

# **Australian Unemployed Workers' Union (AUWU)**

## **Workforce Australia Overview + Discussion**

Wednesday 22 June 2022

Facilitated by Raquel Araya (on Kurna Land) feat Simone Casey (Senior Policy Advisor at ACCOSS)

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YOUR RIGHTS**

[AUWU.ORG.AU](http://AUWU.ORG.AU)

# Overview

- **Introduction – who we are & what we do**
- **Background on Employment Services**
- **Current Changes to Employment Services in ‘Workforce Australia’**
- **Q&A**
- **Fighting Back**
- **Wrap Up**

# Who we are

## For the unemployed, by the unemployed

We're an incorporated association + charity carrying on Australia's rich history of unemployed workers organising for a world where everyone is guaranteed dignified social security/welfare + employment

### Principles

1. Solidarity
2. Equality
3. Social Justice
4. Diversity
5. Democracy
6. Independence
7. Dignity
8. Respect

### Our Key Work

- I. Advocacy – helping people navigate job agency/employment services system
- I. Organising – excited to get active again, we want your help!

### Current National Team

- I. Tracey Smallwood - President
- II. Daniel Levy – Secretary
- III. Jeremy Heywood– Vice President + Media & Communications
- IV. Raquel Araya - Advocacy Coordinator & Committee Member
- V. Jeremy Poxon - Media

# Background on Employment Services

- Govt outsources the administration of ‘mutual obligations’ to job agencies - they enforce social security legislation which says people must enter a job plan and do activities as part of their mutual obligations in exchange for welfare payments.
- Job providers since 2018 tasked with enforcing the Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) + ‘assisting’ Job Seekers into employment.
- David O’Holloran:
- Compliance + administrative work agencies carry out are facilitated via various binding documents. Documents pertaining to new Workforce Australia model include:
  - *Career Transition Assistance Deed 2022 – 2027*
  - *Employability Skills Training Deed 2022 – 2027*
  - *New Employment Services Model Deed of Standing Offer*
  - *2022 – 2028*
  - *Self-Employment Assistance Deed 2022-2027*
  - *Transition to Work Deed 2022-2027*
  - *Entrepreneurship Facilitator Deed 2022-2025.*

# Advocacy & Need For it

- Lack of meaningful government or other support for unemployed people navigating a complex & punitive system (e.g. penalties being applied incorrectly)
- In 1997, CES was privatized and as time went on, govt wanted to increase requirements placed on people accessing payments. Gradually over time we've seen govt give agencies have more power, essentially making them unemployment cops.
- Volunteer Advocates in the union are a key part of the organization. Advocacy is a our core service & are at the frontline of fighting back. We predominately help people with job agency concerns and questions around 'mutual obligations'
- Note: We're not mediators or counsellors.

# New Things in WFA

- PBAS System + Job Seeker Snapshot via Workforce Australia portal (MyGov) and app
- Employability Skills Training (EST)
- Mandatory Activities for all participants in OES and Work Force Australia
- AAR being scrapped in place of SMAR (Six Month Activity Requirement)
- Strengthened Work for the Dole (WftD)
- Expansion of National Work Experience Program (NWEPP)

# Workforce Australia

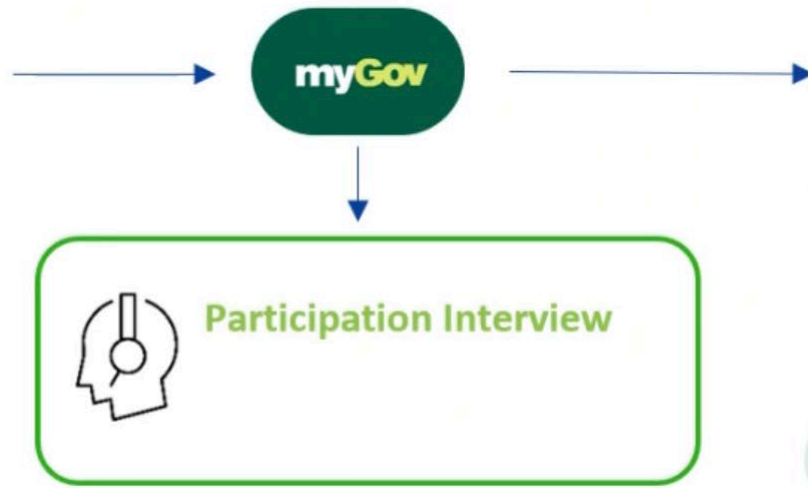
- Replacing jobactive – regular employment services - from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022. NESM comes as a result of previous government recognizing that the system needed to change because it was not working well. Hence ‘new’ ways of delivering employment services were recommended in a report called ‘I want to work’ (Jan 2018).
- **Under the Workforce Australia umbrella there are 2 employment services:**
  1. **Enhanced Services (ES) / Workforce Australia Services (WFAS)**
    - Normal face-to-face servicing you’ve been used to
  2. **Online Employment Services (OES)**
    - From 2019 some people were put into the ‘trial’ version of this self-management service
- **BOTH employment services streams/types will have a new WFA portal where jobseekers are expected to track and manage (report) their points target** - monthly target where X points need be met
- Some terminology to look out for: ‘Activation’ / ‘PBAS’ / ‘EST’ / DCC
- Other programs under WFA: Transition to Work (15-24 yos), Self Employment Stream and Entrepreneurship Facilitator Stream. Also note Career Transition Assistance (45+)



