



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

**Deputy Secretary
Nathan Smyth**

Dear Chief Executive Officer

COVID-19 — VICTORIA

As announced by Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash and Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, today the Australian Government has temporarily lifted mutual obligation requirements for job seekers and participants in Victoria. These arrangements will be in place from today, 12 February 2021 until Monday 22 February 2021.

These arrangements mean all mutual obligation requirements will be voluntary— no compliance action will be taken and no one's payments will be suspended. 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.

Special Circumstances Exemptions continue to be available through Services Australia for job seekers who require them.

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

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

Providers are required to ensure the services they deliver are safe and in line with all local health advice for that area. Job seekers and participants can continue to voluntarily participate in non face-to-face provider appointments delivered in line with local health advice. I encourage your organisation to revisit your existing COVID-19 safe plan to ensure participants' and your staff members' safety.

This arrangement will be closely monitored and reviewed prior to 22 February 2021, giving consideration to advice from the Victorian Government and the evolving nature of the situation.

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

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

Yours sincerely

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

Nathan Smyth
12 February 2021