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Department of Jobs and Small Business

Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job

Evaluation Report

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The document must be attributed as the Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job Evaluation Report.

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List of abbreviations and terminology

CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interview
CPwJ	Connecting People with Jobs
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DES	Disability Employment Services
DHS	Department of Human Services
EBIW	Employment Business Intelligence Warehouse
EF	Employment Fund
EPF	Employment Pathway Fund
GST	Goods and Services Tax
JCB	Job Commitment Bonus
JSA	Job Services Australia
RATTUAJ	Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job

This report uses the terms ‘job seeker’ and ‘participant’ to describe individuals involved in RATTUAJ. ‘Job seeker’ refers to all individuals serviced by JSA/jobactive, and is used when discussing individuals before their participation in the program. ‘Participant’ refers to job seekers who have relocated through RATTUAJ. The term ‘provider’ is used to describe a provider of JSA or jobactive employment services (DES is outside the scope of this evaluation).

The ‘start date’ of a relocation agreement is the date entered into the administrative system as the date the job seeker intends to start their relocation.

This report contains findings from qualitative (in-depth) interviews. This type of research does not quantify the number of people that held a particular view but rather provides deeper meaning to and information on a topic. While the experience of each individual is important, commonly used terminology can describe the proportion of interviewed individuals that held a particular view or reported a particular experience. This can further contextualise insights. This terminology and the corresponding meanings are listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Qualitative terminology

Term	Meaning
Most	Three quarters or more of the consultation group or sub-group
Many	More than half but less than three quarters of the consultation group or sub-group
Half	Approximately half the group or sub-group
Some	More than a quarter but less than a half of the consultation group or sub-group
A few	Up to a quarter of the consultation group or sub-group

Executive summary

The Department of Jobs and Small Business¹ (the Department) evaluated the first eighteen months of the Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job (RATTUJ) programme since its commencement on 1 July 2014. The evaluation used administrative data and qualitative and quantitative research to examine the program's effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness.

Early indications are that financial assistance through RATTUJ was effective for long-term unemployed job seekers who were motivated to take up employment in another location, with most successfully relocating and many still in employment six months after relocation.

The evaluation found:

1. Many of the people who relocated kept the jobs they moved to take up, with two-thirds of job seekers who relocated under JSA achieving a 13 week employment outcome and four in five job seekers who relocated under jobactive achieving a 12 week employment outcome.
2. The majority of relocated job seekers remained off income support payments or reported earnings twelve months after the start of their relocation agreement: 58 per cent under JSA and 63 per cent under jobactive were off income support.
3. Between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015, 620 participants had a confirmed employment placement. Almost all job seekers (96 per cent) who entered into an approved Relocation Agreement relocated successfully.
4. The key factors for successful relocation and sustained employment were people's social support networks, financial assistance, new opportunities such as seeking a fresh start, the support of employment services providers ('providers') in assisting participants, and suitable accommodation.
5. Participants had more successful relocations, more sustained employment and enjoyed their jobs more when they were well matched to their job for which they relocated.
6. Most interviewed job seekers considered that their providers did not understand or know about the program, or did not encourage relocation and expected job seekers to understand the program without assistance. This perception differed from that of providers who reported promoting the program and saw it as a job seeker role to source jobs in other locations.
7. Employment and better employment opportunities were the most common factor in job seekers' decisions to relocate. Other factors were the circumstances of the job seeker, for example a desire to break a negative lifestyle for a new beginning, and the attraction of a particular location.
8. An unwillingness to move away from family and friends, costs involved in relocation and a perceived lack of knowledge and support from providers made relocation unattractive to job seekers. The possibility of a 12 week income support non-payment period for leaving a job without a reasonable excuse after relocation appears to have a limited impact on job seekers relocating for a job.

¹ The Department of Jobs and Small Business replaced the Department of Employment as a result of the Administrative Arrangements Order - amendment made 20 December 2017.

9. Some participants and providers reported issues. Job seekers did not have enough money to make upfront payments on the expectation of later reimbursement, providers could not always directly pay suppliers during relocation, and there was confusion about eligibility requirements, which expenses could be claimed through the program, and about reclaiming rental bond. In addition, job seekers and providers highlighted issues with the administrative burden of the program, difficulty in finding accommodation in the new location, and the short timeframes for relocation and starting employment.
10. The program was undertaken by a very small segment of the overall job seeker population (less than 0.2 per cent of the eligible caseload), but was successful, useful and important for those job seekers who participated.

There were issues with efficiency, given the low numbers of participants, administrative burden, and long timeframes.

The appropriateness of the program could be improved by broadening eligibility criteria to increase take up and by addressing requirements for participants to make payments upfront and then seek reimbursement.

In summary, the evaluation found that:

- the program can assist people move to a new location for work and for some this financial assistance is crucial
- a lack of awareness is dampening demand for the program among potential participants
- some participants in the program reported they would have attempted to find other means to relocate without the assistance
- the model for financial support, particularly reimbursement, could be improved
- relocation places job seekers under considerable financial and emotional stress
- providers have a significant influence over the relocation experience for job seekers
- program guidelines and administrative practices, at the time of the evaluation, did not support rapid relocations
- providers' business constraints affect promotion and use of the program
- broadening eligibility criteria may result in greater take-up.

An important caveat is that the evaluation findings relate to a small, voluntary program. These findings may not generalise if there were significant changes in program design, eligibility or scale.

Evaluation findings

The RATTUAI programme started on 1 July 2014. The program is available to long-term unemployed job seekers who wish to relocate to another location for on-going employment. The Department evaluated the first eighteen months of the RATTUAI programme to examine the program's appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency.

The following data sources and methodologies were used:

- qualitative research – in-depth interviews with 10 employment services providers and 50 job seekers² who were about to enter or had recently entered into a relocation agreement. Follow-up interviews were attempted with all 50 job seekers approximately three months after the initial interview, with 29 agreeing to be re-interviewed.
- quantitative research – data collected from online surveys of employment services providers and a telephone survey of job seekers.
- administrative data analysis – descriptive analysis was performed using data as at 31 March 2016, unless otherwise stated.³ The analysis relates to all Relocation Agreements with start dates between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015. Comparisons were made between job seekers with a Relocation Agreement and other job seekers in the caseload who would be eligible for RATTUAI. Additional information on the research approach is at Appendix B. This approach enabled insights into early implementation and initial outcomes of the program. However, the timeframe meant that it was not possible to capture longer-term outcomes for a large group of participants.

The evaluation period spans two employment services contracts. The RATTUAI programme initially operated under Job Services Australia until 30 June 2015 and continued under the current employment services program, jobactive (DES is outside the scope of this evaluation).

The evaluation posed eight evaluation questions. These are addressed below.

1. Do program participants relocate successfully?

Between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015, 620 job seekers with approved relocation agreements had a confirmed employment placement (a successful relocation for the purposes of this question). This represents 96 per cent of job seekers with an approved Relocation Agreement.

2. Do relocated job seekers achieve employment outcomes?

Two-thirds (66 per cent) of successful relocators whose Relocation Agreements started during the Job Services Australia (JSA) period of this evaluation (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015) achieved a 13 week employment outcome and 49 per cent resulted in a 26 week employment outcome. For successful relocators with agreement start dates during the jobactive period of this evaluation (1 July 2015 –

² Consisting of 40 job seekers who had already relocated, four job seekers who were in the process of relocating and six job seekers who started the process, but did not relocate.

³ 31 March 2016 was used to allow enough time to have passed for the Relocation Agreements to have ended.

30 June 2016), 84 per cent achieved an employment outcome of 4 weeks, 79 per cent a 12 week outcome and 64 per cent a 26 week outcome.⁴

3. Do relocated job seekers remain off income support payments or continue to report earnings over time?

Twelve months after the start of their relocation agreements, 58 per cent of relocated JSA participants in the RATTUAI programme were off income support. This is 22 percentage points greater than for job seekers who were placed in on-going employment but were not part of the RATTUAI programme, with 36 per cent of these job seekers off income support 12 months after placement.

In total, 91 per cent of RATTUAI participants were either off income support or reporting earnings by the second month after the start of their agreement. By the twelfth month this was 71 per cent. The remaining 29 per cent of relocated participants were on income support with no earnings.

4. What factors contribute to successful relocation and sustained employment?

Key factors that contribute to successful relocation and sustained employment include social networks, financial assistance, new opportunities such as seeking a fresh start, the support of providers in assisting participants and finally, finding suitable accommodation.

5. How important is job matching quality and perceived job prospects in contributing to successful relocation and sustained employment?

The alignment of the job with the job seeker's expectations had a big impact on their reported mental wellbeing. People who were engaged and happy with the job they moved to take up were more positive about the program and the move. Many of the job seekers also saw the move for work as an opportunity to grow and not just a job but to develop a career.

Interviews with participants in the program indicated that high quality job matching increases the likelihood of successful relocation and sustained employment. Approximately half of the participants interviewed stated that finding employment that matched their preferences was important to them. At the time of the follow-up interview many participants said they enjoyed the job for which they relocated.

Conversely, interviews also showed that poor quality job matching negatively impacted employment prospects. Some participants reported dissatisfaction with the job for which they relocated, with a few participants stating that poor quality job matching was the reason they were no longer in their job. It is worth noting that the evaluation found that most participants found their own employment, while providers had a limited role in ensuring quality job matching.

⁴ Data is presented as at 31 December 2017 and represents all jobactive participants who were relocated and placed in a job between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016. Outcomes for these participants are reported as at 31 December 2017, allowing a minimum 18-month observation period.

6. *What strategies do employment services providers use to promote the program, to source suitable jobs and ensure quality job matching?*

Employment services providers are responsible for assisting in making arrangements under the RATTUAI programme and promoting it to job seekers. Job seekers and providers who participated in this research had very different perspectives on provider promotion of the program.

On the one hand, provider staff responding to a 2016 provider survey reported actively promoting the relocation program to job seekers.

On the other, qualitative interviews with participants and provider staff indicated there was a lack of understanding and knowledge of the program on the part of providers, a reluctance to encourage relocation and an expectation that job seekers would understand the operational details of the program without provider assistance.

The research also suggested that provider staff saw the sourcing of jobs in other locations and job matching as primarily the responsibility of job seekers.

7. *What are the major factors that contribute to job seekers' decisions to relocate?*

The most common factors that contributed to job seekers' decisions to relocate were employment and better employment opportunities. Other factors included the personal circumstances of the job seeker, for example a desire to move away from family, and the attraction of a particular location.

8. *What are the major impediments that job seekers perceive when deciding whether to relocate? Is the potential of a 12 week income support non-payment period for leaving a job a factor?*

There were several common factors reported by job seekers as discouraging them from relocating. Job seekers who choose to relocate as part of the RATTUAI programme, and those that did not, indicated that factors such as an unwillingness to move away from family and friends, costs involved in relocation and a perceived lack of knowledge and support from providers were impediments to their decision to relocate. The possibility of 12 weeks without income support for job seekers who leave their job without a reasonable excuse during the first six months after relocating appeared to have a limited role in job seekers' decisions to relocate for employment.

9. *Emerging issues*

Through the course of this evaluation, issues emerged that were not part of the evaluation questions but were worth noting. While many participants and providers reported successful outcomes from their involvement in the RATTUAI programme, some reported challenges and barriers.

In particular, there were issues with the financial mechanisms and reimbursement model, including job seekers having enough money to make upfront payments on the expectation of later reimbursement, providers' ability to directly pay suppliers during relocation, and confusion regarding which expenses could be claimed through the program.

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Other issues that emerged included the administrative burden of the program, job seekers experiencing difficulty finding accommodation in the new location, and the relatively short timeframes in which participants were being asked to relocate and commence employment. Providers also identified issues with eligibility requirements and with rules around the provision of rental bond money and its later recovery.

1 Introduction

Given the wide geographical differences across Australian labour markets, job seekers who are willing and able to relocate may find better job opportunities in growth regions and industries. In order to facilitate access to these opportunities, the RATTUAJ programme is available to eligible job seekers to assist them with the financial costs associated with relocating for employment. This report evaluates the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the RATTUAJ programme.

1.1 The Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job programme

The RATTUAJ programme was announced in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2013-14 and started on 1 July 2014. The program assists job seekers with the costs of moving for a job including an apprenticeship to encourage them to relocate to areas with lower unemployment rates than those where they currently reside. It operated under the Job Services Australia (JSA) deed until 30 June 2015 and then continued under the current mainstream employment services program, jobactive. RATTUAJ is also available under Disability Employment Services (DES).

RATTUAJ provides financial assistance to job seekers to relocate for ongoing employment. The financial assistance payments are typically paid as a reimbursement to job seekers for costs incurred, are flexible and can be used for preparing to move, moving and settling in the new location. There are job seeker, relocation and RATTUAJ placement eligibility criteria.

Under the program, providers must:

- ensure the job seeker, the relocation and the RATTUAJ Placement all meet their respective eligibility criteria
- enter into a Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job Agreement (RATTUAJ Agreement)
- assess and pay eligible expenses
- assist job seekers with job placements, post placement support and relocations.

To be eligible for assistance a job seeker must:

- have been a Fully Eligible Participant with a JSA or a jobactive provider or be participating in DES
- have been receiving an eligible income support payment (Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance (Other), or Parenting Payment) for at least 12 months
- have Mutual Obligation requirements
- enter into a Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job Agreement (RATTUAJ Agreement)
- agree to relocate to an eligible location to take up ongoing work including an apprenticeship.

The proposed relocation must:

- be within Australia
- be to a location at least 90 minutes away from where the job seeker currently resides
- not be within a capital city

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- if the relocation is between capital cities, the relocation must be to a capital city with a lower unemployment rate than the capital city where the job seeker currently resides.

For a RATTUAI placement to be eligible:

- the receiving employer must declare that they have attempted to fill the position with a local job seeker
- the job seeker must have received and accepted a job offer from an employer that requires them to relocate
- the placement must not be for a non-payable employment services program outcome or self-employment
- the job must be more than 30 hours per week,⁵ be sustainable and expected to be ongoing (more than six months) and pay remuneration to the job seeker in accordance with the relevant award classification.

If eligible, job seekers who participate in RATTUAI will be reimbursed up to:

- \$3000 (GST exclusive) if relocating to a capital city
- \$6000 (GST exclusive) if relocating to a regional area
- an extra \$3000 (GST exclusive) if relocating with dependent children.

A job seeker who has received financial assistance through RATTUAI and voluntarily leaves their job within the first six months without reasonable grounds may be subject to a 12 week non-payment period, rather than the usual 8 week non-payment period for voluntary unemployment. This also applies if their employment is terminated in the first six months due to misconduct or if the job seeker accepts the job but does not commence employment.

The program links into existing employment service delivery arrangements. To support successful relocation, providers are required to reimburse participants for eligible relocation expenses⁶ and to assist job seekers with job placements, post-placement support and relocations.

Overall, the government allocated \$16.6 million for the program over five years starting in the 2013-14 financial year (Budget Papers 2013-14). Three Australian Government departments have been involved in implementing and managing the program:

- the Department of Jobs and Small Business, which is the lead agency and has administered the majority of the funding
- the Department of Human Services, which administers Centrelink and income support payments
- the Department of Social Services, which administers DES.

Participants followed a general sequence through the program:

- Job seekers decided to move, with job seekers in the vast majority of cases initiating the move

⁵ Job seekers with a Partial Capacity to Work are able to use the program for placements with a minimum of 15 hours per week.

⁶ Noting that providers can make upfront payments to the job seeker for their expenses (that is, before the expenses are incurred) where a job seeker displays financial hardship and providers cannot make the payment directly to the supplier on behalf of a job seeker.

- Job seekers and/or providers searched for and found a job
- Job seekers made an application and, where eligible, entered into a Relocation Agreement with the employment service
- Participants moved with their providers' assistance or support
- Participants start (and hopefully) sustain employment in a new job in a new location.

1.2 Prior research

The former Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) evaluated a pilot relocation program that ran between November 2006 and June 2007. The findings of the evaluation were presented at a House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Skills Relocation on 11 March 2010.⁷

The pilot aimed to relocate job seekers on the east coast of Australia and Adelaide to take up job opportunities in Perth. This program offered greater assistance than was available generally to job seekers at the time by facilitating the participation of employers, extra funding for relocation costs and managing physical relocation.

The pilot program was funded to assist 130 job seekers to relocate from New South Wales and Adelaide to Perth. Ultimately two-thirds of these places were filled with 87 people relocating under the program. Of the 87 people, 67 were still in Perth in October 2008.

The findings demonstrated that the pilot assisted a select group of job seekers, namely young single men with above average employment prospects. This was attributed to the voluntary nature of the pilot and additional screening process established especially for the pilot.

The Department concluded that while the proportion of participants that were off income support six months after job placement was higher than that of matched cohorts in the sending regions, this was likely to be due to the selection bias described in the paragraph above and the results should not be extrapolated to the wider job seeker population.

In 2011, DEEWR undertook a relocation assistance trial called Connecting People with Jobs (CPWJ). While no formal evaluation of this program was undertaken, outcomes of the program were contained in a submission⁸ by the Department to the Productivity Commission's Geographic Labour Mobility Research Report.⁹

The CPWJ initiative, which began on 1 January 2011, was designed to improve labour mobility and reduce unemployment by providing practical assistance to eligible job seekers in JSA and DES to relocate for work including an apprenticeship. Take up was lower than expected with only 1383 relocations of the expected 4000 taken up by the time the program ceased. This was primarily because disadvantaged job seekers found it difficult to overcome social barriers to relocation. Of

⁷ http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/commrep/12888/toc_pdf/7472-2.pdf

⁸ http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/135184/subdr060-labour-mobility.pdf

⁹ <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/labour-mobility/report>

those that did relocate, very few participants were reimbursed the full funding amount available to them.

