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Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Review of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument

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Glossary

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DES	Disability Employment Services
DSP	Disability Support Pension
ESA	Employment Service Areas
ESC3	Employment Services Contract 3
JCA	Job Capacity Assessment
JSA	Job Services Australia
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument
NESA	National Employment Services Association

Review of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument

1. Introduction and Summary of Findings

The Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI), which was first introduced in 1998, measures a job seeker's level of disadvantage in the labour market based on his or her unique circumstances. These circumstances are assessed through the job seeker's answers to the JSCI questionnaire and other information known to influence his or her employment prospects.

From 1 July 2009, the JSCI will be used to assess job seekers for referral to the new Job Services Australia. Job Services Australia will provide job seekers with more personalised help, better targeted services and greater access to training opportunities and work experience in areas of skill need. Job Services Australia will also provide more help for employers to find the workers that have the skills they need.

The JSCI will be administered by Centrelink and Job Services Australia providers to identify the job seeker's appropriate level of service. Based on their JSCI results, job seekers will be referred to the level of Job Services Australia assistance that best suits their needs. Where barriers are identified through the JSCI that indicate a potential need for the most intensive Job Services Australia assistance or participation in Disability Employment Services (DES), the job seeker will undertake an additional comprehensive Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) before referral to the most suitable specialised service. It is essential that the JSCI provides for reliable assessment of each job seeker's needs. Examples of how the new JSCI would be applied, compared with the current version of the JSCI, are provided in [Appendix A](#). The current and new factors, sub-factors and points which generate these and other JSCI outcomes are provided in [Appendix B](#).

The Review of the JSCI was announced in *An Australian Social Inclusion Agenda* on 22 November 2007. Terms of Reference for the Review are provided in [Appendix C](#). On 17 April 2008, the then Minister for Employment Participation, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, wrote to Australian Government employment services providers, employment services peak industry bodies and a range of community organisations, inviting submissions to the review by 12 June 2008.

1.1 Submissions to the Review

A total of 24 submissions to the review were received (see [Appendix D](#) for a listing of these submissions). Those submissions for which the authors gave permission for publication are available, in full, on the *Workplace.gov.au* Employment Services page.

A number of common themes were raised in the submissions. These included: the identification of triggers for referral to JCAs; measures of geographic disadvantage; assessment of Indigenous job seekers, particularly in remote locations; the better identification of job seekers with English language barriers; better assessment of those at risk of homelessness; and better assessment for sole parents.

These and other issues important to the successful operation of the JSCI were examined in detail through the conduct of the review. Further details are in the next Chapter of this report.

Ensuring that the classification of job seekers within Job Services Australia Service Streams aligns with the expectations of Job Services Australia providers was also identified as a key concern by DEEWR and NESAs and has been addressed.

1.2 Conduct of the Review

The potential for improving the JSCI and testing of its reliability was examined through three types of inter-related research:

- Consultations and qualitative research were conducted by the Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), and the Social Research Centre (Melbourne). The researchers examined job seekers' and JSCI administrators' views about the JSCI administration process. For example, were particular questions difficult for job seekers to understand, and how could the administration and effectiveness of the JSCI be improved? Using feedback from the submissions to the Review as a starting point, Centrelink staff, Job Capacity Assessors and employment services staff were interviewed at length about such issues.
- Cognitive testing of potential refinements to existing JSCI questions, and testing of potential new questions was carried out with job seekers through in-depth interviews conducted by the consultants, TNS Research (Canberra). Job seekers from Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT were selected to ensure appropriate representation of people with disability, the long-term unemployed, Indigenous Australians, people for whom English is a second language, and job seekers from regional and metropolitan locations.
- Extensive econometric analysis was conducted, with advice from Professor Paul Miller and Dr Anh Tram Le of the University of Western Australia, to ensure that the JSCI is effective as a reliable predictor of a job seeker's level of labour market disadvantage.

Research was closely informed by the Submissions to the Review and has resulted in significant improvements to the assessment of job seekers' circumstances. Further information on these research processes is provided in [Appendix E](#).

1.3 Conclusions

The new JSCI provides a more balanced and reliable holistic assessment for all job seekers, whether they reside in remote, regional or metropolitan areas. The improvements in assessing job seekers' circumstances are achieved through the inclusion of new JSCI questions and additions to the factors that are given weight in calculating an individual's JSCI score. Refinements have also been made to the wording of some existing JSCI questions and response categories, to improve job seekers' understanding and increase the ease of JSCI administration.

Important changes have also been made to the identification of the circumstances that serve as triggers for referral to a JCA. For example, the trigger for a job seeker whose disability or medical condition leads them to indicate they have only a partial work capacity has been adjusted - from the job seeker reporting they are able to work 'less than 15 hours per week' to reporting they are able to work 'less than 30 hours per week'. These changes will ensure that the most highly disadvantaged job seekers are directed to the service that will best help them to address their barriers and gain sustainable employment.

2. Submissions to the Review

The main issues raised in the submissions to the Review of the JSCI are discussed below under the main headings in the Terms of Reference for the Review.

Consultation feedback from stakeholders (both from the submissions and face-to-face meetings with DEEWR staff as part of the Review) shows general satisfaction with the JSCI as a tool for identifying disadvantage among mainstream job seekers. Stakeholders are also content with the factors that trigger a further assessment. Nevertheless, a number of key issues were identified.

A number of common themes were raised in the submissions. These included: the identification of triggers for referral to a JCA; measures of geographic disadvantage; assessment of Indigenous job seekers, particularly in remote locations; the better identification of job seekers with English language barriers; better assessment of those at risk of homelessness; and better assessment for sole parents.

2.1 Effectiveness

In its submission, NESA claims that the proportion of job seekers accessing higher level services has reduced over time.

- However, it is difficult to compare validly the proportions of job seekers accessing different levels of employment services over time, given changes in allocation methods between stocks of job seekers versus inflows of job seekers and given changes in the types of employment services provided over time.

In its submission, NESAs also claims that the improved labour market conditions that applied in mid-2008 did not imply that job seekers with very substantial barriers to work are more likely to find employment. Additionally, NESAs claimed that Welfare to Work has pushed an increasing number of highly disadvantaged persons into employment services, particularly Indigenous people, parents and people with disabilities. Corresponding with this, the association claimed that many job seekers are being denied the level of service they require; for example a Job Network member with a specialist hearing contract noted that significantly fewer profoundly deaf job seekers are being classified as Highly Disadvantaged.