# The initial assessment process – Job Seeker Snapshot



Individual lodges  
income support claim



## INITIAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: THE JOB SEEKER SNAPSHOT

Strengths-based questions on individuals' **skills, qualifications, education and career interests**

Future technology and system enhancements will allow the pre-population of the Job Seeker Profile

Questions that determine risk of long-term unemployment

Job search confidence question

Questions that help identify an individuals' **internet access and ability**

Questions that help identify the need for an **ESAt**

# General Workings of WFA

- Key focus of NESM is to promote greater personal responsibility among individuals + maintaining strong mutual obligations + focus on employment (promoting ownership over pathway to employment).
- Jobseekers in WFA, whether in face-to-face services or OES, are meant to get the benefit of
  - New Online Portal/App
  - Simplified Job Plan
  - Points Based Activation (removing the general requirement for job seekers to apply for 20 jobs per month)
- Govt Idea to is have 'wholistic' servicing and the following elements contribute to that, per govt
  - Targeted Compliance Framework
  - Points Based Activation System
  - Job Seeker Assessment Framework

# Points Based Activation (PBAS) System

PBAS tracked and managed via self-management app and WFA portal

- Both OES and ES job seekers will work with this system, a new way of doing ‘mutual obligations’ – people in both streams will have requirements to do an activity at certain points (also known as ‘mandatory’ activity). This ties in with last point.
- PBAS theoretically is meant to be easier to work with. The emphasis on NESM being about ‘personal responsibility’ and acknowledgement of different pathways people have toward employment means that PBAS is part of this ‘flexibility’ outlook. PBAS designed around job seeker ‘engagement’ and ‘positive activation’ and has been touted as a good way to provide ‘choice’ to Jobseekers in how they manage their mutual obligations
- PBAS complemented by **new strong activation model that introduces new activation points that are earlier and frequent than under current model**
- **Everyone will have a target of 100 points that must be met every month unless adjustments are sought (more on this shortly)**
- **Points can be banked**

# Mandatory activity requirements for individuals

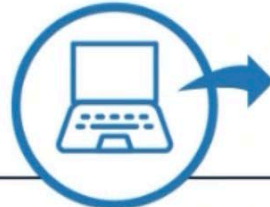


## Workforce Australia Online participants

Have a mandatory requirement at **4 months** if:

not in work or study – program focusing on ‘soft skills’

working or studying but not meeting their mutual obligations – default is an Online Learning Module



## Participants exiting online services at 12 months

Have a mandatory activity requirement **within 3 months in Workforce Australia Services** if:

not engaged in work, study, training or work experience

*Work for the Dole is the default mandatory activity.*



## Individuals in Workforce Australia Services

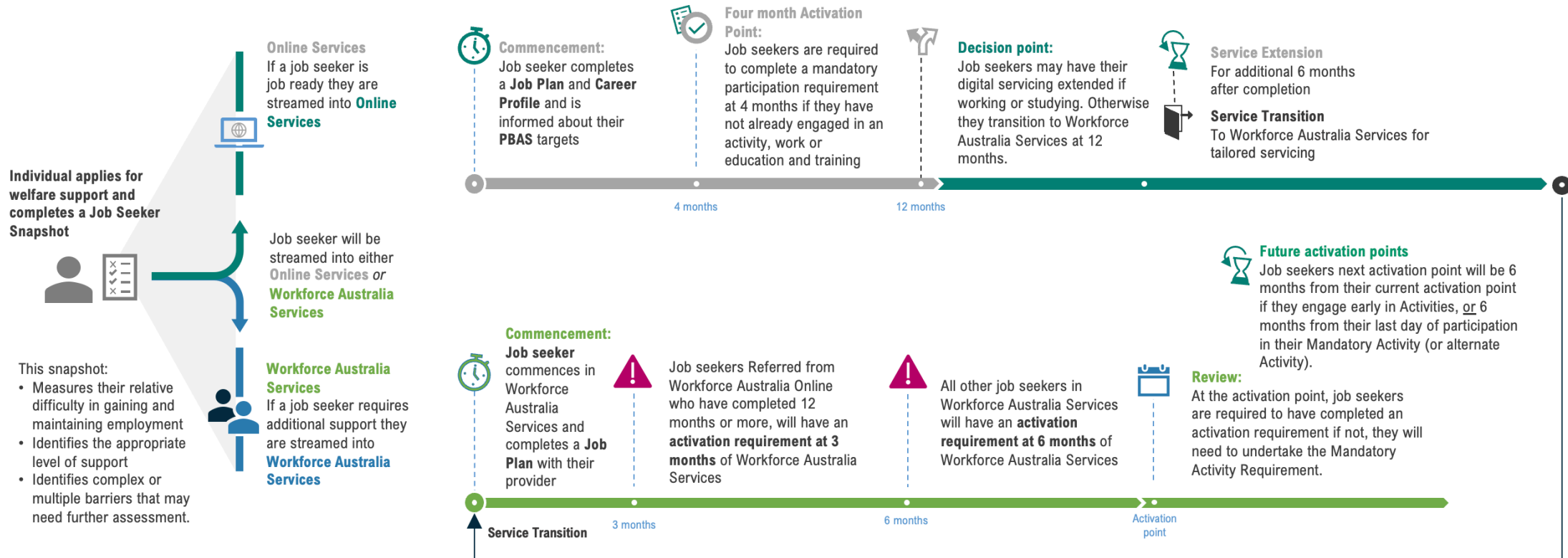
Have a mandatory requirement at **6 months** if:

