

New Labor Government's invitation to comment on current and future employment policy:

Response

Arrow Recruitment Pty Ltd is a Recruitment and Labour hire company who's Director and most key executive staff are Australian Muslims.

So running a labour hire business where we deal with people from all backgrounds, religions and walks of life, we are in an unique position to assess the Muslim population and its performance in relation to employment outcomes from an insider's point of view. We feel that this is a topic that although discussed at length through many forums held by the former Liberal Government, has been largely neglected in that there are still no concrete programmes in place to assess and then address the issue of non participation amongst the Muslim population.

So whilst our experience indicates that the current number of programs and services in place has been quite effective in providing successful employment outcomes in general, we feel that there needs to be more done to assess, and then address the factors that contribute to the low employment success rate within the Australian Muslim community.

We also suggest all newly unemployed people be made to participate in Work for the Dole Schemes immediately with allowances for jobsearching and interviews and appointments etc, and not just be allowed to take up language skills courses only to qualify for support. This will impede the tendency of workers to lose their work ethic and values over the first 13 weeks.

There needs to be a greater emphasis placed on the "job comes first" attitude as currently the job network or centrelink appointments are viewed as the highest priority and if employment opportunities conflict with these appointments then jobseekers will neglect to turn up to potential employment opportunities as a result eg. a jobseeker newly placed in to a job but will neglect to turn up for a days work, far too often the excuse has been I cannot miss my centrelink or job network appointment because they will issue me with a breach, ultimately ending up in the person missing out on the dole. This often ends up in the jobseeker being put off from the job he / she just undertook. To tackle this problem a campaign to educate both the job network providers, centrelink staff and the jobseeker about "the job comes first" principle should change this perception.

The Government should also fund private recruitment agencies in a similar way to its jobnetwork providers for successful job placement of at risk candidates.

Skills training should become an additional activity which people may take up to advance themselves into future positions but should not be the only thing that unemployed people need to do to secure allowances from centrelink. For example if a migrant found that language was a barrier to career advancement or merely retaining employment, and as a result then chose to leave the workforce and undertake an English language course, then they should be made attend modified work for the dole schemes in conjunction with the language course to qualify for support.

The Government should also make jobseekers more accountable to turn up for job interviews arranged with employers – over 50% of candidates who arrange to come for interviews through jobnetwork providers do not show up for the interview, or show up for interviews but fail to show up to the job when placed. We need a system where employers can report these breaches to centrelink with consequences for the jobseeker which include addressing why the jobseeker failed to attend.

The Government needs to place more emphasis on the importance of getting and retaining a job rather than just simply undertaking a range of training courses with no intention of ever joining the workforce.

Training courses should also be conducted after hours for those jobseekers who are categorized as JSSO or FJNE who are getting some work, e.g. forklift courses etc... Too many times we have had a successful placement turn sour because the job network offers training opportunities to jobseekers during work hours and the jobseeker will give up the job to undertake the training. In these circumstances allowing the job seeker to stay in the employment while receiving training after hours will give them the best of both worlds i.e. being employed and being able to receive training.

Equal opportunities for Incentives between job network and private recruitment agencies for the placement of long term unemployed instead of all the incentives going to the job network. Again those same incentives should also be aimed at job retention as well. This will encourage competition amongst recruitment and employment agencies to have the long term unemployed placed quickly so that agencies can benefit financially.

Long term training e.g. Adult Apprentices should be made more attractive to both the potential employer and the potential employee, not just financial it could be other benefits such as assistance with tools, uniforms, etc... with a large incentive or focus to come on completion of the Apprenticeship. Job Network and training facilities that offer these services should ensure that they do all the necessary checks to ensure that the jobseeker is suitable i.e. doesn't have back problems if the job will involve heavy lifting (Fitter/ Welder) or has a suitable level of math's if going for an Electrician apprenticeship. Simple checks will stop drop outs and unsuitable forms of training.