanstone

Joint Chair
Minister for Family and
Community Services

The Hon Tony Abbott MP

Joint Chair
Minister for Employment and
Workplace Relations

Professor Peter Dawkins

Director
Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic
and Social Research
University of Melbourne

Professor Julian Disney

Director
Social Justice Project
University of NSW

Ms Wilma Gallet

National General Manager
Salvation Army Employment Plus

Mr Graham Glenn

Independent expert

Ms Elaine Henry

Chief Executive Officer
Smith Family

Ms Elizabeth Morgan

Social Policy Specialist
Morgan, Disney and Associates

Mr Warwick Smith

Executive Director
Macquarie Bank

Mr David Thompson

Chief Executive Officer
Jobs Australia

As at the release of *Australians Working Together*
in May 2001

3. *Australians Working Together*

Australians Working Together is the result of this extensive period of investigation, consultation and policy making.

The Government is investing \$1.7 billion in *Australians Working Together*. The new system will provide improved personalised assessment and service and more opportunities for training and work experience. It will also provide better incentives, encouragement to increase their earnings and reasonable requirements for people to find work or contribute to their communities.

Features include the Working Credit to encourage people to take up jobs, more flexible and better integrated employment services, the new Personal Support Programme to provide personalised assistance to people who need it most, and a new Transition to Work Programme to help parents, carers and mature age job seekers return to the workforce. An overview of the initiatives is provided here and a more detailed summary is at the back of this report.

A key feature of *Australians Working Together* is that it seeks to strike the right balance between incentives, obligations and assistance in order to modernise the current income support system. It takes account of individual circumstances in helping people to achieve independence.

The release of *Australians Working Together* in the 2001–02 Budget was not the end of the consultation story. We knew that in such a broad package of changes we would not necessarily get every detail right the first time.

After the announcement of the package, we started a new round of consultations with the community to help us to identify any issues that may limit the success of *Australians Working Together* in local communities.

People warmly welcomed the consultation process and appreciated the opportunity to provide input. The dialogue has been invaluable and will continue as initiatives are started or enhanced.

AUSTRALIANS WORKING TOGETHER — SUMMARY OF KEY INITIATIVES

Help to participate — \$526 million

Working Credit and Literacy and Numeracy Training Supplement.

Helping people find jobs — \$324 million

Employment services: Job Search Training, Intensive Assistance, Work for the Dole, community work, literacy and numeracy, Transition to Work and Training Credits.

Getting people the right help — \$143 million

Personal Support Programme, better assessment and improved Information Technology (IT).

Helping parents return to work — \$251 million

Intensive support and assistance through Centrelink Personal Advisers, Participation Pack, Transition to Work Programme

More child care places — \$16 million

Outside school hours child care places

A fair go for mature aged people — \$146 million

Access to Personal Advisers, Literacy and Numeracy Training, rehabilitation, disability services and education, training, financial information and counselling.

A better deal for people with disabilities — \$177 million

Early intervention, employment services and education and training.

Promoting self-reliance for Indigenous Australians — \$83 million

Employment services, community capacity building, education and training and remote area services.

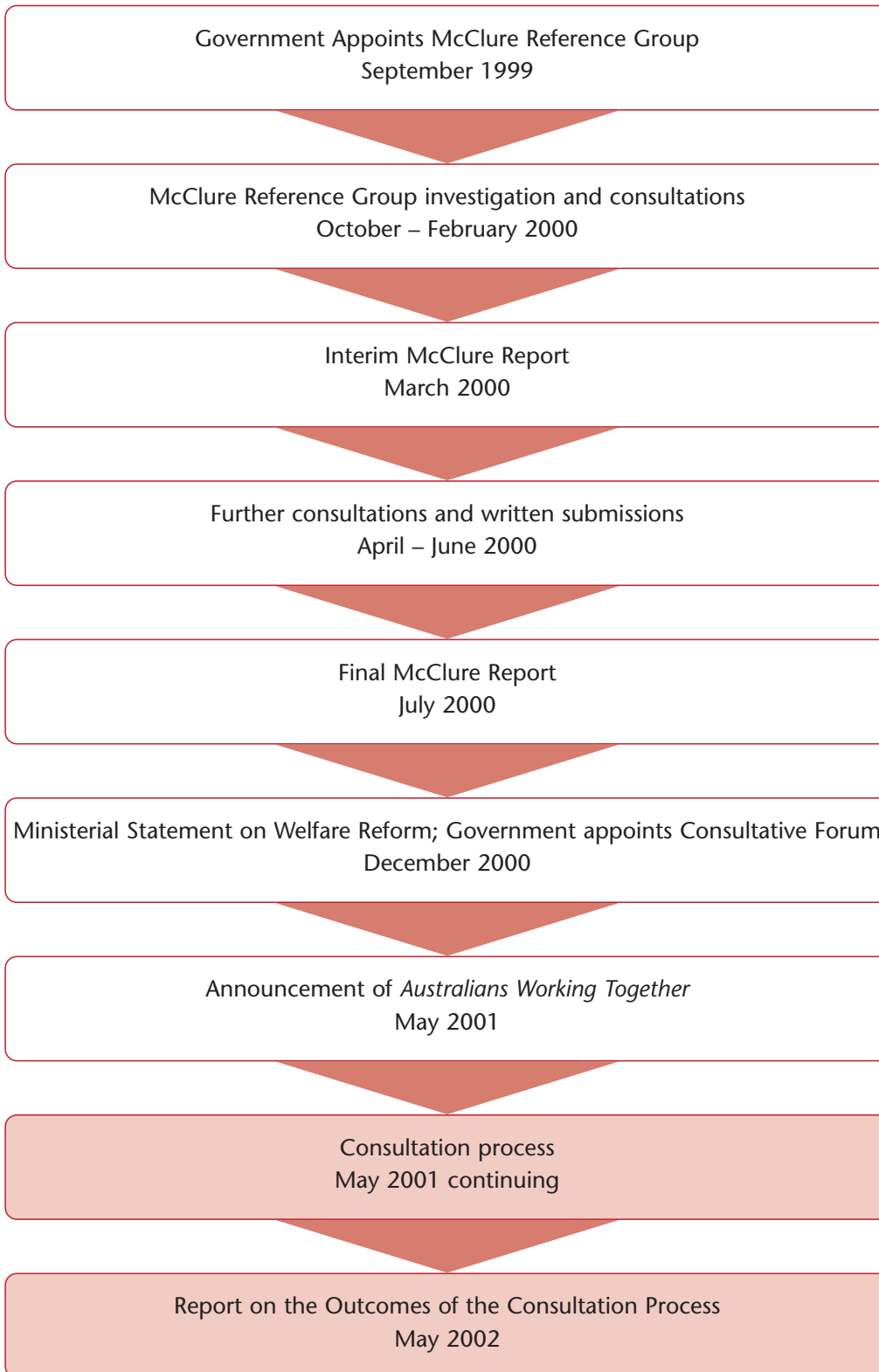
Community and business engagement — \$22 million

Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership and community consultation and communication.

Planning for the future — \$5 million

Pilots and evaluations

BUILDING A NEW INCOME SUPPORT SYSTEM



CHAPTER 2

The Consultation Framework

Initial community consultations through the McClure Reference Group and the Consultative Forum provided early insight into community views and guideposts for appropriate action.

This time, we wanted to gain more extensive advice on the specific initiatives in *Australians Working Together* and on the issues Australians believed could have an impact on the implementation of the package in their local communities.

We designed the consultations so that they would encompass a broad cross-section of people, organisations, places and issues. We did not just go to specialists in the big cities; we wanted to hear from people working in different sectors and living in regions across the country.

We issued a community consultation paper, *Listening to the Community*, to outline the package and invite people to consider key issues, from broad concepts such as being active in the economic and social life of Australia to the specific initiatives and how they would work.

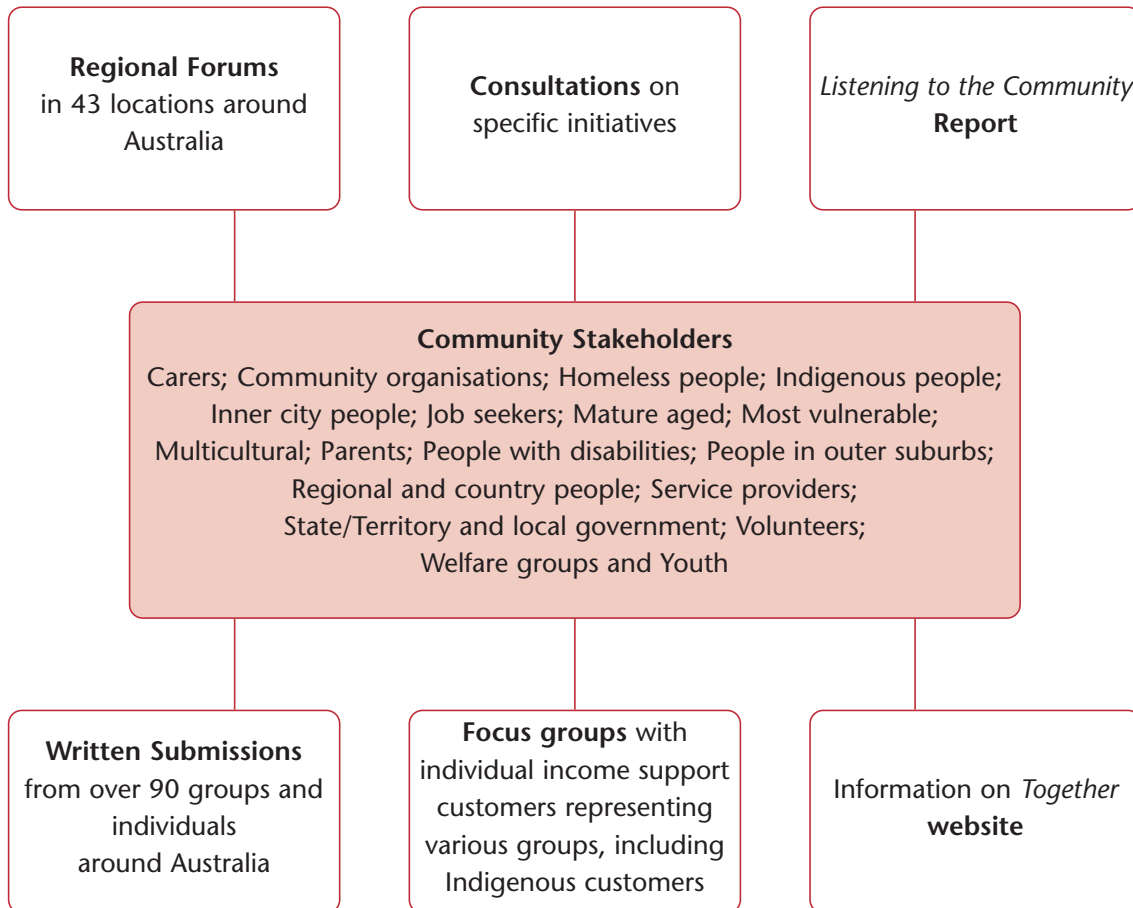
We set up an *Australians Working Together* website to provide an online channel for people to access information and to e-mail their submissions to us. An *Australians Working Together* information package was provided to give people the information they needed. People could access the package and *Listening to the Community* by mail or the *Together* website (www.together.gov.au).

