



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

New Employment Services Trial Reference Group Terms of Reference



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Document Change history

Date of change	Detail of change
18 March 2020	Final Travel Policy – Attachment A
18 March 2020	Updated document to reflect new title of the Chair given new department name
11 May 2020	Update document to be on new department templates

Introduction

Development of a new employment services model began in January 2018 with the establishment of an Expert Advisory Panel to provide guidance to the Government on a future employment services model, to replace jobactive when current contracts expire. The Panel included employer, provider, and welfare group representatives, as well as a labour market economist and an expert in business transformation.

On 29 June 2018, [‘The Next Generation of Employment Services 2020’](#) public discussion paper was released for consultation. To support the release of the discussion paper, 23 face-to-face public consultation sessions were held around Australia with approximately 560 people attending and over 450 submissions received in response to the discussion paper.

The Expert Advisory Panel’s work culminated in a report to Government – [‘I Want to Work: Employment Services 2020’](#) in October 2018 and was released in December 2018.

On 20 March 2019, the Government announced the extension of jobactive contracts until June 2022 in all regions outside the trial regions and that there would be two Employment Regions trialling the New Employment Services Model – Adelaide South in South Australia and Mid North Coast in New South Wales.

To ensure the model is tested and meets the needs of all of its stakeholders the Government also announced that a Reference Group would be established to test policy and operational aspects with stakeholders to inform the final design of the new employment services model ahead of a national roll out in 2022.

These Terms of Reference set out the Reference Group’s objectives, roles and responsibilities, membership and administrative arrangements.

In exercising its functions, the Reference Group will consider the perspectives of job seekers, employers, and the employment services sector, ensuring a user-centred focus is central to the design of the new employment services model.

The Reference Group will serve as an advisory body, testing policy concepts and operational options and provide advice to the Department of Education, Skills, and Employment (the department).

The Reference Group will be chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Employment in the department. It will have representatives from stakeholder groups that represent large and small business, community and welfare organisations and employment services providers. The Reference Group will be supported by the New Employment Services Model Division within the department.



Roles and Responsibilities

The Reference Group will consider and build on the principles outlined in the Expert Advisory Panel's report to Government and the consultations undertaken by the department in 2018 when testing policy concepts and operational options. The Reference Group will provide advice and feedback to the department as requested to ensure the final design of the new employment system:

- Meets the needs of job seekers and employers
- Considers innovative solutions
- Maximises effectiveness of services in supporting people into work
- Is efficient, cost effective and sustainable.

Membership

Membership of the Reference Group will comprise representation from key stakeholder organisations. The membership will consist of nominations from the following organisations (as per number stated below). This may include representatives from the peak organisation and/or their member organisations up to the number stated.

The peak stakeholder organisations are listed below:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) (1 representative)
- Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) (2 representatives)
- Business Council of Australia (BCA) (1 representative)
- National Employment Services Association (NESA) (1 representative)
- Jobs Australia (1 representative)
- Independent Indigenous Representative (Spotless) (1 representative)
- National Social Security Rights Network (NSSRN) (1 representative)
- Settlement Council of Australia (1 representative)
- National NEIS Association (1 representative)
- The Brotherhood of St Laurence (1 representative)

Expert advisers from external organisations and from within the department will be invited to attend meetings as required according to the agenda for individual meetings.

Meetings will be chaired by the Deputy Secretary, Employment, from the department. Deputy Chair will be held by the First Assistant Secretary, New Employment Services Model Division.

As members will have access to confidential data and information all members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to attending their first meeting. If an alternative person attends they will also be required to complete a confidentiality agreement prior to attending.



Meetings

It is envisaged that this group will meet at least quarterly until six months after the new employment services model is implemented.

Members will be given the option to attend meetings in person or where possible, via teleconference or video conference.

Depending on the membership, meetings may be held in different locations around Australia.

A short briefing session to provide an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Reference Group will be organised soon after the membership has been finalised.

The department will work with the peak and community organisations to ensure the interests of job seekers including people with disability, sole parents, migrants, refugees, carers, youth and Indigenous Australians are represented.

Quorum

A quorum will be considered to be reached if the number of attendees (including the chair) equates to 50 per cent or more of the members.

Members of the Reference Group should commit to attending all meetings. Where a member cannot attend a meeting, the member can nominate an alternative person from their organisation to attend on their behalf.

Secretariat support


Secretariat support will be provided by the New Employment Services Model Division.

The secretariat will organise all meetings as required with all members. An agenda and papers will be provided to members prior to each meeting.

Outcome Notes of Meetings

Following each meeting, an outcome note will be cleared and circulated to all members, where possible within one week of the meeting.

An issues and action item register will be maintained and provided to all members at each meeting.




Where appropriate a short communique will be published for stakeholders on the department's website and on the 'Our Stakeholder' portal page post meetings. These communiques will outline the discussions at a high level and provide the forward agenda for the next meeting to allow members to consult with their membership base prior to each meeting.

Travel and Accommodation

The department will reimburse reasonable costs for travel and accommodation for travel associated with meetings that require members to travel interstate.

Attachment A - Travel policy provided to members on 18 March 2020 to assist with travel bookings.



Attachment A