



Australian Government  
Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment

# Employment Services CEO Address

Deputy Secretary – Mr Nathan Smyth

| August 2021 |



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Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment

# New Employment Services Model

NEST and OES data update, 'Tell Us Once', PBAS consultations and Provider Survey results

Melissa Ryan

6 August 2021

Thank you Nathan, Today I am going to:

- provide an update on data for both the Online Employment Services (OES) and the New Employment Services Trial (NEST)
- let you know about the 'Tell Us Once' function and how it helps jobseekers and
- provide an update on our consultations around PBAS.

## Procurement phase of new model and probity



The department is committed to conducting a fair and transparent process



The department has created a NESM Probity Plan



Our processes are **fair, equitable and transparent.**

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*The department is committed to conducting a fair and transparent process for the procurement of services for the new model- referred to as 'probity'.*

As we are entering into the implementation of the model involving a Request for Proposal process through an open tender for the engagement of Employment Service Providers, we are in a probity environment.

In this we mean acting with:

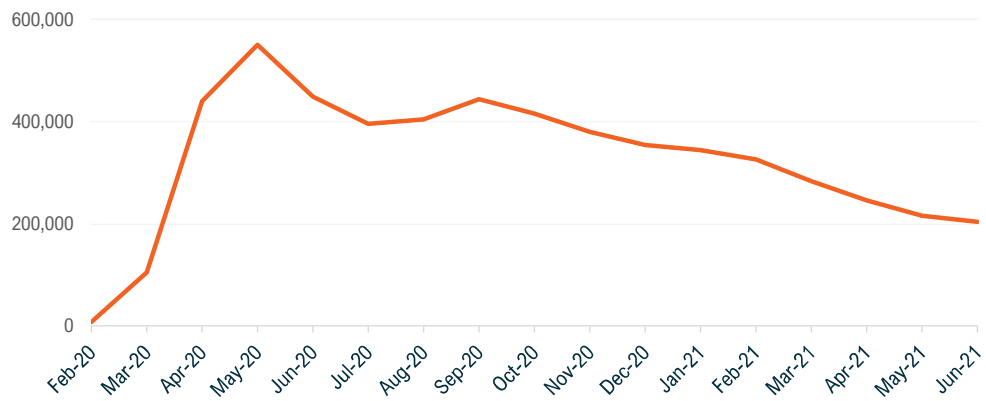
- integrity
- fairness
- uprightness
- honesty of processes

The department has created a NESM Probity Plan which has more information about the individual principles and protocols that we are applying to managing probity in relation to the NESM.

We need to make sure that detail we share with one potential supplier of Employment Service Providers is shared with other potential suppliers. For example, if we answer a direct question that could give one potential supplier an advantage, we must ensure it is available to other potential suppliers.

In all of our interactions, please be aware that we want to be as open as possible and to answer any questions you might have, but there may be some subjects or questions that are off limit.

## Online Employment Services caseload over time (excluding NEST) 2020 – 2021



Data as at 30 June 2021

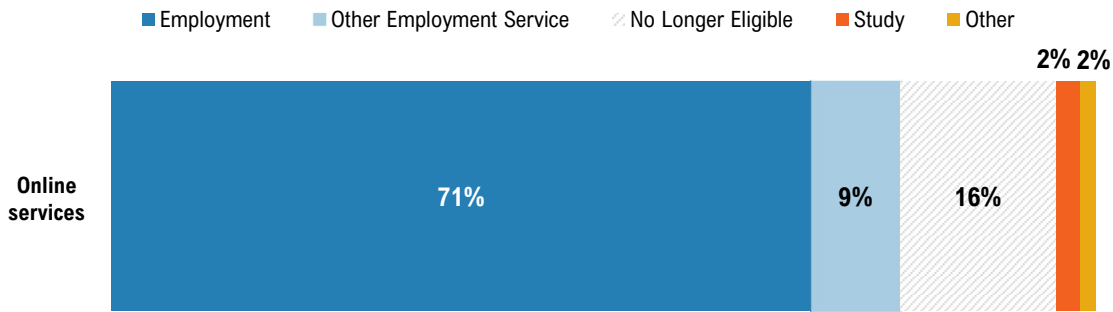
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This slide shows the department's 'Online Employment Services' but does not include NEST.

Building on my last presentation, you can see that the OES caseload is continuing to reduce in size to just under 204,000 as at 30 June 2021, from its high of around 551,000 at 31 May 2020.

Some of the participants who left online services were eligible for provider servicing, while others left employment services.

