



A LOCAL RESPONSE TO WELFARE TO WORK

JUNE 2008

A LOCAL RESPONSE TO WELFARE TO WORK [ALR W2W] IS A PARTNERSHIP PROJECT BETWEEN PORT PHILLIP COMMUNITY GROUP, ISEPICH, AND HOMEGROUND. THE PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

W2W & the Budget!

The ALR - W2W steering group were optimistic that there would be significant changes to W2W following comments made by Labor politicians since winning government in November last year. There are in fact no immediate changes to the legislation at this stage, only a discussion paper outlining of the direction of recent consultations.

Details of this paper can be found by [clicking here](#)

We have given the government a score on how the proposed measures match up to each of our recommendations:

1. The practice of withholding payments should cease immediately:

Failure to comply with participation activities, without reasonable excuse, will result in the loss of a day's pay for each day missed under a new 'no show, no pay' policy. The eight week non payment penalty will remain though, rather than being automatic after three failures, job seekers will receive a comprehensive compliance assessment to determine whether an eight week non-payment penalty is appropriate.

4/10

2. The gap between pensions and payments for people with partial capacity should be closed.

There is no reference to this in the discussion paper, and no action.

0/10

3. Incentives for work should be designed to build personal capacity, increase skills and support maintenance of work in the long term.

Both the Employment Pathway Fund, and the Innovation Fund point to solid attempts by government to tailor activity plans to the needs of the job seeker. There is acknowledgement of the differing circumstances of recently and long term unemployed, through a system of streaming.

7/10

4. Individuals should be able to build relationships with Centrelink, and have all decisions explained.

While no statement has been made on relationships with Centrelink, there is the stated intention to contact people before they are breached. This years allocation is however only for IT upgrades and improved call centre service. .

3/10

5. The current punitive approach to activity requirements should be replaced by fair and realistic individual plans.

While there remains a punitive element to the proposals, there is a shift to more individualised plans.

5/10

The Government will invest \$3.7 billion over three years in a new generation of employment services – but only from 1 July 2009.

38% please try harder - you have the potential!!

Stories of real people bring policy to life...

May Story

(Name changed to protect privacy)

Jimmy was told to attend an interview for a cleaning job. He refused to go saying that he already had work doing medical research. He was told to send the documentation to Centrelink, which he did. Jimmy heard nothing back from Centrelink but two fortnights later, he stopped receiving payments. A few weeks later, Jimmy was evicted without notice from his rented house after not paying rent. He was not able to take anything with him. After staying with his uncle for a short while, he found accommodation at a local rooming house. His mental health deteriorated while in the rooming house until finally the CAT team had to be called. He was hospitalised for a month before being discharged into temporary accommodation. His payments were eventually reinstated, but Jimmy is back on Newstart and again in danger of being breached.

For a summary of stories received, [click here](#)



We need to keep up the pressure over the next 12 months, so please keep the stories rolling in!

Community research

ALR-W2W has published a paper in 'Practice Reflexions' on the evolution of this community project. To read it, [click here](#)

Breaching has been on the increase

There have been 31,789 eight-week non-payment periods imposed from July 2007 to March 2008 – more than double that for the whole of the last financial year.

Consultation on the 'National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy'

Submissions on the discussion paper are open until 30th June 2008. Make your submission online by [clicking here](#) or contact Kirra on 9662 3324 if you want assistance with filling in an individual submission.



PORT PHILLIP COMMUNITY GROUP

For more information go to www.ppcg.org.au or call Sandy on 9534 0777

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