



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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SHADOW MINISTER IN NEWCASTLE TO DISCUSS EMPLOYMENT & DISABILITY ISSUES

The Shadow Minister for Employment and Workforce Participation, Senator Penny Wong, is today visiting Newcastle to meet with disability and social service groups.

Federal Member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson, welcomed the visit, saying that Labor was committed to consulting with community groups who would be impacted by the Government's proposed radical welfare shake-up.

"We are still the youth unemployment capital of NSW, with 30.7% of our young people unable to find a job," Ms Grierson said. "And the 7,000 people in Newcastle receiving the Disability Support Pension are very worried about the Government's plans to make it more difficult to access this pension."

Ms Grierson and Ms Wong will be participating in roundtable discussions with Disability Network Hunter and the Hunter Council of Social Service today.

Senator Wong said the Government's proposed welfare changes were simply crude cost-cutting measures, and did not address the real issues of re-skilling and rehabilitation for those on the DSP.

"The Government clearly cannot tell the difference between cost-cutting and real reform," Senator Wong said. "Labor believes that welfare reform involves a balance of incentive, responsibility and support. We believe that the responsibilities placed on welfare recipients should be reasonable, not punitive."

"I look forward to meeting many of the groups who will be affected by the Government's changes, and to taking their concerns and input back to Canberra to help Labor prepare its response," Senator Wong concluded.

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