

## **Additional material**

### **Submission to the Community Affairs Committee**

#### **Inquiry into Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work and other Measures) Bill 2005 and Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work) Bill 2005**

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##### Recommendations

- (1) Leave principal carers and people with partial capacity on pensions, even if you must activity test them
- (2) Remove short-term and long term distinction in DSP eligibility – deal with the issue by more frequent reviews of people with disability expected to last less than 2 years
- (3) Provide a non-means tested disability allowance for all persons with severe disability to recognise the unmet costs of disability – this could be achieved by modifying Mobility Allowance
- (4) Extend the definition of 'incapacitated' in the activity test and related activity/participation agreements to people unable to work 15 hours instead of 8 – [eg S603C(2)(b) and similar provisions in parenting payment, youth allowance, Austudy and Special Benefit]
- (5) In all payments with an activity test, participation/activity test agreements and related requirements, include either in exemptions or the definition of 'unsuitable' work
  - (a) a period of adjustment following relationship breakdown or onset of disability
  - (b) combinations of disability, parenting and caring which taken together reduce a person's capacity to work
  - (c) principal carers of a child who has been subjected to violence or child abuse
  - (d) principal carers with large families (3 or more children under 16) [the government announced an exemption for large families but it is not in the Bill]
  - (e) work where commuting between the person's home and work would be unreasonably difficult, *including travel to take children to a school or place of child care or to collect them from those places, and where unreasonably difficult took account of both time and costs involved.*
- (6) In all payments with activity tests or related requirements, provide clauses covering training, education and rehabilitation as activities which may be included in agreements or activities which the person might be required to undertake.
- (7) Amend Austudy to allow principal carers to be 'concessional study-load students' under S569D(1)(a).
- (8) Raise Austudy rates to the level of Newstart rates, and extend eligibility for Pharmaceutical Allowance and pensioner concession cards to principal carers and people with partial capacity receiving Austudy.
- (9) Extend Mobility Allowance to people undertaking education, rehabilitation or pre-vocational training and to those searching for work not subject to mandatory agreements.

- (10) If principal carers and people with partial capacity are to be placed on Newstart
  - (a) restore the alignment of Newstart and Pension sole parent rates; and
  - (b) extend the top-up payment under S1068-D2A and D2B for people with disabilities on Newstart
- (11) Amend Section 634 (and similar sections for other payments) which stop payment of Newstart for 26 weeks for a person who moves to an area of lower employment – either
  - (a) exempt principal carers and people with impaired capacity from this section; or
  - (b) add to S634(3) moves because of lack of access to suitable, affordable housing in the area where the person has been living.
- (12) Exempt people from all waiting periods (ordinary, liquid assets, seasonal workers, income maintenance, and newly arrived residents waiting periods) who are applying for Newstart, Youth Allowance or other payments because of relationship breakdown, death of a partner, accident or onset or deterioration of any disability or condition that affects their capacity to work.