

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Schools

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000040

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Children in vulnerable circumstances

Question

The Minister for Education has repeatedly referred to learning loss for “children in vulnerable circumstances” as a key reason why schools should be returning to physical learning.

1. What measures are being put in place to identify children who have fallen behind?
2. What action is being taken to make sure kids who fall behind are able to catch up?
3. Has any extra funding been provided?
4. Has the Department provided advice to the Minister on what the Commonwealth can do to make sure kids who fall behind aren't permanently impacted by the crisis?

Answer

1. & 2. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment has not collected this information, which will vary across education authorities, schools, teachers and the circumstances of individual students.
3. No.
4. The department has provided advice to the Minister on research commissioned to examine the impact of learning at home on the educational outcomes of vulnerable children. This research identifies areas that the education sector could progress to mitigate impacts.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000041

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships during COVID

Question

1. How many apprenticeships have been cancelled since 20 January 2020?
2. How many apprentices have been suspended during the COVID crisis?
3. Please provide the same data (Q1-2) for traineeships.

Answer

The Department is not able to provide a response to these questions at this time due to the lag in the release of National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data.

The NCVER Apprentice and Traineeship data collection is released quarterly, six months in arrears. The Department expects data for the first quarter of 2020 will be released in August 2020, and the June quarter will be released in November 2020.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000042

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships during COVID (small to medium enterprises)

Question

What proportions of apprentices and trainees are employed with small to medium enterprises with up to 20 employees?

Answer

The latest available data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research indicates that, as at 30 September 2019, 41 per cent of apprentices and trainees were employed by small businesses (less than 20 employees), 27 per cent were employed by medium sized businesses (20 or more employees but less than 200 employees).

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000043

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

COVID-19 Apprentice Wage Subsidy

Question

How many apprentices and trainees are receiving the COVID-19 Apprentice Wage Subsidy?

- a. How many employers?
- b. Top 5 industries/occupations impacted.

Answer

- a. As at 21 May 2020, a total of 39,443 apprentices and trainees have been assisted by the *Supporting Apprentices and Trainees* wage subsidy (*Note: these figures do not include assistance under the JobKeeper Payment Scheme*).
- b. As at 21 May 2020, 22,393 employers have been assisted by the *Supporting Apprentices and Trainees* wage subsidy.
- c. The table below shows the top five industries and occupations of the apprentices and trainees assisted through the *Supporting Apprentices and Trainees* measure.

Top five industries	Top five occupations
Construction Services	Bricklayers, Carpenters and Joiners
Repair and Maintenance	Electricians
Building Construction	Plumbers
Administrative Services	Automotive Electricians and Mechanics
Personal and Other Services	Hairdressers

Notes:

- Data as at 21 May 2020 includes an additional week of claim data. As a result, these figures are higher than those provided during the 19 May 2020 hearing of the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19.
- Industry is classified using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), and Occupation is classified using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000044

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships during COVID (job losses and redeployments)

Question

How many apprentices and trainees have lost their job due to COVID-19?

- a. How many have been re-employed with a wage subsidy?
- b. How many have been re-employed by a group training company?
- c. How many have been re-employed without a wage subsidy being paid?

Answer

The Department is not able to provide a response to this question at this time, due to the lag in the release of National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data. The NCVER Apprentice and Traineeship data collection is released quarterly, six months in arrears. The Department expects data for the first quarter of 2020 will be released in August 2020, and the June quarter will be released in November 2020.

- a. At 21 May 2020, 39,443 apprentices and trainees had been retained with wage subsidy under the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees Wage Subsidy Measure (*Note: these figures do not include assistance under the JobKeeper Payment Scheme*). As at 21 May 2020, three apprentices displaced from a small business have been re-engaged and their new employers have claimed a re-engagement wage subsidy through the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees measure.
- b. As at 21 May 2020, two of these apprentices were re-engaged through a Group Training Organisation using a Supporting Apprentices and Trainees wage subsidy.
- c. Where an employer has not claimed a Supporting Apprentices and Trainees re-engagement subsidy for an eligible apprentice or trainee, data is not immediately available to the Department.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000046

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships during COVID (subsidies)

Question

What is the cost to government of:

- a. The COVID-19 Apprentice Wage Subsidy
- b. Apprentices and trainees receiving the JobKeeper wage subsidy?