- In the revision of the JSCI, particular attention was paid to improving the effectiveness of the JSCI for Indigenous Australians, income-support-receiving parents of school-age children and people with disabilities. The outcomes of these changes are shown in Section 3.6.

An overwhelming majority of stakeholders indicated non-disclosure of information by job seekers is a pervasive problem, potentially reducing the effectiveness of the JSCI. The view of Salvation Army Employment Plus, consistent with many other stakeholders, is:

“...the JSCI is currently unable to identify job seekers who require specialist assessment when: (a) the job seeker lacks insight into their condition. This is particularly prevalent for job seekers with mental health or substance abuse issues; (and b) the job seeker is unwilling to disclose particular factors including disabilities/medical conditions, ex-offender status and other relevant JCA triggers. This is particularly prevalent for Indigenous Australians and migrants/refugees due to a higher level of distrust of authorities.”

- To assist in encouraging disclosure by job seekers, there are some refinements to the wording and sequencing of questions in the interview and in the privacy and introductory statements. Measures are also being implemented to overcome the lack of disclosure (see Section 3.5).

Stakeholders identified several groups of job seekers, and particular types of disadvantage, where the JSCI may be less effective. This feedback relates to disadvantaged youth, job seekers with a disability or medical condition affecting their ability to work, ex-prisoners, migrants, people with literacy and numeracy problems and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- Measures have been taken in the revised version of the JSCI to improve the effectiveness with which each of these groups of job seekers is identified and allocated to the most appropriate service. Details are provided in Chapter 3.

2.2 Appropriateness

NESA argues in its submission that a wide range of issues that could affect employment outcomes are not included in the current JSCI. These include access to transport and income-support and employment-service participation history. NESAs states that participation/compliance reports are often indicators of complex issues

such as undiagnosed mental illness. NESAs also suggests that the length of recent employment and the reason for employment termination should be investigated further.

In several other submissions, stakeholders considered that the JSCI should account for a job seeker's service or benefit history in some way.

- Access to Transport and the duration and number of times on income support have been added to the new version of the JSCI. Changes to the JSCI questions, question flow, triggers for a referral to a JCA and JSCI points allocation have been made to address complex issues such as undiagnosed mental illness. While the length of recent employment and the reason for employment termination were investigated as part of the Review, it is the case that Recency of Work Experience is an existing JSCI factor, while those who have recently been retrenched are being assisted through the *Compact with Retrenched Workers*.

2.3 Efficiency

A key issue raised about the efficiency of the JSCI is whether it is more efficient to conduct the interview in Centrelink (particularly over the phone) or by face-to-face interviews in the offices of employment service providers. The views of a number of Job Network members are encapsulated in the following remark, made by Mission Australia in its submission to the JSCI Review:

"The JSCI does not always effectively identify job seekers at risk of long-term unemployment due to the way in which it is administered...Centrelink initially administers the JSCI at the counter or over the phone and there is usually limited time available, and not an ideal environment to encourage and maximise job seeker disclosure."

A large number of employment service providers believe the JSCI would be better delivered by employment consultants, rather than at Centrelink, although some acknowledge that Centrelink plays an important role as a streaming and referral agency. Many emphasise that the initial Centrelink interview, during which the JSCI is administered, is first and foremost an income-support claim interview. This may mean that job seekers are less likely to reveal personal information that they believe may affect their claim, particularly if they are young, Indigenous, have recently arrived in Australia, or have recently been released from prison, according to these employment service providers.

- However, quality assurance surveys have routinely shown that the application of the JSCI by Centrelink staff results in accurate and effective assessment of a job seeker's status.
- In addition, a change from present methods (with a high proportion of JSCI interviews conducted over the phone with Centrelink) to conducting a large proportion face-to-face in JNM's offices would result in a widespread change in methods and could therefore be less efficient than current methods.

- Finally, employment service providers will retain the facility to conduct change-of-circumstances upgrades to a job seeker's JSCI if a job seeker discloses new information.

3. Outcomes of the JSCI Review

3.1. Referral of job seekers to Stream Services

Under the new JSCI, the points score cut-offs for each of the first three Service Streams are the same as those published in the information for tenderers for the new employment services.

Table 1: **JSCI Bandwidths**

Stream	JSCI Points Bandwidths*
Stream 1	≤19
Stream 2	20-28
Stream 3	29+

*Bandwidths were published in Table 1 of "Modelling of the new Employment Services at the national level" on the workplace.gov.au/workplace/Publications/Purchasing page in August 2008. Entry to Stream 4 is determined by Job Capacity Assessment – rather than a job seeker's JSCI score.

The department's modelling shows that the new JSCI will result in the referral of job seekers to Service Streams in proportions comparable to those previously published (see Table 2), in the absence of the effects of the Global Recession, the Australian Government's *Compact with Retrenched Workers* and other recent developments. Newly redundant job seekers referred to Job Services Australia will be commenced in Stream 2 or higher Streams.

Table 2: Inflow Percentages to Stream Services in Job Services Australia

Inflows of New Job Seekers on Day 1	Previously Published Percentages*
% in Stream 1	61
% in Stream 2	18
% in Stream 3	9
% in Stream 4	12
Total (%)	100

* Expected inflow percentages, averaged over the three financial years from 2009-10 through 2011-12, were published in Table 2 of "Modelling of the new Employment Services at the national level" on the workplace.gov.au/workplace/Publications/Purchasing page in August 2008. Estimates do not include movements between Streams after 12 months and are at the national level. Job Services Australia providers should be aware that actual service Stream inflow percentages may vary in line with differences among local labour markets, variations in the characteristics of job seekers and changes to broader economic and labour market conditions.

Mainly as a result of the *Compact with Retrenched Workers*, the proportion of new job seekers flowing into Stream 2 is now expected to be substantially higher (and the proportion flowing into Stream 1 correspondingly lower) than previously expected.

While there is no change to the cost to the Australian Government of funding Job Services Australia over the three years of the contract as a result of the JSCI Review itself, the Government has budgeted an additional \$298.5 million between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2011 to provide newly redundant former employees with early access to intensive employment services. The Government has also increased funding to the rest of Job Services Australia to reflect the effects of the Global Recession on the costs of providing employment services.

3.2. Improvements in the assessment of job seeker disadvantage

The new JSCI provides for improved assessment of disadvantaged job seekers' barriers to employment. For example, proximity to a labour market, access to transport, job seekers' English language skills, job seekers' partial work capacity and income-support histories are all subject to improved assessment through new questions and new or refined factors. The assessment of Indigenous job seekers, particularly those in remote communities, has also been improved.

