

**Road to Where?: the Politics and Practice of Implementing Welfare-to-Work,  
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**‘Go and Get a Job: possible issues from the ‘work-first’ approach to employment  
policy under Welfare to Work’**

Simon Smith  
Policy and Research Officer  
Catholic Social Services Australia  
PO Box 326  
Curtin ACT 2605  
Phone: 02 6285 1366  
email: [simon@catholicwelfare.com.au](mailto:simon@catholicwelfare.com.au)

Abstract

This paper will consider issues arising from the ‘work first’ approach to employment policy underpinning the welfare-to-work legislation.

Welfare-to-work emphasises even more strongly the Government’s commitment to ‘work first’ as its preferred employment policy.

Under the legislation, single parents and people with a disability receiving Government benefits will, for the first time, become subject to the same participation requirements that apply to the unemployed.

Other changes that emphasise a ‘work first’ approach include changes to the compliance system and new measures for the very long term-unemployed, including ‘full-time’ Work for the Dole.

This paper will consider some significant issues arising from this greater emphasis on a “work first” approach, including:

- whether a ‘work first’ approach will necessarily lift people out of poverty, especially in the current industrial relations climate;
- whether ‘work first’ will work for single parents and people with disabilities; and
- the effectiveness of new services for the very long term unemployed.