Similar to the pilot program discussed earlier, the CPwJ initiative primarily appealed to men (74 per cent of participants were male) without dependants (78 per cent of participants did not have dependants). The participants' average age was older (37 years compared to 30 for the pilot).

On 1 July 2013 CPwJ transitioned into the Move 2 Work program, which was replaced by the RATTUAI programme on 1 July 2014.

1.3 Evaluation scope and objectives

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of RATTUAI as it relates to JSA and jobactive. Use of the program by job seekers registered with DES is outside the scope of this evaluation.

The evaluation examines the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of RATTUAI and the factors that contribute to a successful relocation by addressing the following questions:

1. Do program participants relocate successfully?
2. Do relocated job seekers achieve employment outcomes?
3. Do relocated job seekers remain off income support payments or continue to report earnings over time?
4. What factors contribute to successful relocation and sustained employment?
5. Are job matching and perceived job prospects important to successful relocation and sustained employment?
6. What strategies are put in place by employment services providers to promote the program, to source suitable jobs and ensure quality job matching?
7. What are the major factors that contribute to a job seeker's decision to relocate?
8. What are the major impediments that job seekers perceive when deciding whether to relocate?

A key caveat is that the small take-up of the program means that the evaluation cannot make specific statistical findings as to whether the program induced additional work related relocation or led to better outcomes (employment and earnings).

This is due to the small population size, the risk of selection bias and the difficulty in establishing a control group. That is, individuals who volunteer to relocate may have something fundamentally different about them compared to other unemployed people that makes them more likely to have better employment outcomes. As these traits cannot be measured or controlled for, a robust comparison group of other unemployed people cannot be created.

1.4 Data sources

The evaluation draws upon:

- the Department's administrative data

- a series of qualitative interviews with job seekers and employment services providers
- surveys of employment services providers in 2015 and 2016
- a survey of job seekers in 2016.

How these data sources are used is outlined below and discussed in Appendix B.

1.4.1 Administrative data

The evaluation uses administrative data from the Department's Employment Business Intelligence Warehouse (EBIW). This database contains information on job seekers registered with JSA and jobactive employment services including take up and use of the RATTUAJ programme.

Descriptive analysis was performed using data as at 31 March 2016, unless otherwise stated.¹⁰ The analysis relates to all Relocation Agreements with start dates between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015. Comparisons were made between job seekers with a Relocation Agreement and other job seekers in the caseload who would be eligible for RATTUAJ.

1.4.2 Qualitative research

The Department engaged Colmar Brunton to conduct in-depth interviews with job seekers and providers. The research collected qualitative information on the experiences of job seekers and providers involved with RATTUAJ.

An initial wave of in-depth interviews with 50 job seekers and 10 providers was conducted from August to October 2015. A follow-up wave with the same job seekers was conducted from December 2015 to February 2016. Of the 50 job seekers who participated in the first wave, 29 agreed to be re-interviewed.

1.4.3 Surveys of employment services providers

Employment services providers are surveyed regularly and all provider site managers are expected to complete the survey. The surveys gather the views of provider staff on service delivery approaches and provider relationships with the Department. For this evaluation, information was used from surveys conducted in 2015 and 2016. For further details on the surveys see Appendix B.

1.4.4 2016 job seeker survey

A job seeker survey conducted in 2016 collected specific information on RATTUAJ. For further details, see Appendix B.

¹⁰ 31 March 2016 was used to allow enough time to have passed for the Relocation Agreements to have ended. Outcomes for job seekers that relocated under jobactive were observed as at 31 December 2017.

2 Participant population

2.1 Job seeker pathways through the RATTUAJ programme

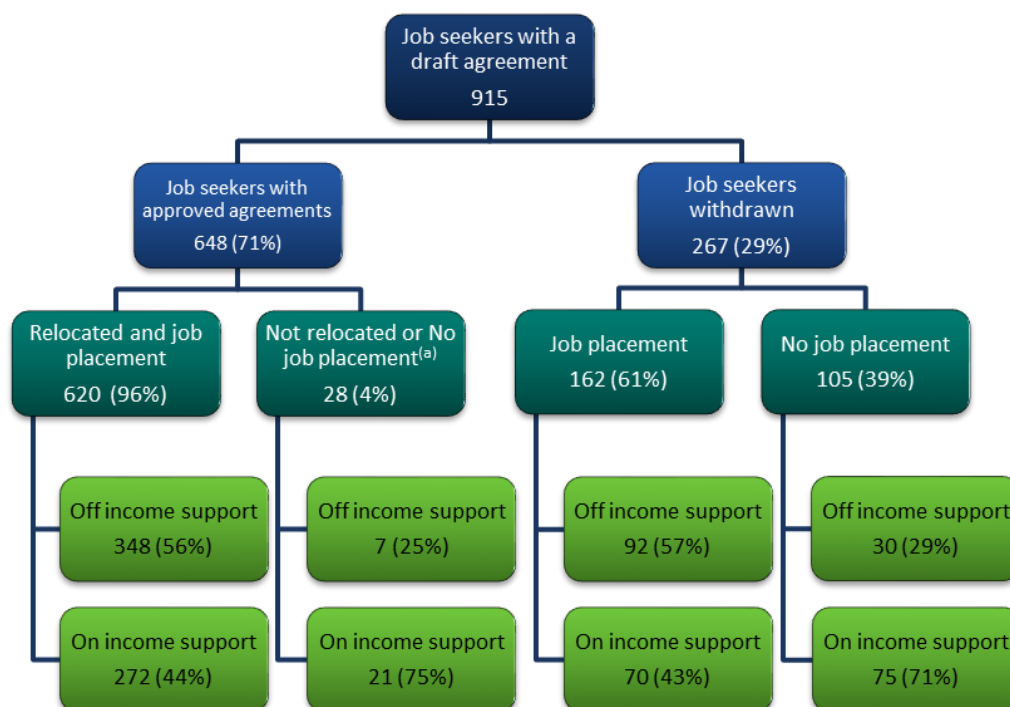
Between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015 a total of 915 job seekers had a Relocation Agreement initiated on their behalf (Figure 2.1). Over two-thirds of these job seekers had their agreements approved. On any given day during that period, around 450,000 job seekers were eligible for RATTUAJ (see Table 2.1).

While low, these rates need to be considered in the context of the small fraction of the general population that move each year for primarily employment purposes. The Productivity Commission's *Geographic Labour Mobility* Research Report (2014) reports that about 16 per cent of the labour force changes residence each year, and of these only a small proportion move primarily for work purposes (10 to 17 per cent of residential moves). The rate of movement of people between regional labour markets is 3.3 per cent of the labour force per year, falling to 1.7 per cent for interstate moves.¹¹

Among job seekers with an approved RATTUAJ agreement 96 per cent went on to have a successful relocation with a confirmed employment placement. Of those job seekers with a confirmed employment placement, 56 per cent were off income support payments three months after the relocation start date. Further analysis of employment and income support outcomes is in Section 3.2.

¹¹ Productivity Commission (2014), *Geographic Labour Mobility*, Research Report, Canberra.

Figure 2.1: Flowchart of job seekers with Relocation Agreements with start dates between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015 as at 31 March 2016, (JSA and jobactive)



(a) Not Relocated or No Job Placement grouped as EBIW data does not capture why approved agreement did not become a job placement.

Notes:

1. Withdrawn job seekers did not have an agreement approved during analysis period, but may have been approved later.
2. The 'job seekers with approved agreements' box is placements in the specific vacancy recorded in the relocation agreement.
3. Job placements under the job seekers withdrawn box occurred in the period between 7 days before and 30 days after the start date of a relocation agreement.
4. Income support status was calculated at roughly 3 months (91 days) after the relocation start date.

Source: EBIW data

There were a total of 407 job seekers under JSA who had an approved Relocation Agreement and 241 under jobactive. Allowing for the difference in duration of the reference periods, take up into the program was slightly higher under jobactive compared to JSA at a rate of 9.3 job seekers per week compared to 7.8 job seekers per week under JSA.

2.2 Job seeker characteristics

The participants who accessed RATTUAJ were more likely than those in the eligible caseload to be men, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and more educated. They were less likely to have a disability and less likely to be very long term unemployed. Only 17.1 per cent had dependants. They were more likely to go to a regional area (71.3 per cent) than a capital city (28.7 per cent).¹²

RATTUAJ participants were more likely to be male, however the proportion of participants aged 25 years or younger mirrored the caseload closely, particularly under JSA. Job seeker characteristics are provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Demographics of job seekers, with an approved Relocation Agreement, RATTUAJ eligible population (per cent)

Participation status	Per cent of participants JSA ^(a)	Per cent of participants jobactive ^(a)	Per cent total participants (JSA and jobactive)	Per cent of eligible caseload ^(b)
Female	35.1	41.1	37.3	51.3
Age 25 years old and under	24.3	19.5	22.5	24.1
Very long-term unemployed (24+ months) ^(c)	43.7	43.6	43.7	56.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	18.2	22.8	19.9	10.2
Ex-offender	11.8	10.0	11.1	11.3
Disability	26.3	25.7	26.1	34.0
Education: Less than Year 10	15.0	6.6	11.9	13.2
Education: Year 10 or 11	21.1	23.2	21.9	28.9
Education: Year 12	13.5	14.1	13.7	16.1
Education: Non-trade vocational education or diploma equivalent or trade qualification	38.6	36.9	38.0	33.4
Education: Tertiary qualification	11.8	19.1	14.5	8.3
All relocation agreements (numbers)	407	241	648	450,512

(a) Characteristics presented are based on information at relocation agreement start date.

(b) Eligible to participate in RATTUAJ as at 31 January 2015.

(c) Unemployment duration is based on the last registration date for income support with the Department of Human Services. This may not align with the requirements for eligibility for RATTUAJ.

Source: EBIW Data

¹² EBIW data

3 Key evaluation questions

3.1 Do program participants relocate successfully?

Program participants relocate successfully

- Between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015, 620 job seekers with approved relocation agreements had a confirmed employment placement (considered as a successful relocation for the purposes of this question). This represents 96 per cent of job seekers who entered into an approved relocation agreement.
- Three in five participants who successfully relocated moved to a regional area, taking no dependants with them.¹³
- The most common industry of employment for relocated job seekers was Accommodation and Food Services.

For the purposes of this evaluation question, a successful relocation is defined as a job seeker with an approved relocation agreement and a confirmed employment placement. This definition has been chosen as the best available indicator of actual relocation, since it is not possible to ascertain from the data available whether a job seeker did in fact relocate.

Between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015, 648 job seekers had an approved Relocation Agreement.

From 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 under the JSA contract, 407 job seekers entered into an approved Relocation Agreement and 389 of them successfully relocated (i.e. had a confirmed employment placement) (Table 3.1). Between 1 July 2015 and 31 December 2015 a further 241 job seekers entered into an approved Relocation Agreement under the jobactive contract of whom 231 successfully relocated (Table 3.2). In total, between 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2015, of the 648 job seekers with approved relocation agreements, 620 (96 per cent) successfully relocated.

The likelihood of successful relocation did not differ greatly between different streams¹⁴ varying between 94 per cent for Stream 4 participants to 98 per cent for Stream 1 participants under the JSA contract. Under the jobactive contract, all Stream C participants successfully relocated while 96 per cent and 94 per cent of Streams A and B participants respectively successfully relocated.

¹³ A dependent child is:

- under 24 years of age or a Stronger Participation Incentives (SPI) Participant
- financially dependent on the relocating job seeker, and
- relocating to live with the job seeker.

Dependants do not include the job seeker's sibling/s or parent/s.

¹⁴ Discussion of streams in this report relates to the main element of the employment services models in operation during the reference period for this evaluation. The JSA model had four service streams for job seekers: one for work-ready job seekers (Stream 1) and three for more disadvantaged job seekers (Streams 2 to 4). A similar system operates under jobactive with three service streams. Stream A represents the most job ready job seekers, while Stream B and Stream C capture more disadvantaged job seekers.

Table 3.1: Number of job seekers with approved agreements by relocation status and stream – JSA

Stream	Relocated ^(a) (number)	Not relocated (number)	Total (number)	Percentage relocated
Stream 1	62	1	63	98.4
Stream 2	135	6	141	95.7
Stream 3	102	5	107	95.3
Stream 4	90	6	96	93.8
Total	389	18	407	95.6

(a) A relocated job seeker is one with an approved relocation agreement and a confirmed job placement.

Source: EBIW data.

Table 3.2: Number of job seekers with approved agreements by relocation status and stream – jobactive

Stream	Relocated ^(a) (number)	Not relocated (number)	Total (number)	Percentage relocated
Stream A	106	5	111	95.5
Stream B	82	5	87	94.3
Stream C	43	—	43	100.0
Total	231	10	241	95.9

(a) A relocated job seeker is one with an approved relocation agreement and a confirmed job placement.

Source: EBIW data.

Five industries accounted for almost two-thirds of the successful relocations. These industries were: Accommodation and Food Services (135), Other Services (101), Health Care and Social Assistance (60), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (57) and Manufacturing (56). A breakdown of approved Relocation Agreements by relocation status and the 10 most common industries for RATTUJ participants is at Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Approved Relocation Agreements by relocation status and the 10 most common industries for RATTUAJ participants

Industry	Relocated ^(a) (per cent)	Not relocated (per cent)	Total approved agreements (per cent)	Job placements ^(b) N = 486,169 (per cent)
Accommodation and Food Services	21.7	21.4	21.7	12.6
Other Services	16.2	28.6	16.8	18.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	9.6	7.1	9.5	6.7
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	9.2	7.1	9.1	5.2
Manufacturing	9.0	3.6	8.8	8.1
Construction	6.1	10.7	6.3	9.2
Retail Trade	5.1	3.6	5.1	12.2
Education and Training	4.7	3.6	4.6	3.1
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	3.5	0.0	3.4	5.7
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2.9	3.6	2.9	6.0

(a) This column is based off 622 Relocation Agreements, which relates to 620 job seekers.

(b) All job placements from 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2015.

Source: EBIW data.

Only 28 job seekers did not progress from an approved agreement to a confirmed employment placement, which means there is insufficient data to analyse any effect the characteristics of job seekers or the jobs for which they relocated may have had on the likelihood of successfully relocating.

3.2 Do relocated job seekers achieve paid employment outcomes?

Relocated job seekers achieve employment outcomes

- Two-thirds (66 per cent) of successful relocators whose Relocation Agreements started during the JSA period of this evaluation (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015) achieved a 13 week employment outcome and 49 per cent a 26 week employment outcome.
- For successful relocations with agreement start dates during the jobactive period of this evaluation (1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016), 79 per cent achieved a 12 week employment outcome and 64 per cent a 26 week employment outcome.

For the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, under JSA, employment outcome payments were paid to providers for job seekers in Stream 2, 3 or 4 who achieved 13 and 26 week employment outcomes (Stream 1 job seekers did not attract outcome payments unless they had been unemployed for 12 months or more). For the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, under jobactive, employment outcome payments were paid at 4, 12 and 26 weeks of employment.

Employment outcome payments reported in this section are only those directly linked to the job specified in the relocation agreement. Payments made where a participant secured a different job to the one specified in their relocation agreement are excluded from the analysis, since in these (few) cases it is not always clear whether the planned relocation actually took place.

3.2.1 Job Services Australia

As at 31 March 2016, of all participants who had an approved relocation agreement and a confirmed employment placement (“relocated” – see section 3.1) during the JSA contract:

- two thirds (66 per cent) of placements resulted in a 13 week employment outcome and 49 per cent with a 26 week employment outcome
- the remaining third had no employment outcome.

For more disadvantaged RATTUJ participants (Streams 2, 3 and 4) under JSA, the likelihood of achieving an employment outcome decreased with increasing disadvantage. Relocated participants in Streams 2 and 3 were more likely to attain a 26 week outcome (54 and 53 per cent respectively) compared to Stream 4 (41 per cent).

Counterintuitively, participants with less disadvantage (Stream 1) were less likely to have an employment outcome recorded (at 43 per cent) than participants in other streams (Table 3.4). Of the Stream 1 RATTUJ participants, at least 13 were not eligible for outcome payments.¹⁵ When participants ineligible for outcome payments are excluded from analysis, 28 per cent of Stream 1 participants would have no outcome, which is in line with Stream 2.¹⁶

¹⁵ Noting that while some of the Stream 1 RATTUJ participants were not eligible for outcome payments they were eligible (at the time) for relocation assistance.

¹⁶ Employment outcomes (beyond job placement) are detectable in administrative data only because of the provider incentive payments they incur. Where providers do not or cannot claim a payment, administrative data provides no way to detect that an outcome has occurred. Stream 1 participants in JSA who had been unemployed for less than 12 months did not attract outcome payments.

The transition between the JSA and jobactive contracts may have led to some outcomes never being claimed, since not all JSA providers went on to become jobactive providers. This may have contributed to the comparatively higher 12 week outcome rate for jobactive (Table 3.5).

Table 3.4: Employment outcome by stream as at 31 March 2016 for all Relocation Agreements that had a confirmed job placement – JSA

JSA Stream	Relocated (number)	13 week outcome (per cent)	26 week outcome (per cent)	Conversion rate 13 to 26 week (per cent)
Stream 1	63	57.1	46.0	80.6
Stream 2	136	70.6	53.7	76.0
Stream 3	102	67.6	52.9	78.3
Stream 4	90	64.4	41.1	63.8
Total	391	66.5	49.4	74.2

Note: Given a data extract date of 31 March 2016 all JSA outcomes should have been finalised. The table excludes Relocation Agreements which did not result in relocation.

Source: EBIW data.

3.2.2 jobactive

The jobactive contract began on 1 July 2015. Table 3.5 reports as at 31 December 2017 the number of employment outcomes for all Relocation Agreements, with a start date between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016, which had a confirmed job placement under jobactive.

