

# **MEDIA RELEASE: 'Job Active' Providers – Wasting Taxpayer's Money And Unemployed People's Time**

**INFO: Anti-Poverty Network SA spokesperson Pas Forgione, on 0411 587 663, or at [antipovertynetwork.sa@gmail.com](mailto:antipovertynetwork.sa@gmail.com); Australian Unemployed Workers Union spokesperson Owen Bennett, on 03 8394 5266**

Unemployed people are sick and tired of 'Job Active' providers, the \$1.3 billion-per-year government-funded organisations tasked with helping job-seekers find work, but which are creating needless hardship and stress.

Current and former unemployed people who have dealt with these services will gather on Friday August 26<sup>th</sup> at 1pm at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church, Beulah Park. They will be sharing their experiences and ideas for securing better treatment.

Anti-Poverty Network SA spokesperson Pas Forgione said, “it is very hard being unemployed in Australia. Not only do you have to survive on the grossly inadequate Newstart Allowance, which is only \$260 per week, but you face an unfair labour market, one where there is 11 job-seekers for every job (when you include the underemployed).”

“To make matters worse, the unemployed have to navigate the complex and frustrating world of Job Active, a world of useless appointments and short courses. Very little of this busyness helps the unemployed, most of whom want to find work, but face the grim reality of nowhere near enough jobs to go around”, Mr. Forgione said.

Anti-Poverty Network SA regularly hears stories of job-seekers being wrongly treated by their providers, such as:

- Being given insufficient notice of appointments, and providers being very inflexible about rescheduling them;
- Job-seekers who miss appointments because of poor health or work commitments being 'breached' (having their payment cut), even when they have notified their agency beforehand;
- Job-seekers not having their physical and mental health circumstances taken into account.

Aidan Jarvis, a young job-seeker, said, “after two complaints to the Department of Employment about my old agency, I quickly changed to a new provider. I went in for an introductory meeting, and they forgot about me for a whole month. I contacted them each week afterwards, and they finally realised they had not set anything up for me on the third time I contacted. And in my first meeting they immediately placed me in Work For The Dole and that was it. I asked them to use their expertise in the world of job seeking to reword and improve my resume, and they still have not done that. If they cannot do that, how can they help me look for work?”

“We know there are already serious questions about the effectiveness and integrity of the Job Active system. Multiple government inquiries, and a February 2015 'Four Corners' report, detailed evidence of widespread rorting in the Job Active program, including forgery, manipulation of records, and inflated claims for fees (that agencies receive from the government for providing certain services).”

“Unemployed people do not need more punishment and stress, when they are already struggling on very low income support payments. They need a government that stops blaming

them, recognises there are not enough jobs to go around, and starts genuinely support those out of work, instead of making them jump through hoops and over hurdles”, Mr. Forgione said.