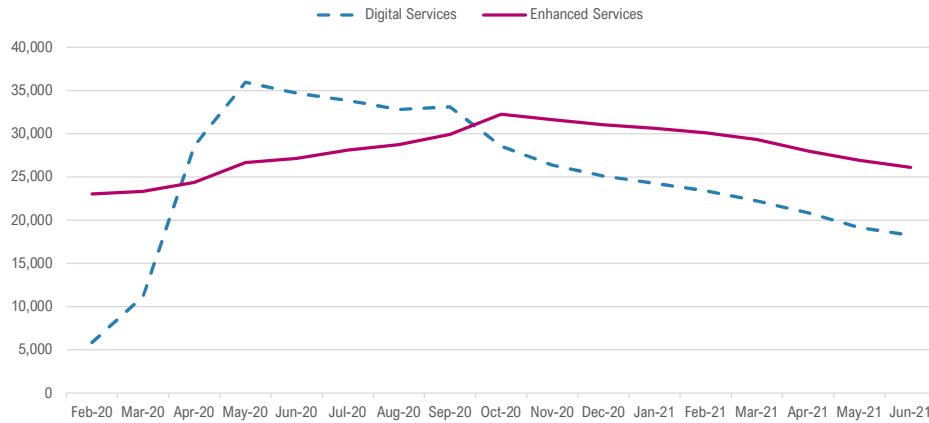
# Exits from Online Employment Services (excluding NEST)



Data as at 30 June 2021

This slide illustrates the exits from the Online Employment Services as at 30 June 2021. Exits have increased by around 23,000 since 31 May 2021. The reasons behind the exits has remained stable, with most (71 per cent) participants moving into employment. A quarter of participants left the OES to go to other employment services or because their eligibility changed. Only a small number have exited to study or for other reasons.

## NEST caseload over time



Data as at 30 June 2021

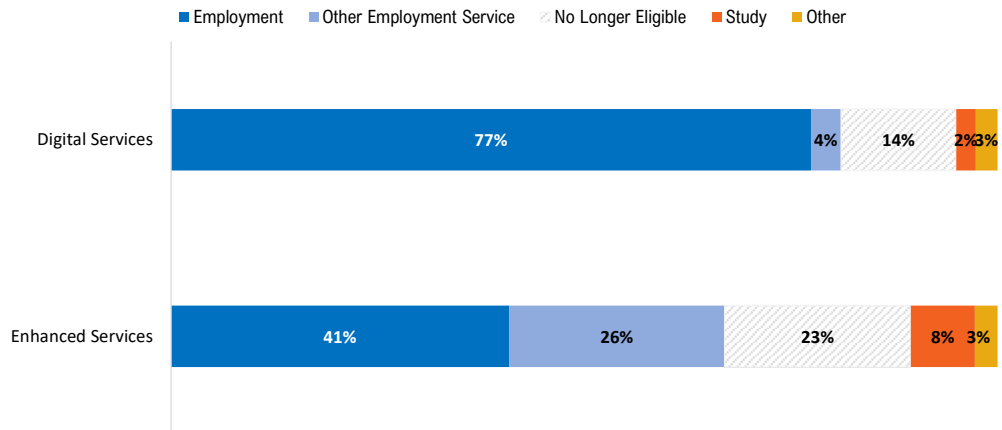
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This slide presents the NEST caseload for both digital services (blue dotted line) and enhanced services (red line). As at 30 June 2021, 18,252 job seekers are on the digital services caseload and 26,106 job seekers are on the enhanced services caseload.

The graph shows that both caseloads are continuing to reduce in size, with each service stream decreasing by approximately 1,000 job seekers during June.

We have seen this trend since late last year, with more job seekers moving off the caseload as labour market conditions continue to improve, the unemployment rate trends down and people move into employment.

