

RED TAPE SSRV NEWSLETTER

JobVoice wins 'National Rural Law and Justice Innovation Award'

SSRV was thrilled that its JobVoice project won the 'National Rural Law and Justice Innovation Award' presented at the National Rural Law and Justice Conference in Orange (NSW) in July for 'transformative use of technology in the law'. The judges were Justice Stephen Gaegler, High Court Judge; Andrew Jackomos, Victorian Aboriginal Child Safety Commissioner; Dr. Cassandra Goldie, CEO – ACOSS; Richard Coverdale, Director, Centre for Rural Regional Law and Justice.



JobVoice is an innovative online platform that empowers unemployed jobseekers across Australia by enabling them to share their experiences with employment service providers and Centrelink. JobVoice is a website, like TripAdvisor or Urbanspoon, which provides transparent information about employment service providers to inform choice of provider to best suit individual needs.

Please support JobVoice:

- “Like” JobVoice's Facebook page
- Visit jobvoice.org.au to read jobseekers stories and for more information about the project.

Pictured below: Annie Nash, CEO of the National Rural Law and Justice Alliance presenting the award to Deborah Itzkowic, SSRV Director



National Welfare Rights Network email list

If you would like a monthly email in your in-box regarding broader social security issues the National Welfare Rights Network (the NWRN) now has a monthly e-newsletter you can sign up to. The NWRN is the national organisation for services like SSRV (two SSRV staff are on the Board of the NWRN). It undertakes the direct policy work on behalf of the fourteen 'welfare rights' centres around Australia. The network email includes information about this work and related information. You can sign up to the newsletter on the front page (about half way down the right hand side) of the welfare rights network webpage <http://www.welfare-rights.org.au/>



A0015471X

SSRV AGM - Advance notice - Tuesday the 17th of November 2015

The SSRV Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday the 17th of November 2015 at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre (usual venue- 241 Wellington St Collingwood - just south of the Tote) **however the meeting will be on the 2nd floor - upstairs from the usual site.** 6pm for refreshments, 6.30pm for formalities. More information in the next Red Tape and members will receive invites either electronically or in the mail in October.

Operation El Paso



We know it sounds like an inquiry into Mexican food (yum!) but unfortunately it's much more serious than that. We're aware that Centrelink are undertaking a very significant investigation into recipients who are also running home-based childcare. Now a lot of this is rough guesswork and somewhat complicated but based on our understanding of the situation the issue is a bit like this:

- People who have children are in receipt of Family Tax Benefit [FTB] and Child Care Benefit [CCB] and Child Care Rebate (CCR) and in some cases Parenting Payment [PP] and 'Jobs, Education, Training Child Care Fee Assistance' [JETFCCA].
- Note that this issue does not affect CCR - that is an income-exempt payment and therefore is not part of this issue.
- These people then start running their own home-based child care - that is providing care for other people's children (usually in conjunction with their own) in their own homes. They become eligible for CCB payments from the Department of Human Services (DHS - the 'super department' which Centrelink is part of) which are technically subsidies for the childcare. However, the payments from DHS are subsidies, not full payment. The subsidy (currently \$4.17 per child per hour) is presumed to be only a part of the cost - for example currently in the Yarra city council run Child care centres, the charge is \$95 per day. Presuming an eight hour day equates to a CCB subsidy of \$33.36 - leaving a payment to the centre of \$61.64 per day - effectively one-third of the hourly cost.
- In reality we believe a significant number of people operating these home-based childcare services are not charging the other rate - they are simply operating their care programs on the CCB rate.
- However this is (presumably) not what the Department of Human Services (DHS) presumes. They no doubt presume that the person is charging at some rate. It is indeed likely (though we're not 100% sure) that the agreement they sign to be paid CCB as an 'approved care' provider requires this. Therefore they could easily presume (as with the example above) that the person is indeed receiving three times the income they are paying.
- DHS then informs the Australian Tax Office of what they have either paid or presume paid (this is where we're not entirely sure) but either way, a calculation is done as to the income the person is deemed to have received, and a tax liability is issued. In many cases this liability is in excess of \$100,000 - the 'magic' figure for eligibility for (a) FTB and (b) CCB and far in excess of the cut-off for PP. Because FTB and CCB are 'annual' entitlements usually paid in

advance, a person in this situation can end up with debts for an entire year's entitlement if not more.

- Of course, this often results in the person having a tax debt as well and whilst we can't comment on those, they certainly add to the pressure people are under.
- Worse than this in many cases, if a person becomes ineligible for PP and were in receipt of JETFCCA assistance (the payments are not made to the client, but like CCB to the care provider) they can end up with a debt for this as well. This is even more problematic as JETFCCA is not a legislative payment (unlike the others) it is a program - a DHS program to assist those with very young children to study or work by being credited with some childcare assistance. Thus you cannot appeal a JETFCCA debt, as it has no 'legal status'. A person needs to appeal the PP debt - for every day a person becomes eligible for PP, the JETFCCA debt reduces.
- SSRV has undertaken some significant work in this area, but it is complicated by many of the people with these debts being of recent arrival status and are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to understanding the machinations of the way the data-matching processes of the Australian bureaucracy operate.
- Later in the year, SSRV will undertake a project with the Western Suburbs Legal Centre to work with such communities to assist them and attempt to stem the flow of these debts.

Make a Donation



Using the secure engine
of GiveNow.com.au

Donate to SSRV here:

RED TAPE SSRV
NEWSLETTER

RED TAPE SSRV
NEWSLETTER

SSRV Social
Security
Rights
Victoria Inc.

A0015471X

PH: 9481 0355 or 1800 094 164
info@ssrv.org.au
www.ssrv.org.au
www.jobvoice.org.au

Copyright © 2015

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)