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MEDIA RELEASE

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Welfare to Work Package Making Progress

Anglicare Australia responded positively to the news that the Federal Government has modified its welfare-to-work package by softening compliance requirements for the most disadvantaged job seekers.

With other church-agency providers of Job Network services, Anglicare Australia has over several months expressed concerns about the harshness of original suspension and breaching proposals.

Sue Leppert, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, said that this step toward a fairer and more workable system is an improvement on the original proposal announced at the time of the Federal Budget. "Today's announcement indicates that the Government has listened to some of these concerns. The next challenge is to ensure that job seekers are adequately supported as they seek employment," Ms Leppert said.

Many people who have been out of work for a long time face considerable barriers to employment. They need secure income support, education and retraining, and practical assistance such as child care and access to transport. The revised measures lessen the chances of job seekers who are mentally ill or homeless having their income suspended for reasons beyond their control.

However, the proposal as it now stands will still result in reductions in income support payments to people who already live at or below the poverty line, making it even harder to comply with 'mutual obligation' requirements.

"Anglicare Australia will continue to work with Government to ensure our concerns for a fair, workable welfare-to-work system are addressed in the implementation of the proposed model," Ms Leppert said.