## Exits from the NEST



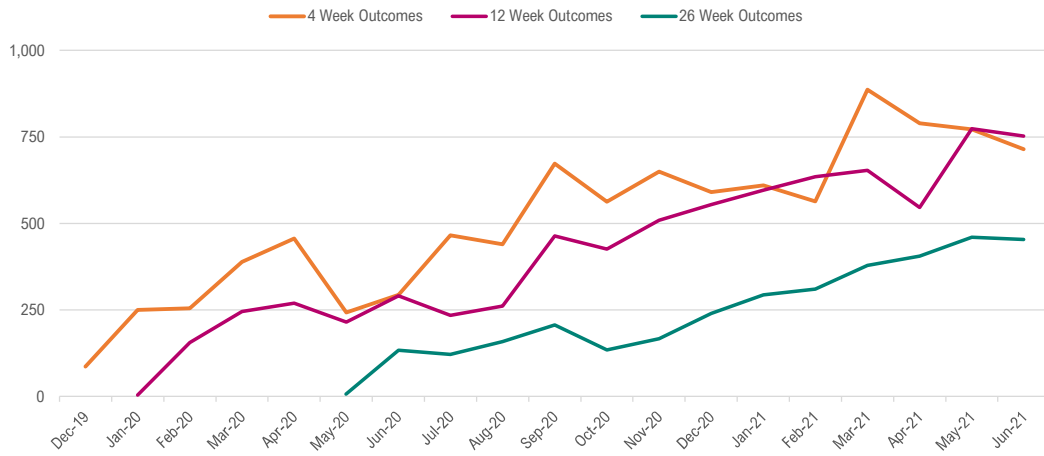
Data as at 30 June 2021

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62,195 job seekers have exited from the Trial since it commenced. 61% of these exits have been from Digital Services, and 39% are from Enhanced Services. NEST exits have increased by around 3,000 during June.

Encouragingly, despite the disruption that the bushfires, flooding and COVID-19 has had, you can see that the main reason that the caseloads are decreasing, is because job seekers are exiting as they move into employment.

## Enhanced Services Outcomes



Data as at 30 June 2021

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We can also see this trend by looking at employment outcomes in Enhanced Services over time.

This graph shows the number of employment outcomes claimed in each month since Enhanced Services began. This continues to trend up, other than a sharp dip between last year due to the impact of COVID-19.

The increased number of outcomes is indicative of strengthening economic conditions and Enhanced Service providers helping their job seekers to move into sustainable employment.



## 'Tell Us Once' function



Before 26 June, job seekers entered some information numerous times with different departments.



**'Tell us Once'**  
Implemented for the JSCI



Up to 12 questions in the JSCI are now pre-populated from their income support claim.



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On 26 June, a new IT change for the Department and Services Australia meant that JSCI's became easier to complete.

There are 49 questions in the Job Seeker Classification Index (also known as the Job Seeker Snapshot) and up to 12 of them can now be pre-populated with information job seekers submitted for their income support claim.

One example is if a job seeker answers "How long have you lived at this address?" on their income support claim, the JSCI updates the question, "Have you been living in rented accommodation or your own home for the past 12 months?"

This change drastically reduces the number of times job seekers have to share their information, making it easier for them to fill in their JSCI.

As of 21 July, 12,553 JSCI's have been pre-populated using income claims data.

This is the first in a series of Job Seeker Assessment Framework deliverables and over time we will gain more access to Services Australia data to keep improving job seeker experience.

## Points Based Activation System



These elements of PBAS have been working well.

- ✓ Choice in what job seekers can do
- ✓ Independence and empowerment for job seekers
- ✓ Rewarding participation and activation
- ✓ Encourages job seekers to participate in activities
- ✓ Greater visibility for consultants
- ✓ Simple and makes the job plan process much simpler

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We have been undertaking stakeholder consultations on the operation of PBAS in NEST to seek feedback on the proposed model for NESM.

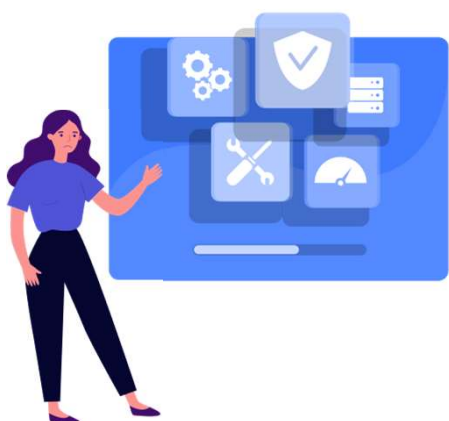
Recently we have held bilateral meetings with all NEST providers, and webinars for jobactive providers, and other interested stakeholders, such as NESA, Jobs Australia and ACOSS.

Overall, most NEST providers and job seekers are having a positive experience with PBAS, noting they experienced initial hesitation until they had a better understanding of how it operated. Elements they particularly liked were:

- The ability for choice in what a job seeker can do to meet their mutual obligation requirements.
- The independence and empowerment PBAS provides to job seekers.
- PBAS is considered a good change in the way providers engage with job seekers by rewarding participation and activation rather than focusing on compliance.
- Providers found that PBAS encourages job seekers to participate in activities.
- PBAS provides greater visibility for consultants in seeing what a job seeker was doing.
- One provider noted that this greater visibility allowed their consultants to better engage with their job seekers and have meaningful conversations around what job seekers were applying for.
- PBAS is ultimately simple and not a difficult process to use and makes the job plan process much simpler.

## Points Based Activation System

We acknowledge that there are elements that we are currently trialling which need to be addressed.



- Reporting for paid work and checking what job seekers are declaring
- The ability to make referrals to interview
- Quality assuring reporting of job interviews, hours of paid work
- Better flexibility in the value of points
- Work arounds for job seekers with no digital literacy, access to mobile phones or internet access
- More training aids to assist job seekers

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While the majority of feedback was positive, we do acknowledge there are elements to the version of PBAS that we are currently trialling which need to be addressed.

