



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

# Disability Employment Services Reforms

Consultation regarding  
recent recommendations  
relating to employment services

21 and 22 February 2024

*The Department of Social Services acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, water and community.*

*We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.*

# Introduction

# Recent reviews

## **The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (Disability Royal Commission):**

Investigated how to ensure a more inclusive and just society that supports the independence of people with disability.

## **The Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Review):**

Examined the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS, plus ways to build a more responsive, supportive and sustainable market and workforce.

## **The House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services (Select Committee on Workforce Australia):**

Inquired on matters related to Workforce Australia and the employment services system more broadly.

# Eligibility

**The Disability Royal Commission and public consultation on DES reform recommended removal of the minimum 8 hour work capacity requirement.**

- If eligibility was extended to include those with an assessed work capacity with support of less than 8 hours a week:
  - What would quality employment look like for this cohort?
  - What would be the key features of a service for this cohort?
  - What kind of expertise would be required in providers to deliver this service?
  - What type of employment incentives or support would be beneficial?
  - Is there the potential for unintended consequences that should be considered?

# Eligibility (continued)

**The Disability Royal Commission considers that all people with disability should have the opportunity to work in open employment.**

- If the 2 year limit on DES participation is removed **and/or**
- If the requirement to be in receipt of an income support payment is removed?
  - What benefits would these arrangements bring to participant services and reduced administration?
  - Are there any unintended consequences, for whom, and why is this important?

# Service structure

**The recent reviews included recommendations with themes of program simplification and less administration, while retaining customised, cohort specific services.**

- If the Disability Management Service (DMS) and Employment Service Support (ESS) were combined into a single service with funding levels catered to differences in service and support needs:
  - Would this simplify the program design and reduce administration?
  - Would this have any unintended consequences, for whom and why is that important?

# Service structure (continued)

**The recent reviews have recommended that employment services be more flexible and tailored, with support differentiated according to individual need and circumstances.**

- If, *in addition* to the current full service offer, a more flexible service option was proposed for some participants.
  - Which participants might be suitable for this type of service offer?
    - Volunteers with or without temporary exemptions?
    - Participants with circumstances limiting their capacity?
    - Participants engaged in partial work, non-vocational activities or education or who want to remain connected?
  - What benefits would this bring to participant services and reduced administration?
  - Are there any unintended consequences, for whom, and why is this important?



# Mutual obligations

**The Select Committee on Workforce Australia called for greater flexibility and tailoring of mutual obligations, with a focus on participating meaningfully in services.**

- If it was possible to simplify requirements so participants meet their obligations by engaging effectively with a provider in preparing for, seeking and undertaking employment:
  - What benefits would this bring to participants and administration?
  - Are there any unintended consequences, for whom and why is that important?
- Would the option to move to specific requirements – similar to current arrangements – be appropriate where a participant wasn't engaging effectively?

# Ongoing support

**The Disability Royal Commission recommended that arrangements facilitate flexible employment supports, and support progress to long-term employment outcomes.**

- If Work Assist focussed on immediate access to support service fees, and with less emphasis on outcome payments:
  - What benefits would this bring to participant service and reduced administration?
  - Are there any unintended consequences, for whom, and why is this important?

# Feedback



Email: [DESReforms@dss.gov.au](mailto:DESReforms@dss.gov.au)



Due: 27 February 2024

# Thank you

*Kellie Spence*

*Group Manager*

*Disability Employment*

*Email address for feedback TBC*