



Australian Government
**Department of Education,
Skills and Employment**

**Deputy Secretary
Nathan Smyth**

Dear Chief Executive Officer

COVID-19—"circuit breaker" South Australia

As announced by Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, the Australian Government has lifted mutual obligation requirements for job seekers and participants in South Australia. These arrangements will be in place from today, 18 November 2020 until 29 November 2020 (inclusive) and are in response to the South Australian Government's announcement that there will be a six day period of restrictions across South Australia from midnight tonight.

These arrangements mean all mutual obligation requirements will be voluntary— no one's payments will be suspended and no compliance action will be taken. Job seekers and participants will not be penalised for not meeting their mutual obligation requirements, such as signing their Job Plan, attending, or reporting their attendance at appointments or activities.

These arrangements apply to all job seekers and all participants with mutual obligations across employment services programs - jobactive, Online Employment Services, Disability Employment Services and ParentsNext.

Until further notice, the department also directs your organisation that all services and appointments must only be delivered over the phone, online, by video conference or by other arrangements that do not require face-to-face contact in South Australia. The department also directs your organisation to immediately suspend or terminate all activities or move them to non-face-to-face delivery in South Australia.

Job seekers and participants can continue to voluntarily participate in provider appointments over the phone or video conference. This will allow job seekers and participants to stay connected with their employment services providers to ensure they are supported to access the full range of assistance, including mental health services, if required.

The department will send an SMS to job seekers and participants advising them of this update.

This arrangement will be closely monitored and reviewed prior to 29 November 2020, giving consideration to advice from the South Australian Government and the evolving nature of the situation.

I urge you and your staff to continue to follow the guidance of health officials and stay safe during this time.

If you have any questions, please contact your Account Manager.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Smyth', with a small dot at the end.

Nathan Smyth
18 November 2020