



## **Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash**

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS, SMALL AND FAMILY BUSINESS

SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**25 March 2020**

### **CONFIRMATION OF CHANGES TO MUTUAL OBLIGATION ARRANGEMENTS**

The Government has already put in place flexible job seeking arrangements as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

#### **UNTIL 31 MARCH 2020 SUSPENSION OF ALL MUTUAL OBLIGATION REQUIREMENTS**

On Tuesday 24 March, the Government announced that mutual obligations will be suspended until 31 March, to help ease the congestion on the MyGov website.

These arrangements will continue to be reviewed regularly.

During this period no one's payments will be suspended and no compliance action will be taken.

#### **DEFAULT MUTUAL OBLIGATION CHANGES ALREADY ANNOUNCED**

The Government has already announced that mutual obligations requirements for jobseekers were made more flexible to eliminate the need for face-to-face interactions with service providers as a result of COVID-19.

Any mutual obligations requirements, if they apply, are able to be undertaken over the phone or by an on-line channel such as Skype.

#### **ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL APPLY IF AND WHEN MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS ARE REINSTATED**

**If and when mutual obligation requirements are reinstated, the following flexible arrangements already apply:**

#### **CARING RESPONSIBILITIES, OR THOSE WHO NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE**

Jobseekers who have caring responsibilities, or who need to self-isolate, are able to seek an **exemption** from their mutual obligation requirements **without the need for medical evidence**.

## **JOB SEARCHES SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED**

Job Plans have been adjusted to a **default requirement** of 4 job searches a month. (or one a week) to reflect the labour market conditions. This job search can be done on-line.

## **MEETINGS WITH JOB SERVICE PROVIDERS**

If required, all meetings with job service providers are able to take place over the phone or via an online channel such as Skype at the discretion of the Job Seeker.

## **WORK FOR THE DOLE**

ALL Work for the Dole and other activities delivered in group settings that cannot be delivered online **have been suspended** until further notice;

## **SOLE TRADERS**

Sole traders that become eligible for the Jobseeker Payment **will automatically meet their mutual obligation requirements** during this period by continuing to develop and sustain their business.

## **IMPORTANCE OF REMAINING CONNECTED TO THE WORKFORCE DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES**

During these challenging times jobseekers are encouraged to stay job ready and connected to their employment services provider and up to date on potential job opportunities in their local area.

The significant changes we have already made to mutual obligation will assist in achieving this.