



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

*Minister for Human Services*

*Senator for Queensland*

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Monday 8 December 2008

### **Better services for people with barriers to work**

Minister for Human Services, Senator Joe Ludwig, today outlined major improvements to the Government's \$170 million program to provide job assessment services for people with disability or other barriers to work.

The reforms to the Job Capacity Assessment process follow a review of the system ordered by the Minister last February.

"The Rudd Government is committed to building a more inclusive and a more productive Australia," Senator Ludwig said.

The Minister has also announced the extension of the Job Capacity Assessment service provider contracts until June 2010. They will not be re-tendered.

Under the changes the Government will:

1. Increase payments for Job Capacity Assessments by 10 per cent from 1 July 2009. This will ensure assessors are appropriately qualified allied health professionals.
2. Make more than 2,250 additional assessments and specialist assessments available for social security review and appeal processes. This will give people access to specialist assessments when they need them most.
3. Fund the secure electronic transfer of customer medical information. This will maximise privacy protections for Centrelink and Job Capacity Assessment customers.
4. Cut through the red tape of multiple assessments, which had become a hallmark of the old system.

Together with the Government's reforms to employment services, the changes will allow assessors to provide more comprehensive reports that reflect the individual's circumstances and possible alternative payments and services.

"The Rudd Government is taking concrete action to help unemployed Australians get back to work," Senator Ludwig said.

"That's why we're investing in changes to the Job Capacity Assessment program to better assess a person's capacity to work."

This work builds on changes announced last August.