3.3. Changes in Points

Overall, the new JSCI achieves a better holistic assessment of the individual job seeker's circumstances whether they reside in a remote, regional or metropolitan area.

There are some reductions in the points allocated for specific job seeker characteristics, further details of which are provided below. However, this is countered by increases in the points for other important characteristics. The end result is an improved and more balanced assessment of the individual job seeker's specific barriers and needs.

The current and new JSCI points are detailed in [Appendix B](#).

3.4. Improvements in referral to Job Capacity Assessment

To ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged job seekers are referred for appropriate and more comprehensive assessment of their barriers and needs, refinements have been made to the identification of the circumstances that serve as triggers for referral to a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA).

As an example, the trigger for a job seeker with disability or a medical condition that leads them to indicate they are not able to work full time has been adjusted upwards, from a self-reported capacity of 'less than 15 hours per week' to 'less than 30 hours per week'. A new JCA referral trigger for those who feel they need support within the workplace to assist them in coping with their disability or medical condition has also been added.

Based on the conclusions of their JCA, highly disadvantaged job seekers will be referred to Stream 4 services or to Disability Employment Services as most appropriate to their individual needs. Where a JCA determines a person's barriers are not sufficient to require specialised highly intensive assistance, they would be referred back to the appropriate lower level of Stream services.

3.5. What are the Main Improvements to the JSCI?

A number of common themes were raised in the 24 submissions to the review. They include: the identification of triggers for referral to Job Capacity Assessment (JCA); measures of geographic disadvantage; assessment of Indigenous job seekers, particularly in remote locations; the better identification of job seekers with English language barriers; better assessment of those at risk of homelessness; and better assessment for sole parents.

These themes have been addressed through: refinements to JSCI questions; new questions; new factors and sub-factors; improved use of information on job seekers' income support histories and refinements to the identification of job seekers' barriers, including adjustments to existing triggers and new triggers for referral to JCA.

The major enhancements incorporated in the new JSCI are as follows.

3.5.1 Locational disadvantage

- Locationally disadvantaged job seekers will have their circumstances reflected much better in the new JSCI, through the introduction of new factors for Access to Transport and Proximity to a Labour Market and a new sub-factor for Indigenous labour market disadvantage.

3.5.2 Intergenerational disadvantage

- There is a new question on intergenerational disadvantage. While no points are allocated at this stage, there is a trigger from this question to a referral to a JCA for young job seekers.

3.5.3 Income-support history

- Job seeker history will be reflected through the introduction of a new factor that covers both duration on income support and the number of previous spells on income support.
- Income-support recipients on non-activity-tested payments for a substantial amount of time who have not volunteered for employment services, but then face participation requirements, will receive points under this factor when they have their JSCI conducted.

3.5.4 Disadvantaged teenagers

- The situation of disadvantaged teenagers will be reflected more accurately, with the allocation of additional points to these job seekers and more referrals to JCAs.

3.5.5 Living circumstances

- In addition to allocating points to sole parents, as occurs now, points will be allocated to partnered parents and job seekers living alone.

3.5.6 First language spoken

- The characteristics of those whose first language was other than English will be reflected more accurately through the introduction of two sub-factors for first language spoken, one for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and the other for overseas languages.
- The highest points under these sub-factors are allocated to languages, such as Pushtu, spoken in the regions from which refugees have recently arrived.

3.5.7 Better identification of disadvantage

- Job seekers with disabilities will have their situations reflected more accurately through the rewording of the questions in the Instrument and the allocation of points for job seekers who have workplace support needs.
- There will be a clearer distinction between Disabilities and Other Personal Characteristics.

- Job seekers who are ex-offenders will receive more appropriate assessment in the new JSCI through an improvement in the privacy statement, a rewording of the questions, and allocating points to job seekers who have received a Crisis Payment from Centrelink in the six months before their JSCI interview.

3.5.8 Improved disclosure and compensating for lack of disclosure

- To assist in encouraging disclosure by job seekers, there are some refinements to the wording and sequencing of questions in the interview and in the privacy and introductory statements.
- Where a job seeker does not wish to answer some of voluntary questions (e.g. on criminal convictions) they are allocated one JSCI point.
- An additional point is allocated for a job seeker who received a Crisis Payment from Centrelink in the six months before their JSCI interview. Those who receive a Crisis Payment will also receive a referral to a JCA, with potential referral to Stream 4 services or DES.

3.6. What happens to Key Disadvantaged Groups?

3.6.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

- The points allocated to job seekers in the general Indigenous factor have halved - from 10 to 5. However, this is balanced by the additional points under new factors and sub-factors which have particular relevance to Indigenous Australians. For example, additional points are allocated for any Indigenous job seeker who:
 - first spoke an Indigenous language as a child (particularly relevant in remote and regional communities);
 - lives in a location where lack of proximity to a labour market is, of itself, a source of disadvantage;
 - has inadequate access to transport to support their labour market participation; or
 - is a teenager (all Indigenous teenagers receive an additional 4 points).
- Modelling has shown the new JSCI will classify around 90 per cent of Indigenous job seekers in remote and regional communities as requiring Stream 3 services – as a minimum level of service. The refinements to triggers for a JCA will also ensure that indigenous people are referred to Stream 4 or DES where these are the appropriate services for their needs.
- Through the enhanced assessment of each individual’s specific circumstances, the new JSCI achieves an improved holistic assessment of Indigenous job seekers’

barriers and needs whether they reside in a remote, regional or metropolitan area.

- See, in particular, Tables 8 and 9 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.2 Australian-born South Sea Islanders

- In contrast to the existing JSCI, the new JSCI does not allocate additional points for Australian born-South Sea Islanders (they are no longer identified in a JSCI question).
- Econometric analysis has also shown the level of disadvantage for this very small group, who make up less than one tenth of one per cent of the employment services caseload, has fallen. In addition, feedback from Centrelink and employment service providers was that the relevant question was the cause of confusion for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers.

3.6.3 Job seekers in Temporary Accommodation

- Adult job seekers in temporary accommodation, and those who are homeless, will receive the same number of points in the new version of the JSCI as at present.
- All teenage job seekers in temporary accommodation will receive four more JSCI points in the new version¹.
- All teenage job seekers in temporary accommodation will also receive a referral to a JCA.
- Many homeless job seekers, especially those in primary homelessness, will also receive an additional JSCI point in the new version because they 'live alone'.
- See, in particular, Table 15 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.4 Partnered parents

- Partnered parents² will receive points under the Living Arrangements factor in the new version of the JSCI, whereas they receive none in the Living Arrangements factor in the current JSCI.
- See, in particular, Table 16 in [Appendix B](#).

