

MEDIA STATEMENT

Thursday 25 February 2021

JobSeeker changes pave the way for unscrupulous employers

We are concerned about a number of the mutual obligations that have been reinstated and strengthened as part of the changes to the JobSeeker payments announced on 23 February 2021.

In particular, we have concerns about the creation of a new hotline for employers to report people who are offered a job and turn it down.

We have seen many instances of unscrupulous 'employers' offering jobs that are unlawful, underpaid, or unsuitable in other ways where the only possible action for the job seeker is to turn down the job.

There are employers who get new employees to sign contracts with the promise of day shifts, only to roster them for overnight shifts after the first week.

There are employers that turn down requests for flexible work arrangements without a valid business reason, so that parents or carers are unable to work and meet their caring responsibilities.

There are employers who advertise and interview for a particular job, only to turn around and offer a lower-paid or unrelated job once the contract is provided.

The bottom line is, there are many ways in which unscrupulous employers can offer jobs that are not legitimate, appropriate, or as advertised.

Through our Telephone Information and Referral Service, we receive over 12,000 calls a year from workers about situations where employers are not acting lawfully.

It is hard to believe that all reports to this proposed hotline by employers will be lawful and in the public interest. It is far more likely that employers will use this hotline to coerce vulnerable workers to accept unfair conditions of employment.

Available for interview

- Zana Bytheway, Executive Director, JobWatch

Contact

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Note - for commentary on the changes to the rate of JobSeeker and other mutual obligations, please refer to the national peak body [Community Legal Centres Australia](#) who have joined the ACOSS #RaiseTheRateForGood campaign.

About JobWatch

JobWatch is an independent, not-for-profit Employment Rights Community Legal Centre. We operate out of Victoria and assist Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian workers with their rights at work. Some of our functions include:

- A free and confidential telephone information and referral service for Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian workers.
- Community legal education, including training, seminars and the production of a variety of publications on employment law and workers' rights.
- Representation and assistance for disadvantaged workers through a legal casework practice.
- Campaign and law reform activity with a view to promoting workplace justice and equity for all workers.

For more information: www.jobwatch.org.au