

Inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services (Consideration of broader Workforce Australia employment services system, including complementary programs)

– yourtown's advocacy submission



What is it about?

The Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services is conducting an inquiry into the implementation, performance, and appropriateness of Workforce Australia Employment Services.

Why is it important?

The inquiry is a first principles review of the employment services system. The Committee is seeking evidence on key issues with the system and is particularly interested in proposals to reform policy settings and service models to optimise employment services in the future. This is particularly important for young job seekers.

Some of yourtown's key messages:

1. The employment services model should be overhauled and re-designed, adopting a human-centred design approach. All changes should be informed by the direct views and aspirations of young people and designed with them.

To develop an employment services model that is truly representative of the multifaceted issues faced by job seekers and employers requires genuine co-design and engagement with all stakeholders. This will ensure any future model developed and implemented is purpose built on the needs and aspirations of its stakeholders. To achieve this, the Government should prioritise engagement and co-design processes with young people with the support of the Office for Youth, and employers.

2. That employment services models incorporate a strong focus on mental health and wellbeing to address critical barriers to employment for young people.

For young people experiencing long-term unemployment, mental health issues can occur at the time of unemployment and then periodically throughout their life.

3. That the Australian Government revise the architecture of the employment services model, using its own data sets to determine the types of specialist providers required for each employment region.

The current model supports the establishment of multiple service providers in each region, fostering competition against one another to achieve 'results', rather than fostering the collective sharing of intelligence and understanding of local employment barriers to develop local solutions. The model should be revised to include an approach where there is one Workforce Australia generalist provider appointed in each location, with a TtW provider for under 25's, specialist providers as required (depending upon an analysis of the demographic breakdown of the region), and funding a position to facilitate connections between providers and schools.

4. The Australian Government commit to developing and applying robust eligibility criteria as a fundamental part of the tender process for specialist providers.

In our experience, target cohorts benefit more in an employment services model where cohort specialists are only referred job seekers from their target group. Specialist providers understand their target cohort because they have recruited, trained, and resourced staff with a specific profile designed for their speciality.



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