Australians welcomed the chance to make a contribution. Individuals, peak organisations, community groups, employment providers, welfare agencies, members of the volunteer sector, and State, Territory and local governments became involved.

Using a variety of channels, we sought views on both the implementation of the package as a whole in consultations across the country and on the impact of specific initiatives.

THE CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

This diagram shows how the Government involved the community and key stakeholders in the consultation process.



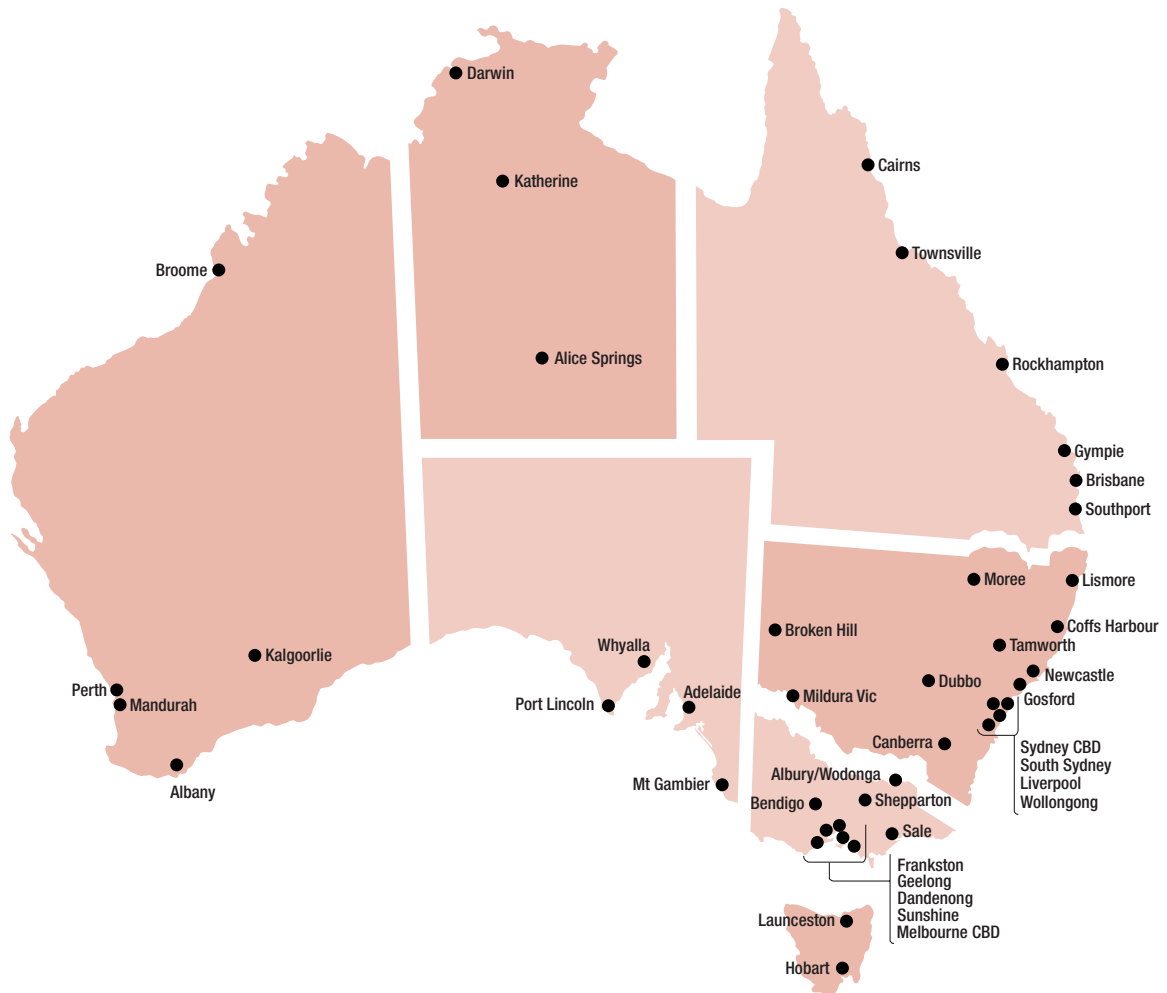
1. Consulting Across Australia

We embarked on Australia-wide consultations to give us an accurate picture of what the community thought of *Australians Working Together*. We held forums in 43 locations around the country, extending the reach of consultations outside of city centres so that local and regionally based groups and organisations could have a say.

In rural areas, regional centres, and both inner and outer metropolitan areas, we asked Australians for their practical suggestions on how the package could work in their local communities and invited them to point to any issues that might act as barriers.

LISTENING TO AUSTRALIA

Locations of Consultations



People at the forums were able to give us a broad view of the impact of the package. There was discussion about big-picture issues such as how the participation requirements would work, Centrelink's role as a gateway, and the services or incentives being provided to a range of client groups. They also advised us on what issues would affect the reforms in rural and remote communities.

Commonwealth Ministers took a role in the consultations, signalling their high priority in listening to people at the grass roots. Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Hon Tony Abbott MP, the then Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business launched the regional forums. At each forum, a personal message was provided by video from the Ministers, emphasising that they wanted to hear from all Australians.

As a prelude to the regional consultations, the Minister for Employment Services, The Hon Mal Brough MP, also consulted with key employment stakeholders on *Australians Working Together* the week after the package was announced.

We also went out to individuals, peak groups and organisations to give everybody the opportunity to have a say, in the format that suited them. We encouraged written submissions from people and organisations that could not be involved in the meetings or forums or wanted to outline their views in greater detail. We received over 90 submissions in this way. A list is at the back of the report.

2. Consulting on Specific Initiatives

We conducted consultations on the specific initiatives in *Australians Working Together* so that we could go into issues in greater depth with the people who will be most involved in the initiative. The regional forums helped us map community views in different locations; the issue-specific consultations gave us a detailed view.

In some instances, the key groups and providers already had knowledge of our approach as we had already held a series of meetings with them to discuss the initiatives. For the initiatives for parents, for example, the Department of Family and Community Services had been building plans with parents groups since before the 2001–02 Budget.

In other cases, we went out to relevant groups to seek their views on community needs and how these could be better met, within broad parameters of announced initiatives. For instance, with the Department of Family and Community Services' Personal Support Programme, our consultations with service providers, peak groups and agencies helped us to actually design the programme from the ground level up.

Dialogue with relevant groups has also helped the overall design of Working Credit and helped in clarifying how we should deliver communications in relation to the programme. Similar discussions with the voluntary sector have meant that the Department of Family and Community Services can better tailor the initiative to ensure success. Pilots in selected locations have also been an important element in testing the Centrelink Personal Adviser initiative, highlighting areas for refinement and development.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations consulted with Job Network members and Community Work Coordinators on the “Helping people find jobs” initiatives. Providers were consulted on the policy details and implementation proposals contained in *Australians Working Together*. Consultations were held with Job Network providers in September 2001. They were also able to access and comment on a discussion paper on implementation arrangements which had been placed on the Department’s website. Peak groups were also consulted on the *Australians Working Together* initiatives affecting Job Network.

A discussion paper on the impact of *Australians Working Together* on the role of Community Work Coordinators was placed on the Department’s website. This paper sought views on how Community Work Coordinators might deliver new and improved services. Information sessions about the Request for Tender were held in July 2001. Feedback was helpful in developing the Request for Tender for Community Work Coordinator Services 2002.

In December 2001, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations released an Exposure Draft of the Transition to Work Request for Tender. The objective was to give prospective Transition to Work providers and other interested stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the development of Transition to Work policy and guidelines prior to the release of the final Request for Tender document. Consultation sessions in capital cities and major regional centres were held in January and early February 2002.

For the Indigenous Employment Centres (IECs), the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations held meetings around the country to discuss how IECs might work. We talked with local Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) organisations, Regional Councillors of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Job Network members, Community Work Coordinators and Area Consultative Committees as well as ATSIC and Centrelink representatives.

The consultations took place in the eight locations where CDEP organisations are participating in a Work Preparation and Employment Trial sponsored by the Department — Brisbane, Broome, Canberra, Geraldton, Newcastle, Port Augusta, Redfern and Shepparton — as well as Townsville and Darwin to gain a range of views.

To ensure we listened closely to people who will be directly affected by *Australians Working Together*, we held focus sessions with clients who currently receive income support. In focus groups of six to eight people, we talked to parents, older income support recipients, job seekers both young and mature aged, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Individuals also provided written submissions on the consultation report and participated in regional forums.

Initiative specific consultations will continue into mid 2002, for initiatives with later implementation dates. The Government intends to continue this dialogue for existing initiatives and those just commencing, such as the Department of Education, Science and Training programmes for Indigenous Australians.

3. Existing Consultative Avenues

The final way we are consulting is to use our existing channels and networks to talk with State and Territory Governments and a variety of organisations and interest groups. The diversity of channels ensures we raise the issues in as many ways as possible.

