



**A-S-U**

18 December 2007

~~The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP~~  
~~Minister for Employment Participation~~  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Australian  
Services  
Union of  
New South Wales**

Secretary  
Sally McManus

Deputy Secretary  
Naomi Arrowsmith

PO Box 1865  
Strawberry Hills  
NSW 2012

T: (02) 9210 4000  
F: (02) 8698 8938

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on the recent election result and on your appointment as *Minister for Employment Participation*. Today we write with regard to the Job Placement, Employment and Training Program (JPET), a program which our members believe needs your urgent attention.

The ASU has members working in JPET services based in non-government community agencies across Australia. The Program is designed to assist young homeless and disadvantaged people overcome the social barriers to an improved life (the name of the Program is not an accurate reflection of the aim of the Program). The Program was initially developed by a previous Labor Government and is a much needed program. The Howard Government moved this Program from the previous Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSLIA) to the previously named Department of Workplace Relations (DEWR), a move which was not supported by the vast majority of provider agencies primarily as agencies believed that in doing so the program would lose its broad focus.

Problems in the current JPET include too strong an emphasis on measuring 'economic outcomes' that is, employment-related outcomes. This program is about helping homeless and disadvantaged young people overcome barriers to connections to family, community, education, training and employment. Focusing too early on the economic outcomes makes assisting the young people involved more difficult. The emphasis on reaching designated targets and treating JPET services like mini Job Networks is not only difficult for this highly disadvantaged group in society but also creates a very difficult work environment for staff. It is our opinion that staff satisfaction in their employment has drastically reduced in recent years. The pressure to meet target job placement numbers and reporting requirements has also reduced the amount of time left to support clients of the Program adequately. Most disturbingly, young people who most need JPET type services may not be using the services if it no longer meets their needs in the most engaging way.

We seek to meet with you to discuss our views on the current problems in the Program and options for improvements. Our members support the continuation of the JPET Program but believe urgent changes are needed in order to provide the assistance needed to these young and vulnerable people. Our members also have direct knowledge and experienced to bring to the discussion, including the President of our Union, Narelle Clay (AM) who has been involved in JPET since the early development under a previous Labor Government. She was also a Member of the JPET Advisory group under the previous Government which the Department advised last week would no longer exist.

Yours faithfully,

  
**Secretary**

Encl.

cc The Hon Julia Gillard, MP  
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education,  
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and  
Minister for Social Inclusion