¹ They will receive the extra points under the Disadvantaged Teenager sub-factor (see Table 1 in Appendix A).

² That is, partnered principal carer parents whose youngest dependent child is aged less than 16 years.

3.6.5 Sole parents

- While the number of JSCI points allocated to sole parents under the general Living Arrangements factor will be reduced by two points, there will be a better assessment of the actual circumstances of sole parents.
 - In particular, age of the sole parent and their time on income-support payments will be taken into account in addition to the age of the youngest dependent child.
 - Also, many sole parents will pick up points under other new factors and sub-factors, especially the Access to Transport factor.
- All teenage sole parents will receive four points³, outweighing the two point reduction under the Living Arrangements factor.
 - Teenage sole parents will also trigger a referral to a JCA, which in many cases would result in referral to Stream 4 services or DES.
- All sole parents who have been receiving income support for a year or more before they face participation requirements or volunteer for employment services will receive more points in the new version of the JSCI.
 - Those who have been on income support for between one and two years will receive six points under the Duration on Income Support sub-factor,
 - Those who have been on income support for two years or longer will receive 12 points under this sub-factor.
 - Many sole parents are on income support for a number of years while their youngest dependent child is aged below six years without volunteering for employment services, before they face participation requirements and register as a job seeker.

³ They will receive the extra points under the Disadvantaged Teenager sub-factor (see Table 1 in [Appendix B](#)).

- Other changes in the JSCI assist sole parents. In particular, those who have received a Crisis Payment in the six months before their JSCI interview will receive an extra JSCI point and a referral to a JCA.
- See, in particular, Table 16 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.6 Job seekers with disabilities

- While the number of JSCI points allocated to job seekers with disabilities under the general Disability/Medical Conditions factor will fall, there will be a better assessment of the actual circumstances of job seekers with disabilities and many will receive the same or more points in the new JSCI.
- There have been changes in the triggers in the JSCI so that more job seekers with disabilities are anticipated to be referred to JCAs.
- Job seekers with disabilities and workplace support needs will receive either one, two or three points for this sub-factor depending on the number of domains of workplace support requirements that are recorded in their JCA report.
 - There are 15 of these domains, for example - moving around safely and communicating with others in the workplace.
- Many job seekers with disabilities will receive points for duration on income support for periods before they started job seeking.
 - For example, a person in receipt Disability Support Pension for two or more years before commencing to seek a job would receive 12 points under the Duration on Income Support factor in addition to the points they receive under the Medical Conditions/Disability Factor.
- Refinements to the wording and sequencing of the questions in the JSCI interview may assist in job seekers disclose their disabilities and medical conditions and job seekers with a wider range of circumstances will receive points in the JSCI⁴.
- See, in particular, Table 14 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.7 Ex-offenders

- In the new JSCI, ex-offenders are more likely to be referred to a JCA for potential referral to Stream 4 as appropriate to addressing serious non-vocational barriers.

⁴ In particular, those whose disabilities affect the type of work that they can perform and those who think that they need workplace support will now receive JSCI points. Also, job seekers who do not wish to disclose whether they have disabilities or medical conditions will also receive a point in the new JSCI.

- Any job seeker who has recently received a Crisis Payment⁵, as may be common for ex-offenders, will also be referred to a JCA.
- All teenage job seekers who have disclosed a criminal conviction will be referred to a JCA.
- While the number of JSCI points for disclosed ex-offenders falls by one or two points (depending on the individual’s circumstances) under the general Ex-offender Status factor, this is balanced by other changes that allocate additional points.
 - Job seekers who have recently received a Crisis Payment will receive one extra JSCI point⁶.
 - Teenage disclosed ex-offenders will receive an additional four JSCI points⁷.
 - The criterion for allocating increased points for job seekers who have served custodial sentences has been reduced from one month to one fortnight.
- Some ex-offenders may not wish to disclose their status and indicate they do not wish to answer related JSCI questions.
 - A job seeker who does not wish to answer questions on any convictions they may have will receive one JSCI point.
 - A job seeker who is an ‘undisclosed’ ex-offender and has recently received a Crisis Payment would receive an additional JSCI point.
- See, in particular, Table 17 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.8 Job seekers with low educational attainment, language or workforce experience

- While adult job seekers with low educational attainment, English language barriers or lacking recent workforce experience receive fewer points under the relevant general factor, additional points are allocated under new sub-factors. Job seekers are also more likely to be referred to programs to address these barriers through a new English language training flag.
 - Many job seekers with English language barriers will pick up points through identification of the language they first spoke as a child (including Indigenous Australians and those born overseas).
 - Where a person’s recent main labour force experience has been unemployment, or they have been outside the labour force or doing

⁵ That is, job seekers who have received a Crisis Payment from Centrelink in the six months before their JSCI interview will be referred to a JCA. ‘Prison Release’ was the main category of Crisis Payment grants in both 2006-07 and 2007-08, accounting for over half of all grants in both financial years.

⁶ This will make up for half of the reduction in points for ex-offenders with a custodial sentence.

⁷ They will receive the extra points under the Disadvantaged Teenager sub-factor (see Table 1 in [Appendix B](#)).

voluntary work, additional points may be allocated under the sub-factors for duration and number of times on income support.

- Job seekers with low educational attainment who live in locations where lack of proximity to a labour market is (of itself) a source of disadvantage and/or have inadequate access to transport will pick up additional points.
- All teenage job seekers who have less than Year 10 education and/or have mainly been unemployed for the last two years will receive an additional four points⁸.
 - In line with the individual’s circumstances, many would receive more JSCI points than in the current version.
- Job seekers who indirectly disclose English language barriers⁹ can be identified for referral to the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program or Adult Migrant English Program.
- See, in particular, Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.9 Overseas-born job seekers

- In addition to a regrouping of the countries and a re-estimation of points for job seekers born overseas, a new sub-factor has been introduced for those whose first language was other than English, with JSCI points allocated for a number of language groupings, particularly relating to languages, such as Arabic and Pushtu, spoken by recent refugees.
- The new English language training flag will assist in ensuring referral to the Adult Migrant English Program where appropriate to the job seeker’s needs.
- See, in particular, Table 7 in [Appendix B](#).

3.6.10 Prime-age female job seekers

- Some prime-age female job seekers¹⁰ will receive one point fewer under the Gender and Age Factor in the new version of the JSCI.
 - However, many of these job seekers will receive additional points as a result of other changes to the JSCI, particularly the allocation of points for partnered principal carer parents.

⁸ They will receive the extra points under the Disadvantaged Teenager sub-factor (see Table 1 in [Appendix B](#)).

