

# Ombudsman investigation into the Targeted Compliance Framework

Public statement – 4 February 2025

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**The Commonwealth Ombudsman, Iain Anderson, announced today that he has commenced an investigation into the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Services Australia's cancellation of income support payments under the Targeted Compliance Framework**

Income support payments to job seekers are important because they provide essential financial support that enables people to meet their basic needs while seeking employment.

Job seekers receiving these payments have mutual obligations to ensure they are actively looking for work and are participating in activities that will help them into employment. When a job seeker fails to meet their requirements, they may have their income support payments suspended or cancelled.

The Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) administered by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations was introduced in 2018 and is designed to increase job seeker compliance with mutual obligations.

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) has raised with my Office concerns that income support payments may have been cancelled unlawfully or inappropriately.

The Department has also reported to me about reviews it is carrying out or commissioning on how the TFC has been operating.

Noting these matters and the potential impact of the TFC on highly vulnerable people, my Office will be examining the TCF to consider if cancellation decisions are being made and implemented in a manner that is lawful, fair and reasonable.

My Office will be seeking information from relevant agencies. Given a parliamentary inquiry<sup>1</sup> has previously examined and delivered recommendations to overhaul the TCF, my Office will not seek to duplicate the inquiry. We also do not intend to duplicate the Department's own reviews, although we will monitor these.

My Office conducts its investigations in private and I generally do not make a public statement in the absence of a formal report. However, in the current circumstances, I believe it is in the public interest to share my plan to investigate this matter.

I will report further once our investigation is completed.

For more information visit [ombudsman.gov.au](http://ombudsman.gov.au) or call 1300 362 072.

**Iain Anderson**  
**Commonwealth Ombudsman**

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<sup>1</sup> [Rebuilding Employment Services – Parliament of Australia](#)