



26 September 2018

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Senate Education and Employment References Committee
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Submission to the inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of jobactive

Anglicare Australia commends the committee for undertaking this inquiry regarding jobactive. The employment services system has significant consequences for the wellbeing of Australians experiencing disadvantage. Reviewing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the jobactive model is key to improving the employment services system.

Anglicare Australia supports the call of the Australian Unemployed Workers Union for a greater focus on person-centred employment services, and urges the committee to give primary attention to the experiences of people who have been required to use jobactive. The voices of those with firsthand experience of the system, and for whom it is intended to support, must be the first priority in reviewing and reforming jobactive to achieve better employment outcomes.

As acknowledged by the Department of Jobs and Small Business, the jobactive system has largely failed to support people who are most disadvantaged into employment. The Department found that “almost half of the people in jobactive have remained in the service for two years or more. Among the most disadvantaged job seekers (Stream C), the average length of time on the caseload is five years.”¹ Anglicare Australia’s submission to the Department’s review focused on this issue and is relevant to this inquiry.² The jobactive system does not support long-term, quality outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage. Research from the Anglicare Australia network demonstrates that a person-centred approach, which acknowledges and supports individual differences and situational factors, recognising people’s agency, strengths and aspirations, would be much more effective in supporting long-term employment outcomes.³

¹ Department of Jobs and Small Business (2018) *The next generation of employment services discussion paper*.

² Anglicare Australia, Submission regarding ‘The Next Generation of Employment Services: Discussion Paper’, 8 August 2018, available at <http://www.anglicare.asn.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/aa-submission-future-employment-services-aug-2018---final.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

³ Goodwin-Smith, I. and Hutchinson, C. (2015) ‘Beyond supply and demand: addressing the complexities of workforce exclusion in Australia.’ *Journal of Social Inclusion* 6(1). Available online: <https://josi.journals.griffith.edu.au/index.php/inclusion/article/view/640/670>

Further, the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of the jobactive system reflects a lack of acknowledgement of the job market context. Anglicare Australia's [Jobs Availability Snapshot](#) has found there is a consistent lack of entry-level jobs for those who need them. In 2017 our snapshot found that a conservative ratio of five people in Stream C jobactive caseload (facing the most barriers to employment) are competing for each entry level position. The situation was found to be particularly dire for people seeking low-skill positions in South Australia and Tasmania.⁴

We urge the Committee to recommend:

- Reform of jobactive to create an appropriate and effective employment services system that offers a range of support. This system must recognise the aspirations and capacity of people seeking work, and support creative opportunities for partnership and employment at the local level.
- The decoupling of employment service provision from individual penalties. The current regime creates further economic deprivation for people who are already often highly vulnerable, and trying to survive on government income payments well below the poverty line.⁵
- The urgent creation of a third party independent body to better regulate employment services, and provide advocacy for people using them.

We thank the Committee for your consideration of our position. Should you require further information, please contact the Anglicare Australia office

Yours sincerely,

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Anglicare Australia

⁴ Anglicare Australia (2017) *Jobs Availability Snapshot 2017*. Anglicare Australia: Canberra. Available online: <http://www.anglicare.asn.au/our-work/research-reports/jobs-availability-snapshot>

⁵ See Saunders, P., & Bedford, M. (2017). *New Minimum Income for Healthy Living Budget Standards for Low-Paid and Unemployed Australians*. (SPRC Report 11/17). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney. <http://doi.org/10.4225/53/5994e0ca804a4>