Some of the issues identified include:

- The current duplication of reporting for paid work and the ability to check this against what job seekers are or are not declaring to Services Australia.
- The lack of the job referral code in the job plan for job seekers using PBAS preventing the ability to make referrals to interviews etc compellable.
- The ability to quality assure and take action for false reporting of job interviews, hours of paid work etc. Currently in PBAS you can only review job search quality as you do in jobactive.
- Providers would like better flexibility in the value of points for participation in activities, in particular for different types of study.
- What the work arounds will be for job seekers with no digital literacy, access to mobile phones or internet.
- Providers suggested that there will need to be more training aids to assist job seekers, particularly in various languages. Some of the suggestions included: step-by-step visual aids and resources, videos, screenshots, basic tutorials for PBAS, and factsheets.

# Points Based Activation System

## Next Steps

- Insights and learnings from consultation will inform the design of PBAS
- PBAS presentations and Q&As published on department website:  
[www.dese.gov.au/new-employment-services-model/consultation-inform-new-employment-services](http://www.dese.gov.au/new-employment-services-model/consultation-inform-new-employment-services)
- Consultation PBAS Questions – Close 13 August 2021, send to: [pbas@dese.gov.au](mailto:pbas@dese.gov.au)
- Webinars following release of Request for Proposal

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The insights and learnings may be used by the Department to inform the development of the final design of PBAS. It is important to note however that prior to finalising the design we still need agreement from Government.

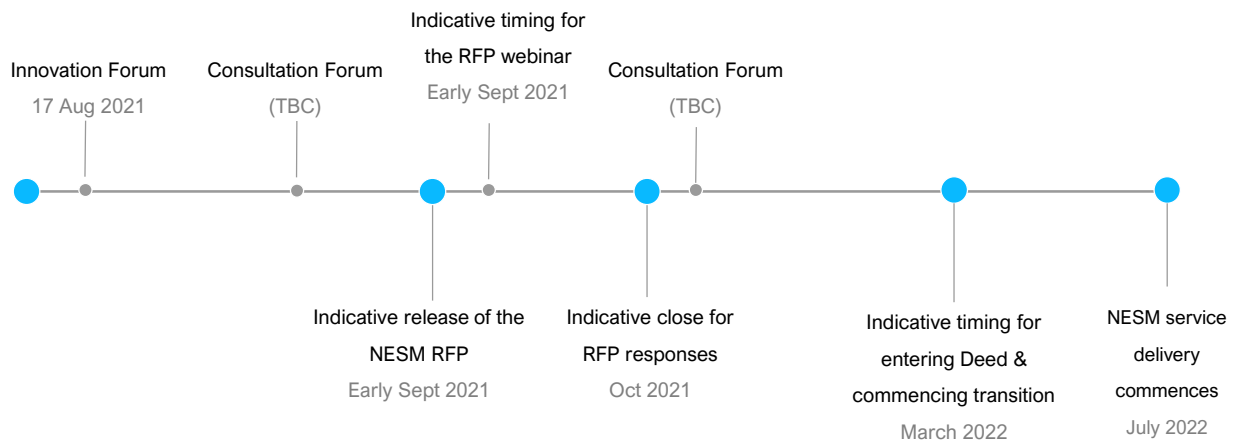
There is still an opportunity to contribute feedback on the proposed design of PBAS.

The presentations used during the different consultation sessions, together with all Q&As, have been made available for all interested stakeholders on the department's website.

The Department is still accepting questions on the proposed approach to PBAS and will publish all answers to questions received prior to 13 August 2021, noting this will be de-identified. Questions about PBAS can be sent through to [pbas@dese.gov.au](mailto:pbas@dese.gov.au).

Following the release of the Request for Proposal the department will look to hold further webinars to provide all interested stakeholders with an overview of any updated design features of PBAS.

## Upcoming view of engagement



Source: Exposure Draft for the New Employment Services Model 2022 Purchasing Arrangements

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I would like to thank you to those who completed our second provider survey recently which is the Department's key feedback mechanism for our change management approach. We are proposing to share the results with your peak bodies shortly, prior to discussing further with you in September.

We look forward to continuing our engagement with you via upcoming provider consultation forums and future CEO livestreams:

- We will be holding an Innovators Forum on 17 August, to present detail around how Security will work in the new model.
- The Innovators Forum is open to existing jobactive and other program providers, Third Party Employment Systems vendors and Peak Association Bodies. Due to the agenda and topics being discussed, the attendance is most suited to the CIO or Head of Technology levels.

I will now hand back to Nathan.



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