

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 22 March 2017, the following matter was referred to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee (committee) for inquiry and report by 14 September 2017:

The appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program (CDP), with specific reference to:

- a. the adequacy of the policy process that led to the design of the CDP;
- b. the nature and underlying causes of joblessness in remote communities;
- c. the ability of the CDP to provide long-term solutions to joblessness, and to achieve social, economic and cultural outcomes that meet the needs and aspirations of remote Indigenous people;
- d. the impact of the CDP on the rights of participants and their communities, including the appropriateness of the payments and penalties systems;
- e. the funding of the CDP, including the use of unspent funds in the program;
- f. the extent of consultation and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the design and implementation of the CDP, and the role for local decision making within the program;
- g. alternative approaches to addressing joblessness and community development in remote Indigenous communities; and
- h. any other related matters.¹

1.2 The Senate granted an extension of time for reporting until 14 December 2017.²

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 The inquiry was advertised on the committee website. The committee invited submissions from individuals and organisations by 9 June 2017. The committee received 47 submissions. Submissions received by the committee are listed at Appendix 1.

1.4 The committee held public hearings in Kalgoorlie on 23 August 2017; Alice Springs on 28 August 2017; Canberra on 8 September 2017; Palm Island on

1 *Journals of the Senate* No. 33—22 March 2017, p. 1131.

2 *Journals of the Senate* No. 60—11 September 2017, p. 1932. See also: *Journals of the Senate*, No. 68—13 November 2017, p. 2190; *Journals of the Senate*, No. 76—4 December 2017, p. 2428.

4 October 2017; and Townsville on 4 October 2017. A list of the witnesses who gave evidence at the public hearings is available at Appendix 2.

1.5 The committee also conducted site visits in Alice Springs on 28 August 2017, Papunya on 29 August 2017, and Palm Island on 4 October 2017. Summaries of the site visits can be found in Appendix 3.

1.6 Submissions, additional information and the Hansard transcript of evidence may be accessed through the committee website at: www.aph.gov.au/senate_fpa.

1.7 The committee thanks those who made submissions to the inquiry and appeared as witnesses at hearings. The committee thanks Tangentyere Council, Tangentyere Employment and Tangentyere Constructions for hosting site visits to its facilities in Alice Springs. The committee also thanks the community of Papunya and the Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation for hosting the committee's visit to the Papunya community. The committee thanks the community of Palm Island and Campbell Page for hosting a site visit on Palm Island. Finally, the committee extends its sincere gratitude to participants and residents in these communities who warmly invited the committee into their workplaces and communities, and shared their stories.

Related inquiry

1.8 During the 44th Parliament, the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee undertook an inquiry into the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Community Development Program) Bill 2015. The committee reported on 2 March 2016. The bill lapsed at the dissolution of the Parliament on 9 May 2016.³

Structure of the report

1.9 Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter which outlines the context and administrative details of the inquiry. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides the context and background for the Australian Government's CDP.
- Chapter 3 focuses on the nature and underlying causes of joblessness in remote communities.
- Chapter 4 looks at the impacts of the CDP on individuals and their communities.
- Chapter 5 examines the impacts of the CDP on providers contracted to provide CDP.
- Chapter 6 explores alternative approaches for a future remote jobseeker employment program.

3 Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, *Inquiry into the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Community Development Program) Bill 2015*, March 2016, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Social_Security (accessed 10 July 2017).

- Chapter 7 draws together the committee's conclusions and recommendations.