As with participants relocated under JSA, employment outcome results varied depending on the service Stream of the participant. More than four-fifths (88 per cent) of Stream A participants, the least disadvantaged, had attained a 12 week employment outcome, compared to 62 per cent of Stream C, the most disadvantaged (Table 3.5). Overall, almost two-thirds (64 per cent) attracted a 26 week employment outcome payment. Unlike Stream 1 participants in JSA, an Employment Outcome can be claimed for a Stream A job seeker after three months of receiving continuous service.

Table 3.5: Employment outcomes by stream as at 31 December 2017 for all Relocation Agreements with a confirmed job placement – jobactive

jobactive stream	Relocated (number)	4 week outcome (per cent)	12 week outcome (per cent)	26 week outcome (per cent)	Conversion rate 4 to 26 week (per cent)
Stream A	233	88.7	88.2	78.7	88.8
Stream B	191	82.4	76.1	56.9	69.0
Stream C	88	73.6	62.1	41.4	56.3
Total	512	83.7	79.0	63.9	76.4

Notes:

1. Data is presented as at 31 December 2017 and represents all jobactive participants who were relocated and placed in a job between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016. Outcomes for these participants are reported as at 31 December 2017, allowing a minimum 18-month observation period.

2. This may be an under report of 26 outcomes because not all 26 outcomes may be claimed by the data extract date of 31 December 2017. Note that if the Outcome Period ended on or after 5 May 2016, providers have until 12 months after the Completion Date of their *jobactive Deed 2015-2020* to claim Outcome Payments.

Source: EBIW data.

3.3 Do relocated job seekers remain off income support or report earnings?

The majority of relocated job seekers remain off income support payments or report earnings

- Twelve months after the start of their relocation agreements, 58 per cent of relocated JSA participants in RATTUAJ were off income support and 63 per cent under jobactive were off income support. This is greater than for job seekers who were placed in on-going employment but were not part of RATTUAJ, with 36 per cent of these job seekers off income support 12 months after placement.
- In total, 91 per cent of JSA RATTUAJ participants were either off income support or reporting earnings by the second month after the start of their agreement. By the twelfth month this had fallen to 71 per cent. The remaining 29 per cent of relocated participants were on income support with no earnings.
- In total, 81 per cent of jobactive RATTUAJ participants were either off income support or reporting earnings by the second month after the start of their agreement. By the twelfth month this had fallen to 72 per cent. The remaining 28 per cent of relocated participants were on income support with no earnings.

The aim of the RATTUAJ programme is to assist long-term unemployed job seekers to relocate for ongoing employment. A measure of the success of this program is the number of participants who leave income support or, to a lesser extent, reduce their reliance on income support, reporting additional earnings to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

3.3.1 Job Services Australia

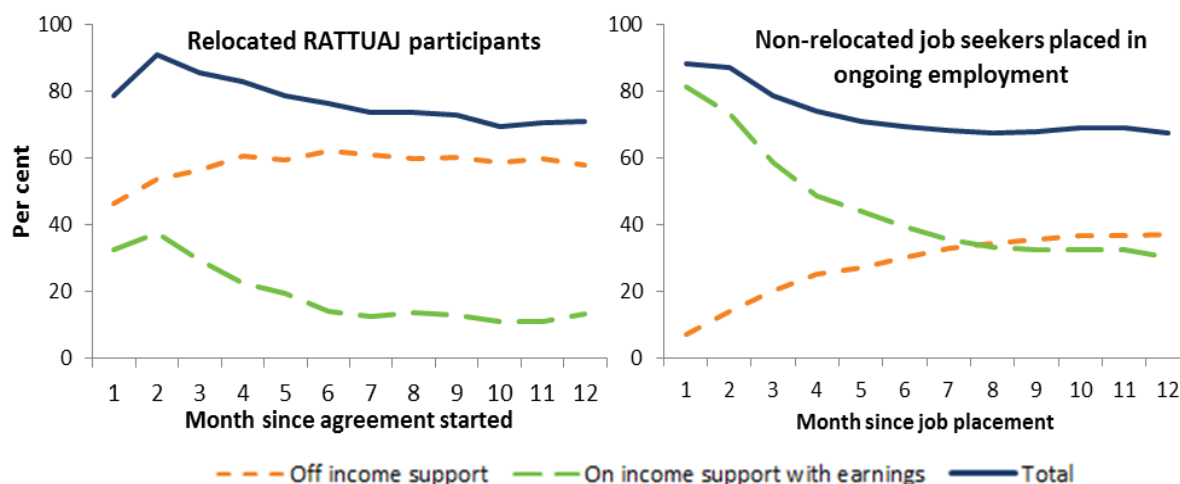
In order to examine the outcomes for participants over time, a cohort was identified comprising 321 RATTUAJ participants with approved agreements, a confirmed employment placement ('relocated'), and for whom sufficient time had elapsed after relocation that they could be tracked each month for 12 months from the start date of their agreement.¹⁷ By the second month after the start of their agreement, 91 per cent of the relocated RATTUAJ participants had either left income support all together, or were still on income support but reporting earnings to DHS. This is very similar to the proportion of job seekers who were placed into ongoing employment but were not part of RATTUAJ at 88 per cent. The pattern over the 12 months of tracking for both groups mirrored each other and differed by only a few percentage points. This pattern showed that the combined proportion of job seekers off income support or on income support with earnings plateaued from 6 months at around 70 to 75 per cent for relocated job seekers and 67 to 69 per cent for non-relocated job seekers

Figure 3.1 shows the proportion of this cohort that was either off income support or on income support with reported earnings each month after the start of the agreement. Alongside is a

¹⁷ The 321 RATTUAJ participants that form a part of the analysis of this section have a relocation agreement start date between 1 July 2014 and 31 March 2015 and is based on data as at 31 March 2016. This allows for the 321 RATTUAJ participants to be tracked for 12 months.

comparable group of job seekers who were placed into ongoing employment between 1 January and 31 January 2015, but were not part of RATTUAJ.

Figure 3.1: Monthly income support status of relocated participants and non-relocated job seekers - JSA



Notes:

1. “Relocated RATTUAJ participants” includes 321 participants in RATTUAJ with approved agreements, a confirmed employment placement and for whom enough time had lapsed so they could be tracked for 12 months.
2. “Non-relocated job seekers placed in ongoing employment” are 6247 job seekers who would be eligible for RATTUAJ (as at 31 January 2015) placed into ongoing employment between 1 January and 31 January 2015.
3. The “Total” value includes all participants who were either off Income Support or had earnings. Subtracting “Total” from 100 provides the percentage of participants who remained on Income Support with no earnings.

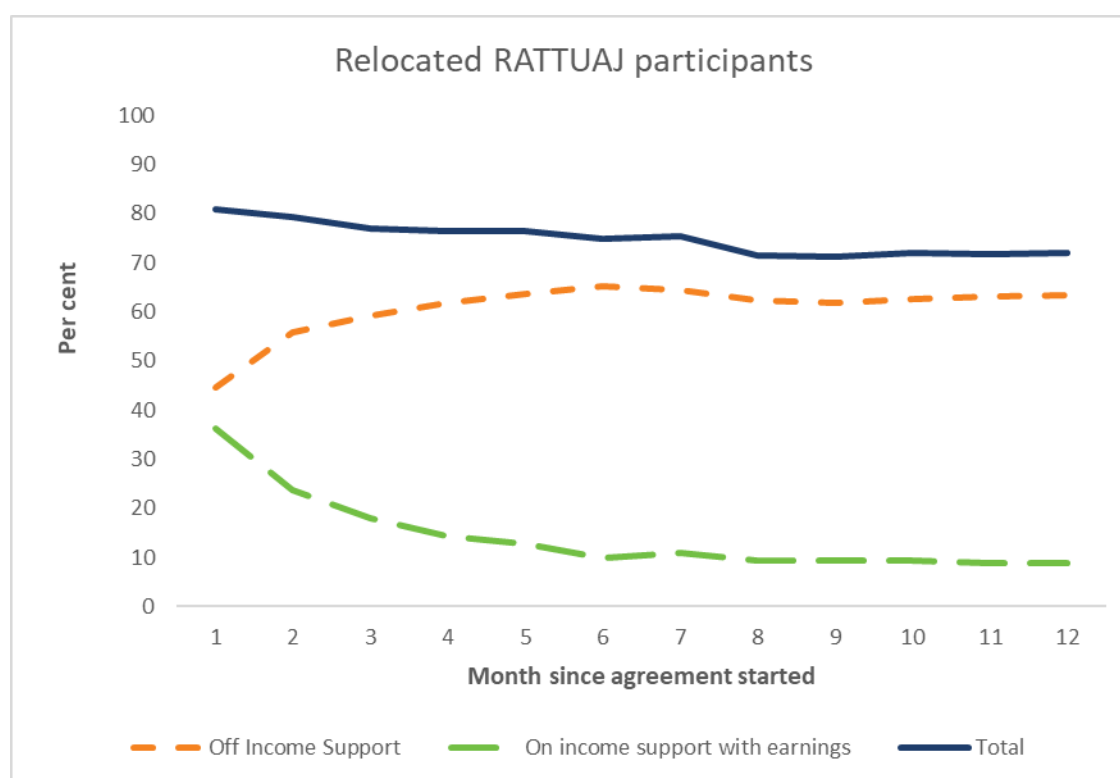
Differences between the two groups of job seekers became evident when the patterns for the off income support and on income support with earnings were compared individually. Throughout the 12 month period the majority of relocated RATTUAJ participants were off income support, rising from 54 per cent in the second month to 62 per cent in the sixth month, and remaining fairly stable at around 60 per cent thereafter. However, two months after non-relocated job seekers were placed in a job, 81 per cent were still on income support but were reporting some earnings. This proportion fell dramatically over the 12 months to 30 per cent. Conversely the proportion of non-relocated job seekers off income support all together rose throughout the 12 months from 7 per cent for the first month to 36 per cent by the twelfth month, but never achieving a similar rate as that for relocated RATTUAJ participants off income support.

This difference in patterns reflects an expectation that employment will be ongoing and full-time following relocation. Individuals are unlikely to consider making the significant step of moving to another location, given the personal and financial stress involved and the challenges of leaving established social support networks, without being relatively confident that their future job will result in enough income and will be relatively secure. Hence relocated RATTUAJ job seekers are more likely to have earnings allowing them to come off income support, and stay off for a longer period of time.

3.3.2 jobactive

Based on analysis for RATTUAJ participants under jobactive one month after the agreement start date, 81 per cent of relocated job seekers were off income support or on income support with reported earnings. This had fallen to 72 per cent by 12 months after the agreement start date. Figure 3.2 below shows how income support reliance developed over the 12 month period after the agreement started and includes the same 512 job seekers shown in Table 3.5. It provides an updated version of Figure 3.1 for jobactive RATTUAJ participants with data as at 5 January 2018. The proportion of relocated job seekers who were off income support one month after their agreement started was 45 per cent. By 12 months after the agreement start date, 63 per cent were off income support. These patterns are broadly similar to those shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.2: Income support reliance of RATTUAJ participants during the 12 months after agreement start date - jobactive



Notes:

1. "Relocated RATTUAJ participants" includes 512 participants in RATTUAJ with approved agreements, a confirmed employment placement and for whom enough time had elapsed so they could be tracked for 12 months.
2. The "Total" value includes all participants who were either off Income Support or had earnings. Subtracting "Total" from 100 provides the percentage of participants who remained on income support with no earnings.

3.4 What factors contribute to successful relocation and sustained employment?

There are key factors for successful relocation and sustained employment

Social support networks, financial assistance, job matching, new opportunities, the support of providers in assisting participants, and finally, finding suitable accommodation are key factors that contribute to successful relocation and sustained employment.

For the purposes of this evaluation question, a successful relocation is defined as a job seeker in RATTUAI moving to a new location to work in the job specified in their relocation agreement. Factors contributing to sustaining that employment are also examined.

3.4.1 Factors that contribute to successful relocation and sustained employment

Of the 50 RATTUAI participants initially interviewed, 29 were able to be re-interviewed approximately three months later. These follow-up interviews were conducted to obtain participants' perspectives and experiences following their relocation. Of the 29, 23 were employed in the job for which they relocated, six were not and one did not commence employment or complete the relocation process.

Interviews with participants revealed the following factors that contributed to successful relocation and sustained employment:

- the financial assistance provided by RATTUAI was crucial to their decision to relocate
- relocation was problematic for those who did not have family members or other connections to provide social support
- job matching was an important factor for successful relocation and sustaining employment post relocation
- some participants reported that they would have been willing to relocate for 'any job' rather than staying in the same location and remaining unemployed
- the interactions participants had with their providers in accessing the program had an important impact on their perceptions of relocation, and on the ability of participants to successfully integrate into their new locations
- half of participants indicated in their first interview that they were pleased with the assistance they received from their providers during the relocation process
- when followed up around three months after their initial interviews, approximately half the participants reported having had further contact from their providers after relocation. Some appreciated this post-relocation contact, and
- for many participants, finding suitable accommodation either on an interim or longer-term basis was particularly difficult.

Most of the participants who were still in the same job reported enjoying the work and many said they had had no negative experiences in their new position. Participants reported positive experiences of the employment they relocated for, including: having financial independence and the

ability to save money; learning new skills; being able to use transferrable skills from previous jobs in their current role; and making new friends. Participants who reported a good job match described having higher levels of satisfaction with their relocation and with RATTUAJ.

Of those no longer in the job for which they relocated, a few participants stated they left employment due to poor job matching. Other reasons for leaving employment included returning to their original location in order to be closer to family, being terminated and, in one participant's case, being allegedly underpaid in the job. Of the participants who were no longer employed in the job for which they relocated, many ultimately returned home but a few stayed in their new location. At the time of the follow-up interview, only a few of these participants had found alternative employment.

3.4.2 Financial assistance

As at 31 March 2016 expenditure to assist job seekers, with Relocation Agreements with start dates between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015, totalled \$1.408 million (Table A.6). This was at an average cost per participant of \$2,903 (Tables A.7). Additional information on expenditure is in Appendix A.

Some interviewed job seekers also reported that receiving income support for at least 12 months - a requisite for eligibility for the program - meant that they generally had difficulty saving money.

"...it's not easy to save money to move when you are still paying all your bills and that just on Centrelink money."

Male, 30s, from regional area, to capital city

According to most interviewed job seekers, financial assistance provided by RATTUAJ was crucial to a participant's decision to relocate. Many of the participants said that without the assistance of the program, they would not have been able to relocate.

"Oh it was everything, otherwise we wouldn't have been able to do it. We wouldn't have been able to afford to move at all."

Male, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

"I wouldn't have done it. I wouldn't have been able to afford it otherwise. So that's a big thing, a big part of it. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here... I wouldn't have been able to afford the ticket and food and everything like that if I didn't go through this system."

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

"Yeah, it [financial assistance] was definitely the vital factor which constituted to actually agreeing to do this. Because if I wasn't able to get that financial support, I don't know what I would have done because this is a great job and it was a great opportunity and I really love it here and I would have been really disappointed if I wasn't able to get that assistance. I can't thank the government, the people that have helped me to do that enough."

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

The importance of the financial assistance was supported by providers:

“Very important, as I said, if you move and you can get your rent paid, plus you’re going into full-time work and you can get your stuff moved, then that’s a wonderful thing.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

The financial support provided through upfront payments and reimbursement was a significant factor in facilitating relocation. Some participants indicated they would have had to rely on friends, parents, family or relatives or draw heavily on their credit cards if it had not been for the financial assistance, leading to additional financial pressure. Others lacked these options.

“Me myself, no. I wouldn’t have been able to on my own. I would have to go to family members which I do not like but I would have found some way to get myself here if I really wanted it.”

Female, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

3.4.3 Social support networks

Relocation was problematic for job seekers who did not have family members or other connections to provide social support (see Section 3.8.2). Those relocating to areas where they had some existing social connections (for example friends or family) or at least a degree of familiarity with the area (perhaps having lived there before) tended to be better connected when they relocated. They were able to stay with friends or family on arrival, giving them time to better assess the local housing market to find suitable and affordable accommodation. Those who were relocating to an area familiar to them were in a position to target their search for accommodation in specific suburbs or regions they knew they liked and could afford.

“And the family, and my family’s going to be there pretty much. If my family wasn’t there I wouldn’t have even thought about moving.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

“Yeah I have [FAMILY] that lives up there. I was going to stay with [FAMILY] until I got a place ... Oh pretty much the main, it was a big reason because I would have nowhere to stay. I just don’t have the money as I haven’t been working. Accommodation and the airfares and everything else, that was a big help or will be a big help.”

Male, 30s, from regional area, to capital city

Making friends and establishing new social networks also contributed towards a successful relocation.

“Yeah, they sometimes have after work functions, you know, drinks, you know, they’ll go to dinner sometimes together and they’ll always invite me. So it’s not just settling in with the work, it’s settling in with the people which is really nice and we always talk to each other about how weekends were, what we do in the evenings. We’ve sort of really got to know each other, our families, where we’re originally from, all of that sort of stuff. That really helped as well. Not just being able to approach them for work-related questions but to be able to go and talk to them just about general day to day things, yeah, that helped a lot.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

“The organisation made it easy to be assimilating to the [LOCATION] and I just had to do the leg work though which is the same with everyone. I had to go and approach them. So that was good

to touch base with the local people and the local community. Being actively involved in the community has made a big difference for anyone when you come into [LOCATION]... So it's not the weather and it's not the environment. It's the people. The atmosphere of [LOCATION]..."

Female, 50s, from capital city, to regional area

3.4.4 Quality job matching

The quality of the job match, in the job seeker's opinion, was an important factor for successful relocation and sustaining employment post relocation. Interviews with participants both shortly after they moved and within three to four months after their relocation, showed that the degree to which the job aligned with their skills, experience and expectations had a significant impact on their broader mental well-being and desire to remain in the job. Typically, the more engaged and happy they were in the new job, the more positive their outlook in relation to RATTUAI and their decision to relocate. Many reported feeling happy and proud to be applying their skills and abilities in their new jobs.