Answer

- a. A total of \$1.3 billion is available for the *Supporting Apprentices and Trainees* measure across the 2019–20 and 2020–21 financial years.
- b. Information about the operation of the JobKeeper Payment, including the cost of the measure and the characteristics of recipients, should be directed to the Treasury.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000047

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Registered Training Organisations and COVID (impact)

Question

What impact is the COVID crisis having on the vocational education and training sector?

Answer

RTOs, which also include those regulated by the state regulators, train around 4.1 million students annually, with the majority (about 2.9 million students) undertaking at least one unit of training at a private provider. There were 4,039 RTOs as of 30 April.

As at 1 June 2020, there are 3,735 Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) regulated providers, of which approximately 2,800 are private providers.

According to data self-reported by training providers to ASQA (as at 1 June), 1,132 training providers have reported as being impacted by COVID19.

- 715 providers had temporarily closed all campuses.
 - 631 have moved to remote study options.
 - 84 have ceased all training and assessment.
- 40 providers had temporarily closed one or more campuses, but others remain open.
- 377 providers are offering online delivery if preferred, but campuses remain open.

This has affected a total of 780,637 students, who have had their training adjusted and a further 29,182 students have ceased training.

Of the 29,182 students that have ceased training:

- 11,018 are at providers where all campuses are closed and no training or assessment is being conducted.
- 9,125 are at providers where all campuses are closed but students were offered remote study options.
- 7,037 are at providers where campuses remain open and students have been offered online training if preferred.

- 2,002 are at providers where one or more campuses are closed but others remain open.

13 training providers are in the process of permanently closing, citing COVID-19 as the cause.

- 10 of these providers are private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), 2 are CRICOS providers and 1 is a community-based education provider.
 - 9 of the 11 registered training organisations had enrolments in 2018.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000049

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Registered Training Organisations and COVID (closures)

Question

Has the Department done any analysis of the proportion and number of providers who are vulnerable to closure as a result of the crisis?

- a. If yes, how many students will be impacted by RTO closures?
- b. How many jobs will be lost because of closures?

Answer

The Department has worked closely with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and identify those providers that may be at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Refer to Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000049 for information on students impacted by training provider closures.

The Department is unable to quantify the number of jobs lost due to provider closures.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000050

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Registered Training Organisations and COVID (TPS)

Question

Will provider failure place an additional burden on the tuition protection scheme?

- a. What is the estimated cost to Government of provider failure as a result of the crisis?
- b. What measures are being taken to prevent provider closures?

Answer

On the current rate of provider closures, costs are able to be met within the existing resources of the Tuition Protection Service (TPS) program.

- a. As at 26 May 2020, the value of claims paid by Overseas Student Tuition Fund is \$48,000 for training provider closures citing the impact of COVID-19.
- b. In response to emerging risks to capacity of the national training system, on 3 April 2020 the COAG Skills Council agreed a national approach to supporting viability of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

All jurisdictions agreed to put in place measures that vary contract arrangements to provide greater flexibility and funding certainty for RTOs (although approaches across jurisdictions are different) including:

- adjustments to payment structures to assist training providers with cash flow;
- additional or guaranteed budgeted funding for community education providers;
- new funding to support the move to online delivery;
- variations to existing funding agreements to allow additional time to meet milestones or greater flexibility in contract deliverables.

The Australian Government has acted through the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) to ensure measures were quickly put in place to reduce regulatory burden, provide regulatory fee relief, and support RTO viability.

ASQA is providing advice to RTOs on training and assessment adaptive measures that allow providers to continue training. This includes, but is not limited to, online or other flexible delivery, changes in sequencing for the delivery of units of competency and arrangements for delaying work placements.

On 12 April 2020, the Government announced measures that provide regulatory fee relief for registered training organisations (RTOs) through ASQA.

