

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004256

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

Refocussing Work for the Dole

- Has the Department consulted with anyone about the “refocus” of Work for the Dole? What did they say? What has the Department done to address those concerns?
- Why would the government refocus Work for the Dole if not to improve the job outcomes of participants?

Answer

Since the commencement of *jobactive* the Department has consulted extensively and consistently with *jobactive* providers, Work for the Dole Coordinators and peak bodies on the operation of Work for the Dole. In addition, the Department actively monitors the program, including surveys of job seekers following their participation in the program.

Following the initial implementation of *jobactive*, providers and Work for the Dole Coordinators have consistently raised issues about the impact of the overlapping of the roles of providers and Coordinators on the efficiency of the program. In line with the Department's approach to program management, the Department worked with all parties to address these issues. This included a substantive review of operational guidelines, the introduction and review of supporting materials, enhancements to the Department's IT system, consultation on performance measures and the introduction of additional recognition of the role that providers play in managing Work for the Dole activities. The demand for Work for the Dole places has reduced significantly since the program commenced, with all providers experiencing a decrease in the number of job seekers requiring a Work for the Dole activity compared to 2015. While Coordinators played a significant role in helping to source Work for the Dole places at the commencement of the program, the need for this assistance has diminished. The removal of Coordinators will streamline the program and *jobactive* providers are well placed to manage the expected demand going forward.

Currently, group-based Work for the Dole activities can be undertaken by job ready and disadvantaged job seekers. Under these changes, group-based activities will be primarily targeted at the most disadvantaged people, as these places provide a more supportive environment. More job ready people will primarily undertake individual hosted activities.