not engaged in activities and progressing towards employment

*Work for the Dole is the default mandatory activity.*

# High Level Overview of Activation Points

Workforce Australia will offer job seekers different employment service pathways through **Online Services** or **Workforce Australia Services** programs. The pathways outlined below summarise the events and mandatory requirements that job seekers will undertake while using each service after their initial Digital Literacy Assessment.



# Activity Requirements

## Enhanced Services (ES) / WFA Services (WFAS)

- **Mandatory Activity requirement kicks in at 6 months from commencement in this stream**
- WftD will be the default mandatory activity for all participants who have not met their activation requirements by the time of the activation phase/point. This means participants will need to engage intensively from the beginning of WFA
- WftD is undertaken for 8 weeks (2 months, up to 25 hours per week)
- Participants may also be required to undertake EST
- People who transfer from OES to face-to-face services will need to do WftD after 3 months

## Activation Requirements (AR)

- Generally, participants will have future activation requirements every 6 months from either last activation point or date they completed their mandatory or alternate activity
- **AR for ES means that participants must undertake a minimum number of hours for either:**
  - ❑ One approved activation activity where they have participated in or completed at 80% of activity OR
  - ❑ One or more provider-assessed activation activities where they have engaged for a minimum of 75 hours (across any 2 reporting periods)

## Online Employment Services (OES)

- **Mandatory Activity requirement kicks in at 4 month point**
- Unless participant arranges an alternate activity, the default activity will be EST (Employability Skills Training).
- If you're working or studying at the 4 month point, you will do an online learning module
- Must also complete at least 5 job searches per month -

# Workforce Australia - Employability Skills Training (EST)

## Eligibility

**Eligible job seekers aged 15+** in Workforce Australia Services, Workforce Australia Online Services, Transition to Work or Disability Employment Services.

**Participants in Transition to Work and Disability Employment Services** can participate for the first time, on a fee for service basis.

**Participants in Workforce Australia Services** also participate on fee for service basis.

**Default activity for Online Participants** at mandatory stage of Four Month Activity Requirement.

## Course Content

### Training Block 1

- Pre-employment soft skills
- Advanced job search skills

### Training Block 2

- Industry specific training
- Focus on local labour market industry needs
- Can offer accredited training
- Direct link to work trials that have a reasonable prospect of employment
- Prepare participants for entry-level employment opportunities in specific industries.

*Note that course content must be tailored to meet the needs of individual EST Participants, as informed by the initial assessment*

## Payment Settings

### Course Fees

#### Workforce Australia Online / Yarrabah

#### Training Block 1 & 2

- \$1250, funded by department
  - \$875, commencement (70%)
  - \$375, final\* (30%)

#### Workforce Australia Services & Transition to Work

#### Training Block 1

- funded by referring provider
- \$1250, full fee for service

#### Training Block 2

- \$300, funded by referring provider
- \$950, funded by department
  - \$575 commencement
  - \$375 final\*

### Disability Employment Services

#### Training Block 1 & 2

- funded by DES provider
- \$1250, full fee for service.

*\*EST providers are eligible for the Final Payment if 80% attendance is met, or participant exits for employment*

## Placement Management Services (PMaS)

**EST Providers** to source and/or manage work trial placements

- PaTH Internships (17-24 years)
- NWEF placements (25+ years)

**In line with** Internship and NWEF settings, Employability Skills Training Providers eligible for:

- \$1000 provider payment
- Reimbursement \$1000 Host payment

### Participant Eligibility

#### Workforce Australia Online

63 days in service, or commenced Employability Skills training.