⁹ Through using an interpreter in the JSCI interview or stating that low English proficiency is preventing them from using a vocational qualification.

¹⁰ Generally those without disadvantageous labour market characteristics, or with labour market characteristics where JSCI points are falling such as low educational attainment. While this is based on the econometric estimation, it is also consistent with the face-to-face feedback in the Review of the JSCI, where it was stated on a number of occasions that prime-age female job seekers seemed to be less disadvantaged than many other age and gender groups, especially disadvantaged teenagers.

- See, in particular, Table 1 in Appendix B.

3.7. Comparison of JSCI Weights

Appendix A provides a number of case study comparisons that show the way in which the new JSCI delivers improved assessment of the individual job seeker's particular circumstances.

A comparison of the weights for the current (pre-July 2009) and new JSCI is provided in Appendix B.

3.8. Further Information

Requests for further information on the Review of the Job seeker Classification Instrument may be sent, by email, to: JSCI@deewr.gov.au

Case Study Comparisons

The new JSCI provides for improved assessment of disadvantaged job seekers' barriers to employment. For example, proximity to a labour market, access to transport, job seekers' English language skills, job seekers' partial work capacity and income-support histories are all subject to improved assessment through new questions and new or refined factors. The assessment of Indigenous job seekers, particularly those in remote communities, has also been improved.

Overall, the new JSCI achieves a better holistic assessment of the individual job seeker's circumstances whether they reside in a remote, regional or metropolitan area. There are some reductions in the points allocated for specific job seeker characteristics. However, this is countered by increases in the points for other important characteristics. As shown through the illustrative case study comparisons below, the end result is an improved and balanced assessment of the individual job seeker's specific circumstances and their particular barriers and needs.

Referral to Job Capacity Assessment

Referral to a JCA, with the potential for subsequent referral to Stream 4 or DES, does not rely upon a job seeker's JSCI score. Job seekers with relatively low JSCI scores (e.g. indicating Stream 2 referral would be appropriate) are referred to a JCA where relevant barriers or 'triggers' are identified as part of JSCI administration.

Example 1: An Indigenous Job Seeker

Job seeker A is an Indigenous job seeker aged 26 years living in the vicinity of Darwin. She did not complete high school, has no vocational qualifications and has mainly been unemployed in the last two years. Under the current JSCI she has been classified as Highly Disadvantaged. Despite getting fewer points from the Indigenous Status factor in the new JSCI, she would have scored enough points from the newly introduced factors to be classified as a Stream 3 job seeker.

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker A in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker A in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Female 25-29 years)	3	7
Educational Attainment (Year 10/11 completed)	2	1
Vocational Qualifications (none)	1	1
Recent Work Experience (Unemployed)	7	4
Indigenous Status (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander)	10	5
Personal Factors (High Impact)	8	7
<i>Indigenous Status (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Language Spoken First)</i>	..	1
<i>Job Seeker History (Crisis Payment Recipient)</i>	..	1
<i>Proximity to Labour Market (Outer Regional)</i>	..	2
<i>Indigenous Location (Disadvantaged Labour Market Component)</i>	..	2
TOTAL	31	31
JSCI Outcome	Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 3

Note: Only those JSCI factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics.

Job seeker A would have triggered a referral to a JCA in both the current and the new versions of the JSCI as a result of the personal factors she disclosed in the JSCI interview. This might lead to a referral to Stream 4 Services or DES under Job Services Australia.

If the job seeker had not disclosed these personal factors, she would not have been referred to a JCA in the current version of the JSCI. In the new version, the fact that she had received a Crisis Payment from Centrelink during the six months before her JSCI interview, would trigger her referral to a JCA.

Example 2: An Indigenous Job Seeker Living in Redfern

Job seeker B is an Indigenous female job seeker aged 44 years living in Redfern. She completed Year 12, but has no vocational qualifications, some personal issues and has mainly been outside the labour force in the last two years. Under the current JSCI she would be classified as Highly Disadvantaged. Despite getting fewer points from the Indigenous Status factor and a lower score in the new JSCI, she would still score enough points to be classified as a Stream 2 job seeker.

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker B in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker B in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Female 40-44 years)	6	5
Educational Attainment (Year 12 completed)	1	0
Vocational Qualifications (none)	1	1
Recent Work Experience (outside the labour force)	6	3
Indigenous Status (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander)	10	5
Personal Factors (Medium Impact)	6	5
Geographic	2	4
<i>Indigenous Location (Disadvantaged Labour Market Component)</i>	..	2
<i>Access to Transport (Public)</i>	..	1
TOTAL	32	26
JSCI Outcome	Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 2

Note: Only those JSCI Factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics.

Job seeker B would trigger a referral to a JCA for assessment of her Personal Factors in both the current and new versions of the JSCI. In Job Services Australia, Stream 4 Services or DES referral may result.

Example 3: A Homeless Job Seeker

Job seeker C is aged 27 years and lives on the south west tip of Western Australia. She is in primary homelessness and lives alone. She has been classified as Not Highly Disadvantaged in the current JSCI and would have been classified into Stream 2 in the new JSCI mainly because of attracting points from the newly introduced factors:

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker C in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker C in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Female 25-29 years)	4	7
Living Arrangements (Lives alone)	0	1
Geographic (Low to moderate disadvantage ESA)	2	2
Residence Stability (Primary homelessness)	5	5
Personal Factors (High impact)	8	7
Educational Attainment (Year 12/TAFE/Diploma)	1	0
<i>Proximity to Labour Market (Outer regional)</i>	..	2
<i>Access to Transport (Public Transport)</i>	..	1
TOTAL	20	25
JSCI Outcome	Not Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 2

Note: Only those JSCI factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics. Unstable residence is classified into two groups, *Primary* (e.g. sleeping rough or in a car) and *Secondary* (e.g. staying in a hostel, boarding house or rooming house).

Job seeker C would trigger a referral to a JCA for assessment of her Personal Factors in both the current and new versions of the JSCI. In Job Services Australia, Stream 4 Services referral may result.

Example 4: A Disadvantaged Teenage Job Seeker

Job seeker D is a male job seeker aged 19 years, has not completed Year 10, has no vocational qualifications, has personal issues with high impact, has not been living in a stable residence and has mainly been unemployed in the last two years. He was born in Myanmar (Burma) and now lives in Melbourne. He would be classified as Highly Disadvantaged under the current JSCI and as Stream 3 job seeker under the new JSCI, despite a reduction in the JSCI score.