"... I think it's very, very important [to have a job that matches one's skills and training]... I think you always feel happier in yourself if you're doing the job you really like and you're doing a good job of that job, you always feel better in yourself."

Male, 60s, from capital city, to regional area

"Very, very important; you've got to be happy. You've got to be happy in your job and if you don't get the right job, you're not going to stick around, are you?"

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

"... it's not always about the location it's just about the actual work I'm doing and with the company I'm working with that made me sort of feel comfortable with the decision to do this."

Male, 40s, from regional area, to capital city

See Section 3.5 for further discussion on the importance of job matching to successful relocation and sustained employment.

3.4.5 A "fresh start"

Some participants reported that they would have been willing to relocate for 'any job' rather than staying in the same location and remaining unemployed. For this small group, this mindset was underpinned by either a significant frustration at the inability to secure work in their current location, or a desire to break a negative lifestyle for a 'fresh start' elsewhere. These participants typically had fewer ties to their immediate location (for example they were single, or they had no children, they were older, or their children were independent adults).

"It's just getting out of my comfort zone and just going ahead and just do what I've got to do. Sometimes it's good to get out of our comfort zones."

Female, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

"The help that it [financial assistance] could give you and the fact that you can start life again. Be back into the world of living, but you've got to be willing to make the step and with the help."

Male, 50s, from regional area, to capital city

“That’s it’s not just a walk in a park. You have to really put your head down and commit to it. It’s not just a little holiday. It’s your job to provide other people with [JOB TYPE]. All those things I sort of knew but I wasn’t really – I’m still very very immature.”

Male, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

3.4.6 Support from providers

The interactions participants had with their providers in accessing the program had an important impact on their perceptions of relocation, and on the ability of participants to integrate successfully into their new locations. Beyond the immediate financial assistance provided by the program, it appeared that providers had varying interpretations of ‘post-placement support.’ Some participants reported their providers made contact just to check in with them and made sure they felt supported, which was valued. Others reported having little or no contact with their providers after the move, outside of processing outstanding financial claims.

Pre-relocation support

Half of participants indicated in their first interview that they were pleased with the assistance they received from their providers during the relocation process. These participants reported that their providers had worked collaboratively with them in preparing for their move, including examining how RATTUAI could be used to defray relocation related costs and ensuring timely reimbursements through the program. Participants who were positive about their experiences with the program also mentioned how their providers kept them fully informed at each stage of the process and helped address any issues or challenges encountered. It was apparent to these participants that the provider’s understanding of the program was an important factor in ensuring that participants gained maximum benefits from the program.

Participants who were most positive about RATTUAI also saw their providers as being an advocate in helping them to relocate and take up a new job successfully with minimum stress.

“It made it really easy because the turnaround time was pretty fast and they wanted a fair bit to happen between me having to relocate and everything else, it just made it possible. It didn’t make it easier, it made it possible. There’s a big difference because I wouldn’t have been able to do it without their support. I would have had to turn the job down.”

Female, 50s, from capital city, to regional area

“Paid for my flights which made that so much easier coming out here. If someone was to do that all themselves, I couldn’t imagine how their first couple of months would be out here. They were actually very helpful. I couldn’t thank them enough.”

Male, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

Post-relocation support

There was considerable variation in the level of post-relocation support delivered by providers to participants. Some participants welcomed the level of contact while others would have preferred more. The RATTUAI programme guidelines require providers to continue supporting participants after relocation. However, the guidelines are not prescriptive concerning what form this post-relocation support should take, leaving providers to use their discretion.

Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job – Evaluation Report

Out of those participants who participated in follow-up interviews, around three months after their initial interviews, about half reported having had further contact with their providers after relocation. Of those who received contact, most appreciated this post-relocation contact.

“Really good. I didn’t think she would. I owe her a lot just for getting me out there and stuff. I didn’t think she would call but she did. She rang a few times just to see how everything was going.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

“For the first probably six weeks I was here, they kept in contact either via email or by phoning me just to catch up and see how I was going and see if there was anything else I needed, if I had any questions... So they kept in touch until I told them that I’d completely settled down.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

Some participants indicated that they did not need the post-relocation contact they received from their providers.

“I get the occasional email, I think monthly or something, just to say “hey are you still in your job”. She does always say to let them know if I need anything, but you know I guess I’m not sure of what they can actually offer so I don’t bother following it up... I honestly feel a bit awkward about it because it almost feels like they’re checking up, you know, hey are you still working, have you still got a job, great we’ll hassle you in another month or two.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

Of those who participated in a follow up interview, many did not express interest in receiving further contact from their providers. Program participants reported they did not want or need the contact now they were employed. However, for one participant it reflected their view that no contact was good because their negative experience with their provider during the relocation process.

“No, they have not (made contact)... I have no intention (of making contact). You only get angry if you do that.”

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

Some job seekers who reported having had no contact since relocation said they had tried to make contact with their providers but only a few were able to do so. Generally, job seekers initiated such post-relocation contact because they either wanted to submit a claim for reimbursement or follow-up on previously lodged claims.

“I tried calling them but I didn’t get in touch with no one... they owed me a voucher for some uniform sort of stuff, new shoes and all of that because they were meant to provide me with that but they didn’t because they reckon it was like short timing. Yeah, so I tried contacting them but I didn’t get them on that.”

Female, 30s, from regional area, to regional area

Two participants who were no longer in employment at the time of their follow-up interviews noted that greater support from their providers during and after the move could have potentially enabled them to stay in the job for which they had moved. There were also a few participants who had remained in employment who indicated that they would have preferred further contact from their

providers to either offer more guidance or advice on employment-related matters or to simply ask them how things were going.

“They didn’t keep in contact with me. No. You know I think they did the least possible and it was kind of – I found it was like with – you know there’s this much money, we can offer you this that and the other thing and off you go and the best of luck. I don’t know. Yeah maybe it would have been better if they’d given me more support while I was up there. Just to sort of check in or whatever but I don’t really know what kind of support they could have offered me... like a phone call would have been nice... I don’t think it would have made any difference, but I reckon it kind of would be appropriate I think.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

Providers reported that they did extend support to the participants they relocated to confirm they were still in employment and were not having any issues. There were providers who stated they provided in-depth post-placement support to RATTUJ programme participants.

“So it depends on the job seeker but we maintain contact for generally up to six months to make sure they’re settling into the job okay, everything’s all right, if they need assistance. It depends on the level of disadvantage of the job seeker, for some participants who are fine, they’ve gone back to work, they’re happy, they’ve got no issues, it’s just a phone call to say, “Is everything okay? Do you need anything to help you stay in the job?” Like steel caps have fallen out of your boots, that type of stuff whereas for other job seekers they might struggle to get out of bed every day and it’s a motivational thing, reminding them of why they’re getting up and doing this, why they’re trying to get themselves back out there, so some clients need a lot more help to stay in the job than others, so it can be a mixture of services.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

“It’s [our] policy that you contact people that are in work, every couple of weeks, just to make sure that work is going fine. And if there’s an issue, if there’s something we can do before it becomes a giant issue...so you ring the job seeker every six weeks, and the employer every six – well it’s every three weeks, but you do alternate between the two. So it’s – and the idea is to keep people in work, because sometimes it’s a little thing that’s a problem.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

3.4.7 Finding suitable accommodation

For many participants, finding suitable accommodation either on an interim or longer-term basis was particularly difficult. This caused a great deal of stress during the relocation process. For those participants who relocated to areas where they had existing social connections, finding suitable accommodation was less difficult and the relocation was more likely to be successful.

“You know finding something that suited your needs... You know it’s an old [LOCATION] and so everything is quite old. Still expensive but quite old.”

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“Yeah, I was really in like crisis back then because I was just house surfing, from my shared accommodation with my mates and then go into another share accommodation but I’ve finally

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got my rental and back then I had to keep up with the rent and pay my food and getting to and from work as well and whatever else.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

“I moved on like a week’s notice so it was really difficult. To start with I didn’t have a place to live. I had to live in a hotel for a few weeks. So there was a lot of difficult things, such as deciding what to do with the dog ...”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

“When I got here it [the apartment] wasn’t clean. I flew in and stayed in a hotel and I rang up the next morning and said, ‘Look, because I don’t want to be in the way of these cleaners, is it done?’ and they said ‘Oh, give us an extra day.’ I’m like, ‘God! So I had to pay two nights’ accommodation.’ And then I thought, ‘I’m over it, I can’t afford this.’”

Female, 50s, from capital city, to capital city

“They found me a job...they arranged for me accommodation. They said before that it’s a house, a room and you go there, so you’ll be there for four weeks and you’ll stay there, they pay the rent, everything. I said okay, yeah. When I moved...there was not any house, room. There was a caravan... the windows are broken, the doors are broken, the door cannot lock properly. They [the provider] said ‘That’s the only accommodation I can give you.’”

Male, 20s, from capital city, to regional area

Some participants had suitable accommodation provided by their employers, helping to ease the stress of relocating.

“It wasn’t too hard because my employer put me up for the first [TIME PERIOD] and told a removal specialist to help me find a place to move into. So that was good, that took a lot of the pressure off.”

Male, 30s, from regional area, to capital city

“It’s part of my pay. It’s just like renting. Yeah, they take it out of my pay and I never see it... It’s nice, yeah. They do everything for you. They give you the house and that and they just take - yeah, it’s just like renting a flat basically.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

3.5 How important is job match and prospects to successful relocation and employment?

High quality job matching increases successful relocation and sustained employment

Interviews with participants in the program indicated that high quality job matching—a good match between participants’ skills and expectations and the actual job— increases the likelihood of successful relocation and sustained employment.

One of the aims of RATTUAJ is to relocate participants to areas with skill shortages. Relocation to another region may allow participants to find employment that more closely matches their skillset, than would be possible in their original location. High quality job matching where the new job matches a job seeker’s skills and expectations appears important to the successful relocation of participants through RATTUAJ.

3.5.1 The importance of job matching on participants’ decision to relocate

How the job aligns with expectations has a big impact on the mental wellbeing of the participant. If they were engaged and happy with the job they were more positive about the program and the move. Many of the job seekers also saw the move for work as an opportunity to grow and to have not just a job but to develop a career.

Half of the participants interviewed stated that finding employment that matched their preferences was important in their decision to relocate.

At the time of the follow-up interview many participants said they enjoyed the job for which they relocated. Conversely, interviews also showed that poor quality job matching negatively affected employment prospects. Some participants reported a level of dissatisfaction with the job for which they relocated, with a few participants who were no longer in the job stating that poor quality job matching was the reason. Providers had a limited role in ensuring quality job matching, with most participants finding their own employment.

This is consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics report, *Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation*,¹⁸ which states that 64 per cent of survey respondents thought ‘getting a job that matches skills and experience’ was very important.

“[Job matching] would be hugely important because if I moved up to a job where I was just moving up because it was just a job I had to take, I doubt that...I’d be moving to a new place and if I didn’t enjoy my job I suppose I probably wouldn’t enjoy too much of my life outside that.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

Participants were evenly split over their views on the importance of job matching when relocating for employment with around half stating they had a preference for the right job, while the other half

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2013). *Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation* (July 2012 to June 2013), cat no. 6239.0, Canberra: ABS.

reported that they would have relocated for any job. Of those who preferred to relocate for a job with some level of job match, many participants said they would only relocate for the right job, some said they would relocate for any job within their field and a few would like to relocate for the right job, but ultimately would have relocated for any job offered.

"[Job matching] it's the most important thing. You know, if you're going into a job that you know the nuts and bolts of it, it takes a good lump of stress out of it."

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

I think it's really important if you're not happy with what you're doing you know you need to find something that you're happy with... you know it just makes it just that much harder to get out of bed in the morning to go do something you don't like doing."

Male, 30s, from regional area, to regional area

"I applied anywhere, so wherever I was accepted first was going to get me."

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

"[The provider] knew that I liked travelling and it doesn't matter where I go to work. So this came up and they told me straight away because they knew that it doesn't matter where I get a job as long as it's a long way from home. So, yeah, they pretty much knew that I wanted to come out here."

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

Most participants reported that they would be willing to move locations if the right jobs were available. This indicates that the location itself was less important than a quality job match for participants making the decision to relocate.

"Like I said, it's not always about the location it's just about the actual work I'm doing and with the company I'm working with that made me sort of feel comfortable with the decision to do this."

Male, 40s, from regional area, to capital city

3.5.2 Importance of job matching in sustaining employment

Interviews with participants showed that the alignment of the job with their skills, experience and expectations had a significant impact on their mental wellbeing and desire to remain in the job.

"Interesting job, interesting people, different industry using the same skills, able to use my experience ... I'm putting the skills that I already had to use but I'm actually learning new skills, I've got a broader [sic] information now. I'm dealing in a different industry but utilising the same skills."

Female, 50s, from capital city, to regional area

"I think that in terms of the team; they're authentic, they're genuine, they are very much people persons, and the job itself...it's something that will keep me interested."

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

In a few cases, participants had low expectations of their new job and anticipated they would stay in it for a short period only. However, a favourable job match positively affected their expectations of how long they would remain in their job.

“My first goal out here was after 12 months and then leave. ...With this job I want to try work overseas for a year at another [BRAND] restaurant and working here can give you that opportunity. ... Now I want to stay another year and then after that I’ve got a feeling I’ll want to stay another year.”

Male, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

For many, relocating to a new location and being back in the workforce was more important than the job matching their skills, experiences and interests. For these participants they saw their participation in RATTUJ as one step of several to improving their lives. So while they may not stay in the job for which they relocated in the long term, their expectation was to find new employment that better suited them after an appropriate period.

“I would stay here and get a job you know get another job. ...It’s easy now that I’m here to get another job and you know like for example, I’ve already had a conversation with the [REMOVED] about my skills and how they could fit in there.”

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

Follow-up interviews indicated that most participants were able to overcome poor job matching and sustain employment.

“I was expecting it to be quite stressful because of the kind of work it is...I didn’t have any skills for that when I applied for the job. But they took me on and they trained me how to do it and I’ve settled in to it and I find it rather easy now.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

3.5.3 Provider’s role in job matching

In-depth interviews with providers showed that they played a limited role in ensuring a quality job match. Only a few participants reported receiving the help of their providers to find the jobs for which they relocated, with the remainder finding their own employment. This implies that participants were assessing the quality of the job match themselves, although this does not necessarily mean that participants accepted jobs that were best-matched with their existing skills. Interviews with providers confirmed this.

“They found their own [jobs]... the first one had said, “I’m looking for – I’m looking to move because there’s not much here for me.” So we encouraged him. The second one was the same. And the third one, yeah as I said, we talked about relocation because he was having such trouble getting a job here.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

“Sometimes the individual candidate can come to us, because they do their sums and find out that living in Sydney it’s really hard. So they decided to look elsewhere if opportunity available. And they will say, ‘I’m going to move there, what sort of things that we could help.’”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

“You certainly have clients [say] ‘oh I’m going to relocate and I’ve got a job here’ and you sort of go ‘Is that going to last’ because you get to the point where you know the client, you know the client’s history, you know what’s been going on for the past 12 or 18 months. I can think of one [in] particular when... he said he was relocating, I’ve just gone, ‘Oh okay’...The job lasted six weeks but he also had massive amounts of issues but he was determined he was going to move away.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

One provider opined that their role in RATTUJ was more about providing financial assistance to participants to help them successfully relocate and maintain ongoing employment, than ensuring the quality of the job match.

“When somebody’s relocating, as we said before, it’s generally because they’ve sourced their own employment... So even if we thought that they were inappropriate for—you know it’s really not our gig at the end of the day... I think it’s important for [participants] to actually go out and source that employment ... because they’re driving it. They’re the ones who’ve gone out, sourced the position, applied for the position... they’re motivated enough.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

3.5.4 Future job prospects

Initially, participants may have viewed employment as simply a job that pays the bills, but employment through RATTUJ may have changed how participants view ongoing employment.

With eligibility to access the financial assistance available through RATTUJ restricted to long-term unemployed job seekers, relocating for longer-term job prospects or career paths may not have been a primary concern for participants. Initially, participants may have viewed employment as simply a job that pays the bills.

“The job that I took it’s not what I want but it’s work. Like I said I’m going to be out here for another three to six months on my [inaudible] and that’s where the obligation is with the company.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

Gaining employment through RATTUJ may have changed the way participants viewed ongoing employment.

“I thought we just came out here, did our traineeship and then that was it but apparently if you’ve earned your keep you get a full-time job and pursue manager’s jobs and stuff like that. I wasn’t really thinking about that, thinking that way before I came out here. Now if I keep doing good or start to do good I can see myself actually being one of the ones to control a shift or counting tills or stuff like that. It helps you grow up a bit more.”

Male, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

3.6 What strategies do employment services providers use to promote the program, source jobs and ensure a good job match?

Employment services providers and job seekers had different views on promotion of the program, job sourcing and job matching

- While providers reported actively promoting RATTUAJ, participants indicated that their providers lacked knowledge of the program, were reluctant to encourage relocation and had an expectation that job seekers would understand the operational details of the program without assistance.
- Providers saw the sourcing of jobs in other locations and job matching as primarily the responsibility of job seekers.

A 2016 provider survey found that provider staff were aware of the critical role they play in promoting government incentive programs to job seekers and employers, and largely reported being active in the promotion of the RATTUAJ programme to job seekers. Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of the providers indicated that their staff promote RATTUAJ to job seekers to some extent, while a further 22 per cent indicated they did this to a great extent.

Findings from in-depth interviews with participants revealed that most participants did not find out about RATTUAJ from their providers. They reported that they were told about the program only after they notified their providers that they had found a job in a different location.