#### Workforce Australia Services & Transition to Work\*

Directly following Employability Skills Training participation.

*\*Transition to Work eligibility for PMaS will be delayed until system referrals are available*

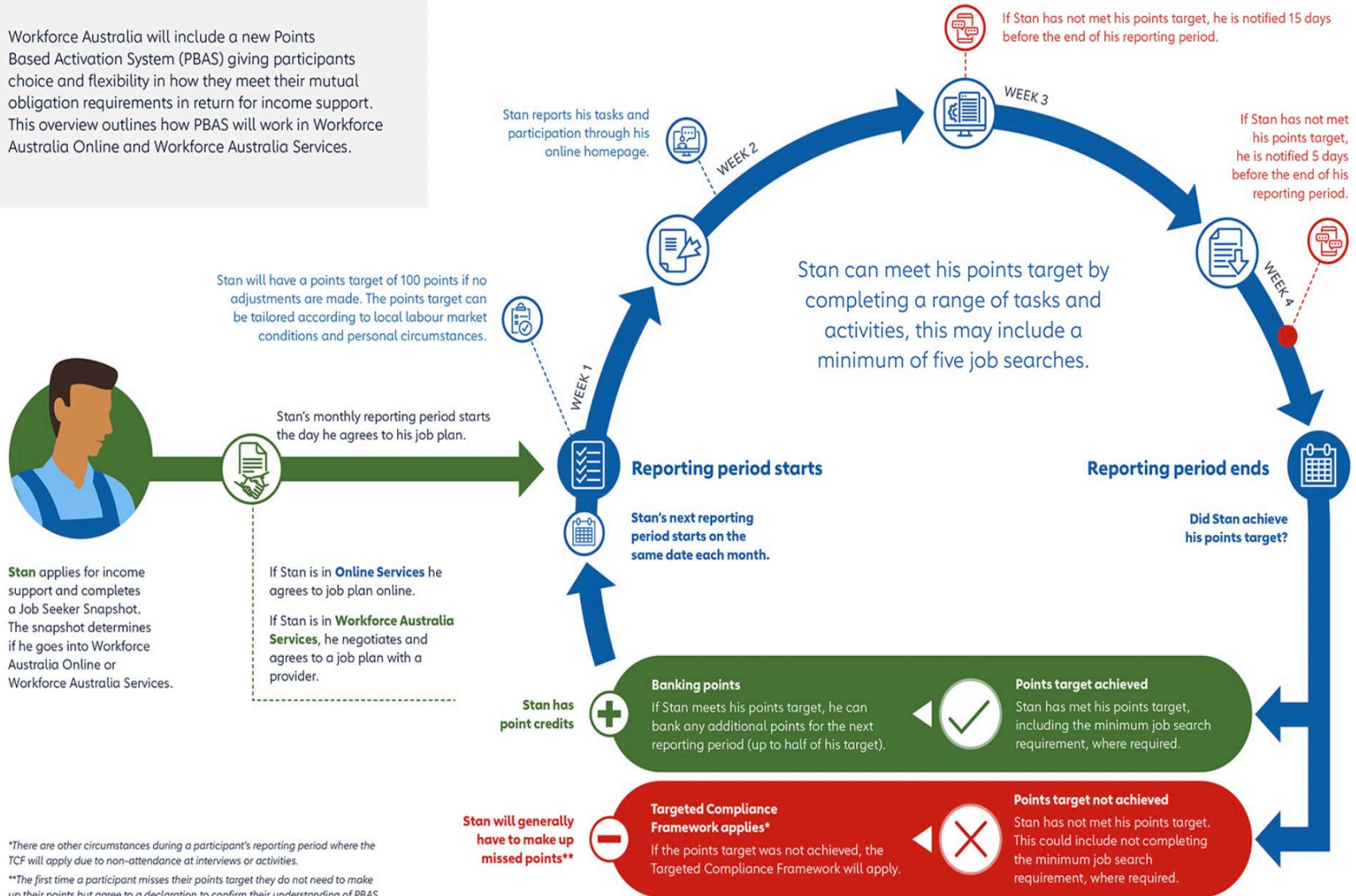
*\* Disability Employment Services not eligible for PMaS*

### EST Placement Payment

\$250 per participant, if placed in a PaTH Internship or NWEF after participating in Training Block 2.



Workforce Australia will include a new Points Based Activation System (PBAS) giving participants choice and flexibility in how they meet their mutual obligation requirements in return for income support. This overview outlines how PBAS will work in Workforce Australia Online and Workforce Australia Services.



\*There are other circumstances during a participant's reporting period where the TCF will apply due to non-attendance at interviews or activities.  
\*\*The first time a participant misses their points target they do not need to make up their points but agree to a declaration to confirm their understanding of PBAS.