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker D in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker D in Job Services Australia
Country of Birth (Central and Far East Asia)	2	1
Educational Attainment (<Year 10)	3	2
Vocational Qualifications (None)	1	1
English Proficiency (Poor)	4	2
Recent Work Experience (Unemployed)	7	4
Phone Contactability (Not contactable)	2	2
Geographic	4	3
Personal Factors (High impact)	8	7
Residence Stability (Secondary homelessness)	3	3
<i>Disadvantaged Youth</i>	..	4
TOTAL	34	29
JSCI Outcome	Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 3

Note: Only those JSCI Factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics. Unstable residence is classified into two groups, *Primary* (e.g. sleeping rough or in a car) and *Secondary* (e.g. staying in a hostel, boarding house or rooming house).

Job seeker D would trigger a referral to a JCA for assessment of his Personal Factors and Special Needs in both the current and new versions of the JSCI. In Job Services Australia, Stream 4 Services referral may result.

Example 5: A Single Parent Job Seeker

Job seeker E is aged in her mid-late thirties and lives near Wollongong. She is a sole parent whose youngest child turned 6 years recently and is therefore required to look for work of at least 15 hours a week. In the current JSCI, Job seeker E has been classified as Highly Disadvantaged, and would have scored well above the threshold for Stream 3 in the new JSCI mainly because she has been on income support for several years and would have therefore received 12 points from the new income-support duration sub-factor:

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker E in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker E in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Female 35-39 years)	6	5
Living Arrangements (Lone parent with youngest child 6 to 15 years)	5	3
High disadvantage ESA	5	5
Educational Attainment (<Year 10)	3	2
Vocational Qualifications (None)	1	1
Recent Work Experience (Unpaid work)	6	3
<i>Job Seeker History (Duration on income support of 24+ months)</i>	..	12
TOTAL	26	31
JSCI Outcome	Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 3

Note: Only those JSCI factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics.

Example 6: An Ex-offender

Job seeker F is aged 39 years and lives in a suburb in central west Sydney. He has a criminal record and served more than a month in prison. He was not classified as Highly Disadvantaged in the current JSCI but would be classified into Stream 2 in the new JSCI. He would have gained extra points for living alone and not having his own transport.

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker F in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker F in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Male 35-39 years)	4	5
Living Arrangements (Lives alone)	0	1
Geographic (Moderate disadvantage ESA)	3	3
Ex-offender Status	6	4
Personal Factors (High impact)	8	7
Educational Attainment (Year 12/TAFE/Diploma)	1	0
Recent Work Experience (Seasonal/irregular)	1	2
<i>Access to Transport (Other Private)</i>	..	1
TOTAL	23	23
JSCI Outcome	Not Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 2

Note: Only those JSCI factors which would attract any point for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics.

Job seeker F would trigger a referral to a JCA for assessment of his Personal Factors in both the current and new versions of the JSCI. In Job Services Australia, Stream 4 Services referral may result.

Example 7: A Job Seeker with Disabilities

Job seeker G is a female job seeker aged 54 years, completed Year 10, has medical conditions and has mainly been working part-time in the last two years. She lives in the Southern Ranges Employment Services Area of NSW. She would be classified as Highly Disadvantaged under the current JSCI and as a Stream 2 job seeker under the new JSCI.

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker G in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker G in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Female 54-59 years)	9	8
Educational Attainment (Year 10)	2	1
Recent Work Experience (PT 8-35 hrs/wk)	2	0
Disabilities/Medical Conditions (<15 hrs work capacity/wk)	9	7
Geographic	3	3
<i>Workplace Support Needs (2)</i>	..	2
TOTAL	25	21
JSCI Outcome	Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 2

Note: Only those JSCI Factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics.

Job seeker G would be referred to a JCA to assess her disabilities/medical conditions in both the current and new versions of the JSCI. In Job Services Australia, Stream 4 Services or DES referral may result.

Example 8: A Job Seeker with a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background

Job seeker H is a male job seeker aged 39 years living in north-west Melbourne. He migrated to Australia from the Middle East more than two years ago, has not completed Year 10, and has mainly been unemployed in the last two years. Under the current JSCI, he would be classified as not Highly Disadvantaged. Under the new JSCI, he would be classified as a Stream 1 job seeker. However, if he had poor access to transport or any other additional disadvantage, he would have been classified as a Stream 2 job seeker.

Factors	JSCI score for job seeker H in ESC3	JSCI score for job seeker H in Job Services Australia
Age and Gender (Male 35-39 years)	4	5
Country of Birth (Middle East)	4	1
Educational Attainment (<Year 10)	3	2
Recent Work Experience (Unemployed)	7	4
English Proficiency (Moderate)	2	1
Living Arrangements (Lives alone)	0	1
Geographic	4	4
<i>Language Spoken First as a Child (Arabic)</i>	..	1
TOTAL	24	19
JSCI Outcome	Not Highly Disadvantaged	Stream 1

Note: Only those JSCI Factors which would attract any points for this job seeker are included in this Table. Newly introduced factors/sub-factors are marked in italics.

Job seeker H would trigger a Special Needs referral to a JCA in both the current and new versions of the JSCI. Under Job Services Australia, job seeker H would also trigger an automated prompt to the interviewer that a referral to the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program should be considered. This means that even if he is not referred to Stream 4 Services in the new environment, a 'fail-safe' is built into the system so that action would be taken to improve his literacy and numeracy.

Comparison between Current and New JSCI Weights

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Table 1: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Gender and Age

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Non-disadvantaged Female 15-19 years	2	5
Disadvantaged Female 15-19 years (a)	2	9
Female 20-24 years	3	7
Female 25-29 years	4	7
Female 30-34 years	5	7
<i>Female 35-39 years</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Female 40-44 years</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Female 45-49 years</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Female 50-54 years</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8</i>
Female 55-59 years	12	12
Female 60+ years	15	16
Non-disadvantaged Male 15-19 years	0	0
Disadvantaged Male 15-19 years (a)	0	4
Male 20-24 years	2	4
Male 25-29 years	3	4
Male 30-34 years	4	4
Male 35-39 years	4	5
Male 40-44 years	4	5
Male 45-49 years	5	6
<i>Male 50-54 years</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7</i>
Male 55-59 years	10	10
Male 60+ years	14	15

(a) A disadvantaged teenager is a teenager who is a sole parent, in temporary accommodation, Indigenous, a disclosed ex-offender, has mainly been unemployed in the last two years and/or has completed less than Year 10 at school. This sub-factor is new.

