

**Employment, Education, Training
and Youth Affairs**

**WORKING FOR
THE DOLE**

Work For The Dole – The Liberal and National Parties' Work for the Dole policy is providing hope, experience and opportunity to thousands of young Australians. Work for the Dole builds the work ethic and restores young people's links with their communities, giving our youth the message that it is important to give something back in return for support.

Work for the Dole Policy

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Executive Summary

- Work for the Dole is based on the principle of mutual obligation - that it is fair and reasonable to require those in receipt of support to put something back into our community.
- Under the Howard/Fischer Government, from 1 July 1998, all young unemployed people (18-24, unemployed 6 months or more) are required to undertake an additional activity such as Work for the Dole in return for the receipt of their unemployment allowance.

- The Coalition will expand Work for the Dole to all Year 12 school-leavers on full rate of Youth Allowance benefits once they have been unemployed for three months to give them work experience, confidence and build their work ethic.
- The Coalition will expand Work for the Dole by around 25% - up to 25,000 over four years - to increase opportunities for these school-leavers.
- The Coalition will increase spending on Work for the Dole by \$25 million per year - \$100 million over four years.
- This will bring the Coalition's total commitment to Work for the Dole to up to 125,000 places over four years.

Labor's Record

The Labor Party has consistently opposed Work for the Dole. Labor tried to destroy Work for the Dole in the Parliament, before backing down in the face of public pressure. Their constant condemnation of Work for the Dole leaves little doubt that, if elected, they would abolish this programme that is providing hope, experience and opportunity to many thousands of young Australians.

Labor's dole policy gives young people the very damaging message that life on the dole is an acceptable alternative. The Labor Party is opposed to the principle of mutual obligation - that it is fair and reasonable to ask those receiving support from the community to put something back - because their union bosses oppose it.

"ACTU president, Ms Jennie George, said the union movement would be "dead against" any move by the Government to introduce a work-for-the-dole scheme."

Financial Review, 10 February 1997

(i) Kim Beazley, Leader of the Opposition,

condemns Work for the Dole

"...an initiative which is in fact a disgrace."

Hansard, 11 February 1997

"We are going to amend it to blazes."

PM, 11 February 1997

"And it (Work for the Dole) is Mickey Mouse."

2LM Lismore, 28 February 1997.

***(ii) Martin Ferguson, Labor's Employment spokesman,
condemns Work for the Dole***

"... forcing the unemployed to work for the dole will take them nowhere."

Radio National, 10 February 1997

"I won't maintain his approach to Work for the Dole which is about Mutual Obligation ... This Government's Work for the Dole programs are wrong."

Triple J, 3 September 1998

***(iii) Simon Crean, Labor's Industry spokesman,
condemns Work for the Dole***

"...it's demeaning to young people to say that they've got to work for the dole."

Face to Face, Seven Network, 16 March 1997

***(iv) Cheryl Kernot, Labor's new recruit, condemns Work for
the Dole as Leader of the Democrats***

" 'However, we do not support the ill-conceived and open ended, compulsory scheme currently being advocated by the Minister...'

Media Release, 16 June 1997

"... we still cannot support the compulsion....We will be supporting the Labor Party's amendments to take away the compulsory element of that..."

Senate Hansard - 20/6/97

Highlights of the Government's Achievements

- Work for the Dole is providing hope, experience and opportunity to young Australians aged 18 to 24 years and unemployed for six months or more. It aims to increase participants' work ethic, build their self-esteem and restore their links with the community, which can prove so valuable when seeking work.
- The Coalition's Work for the Dole initiative is an attempt to break the cycle of despondency and despair that can be caused by unemployment - it is fostering good work

habits and attitudes and generic work skills in young people.

- As work habits are developed, self-esteem and sense of attachment to the labour force and to education and training will increase. A Morgan and Banks survey found that **nearly 60% of employers would be more likely to employ someone who had been on a Work for the Dole project** than someone unemployed without this experience.
Morgan and Banks Job Index, May-July 1997

A Piloted Work for the Dole

- The Coalition Government, despite opposition from the Labor Party and the minor parties, passed and implemented the Work for the Dole legislation.
- This enshrined in legislation the principle of mutual obligation - that the community is prepared to support those in need, and that it is fair and reasonable to require those receiving support to give something back to the community.
- Over 630 applications from community groups were received to run projects during the pilot round, indicating the strong community support for Work for the Dole.
- In 1997-98, 179 Work for the Dole projects were piloted throughout Australia providing 10,400 places for young, unemployed Australians.
- Many participants have gone on to employment as a result of their participation on Work for the Dole.

B Expanded Work for the Dole

- Due to the enormous success of the Work for the Dole pilots, and the overwhelming community response, the Coalition Government **expanded Work for the Dole** to provide a further **100,000 places** over four years (25,000 places each year).
- The Coalition Government has already provided a total of **\$260 million** over four years (\$61.8 million in 1998/99) for Work for the Dole.
- The second round of Work for the Dole projects attracted more than **700 applications** confirming strong community support.

- **301 projects** providing places for a further **16,500 participants** were recently announced by the Coalition. These projects commenced from August 1998.

C Mutual Obligation

Work for the Dole is based on the principle of mutual obligation - that it is fair and reasonable to require those in receipt of support from the community to put something back into the community.

The Coalition strongly believes in the principle of mutual obligation, and maximising the employment prospects for young Australians. The Howard/Fischer Government has implemented a comprehensive strategy to address the underlying causes of youth unemployment, including such initiatives as raising literacy standards, expanding New Apprenticeship opportunities, retaining youth wages, mutual obligation arrangements, and a plan for sustained jobs growth.