We are using current Commonwealth-State mechanisms to discuss the implementation of *Australians Working Together*. These mechanisms will be important in also addressing bigger concerns that relate to the broader welfare reform agenda.

State Community Services Ministers are establishing a joint working group with the Commonwealth on welfare reform following a briefing on *Australians Working Together* to the Ministerial Conference in August 2001. This working group will consider issues raised in the implementation phase as well as look at issues which need to be considered in the longer term.

We will also be talking to State Governments on housing and disability issues through the current negotiations for the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement. The Housing Ministers Conference has received a presentation on *Australians Working Together* and discussed relevant issues.

Outside of these broader forums, the State and Territory offices of the Departments of Family and Community Services and Employment and Workplace Relations have been discussing *Australians Working Together* with local providers and community groups.

The two Departments have also had discussions with peak groups through their existing consultative mechanisms. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations will continue to consult with stakeholders including the National Employment Services Association, the employment services provider peak body on the implementation of the package.

The Department of Family and Community Services has been talking to a range of organisations and providers, including the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Australian Early Childhood Association, Carers Association of Australia, ACROD (a national disability peak association), the National Ethnic Disability Association (NEDA), the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations, the Council on the Ageing and Volunteering Australia.

4. Learning from the Consultations

The comprehensiveness of the consultation process means we have been able to tap into the views of people in the city and the country as well as those from large welfare groups to members of small community organisations and individuals.

Not only did we learn about the issues involved in implementing *Australians Working Together*, the consultations have enabled us to reinforce our step-by-step approach to modernising the social support system.

We have retested the core ideas and concepts involved in welfare reform, continuing the process that we started when we embarked upon the reform path. We now have a strong understanding of what Australians think about a diversity of reform issues.

CHAPTER 3

Most Valued Elements of *Australians Working Together*

The consultations have highlighted that Australians support *Australians Working Together*. People believed the primary goal — to help people achieve independence through participation and assistance — was the right approach to modernising the social support system.

Individuals, service providers and welfare organisations told us they believed the package was well constructed. They liked the way that it sought a balance between providing assistance, incentives and obligations. People welcomed the way areas of government had “joined up” to deliver the package.

Many believed the priority given to different groups and the way services would be targeted to the needs of people would provide a far better way to tackle problems. Australians particularly welcomed the chance to contribute through the consultations.

Given that extensive consultations had occurred in the lead up to *Australians Working Together*, we were interested to see if any issue stood out to guide our implementation and our next steps in welfare reform.

In some cases when people supported the initiatives, they also thought extra incentives could be provided, support could be increased or extended, or the initiative could work better if some adjustments were made.

Outlined below are the concepts and the initiatives that resonated with people the most. These are the things that people saw as necessary and responsive to the problems in the social support system. They are the core elements that we will retain in the implementation of *Australians Working Together* and build on in future welfare reform.

1. Support for Key Concepts

Focus on Individual Needs

The emphasis on tailoring service to provide people with the right help at the right time was welcomed by the community. Parents and older workers warmly welcomed the introduction of Personal Advisers to help focus on peoples' actual requirements through early intervention. There was a consensus that *Australians Working Together* would help ensure people would be treated like individuals, with the focus shifted from trying to fit people into programmes to looking at their needs and circumstances.

People would no longer feel like they were identical or "a number in the system". Many groups saw targeting individual needs as a major advance in the welfare reform agenda.

People also appreciated the way the Four Pathways would tailor different types of support and assistance according to their different circumstances, skills and barriers and that people would be able to move between pathways as their circumstances or capacity change.

Joining up Governments

The community liked the way the Departments of Family and Community Services and Employment and Workplace Relations, in particular, had joined together to provide *Australians Working Together*. This partnership had also included the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and Centrelink, hence providing a breadth of vision. They also noted a need for plans for better links with State, Territory and local governments. People generally wanted to see more departments and governments working closer together. They thought this would make the system less complex for people to navigate and help avoid gaps in services.

Recognition of Social Participation

Many in the community thought the emphasis given to social participation was a great step ahead. People agreed that community activities are socially valuable in themselves, contributing and strengthening the community as well as providing pathways to part-time or full-time work.

Parents and older job seekers also liked the flexibility they had been given to choose community work as their participation activity. They said this recognised the important role that they already played through voluntary or community work. Generally, people agreed that social participation keeps people engaged in the community and is one way to prepare people to get a job. It was recognised however, that this level of participation would be different for everyone. For some, volunteering or Work for the Dole may lead to enhanced job prospects while for others, this end goal may not be possible.

Opportunity for Community and Business Partnerships

People welcomed the shift away from governments “handing down” solutions in isolation from people. They thought collaboration between governments, communities and businesses created much broader relationships that would lead to far better solutions to problems.

The community participation agreements for Indigenous people, for instance, were welcomed because they enabled solutions at the local level. Groups thought the community’s extensive involvement in building the Personal Support Programme meant it would lead to services being delivered far more effectively, based on what was possible at the ground level. Those living in regional, rural and remote areas, particularly, saw local partnerships as essential to generating local employment opportunities and strengthening local communities.

Balance of Obligations, Assistance and Incentives

The community saw that we had tried hard to strike a balance of obligations, assistance and incentives in *Australians Working Together*. They liked the way the participation requirements were based on the needs of different groups and that they were timed so that assistance would be available before obligations cut in. For instance, parents will be able to access Personal Advisers in September 2002, well before the participation requirements start to apply for those with high school aged children in July 2003.

Much of the discussions centred on making sure the design and administration of participation requirements were flexible enough to take account of special circumstances. Where the participation requirements were being extended, people wanted a cautious and flexible approach adopted. There was universal support for improved incentives and financial assistance such as the Working Credit, Training Credit, and Literacy and Numeracy Supplement.

Meeting the Needs of Special Groups

The community supported the priority which *Australians Working Together* gave to some groups of people. They saw that these groups — parents, people with disabilities, mature age workers and Indigenous people — had different characteristics and needs that warranted additional attention. They suggested the same approach could be extended to other groups, such as youth and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Some parents, for instance, returned to work after substantial periods out of the workforce. People with disabilities face special barriers to finding jobs. Older workers needed to update their skills for new jobs in a modern workplace, while Indigenous people often started out with a lower level of education when looking for a job. People saw that the Government’s targeted approach helped to tailor the programmes in real ways to the needs of people in these situations.

THE FOUR PATHWAYS

Australians Working Together provides four pathways along which people can move to achieve independence. People may access different levels of assistance in different pathways as their circumstances change.

Job Search Support

A pathway for the job ready.

- Job Search Assistance
- Job Search Training
- Training Credit
- Work for the Dole
- Community Work
- Passport to Employment
- Indigenous Employment Centres

Intensive Support

A pathway for people at risk of long-term unemployment.

- Intensive Assistance
- Literacy and Numeracy Training
- Training Credit
- Personal Support Programme

Community Participation

A pathway for people with severe or multiple barriers who may not benefit from employment services.

- Personal Support Programme

Transitional Support

A pathway for parents and older job seekers returning to the workforce, who may have spent long periods on income support and need help updating their skills.

- Transition to Work services
- Assistance to help parents return to work
- Assistance for mature age workers

Paid employment or
community participation

2. Support for Key Initiatives

Working Credit

The Working Credit was received enthusiastically by the community, with people seeing the initiative as a major step forward in creating a more active income support system. Many thought the current system is hard to understand and its income testing rules create a major disincentive to work because people are scared of losing their payments or benefits or incurring debt.

Under Working Credit, people who earn income of less than \$48 a fortnight will be able to accumulate up to \$1,000 in their Working Credit. When they get a job, their income support payments can only start to reduce once their earnings have reached the amount they have built up in their Working Credit. People believed this would genuinely encourage people to actively take up work — full-time, casual or occasional work — as it came along.

The Working Credit was very popular among parents, who thought it would make it easier to move back into work. People liked the fact the Working Credit would enable them to easily reclaim their income support after finishing a brief stint at work. They also thought it would help cover some of the costs involved in starting a new job.

Some thought the Working Credit accumulation rate should be higher than \$48 a fortnight, although they also recognised that a substantial amount is being invested in the initiative. More than \$506 million is being devoted to Working Credit, almost a third of total funding for *Australians Working Together*.

Personal Support Programme

People welcomed the introduction of the Personal Support Programme (PSP) as a way to help the community's most vulnerable people to overcome their personal barriers to work. PSP replaces the Community Support Programme and aims to help people with severe and multiple personal obstacles to employment, such as drug addiction, mental illness and homelessness.

Community groups and service providers believed PSP would provide help that was far more appropriate for the difficulties that vulnerable people faced. Many people regarded the introduction of the programme as a sign the social support system would not fail them if they faced special difficulties. Some expressed concerns about a compulsory programme for some parts of this vulnerable group.

People were pleased at the way the programme emphasised a person's special needs and focused on stabilising personal circumstances. The incentives to encourage providers to help people improve their participation were seen to be an important step in keeping vulnerable people 'connected' with the community. Many welcomed the way Intensive Support and PSP providers will be able to work together to provide better support for people leaving PSP. There was consensus that this would give people a better chance to successfully make the transition from income support to work.

Personal Advisers

Most people strongly supported the introduction of Centrelink Personal Advisers, who will be providing more individualised help to eligible mature age workers, parents with school age children, Indigenous Australians and people with special needs.

The funding for new Personal Advisers will enable Centrelink to provide more individualised assessments of the needs and capabilities of disadvantaged people. This will build on Centrelink's capacity to refer people to the right services and assistance, to move into a job or get involved in the community, as well as access the right form of income support. While welcoming the initiative, some groups also thought they wanted to see access to Personal Advisers extended to cover more people receiving income support. Some also had the view that the Personal Advisers would have case loads that would be too high to manage.

Training Credit

People believed the Training Credit was a great way to provide training and to increase a person's capacity to take up job opportunities. Training Credits of up to the value of \$800 per person will be available to help eligible job seekers to gain work-related skills. While many thought the Training Credit should be extended and some noted that accredited training is not always available, they liked the way the initiative was targeted.