Table 2: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Recent Work Experience*

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Full-time	0	0
<i>Outside the Labour Force</i>	6	3
<i>Part-time (8-30 hours)</i>	2	0
<i>Part-time (<8 hours)</i>	5	2
Seasonal/irregular	1	2
<i>Unemployed</i>	7	4
<i>Unpaid work</i>	6	3

* Main activity in the last two years.

Table 3: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Job Seeker History

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Duration on Income Support of 0-12 months (new)	N.A.	0
Duration on Income Support of 12-23 months (new)	N.A.	6
Duration on Income Support of 24+ months (new)	N.A.	12
More than One Time on Income Support (new)	N.A.	1 extra
Crisis Payment Recipient (new)	N.A.	1 extra

Table 4: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Educational Attainment

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Degree/Post-graduate	0	0
<i>< Year 10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Year 10/11 completed</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Yr 12/TAFE/Diploma</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>

Table 5: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Vocational Qualifications

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Has useful vocational qualifications	0	0
No Vocational qualifications	1	1
Vocational qualifications not useful	1	1

Table 6: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: English Proficiency

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Good	0	0
<i>Mixed</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Poor</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>2</i>

Table 7: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Country of Birth: Country Component and Language Component

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Central Africa	N.A.	2
Central and Far East Asia	N.A.	1
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	N.A.	1
Middle East	N.A.	1
North America	N.A.	0
South America	N.A.	1
Southern Africa	N.A.	0
Western Europe and Mediterranean	N.A.	0
Australia, Oceania and others	N.A.	0
Arabic and other Middle Eastern languages (new)	N.A.	1
Horn of Africa languages (new)	N.A.	2
Pushtu (Afghani) (new)	N.A.	3
Scandinavian languages (new)	N.A.	1
English and other languages (new)	N.A.	0

Table 8: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Indigenous Status

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Not Indigenous	0	0
<i>Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>5</i>
Declined to answer Indigenous question	0	1
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander language spoken first (new)	N.A.	1 extra

Table 9: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Indigenous Location: High CDEP Component and Disadvantaged Labour Market Component

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
<i>Far West NSW</i>	2	1
<i>Goldfields/Esperance WA</i>	2 (Goldfields)	1
<i>Gwydir Namoi NSW</i>	3	1
<i>Macleay NSW</i>	N.A.	1
<i>Mid West and Gascoyne WA</i>	3	1
<i>Mt Isa QLD</i>	4	1
<i>Pilbara WA</i>	5 (East Pilbara)	1
<i>Port Lincoln/Ceduna SA</i>	9 (Ceduna)	1
<i>Oxley NSW</i>	6	2
<i>Alice Springs NT</i>	9	5
<i>Top End NT</i>	9	7
<i>Kimberley WA</i>	9 (East Kimberley)	8
Katherine NT	9	9
Tennant Creek NT	9	10
Far North QLD	N.A.	12
Not High-CDEP ESA	0	0
Very low disadvantage ESA (new)	N.A.	0
Low disadvantage ESA (new)	N.A.	2
Medium disadvantage ESAs (new)	N.A.	3
High disadvantage ESAs (new)	N.A.	4
Very high disadvantage ESAs (new)	N.A.	5

Table 10: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Geographic

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Very low disadvantage ESA	0	0
Low disadvantage ESA	1	1
Low to moderate disadvantage ESA	2	2
Moderate disadvantage ESA	3	3
Moderate to high disadvantage ESA	4	4
High disadvantage ESA	5	5
Very high disadvantage ESA	6	6
Extreme disadvantage ESA		7

Table 11: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Proximity to Labour Market

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Metropolitan or Inner Regional (new)	N.A.	0
Outer Regional, Remote, Very Remote or Migratory (new)	N.A.	2

Table 12: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Mode of Transport to Work

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Own transport (new)	N.A.	0
Other private transport (new)	N.A.	1
Public transport (new)	N.A.	1
No transport (new)	N.A.	2

Table 13: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Phone Contactability

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Contactable by phone	0	0
Not Contactable by phone	2	2

Table 14: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Disability/Medical Conditions

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
No disability	0	0
<i>Has one disability</i>	3	2
<i>Has multiple disabilities</i>	4	3
Declined to answer	0	1
<i>23-29 hours work capacity</i>	5	3
<i>15 to 22 hours work capacity</i>	7	6
<i>< 15 hours work capacity</i>	9	7
A single domain of support needs (new)	N.A.	1 extra
Two domains of support needs (new)	N.A.	2 extra
3-15 domains of support needs (new)	N.A.	3 extra

Table 15: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Residence Stability

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Stable residence	0	0
Primary homeless	5	5
Secondary homeless	3	3

Table 16: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Living Arrangements

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Lives with spouse	0	0
Lives with non-family members	0	0
Lives alone	0	1
<i>Lone parent with youngest child <6 years</i>	6	4
<i>Lone parent with youngest child 6-15 years old</i>	5	3
Other living conditions	0	0
Partnered with youngest child 6-15 years	0	1
Partnered with youngest child <6 years old	0	3

Table 17: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Ex-offender Status

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
Not an ex-offender	0	0
Declined to answer ex-offender question	0	1
<i>Non-custodial sentence</i>	2	1
<i>Sentenced <=1 fortnight</i>	5	3
<i>Sentenced > 1 fortnight</i>	6	4

Table 18: JSCI Factors and Sub-factors: Personal Factors

	Current Weight (Post-July 2006)	Revised JSCI Weight for July 2009
No impact	0	0
Sleep problems/insomnia (no JCA)*	3*	1
Self-esteem/motivation/presentation issues (no JCA)*	3*	1
Low impact (JCA)	3	3
<i>Medium impact (JCA)</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>High impact (JCA)</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7</i>

* Under the arrangements that apply from July 2006 to June 2009, job seekers who report 'Sleep problems/insomnia' and/or 'Self-esteem/motivation/ presentation issues' in their JSCI interview receive a maximum of 3 points, regardless of whether they report one or both issues. In the version applying from 1 July 2009, job seekers who report these conditions, but not other conditions that trigger a referral to a JCA, will receive one JSCI point for each issue they report.

Terms of Reference for the Review of the JSCI

Purpose of the Review

The Government has made a commitment, through its Social Inclusion Agenda, to improve socio-economic outcomes by maximising economic and social participation. This includes improving labour market participation, with a focus on early intervention to minimise the number of long-term welfare-dependent Australians of working age. Part of this strategy will be to ensure that employment assistance and services are targeted where they are needed the most. As the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) is used for both the identification of job seekers at risk of long-term unemployment and for allocation into appropriate services, the Government has committed to reviewing the JSCI. The Review of the JSCI will complement and support the Government's review of employment services, which has also been identified as a priority under the *Social Inclusion Agenda*.