Under the Howard/Fischer Government, from 1 July 1998, all young unemployed people (18-24, unemployed 6 months or more) are required to undertake an additional activity in return for the receipt of their unemployment allowance.

The Coalition has enhanced mutual obligation arrangements to improve young people's job prospects and encourage their involvement with their communities.

The Coalition's mutual obligation programme imposes additional obligations for the receipt of unemployment allowances to encourage young people to look for work more actively and to participate in activities which will improve their skills and work habits.

From 1 July 1998, young people will be able to satisfy their obligation by participating in an activity from the following options:

Activity	Usual participation requirement
Work for the Dole	6 month project involving 12 to 15 hours of activity a week.
Literacy/numeracy	up to two semesters involving 6 to 15 hours of activity a week.
Green Corps	Green Corps participants will not have to satisfy mutual obligation requirements while receiving a training allowance.

Voluntary work	minimum of 6 hours a week for at least 14 out of 26 weeks.
Education/Training	minimum of 6 hours contact a week in an accredited course. Completion of a course of at least 14 weeks or a full semester for longer courses is required or supplementation with another activity for shorter courses.
Jobs, Placement, Employment and Training Programme (JPET)	Minimum participation of 26 weeks or participants will need to undertake another mutual obligation activity
Job search training	3 week course followed by 14 weeks of more intensive job search
Intensive support	up to 2 years of individualised job preparation and support.
Part-time work	minimum of 6 hours a week for at least 14 out of 26 weeks.
Relocation	moving to another area with better employment prospects followed by 14 weeks of more intensive job search.

In addition, 1,000 young people under mutual obligation will be assisted under the Mentoring pilot programme in 1998-99 with a further 6,500 young people to be provided with career counselling.

Under the Coalition's initiative, career counselling and mentoring will supplement mutual obligation activities and will not satisfy a young person's obligation by themselves.

D Work for the Dole Projects

Work for the Dole projects have included:

- a project on Magnetic Island repairing and developing walking tracks and access roads to

tourist attractions on the island. Following the torrential downpours caused by the cyclone which hit North Queensland in January, the participants also worked closely with Department of Environment officers to clean up the damage caused by landslides and flooding;

- assisting various community agencies in Caboolture, Queensland, in retail, clerical, food preparation, aged care, reception duties and customer service;
- in Millicent, South Australia, participants have been working with the local community radio station to assist with research, producing programmes, administration and managing events;
- assisting with the displays and as tour guides at the Investigator Science and Technology Centre in Adelaide;
- publishing an oral history of migrants in the historic St George community in the Hurstville area, interviewing selected residents, and documenting and publishing their stories. Participants have also collected and reproduced historic photographs, learnt a variety of interview and communication techniques and gained experience in using recording devices, dictaphones, photographic replication equipment, computers and desktop publishing software;
- building new fences; removing and spraying harmful weeds; planting trees, shrubs and grasses; and general building maintenance participants at the Phillip Island Penguin Parade Nature Park in Victoria;
- implementing a land care management plan for the Reedy Creek in Queanbeyan and Pialligo, Australian Capital Territory;
- planting of wetland plants in the practice and catchment lakes of the Sydney International Regatta Centre, which will improve rowing conditions, and rejuvenation of the Nepean River adjacent to the regatta centre on the Penrith 2000 Olympics Regatta Project in Sydney;
- with the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in Burwood, Victoria, assisting with animal welfare and well-being, and administration;

- working with the Derwent Valley Railway Preservation Society in Hobart on building construction and railway restoration;
- building a skate board facility and landscaping in Geraldton, Western Australia;
- renovation and beautification of the foreshore at Goode Beach in Albany, Western Australia; and
- establishing a greenhouse of bush tucker and medicinal plant use at Northern Territory University.

Expanding Work for the Dole

A More Work for the Dole

The Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that within three years of leaving school, those people who left school early are twice as likely to be unemployed as those who completed Year 12 (ABS Survey "Transition from Education to Work" May 1996) . The Coalition has put in place a comprehensive strategy to encourage young Australians to invest in their own futures by staying at school. These include:

- literacy and numeracy programmes;
- vocational education in schools and school to industry programmes;
- New Apprenticeships in schools;
- the Jobs Pathway Programme, where the school assists students to find jobs;
- the Youth Allowance is only available to 16 -17 year olds if they are in full-time education or training; and
- full service schools to give young people at risk of dropping out access to flexible and innovative schools.

School-leavers who have not gone on to employment, education or training, and register for Youth Allowance are required to fill out a Jobseeker Diary for three months,

recording their efforts to find employment. The Coalition Government has introduced the Jobseeker Diary to encourage active and organised job search in the early stages of unemployment.

Year 12 school-leavers on income support for extended periods are at risk of falling into the despondency and despair that unemployment can bring, and becoming further disadvantaged in the job market the longer they are detached from work experience or education.

Accordingly, **all Year 12 school-leavers on full rate of Youth Allowance will be required to join a Work for the Dole project once they have been unemployed for three months.** The Coalition will not require them to wait until they have been unemployed for six months, as they will benefit most if they are able to build their confidence and work ethic and gain work experience sooner after finishing school.

The Coalition will expand Work for the Dole by around 25% - up to 25,000 places over four years - to increase opportunities for these Year 12 school-leavers, at a cost of \$100 million over four years.

This will bring the Coalition's total commitment to Work for the Dole to up to **125,000 places over four years.**