

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 389

Topic: Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Payne asked:

How does the Government encourage those who are eligible for wages to choose income support, and to transition those already on wages out of this?

Answer:

In 2008, the Government announced a series of reforms to the CDEP program to help more Indigenous Australians get the skills they need to get a keep a job. The reforms, introduced on 1 July 2009, require CDEP, Job Services Australia (JSA) and Indigenous Employment Program providers to work in partnership to build the skills of participants to find jobs outside of CDEP.

The CDEP program plays an important role in preparing people for employment through training, mentoring and community development however it should not be a substitute for real employment with proper wages.

From 1 July 2013, CDEP participants living 59 Remote Regions across Australia will transition into the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP). The RJCP builds on the strengths of existing employment and participation and community programs, including CDEP, to provide a more flexible and responsive service to better meet the needs of people living in remote Australia.

The RJCP's 'jobs first' focus will see a single service provider with a permanent presence in each Remote Region delivering personalised assistance to job seekers to ensure they are getting better support to get the skills needed to get and keep a job. It will also ensure people who are not working are participating to their capacity in activities that contribute to developing strong and sustainable communities.

In order to provide certainty and stability for long-term CDEP participants as they transition into the new arrangements, the Government has extended CDEP Wages for an additional five years - from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2017 – for eligible CDEP Scheme Participants living in RJCP Remote Regions and in non-remote CDEP locations.

CDEP Scheme participants may choose at any time to move off CDEP Wages and apply for income support payments instead.