



The Hon Peter Dutton MP

Minister for Workforce Participation

Welfare to Work - Increased participation of the very long-term unemployed

What funding is the government committing to increase job opportunities for the very long-term unemployed?

- ▶ The Howard Government will provide funding of \$360.2 million over four years to assist long-term job seekers find jobs.
- ▶ From 1 July 2006, these job seekers will be given more opportunities to find work, and will also face increased requirements if they are avoiding work.

How will this support be accessed by the long-term unemployed?

- ▶ After a second period of Intensive Support customised assistance, Job Network members will review the circumstances of each job seeker to decide the future needs of very long-term unemployed people.
- ▶ Some job seekers will be referred for a Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessment and, as a result, may go on to specialist services such as the Personal Support Programme, vocational rehabilitation or Disability Employment Services.

How long does someone have to be in Job Network before they can access these services?

- ▶ Job seekers assessed by their Job Network member as making a genuine effort to find work will, usually after 36 months in Job Network, be able to access:
 - ▶ Wage Assist, a wage subsidy; or
 - ▶ ongoing Job Network assistance; or
 - ▶ meet an annual Mutual Obligation requirement, where applicable.
- ▶ Job seekers on part-rate of payment, or who are not capable of working full-time, will continue to receive their regular Job Network servicing.

How much will the Wage Assist subsidy be?

- ▶ The Wage Assist subsidy will be equivalent to the average rate of Newstart Allowance (currently about \$350 per fortnight). It will be paid to employers by Job Network members through the Job Seeker Account.



The Hon Peter Dutton MP

Minister for Workforce Participation

Page 2

-
- ▶ The Wage Assist subsidy will be for a minimum of 13 weeks and may be up to 26 weeks. The maximum subsidy available to employers will be approximately \$4 600.
 - ▶ If a job seeker becomes unemployed during the 26 weeks on the subsidy, they will return to the Job Network system at the point where they left it.

How many Wage Assist places will there be?

- ▶ When fully implemented, about 7 000 Wage Assist places will be available each year.

What happens to concession cards for job seekers?

- ▶ Job seekers on Wage Assist will remain eligible for concession cards.

What happens to payments for Job Network members?

- ▶ Job Network members will continue to be eligible for 13- and 26-week interim and final outcome payments as they are now.
- ▶ Job Network members can choose to place a job seeker in a Wage Assist job as an alternative to a second period of Intensive Support customised assistance.
- ▶ Job seekers will only be able to participate in one period of Wage Assist.

What happens to people who seem to be avoiding work? Will there be any penalty?

- ▶ Job seekers aged under 60 with a pattern of work avoidance will be referred to full-time Work for the Dole for 25 hours a week, ten months a year.
- ▶ This means they will be required to undertake 1 100 hours of Work for the Dole, compared to the current 390 hours a year.
- ▶ Where job seekers do not attend full-time Work for the Dole projects, they may be precluded from income support payment for eight weeks.