- ASQA is reimbursing or waiving certain fees and charges paid between 1 January 2020 and 30 June 2021, resulting in up to \$22.6 million in fees and charges relief for the vocational education and training sector.
- In addition, ASQA's move to full cost recovery has been delayed until July 2021. This is an additional saving to the sector of \$12.6 million.

ASQA has also taken steps to reduce regulatory burden on RTOs and extended timeframes for regulatory obligations. This includes:

- postponing regulatory activities, such as audits, on a case-by-case basis;
- extending teach out periods for qualifications that have been updated, so that RTOs can teach the current qualification instead of moving to the new qualification;
- delaying requirements for RTOs to complete annual declarations on compliance from 31 March to 30 April 2020;
- supporting RTOs to put their registration on hold if they need to temporarily cease operating during the pandemic;
- supporting RTOs to advise ASQA of temporary changes in their operations through a streamlined online tool.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000052

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

jobactive (transfers to other employment programs)

Question

Please provide complete data on the number of people transferred into the other employment programs for the months of March 2019, April 2019, March 2020, and April 2020.

Answer

The number of job seekers who exited jobactive, Online Employment Services Trial or New Employment Services Trial to another employment service program:

Destination Program	March 2019	April 2019	March 2020	April 2020
ParentsNext	<10	<10	0	0
Time to Work	<10	<10	13	12
Disability Employment Services	5,353	4,822	5,691	4,892
Community Development Program	577	492	599	318
Transition to Work	97	91	186	88
New Enterprise Incentive Scheme	455	462	396	266
Total	6,485	5,870	6,885	5,576

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000053

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

jobactive (placements into Streams)

Question

Please provide the placement data for placements made into streams A, B & C for jobactive for the months of March 2019, April 2019, March 2020, and April 2020.

Answer

The number of participants on the jobactive caseload in Streams A, B and C as at 31 March 2019, 30 April 2019, 31 March 2020, and 30 April 2020 are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Caseload placements by stream and date

Caseload Placements	31 Mar 2019	30 Apr 2019	31 Mar 2020	30 Apr 2020
Stream not determined	4,707	4,912	18,459	63,742
Stream A Volunteer	10,841	10,118	96,950	13,098
Stream A	247,506	242,184	263,983	703,248
Stream B	267,196	266,191	278,687	317,423
Stream C	100,792	100,201	99,237	105,029
Total	631,042	623,606	757,316	1,202,540

Notes:

1. The data includes participants in the Online Employment Services Trial, Voluntary Online Employment Services Trial and New Employment Services Trial.
2. Participants whose stream was not determined had yet to complete the Job Seeker Classification Instrument.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000056

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Mutual obligation

Question

1. Minister Cash has said further extensions to mutual obligation suspensions will depend on Treasury figures and ongoing impacts of restrictions in place. In evidence to the Committee several measures were outlined, please explain what criteria will be used to make these decisions?
2. Please provide a detailed description of each stage of reintroducing mutual obligations.
3. What threshold will need to be met to reintroduce penalties?
4. Are you looking at alternatives to punitive approaches driven by compliance?
5. Are you monitoring how providers are using the advanced administration fees?
6. Can you provide any metrics around how providers are using these fees eg. increased number of appointments with jobseekers?

Answer

1. Any changes to mutual obligation arrangements will consider Treasury analysis on the status of the Australian labour market and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 restrictions.
2. On 31 May 2020, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, announced that mutual obligation requirements will recommence in a limited capacity from 9 June 2020. This follows the decisions of National Cabinet to gradually remove COVID-19 restrictions and allow many businesses across the economy to re-open.

From 9 June, job seekers will be required to undertake at least one appointment, by phone or online with their employment services provider. During this period, suspensions and financial penalties will not apply. Job seekers may choose to undertake job search and participate in appropriate activities on a voluntary basis, where it is safe to do so.

Further information can be found in the Minister's media release at <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/cash/gradual-return-mutual-obligation-requirements>.