There were two main elements highlighted. First, job seekers who are participating in Work for the Dole or community work will be able to access the Training Credit. People saw this would help these people gain training on top of their work experience — a reward for their participation. And second, mature age and Indigenous job seekers will be eligible for the Training Credit. The community said this would help provide new skills for people who face extra difficulties in getting a job.

There was a general view, particularly in regional areas, that Work for the Dole helped keep unemployed people engaged while also giving something back to the community. In these communities, people were supportive of the extra Work for the Dole places provided in *Australians Working Together*.

Literacy and Numeracy Supplement

Similarly, the community liked the Literacy and Numeracy Supplement and wanted to see the initiative increased or extended. What they liked most was the recognition that people should be assisted to undertake this training and that undertaking training entailed increased costs for individuals.

Under *Australians Working Together*, those undertaking accredited literacy and numeracy training will be eligible for a fortnightly supplement of \$20.80 to help meet incidental costs involved, such as travelling to the courses. People are not charged for the cost of funded literacy and numeracy courses.

Transition to Work Services

Transition to Work, the main plank of the Transitional pathway, was positively received by the community. Transition to Work brings together a range of individual and flexible assistance to help parents, carers and mature age people over 50 years who are looking for paid employment or planning to join or re-join the workforce and have been out of the workforce for two or more consecutive years. Transition to Work is a voluntary programme and helps people whether or not they are receiving income support.

People particularly liked the idea that these services will help people regardless of their income support. The flexibility of the services in providing individualised assistance and access to a range of personal and work related skills development activities was also appreciated.

CHAPTER 4

Community Suggestions for Better Implementation

We undertook the community consultations so that we could gain practical advice from people at the grass roots on how *Australians Working Together* can be best implemented.

People have highlighted the strengths of the package — the places where they thought the initiatives were working best. They have also provided us with useful suggestions on how to help us implement the initiatives to ensure a better introduction of the package.

Many of the issues raised by people centred on the assistance and requirements being introduced and how they could be better implemented. We are now incorporating these issues in the design of the *Australians Working Together* legislation and as part of the policies and procedures.

Outlined below are twelve areas where the community has helped us to better implement *Australians Working Together* — these incorporate a combination of different initiatives and the way they apply to different client groups. The examples demonstrate how we are listening to the community and adjusting our approach through the fine detail of the package.

There were many other suggestions made in community forums and submissions that departments are also taking into account as they are implementing AWT initiatives.

Some of the issues raised by people went far beyond the scope of the initial *Australians Working Together* initiatives and can only be addressed in the longer term. These aspects are discussed in Chapter 5.

1. Working Credit

Means test rules for income support payments are complicated but ensure that payments go to those who are most in need. People liked the general design of the Working Credit initiative once it was clearly explained to them but told us they wanted to make sure it was communicated very clearly to income support customers. Organisations were concerned that if customers could not understand the initiative, they would not take advantage of it. Apart from wanting us to explain the Working Credit in plain English, people also pointed to the needs of Indigenous and multicultural customers.

We are considering all of these comments in how we design and deliver the communications for Working Credit. Our overarching communications strategy is identifying how best to explain the initiative to different customers and how to get information to the target customer groups.

Information on the Working Credit will be written in simple terms, taking into account different literacy levels and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We are developing practical examples to show how the Working Credit would help people in different circumstances. We are also making sure the Working Credit's complementary incentives and assistance are explained clearly. There will be a strong emphasis on one-on-one explanations to customers.

Even though Working Credit is simple in concept, it is complex in detail because it covers such a range of payments and diversity of individual circumstances. In designing the initiative, we took into account community views about the complexity of income testing and simplified the rules for measuring employment income for workforce-age pensioners and parents under Working Credit.

In the consultations, people were also keen to have as many alternative ways as possible to report their income, as they were worried they would incur debts if they received incorrect payments. People wanted to easily keep track of their Working Credit balance. Centrelink will be closely working with customers and community organisations to address these needs.

To properly take all these issues on board, we have decided to delay the implementation of the Working Credit initiative from September 2002 until 28 April 2003. As Working Credit has the potential to affect most people on workforce-age income support payments (up to two and a half million people), we have to get it right.

With the new rules for measuring employment income, customer reporting requirements will be tailored to the person's pattern of earnings. This means that some people with variable earnings may need to report their income more frequently than they do now. Centrelink will be introducing automated telephone systems and use of the Internet to make it easier for many customers to report employment income and access information, including Working Credit balances.

We chose April 2003 as the implementation date quite deliberately. We have avoided putting in the new rules and technologies over Christmas and Easter, when customers have enough to worry about without having to learn new technologies or new reporting rules. This date means that customers have extra time to learn the new technologies before any change to their income reporting pattern. It also gives Centrelink the opportunity to trial the new technologies with a small group of customers (students) before making the technologies more widely available to many thousands of customers.

2. People With Disabilities

The community welcomed the priority given to people with disabilities, including the extra opportunities provided in education, training and employment. They liked the focus on abilities not disabilities. Peak groups also raised the question of availability of support services in some areas.

In developing early intervention and better assessment, we consulted closely with a range of peak groups and service providers and incorporated their views in the way we designed the measure. Some groups did not want the changes to exclude information on work capacity coming from doctors who are treating a person. Other agencies thought doctors were not always best placed to assess a person's work capacity and said not all people with disabilities have a regular treating doctor.

In response to these comments, we have developed a holistic approach to work capacity assessment, where a range of professionals will provide assessments, including rehabilitation counsellors, occupational therapists and physiotherapists as well as treating doctors who will continue to supply medical information but not be required to comment on a person's capacity to work. The Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners support this approach.

Another way we are listening to the community is in looking at the question of job opportunities for people with disabilities. Many peak organisations said employers were often not aware of what people with disabilities could do, or of the assistance that was available to them. They said the attitude of employers made it difficult for people with disabilities to find work.

From our earlier talks with peak employer groups we were aware of this issue. We intend to review the programmes that provide incentives to businesses with the aim of providing better encouragement and support to employ people with disabilities.

3. Helping People Find Jobs

The community appreciated the extra places being provided under *Australians Working Together* to help jobseekers move into jobs, education and training. People strongly supported the belief that getting a job was the best way for people to achieve independence.

In the package, we will be expanding Job Search Training, Work for the Dole and Literacy and Numeracy Training places. Training Credits will be available to some job seekers and a Transition to Work Programme introduced.

Many people wanted to see job creation as a focus of government action. However, as Minister Abbott has noted, artificial job creation schemes have been tried and failed in the past. We believe the best solution to generate jobs for the long term is through building a strong economy. High economic growth over past years has resulted in more than 900,000 extra jobs since March 1996.

Many regional communities wanted to see much of the assistance expanded, such as more places for Work for the Dole — beyond the 16,500 extra places announced — and increased access to the Training Credit. Many in the community also wanted to see greater attention to the needs of mature age job seekers and regional unemployment; these are discussed in Chapter 5.

While some in the community expressed concern about the term Work for the Dole, others supported the programme and welcomed its enhancement through the Passport to Employment, which will be available to those who successfully participate in Work for the Dole and Community Work.

Welfare groups and providers wanted greater flexibility in the Intensive Assistance given to job seekers to help them into jobs. People welcomed the way Intensive Assistance providers will be able to help refer job seekers to other programmes (such as Work for the Dole, Literacy and Numeracy Training and the Personal Support Programme) that are needed to address individual barriers before they can benefit from Intensive Assistance.

Some questioned if the four-week period for assessing whether a job seeker should be referred to one of these programmes would be long enough. We are now introducing greater flexibility to the Intensive Assistance assessment period to take account of individual circumstances. We have also listened to providers and adjusted the timing of payments for these assessments.

We are also taking up community suggestions in establishing the new Indigenous Employment Centres. The centres will provide extra help to up to 10,000 Indigenous Australians to get a job, making sure they also receive the full benefit of other employment services.

4. Parents

The community was positive about our plans to provide special services and assistance to help parents to return to work. Generally, parents and parent groups thought *Australians Working Together* was recognising the additional barriers to work faced by parents who are busy bringing up their children.

Under the package, parents will be given more intensive support to help them return to work and access to services to improve their skills. Centrelink Personal Advisers will assess their needs as well as encourage and help them to plan and prepare for a return to work and improve access to child care fees assistance and more places for outside school hours care. Transition to Work services will help parents move into employment by providing individualised assistance, access to training and skills development activities and support services.

Parents want practical, easy-to-understand information on everything from childcare and local employment services, to financial advice and a range of job seeking issues. We are now tailoring the design and contents of the *Participation Pack* according to what parents and parent groups have told us. The design process will include collaboration with parents to ensure the language and design of each part of the pack is simple and relevant.

Another issue important to parents was ensuring that individual circumstances were taken into account when designing assistance and applying the new participation requirements. Overall, most people believed the participation requirements were a good idea — some people including those in focus groups wanted the requirements to be stronger and to start earlier. At the same time, they did not want to see the importance of parenting devalued.

Parents with very young children have no participation requirements. Parents whose youngest child turns six will need to attend an annual interview with a Centrelink Personal Adviser. During this interview parents and Personal Advisers will discuss work readiness options and work out a plan that suits the individual's needs and personal circumstances.

Parents whose youngest child is aged between 13 and 15 years will be required to undertake a part-time activity to help prepare them to find work. Such activities may include part-time paid work, community work, study or training for around six hours per week (150 hours over six months). Participation hours are bankable and can be reduced if parents face very difficult circumstances.

Parent groups advised caution in setting requirements too harshly so as to avoid unintended impacts on families — particularly children.

Parents wanted to see flexibility in the participation requirements so that they could cope with any unplanned changes in family caring responsibilities, such as illness or children’s behavioural problems. They wanted Centrelink to take extra steps to prevent any penalties arising. Parent groups and some welfare groups questioned the need for penalties like the Newstart breach model, suggesting a different approach might prove more encouraging to parents.

We are taking on board these comments by building protection into the *Australians Working Together* legislation to ensure participation requirements are tailored to people’s individual needs and circumstances. The legislation supports the need for real negotiation with the parent before including any particular activities in a participation agreement.