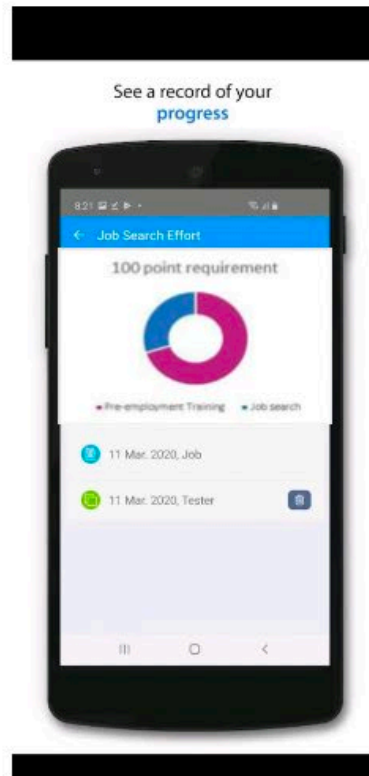
# Meeting the points target

Once a job seeker has their points target, they can start undertaking tasks and activities to meet that target.

The screenshot shows the user's profile page. At the top, the Australian Government logo is on the left, and the user's name 'Ashley Smith' with 'JSID: 9823983' is on the right. A navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Jobs', 'Points and obligations', 'Education and training' (with a notification badge), 'Coaching', and 'Help and support'. The main content area features a greeting 'Hi, Ashley' and 'Last login 1 Nov 2021 at 3:23 pm'. Below this is a search bar with 'Keyword' and 'Location' fields, and a 'Search 2,947 jobs' button. There are also links for 'Jobs based on your profile' and 'Jobs near you'. The 'Your tasks' section has two items: 'Apply to a minimum of 5 jobs' (due in 31 days) and 'Job interview - Sundance Clinic - Dental Assistant' (event starts in 13 days). The 'Your points' section shows a progress bar for '0 / 100 points' for the period '1st November to 31st November 2021' and a 'Report and earn points' button.

The screenshot shows the 'Points and obligation' reporting page. The reporting period is '5 November to 4 December 2021'. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: 'How you're tracking', 'Report and earn points' (selected), 'Compliance history', 'Your Job Plan', and 'Learn more about points and obligations'. The main content area is titled 'Report and earn points' and explains that users can report tasks to earn points. It features a grid of reporting options, each with a description and a button: 'Apply for jobs online' (5 points), 'Job application (manual)' (5 points), 'Job application (by upload)' (5 points), 'Job interview' (20 points), 'Starting a job' (20 points), 'Volunteering' (20 points), 'Study or training' (points vary), 'Paid work' (points vary), and 'Declare your profile is up to date' (5 points).

# The dashboard and points-based activation

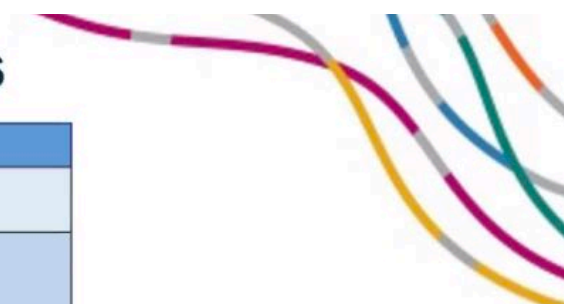


# Activities Available to You in order to meet Points Target

“To get your points, you can choose different activities such as job search and training. More intensive activities such as detailed job applications and job interviews will get you more points” - DESE

## Meeting the points target – points values

Tasks and activities	Points values
Completing a job application Creating/updating the career profile	5 points
Paid work Driver's licence hours Participant sourced voluntary work	5 points for 5 hours
Provider workshops Counselling Drug and alcohol rehabilitation Self help and support groups Non-vocational interventions Defence Force Reserves	10 points (with flexibility to adjust)
Work related licences and qualifications	15 or 20 points
Attending a job interview Starting a job Attending a job fair	20 points
PaTH Internships National Work Experience Program SelfEmployment Assistance Small Business training Launch into Work	25 points per week (Fully meets requirements over 4 week period)
Work for the Dole (WfD) Employability Skills Training (EST) Career Transition Assistance (CTA/P/T only) Observational work experience (WE) Provider sourced voluntary work (VW)	20 points per week (fulltime 25hrs/wk) 15 points per week (parttime 15hrs/wk)
Education and training Skills for Education and Employment Adult Migrant English Program	20 points per week (fulltime) 15 points per week (parttime)
Workforce Specialist Project Local Jobs Program	25 points per week (high intensity level) 20 points per week (medium intensity level) 15 points per week (low intensity level)



❖ Providers can adjust the points values of *certain* tasks and activities based on job seeker circumstances

