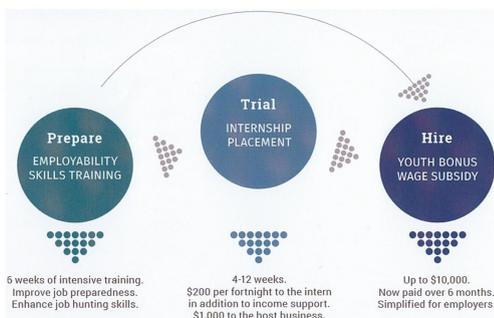


RED TAPE **SSRV NEWSLETTER**

In this issue

Federal Budget 2016 PaTH
Paid Parental Leave

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(Official Government graphic: Source - see reference at end)

NewStart Allowance 'Interns'

We need to note that this is a 2016/7 Budget announcement. As with the 2013/4 and 2015/6 Budget announcements this is subject to the (a) the result of the 2nd of July Federal Election and/or (b) the passage of the legislation. Furthermore the date of implementation of this program (presuming above) is not until 1st of July 2017.

In the Budget the Federal Treasurer announced a program called 'Youth Jobs PaTH'. The modified spelling of path stands for 'Prepare, Trial Hire'. Whilst the announcement was new the program itself is fairly derivative of other similar programs. The most significant of these was 'Working Nation' in the early 1990s. Both programs (though to differing degrees) seek to gain work experience for people who are long-term unemployed. The current program is particularly focussed on young people, those in receipt of *NewStart Allowance (NSA)* and *Youth Allowance (Other) (YA (O))*. It should be noted that YA (O) is a fairly rare payment as YA (S) (Student) is the main version of this payment. Usually YA (O) is only paid for short periods (often a maximum of three months) and therefore its inclusion in this

program (with much longer time frames) appears to be unusual.

In our understanding the program has three (3) main phases:

Phase	Time frame	Program
1	2 x 3 weeks (6 weeks) to be undertaken within five months of registering for NSA or YA (O)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 weeks: teambuilding, 'presentation' (presumably dress code etc) and IT skills • Second 3 weeks: advanced job hunting and preparation skills
2	4-12 weeks	Internship – recipients receive up to 12 weeks work in a business between 15-25 hours per week. Participants will receive \$200 per fortnight (\$100 per week) on top of their NSA/YA entitlement. The business who will take them on will receive an upfront payment of \$1,000. [They do not receive any further payments from the government].
3.	Six months +	A subsidy of \$6,500 (or more) is available to businesses that take on certain young people who have been unemployed for six months or more.

Under this plan participation in phases 2 or 3 are voluntary for both businesses and the jobseeker.

We note the promotional information refers to an entitlement under Phase 3 for someone who is hired 'under labour hire' arrangements. It is not clear whether this covers 'labour hire firms' who contract out workers to other companies or is simply using the term generically. Furthermore at the time of the Budget there was concern from both unions, workplace lawyers and academics as to whether such a program is legal under current workplace laws.

SSRV's point of view

Positive

- There is little that can be criticised about any form of employment program. Whilst we have a preference for 'Working Nation' type programs, this was a very expensive program and with current budget issues is unlikely to be repeated despite its significant success (including for folk in the SSRV community). Australia needs more programs of this nature
- There's no question that work experience (particularly in a related industry) is very important in obtaining work. A regular complaint of potential employers is the 'lack of job readiness' in applicants. If a person has work experience this can address this to some point.
- It is difficult today to find a job that doesn't have a significant IT component. At SSRV all the jobs are IT dependent. Everything from parcel delivery to checkout operators are IT based. The more of this training the better.
- In many ways unofficially this is the end of 'Work for the Dole' (W4TD). In its original form W4TD had some good points. However in the past few years, the benefits of W4TD have been difficult to find. A report by the Australian National University's Social Research Centre, released in February 2016 found that W4TD scheme has improved the

probability that an unemployed person will find a job by just 2 percentage points. For such an expensive program, the community should expect a better outcome rate.

- The extra money is always useful. \$100 a week is much better than the \$20pf for W4TD.

Our concerns:

Our big concern is not with parts of the program itself, but how it will be administered. The documents clearly identify that the main part of the program will be administered by JobActive (JA) providers. JA providers do not have a great track record with providing tailored assistance to vulnerable job seekers. A Four Corners Report in March 2015 found that many jobseekers in the most vulnerable 'stream' were often 'parked' and not provided ongoing assistance as their circumstances made them difficult to employ. For this system to have any chance of success the JA must be radically reorganised. This includes mandatory relevant qualifications for staff and a client-focussed outcome culture. In the absence of this, the program is likely to end up like W4TD, a nice idea, badly executed. The clients who this program could assist shouldn't be short-changed by the current problems in JA.

Source: the main source for the information in this article was:

<http://budget.gov.au/2016-17/content/glossies/jobs-growth/downloads/Budget-2016-17-Jobs-Growth.pdf> (note that this is a long document, only pages 22-26 are relevant to this issue).

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Paid Parental Leave Appeals

Despite not being funded to do it, SSRV is getting more and more calls about the *Paid Parental Leave Scheme (PPLS)*. The relevant legislation is particularly problematic in relation to appeal times. For example for *social security* decisions there's a thirteen (13) week (three month) limitation period for *beneficial* decisions (though this is only where a person will end up with more money) there's no limitation date on debts for example. *Family Assistance (Family Tax Benefit, Childcare benefit etc)* have a fifty-two (52) week (one year) limitation date. Claims under the PPLS have only a twenty-eight (28) day limitation date. In any situation this time seems fairly limited. It can take a week for a person to process information and then a week or two to do something about it, in normal circumstances. This is prior to putting together information as part of an appeal. All that could be okay in some circumstances, but it's hardly a priority when a person has either themselves (or their partner) just given birth! A 28 day timeframe is at best presumptuous and at worst specifically designed to reduce appeals. The *legislative basis* for eligibility for PPLS or its alternative being *Dad and Partner Pay (DAPP)* (no we didn't make it up, that's what it's called in the legislation) is very strict and a fair percentage of applicants miss out. Therefore a clear, simple and appropriate limitation basis for such appeals is strategically important. We believe that a program needs an appropriate time for reviews and twenty-eight days is far too short.

Furthermore a client rang us recently to say that they had rung the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)* to appeal an *Authorised Review Officer's* review of their eligibility for PPLS.

They had been told it would cost \$861 for them to hear her appeal. On investigation it became apparent that this is half correct and half incorrect. The person had used a search engine to seek the AAT (as the ARO had indicated this is where she had to appeal) but had turned up the phone number for *general* appeals (AAT General Division) (the 'second tier') being the second level of appeal (AAT GD). The first tier of the AAT being the *Social Services and Child Support Division (SSCSD)*. A person can appeal to the SSCSD for free on PPLS. However unlike *social security* and *family assistance* issues, they cannot appeal to the AAT GD without paying an \$861 lodging fee. This is the same fee that people pay to challenge taxation decisions. This fee can be reduced to \$100 in certain circumstances (usually on the grounds of having a health care card) but even that is problematic. It is clear from the 28 day limitation and the exorbitant fee at the second tier that the policy is to significantly restrict and discourage people from appealing. The right to a free, fair and transparent review process is essential for any interaction between government and individuals.

Particular thanks to Meredith for her assistance with this edition.

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