“I said, I’ve got employment in [LOCATION]. I didn’t even know about this scheme that they’ve got running. Didn’t know anything about it. I didn’t even know about it and the person who did it she told me all about it. So if she hadn’t have opened her mouth, some of it - if she hadn’t have opened her mouth I wouldn’t have known anything about it.”

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

A few participants proactively sought out information about the program by either calling Centrelink or browsing the internet.

“I went online and did some research myself.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

“Through Centrelink and my appointments that I go to every [TIME PERIOD] I told them that I’m actually going – moving away to [LOCATION] and that I won’t actually need to come in anymore and be on the program, be on Centrelink. They said that you might be eligible for a relocation assistance fee and it was just a matter of getting a letter and just confirming some details.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

Provider staff who were interviewed in-depth as a part of a 2015 provider survey reported that they had been promoting RATTUAJ but only to job seekers who indicated that they were willing to move. Providers did not generally promote the program because they considered relocating as a personal decision depending on each individual’s life circumstance.

“And we have used a couple of the Relocation ones. We have just had someone that's moved to [STATE/TERRITORY] for employment, so we were able to access Relocation funding for her, but that's very specific. That's not something that I would - that we really publicise, because moving house is a big... it's a very personal decision. But when someone advises that they are doing that, we will happily access funding for them.”

Provider, regional area, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

This is consistent with reports from in-depth interviews that a few participants were alerted by their providers to a job in a different location and possible financial assistance to relocate. These participants had previously indicated that they would be willing to move.

“My case manager asked me if I wanted to apply for it because she knew that I wanted to hurry up and look for a job. So I applied for it and went to the interview... I don't like to stay in the one spot... I would move anywhere else.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

“Through my job seeker provider, [EMPLOYMENT PROVIDER]. They actually asked me if I wanted to come out here and I straight away said yes... I always wanted to go outside [LOCATION] to work and live out of state. So I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to come out here.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

Some providers however, felt that it would be more realistic for job seekers to undertake their own job searches in other locations instead of relying on providers to canvass job opportunities across multiple locations.

“We do promote it quite heavily, it's just – how can we provide it to the job seekers? I think if the job seekers know that they're eligible the onus then is on them as to whether they ask us for help.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

“I think probably one of the big things was to put the onus more on the client than on us to be chasing. The first one was chasing around – I had to do all that chasing around for them, because otherwise you just weren't going to get them out of the office.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

As discussed in Section 3.5.3 many providers did not focus on quality job matching as part of RATTUAI as most clients sourced their own jobs and assessed the appropriateness of the job themselves.

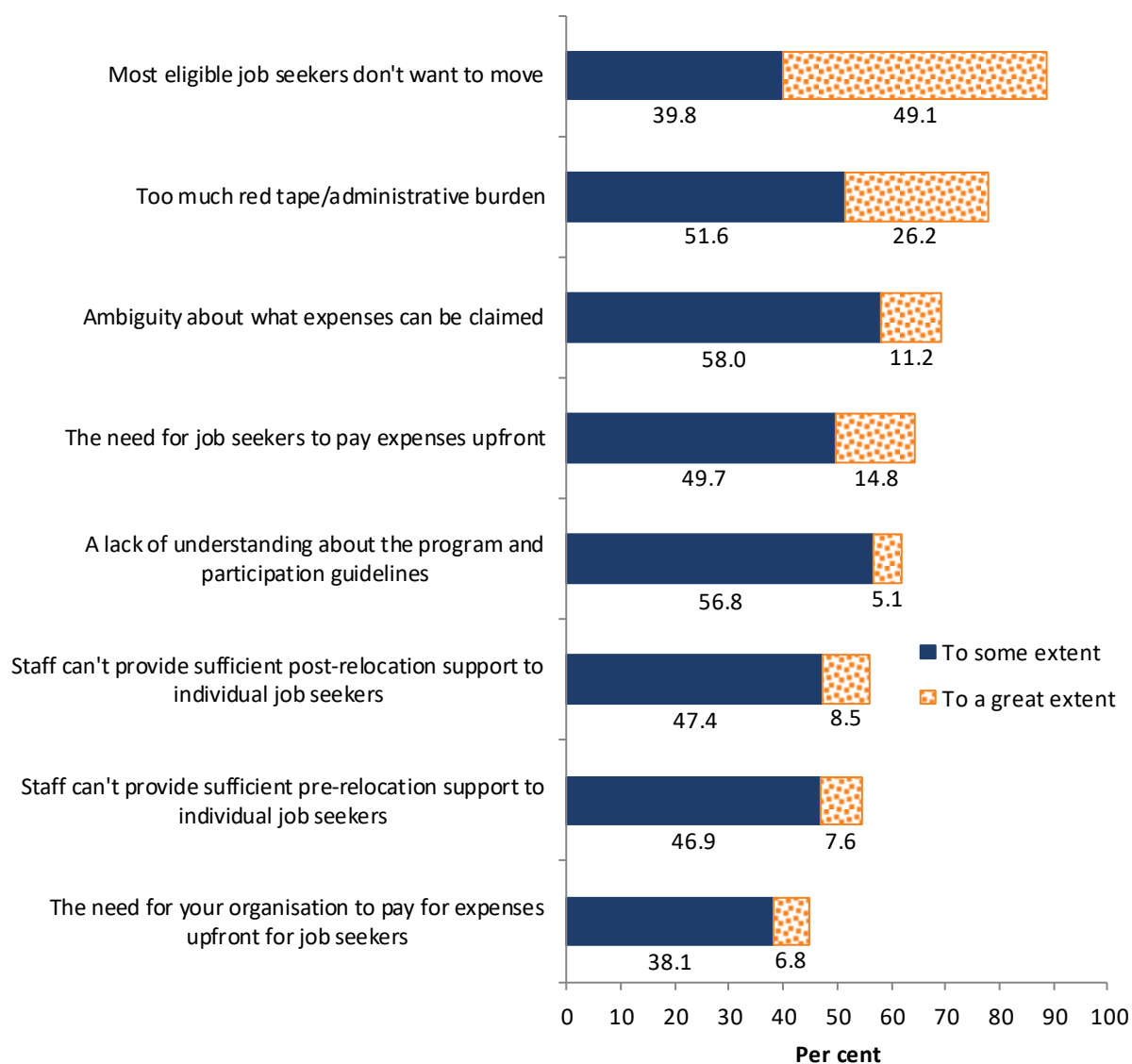
3.6.1 Reasons some providers may not actively promote the RATTUAI programme

In a 2016 provider survey, 960 provider sites completed the questions on RATTUAI. Of these, 741 providers or 78 per cent reported not actively promoting RATTUAI or only promoting it to some extent.¹⁹ Almost all of these providers (89 per cent) attributed this to the unwillingness of job

¹⁹ The 78 per cent comprises of 69 per cent indicating that their staff promote RATTUAI to job seekers to some extent and 9 per cent indicating they do not promote the program at all.

seekers to move (Figure 3.3). This perception may have driven a reluctance on the part of providers to suggest to job seekers that they relocate, as discussed in the next section.

Figure 3.3: Providers who do not promote RATTUAJ or promote it to some extent only: To what extent do the following prevent staff from actively promoting RATTUAJ?



Note: This question was only asked of the 738 providers who indicated they did not actively promote RATTUAJ or only promoting it to some extent.

Source: 2016 provider survey

These providers also indicated that the administrative burden of the program deterred them from promoting it.²⁰ In total, 78 per cent of providers reported this as affecting them to some or a great extent. Other reasons included perceived ambiguity about the expenses that could be claimed (69 per cent; see sections 3.6.3 and 4.1.1), the need for job seekers to pay expenses upfront

²⁰ Noting there were updates to guidelines and advice during the evaluation period.

(65 per cent; see Section 4.1.3) and a lack of understanding about the program and participation guidelines (62 per cent; see Section 3.6.3).

3.6.2 A reluctance to suggest to job seekers that they relocate

All providers interviewed for this evaluation indicated that they would only recommend relocating for work if this suited a job seeker’s personal and family situation, and if there was a good career opportunity.

“Some of them I guess they probably could have moved but it would have been a lot tougher for them and chances are when they got to the other end if their life’s that much more tough they might not have been able to make the job work because of other stresses, so yeah.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

“No, I wouldn’t advise anything, our job is to provide information so they can make informative decision. Because they only disclose what they would like to disclose to us, we can’t really judge just on what’s on their assessment. Like I wouldn’t really – you provide the information. We can say, “Looking at your case, looking at the job you’re looking for, the benefit of this or that.” And you make your – we are not in a position to advise, it’s not something that we are probably called to do.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

Providers’ reluctance to actively promote the program could stem from a view that job seekers are generally resistant to the prospect of relocating; in particular, the more disadvantaged job seekers who are heavily dependent on their local social support networks. This is supported by a 2016 provider survey that showed many provider staff who were not fully promoting the program believed most eligible job seekers do not want to move (see Figure 3.3).

“You know, if they are a single family - Indigenous community, you won’t get a lot of take-up because people who live here, everyone’s here.”

Provider, regional area, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

“Plenty of clients have no interest to travel more than 30 minutes let alone move completely...It isn’t something you would bring into the conversation from day one. Most are just not interested in moving... They have their comfort zone and families, friends or they have housing. That makes a really big impact.”

Provider, capital city, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

“A really good example is a job seeker of ours got offered a job being like a mental health support worker down the coast. I think it was at [LOCATION] and would not move from [LOCATION] The reason why, great job, paid really well, but the reason that was given was “I can’t move away from my family”.

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

Section 3.8.1 has further discussion from the perspective of job seekers.

3.6.3 Knowledge of the program

In-depth interviews with participants indicated that many felt that their provider did not fully understand RATTUAI, and was not able to convey comprehensive information about the program.

“So I actually approached my job service provider and asked them about it. They didn’t know anything about it. They were a bit, ‘we don’t know much about this’. ‘Well you better find out because I think I’m entitled to it’.”

Female, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

As there was a low level of demand for the program, providers may not have had the experience of placing a job seeker through RATTUAI.

“... it was a steep learning curve but it was a good learning curve, so I knew exactly what we could and couldn’t do, how many quotes we needed, how we got around things...”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

A lack of familiarity with the program and knowledge of the guidelines may have resulted in a lack of confidence, particularly in relation to being reimbursed by the Department.

“And you have to be careful that you get, we try to get through to them, you must send these receipts back immediately because there is that small window that we have to process the reimbursement to get reimbursement ourselves. Otherwise anything outside of that has to come off our bottom line.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

Over half (55 per cent) of the provider staff in a 2016 provider survey indicated that a lack of understanding about the program and participation guidelines had hindered them to some or a great extent from actively promoting the program.

In addition, while not reflected in the findings above, there is a broader expectation that employment services provide a localised model of service provision – where providers are expected to know their own location in detail and maximise employment opportunities with local employers. This can be seen to be at odds with expending effort on wider geographic job search activities.

3.7 What are the major factors that contribute to job seekers' decisions to relocate?

Employment was the major factor in job seekers' decisions to relocate

- The most common factors that contributed to job seekers' decisions to relocate were employment and better employment opportunities.
- The personal circumstances of the job seeker, for example a desire to move away from family, and the attraction of a particular location were also an influence.

The decision to relocate for work varied widely between individuals, where personal, locational and transitional factors (the one-off costs and benefits) interact to influence this decision.

"Look, it's all individual. If people want to stay in [site location], then they are not going to relocate anyway. Some people want to relocate; some people want to start again. It's a very individual thing."

Provider, capital city, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

3.7.1 Work-related factors

Almost all participants identified employment as the primary driver for their decision to relocate. Most participants indicated that they were happy to move to a number of different areas or locations in order to find work. Half of the participants expressed the view that relocating for any job was preferable to remaining unemployed in their current location.

"I was unemployed for [TIME PERIOD] and just getting back into the workforce and the move was about the only way I could do it, so it's been great."

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

"Yeah just for work basically because I was sick of not working... To make some money. Just sick of sitting around, you know what I mean? I needed to actually work because you sort of start getting into a state of depression because you're not working."

Male, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

"It was a job. Yeah, just a job, desperate to work. And you know I'm so grateful to have a job that I, you know, it's a job."

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

Interviewed participants were frustrated at their inability to find and secure employment in their existing locations. Moving to a new location was perceived as a 'fresh start' and the chance to 'renew' their working lives. For a few, relocating was seen as an opportunity to start a new career and change their life circumstances.

"It's good now because you can go up town and you haven't got dirty garbage around there. No-one knows me here and you're starting fresh. You haven't brought your dirty laundry with you."

Male, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

“Well it’s the start of a new career, that’s it... because I want job security and I’m sick of that now... I’ve had two bouts with blokes on ice and I said enough for me, it’s enough for anyone.”

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“It’s a good opportunity to come out here. You’ve got to think about your career. If you go back home there’s nothing... It’ll be tough I know that for a fact, but I’m just thinking about my career and what I want. I want to set goals for myself as well because if I do end up staying here I won’t have goals. I can’t get to where I want to be.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

These findings are consistent with the Productivity Commission’s *Geographic Labour Mobility*, Research Report (2014), which found that the reasons given for moving varied depending on the distance moved with work-related reasons the most common for moves over longer rather than shorter distances.²¹

3.7.2 Family circumstances

Personal characteristics and family circumstances are also vital factors influencing an individual’s decision to relocate. While for many participants moving away from family and friends was an impediment to participating in RATTUAI (see section 3.8.2 for further discussion), for others it was seen as an incentive. The following comments reflect these different perspectives.

“Well, how much working time I had left. You know...because of my age too, whether I would get another position over there, which I knew I had been trying for a [TIME PERIOD] to get back into [JOB TYPE]. Yeah. It was just the fact having to leave the family, all my kids and my parents, and all the [FAMILY] was hard.”

Female, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“Oh yeah. As I said it’s – oh look I really like being away from my family. Sounds horrible. I’ve only got [FAMILY] and [FAMILY]... Now they have to deal with their own drama it’s just really wonderful. I know that sounds really horrible...”

Female, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“Because where I was living, my [FAMILY] was very close and I just [REMOVED], ...there was a lot of miscommunication, anxiety. I was an emotional wreck and it was just getting too hard to stay there. I just needed to get away from them all... A clean start. It would have been worth it just to get away from all the emotional shit”

Female, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

While work is a deciding factor and family relationships and responsibilities can be major impediments, these factors can often change over time depending on an individual’s circumstances, life stages, and types of job opportunities. This is consistent with findings in the Productivity Commission’s *Geographic Labour Mobility*, Research Report (2014).

²¹ Productivity Commission (2014), *Geographic Labour Mobility*, Research Report, Canberra.

3.7.3 Location

The location itself was also a significant factor in the decision.

“It’s much quieter. I love the air. There’s more things to do personally. More gardening. There’s a lot more stuff that I was able to do for myself and there’s me and my family just living here now and it’s great...”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

“The main thing for me was giving [FAMILY] an opportunity to grow up in a [LOCATION]. To have the option to go to [LOCATION] whenever she wanted to. It’s [LOCATION], I was originally born in [LOCATION]. ...I don’t know, all the opportunities that a child can have growing up. And I do have friends in [LOCATION] who’ve said that they grew up here, and they said they’d do it all over again.”

Female, 40s, from capital city, to regional area

“I’d say the location. I wouldn’t really care what they put me in for the job. I was just excited to come out here... I’d say the place and [LOCATION]. I was excited to see [LOCATION]. And the people out here. It’s just so different to what I’m used to. So I like different.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

3.8 What are the barriers to job seekers relocating? Is the potential of a 12 week income support non-payment period for leaving a job a factor?

Potential loss of social support networks, costs of relocation and a lack of support from providers were the major impediments that job seekers identified when considering whether to relocate

- Job seekers indicated that an unwillingness to move away from family and friends, costs involved in relocation and a perceived lack of knowledge and support from providers were barriers to their decision to relocate.
- The 12 week non-payment period appears to have played a limited role in job seekers' decision to relocate for employment.

In the interviews with job seekers who had started the process of relocating under the program:

- 42 out of the 50 initial interviewees went on to relocate under the program
- one job seeker relocated without the financial support available through RATTUAI
- seven job seekers either chose not to or became ineligible to relocate through the program.

While most job seekers interviewed in the qualitative fieldwork did complete the relocation process, they reported major barriers when making this decision including the loss of their social support networks (family and friends) and provider's lack of understanding about the program itself.

The possibility of facing a 12 week non-payment period if they chose not to stay in the job was raised but to a lesser degree.

3.8.1 Unwillingness to relocate

One of the major barriers to the effectiveness of RATTUAI is job seekers' unwillingness to consider moving for employment. As detailed by the Productivity Commission report on Geographic Labour Mobility, only a small proportion of the population relocate for work, with very small numbers moving significant distances or interstate. Job seekers do not differ in this regard.²² A 2016 job seeker survey found that just over half (54 per cent) of the job seekers had not considered moving more than 150 kilometres for employment. Out of the approximately 1500 job seekers surveyed, 32 per cent had considered relocating and 14 per cent actually had moved 150 kilometres or more for work. Only 6 per cent had discussed the option of relocation with their provider. It is worth noting that job seekers of all durations of unemployment were included in the 2016 job seeker survey.

