



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

**Deputy Secretary
Nathan Smyth**

Dear Chief Executive Officer

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seroja – Greater Geraldton Local Government Area, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government has announced that mutual obligation requirements have been temporarily suspended for job seekers and participants in Western Australia affected by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Seroja. These arrangements apply in the Local Government Area of Greater Geraldton, Western Australia from Monday, 12 April 2021 until Tuesday, 20 April 2021, inclusive. Job seekers and participants across employment services programs - jobactive, Online Employment Services, Disability Employment Services and ParentsNext will have their mutual obligation requirements lifted for this period.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency will advise their Community Development Program providers separately on its contingency arrangements.

Providers operating in the affected Local Government Area should, where possible, also continue to offer services other than through face-to-face delivery until Tuesday, 20 April 2021. Extending the support your organisations can provide through phone or online contact will be critical, with job seekers and participants encouraged to remain connected to access a full range of support services - including mental health services over this period.

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

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

Special Circumstances Exemptions are available through Services Australia for job seekers and participants who require them.

We are keeping a watching brief on this situation, including any impacts for the Esperance area of Western Australia and will advise of any changes as they occur.

I urge you and your staff to continue to follow the guidance of relevant agencies and stay safe during this challenging time. As usual, if you have any questions, please contact your Account Manager.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Smyth', followed by a period.

Nathan Smyth
13 April 2021