3. A decision to re-introduce penalties will take into account the ongoing impact of COVID-19 restrictions and Treasury analysis on the status of the Australian labour market.
4. The Department is not exploring alternatives to the Targeted Compliance Framework at this time. The Department continuously reviews the framework in place to ensure it is fit for purpose, and that it delivers on the intent of policies and legislation that have been passed by the Australian Parliament.

5. All remuneration paid to employment service providers under the jobactive Deed 2015-2022, including administration fees, is paid in recognition of the costs of delivering employment services. Providers must meet the requirements of a Service Guarantee that sets out the minimum level of services they provide to their job seekers, and the Department has a range of contract monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that providers deliver these services in line with the Deed.
6. Providers have needed to scale up their operational capacity to manage the increase in referrals and caseload during COVID-19. Administrative data shows appointment volumes in March and April 2020 increased four-fold compared with volumes in February 2020.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000057

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Career Transition Assistance Program

Question

Please outline how the changes to the Career Transition Assistance Program will help jobseekers aged over 45 years?

Answer

On 4 May 2020, the Department established a separate funding source of \$41.7 million, enabling jobactive and New Employment Services Trial providers to more readily refer suitable mature-age job seekers to Career Transition Assistance.

This will maximise the opportunities job seekers aged 45 years and over can receive to improve their digital literacy, identify job opportunities in their local area, tailor their job applications based on their skills and experience, and identify skills they already have that transfer readily to different jobs.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000058

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Mutual obligations suspension

Question

Can you give some examples of how employment service providers are supporting jobseekers since mutual obligations have been suspended?

Answer

Employment services providers have remained open to support job seekers and employers in a wide range of ways during this challenging time. Examples of support include:

- While the labour market has been subdued, employers still have vacancies. Providers act as a conduit to these job opportunities and refer job seekers to them.
- The Employment Fund remains available to jobactive providers to assist with wage subsidies and purchasing work-related items such as training, licenses and professional services to help job seekers improve their skill set and employability.
- Employment service providers maintaining contact with job seekers in the form of monthly or fortnightly phone or video calls to offer support and referrals to any additional services the job seeker may need.
- Referring job seekers to mental health support, counselling, and other support services when the job seeker discloses that they would benefit from this assistance.
- Tailoring training and work readiness support for job seekers who want to continue to improve their skills and employability.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000059

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Mutual obligations

Question

1. Have you had reports of employment service providers attempting to enforce mutual obligations during the suspension period? If so, what action have you taken to address this?
2. What safeguards are in place to ensure employment service providers are not enforcing mutual obligations?

Answer

1. A small number of reports have been received about a miscommunication of mutual obligation requirements since these were lifted on 24 March 2020. These mainly relate to provider correspondence sent before, but received by the job seeker after, mutual obligation requirements were lifted. The Department has worked consistently with employment service providers to ensure that they are aware that job seeker participation is voluntary during this period. Communication has included Account Manager engagement, regular CEO letters and addresses and provider webinars to reinforce the voluntary nature of job seeker participation while mutual obligations remain lifted and the importance of accurately communicating this with job seekers.
2. When mutual obligations are lifted, the Department's IT system does not allow any compliance action (enforcing mutual obligations) to be taken if job seekers do not meet their requirements. This means that employment services providers are not able to trigger payment suspensions, the accrual of demerits or financial penalties.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000060

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Support for vulnerable jobseeker cohorts

Question

What work is being done to support particularly vulnerable cohorts at this time, such as older and younger workers who have lost their jobs?

Answer

The Government has introduced a number of measures to ensure that vulnerable job seekers are able to access the support they need including:

- **IQ20-000058** provides details on how employment services providers have remained open and delivering support to job seekers during this period of mutual obligations suspension.
- a range of Employment Services flexibilities around servicing of job seekers such as removing the requirement for face to face servicing.
- the allocation of additional funding of \$41.7 million to the **Career Transition Assistance** program to make it quicker and easier for mature age job seekers to access training to improve their digital literacy, find job opportunities and identify their transferrable skills.
- a new platform called '**Jobs Hub**' (<https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/jobs-hub>), which connects job seekers looking for work and organisations who are hiring. Job seekers can search for a wide range of opportunities with different employers on the 'Find employers hiring now' section of the Hub. They can also find information on jobs in demand in their location, jobs and careers in the care sector and defence industry and links to other useful resources that can help them with their job search.