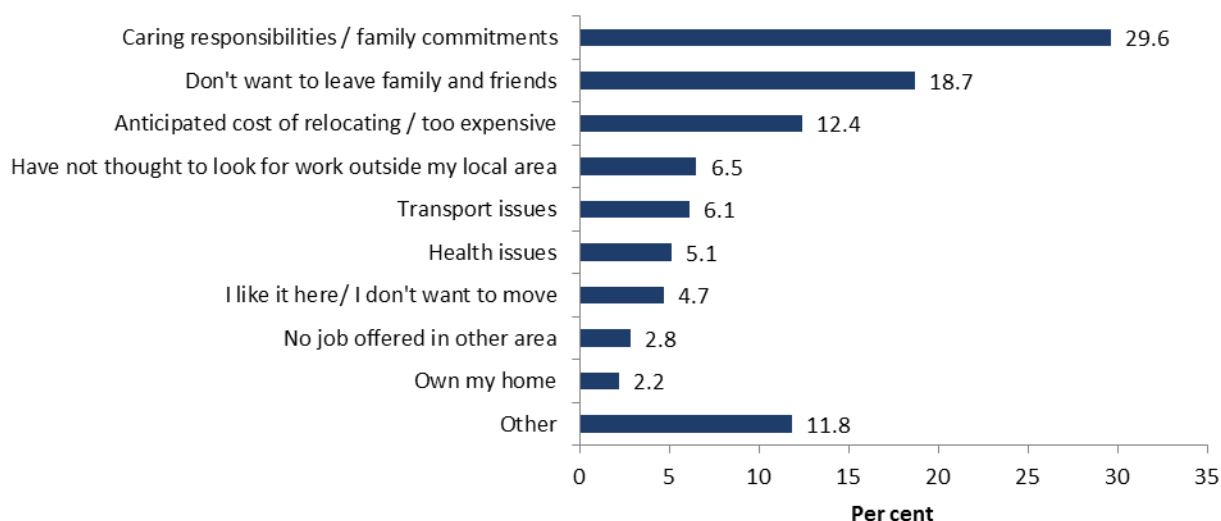
"There needs to be greater understanding that people are uprooting their lives, they're in strange environments and it is stressful. Moving anywhere is quite stressful because it's an unknown quantity..."

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

²² Productivity Commission (2014), *Geographic Labour Mobility*, Research Report, Canberra.

The most common reasons that relocation was not considered a viable option were having caring responsibilities (31 per cent); not wanting to leave family or friends (18.7 per cent) or the costs of relocation (12.4 per cent) (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Main reason job seekers have not considered moving to another location to take up a job



Note: n=507

Source: 2016 job seeker survey

3.8.2 Loss of social support networks

Many people are unwilling to move away from family and friends. This also applies to job seekers. In a 2016 provider survey, the most common reason providers gave for why a job seeker would not use RATTUJ was ‘Family Reasons’ at 37 per cent of respondents. Similarly, 44 per cent of surveyed providers said that being away from family/friends was the main challenge facing job seekers when they relocate. These sentiments are echoed by job seekers themselves. Thirty-eight per cent of job seekers identified the loss of social support networks caused by relocation as the primary challenge of relocation in a 2016 job seeker survey.

Interviews with job seekers entering into relocation agreements and with providers indicated that separation from family and friends was a significant issue when considering relocation.

“Well for me, I’m by myself but I have [family] so I had to discuss [relocating] with them...because I have a fair bit to do with my [family].

Female, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“I think it was both easy and hard [when deciding to relocate]. Easy in as much as it was a job. Hard leaving the family, [that] was not something I wanted to do.”

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

“I was keen to move because of this job, but I was a bit concerned about leaving my family...It was just the fact having to leave the family, all my kids and my parents.”

Female, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“Primarily they don’t want to move away from family is the main one that they give [as the reason for not considering relocation more closely] but I think there’s probably a fear factor of actually getting out of the comfort zone is the reason why.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

3.8.3 Costs of Relocation

Many participants interviewed stated that they could not have afforded to relocate for employment without the financial assistance provided through RATTUAI.

“Without [the relocation assistance] I wouldn’t have moved out there, just because like I hadn’t been working and like without that money I wouldn’t have been able to drive out there in the first place, or eat while I was out there, until I got paid.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

For many participants, the financial assistance allowed them to overcome a major impediment when making decisions about relocating for employment. This means that the program is meeting its aim of supporting relocation for these participants.

“Like I said, I just didn’t have that kind of money upfront, so that [relocation assistance] made a massive difference.”

Female, 20s, from capital city, to capital city

“The ability to move. I would not have been able to move my furniture. My life, I wouldn’t have been able to pick it up and move it, I wouldn’t have been able to afford that.”

Female, 20s, from capital city, to regional area

“Majority [of job seekers] couldn’t afford to relocate with moving their entire households. Like I said they’re generally people who’ve got minimal finances to tap into. I have had clients that have potentially, ‘if you don’t help me I’ll have to borrow this sort of dollars to get out of here because I’m determined I’m going to go’. Some of them just go, ‘well if you’re not going to assist I can’t go’. So yeah but majority, yeah, if there wasn’t the funding they’d be still sitting here.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

Some participants indicated that they would have found a way to relocate even if financial assistance was not available. For example, participants reported they would have borrowed money from family or friends or taken on debt in order to fund their move if assistance through RATTUAI was not available. Additionally, a few job seekers either relocated without assistance or did not complete relocation. This indicates that there is a small level of deadweight, although having the funding available may have made it considerably easier for a job seeker to relocate, and may have improved the success of ongoing employment, due to lower stress.

“We could have [relocated] but we would have been eating bread and dripping until our first pay day...not many people do but we had the money to get here and set up but this just made it a little bit better.”

Male, 60s, from regional area, to regional area

“Yeah, no, [relocation assistance] did help a lot, because I mean I probably could have scrounged up money to get out there, but it just made it a little bit easier.”

Male, 30s, from regional area, to regional area

“I would have had to try and borrow off family and friends which is very hard...I would have just been scraping the barrel to get there, sleeping in the car and stuff, uncomfortable, but I would have done it if I needed to.”

Male, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

3.8.4 Providers’ lack of understanding and information

Job seekers perceived providers as having a low level of information and understanding about RATTUAJ and reported a lack of awareness of any promotion of the program.²³ Many of the participants reported that providers did not completely understand RATTUAJ and some thought that the program was not a typical part of their providers’ services. For some participants this led to a lack of confidence to make the move while others reported that had they been supplied with better information upfront then the decision making process regarding moving would have been easier.

“It was quite a sort of grey area that I had to ring up and clarify it because the employment agency should have - they sort of said they had no idea. They certainly left me feeling well if you’ve got no idea and I’m meant to go through you, this is going to be a difficult process ... Not knowing what’s actually happening ... I was a bit disappointed that they didn’t know much about this employment services relocation assistance because it really made me feel like I couldn’t take the job.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

“They just named a few things which I was entitled to...but I’m sure that if I had been presented with a document to read, this is the Government program, this is what it entails, this is what one could access, not necessarily have access to but could get access to, and then you can make further informed choices about what it is you want to do.”

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

3.8.5 The 12 week non-payment period

One condition of the RATTUAJ programme is that participants can face a 12 week non-payment period, where income support payments are suspended, if they:

- leave the job they relocated for without reasonable cause during the first six months
- are terminated by their employer due to misconduct
- accept relocation assistance, but do not commence employment or complete relocation.

Some job seekers reported that their provider advised them of the 12 week non-payment period. Of those who could specifically recall this condition either being mentioned by their providers or as part of the agreement they signed, about half did not feel this was a significant concern for them or a barrier to relocating through the program. A few job seekers were aware of the 12 week

²³ The apparently low level of promotion of RATTUAJ by providers is discussed in more detail in section 3.6.

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non-payment period and, while they had concerns, they decided to proceed with the relocation anyway.

"It did [worry me] but I thought, well hell, what do I do? I either need to take this assistance to continue on the journey with this job or I let things like that worry me and say well what am I going to do? I thought, know what, I'll do it I'll just take the position, take the assistance that I can get and go for it. If anything goes wrong down the track then I'll have to deal with that then."

Male, 40s, from regional area, to capital city

A few participants were aware of penalties applying if they left the job they relocated for but were confused about what it actually meant in practical terms. Two participants reported that they believed the conditions of RATTUJ required them to repay the financial assistance given to them if they did not remain employed in the job they relocated for. A few participants reported that providers specified that they would be required to pay back relocation assistance if they did not retain the job they moved for. While the program guidelines do not specify that the financial assistance needs to be repaid, it is possible that particular providers incorrectly tell job seekers that it does.

"Yeah, one of the – some of the conditions were: Whatever I'd been granted, if I am made redundant, or if I quit the job within the first six months, I cop a fine of how much I was granted. I have to pay back that full amount of \$6000. And I was like, "Oh, crap!" And it was just – that was mainly the only one they fully told me about. Well, they may have told me more, but that was the main one that stuck in my head."

Male, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

"I know that if I leave this position on my own, without good reason, then I would be responsible to pay that money back to the agency, because of – if it's something that I've done, or I've just decided, "No." and returned back to home, or wherever. Then, not that's not acceptable under the government acts. No, then I would be responsible to pay that money back, for all the relocation costs."

Female, 40s, from capital city, to regional area

One participant who did not complete relocation stated that when she became aware of the 12 week non-payment period during her initial interview this discouraged her from moving.

"Okay, in this situation because I only had a one month probation period where they could say to me oh look it's not working out, all right, in that situation even if I got another job in the area I would still... not be able to get any payments for that [12 week non-payment period]...In that situation I wouldn't relocate would I? Who would do that?"

Female, 40s, from regional area, did not relocate

Only one participant of the six no longer employed in the job for which they relocated, experienced the 12 week non-payment period. This participant ultimately decided the penalty was worth incurring rather than remaining in the job.

"Yeah [the 12 week non-payment period] did [worry me], but you know, at the end of the day the job was not worth staying in it through fear of not being able to get payments, do you know what

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I mean? I knew that I'd probably most likely be able to get a job, another job anyway, so it wasn't—I wanted to be working pretty much."

Male 30s, from capital city, to regional area

4 Emerging Issues

While many participants and providers successfully used RATTUAJ, for some there were issues with the program, including the financial mechanisms—particularly the reimbursement model, administrative burden, challenges finding accommodation, the short time frames for relocation and the limitation on eligibility.

This chapter discusses issues that have emerged from the evaluation of the RATTUAJ programme, including the RATTUAJ qualitative research and the 2015 and 2016 surveys of providers.

Issues were raised with the financial mechanisms and reimbursement model of the program, including job seekers having enough money to make upfront payments on the expectation of later reimbursement, reclamation of rental bond, providers' ability to directly pay suppliers during relocation, and confusion regarding which expenses could be claimed through the program.

Other issues were the administrative burden of the program, difficulty finding accommodation in the new location, and the relatively short timeframes in which participants were being asked to relocate and commence employment. Providers also identified issues with eligibility requirements.

4.1 Financial issues

4.1.1 Financial mechanisms

The RATTUAJ programme provides flexible assistance both upfront and by reimbursement to support a participant to move to take up a job. Once a quote is agreed, the provider is able to pay costs directly to the supplier or the participant. Providers are then able to claim reimbursement from the Department. These claims for reimbursement can be made as soon as the goods/services receipt is received, however the provider must first make the payment from their own funds. Payments made to the participant before the payment has occurred (upfront), are only made where the participant is experiencing financial hardship or it is not possible for the provider to make the payment directly to the supplier on the participant's behalf. As the provider pays the job seeker or supplier from their own funds, and then submits a claim to the Department to be reimbursed, this could result in the job seeker or the provider not being fully reimbursed should the documentation be incorrect or incomplete.

Some providers had concerns with post decision reviews by the Department and consequent financial risks to job seekers and providers. This led to them being unwilling to give job seekers upfront payments.

“So if we’re spending the money and we’re claiming it back in six months’ time the Department will perform an audit and we have to provide our documentary evidence to support that we did that in line with their guidelines. If we don’t have, if we haven’t done it in line with their guidelines then they take that money back.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

Job seekers and providers had issues with the clarity of guidelines and advice from the Department about how to provide supporting documentary evidence, such as receipts and invoices.²⁴ Participants reported that a lack of clear guidelines on the reimbursement process caused difficulties. Many participants felt they did not receive enough information and about half stated they had to request information or clarification about the application process from their provider.

“There’s a lack of [communication]. It’s more or less like you’re trying to put stuff through and you don’t hear back from them. You have to chase them up all the time. There has been times when I’ve put something in to claim money back and I didn’t hear back from them for maybe four weeks. I had to ring them up and then they said ‘oh you can’t claim for that’. It should be a bit quicker than that.”

Male, 40s, from regional area, to regional area

“I started to make plans to move and paying for things before the grant was approved and I didn’t know that it had to be from the approval date...I could have waited until the approval date before I handed in my receipts because it was the date before. If I knew, I would have waited until the approval date and I didn’t know that we couldn’t back claim.”

Female, 20s, from capital city, to regional area

Participants indicated that a lack of access to clear guidance, coupled with a lack of assistance from their providers led to reluctance to keep chasing reimbursements even though the expenses were eligible to be claimed under the program.

“Yeah just waiting for the payment, if that had come a little bit quicker. That’s the only thing, but that was a small glitch and it wasn’t something that made me desperate. It was something that was frustrating but not life threatening if you know what I mean.”

Female, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

“No. I didn’t chase. I just – because I told you [FAMILY] helped me also move so he gave me the money ahead and stuff like that so there’s no use doing – I couldn’t force anything and all I wanted to do was get into work so when that actually happened I was just fully into work [NUMBER] days a week. I didn’t have time to – when you’re doing it yourself – I can’t take time off work to try and chase the money that’s owing. So I’ll just absorb it. So I just pay [FAMILY] back.”

Male, 50s, regional area, to capital city

Participants reported situations where the reimbursement model could add stress in finding accommodation, specifically the ability to act quickly to secure housing when competition for rented properties is tight.

“The issue that I had was that I already had houses that I was putting in for that were snapped up by someone else. I couldn’t be waiting around for [TIME PERIOD] for my service provider to action an invoice from a real estate agent. The real estate would just say, “Well, I’m not going to wait for this, I’ll take the next person. They’ve got their money ready.” So I ended up borrowing the money from [FAMILY] because I don’t have [AMOUNT] hanging around for bond, or whatever it was. I think it was [AMOUNT] or something. Yeah and if I’m on Centrelink benefits I don’t have

²⁴ Noting that there were updates to guidelines and advice in relation to documentary evidence during the evaluation period.

money to be moving interstate let alone putting up bond money for a place when I'm only just starting a new job."

Male, 30s, from regional area, to capital city

The administration of expenses also caused difficulties for some participants and providers. For example, one provider stated that the necessity of having the relocation agreement signed before any costs could be claimed caused difficulties. This was particularly relevant when job seekers found their own employment and then approached their provider about financial assistance having already made some bookings or organised services that could have potentially been claimed through RATTUAJ.

"It's more difficult to access this [RATTUAJ] package but this is just from our point of view the documentary evidence requirements and just the having everything in place in the right order rather than you know, if a job seeker relocates and tells us two days later and says, "Oh I've moved to Perth, I paid \$600 for my flights and I'm now standing on the street, can you give me some money, can you give me, can you pay me back for my flights?" We can, you know, with discretion, we could probably do that under Employment Fund but not for a job seeker that's eligible for the [RATTUAJ] package."

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

"Yeah I think probably in terms of actually the stipulations regarding the agreement in terms of actually placing the job seeker. Say for example if you do it round the wrong way and don't approve the agreement before you place the job seeker then you can't do the agreement."

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

4.1.2 Payment and reclamation of rental bond

Under the RATTUAJ guidelines, rental bond is a cost that can be claimed by participants through the program. Records of bond payment are only available in the administrative data from the start of the jobactive contract (1 July 2015). Under JSA, payment of bond was harder to confirm as there was not a specific claim code that could be reviewed. From records available under jobactive, 17 per cent of participants claimed rental bond as part of their financial assistance through the program. This is relatively low, particularly given the substantial outlay rental bond would be to a participant that had been on income support for at least 12 months.

One potential reason bonds had a low share in the overall costs claimed was that providers may have perceived eligibility for the reclamation of bond money to be ambiguous. According to the Department's guidelines:

"The Employment Provider should have the bond paid and registered in the Employment Provider's name. If it is not possible to have the bond paid and registered in the Employment Provider's name, the bond should be issued in the job seeker's name. The Employment Provider must inform the participant that it is their responsibility to return any remaining bond when the lease ends."

Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job Guidelines v1.3, Department of Jobs and Small Business

Providers reported that they were unsure whether it was their responsibility to reclaim bond on behalf of the Department if the job seeker did not return the bond. If providers are required to

recover the costs of bond, they may not have the resources to recover money from participants. Then there are additional complications such as the provider no longer operating – who is to recover the bond then? Perhaps due to this ambiguity of reclaiming bond, a few providers stated they were reluctant to offer to pay for a participant’s bond.

“I don’t like the fact that we pay for bond and then we’re responsible for potentially reclaiming that money on behalf of the Department...we just don’t tend to pay for bond. We should because it’s in the guidelines but then there’s I guess...a requirement for us to, should they leave that leasing situation, we then should be actually chasing that bond money up and having it repaid to the Department. I just think that’s an unrealistic expectation so I tend not to offer bond.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

“There is that grey area, it’s meant to come back to [the provider] and we’re responsible for it. So we do it as eight weeks’ rent instead. And if their real estate wants to use it as – four weeks of it as bond and four weeks of it as rent, that’s fine, but that eight weeks’ rent is within the guidelines.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

Participants reported that providers’ unwillingness to pay for bond caused stress during the relocation process.

“[The provider] said ‘No, bond is definitely not covered’ and I had to actually escalate it with the employment agency at Centrelink because I was concerned that these guys were saying no. So I was confused because if they say that, I can’t take the job because I’ve got to live somewhere. So there were a lot of problems with it regarding that and it was a lot of stress for me.”

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

4.1.3 Financial hardship provisions

The financial mechanisms in RATTUAJ aim to ensure that job seekers are reimbursed for legitimate costs. However, paying costs associated with relocating upfront can often be an unaffordable option for job seekers, particularly when a job seeker has been on income support for 12 months or more.

The RATTUAJ programme guidelines provide for job seekers facing financial hardship. The guidelines describe ‘financial hardship’ as occurring when the participant would be unable to commence employment without an upfront payment being provided and allow for providers to give out upfront payments in these cases. Usually, these upfront payments consist of the providers paying direct to the supplier or offering the job seeker pre-paid cards for fuel or other costs.