❖ Some tasks and activities may only be available to job seekers who self manage in Online Services or job seekers in Workforce Australia Services

**Up to date document outlining points for activities:**

<https://jobsearch.gov.au/content/documents/twa/points-values-tasks-activities-pbas.pdf>

# Note on PBAS Workings

## Safeguards to support participants in Workforce Australia Online

- ✓ **Eligible participants** can choose to be supported by a provider at any time
- ✓ **Initial assessment** identifies most job ready and those with complex barriers. *Also asks about digital access and ability to use online tools*
- ✓ Need a **linked myGov account**
- ✓ **Participation Interview**
- ✓ **Digital Service Review** at 4 and 8 months
- ✓ **Time limited service**
- ✓ **The Digital Services Contact Centre** available to support job seekers



# Note on PBAS Workings

## Moving Between Different Streams

- After 12 months in Workforce Australia Online, you will be moved to a brick and mortar provider for more intensive and individualised assistance, unless you are in work, training, or a work placement (or have been within the last six months).

## Reporting/Self-Management of Points Target

- **Online:** Participants in OES are expected to self-manage compliance with points target. If person wants 'credits' need to contact DCC to seek adjustments.
- **Face-to-face:** If self-reporting in face-to-face services is not feasible for a Job Seeker - i.e. not being able to use the WFA portal perhaps due to digital illiteracy - then THIS must be removed from the Job Plan. Provider must help Job Seeker manage reporting.
- <https://jobsearch.gov.au/content/documents/twa/points-target-information.pdf>

## Tailored Activities

- Providers must set tailored points target – seek assistance with provider + DCC
- Providers can credit Job Seekers for up to 6 reporting periods

# Your Rights & Things to Note

- ❑ Your Points Target must be tailored and you are entitled to reduce target on account of personal circumstances and/or labour market challenges.
- ❑ MOs are currently suspended until 3<sup>rd</sup> July (suspension began 20<sup>th</sup> June)
- ❑ Participants in ES/WFA who are on part income support and/or who are over 60 years old cannot be put into WftD. Can participate on a voluntary basis.
- ❑ Providers must ensure they have sufficient staff trained at the start of their Deeds to be able to implement the TCF - please tell us if you notice shonky providers still applying this incorrectly !
- ❑ Support with NESM:
  - ❑ For Online Users, DCC at [nationalcustomerservice@dese.gov.au](mailto:nationalcustomerservice@dese.gov.au) or phone
  - ❑ For face-to-face participants, provider or Transition Line on 1300 854 414.

## Providers must act in accordance with Guiding Principals

- ✓ Simple
- ✓ Supported
- ✓ Connected
- ✓ Respectful

# Transition Matters

## Allocation of Participants



Participants will be allocated based on their characteristics, proximity and the providers business share



Where possible, participants will remain with their current provider should the provider be delivering services under Workforce Australia



Transfer of participants will occur over the transition weekend

# Transition Matters

## Update on Caseload Allocation



- Caseload allocation has been completed
- Participants have been allocated to the most suitable providers and service, closest to their home
- Further minor changes to the caseload are expected

### Issues

- Some indicative caseload movement has occurred
  - Lower than expected allocation at some sites
-



# Transition Matters

## Changing your provider before Workforce Australia starts

Transfers are on hold until 4 July 2022 as your employment service is changing. When Workforce Australia starts some providers may stop delivering services in your area, and there'll also be some new providers.

You can only transfer your provider if you move to a location that isn't serviced by your current provider. Update your address with Services Australia to transfer to a provider near you. Where possible, this will be a different site of your current provider.

## Moving to Workforce Australia

If you're participating in employment services, we'll connect you with a Workforce Australia employment service that is starting from Monday 4 July 2022.

We'll contact you before Workforce Australia starts to tell you:

- which service you'll move to from Monday 4 July 2022
- who your provider will be if you're moving to Workforce Australia provider services
- what you need to do to.

Make sure your contact details are up to date. Find out more about [how to update your contact details](#)

# Transition Matters

Pre-transition service	Post-transition service
OES/NEST Digital Employment Services Participants with less than 12 months in OES/NEST Digital Services.	Workforce Australia Online
OES/NEST Digital Employment Services Participant with 12 months or over in OES/NEST Digital Services and is in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment</li> <li>• work placement</li> <li>• training</li> <li>• another Activity.</li> </ul>	Workforce Australia Online
All other OES/NEST Digital Employment Services Participants.	Workforce Australia Services
<u>jobactive</u> (all Streams) or NEST Enhanced Services Participant with recent earnings (see Note 1 below) and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is not tracking to an Employment Outcome</li> <li>• is not in the Targeted Compliance Framework penalty zone</li> <li>• is not a pre-release prisoner or restricted access participant</li> <li>• does not have a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ high JSCI score</li> <li>○ serious incident report or Managed Service Plan</li> <li>○ draft or approved wage subsidy agreement</li> <li>○ draft or approved <u>PaTH</u> Internship Agreement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Workforce Australia Online (may choose Workforce Australia provider services)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>jobactive</u> Stream C/NEST Enhanced Services Participants if eligible for <u>TtW</u> (see Note 2 below).</li> <li>• <u>TtW</u></li> </ul>	Workforce Australia - <u>TtW</u> (may choose Workforce Australia provider services)
All other <u>jobactive</u> and NEST Enhanced Services Participants.	Workforce Australia provider services
New Business Assistance with NEIS with more than 3 months remaining in NEIS Assistance	Workforce Australia – Self-Employment Assistance
Volunteer Online Employment Services Trial	Can register for Workforce Australia - Online