We are also responding by designing the legislation so that the circumstances of individuals must be taken into account before a penalty is considered. Parents will also have the opportunity to quickly resolve penalties so payments can be restored to normal and fully back-paid. Centrelink staff will be empowered to administer the rules flexibly and fairly. Each Centrelink staff member will be supported through effective training, including cross-cultural training. In addition, Centrelink Personal Advisers will be supported by an ongoing mentoring relationship with senior staff members.

5. The Most Vulnerable

We set out to create a new programme for vulnerable people to ensure they could receive the level of help they needed. Almost all aspects of the new Personal Support Programme (PSP) were designed with the community through a staged consultation process. The consultation process — and how community views were integrated in programme design — is outlined below.

We conducted a series of PSP discussions in 47 locations across Australia, with most held in tandem with the *Australians Working Together* regional forums. The discussions were attended by hundreds of participants including providers from the existing Community Support Programme, Job Network and community service providers, State and Territory agencies, and the peak groups for homelessness, drug and alcohol dependency, and mental illness.

In the early discussions, participants guided us to develop a broader understanding of the programme potential — the major problems, who should use the new programme and in what direction it needed to head. As the discussions proceeded, participants went into issues in greater depth. We gained a plethora of ideas on how to meet the many challenges involved. A discussion in Gympie, for instance, proposed the broad selection criteria we should use. These were subsequently discussed, reinforced and expanded. A design paper was also posted on the website allowing further input.

Some of those involved in the consultations were concerned that compelling people to take part in the Personal Support Programme could have an impact on the relationship between the provider and the participant, and hence on their involvement in the programme. They have helped us to develop an appropriate compliance system that recognises circumstances and re-engages people when they are faced with difficult personal problems.

Groups were also concerned about the availability of support services for clients, particularly in regional and remote areas where vital assistance such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation services and mental health services are not readily available. We have used this to start a dialogue with the States about the availability of support services.

In the short term, we have designed the selection process for service providers to reflect what can be realistically achieved on the ground. We will be selecting providers who have service delivery models that take account of regional variations. They must have very good links with other agencies and a strong understanding of the local areas involved.

After a design for PSP was developed, we road tested the programme design with a cross section of specialist providers and groups: small, large, city, rural and regional. These meetings confirmed that, while some organisations had different views on aspects of design, they agreed with the direction of the programme.

We agreed that PSP will be a programme that is based on continuous improvement and open processes. We will be establishing a Reference Group to ensure ongoing community involvement and help us meet new challenges as they arise.

6. Indigenous Issues

Initiatives in *Australians Working Together* targeting Indigenous people were generally well received, especially those concerning Community Participation Agreements, Indigenous Employment Centres, and better service delivery for Indigenous Australians.

Implementation was a key concern for many people. While supporting the initiatives in principle, the community wanted to be assured that the package would be delivered in ways which are culturally appropriate and meet the real needs of Indigenous communities.

We are consulting on all of the individual Indigenous initiatives to draw on community expertise in working out how best to deliver them on the ground. We have also conducted focus groups on the package as a whole with Indigenous jobless people so we can see it through their eyes and shape it to meet their needs.

The Community Participation initiative will ask indigenous communities to identify practical ways people who are receiving income support can contribute to their families and communities. ATSIC is implementing the initiative and has commenced a process of consultation with Indigenous communities and organisations to develop policy details.

Indigenous Employment Centres (IECs) are designed to build a bridge to mainstream employment for Indigenous people. They will provide extra help to up to 10,000 Indigenous Australians to get a job, making sure they receive the full benefit of other employment services.

In developing this initiative, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations talked with local Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) organisations, Regional Councillors of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Job Network members, Community Work Coordinators and Area Consultative Committees as well as ATSIC and Centrelink representatives in the areas where centres might be set up.

The community consultations on the IECs have been important in developing our policy framework for the IECs as well as their operational arrangements.

The IECs will focus on achieving employment outcomes for participants. The consultations recognise that the IECs and Job Network providers will need to work closely together to achieve good outcomes. This will be reflected in their contracts as well as in procedures which will be simple to administer.

Consultation with Indigenous groups and individuals has informed the development of the new Personnel Support Programme. In these discussions, concern was raised about a number of indigenous service delivery issues such as the appropriateness of current assessment methods. To address these the Personal Support Programme will provide additional funding to develop pilots and services that cater specifically for Indigenous people in rural, remote and metropolitan areas. Many Indigenous communities will also benefit from additional funding for translator services and support for people living in remote areas allocated in the Personnel Support Programme.

Centrelink is expanding its services to remote communities with 12 remote area servicing centres employing local staff (by 2004–05) and has commenced consultations on its approach to implementing this initiative.

Communication was a key issue. A “one-size fits all” approach to communication will not work for Indigenous communities. There were suggestions to use local and Indigenous media to broadcast messages about the *Australians Working Together* and calls to keep written material to a minimum (for example, use posters and bulletin boards to spread the message).

We will take on board all of these comments in how we design and deliver the communications for *Australians Working Together*.

7. Community and Voluntary Work

The opportunities for people to undertake community activities, and the capacity for community and welfare organisations to find places for them, were popular themes in the regional forums and the written submissions. Most supported the idea of people undertaking community and voluntary work as a way of meeting their activity requirements. The funding for Community Work Coordinators to assist 35,000 job seekers with community work placements was well received together with Training Credits and the Passport to Employment.

Many groups pointed to the cost involved in individuals taking part in volunteering or community work, such as transport costs. The Government has already recognised these costs through funding we provide for organisations with volunteers all over Australia in virtually every sector. Many have a policy of using some of these funds to assist volunteers with out-of-pocket expenses. Those undertaking Work for the Dole already receive a financial supplement of \$20.80 a fortnight and a number of people suggested that people participating in community work placements should also be paid this supplement.

A number of submissions expressed concern about the impact of compulsory volunteering on organisations, saying it could interfere with the core work of charities or destroy the ethic of volunteering. We are conscious of this concern and have confirmed that no person will be compelled to undertake voluntary work and no organisation will be compelled to take volunteers. Organisations and individuals will be able to choose whether they wish to participate.

Another issue raised by many people related to the capacity and resourcing of organisations so that they can cater for extra volunteers. The Government is providing \$124 million over four years through the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to build community capacity and leadership. We are already seeing how well this works in a project in Beenleigh (Queensland) where childcare for Work for the Dole participants is provided by volunteers. Volunteers and Work for the Dole participants are both meeting activity requirements and gaining skills to help them find employment.

In addition, \$4.9 million over four years has been allocated to build capacity in the voluntary sector and to increase quality volunteer and community work opportunities for people on income support to assist them to meet their participation requirements. This includes expanding and refocussing the Voluntary Work Initiative to cater for new volunteers.

8. Capacity of Centrelink

The role of Centrelink in the income support system is vital. The community wanted to be reassured that Centrelink will have the capacity to successfully act as the gateway to the social support system as envisaged in *Australians Working Together*.

Centrelink has in place the foundations to implement welfare reform, but Centrelink will also be making changes to the way it does business to ensure the package is delivered effectively. We have provided substantial resources under *Australians Working Together* to enable Centrelink to play its new and expanded role in welfare reform.

Centrelink is gearing up for its new charter, developing implementation processes and plans to deliver the package effectively, and enhancing its information technology capacities. Monitoring and evaluation are being built into implementation to ensure continuous improvement.

The Government has brought forward funding from 2002–03 to this year to help Centrelink undertake essential training, build information technology capacity, and design service delivery so that it is well prepared for the implementation of all *Australian Working Together* initiatives.

One of the key issues the community raised was the quality of customer service provided by staff. Centrelink will be investing strongly in its people as a result of *Australians Working Together*.

All staff will receive training in Centrelink's new role, emphasising the focus of *Australians Working Together* on active engagement in economic and social participation. Staff will be given better skills to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups and provide services in an individually tailored way.

The community was supportive of the new Personal Advisers, but wanted to make sure they would be empathetic to different clients and have the right training. They also wanted to ensure their caseloads would not be too high.

Centrelink will be carefully selecting and recruiting the right people for the Personal Adviser role, using both internal and external recruitment. The recruitment will reflect the diversity of the customer groups. The Personal Advisers will receive extensive training in building effective relationships with customers and specific training for their role, including cross-cultural training.

Personal Advisers will have access to specialists such as, social workers and occupational psychologists, and will be expected to work closely with external experts and providers in the local community.

9. Breaching

People generally supported breaching as a compliance tool where job seekers knowingly failed to attend an interview or participate in an activity, without a reasonable excuse. Some people suggested that Centrelink's current approach does not take sufficient account of individual circumstances and that people do not know enough about the rules they are expected to follow.

Australians Working Together initiatives will reduce the impact of breaching on disadvantaged jobseekers while moving towards a compliance system that encourages and rewards participation. The Personal Support Programme will provide early intervention for the more disadvantaged jobseekers, and people will be able to have breaches waived on commencing the programme.

We have taken on board community concerns in the design of the *Australians Working Together* legislation and the policy procedures that are being developed around breaching for parents. We are building protection into the legislation so that the circumstances of individuals must be taken into account before breaching occurs and we are working to ensure Centrelink staff are empowered to administer the rules flexibly and fairly.

Centrelink is introducing measures to enable staff to make better decisions and to ensure that breaches take into account a person's individual circumstances. Training will be improved to ensure staff are aware of issues surrounding homelessness and where customers may be at risk. Centrelink will give people every opportunity to disclose any factors that might make it difficult for them to meet requirements.

Centrelink is also developing tools that can bring all relevant pieces of information together so that they can better identify customers at risk of being breached. It will conduct special pre-grant seminars for those at risk, and is reviewing all communications to clarify and reinforce important messages. It will also conduct trials on ways to improve its ability to contact customers with pending breach recommendations.

The community was particularly concerned about the breaching of 'at risk' young job seekers. Centrelink is introducing more flexible procedural guidelines for 'at risk' job seekers under the age of 18 to assist staff to identify young disadvantaged job seekers. Staff will identify barriers to education, training and employment and work with young clients to address them.

