

6. Concluding Comments

The very short time frame between the introduction of AWT measures and the preparation of this report constrains the extent to which the effectiveness of AWT can be measured. That said, it is significant that where positive, albeit modest, changes in self reliance and paid work are evident, these tend to be associated with the introduction of specific participation requirements (eg. for parents whose youngest child is aged 13 years and over).

In relation to each of the AWT income support recipient groups, the data shows that:

- parents remain heavily reliant on income support;
 - modest increases in paid work were evident for parents with participation requirements (those whose youngest child is aged 13 years and over);
 - more parents left income support because they found employment but the number of parents on income support increased;
 - mature age job seekers were no more likely to leave income support or participate in paid work;
 - mature age job seeker participation in activities such as volunteering and study and training which could be a pathway to paid work remained constant;
 - despite an immediate fall in the numbers of people claiming and being granted DSP, the number of people receiving DSP has since remained steady;
- there was no increase in the percentage of DSP people undertaking paid work; and
 - income support reliance among Indigenous Australians did not decrease.

Although there was no significant change in income support reliance and participation in paid work among working age income support recipients, survey findings indicate that many income support recipients were participating in other activities, had capacity to work and indeed preferred to work.

Personal Adviser Survey findings showed that income support recipients valued the personalised assistance that they received from the Personal Adviser but assistance was generally not enough to encourage people to voluntarily move off income support.

Strong community support was found for income support recipients to participate in activities to improve their job prospects.

While the data in this report has limitations, the findings indicate that AWT was an important and useful first step towards increasing participation of the working age income support population. However, the voluntary nature of many of the AWT measures suggests that greater increases in participation rates may depend on the introduction of compulsory requirements.