To further help support continued service delivery, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (the Department) has kept employment services providers regularly updated through a range of mechanisms, including CEO letters and livestream events, Provider Portal notices and FAQs.

For vulnerable cohorts, such as the youth and mature aged job seekers, tailored training and work readiness supports are being provided to help continue to improve their skills and employability in a COVID-safe manner.

For **youth** focused services this includes:

- **Transition to Work** (TtW), which continues to deliver services to young people.
 - Providers have been encouraged to deliver or refer participants to services that do not require face-to-face participation, such as online training or phone/video conference based courses where the participant has access to relevant devices.
 - For the July to December 2020 period, additional places will be allocated in TtW using updated income support recipient forecasts to reflect the increased number of eligible young people expected to flow into TtW.

- **Employability Skills Training (EST)** for young people, with online courses being available in all employment regions from 19 April 2020.
- Youth-focused **Entrepreneurship Facilitators** operate in Cairns, the Hunter Valley (including Newcastle), and Launceston and North-East Tasmania. These facilitators have been supporting young people to start and run a business since December 2016. Facilitators have adapted their service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic to conduct virtual online sessions for one-on-one support and webinars for group workshops. Anyone looking to start and run a business can access services from their local facilitator at no cost to them.
- The **ParentsNext** program that supports parents to consider education and employment options. The program has a focus on supporting young parents, helping them to re-establish connection with education and achieve year 12 or equivalent wherever possible.
 - Providers have been instructed to service as flexibly as possible and not undertake face-to-face meetings, but instead utilise phone or online mechanisms.
 - Providers have also been advised to move to a monthly phone contact with participants instead of the standard quarterly appointment. This recognised the potential feelings of isolation for some participants and the need for greater connection and support from their provider during this time, including connection to important support services.
 - Exemptions continued to be granted to participants where needed.

Supports targeted to **mature aged** job seekers are also continuing to be delivered, with an online focus. These include:

- The **Career Transition Assistance** program that provides short, intensive course consisting of skills assessments, exploration of suitable occupations, resilience strategies and digital skills to help mature age job seekers aged 45 years and over.
 - Courses are continuing online or via phone.
- The **Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers** program that may be used to provide eligible individuals with support to change career path if the impacts of COVID-19 necessitates such a change.
 - Providers have experienced increased COVID-19 related employment enquiries and as such have delivered services online.
- **Mature age-focused Entrepreneurship Facilitators** operate in 20 locations to provide practical assistance and encourage individuals to start a business as a way to create their own job.
 - Their services include business mentoring and group workshops and they have adapted their service delivery during COVID-19 to conduct virtual online sessions for one-on-one support and webinars for group workshops. They have also adapted their workshop topics, for example to take a greater focus on digital marketing and e-commerce.
 - This will help ensure participants are in a good position to take advantage of new opportunities as the economy recovers. These facilitators have been helping people to start and run a business since January 2019. While they are primarily focussed on supporting mature-age entrepreneurship, anyone looking to start and run a business can access their services.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000061

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

jobactive participants personal data

Question

How is personal data about jobactive participants shared with employment service providers?

Answer

When a job seeker applies for income support, Services Australia collects personal information under social security law. Services Australia shares this information with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (the Department) through a secure IT system when a job seeker is referred to employment services.

Where a job seeker is referred to jobactive, the job seeker's jobactive provider is able to see their personal information in the Department's IT system known as ESS Web. Every provider must ensure their use of personal information is exclusively to support the delivery of employment services.

The appropriate collection and use of personal information is outlined by the Department's Privacy Guideline. Access to ESS Web is governed by the respective Deeds signed by every provider organisation.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000062

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Movement of jobactive participants

Question

If a jobactive participant moves stream, do employment service providers in the area get notified?

Answer

When a job seeker changes Stream eligibility, the jobactive provider that is servicing the job seeker receives a notification through the Department's IT system, ESSWeb.