Advance payments can also be made directly to the participants experiencing hardship if a provider cannot make the payment directly to the supplier on behalf of a job seeker. A few participants indicated that their service providers seemed very reluctant to use this option.

“They told me if I would have paid the fuel that I drove down here with they were going to reimburse me but I didn’t really get that sort of thing... I asked them to pay me fuel vouchers instead of giving me the money. They said they don’t do that...The only option was to just pay for the fuel, get down here and then they were going to reimburse me for that money.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

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One job seeker stated they were not informed of the possibility of upfront payments, although their lack of available money made relocation more stressful.

“A lot of the expense I was putting on my credit card, which is already at a hefty rate being unemployed, and it took absolutely ages [to get reimbursed]... So to give you an idea of how long it’s been taking...I was in a foreign town for the first time and I had all of \$8 in my account and still no sign of reimbursement of my out of pocket expenses.”

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

A few participants were told that payment for costs such as fuel or short-term accommodation would be paid by the provider during the relocation process. This approach also presented difficulties for participants. One participant was asked to phone their provider during the relocation to pay for fuel with the intent that the provider would pay the costs over the phone. In this particular case the provider was not available at the time of the participant’s call, resulting in uncertainty and embarrassment for the participant:

“I think if you’re going to give out your number and say, “Call me at this time” - have your phone on you at that time and be expecting that call. She gave me a time to call her, and she gave me her work mobile and her personal, and I couldn’t get through to her. I ended up calling the office and they told me that they’d get her to call back once she gets into work. Which was difficult for me because I had to sit at the fuel station waiting.”

Female, 20s, from regional area, to regional area

Another participant was told that the provider would pay the hotel directly, however when the payment had not been made the hotel manager had to ask the participant for payment:

“See that was another thing you know like for example, the manager of the hotel was wanting payment, they hadn’t received any payment, despite me giving them a pro-forma invoice even before I left...Coming up in the second week the hotel manager asked me for payment, I wasn’t able to give him payment because I had no money in my account and I thought, God this is incredible, I might be thrown out on the street here now...And finally [the provider] took it upon themselves to pay with a credit card or something in their office, the hotel bill, so that was a relief, but once again it just you know, the client should not be put in those kinds of situations you know that we’re talking about money that we’re not in control of.”

Male, 50s, from regional area, to regional area

A few participants reported having to borrow money in order to pay for their relocation expenses upfront.

“No I actually had to borrow the money because I had to get here for my job so I had to borrow the money to get up here and it was quite hard. I didn’t have a lot of money to come up with.”

Female, 30s, from capital city, to capital city

“It was hard because they only gave me a week to get everything organised. I didn’t have much money to come down with. The flights were expensive so I had to borrow my [FAMILY MEMBER’S] car and pay fuel. I drove by myself down here... It was an odd week that I didn’t get paid so I had no money at all. I had to scrape up money for fuel and for flights. My job provider

that I was up there with, they didn't have any funding for me. They only did a purchase order for three work pants and shoes."

Female, 20s, from regional area, to capital city

4.1.4 Requirement for multiple quotes before expenditure

The tight timeframes for relocation and the requirements for multiple quotes resulted in difficulties for both participants and providers. RATTUJ programme guidelines indicate that participants or providers are, in some circumstances, required to obtain two quotes for services and goods relating to relocation, unless there is only one supplier available, and undertake to receive value for money for the service. Two quotes are required for larger costs, such as plane tickets, car hire, cleaning fees, temporary accommodation and removalists. Many participants reported that they were required to relocate relatively quickly. This is supported by the administrative data that showed the average number of days between the start of Relocation Agreement and the date a participant started their job was 12.9 days, with a median of 8 days.

"So, I had to get quotes, two quotes for each service, or minimum of two quotes. So, best value for money obviously, to be put up against, in regards to them paying for a service. Look, the process, there was nothing wrong with the process, it was the timeframes. [The provider's] accounts side of things need to take into consideration, especially when the urgency was there...it wasn't like I was waiting 'til after I'd moved up here, like they had everything before, like way before I even booked my [flights], because they said they were going to book it and they didn't. So I ended up having to pay for it because there were two seats left, and the price would have been triple if I'd left it."

Female, 40s, from capital city, to regional area

"So I just went online and just took quotes off - what I had to do is obviously measure the difference. I didn't have a car at the time so I had to rent a car. So I had to...take into consideration how many days it would take, fuel, food, where I would stay and all that. So I didn't get it. What I did is I did two options. I did two versions of the same thing essentially and what they took from it is they said we're just going to go with the cheapest option. Anyway, a week or so later when they finally approved it the prices had changed for accommodation, for the rental and all that. So in the end I was out of pocket in the end. I actually had to spend money".

Male, 30s, from capital city, to regional area

Providers had similar comments to the participants, stating that the need for multiple quotes was difficult in the relatively short timeframes.

"I think there needs to be a little bit of leeway in terms of the agreement because often short timeframes are involved in it. It's not like we've got two months of lead up towards it. It can be a matter of days. So yeah, I think there's some red tape issues where it's maybe not used as much as what could be used."

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

"Double quotes has been fun. Sometimes you're in such tight time constraints that getting quotes from two or three different companies or organisations can be a real challenge - particularly removalist companies."

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

Additionally, some providers sought three quotes, as they would do if they were to use the Employment Fund.

“When they actually ask for the funding we generally use the principle of access to the Employment Fund, so they get the three quotes and which one is best for value, and then we approve the funding for that one.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

4.1.5 Other sources of relocation funding assistance

Some interviewed providers preferred to use the jobactive Employment Fund (EF; previously called the Employment Pathway Fund (EPF) under JSA) to provide financial assistance to relocating job seekers. These providers indicated that the administrative burden associated with using RATTUAI, as well as some of its limitations, meant that the EPF/EF was a more accessible and easier way to provide assistance. For example, many providers reported issues with claiming costs through RATTUAI when compared to the EPF/EF.

“There’s more rules around limits of expenditure [in RATTUAI] and just the documentary evidence requirements, you have to have an agreement and offer an acceptance of employment, it has to meet certain criteria, whereas there’s not – I mean there’s Employment Fund principles that are overarching across anything we spend under that pool, but there’s very little in the way that they determine how we can spend funding for relocation assistance under the Employment Fund.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

“The Employment Fund covers a whole range of expenditures, its clothes, like lots of other stuff, training, everything can be claimed from Employment Fund, not everything but specific things, with the Employment Fund there’s an upload facility so we, our IT Department develops a specifically formatted file that has all the lines of data in it of all of our expenditure and we can upload that and the system you know, we can upload 2000 lines of data and the system takes the file up and then reimburses the funds, whereas with the labour mobility [RATTUAI] they’re manual claims so you have to go in and claim each one individually...if we spend \$10 here for fuel, \$20 here for fuel, \$40 here, \$10 for food, they’re five different claims.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

While it is difficult to identify the use of the EPF/EF for relocation directly in the Department’s administrative data, usage can be estimated.²⁵ The source of funding provided to participants with approved Relocation Agreements is presented in Table 4.1. For 16 per cent of these job seekers only EPF/EF funding was used.

²⁵ Please see Appendix A for discussion around assumptions used in determining the use of EPF/EF.

Table 4.1: Source of financial assistance to job seekers with approved RATTUAJ Relocation Agreements, JSA and jobactive as at 31 March 2016

Source of support	Total (per cent)
RATTUAJ programme only	42.6
EPF/EF only	16.3
Both RATTUAJ and EPF/EF	32.0
No financial assistance provided	9.1
Total	100.0

Note 1: The total figure includes 28 job seekers who did not complete relocation. Costs incurred by these job seekers, such as non-refundable deposits, may have been legitimate relocation expenditures.

Note 2: Data presented for all job seekers with RATTUAJ Relocation Agreements started between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015, JSA and jobactive as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

It is not possible to capture providers' financial support to job seekers in the Department's administrative data where they did not make use of RATTUAJ at all, and instead opted to provide financial assistance using EPF or EF without entering into a relocation agreement or use the Relocation Assistance EPF/EF code.

4.2 Administrative burden

Providers identified program administrative processes as warranting improvement. In particular, completing an application was considered lengthy and complex.

"Yeah, so the package has a lot more documentary evidence requirements. You have to have a signed agreement prior to the job seeker accepting employment or relocating, so that's all got to take place beforehand, you've got to have an offer of acceptance of employment, you've got to make sure that the employer has tried to source local employees before you know, sourcing somebody from elsewhere. The documentary evidence requirements are quite, much more difficult than Employment Fund. Employment Fund you just need, it's a tax invoice."

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

This was also reflected in a 2015 provider survey.

"A lot of paperwork; a lot of A to Z stuff to get that happening; a lot of extra work on behalf of the EA to filling the forms in, getting him to sign this - like, checking absolutely everything. Yeah, it was a lot of paperwork involved."

Provider, regional area, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

"Once again, there is a lot of guidelines attached to it. There's got to be a guaranteed job; they only pay for - you know, they have got to give us receipts, approve payments for relocation assistance, whether it be furniture removal, flights, whatever the case may be. It can be very top-heavy administration. I haven't done one here yet."

Provider, regional area, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

“Sometimes it just needs a little more work with the department to make sure that the funds will be there when needed. Normally it is just a matter of entering the data, it takes half an hour. But with some it can take days of back and forth to get it right.”

Provider, capital city, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

Results from a 2016 provider survey also identified issues with the administrative burden of RATTUAJ. Three-quarters (78 per cent) of the providers who did not promote the program or only promoted it to some extent said that administrative burden involved with the program was the reason they did not promote it.²⁶ More information is in Section 3.6.1.

4.3 Eligibility Issues

One concern raised in interviews with providers is that the eligibility requirements were not reflective of some employers’ hiring practices and limitations on job seeker circumstances made this program too restrictive. In particular, the requirement for a job seeker to be receiving particular income support payments for at least 12 months, and the requirement for the job seeker to have a formal employment offer, sometimes meant that providers could not support a willing job seeker’s relocation through the program.

“We had 2 people who we wanted to use it for but couldn’t because they hadn’t been unemployed for long enough so to me that was a fail. So that was a little disappointing.”

Provider, capital city, response to a Departmental survey in 2015

In addition to the eligibility requirements for job seekers who wish to relocate, the employer, type of employment and location must also meet conditions. Some providers reported that the eligibility restrictions and documentation required impeded their use of the program.

“Yeah, so the package has a lot more documentary evidence requirements...it’s not just if the job seeker’s eligible, the employment has to be eligible, the location has to be eligible, and the placement has to be eligible. So if this job seeker’s eligible for the package [RATTUAJ], they’re not eligible for Employment Fund,²⁷ but just because the job seeker’s eligible, doesn’t mean the placement, employer and location are.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

A few providers indicated that program guidelines may not account for actual employer hiring practices. For example, employers’ reluctance to commit a new employee to a full-time position; they may start someone on a casual basis but with the likelihood of revising the position to full-time after a period of time depending on the employee’s performance and also on business needs.

²⁶ Noting there were updates to guidelines and advice during the evaluation period.

²⁷ This provider’s comment is not strictly correct. The Employment Fund can be used for certain categories of expenditure in support of a job seeker who is relocating for employment. See Appendix A.

Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job – Evaluation Report

“It’s very unusual for an employer to offer someone full-time work, or to put in writing that they are going to give someone full-time work...So most work, for anyone, they start off casual and build them up to full time.”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

One provider stated that their application for relocation assistance through RATTUAI was denied as the job seeker was relocating as a self-employed contractor:

“Recently we assisted a candidate, she’s a mature age and she got herself [a job in another location], that it’s actually – she is contracted to this centre and they are going to open a centre that can use her skill, like therapist skills and counselling skills...we applied for it but it got knocked back by contract because she is a self-employed contractor, delivering contract work, so for the take up – for that particular funding only applied to permanent role or full-time role, so we couldn’t access to that. Instead we accessed Employment Fund to assist her to do relocation, and the rental and all that.”

Provider, capital city, in-depth interview

A few providers questioned the rationale for requiring a minimum of 12 months’ income support for a job seeker that is willing to move. It was thought that early intervention would be more desirable than risking a new job seeker becoming entrenched in the income support system.

“If you’ve got someone that’s keen to move and they can get work, why should we have to wait 12 months to tap into that money? I mean we all know that the unemployment rate here is really high, why prolong it 12 months. In that 12 month period they start to lose motivation, depression kicks in. If they’re hanging around, depending on the people they hang around, [LOCATION] has a high drug problem so they just end up spiralling out of control. So why leave it so long?”

Provider, regional area, in-depth interview

5 Conclusion

The Department of Jobs and Small Business evaluated the first eighteen months of the RATTUAI programme under JSA and jobactive. The evaluation used administrative data and qualitative and quantitative research to examine the program's effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness.

Early indications are that financial assistance through RATTUAI was effective for long-term unemployed job seekers who were motivated to take up employment in another location, with most successfully relocating and many still in employment six months after relocation.

There were issues with efficiency, given the low numbers of participants, administrative burden, and a process designed for a move that is slower and more organised than most actually were.

The appropriateness of the program could be improved by broadening eligibility criteria to increase take up and by adjusting requirements for participants to make payments upfront and then seek reimbursement.

5.1 Findings

This evaluation of the RATTUAI programme builds upon evaluation findings of previous Australian Government-funded relocation pilots and trials. As a national program, RATTUAI allows for findings to be generalised across a broader population and more diverse locations. While the evaluation findings offer insights, they are constrained by the short timeframe between the inception of the program and the preparation of this report. An important caveat is that the evaluation findings relate to a small, voluntary program. These findings may not generalise if there were significant changes in program design, eligibility or scale.

In summary:

- Relocation to take up a job is uncommon
- Moving to take up a job can be challenging and stressful
- RATTUAI helped people move to take up a job
- RATTUAI did not encourage people to find jobs in other locations but did help them move
- People who used RATTUAI to relocate for a job had different characteristics to most unemployed people
- RATTUAI supported people to move to take up regional jobs
- RATTUAI worked best where providers gave clear explanations and advocated for job seekers
- RATTUAI guidelines, reimbursement approaches and administration could be improved
- Providers lack incentives beyond employment outcome payments to use RATTUAI
- Some ineligible job seekers could also benefit from relocation assistance

Relocation to take up a job is uncommon

Few people are willing to move from where they currently live for a job. In Australia, people are far more likely to move locally or commute further than to move a considerable distance. For

unemployed people, the financial costs and loss of informal services provided by their social support networks associated with moving can be difficult to overcome, and few unemployed people move to a new location to take up a job.

The uptake of RATTUAJ reflects this. From an eligible caseload size of approximately 450,000 job seekers, there were only 620 job seekers who used the program to successfully relocate over an 18 month period.

Moving to take up a job can be challenging and stressful

Unemployed people who moved for a job reported significant financial and emotional stress during the relocation process. Some also faced cash flow challenges due to gaps in final unemployment benefits received and the first pay period for their new employment.

Participants noted that deciding to move for a job was difficult, particularly as it meant leaving behind social support networks.

That said, job seekers are motivated to relocate primarily to take up the job offer in the alternate location and are highly motivated to make both the move and the new job work out for them in the immediate and medium term.

The majority of participants made efforts to establish themselves in their new location both with their new employer and with the broader local community.

People who relocated to a familiar area or one where they had friends or family members, were generally better able to manage the relocation and more readily established themselves in their new location.

The challenge of securing both short-term and longer-term accommodation was a common experience for program participants.

Collectively, these financial and emotional challenges exacerbated the difficulties experienced in moving to a new location and being able to successfully initiate and sustain employment for many job seekers.

RATTUAJ helped people move to take up a job

The RATTUAJ programme helped unemployed people move to an alternative location to take up a job. This is supported by feedback from job seekers and providers and administrative data. Relocation assistance is meeting its objective of providing practical and financial assistance to job seekers who need help to relocate to get and keep work.

The program helped address financial stress in terms of direct costs associated with relocation.

Almost all (96 per cent) of job seekers who entered into an approved relocation agreement went on to successfully relocate in that they commenced in a job placement.

While a minority of job seekers indicated they could have moved without funding assistance (through borrowing from family or friends, or using credit cards), the vast majority noted that without the program's financial support, the relocation would not have been feasible.

RATTUAJ did not encourage people to find jobs in other locations but did help them move

The qualitative research showed that the relocation process was mainly started by the job seeker, who having found a job elsewhere, sought support from their provider to relocate. Provider involvement with relocations occurred primarily on a reactive basis.

Given some job seekers did not know of the financial assistance available to them until after making a decision to relocate, RATTUAJ was not necessarily an incentive for job seekers to seek employment in other regions but did support the move.

People who used RATTUAJ to relocate for a job had different characteristics to most unemployed people

RATTUAJ appealed primarily to men without dependants. Compared with the eligible caseload, the participants were likely to be more highly educated, less likely to report a disability and less likely to be very long-term unemployed (unemployed for 24 or more months).

RATTUAJ supported people to move to take up regional jobs

Almost three-quarters of the participants moved to a regional area. This is consistent with the findings of prior relocation programs.

RATTUAJ worked best where providers gave clear explanations and advocated for job seekers

Job seekers' relationships with their providers had an important impact on their relocation experience and successful transition to a new environment. Job seekers who felt their providers explained the program clearly and acted as an advocate on their behalf, in terms of ensuring they received all the financial support they needed, generally experienced a far smoother and more positive relocation experience. In contrast, job seekers who felt their providers were poorly informed about the program, or perceived their providers as making the process of accessing financial assistance through the program difficult, typically reported a more negative experience overall and a greater struggle in adjusting to their new jobs and locations.

RATTUAJ guidelines, reimbursement approaches and administration could be improved

The program guidelines and administration reflect a planned relocation process over four to eight weeks. There was an average of 12.9 days between the start of the Relocation Agreement and starting in the job, suggesting that moving was a rushed process for most people.

