



Pearson inspiration for policy: Abbott

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CANBERRA, Aug 17 AAP - Opposition Leader Tony Abbott says coalition measures to entice unemployed Australians off welfare have been inspired by indigenous leader Noel Pearson .

Mr Abbott on Tuesday announced how a coalition government would encourage the long-term unemployed to find and retain a job. Job commitment bonus payments will be available to those aged under 30, who take a job and stay off welfare for at least a year. A bonus of \$2500 would be paid at the end of the first year and a further \$4000 at the end of the second year of employment. Employers also will receive a \$2500 subsidy for taking on eligible job seekers. A relocation payment of up to \$6000 will be available for people who move to an area of low unemployment or regional area to take up a job.

If they leave the job within six months of taking the payment, they won't be eligible for welfare benefits for another six months. "It is a very important part from moving from a welfare state to an opportune society," Mr Abbott told reporters in Canberra.

The inspiration for the policy was not so much from former coalition colleagues such as (former prime minister) John Howard and (former treasurer) Peter Costello. "But ... Noel Pearson ... our gutsiest, and our most imaginative and innovative thinker on these sorts of issues," Mr Abbott said.

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