



Community Affairs References Committee  
Inquiry into Centrelink's Compliance Program  
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Dear Committee Secretary

## **Centrelink's Compliance Program: Case Studies**

Please find below annotated de-identified case studies provided by Jobs Australia members to assist Jobs Australia in presenting evidence to this Inquiry.

### **Case study 1**

Jobs Australia Member's clients' son with OCD received a letter from Centrelink claiming that he owed approximately \$80,000. Client was the primary carer of the son and her 2 grandchildren with Autism and PTSD. This client's son was unable to work due to OCD and was in receipt of income support from Centrelink.

When the client acting on behalf of her son, approached Centrelink, she was informed that the son needs to start making payments immediately. However, Centrelink staff members were unable to inform her about the cause or origin of the debt on her visits. Centrelink started deducting money from the income support payments to recover the debt.

The Jobs Australia Member worker was able to liaise with the Centrelink social worker to reduce the fortnightly deductions to \$25 and assisted the client to obtain information about the debt. The client experienced difficulties in obtaining her son's payment details from the previous employers.

The Jobs Australia Member worker supported the client with her complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman conducted an independent inquiry and the debt was brought down to under \$10,000. The client was able to find more supporting documents while the review was pending. These documents proved that the client did not owe anything and the debt was brought down to zero.

### **Case study 2**

A client who was a single mother with 4 children, some of whom experienced disability, was informed that she owed \$10,000. She did not believe the debt was accurate and the Jobs Australia Member's staff member offered to assist with her to approach the Commonwealth Ombudsman. However, the client stated that she does not have the time or energy to fight the case and decided to gradually pay it off.