



# Parents Advisory Group – Meeting 7

## Communique

The Parents Advisory Group (the Group) held its seventh meeting virtually on 27 May 2025. The Group consists of parent representatives, community organisations and an academic expert. The community organisations attending the meeting included:

- Antipoverty Centre
- Australian Council of Social Service
- Brave Foundation
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Council of Single Mothers and their Children
- Settlement Council of Australia
- Single Mother Families Australia

The Department noted that the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, and his government have been reappointed for a second term. Following the swearing in of the new Ministry on 13 May 2025, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP is the new Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

The Department thanked members for the feedback they provided at the last Parents Advisory Group meeting to help improve the messaging in the Services Australia Parent Pathways workflow. Members were advised that their feedback has already positively impacted the way Parent Pathways will be communicated to parents and carers through Services Australia, with a range of changes to its messaging being implemented in 2025.

The Department provided an overview of the Parent Pathways service data as at 30 April 2025 (<https://www.dewr.gov.au/employment-services-data/parent-pathways-data>). The Department advised that it is working with internal and external teams to address some early service-related issues, such as incorrect data being recorded, incorrect referrals being made, instances of ineligible parents being commenced in the service, and troubles for providers when transferring participants and their Parent Funds to other sites or providers in the system. The Department advised that it is working to address these issues as soon as possible to reduce any adverse effects on participants and providers and to ensure a safe and effective service.

The Department covered a range of service updates that were recently completed, including:

- An update to the Parent Pathways Guidelines for Providers to determine whether face-to-face servicing is safe for an initial discussion at the participants request, for example, because of a natural disaster or a history of serious incidents (effective from 20 May 2025).
- An update to the Parent Pathways Guidelines for the mentor to parent ratio for caseload purposes to include 'commenced' participants only (effective 1 July 2025).

- An update to the Parent Pathways Service Guarantee to provide clarification on the complaints process and to better align privacy obligations with the department's new complaints service offering (effective from 1 July 2025).
- An update the Workforce Australia Online Individual accounts, to enable Parent Pathways participants to view their Individual Fund balance and purchase history (effective March 2025).

Some members had positive reflections of the service, including a community organisation who shared that its team leaders have advised that the experiences with Parent Pathways in Tasmania have been positive so far, specifically in relation to the assistance the service is providing parents with driving lessons, courses and laptops. Members did raise some concerns with reported experiences from people who have become ineligible for the service when their youngest child turned 6 and an apparent lack of handovers to the Workforce Australia program being conducted by Parent Pathways providers. Members reiterated their ongoing concerns about the eligibility restrictions for Parent Pathways being based on the age of the youngest child. The Department confirmed that the concerns have been noted by the Department and changes to eligibility remain a decision for government.

The Department delivered a presentation on the Parent-Centred and Strength-Based Approaches training module that is being developed. Members were provided an overview of the specialist training module which will provide mentors with the skills necessary to include holistic, parent centred servicing focussing on the parents' strengths. Members provided feedback on what should be included in the module, such as empowering and parent centred questions and strategies they can use, ways to build and maintain trust, and help to understand and advocate for parents' best interests, and to support parents from a range of backgrounds in a diverse range of circumstances. The feedback provided will help guide the development of the module.

The Department provided a short overview of the draft Participant Satisfaction Survey for Parent Pathways participants. The Department noted that the survey results will help the Department understand if participants are satisfied with the service and their provider and whether Parent Pathways is helping them reach their goals. Members were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the questions, language, accessibility and design of the survey. The feedback provided will be used by external consultants who specialises in survey design to finalise the survey.

The Department thanked members for their input and feedback into the Parents Pathways Evaluation Strategy and process, noting that the insights will be extremely valuable in determining the success of the service. The Department updated members on the next steps of the process, including the finalisation and publication of the Evaluation Strategy on the Department's website.

The next meeting will take place in late July 2025.