Multicultural groups wanted to ensure that cultural needs would be taken into account when people are meeting their participation requirements. Centrelink will be flexible in its administration of the activity test when dealing with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We are already looking at ways to address any unintended impact of breach penalties. Centrelink's 'third breach alert project' reinforces the need for staff to consult with specialist officers, such as a social worker or an occupational psychologist, where underlying personal circumstances may be responsible for non-compliance. Centrelink has also commenced a pilot project to test different interventions for people with a history of being breached.

Many of the recommendations of Centrelink's review of administrative processes and guidelines relating to breaching involve measures to ensure that customers who find it difficult to comply with their obligations are not disadvantaged. It is now implementing those recommendations.

10. Communications

The community told us that effective communications were vitally important to people understanding *Australians Working Together*. Most said that a "one-size-fits all" approach would not work — information needed to be tailored to the various needs of people on income support, taking into account individual differences in (for example) age, location, literacy, preferred communication styles and media, language and culture.

We are taking up these issues in how we communicate *Australians Working Together*. Our communications strategy is identifying ways to work with these differences so that we can clearly explain how the package will affect all those who stand to benefit from it.

The information materials will be written in plain English and complex measures or concepts such as the Working Credit will be explained through easy-to-understand guides. They will outline the assistance and incentives available to help people to participate through employment or community work, as well as explain the participation requirements that might apply.

Different messages have been developed so that information is tailored for the needs of all people. The design, format, and language of the communications will also vary when this is appropriate. People wanted to see information targeted in more appropriate ways to people with different language needs, literacy levels or cultural perceptions.

Peak groups, for instance, suggested that we should keep written material to a minimum when communicating the package to Indigenous communities. Ideally, Indigenous people should write the information in language that Indigenous people will understand. Community groups also favoured using local media to broadcast messages and to provide posters with simple messages where possible. We will be guided by these suggestions in our communication to Indigenous people.

We will be distributing information about *Australians Working Together* so that it reaches people from diverse cultural groups. Statistics are being gathered from several sources such as the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and Centrelink to identify the numbers of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in different geographic areas. Centrelink provides information to people in a variety of ways. The Centrelink web site contains information in 41 languages and Centrelink makes frequent use of SBS radio to access audiences from different backgrounds.

11. Youth

The consultations found the community believed that *Australians Working Together* had neglected to target the needs of young people because the description of the initiatives did not highlight youth as a group.

Young people do, of course, form part of many groups specifically targeted in *Australians Working Together*. They will have access to the same resources as other members of these key target groups.

Young people seeking paid employment will benefit from the employment services initiatives contained in *Australians Working Together*. From 1 July 2002 they will have access to more places in Job Search Training and where eligible Training Credits in Work for the Dole and community work.

Centrelink is developing a plan to ensure that the specific individual needs of young people are reflected in its service delivery strategies for *Australians Working Together* and that young people are recognised as having different needs and perspective's than other customer groups.

Australians Working Together is only one element of the Government's strategy to help young people. The Government has provided major investment in youth over the last few years including the introduction of Youth Allowance, the Reconnect program and funding for New Apprenticeships, Work for the Dole and Job Network program places. Also important have been Government initiatives in education and training, particularly the national focus on the foundation of skills of literacy and numeracy, and initiatives designed to help more young people complete Year 12 or its vocational equivalent.

The Government is committed to a holistic approach that recognises the links between health, family and education for young people and the critical importance of the transition between education and employment.

In last year's Budget, at the same time as *Australians Working Together*, the Government announced more funding for youth through the newly established Enterprise and Career Education Foundation so it can expand coverage of its Work Placement Coordinator arrangements into remote parts of central and northern Australia. It provided \$3.6 million in 2002 to pilot the provision of around 30 career and transition advisers to work with schools, local communities, young people and their families, and another \$6.4 million to provide a once only payment to young people exiting State care. Mentoring opportunities for young people were also expanded through the development of the Mentor Marketplace.

The Government is providing long-term continuity for the highly successful youth transition programmes — Job Placement, Employment and Training Programme and the Jobs Pathway Programmes.

The Government is also conducting Collaborative Youth Services Trials to focus on better linkages between the wide range of services from different agencies that target disconnected young people or those at risk. Priority groups will include homeless young people, those with poor literacy, or those who are in contact with the juvenile justice system.

12. Multicultural groups

The community noted that people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds were not identified as a target group in the *Australians Working Together* package. However, people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds will benefit from the strategy of individualised service delivery, which is fundamental to *Australians Working Together*. People will be able to access the same flexible services as other groups in the community and those services will be delivered in ways which take account of their individual needs and characteristics.

AWT initiatives particularly relevant to job seekers of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds include literacy and numeracy training places provided through Intensive Support in Job Network as well as the \$20.80 per fortnight Literacy and Numeracy supplement. The supplement will assist people on income support meet incidental costs (such as travel) incurred when attending approved literacy and numeracy training to improve their skills as part of their plan to enter the workforce.

Other AWT initiatives will benefit people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as other jobless people. If they are parents, they will have access to the Centrelink Personal Advisers to gain more individualised support. If they have disabilities, then they will benefit from extra support, early intervention and assessment of people with disabilities.

Community representatives also wanted to see clear communication of *Australians Working Together* to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We are taking up this issue through the communications strategy for the package, where we will be making sure information materials are tailored for diverse needs.

The Multicultural Service Officers in Centrelink will be helping clients to access services and assistance under *Australians Working Together*. Centrelink also provides regular interpreter services for clients when they have language or cultural needs and has a national multilingual call centre service. Funding for interpreters has increased as a result of *Australians Working Together*. For example, the Personal Support Programme will be funding service groups so that they can provide translation and interpreter services to vulnerable people from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Written information on Job Network and services provided is available in 20 languages. Job seekers are able to access interpreter services through the Translating and Interpreting Service provided by the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

We are also planning to monitor and evaluate the take up of *Australians Working Together* by people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to guide our implementation of the package and our future welfare reform steps.

Looking to the Long Term

One of the most important benefits of the *Australians Working Together* consultations was the way the community pointed to a range of issues that need to be considered in the agenda for future welfare reform.

Australians Working Together was always designed to be the first stage of the reform process. We were deliberately cautious on the extent of change that can be taken in the first phase, so that initiatives could be implemented effectively.

The consultations showed that people supported the direction of the reform process and the major initiatives in *Australians Working Together*. They gave us advice and suggestions on how to ensure smooth implementation.

But people also raised more complex obstacles to their social and economic participation in local communities, such as the availability of services, the integration of government service delivery, the barriers to regional employment, and the level of community capacity.

These issues do not only relate to the implementation of *Australians Working Together* or only to welfare reform — they are broader social issues relevant to all Australians. These are issues that have emerged over time, and will take time to bring about longer term change. They require attention by the social coalition and all levels of government. Undoubtedly, they reinforce the need to continue with our goal to modernise the social support system.

The Prime Minister has outlined the following principles to guide the next stages of welfare reform:

- a commitment to making up-front investments that will deliver returns to taxpayers in the long term as people move from welfare dependence to economic and social participation;
- a commitment to working in consultation with the community, through the Consultative Forum; and
- an undertaking that nobody's benefit will be cut as a result of changes in the benefit system.

Our task now is to look at how we can address some of the longer term problems within the social support system. Reform is complex and will need further consultation and development over this time.

Outlined below are some of the key areas that were identified by the community in the consultation process.

1. Improving Housing and Transport

The community identified access to affordable housing and transport as keys to people being able to participate in community and working life. People saw employment, housing and transport as tightly linked — problems with one-dimension impacts upon the others.

People highlighted the “Catch 22” that often constrained their attempts to find work. When affordable housing was available, it was often located too far away from jobs. People either had to move or travel long distances if they wanted employment. Transport was a problem because it was inadequate, unavailable or too expensive. These problems were exacerbated in rural and remote areas and some outer suburban regions.

We will be taking our first steps in this area by bringing forward the issues raised in the consultations during discussions with the States and Territories over the next Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, which will occur this year. Issues about rental assistance will be taken into account in considering a simplified benefit system.

We will also be looking for opportunities to join up efforts with other areas of Government and in particular, to look at better linkages with the regional programmes and services of the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

We will refocus the communities elements of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to give more emphasis to projects which help to address locally identified barriers to participation.

A good example of this in practice is the Hunter Housing Maintenance Employment Training Project which provides training and employment for jobless and community housing tenants. The project is establishing a community organisation to tender competitively for maintenance and other contracts with the Department of Housing, the Local Council and the Roads and Traffic Authority. The project also provides training to allow participants to work towards nationally endorsed qualifications.

2. Governments Working Smarter

The community liked the way we “joined up” the activities of separate Commonwealth Government departments to develop *Australians Working Together*. Most wanted to see that level of cooperation and integration of services happening between the Commonwealth and States, to make better linkages between its programmes. Whilst there are some striking examples of positive cooperation by Commonwealth and State and Territory departments, we need to encourage this to happen more broadly.

One area for action is for the Commonwealth Government itself to improve our integration of services in implementing *Australians Working Together*. This is a priority for the third term. We are beginning work on creating better linkages between the Departments of Family and Community Services; Employment and Workplace Relations; Education, Science and Training; Transport and Regional Services; Health and Ageing; Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, and Centrelink.

We will also be using our existing frameworks and agreements to look at ways to remove barriers to participation with States, Territories and local governments. The Department of Family and Community Services, especially through its State and Territory Offices, will continue to have a role to play.

This will also involve raising *Australians Working Together* issues at the Ministerial level through a number of ministerial councils and through negotiations on Commonwealth and State agreements. We are establishing a Commonwealth-State working group through the Community Services Ministerial Advisory Group to consider issues raised in implementing *Australians Working Together* and to look at issues which need to be considered in the longer term.

3. Strengthening the Social Partnership with Business

The capacity for local communities to provide employment and community work opportunities were strong themes in the regional forums and the written submissions. People liked the concept of a partnership between government, business and community and thought it was critical to the success of *Australians Working Together*.

The community believed the engagement of business was essential to longer term reform. They highlighted the need to focus on building stronger communities and partnerships with business that generated local employment opportunities, and on opening up broader opportunities through industry — in terms that business would understand.