# Additional Transition Matters

Activity	Scheduled Completion Date
Transition Date	1-3 July 2022
Workforce Australia Services Commence Provider choice for eligible Participants (2 weeks) Post Transition period starts	4 July 2022
Transitioned NEIS Participants Commence in Self-Employment Assistance	By 29 July 2022
Transitioned Participants Commence	By 26 August 2022
Post Transition support Period ends	30 September 2022
Provider to claim outcome payments and EST Completion Payments under existing Deeds in ESS Web	By 30 June 2023
NEIS Providers to claim post-program payments in ESS Web	By 31 July 2023
Transition advice sent to Digital Participants (OES, NEST Digital, VOEST)	Mid-June 2022
Transition advice sent to jobactive and NEST Participants referred between 17 May to 24 June 2022	24 June 2022
jobactive, NEST, TtW referrals cease	27 June 2022
Most Activities and existing Deeds end - jobactive (including NEIS), NEST, TtW, CTA and EST Transition Period ends	30 June 2022
Commencement Date for all new Deeds	1 July 2022

- From 4<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> July Job Seekers will be able to choose where to go for servicing (Department says 'eligible' people may choose)
- Your client record will transitioned to another provider as the transition occurs.

# Q&A + Other

## Take Questions in Chat

What we don't answer, we can provide in writing at a later stage

## Resources

- [PBAS FAQ - https://www.acoss.org.au/points-based-activation-in-workforce-australia-faq/](https://www.acoss.org.au/points-based-activation-in-workforce-australia-faq/)
- <https://jobsearch.gov.au/content/documents/twa/workforce-australia-individuals.pdf>

## Contact Us

- Find us on Twitter, Facebook

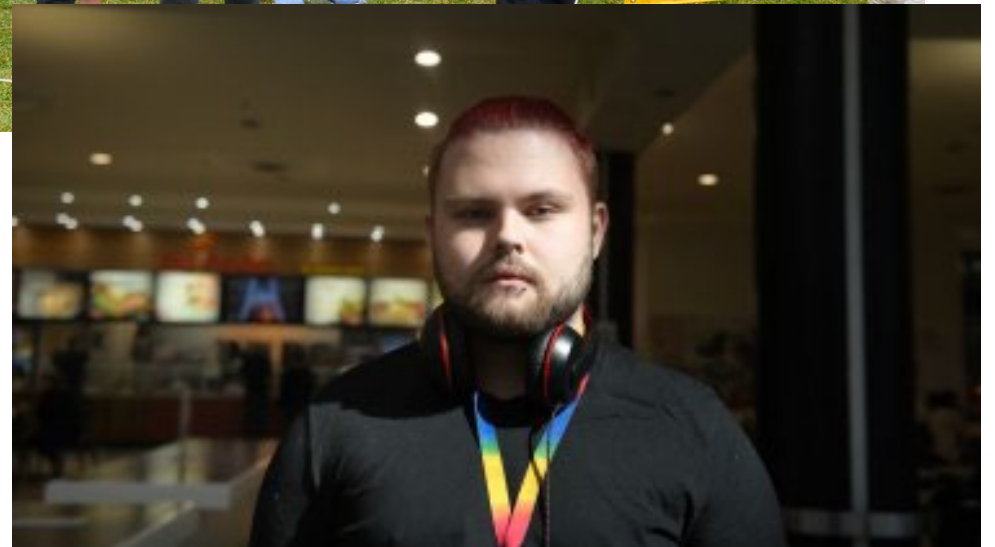
# Fighting Back

**Being left to deal with these punitive systems, and which is now also going to be digitized, is an attack on welfare recipients**

- Job Seekers drop off the grid - i.e. welfare system - due to sheer confusion around rules and overwhelming nature of it all. Hence people get discouraged from attempting to deal with welfare system
- Digital aspect of both employment services (PBAS) could discourage people even further. There's also the issue of automation and the distrust that exists toward government digital solutions re Robodebt.