Notification are not sent to any other provider.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000063

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

New jobactive participants by stream

Question

Please provide a breakdown of the numbers of new jobactive participants going into each stream.

Answer

New jobactive participants are considered to be those referred to the program on or after 20 March 2020, when referral volumes began to increase significantly. The table below shows the stream distribution of new participants on the caseload as at 17 May 2020.

Stream	Number
Stream not determined	48,726
Stream A Volunteer	5,643
Stream A	654,653
Stream B	53,890
Stream C	8,317
Total	771,229

Notes:

1. The data includes participants in the Online Employment Services Trial, Voluntary Online Employment Services Trial and New Employment Services Trial.
2. Participants whose stream was not determined had yet to complete the Job Seeker Classification Instrument.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000064

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

jobactive participants completing JSCI

Question

What number of new jobactive participants are completing the JSCI online voluntarily?

Answer

Between 28 March and 25 May 2020 (inclusive), **368,441** participants who are newly referred to employment services have completed their JSCI online.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000065

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

jobactive caseload by demographic

Question

Please provide a breakdown of current jobactive caseload by demographic data including First Nations status, disability, gender, age group, employment services program and payment type.

Answer

jobactive caseload as at 17 May 2020.

Demographic	Number
Gender	
Male	717,808
Female	677,996
Participant Cohorts	
Indigenous	104,217
People with Disability	242,919
Age Group	
Age <22	117,334
Age 22-24	144,287
Age 25-29	195,190
Age 30-39	312,840
Age 40-49	273,061
Age 50-54	114,128
Age 55-59	105,531
Age 60+	133,433
Allowance Type	
JobSeeker Payment	1,221,897
Youth Allowance	116,532
Parenting Payment	37,841
Disability Support Pension	1,012
Carer Payment	750
Other Allowance	3,893
Income Support Claim Pending	5,474
Not Receiving an Income Support Payment	8,405
Employment Services Program	
Online Employment Services ¹	560,197
jobactive provider servicing	775,095
New Employment Services Trial	60,512
Total	1,395,804

¹ Some participants in the Online Employment Service are undergoing further assessment and will be transitioned to jobactive provider servicing or another program such as Disability Employment Services or Transition to Work.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000066

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

Job plans

Question

In evidence to the Committee the Department said that job plans will need to be bespoke and commensurate with an individual's needs. What criteria will be used to ensure that job plans going forward will be tailored to an individual's needs?

Answer

The Targeted Compliance Framework sets three clear criteria to ensure Job Plans are tailored to individual's needs. To support job seekers successfully meet their Mutual Obligation Requirements and receive the most from the services offered, providers need to ensure the following job plan criteria are met:

Meaningful – When a job plan is negotiated and updated, the employment service providers must take the time to discuss the requirements with the job seeker. It is important they understand any changes that have been made, the benefits of participation, and understand why they are required to participate in these activities.

Tailored and appropriate - Consideration must be given to the individual circumstances of the job seeker. This includes their program or stream, level of requirements, physical capacity, location and labour market of any activities, or other personal circumstances such as caring / family responsibilities.

Clear - Job seekers must know exactly what is required of them; there can be no doubt or confusion of what is expected. This includes the potential consequences of not meeting any of their requirements.

When providers become aware of changes to the job seeker's personal circumstances, and they assess that these changes may affect the job seeker's ability to meet the requirements in their Job Plan, the provider is required to re-negotiate the Job Plan so that it is appropriate for the job seeker at all times.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000068

Senator Rachel Siewert provided in writing.

People working zero hours .

Question

Can people working zero hours access employment service providers?

Answer

Yes. People in receipt of income support and working zero hours may seek to participate in jobactive, New Enterprise Incentives Scheme (NEIS) and Harvest Trail Services.

A person who is not receiving income support payment can access Volunteer Online Employment Services (VOEST) or volunteer to participate in NEIS and Harvest Trail Services.

