



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6277 3515
Fax: (02) 6277 5829

Email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Special Benefit Activity Test) Bill 2002

On 16 October 2002 the Senate, on the recommendation of the Selection of Bills Committee, referred the above Bill to the Committee for inquiry and report. Due to the sitting schedule of the Senate and the legislative priority for this Bill, the Committee has been given a very short inquiry timetable.

The Bill, Minister's second reading speech and Explanatory Memorandum may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ParlInfo/BillsNet/main.htm>

In recommending the reference of the Bill to the Committee, the Selection of Bills Committee provided the following issues for consideration:

The Bill will expose holders of temporary protection visas (TPV) to activity testing and mutual obligation. Typically holders of TPVs have absent or poor English language skills, high levels of poverty, unstable accommodation and few resources, and the following issues need to be examined:

- the ability of people to comply with complex mutual obligation requirements;
- the impact of breaching and financial punitive measures on already disadvantaged people;
- the ability of job network providers to provide language and culturally appropriate employment services; and
- the ability of TPV holders to access the review and appeals system.

Consideration of the application of mutual obligation to the nominated special benefit recipients with particular consideration of:

- a) language barriers and availability of English language tuition;
- b) availability of Job Network services; and
- c) practical implications for administration by Centrelink.

The Committee invites written submissions addressing the above issues. The submission should be lodged with the Committee by Friday, 1 November 2002. The Committee prefers to receive submissions electronically as an attached document - email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au – otherwise by fax (number 02 6277 5829).