

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

Re: Employment Services

Dear Minister,

Thank-you for this opportunity to provide our suggestions on strengthening the outcome for job seekers from employment service providers.

This submission looks at the need for closer coordination and partnership between employment service providers and recommends the development of a services protocol for the provision of services among employment service providers in order to provide greater outcomes for Job Seekers.

Background

In the area of Job Placement, RCSA has been working with the Department over the past four years to promote and increase uptake for the Job Placement program among recruiters (RCSA members and non-members) nationally. RCSA has recently commenced a new contract which runs through to 2009. During this period RCSA will rollout several key initiatives including:

- **Job Placement Information Briefings** for recruiters who are considering the Job Placement License as a strategy to grow their business and access more candidates;
- **Job Placement Strategy & Planning Workshops** for recruiters who presently have a Job Placement License and are looking to develop or further expand this area of their business; and
- **Job Placement Tool Kit** which will be available to all recruiters to assist in integrating a Job Placement License into your recruitment business.
- **Job Placement Information Service** for recruiters to assist in reviewing and applying for a Job Placement License.

A focus of this work is on educating and informing recruiters about the Job Placement program and providing workshops and hands-on sessions to help new license holders integrate this into their recruitment business and to help existing license holders further develop this aspect of their business.

To date, our work within the contract has identified several inherent challenges:

- Existing Job Placement License holders are generally utilising their license in a retrospective rather proactive manner;
- The level of coordination between employment services and private recruiters has historically been inconsistent and fragmented which we feel has resulted in reduced opportunities for job seekers;
- There exists a number of preconception as to the employability and work readiness of candidates available from Australian Job Search and employment services;
- An employer's focus is on securing the best available candidate for a role.

The challenge for recruiters and on-hire firms is to secure a continual supply of skilled, employable and work ready labour to meet the growing needs of their clients, Australian employers.

Candidate Scarce Market

The current employment environment should be well suited to provide outcomes for job seekers:

- Current skill and staff shortages have heightened the need for employers, and recruiters, to rethink their methods and places they are searching for available candidates;
- The current employment environment should provide a compelling case for coordination between employment services;
- Clients of Employment Services (Job Seekers) should be a natural source of candidates to fill the skill and staff shortages.

In the current candidate scarce market recruiters and on-hire firms are actively seeking new candidates. However in the current environment there is little incentive for employment service providers to coordinate their efforts to gain access to work ready candidates. As such, job seekers miss out on an opportunity to move into the workforce.

In the case of Job Placement License holders, they site difficulty in working with employment service providers in regards to the quality of candidates, availability of candidates and responsiveness of providers:

- Private recruiters and on-hire firms work in a time sensitive environment requiring a quick response to meet client needs;
- Candidates frequently need to be job ready as they are often placed in a work site with short notice;
- Recruiters and on-hire firms are seeking the best available candidate not the only candidate available and look to other employment services to assist in pre-screening candidates to help achieve outcomes.

RCSA feels a greater level of day-to-day engagement and awareness of recruitment practices and needs of employers is required from all employment service providers to maximise the outcomes for job seekers. RCSA Members and recruiters work with over 95% of Australian employers and as such have a unique understanding of the needs and workplace environment of Australian employers.

Job Placement license holders frequently advise they are unable to place candidates referred from other providers due to poor skills, work readiness or availability despite a job brief being provided. We are committed to working with all employment service providers to create outcomes for job seekers and to help meet the skills and candidate shortages in the marketplace.

Coordinated Employment Services Protocol

Job Placement License holders also site challenges in striking a reasonable agreement that fairly rewards both employment service organisations for the effort expended in placing a registered job seeker. RCSA believes that any engagement must provide due compensation to both organisations.

We believe greater outcomes for job seekers will result in an environment where an established and agreed protocol exists for the sharing of placement fees and the provision of services such as job readiness training, skills development specific to the requirements of a work site, clothing allowances or special considerations for the workplace environment resulting in an outcome.

This protocol will fairly reward all organisations involved in achieving an outcome and draw on the skills and strengths of each organisation. RCSA believes a set of guidelines must be developed and provided for all employment service providers for this protocol to be effective and to provide an increased number of outcomes for job seekers. RCSA would be pleased to be engaged in the development of such a protocol.

I look forward to discussing this submission with you further.

Yours sincerely

Julie Mills
CEO