**Our approach? Giving people a service that does not exist anywhere else & in the process empowering underemployed/unemployed/unemployed workers to become active in their community so they too can fight against the punitive system + affect change**

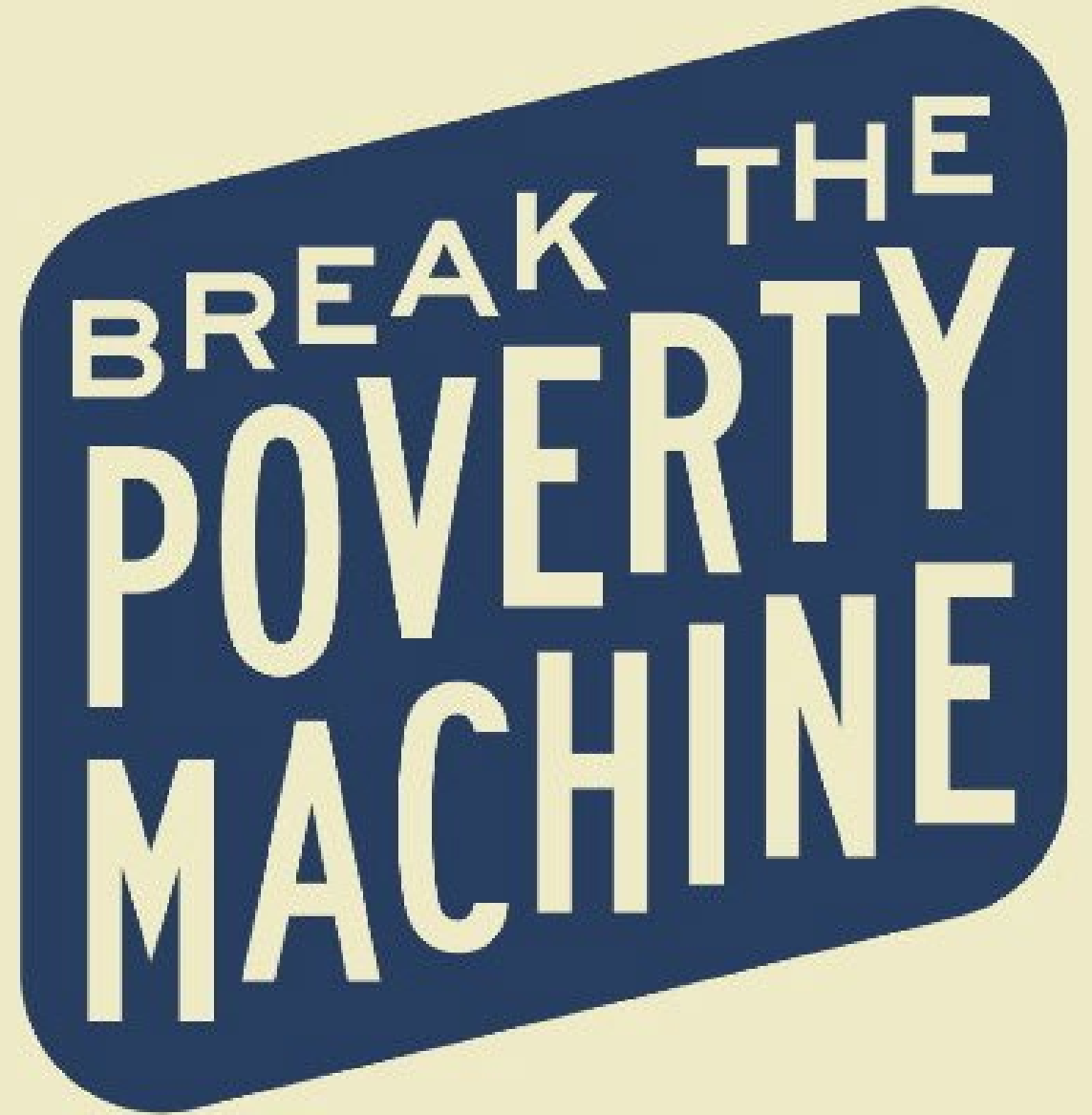
- ✓ Defend and safeguard the rights of all welfare recipients by providing advocacy assistance. Also ensuring that UWs have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.
- ✓ Push back against poor + abusive treatment by being assertive in our demand to be treated humanely
  - **USE OUR NEW APP TO RATE YOUR PROVIDER** <https://www.appsheet.com/start/a209b1ad-46f7-46cf-aacd-e9e5bf77a92a#appName=ESPRATS-6036084&page=detail&sort=%5B%5D&table=App+Intro&view=Advocacy>
  - **COME ALONG TO OUR PUNCHBOWL (SYDNEY) PROTEST Friday 1 July**



# Wrap Up

What next?

- ❖ Site and Area Organising
- ❖ Advocacy Team
- ❖ Pressure Campaigns



**#BTPM**