Aims of the Review

The focus of the Review will be on the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of the JSCI in contributing to achieving the Government's aim of minimising the number of long-term welfare-dependent Australians of working age, by improving labour market participation and focussing on early intervention for disadvantaged job seekers.

An important aspect of the review will be to determine the extent to which the JSCI can contribute to the Government's aims, while ensuring that the outcomes from decisions based on the JSCI are cost effective. The strengths and weaknesses of the JSCI in its current form will be identified and options for improvements will be sought.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness, accuracy and robustness of the JSCI in identifying clients for early intervention will be examined, especially in regard to:

- identifying job seekers at risk of long-term unemployment, and for immediate access to intensive forms of employment assistance and/or other interventions;
- identifying job seekers for further specialised assessment and referral to appropriate services; and
- identifying disadvantage in different groups of job seekers including those disadvantaged by local factors.

Appropriateness

The appropriateness of the JSCI in identifying disadvantage in customers who register for income support and/or public employment services will be examined in the review, including an investigation of:

- the application of the JSCI by Centrelink, Job Capacity Assessors and Job Network;

- the appropriateness of the factors and weightings that make up the JSCI;
- any undue administrative burden associated with the application of the JSCI;
- whether the JSCI should be readministered to job seekers at set time intervals; (e.g., every 12 months), to accurately identify prevailing disadvantage; and
- the mechanisms in place to ensure early identification of changes to a job seeker's circumstances that may affect his or her employment prospects.

Efficiency

The efficiency of the JSCI will be examined to assess whether:

- JSCI assessments are conducted in a manner which is timely, and which result in reliable and valid assessments;
- referral processes, and linkages with other programmes and services, are streamlined as far as possible; and
- the outcomes from decisions based on the JSCI demonstrate an equitable trade-off between expenditure and job seeker assistance.

Submissions to the Review of the JSCI

Submissions to the Review of the JSCI were received from the following organisations:

1. Advanced Personnel Management
2. AMES
3. Bendigo Access Employment
4. BoysTown
5. Campbell Page
6. Carers Australia
7. Central West Community College
8. Excels
9. IPA
10. IPC Employment
11. Jobs Australia
12. Jobs Statewide
13. MatchWorks (1)
14. Max Employment
15. Minniecon and Burke
16. Mission Australia
17. National Disability Services (NDS)
18. Salvation Army Employment Plus – Disability-related aspects
19. Salvation Army Employment Plus - Overall
20. Sarina Russo Job Access
21. South Burnett CTC
22. Wesley Mission
23. WISE Employment
24. (Confidential)

Further Information on JSCI Review Research

Consultations – DEEWR staff *Fieldwork April-May 2008*

- Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with Job Network members, Centrelink Customer Service Advisers and Job Capacity Assessment providers were conducted in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, across metropolitan, regional and rural locations.
- Centrelink assisted with some of the interviews.

Job Network members	Centrelink Customer Service Advisers	Job Capacity Assessment providers
Wangaratta (Victoria)	Melbourne (Victoria)	Shepparton (Victoria)
Shepparton (Victoria)	Adelaide (SA)	Melbourne (Victoria)
Melbourne (Victoria)	Murray Bridge (SA)	Shellharbour (NSW)
Adelaide (SA)	Shellharbour (NSW)	
Murray Bridge (SA)		
Nowra (NSW)		
Total = 6	Total = 4	Total = 3

Note: Also spoke to Centrelink Social Workers at Centrelink's National Office in Tuggeranong.

Qualitative Research – Social Research Centre (Melbourne) *Fieldwork May-June 2008*

- Job seekers were selected to represent a wide range of job seekers based on location; gender; 'Highly Disadvantaged' status; and country of birth.
- Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 job seekers in ACT (Canberra), NSW (Campbelltown) and Victoria (North Melbourne).
- There was also a focus group with job seekers in NSW (Campbelltown).
- Subsequent focus groups scheduled for Victoria (Melbourne) were changed to interviews as the job seekers displayed such diverse characteristics that it was considered unproductive to interview them in a group situation as they had so little in common.

The research with Job Network members consisted of:

- one workshop in NSW (Campbelltown) with 1 Job Network member; and
- one workshop in Victoria (Glen Waverley) with 1 Job Network member.

Note: In some of the presentations/information on the JSCI Review, the consultations and qualitative research have been presented together and referred to as qualitative analysis.

Cognitive Testing – TNS Social Research (Canberra)

Fieldwork Stage One – October 2008

Fieldwork Stage Two – November 2008

- Job seekers (Stage One) were selected to represent a wide range of job seekers based on age, duration of unemployment, allowance type, disability type, Indigenous status, location and other JSCI-related factors (e.g. educational qualifications, English language skills and ex-offender status).
- In-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with 78 job seekers – 39 face-to-face and 39 by telephone.
- Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the ACT (Canberra), NSW (Liverpool), Tasmania (Burnie and Devonport) and Victoria (Melbourne, Ballarat and Ararat).
- telephone interviews were conducted with job seekers living in a range of locations.

State/Territory	Location	Number
Victoria	Ballarat	4
	Sebastopol	3
	Soldiers Hill	2
	Abbotsford	1
	Ararat	1
	Golden Point	1
	Hawthorn East	1
	Nerrina	1
	Stawell	1
	Wendouree	1
Queensland	Bellara	1
	Coalfalls	1
	Wyandra	1
Tasmania	Devonport	2
	East Devonport	2
	Burnie	1
NSW	Canley Vale	1
	Casula	1
	Fairfield	1
	Liverpool	1
	North Parramatta	1
	Pottsville	1
	Warwick Farm	1
ACT	Turner	1
	Higgins	1
	Reid	1
Total		34

Note: This table does not include the 5 CALD telephone interviews. They were conducted in NSW (Sydney x 2 and Western Sydney x 2) and Victoria (Melbourne x 1).

The cognitive testing process with Job Network members (Stage Two) consisted of:

- face-to-face in-depth meeting in NSW (Sydney) with 1 Job Network member – total of 2 participants; and
- a small focus group in NSW (Queanbeyan) with 1 Job Network member – total of 3 participants.

The cognitive testing process with Centrelink Customer Service Advisers (Stage Two) consisted of:

- face-to-face in-depth meetings at Call Centres in NSW (Illawarra) and Victoria (Moreland) – total of 8 participants; and
- a focus group at the Call Centre in ACT (Braddon).