

CatholicCare Tasmania

Submission in response to

**Proposed licensing system for the New Employment Services Model
Discussion Paper**

For more information, please contact:

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Introduction

The Department of Education Skills and Employment (DESE) has requested submissions in response to the “Proposed Licensing system for the New Employment Services Model” Discussion paper, which addresses the new Model that will be rolled out in July 2022. As a current provider of services to those from refugee and migrant backgrounds, who will be directly affected by the new Model, CatholicCare Tasmania’s Multicultural Service Programs is pleased to have the opportunity to provide a submission.

Recommendations

- The creation of “Specialist” providers as part of the “Enhanced Services” is welcome. It will be important to reduce the need for those in the target cohorts to access the digital platforms in the first instance due to challenges with digital literacy – a direct referral from Services Australia (Centrelink) would be welcome.
- Assessment of performance of these providers must be flexible: weighting progress towards employment outcomes (eg. Training, work experience, volunteering), as significantly as an employment outcome. Employment outcomes for this cohort take longer to achieve, and engagement is affected by experience such as trauma.
- Those from a CALD background (eg. Former skilled clients having gained permanent residency) may require particular specialist services, in light of linguistic or cultural barriers. As a subset of the CALD cohort, CCT recommends that former refugees (humanitarian entrants) by default require “Specialist” services.
- Specialist providers should have the option to only receive clients as per their cohort – although could also receive generalist referrals if appropriate, and agreed in the license.
- Flexibility with regards to compliance is also an important consideration in the new Model. CCT is concerned about referral to, and engagement with, existing programs such as Work for the Dole, and Transition to Work if these programs do not allow a similar level of flexibility and adaptability as Specialist services can potentially provide.
- Workforce specialists would need to operate alongside specialist and generalist cohorts with direction from the Department. For example, Service providers should be able to develop their own networks and links without having to rely on those employer links coming from the Workforce specialist. Significant guidance and communication between workforce specialists and other providers in the region will need to occur. Questions for consideration include– how will the workforce specialists take referrals, both from those job seekers in the enhanced services systems, and on the Digital only platforms
- CCT notes the creation of the National Panel and subpanel. However, if organisations are on the subpanel, and are specialist, then they face potentially limited time to scale up in the event a license becomes available. This is both an issue for the service provider, but also for the Department. Therefore, appropriate procedures must be in place to allow for adequate lead in.
- It is the view of CCT that a 3 year license could be limiting to ensure sufficient assessment of an organisation’s performance with respect of the new Model. We would put forward the consideration of a 5 year license period.