Vulnerable Youth may immediately access jobactive Stream C or the Transition to Work (TtW) program.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000069

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Job loss in Universities and Higher Education

Question

1. How many jobs have been lost in universities and higher education providers from 1st January 2020 to present?
2. How many jobs does the Department forecast will be lost over the following period:
 - a. May 2020 to June 2021.

Answer

1. The department does not collect information on university staff numbers in a way that enables the effects of COVID-19 to be assessed at this time.
2. The department is unable to forecast future job losses.
 - The numbers of jobs that may be lost from the university sector depend on a number of factors particular to each individual university.
 - These include, but are not limited to, the extent individually that:
 - their revenues are affected by COVID-19;
 - they are able and willing to seek savings in non-staffing areas; and
 - they are able and willing to accept reduced positive cash outcomes in 2020 and draw on other investments, especially cash and equivalent financial instruments.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000070

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Domestic enrollments

Question

1. What does the Department estimate for total domestic enrolments for next year?
 - a. Have these estimates been updated in light of Covid-19?
 - b. What is the difference between domestic enrolments forecast for next year and actual domestic enrolments last year?

Answer

Higher education providers supply their estimates of domestic enrolments to the department in April and October each year. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and to reduce the reporting burden on universities, the department did not collect university estimates in April 2020.

Current budget forecasts estimates reflect an expected enrolment of approximately 558,854 EFTSL (Commonwealth supported bachelor level) for 2021. For 2019, the estimated enrolments are approximately 549,715 EFTSL (Commonwealth supported bachelor level). These figures are from university estimates provided in October 2019.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000071

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Performance funding program

Question

Please provide an update on the performance funding program. Is this continuing in 2020?

Answer

As part of the Higher Education Relief Package announced by the Minister for Education on 12 April 2020, the PBF amounts for public universities are guaranteed in 2020.

These amounts have been included in the regularly scheduled payments to universities from the first payment of 2020.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000072

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Federal government support for international students during COVID-19

Question

Did the Department ever assess and recommend options for direct federal government support for international students during COVID-19?

a. If yes, please provide details of options provided to the Minister and/or the Government?

Answer

As is the usual course of our business, the Department has provided advice to the Minister on range of issues in relation to international students.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000073

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Welfare of international students

Question

What is the department doing to monitor the welfare of international students? Please list the exact measures being taken.

a. How many staff in the Department are dedicated to monitoring the welfare of international students?

Answer

Education providers have primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their international students, as set out in the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.

The department also obtains information on the welfare of international students through existing stakeholder engagement mechanisms and those established in response to COVID-19, including the Global Reputation Taskforce and International Students Hotline and mailbox established in early February 2020.

Support for these functions is drawn from existing resources.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000074

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

International student enrolments for 2021

Question

What does the Department estimate for total international student enrolments for next year?

- a. Have these estimates been updated in light of Covid-19?
- b. Is the Department expecting a drop in numbers?
 - If yes, what is the drop in actual numbers of international student enrolments forecast for the next year?
- c. What is the difference between international student enrolments forecast for next year and actual international student enrolments last year?

Answer

The department has not estimated total international student enrolments for 2021.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000075

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

International student numbers drop cost

Question

How much is the current and expected drop in international students numbers going to cost the university and higher education sector in revenue? Please provide figures.

Answer

The department is unable to estimate the revenue reduction to the higher education sector relating to reductions in numbers of international students. The number of international student course enrolments with Australian higher education providers in the first quarter of 2020 was four per cent higher than the same period in 2019.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Schools

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000076

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Hygiene in public schools

Question

Has the Department assessed the hygiene needs of public schools during COVID-19?

Answer

No.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Schools

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000077

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Hygiene measures for private schools

Question

What date was the department first asked to work on a package for hygiene measures for private schools?

Answer

28 April 2020.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Schools

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000078

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Emergency or one-off funding for public schools

Question

Has the Department, at any time, been asked to prepare options for emergency or one-off funding for public schools to assist them in coping with the crisis?

Answer

No.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000033

Senator Jacqui Lambie provided in writing.

Breakdown of funding allocation - Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments

Question

What is the breakdown of funding allocation, by service type, of Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments specifically (i.e. separated out from the base relief payment)?