Having been unemployed for a considerable period of time, very few RATTUAJ participants have any funds available to support themselves to relocate. Given this, the default funding model of RATTUAJ – where a job seeker is expected to bear costs first and then seek reimbursement for these expenses on provision of receipts – does not align with the reality of most job seekers' financial position. Additionally, otherwise eligible costs incurred before a relocation agreement is signed cannot be reimbursed. This requirement warrants further consideration, given job seekers often begin making expenditures prior to arranging a relocation agreement.

Some providers expressed concern at the need for them to provide funding to the job seeker and then get reimbursement given there was a risk of paying for things they thought were eligible then being told they were not. This confusion around the rules may have resulted in some legitimate requests from job seekers being turned down.

Some providers reported that the Employment Fund (or Employment Pathway Fund under JSA) was a more attractive option to RATTUAJ as the administrative requirements were easier to meet.

Providers lack incentives to use RATTUAJ

Providers considered that the administrative impost associated with placing a job seeker through this program was far greater than that for a local placement but the provider payments are the same (so long as the employment milestones are achieved).

Providers were also generally reluctant to invest too much effort engaging with and learning more about the program over what they considered to be more immediate work priorities (such as securing local placements for job seekers).

These factors are a disincentive for providers to promote and use the program.

Most providers did not report actively searching for employment opportunities in other locations, and more commonly reported using the program when approached by a job seeker who had already decided to relocate. The localised model of service provision – where providers are expected to know their own location in detail and maximise employment opportunities with local employers – was viewed as inconsistent with an expectation that energies would be expended in wider geographic job search activity.

Some ineligible job seekers could also benefit from relocation assistance

Providers highlighted that some interested job seekers were ineligible for funding through RATTUAJ.²⁸ Job seekers who had been unemployed for less than 12 months, self-employed job seekers who wanted to take advantage of contract work, or job seekers offered casual or shorter-term jobs by employers may also benefit from relocation assistance.

²⁸ Noting that job seekers that are ineligible for RATTUAJ may be eligible for relocation assistance through the EF.

Appendix A – Administrative data analysis

This section presents additional administrative data analysis tables. All figures reported here were captured at 31 March 2016 and relate to RATTUJ approved Relocation Agreements with start dates from 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2015, unless otherwise specified in the notes of the table.

The term ‘Relocated’ in this section applies to any agreement that had a confirmed employment placement, that is, a job seeker started the job.

Approved Relocation Agreements

Table A.1: Approved Relocation Agreements – JSA and jobactive

Employment contract	Relocated	Per cent	Not relocated	Per cent	Total approved Relocation Agreements
JSA	391	95.6	18	4.4	409
jobactive	231	95.9	10	4.1	241
Total	622	95.7	28	4.3	650

Note: This table is based off 650 Relocation Agreements, which relates to 648 job seekers.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.2: Approved Relocation Agreements by stream and eligible caseload – JSA

Stream	Relocated (number)	Relocated (per cent)	Eligible job seekers in caseload as at 31 January 2015 (number)	Caseload (per cent)
Stream 1	63	16.1	92,264	20.5
Stream 2	136	34.8	127,548	28.3
Stream 3	102	26.1	115,690	25.7
Stream 4	90	23.0	115,010	25.5
Total/overall	391	100.0	450,512	100.0

Note: The ‘Relocated’ column is based off 391 Relocation Agreements, which relates to 389 job seekers.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.3: Approved Relocation Agreements by stream and eligible caseload – jobactive

Stream	Relocated (number)	Relocated (per cent)	Eligible job seekers in caseload as at 31 January 2016 (number)	Caseload (per cent)
Stream A	106	45.9	155,359	37.0
Stream B	82	35.5	158,580	37.8
Stream C	43	18.6	105,819	25.2
Total/overall	231	100.0	419,758	100.0

Source: EBIW data.

Expenditure

Monetary support for job seekers to relocate for a job can come from two sources:

- RATTUAI programme and
- Employment Pathway Fund (EPF) under JSA or the Employment Fund (EF) under jobactive.

Claims under RATTUAI are identified in the administrative data. However, there is no definitive connection between EPF/EF usage and Relocation Agreements. To estimate the amount of EPF/EF used to support job seekers with approved Relocation Agreements involves making some assumptions.

A number of items described in the EPF guidelines, such as furniture storage, travel cost to new location, fares, temporary rental assistance, bond assistance and goods transport and removalist costs, were assumed to be directly associated with the costs of relocation. Table A.4 lists the items from the EPF and EF that may be related to Relocation Agreements.

EPF/EF items claimed for relocation included in the analysis are confined to those that occurred within three months of the Relocation Agreement start date.

It is not possible to capture providers' financial support to job seekers in the Department's administrative data where they did not make use of RATTUAI at all, and instead to provide financial assistance using EPF or EF without entering into a relocation agreement. This is because EPF data did not allow differentiation between a job seeker moving a short distance and one moving more than 90 minutes away while EF has no specific relocation expense codes.

Table A.4: Grouping of Employment Pathway Fund/Employment Fund into relocation expense category

EPF/EF expense category	JSA Employment Pathway Fund Description of item included	jobactive Employment Fund Description of item included
Accommodation	Short term accommodation assistance	Not available
Employment	Clothing and presentation Pre-employment check & work related documents and tools Computers, mobile phones and equipment	Clothing and presentation Food, phone and petrol cards/vouchers Work related items Work related licencing
Removalist	Furniture storage Good transport Transport purchases	Not available
Travel	Travel cost to new location Fares and petrol	Job seeker transport
Relocation assistance	Not available	For job seekers who are not eligible to receive support under RATTUAI

Table A.5: Number of Relocation Agreements by source of financial support and relocation status

Source of financial support	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome (number)	Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome (number)	Not relocated (number)	Total (number)
RATTUJ funding only	209	62	6	277
EPF/EF relocation support only ^(a)	70	24	12	106
Both RATTUJ and EPF/EF ^(a)	137	67	4	208
None ^(b)	31	22	6	59
Total	447	175	28	650

(a) For the items that are listed in Table A.4 and that occurred within three months of the Relocation Agreement start date.

(b) Agreements for which providers had not claimed any expenses relating to relocation from either source as at 31 March 2016.

Note: Even though an approved relocation agreement is in place there does not have to be expenditure associated with that agreement. For example, a RATTUJ participant may choose not to seek reimbursement for legitimate expenses. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data

Table A.6: Expenditure under RATTUJ by relocation status of the program participant

Relocation cost component	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome and made a claim N = 346		Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome and made a claim N = 129		Not relocated and made a claim N = 10		Total N = 485	
	\$	Per cent	\$	Per cent	\$	Per cent	\$	Per cent
Accommodation	447,310	43.1	149,615	43.8	5,863	20.1	602,788	42.8
Disturbance costs ^(a)	70,350	6.8	24,673	7.2	666	2.3	95,689	6.8
Employment	23,882	2.3	8,014	2.3	584	2.0	32,480	2.3
Removalist	332,447	32.1	98,293	28.7	19,479	66.7	450,219	32.0
Travel	119,688	11.5	50,330	14.7	2,629	9.0	172,647	12.3
Bond ^(b)	43,545	4.2	10,967	3.2	—	—	54,512	3.9
Total	1,037,222	100.0	341,892	100.0	29,221	100.0	1,408,335	100.0

(a) Examples of Disturbance costs include Gardening fees, Cleaning fees, School uniforms or Utility connection and exit costs.

(b) A 'Bond' item code is only available under jobactive.

Note: Table A.4 provides more detail on what is included in each relocation cost component. RATTUJ participants that did not relocate may have incurred expenses in preparation for a move. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.7: Average cost per claimant under RATTUAJ by relocation status of the program participant

Relocation cost component	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome and made a claim \$/job seeker	Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome and made a claim \$/job seeker	Not relocated and made a claim \$/job seeker	Total \$/job seeker
Accommodation	1,292.8	1,159.8	586.3	1,242.9
Disturbance costs ^(a)	203.3	191.3	66.6	197.3
Employment	69.0	62.1	58.4	67.0
Removalist	960.8	762.0	1,947.9	928.3
Travel	345.9	390.2	262.9	356.0
Bond ^(b)	125.9	85.0	—	112.4
Total	2,997.8	2,650.3	2,922.1	2,903.8

(a) Examples of Disturbance costs include gardening fees, cleaning fees, school uniforms and utility connection and exit costs.

(b) A 'Bond' item code is only available under jobactive.

Note: RATTUAJ participants that did not relocate may have incurred expenses in preparation for a move. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.8: Expenditure under RATTUAJ by relocation status of the program participant – JSA

Relocation cost component	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome and made a claim N = 197 \$	Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome and made a claim N = 95 \$	Not relocated and made a claim N = 7 \$	Total N = 299 \$
Accommodation	311,993	125,735	4,681	442,409
Disturbance costs ^(a)	42,599	17,414	376	60,389
Employment	13,717	6,735	584	21,036
Removalist	197,921	76,713	16,405	291,039
Travel	64,482	37,579	2,225	104,286
Total	630,712	264,176	24,271	919,159

(a) Examples of Disturbance costs include gardening fees, cleaning fees, school uniforms and utility connection and exit costs.

Note: RATTUAJ participants that did not relocate may have incurred expenses in preparation for a move. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.9: Expenditure under RATTUAJ by relocation status of the program participant – jobactive

Relocation cost component	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome and made a claim	Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome and made a claim	Not relocated and made a claim	Total
	N = 149 \$	N = 34 \$	N = 3 \$	N = 186 \$
Accommodation	135,317	23,880	1,182	160,379
Disturbance costs ^(a)	27,751	7,259	290	35,300
Employment	10,165	1,279	—	11,444
Removalist	134,526	21,580	3,074	159,180
Travel	55,206	12,751	404	68,361
Bond ^(b)	43,545	10,967	—	54,512
Total	406,510	77,716	4,950	489,176

(a) Examples of Disturbance costs include gardening fees, cleaning fees, school uniforms and utility connection and exit costs.

(b) A 'Bond' item code is only available under jobactive.

Note: RATTUAJ participants that did not relocate may have incurred expenses in preparation for a move. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.10: Estimated Employment Pathway Fund (JSA) expenditure for relocation expenses by relocation status of the program participant

Relocation cost component	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome and made a claim	Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome and made a claim	Not relocated and made a claim	Total
	N = 207 \$	N = 91 \$	N = 16 \$	N = 314 \$
Accommodation	53,565	21,398	1,520	76,483
Employment	23,412	17,811	1,226	42,449
Removalist	32,180	21,840	6,463	60,483
Travel	37,002	17,435	2,596	57,033
Total	146,159	78,484	11,805	236,448

Note: EPF items claimed for relocation included in this table are confined to those that occurred within three months of the Relocation Agreement start date.

Note: RATTUAJ participants that did not relocate may have incurred expenses in preparation for a move. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

Table A.11: Estimated Employment Fund (jobactive) expenditure for relocation expenses by relocation status of the program participant

Relocation cost component	Relocated and achieved an employment outcome and made a claim N = 207 \$	Relocated and did not achieve an employment outcome and made a claim N = 91 \$	Not relocated and made a claim N = 16 \$	Total N = 314 \$
Employment	12,342	1,864	360	14,566
Travel	14,670	2,150	273	17,093
Relocation Assistance	18,883	272	482	19,637
Total	45,895	4,286	1,115	51,296

Note: EF items claimed for relocation included in this table are confined to those that occurred within three months of the Relocation Agreement start date.

Note: RATTUAI participants that did not relocate may have incurred expenses in preparation for a move. Outcomes are determined as at 31 March 2016.

Source: EBIW data.

Appendix B – Data sources

The primary data source for this evaluation report was a qualitative survey of RATTUAJ programme participants and providers. Information has also been drawn from other data sources, both qualitative and quantitative. The methodologies of these data sources are detailed below.

Qualitative research

Colmar Brunton was engaged to conduct in-depth interviews with job seekers and employment services providers in late 2015 and early 2016 to collect data on the experiences of job seekers and providers involved with the RATTUAJ programme. This multi-stage qualitative study included:

- 50 initial in-depth interviews with job seekers who had entered or were entering into a RATTUAJ Agreement through a provider
- two waves of “online diaries” with job seekers – essentially brief check-ins to maintain contact with respondents
- follow-up in-depth interviews with 29 out of the 50 job seekers approximately three months after initial interview
- 10 in-depth interviews with jobactive providers
- qualitative data analysis.

The Department provided Colmar Brunton with the contact details of all job seekers who participated in RATTUAJ within a defined timeframe. Job seekers were considered eligible for participation in the study if the Department recorded an application being lodged from 1 May to 30 June 2015 under Job Services Australia and through to 6 October 2015 under jobactive.

Job seekers were excluded from the research if they:

- indicated they did not wish to participate in the research
- had recently been approached for other research or evaluation by the Department
- had been involved in an anti-social incident with an employment services provider.

Colmar Brunton, with Departmental approval, sent a total of 129 primary approach letters and information sheets to these job seekers inviting them to participate in the research.

Job seekers were offered payments in recognition of their costs and time to participate in the research:

- \$50 after completing an initial interview
- \$20 after completing both online diary components
- \$80 after completing a secondary interview.

Colmar Brunton attempted to contact all job seekers provided to them by the Department and arranged a time for a face-to-face or telephone interview for those who were willing to participate in the research. For the initial interviews, Colmar Brunton completed 21 face-to-face interviews and 29 telephone interviews. Out of the 50 job seekers interviewed:

- 40 had already relocated

- four were in the process of relocating
- six did not complete relocation.

Interviews were conducted between 31 August and 15 October 2015 and lasted about one hour. When permission was granted, Colmar Brunton recorded the interviews with job seekers and provided de-identified transcripts to the Department.

Colmar Brunton conducted two 'online diary' entries with job seekers at approximately one and two months after the initial interview. The online diaries were primarily used as a tool to engage job seekers between the initial and follow-up interviews and were not considered a source of primary data collection. Eighteen job seekers completed the first diary and eight of the initial 18 completed the second diary.

The researchers conducted a follow-up interview with 29 of the 50 job seekers who participated in the initial phase of the research. All follow-up interviews were by telephone and lasted between 30 to 60 minutes.

In addition to interviews with job seekers, Colmar Brunton conducted face-to-face interviews with 10 jobactive providers in October 2015. Of the providers interviewed:

- two had not placed a job seeker through RATTUAI
- four had placed one job seeker through RATTUAI
- four had placed multiple job seekers through RATTUAI.

When permission was granted the provider interviews were recorded and de-identified transcripts were provided to the Department.

Department of Jobs and Small Business administrative data

The administrative data used in this report is from the Employment Business Intelligence Warehouse (EBIW). This database contains information on the use and recipients of employment services including the take up and use of RATTUAI programme.

The database is a live system. This report used data extracted on 31 March 2016. All relevant data relating to Relocation Agreements that had a start date between 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2015 as at 31 March 2016 were captured. This allowed time for the outcome of most agreements to be known and entered into the system.

An important caveat is that while the data used in this report was robustly quality assured, the preparation of the data, cleaning and checking, and analysis was conducted in-house by the team drafting this evaluation report. This means that the data may not be directly comparable with program performance statistics published in other sources.

Surveys of employment services providers

Employment services providers are surveyed regularly. The quantitative component of the surveys are a census of all full-time JSA/jobactive provider sites in operation.

2015

For the 2015 survey the Department commissioned TNS Australia to conduct qualitative in-depth interviews and an online quantitative questionnaire. For this report, only the qualitative information was used. In total, 44 interviews with JSA case and site managers were completed across metropolitan, regional and rural locations Australia-wide. A total of 37 JSA sites were represented. A mixed qualitative methodology was adopted, comprising:

- 20 in-depth interviews conducted by telephone
- 12 in-depth interviews conducted face to face with a unique participant at an employment services providers site
- 12 'site visits', each involving face to face in-depth interviews and / or discussion groups with two or more staff at an individual site. Group sessions typically included the site manager and one or more case or specialist managers at the site.

Qualitative fieldwork took place in March and April 2015. Interviews were carried out by experienced social researchers from TNS, using a semi-structured interview guide designed in consultation with the Department. Each interview was around one hour to 90 minutes long.

2016

A survey of providers in 2016 was conducted in-house using an online questionnaire. A contact at every full-time jobactive site was sent an email inviting them to complete the questionnaire and it was open from 8 to 24 June 2016. Towards the end of the period email reminders were sent to all sites that had not completed the survey. The Department then conducted follow-up phone calls with the remaining non-responders. In total 975 sites completed the questionnaire in full which resulted in a response rate of 90 per cent. The results presented in this report are based on 960 responses that completed the RATTUAI module in the questionnaire.

2016 job seeker survey

The 2016 job seeker survey was a mixed methodology research project undertaken by The Social Research Centre (SRC) on behalf of the Department. The research comprised qualitative and quantitative components.

The quantitative component was conducted in February 2016, and used Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to collect data. The sample of job seekers registered with jobactive was selected and stratified into 27 sub-groups with quotas. The sampling design was constructed by the Department in consultation with the Social Research Centre and the Australian National University. Defining sample characteristics upon which strata were based included:

- age (under 30 years, 30 – 49 years, 50 years and over)
- stream (A, B or C)
- length of unemployment (long-term unemployed +12 months, not long-term unemployed under 12 months)
- Indigenous status.

The survey design entailed the conduct of 3000 interviews with the survey split into core modules (all respondents) and two sub-surveys (Subset A and Subset B). Questions relating to RATTUAJ were in Subset B and comprised a total of 1502 completed interviews. The cooperation rate (defined by completed interviews as a proportion of refusals plus completed interviews) for the entire questionnaire was 83.2 per cent. The overall average time to conduct each interview was 20.2 minutes.