People thought the Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnership had a role in talking to larger businesses, but they wanted to see a far higher level of business engagement, particularly among smaller and medium-sized businesses. They said that these businesses needed to know how to become engaged, and to know what help and incentives were available to them. As a response to this the Department of Family and Community Services will broaden the Government’s business engagement strategy to include welfare reform. This will add to the work already being undertaken by the Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnership and the involvement of Department of Transport and Regional Services who have the responsibility for Area Consultative Committees and Regional Assistance Programmes. These themes also reflected the broad thrust of the McClure report’s focus on building community and business partnerships.

The Government’s Stronger Families and Communities Strategy is helping communities to address local barriers by supporting local solutions to the problem. We will be refocussing the community element of the Strategy and improving links with business so that it better reflects the objectives of *Australians Working Together*, helping to create participation opportunities at the local level.

Through the Strategy’s guidelines and priorities, we will favour the development of local projects that give more emphasis to giving jobless people participation opportunities. Businesses can provide significant opportunities by understanding and working closely with their local communities.

The Prime Minister’s Community Business Partnership has laid the foundations for creating a stronger social coalition and it will be continuing its role in engaging the support of business.

We will be looking at opening dialogue on a broader front throughout the business community to consider other forums and channels for engaging business at the levels envisaged in *Australians Working Together*. We will be talking to business peak organisations and enterprises at the local level to encourage them to increase economic and social participation opportunities for all Australians.

4. Building Community Capacity

The importance of stronger communities was raised in many of the Regional Forums and some written submissions.

Some communities, particularly those facing locational disadvantage, were concerned about their capacity to implement initiatives under *Australians Working Together*. They told us they lacked local expertise to implement the measures and didn't have the right infrastructure or resources in place to support the package. In many communities they also reported competitiveness between local providers and a resistance to assisting or employing people from neighbouring towns or regions.

While recognising *Australians Working Together* seeks to address systemic issues, they advised us that local solutions were needed. There needed to be more information sharing, more cooperation and partnership and improved understanding of locational issues when determining levels of Government support. They called for the 'skilling up' of members of the local communities.

Many of these issues are being addressed as part of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. The Strategy recognises that strong communities have strong leadership; skills and knowledge; expanding partnerships between public and private sectors; and a solid committed core of volunteers. It aims to strengthen community networks particularly in regional and rural Australia. It will build community capacities to find local solutions to local problems by encouraging potential community leaders and promoting voluntary work. One way the Government has already assisted is by providing \$4.9 million over four years to build capacity in the voluntary sector.

As we acknowledged earlier, the Government also recognises the need for a more "joined up" approach in the delivery of its services. We will be seeking to make good links between the services of all Commonwealth Departments working with regional communities.

Governments do not have all the answers and they cannot solve every social problem alone. The strategy is about increasing the personal and collective resources of individuals and communities to develop the skills and capacities they need to respond to challenges and to seize opportunities that come their way. The most effective solutions always come from the ground up because they are owned and used by the communities who need them.

To date the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy has approved over 300 projects across Australia from all States and Territories. But this is an area for long term investment to achieve long term results.

5. Building Stronger Regions

The regional consultations made it very clear that the impact of *Australians Working Together* in specific places would be affected by local circumstances. Issues ranged from the lack of opportunities for young people, lack of service providers and increased participation costs due to the lack of community capacity and communication infrastructure.

Jobs were a major concern, in particular the ability of youth and older people to find jobs, the problems associated with having to apply for jobs with a limited number of employers and the problems faced by small business in just trying to survive. They wanted to see more attention to generating employment and for business to play a larger role.

Many of the programmes in *Australians Working Together* will be of particular relevance to regional areas where employment and social participation opportunities are limited. For example, the Working Credit will assist rural workers who get seasonal jobs, the Training Credit will assist many people to obtain accredited training and the initiatives assisting Indigenous people will provide support to remote communities.

Centrelink and the Job Network have a strong regional presence throughout Australia, and the Government's initiatives in the area of communication infrastructure will also support economic and social participation by regional communities.

We will also be looking for opportunities to join up efforts of Commonwealth programmes for rural and regional Australia, and to refocus the communities elements of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to give more emphasis to projects which help to address locally identified barriers to social and economic participation.

However, we also recognise that dealing with regional disadvantage is a longer-term challenge that will need to be taken forward in a strategic way. The Government is committed to working in partnership to build sustainable community capacity and to increase self-reliance, thereby developing opportunities for participation. We will be seeking closer cooperation between all levels of government and stronger partnerships with the business and community sectors.

6. Simplifying the Payment System

The community endorsed the goal of simplifying the payment system — many said the system was currently too complex with the result that people could not easily understand what support was available. As a first step towards this, people particularly welcomed the Literacy and Numeracy Supplement. They liked the way it was an “add-on” to their payment that helped them overcome a critical barrier to finding employment. They also wanted more work to be done to recognise other costs to people of participating or because of their disabilities.

The Government is committed to taking further steps to move Australia's complex income support system towards the McClure ideal of a simplified benefits system. Our initiatives will be guided by the McClure model of a layered single benefit structure, which maintains the safety net but provides clearer encouragement to people to find a path towards greater self-reliance. This will take time, it is a big step involving many complex issues. We will need to consult broadly and carefully on the issues.

We will be investigating further steps to reduce the disincentives that are built into the present system that discourage people from moving out of welfare and into work. Significant progress was made in the taxation reform process with the reduction in marginal tax rates and reduction in the withdrawal rates of family benefits. The introduction of the Working Credit in *Australians Working Together* will also be a further step.

7. Individualising Service Delivery

The community liked the Job Network and Disability Employment Services initiatives in *Australians Working Together* saying that they did a lot, but that more needed to be done. They particularly liked seeing income support being tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Many thought the existing system was too rigid in fitting people into specific programmes based on the type of income support they receive rather than their needs. It was felt this could limit their options or lead them in the wrong direction. The community thought the pathways approach in *Australians Working Together* was a step ahead as people could move between paths as their lives changed.

The Government will be giving individualised service delivery further priority as we move forward in the welfare reform agenda. We will need to be careful that further steps build on what has already been done, in a timely way.

8. Creating Further Opportunities for People With Disabilities

The community welcomed the extra assistance provided to people with disabilities in *Australians Working Together*, but they also called for more services which recognised the different level of severity and type of disability for individuals. They said people with disabilities needed greater personal support, access to more transport services and to affordable accommodation. There was also concern about the inability of some people with the severest disabilities to meet possible participation requirements in the future.

The Government will be taking steps to further enhance services for, and improve participation of, people with disabilities. Steps will be guided by the ongoing findings of the Assessment and Contestability Trial and the Case Based Funding Trial.

The community appreciated the focus on ability rather than disability and capacity rather than incapacity. We will be looking at better ways of assessing the capacity of people with disabilities to participate. We will also be putting a greater focus on quality outcomes, intervention and monitoring in the provision of employment services.

For the implementation of *Australians Working Together*, we are also piloting innovative ways to deliver employment services and other assistance in rural and remote areas. The results will guide our delivery of the new places and services.

The question of State and Commonwealth service provision is also a complex issue and one the Government will be addressing over the longer term. We are currently in negotiations with State and Territory Governments to renew the Commonwealth State Disability Agreement this year. One of the priorities will be to look at ways to provide better services to people with disabilities.

9. Older and Mature Aged Workers

The community liked the extra assistance given to people aged 50 and over in *Australians Working Together*. But generally a view remained that more needed to be done. A common theme was that unemployed older people have much to offer the workforce because of their knowledge and experience, but employers undervalue them. They wanted to see greater incentives to employers provided and their awareness of the potential of older workers raised.

We recognise older job seekers have special needs and for this reason they were given priority in the *Australians Working Together* initiatives with \$146 million in new places and assistance. We are making the Training Credit available to mature age job seekers as we recognise that the 'one-size fits all' approach is not appropriate. The participation requirements for older job seekers are also being tailored to take account of their circumstances, including whether jobs are available in their local labour market.

We also acknowledge that the make up of the labour force is changing and that the participation rate of older Australians in the workforce is less than that of their younger counterparts — they often take earlier retirement. The number of working-age people in older age groups is also rising as the baby boom generation and post-war migrants move into this age group.

We are already investigating ways to better help mature age workers having commissioned a number of studies in recent years. An 'Employment for Mature Age Workers Issues Paper' was prepared as part of the debate around the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia. The Government is also developing an Age Discrimination Bill 2002. The Parliament's House of Representatives also conducted an Inquiry into issues specific to Mature-Age Workers (the Nelson Report). The Government acknowledges more needs to be done, but this is a complex area that will need careful development of policy responses in consultation with the community, and relevant government agencies.

Conclusion

We said at the beginning of this chapter, that the issues raised are broad and complex — they have emerged over time, and will take time to bring about change. We appreciate the strong indicators you have given us about the issues that are priorities for communities.

There is a lot to be done, and it will take time to develop appropriate responses to these issues. Welfare reform for Australia remains a key focus of this government in its third term and we will be seeking your help to develop solutions.

CHAPTER 6

Reform Starts Now

Australians Working Together will be a reality from 1 July 2002, when the first major group of initiatives start, with another major set of initiatives due to begin in September 2002.

The Government has been busy preparing for the implementation. Departments have been coordinating the introduction of the initiatives for which they are responsible. Centrelink has been training staff, recruiting people to fulfil the new Personal Adviser roles, and building the information technology systems to make the new initiatives work.

The consultations have given the Government vitally important information on how *Australians Working Together* can be implemented.

Tender processes have started to put new providers in place for the initiatives, such as for the Personal Support Programme, disability employment services and the Transition to Work Programme.

The first Indigenous Employment Centres started operating in April 2002.

From 1 July 2002, the following initiatives will start:

- Personal Support Programme;
- Transition to Work;
- Training Credits;
- Additional Work for the Dole places and new community work places;
- Passport to Employment (provided by Community Work Coordinators);
- Additional Job Search Training places;
- Enhanced Intensive Assistance arrangements;
- Extra Assistance for People with Disabilities;
- Extra Literacy and Numeracy Training Places;
- Disability Coordination Officers; and
- Participation requirements for job seekers aged 18 to 49 years.

