

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

Wednesday 13th February, 2008

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to add to the discourse on how employment services can be improved. I write on behalf of Waverley Action for Youth Services in addition to a letter previously sent by our Business Manager, Karen McLaughlan. I would like to further comment on the JPET and Personal Support Program which WAYS have employment contracts for.

The Personal Support Program and JPET were initially funded by FaCS and were designed to assist clients to focus on their barriers and to get them ready to move into education or employment. Since the change over to DEEWR and the introduction of the Specialist Services Application, there has been an increased focus on clients achieving economic outcomes including placing clients into other employment programs such as Job Network, VRS, DEN and Work for The Dole as well as education and employment placements. The introduction of the single score for both of these programs (soon to take effect for JPET) the outcome rating of 60% for PSP and 40% economic rate (20% social rate) for JPET reinforces that these programs are more focused on economic outcomes. This is a fundamental shift from supporting these jobseekers to address their serious non-vocational barriers to become job ready to the outcome of getting them placed in employment. This disadvantages both the organization and the participants of the programs as it is increasingly difficult to place people into work or education when they are homeless, drug and/or alcohol dependent, have mental health issues and are experiencing a range of other barriers. WAYS have also seen an increase in the severity of mental health issues and are utilizing well over the designated 15 mental health places for PSP. At WAYS the staff focus on reducing the barriers of the participant and will transition them into employment, education, DEN, vocational rehabilitation, Job Network or other employment programs when they are ready yet we are cautious

about moving clients who are not ready and therefore setting them up for failure.

WAYS have also experienced situations where we have gone to transfer a client to the Job Network ISCA program from PSP but have found we cannot as they have already completed ISCA1 previously and part of ISCA2. This guideline disadvantages the participant on the program as they can only stay on PSP and not get the intensive assistance for job seeking they would have got if they were on ISCA. This also decreases the chance of the participant and organization achieving an economic outcome, which is now in integral part in being successful in PSP.

Overall, in light of the aim of assisting the most disadvantaged young job seekers that access the JPET and PSP program to overcome their barriers to employment and education, it would be beneficial for the High Performance Indicator Framework, the outcome rate and single score be reviewed for both PSP and JPET.

We look forward to the outcomes that will come from this request and the impact these will have for job seekers and the overall sector.

Yours truly,

Rena Buchert
Team Leader
Waverley Action for Youth Services
94 George St
Redfern
NSW 2016