Answer

As at 22 May 2020, approximately \$28.96 million in Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments (ECSP) have been made. This includes payments to services for an increase in demand and to applicable services not eligible for JobKeeper.

Breakdown by service type is provided below.

Service Type	Approximate payments (\$m)
Centre-based Day Care	\$21.82m
Outside School Hours Care	\$6.36m
Family Day Care	\$0.73m
In Home Care	\$0.05m
Total	\$28.96m

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000034

Senator Jacqui Lambie provided in writing.

Breakdown of Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments by large providers

Question

What is the breakdown of Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments by large providers (i.e. approved providers with 50 or more individual services [as defined by the Department here]) against all other providers?

Answer

Up to 21 May 2020, there was one large provider out of 751 services that received Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Childcare

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000035

Senator Jacqui Lambie provided in writing.

Ministers directives regarding the Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments

Question

Has the Minister made any directives to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment regarding approval of specific/individual applications for Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payments or the way in which funding was/is to be distributed across service types?

Answer

No.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000036

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Number of child care workers receiving JobKeeper

Question

How many early childhood workers and how many early learning services are receiving JobKeeper? Please provide by state/territory and service type.

Answer

The Department does not currently have data on JobKeeper payments made by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

This question should be redirected to Treasury.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000037

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment program

Question

Of the 1,559 applications to the Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment program, how many have been declined, not approved or sent back to the applicant as at 18 May 2020? Please provide by state/territory and service type.

Answer

The number of individual services that applied for an Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment (ECSP) as at 12 May 2020 was 1,559. Some services applied more than once so actual number of applications received was higher.

As at 18 May 2020, 2,349 applications had been assessed as ineligible or invalid at a particular point in time.

However, services receiving such a letter does not mean services cannot continue to work with us to receive extra support. Services may reapply for exceptional circumstances support. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment has been contacting providers/services who have submitted unsuccessful applications to provide feedback, and to assist them to resubmit an application.

Of these, the state/territory breakdown is:

- ACT 33
- NSW 649
- NT 58
- QLD 421
- SA 138
- TAS 40
- VIC 408
- WA 243.

State/Territory could not be determined for 359 applicants.

The breakdown by service type is:

- Centre Based Day Care 1,493
- Outside School Hours Care/Vacation Care 509
- Family Day Care 302
- In Home Care 26.

Service Type could not be determined for additional 19 applicants.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000038

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment program

Question

What is the average and the median amount paid to services from the Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment program.

Answer

As at 21 May 2020, the weekly average Exceptional Circumstances Supplementary Payment paid to Child Care Subsidy approved services was \$4,400 and the median was \$2,600.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000039

Senator Katy Gallagher provided in writing.

Child care subsidy

Question

What did the government spend on the child care subsidy in the fourth quarter of 2018/19?
(April May June 2019)

Answer

In the June quarter 2019 the government spent a total of \$1.8 billion on Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000079

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Childcare and early learning centre closures

Question

How many childcare and early learning centres have closed in 2020? Please list nationally as well as by state and territory.

Answer

The Department is unable to quantify the number of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved child care services that have permanently closed in 2020. This is primarily because many of these closed services denote a transfer of ownership that requires the new owner applying for a new Child Care Subsidy approval and being issued with a new Service identifier.

However, as part of the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary closure of CCS approved child care services has been closely monitored.

The number of closures fluctuates as some services reopen and others close in response to individual business circumstances.

Breakdown by state/territory is provided below as of 20 May 2020.

State / Territory	Services Temporarily Closed
ACT	2
NSW	34
NT	2
QLD	12
SA	4
TAS	2
VIC	72
WA	20
Total	148

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 19 May 2020

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000080

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

Childcare fee figures

Question

How much have Australian families saved in childcare fees since childcare was made free?
a. How much are Australian families expected to save until 28 June?

Answer

Services may not charge fees at this time. Based on normal child care usage, it is estimated that the current free child care arrangements will result in families saving approximately \$1.3 billion in out of pocket costs over the 12 weeks to 28 June.