Community consultations have provided valuable advice on how to make *Australians Working Together* work in different communities around the country. Departments have used the individual initiative consultations particularly to shape the fine detail of how the programmes will be put in place and operate.

The *Australians Working Together* package was built using a consultative approach. The positive response to the consultations shows the community supports more listening and learning to what the people at the grass roots want from government.

The Government will continue to listen to the community in a variety of ways. The Consultative Forum will continue its valuable role in 2002 and will be advising us on the implementation of *Australians Working Together*.

Initiative-specific consultations will continue throughout 2002 and discussions with peak organisations will occur at different stages in the implementation. Commonwealth, State and Territory issues will each be addressed through relevant mechanisms.

We will continue to involve the community in the ongoing evaluation of the implementation of *Australians Working Together* and we will provide feedback on the results.

We have listened and learned from what you have told us. We will continue our participative approach as we move into the next stage of modernising Australia's social support system.

Further Information

If you want to know more, or to continue the dialogue, please visit the *Australians Working Together* website:

www.together.gov.au

or telephone 1800 050 020*.

People with a hearing or speech impairment can call the telephone typewriter (TTY) on 1800 055 001*.

For information in other languages please call 131 450**.

Written submissions may be made to:

Australians Working Together

Department of Family and Community Services

PO Box 7788

CANBERRA ACT 2610

* A free call except for mobile phones which are charged at mobile rates.

** For the cost of a local call. Calls from mobile phones are charged at mobile rates.

ATTACHMENT A

Overview of *Australians Working Together*

Personal Support and Advice

- Centrelink Personal Advisers will be introduced to provide extra help to assist eligible mature age workers, parents with school age children, Indigenous Australians and people with special needs.
- Workforce age people will have access to four pathways — job search support, intensive support, community participation support and transition support.

Helping People to Participate

- A Working Credit will be introduced to encourage workforce age people on income support to take up full time, substantial part-time or irregular casual work. People can build up a credit of up to \$48 each fortnight to a limit of \$1,000 to offset against the income they get from paid work.
- People who attend approved literacy and numeracy training will be eligible for a fortnightly supplement of \$20.80 a fortnight.

Helping People Get a Job

- Job Search Training, Work for the Dole and Literacy and Numeracy Training places will be expanded.
- Training Credits will be available to eligible job seekers assisted by Community Work Coordinators and to mature age and Indigenous job seekers in Job Search Training or Intensive Assistance.
- The delivery of employment services will be improved to account for individual needs. For example, job seekers referred to Intensive Assistance will be assessed by Job Network providers to see if they would benefit from complementary programmes such as Work for the Dole, Literacy and Numeracy and Training or the Personal Support Programme before undertaking Intensive Assistance.
- Mutual Obligations will be extended to cover people aged 35 to 49 years and requirements will also now apply after six months unemployment for 18 to 49 years olds.
- A new Transition to Work programme will bring together individual and flexible transitional help for people who have been away from the workforce for a long time and for those who have never had paid jobs.

Personal Support Programme

- The Personal Support Programme will be introduced to help those people on payments who have multiple non-vocational barriers to employment, such as homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction, psychological conditions and domestic violence problems.

Helping Parents Return to Work

- People on Parenting Payment will receive more intensive support to help them return to work and access services to gain or improve skills.
- People who apply for Parenting Payment will get an information pack about the advantages of work and the help available to return to work.
- From September 2002, people on Parenting Payment and whose youngest child is aged 12 to 15 years will need to attend an annual interview with a Centrelink Personal Adviser.
- From July 2003, people on Parenting Payment and whose youngest child is aged 6 to 15 will need to attend an annual interview with a Centrelink Personal Adviser.
- From July 2003, people on Parenting Payment whose youngest child is aged between 13 and 15 years old will be expected to do a part-time activity of about six hours a week.
- Parents will have access to expanded training, employment and support services, improved access to child care fees assistance and more outside school hours care places.

Mature Age Workers

- People from 50 years to Age Pension age who receive income support payments or face retrenchment will receive extra help to improve their job prospects.
- From September 2002, people receiving Mature Age, Widow and Partner Allowance will be invited to attend ongoing interviews with a Centrelink Personal Adviser. The interviews will help them plan for their future and explain the assistance available to them, including improved incentives through the Working Credit initiative. The Advisers will also help identify people's needs and the obstacles they may face and refer them to appropriate services.
- Mature age people have access to services including in Literacy and Numeracy Training, rehabilitation, disability services, employment services, and education and training. They will also have access to financial information and counselling.
- People claiming Widow Allowance for the first time will attend an annual interview with a Personal Adviser and have access to increased services.

People with Disabilities

- People who are seeking or getting a Disability Support Pension or Newstart or Youth Allowance while sick or recovering from injury will get better assessment of their ability to work.
- New employment assistance and rehabilitation places will be made available.
- More places in vocational education and training for people with disabilities will be made available.
- A new quality assurance system will make sure that disability employment assistance services deliver quality outcomes.

Community Business Partnerships

The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership is being asked to:

- encourage companies to identify and generate opportunities for people with disabilities, mature age people, Indigenous Australians and parents returning to work;
- promote a range of opportunities to increase business and community partnerships at the local level;
- progress a national framework of triple bottom line reporting;
- establish an Australian Employers' Forum to improve employment opportunities and access for people with disabilities; and
- develop an online clearinghouse for ideas, case studies and information on partnerships.

Indigenous Australians

- Community Development Employment Project may be funded to take on the role of Indigenous Employment Centres in areas with good job opportunities;
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission will work with about 100 remote communities to develop Community Participation Agreements.
- Increased education and training assistance for Indigenous Australians; and
- Centrelink will expand its services to remote communities with 12 remote area servicing centres employing local staff (by 2004–05).

ATTACHMENT B

Written submissions to the *Australians Working Together* consultations

Organisations

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)
Active Consulting
Association for Competitive Employment National Network (ACE)
Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)
Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations (AFHO)
Best Employment
Blind Citizens Australia
Botany Migrant Resource Centre
Clare Homes Supported Accommodation (The Uniting Church Child and Family Care Division)
Department of Immigration Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)
Disabilities Services Commission (Western Australia)
Elsie Refuge For Women and Children Inc.
Employment Now
Head Injury Council of Australia (HICOA)
Illawarra Legal Centre
Katanning Regional Emergency
Lone Fathers Association
Lord Mayor of Brisbane
Magnolia Place Launceston Women's Shelter Incorporated
Manningham Youth Services Supported
Migrant Employment Taskforce
Moreland City Council
National Council of Single Mothers and their Children (NCSMC)
National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
Physical Disability Council of Australia
Refugee Resettlement Committee
Settlement Services Coalition
Single Mothers Lobby Alliance
Soroptimists International of Ku-ring-gai
Southern Family Life
Stepping Out Housing Programme

Tangentyere Job Shop
The Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless People
The AIDS Council of SA
Unemployed Persons Advocacy (UNEMPA)
UnitingCare Australia
UnitingCare, Port Pirie Central Mission
Volunteer Connections
Volunteering Australia
Volunteering Central West
Volunteering South Australia
Women's Information & Referral Centre Cairns, Inc (WIRC)
Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
Youth Affairs Network of Queensland
Youth Coalition of the ACT

Individuals

Aanee	Katrina Evans
Abbie Alcock	Kenneth Graham
Allan M. Davis	Kevin Brennan
Anon (Joe)	Leanne Rasmussen
Anon	Leonie Keane
Anon	Lorraine Warren
B Donnit	Margaret Clark
Christine Walsh	Marie C McGrath
Christopher	Mark Palmer
Claudia Verkroost	Michele Jackson
Dana Popa	Michelle Griffin
Darryl Russell	Paul Spear
David Picone	Paul Wells
Dianne Carroll	Peter
Helen Walsh	Peter de Groot
Isabelle Akoka	Phil Barlow
Jeff Green	Rachel Whiting
Jenni Eakins	Robert Oldman
JK Nolan	Robin Turner
Judith Wooller	Steve Meechan
Karen Lock	Teresa Jacobs
Kat Black	Tracy Harbord
Kathryn Josselyn	

ATTACHMENT C

Schedule of Regional Forum Consultations – 2001

South Australia	Adelaide	26 July
	Mt Gambier	27 July
	Port Lincoln	26 July
	Whyalla	27 July
Victoria	Melbourne CBD	30 July
	Frankston	31 July
	Sale	1 August
	Dandenong	2 August
	Sunshine	3 August
	Geelong	30 July
	Bendigo	31 July
	Shepparton	1 August
	Albury/Wodonga	2 August
New South Wales	Sydney CBD	6 August
	Gosford	7 August
	Newcastle	8 August
	Coffs Harbour	9 August
	Lismore	10 August
	Liverpool	6 August
	South Sydney	7 August
	Wollongong	8 August
	Mildura Vic	9 August
	Broken Hill	10 August
	Dubbo	13 August
	Tamworth	14 August
	Moree	15 August
Queensland	Cairns	14 August
	Townsville	15 August
	Rockhampton	16 August
	Southport	17 August
	Brisbane	20 August
	Gympie	21 August
Western Australia	Perth	20 August
	Mandurah	21 August
	Kalgoorlie	22 August
	Albany	23 August
	Broome	29 August

Tasmania	Hobart	28 August
	Launceston	29 August
Northern Territory	Alice Springs	27 August
	Darwin	28 August
	Katherine	30 August
Australian Capital Territory	Canberra	31 August

ATTACHMENT D

List of Boxes and Diagrams

Chapter 1 Introduction

Membership of the Welfare Reform Reference Group.

Membership of the Welfare Reform Consultative Forum (as at the release of *Australians Working Together* in May 2001).

Australians Working Together — Summary of Key Initiatives.

Building a New Income Support System.

Chapter 2 The Consultation Framework

The Consultation Framework.

A map of Australia showing consultation locations.

Chapter 3 Most Valued Elements of Australians Working Together

The Four Pathways provided in *Australians Working Together* on which people can move to achieve independence.

