The Australian Government is introducing significant reforms to remote employment and community development services to ensure more Indigenous and other jobseekers in remote communities get the skills they need to find and keep a job and participate in meaningful community activities.

From 1 July 2013, the Remote Jobs and Communities Program will provide a simpler, more integrated and flexible approach to participation and employment services for people living in remote areas of Australia.

This program, which will deliver services in 59 Remote Regions across Australia, will replace the four main programs currently delivering employment and participation services and community development in remote Australia – Job Services Australia (JSA), Disability Employment Services (DES), the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP).

Why is the Government doing this?

Indigenous Australians have told us that they want to work in real jobs in their communities with proper wages and conditions.

The Government believes that people who can work should work, and those who are not working should be participating in activities that contribute to the strength and sustainability of their community.

The Remote Jobs and Communities Program will link job seekers to employment and assist in addressing the obstacles and barriers that may prevent them from holding down a job. The new program will assist people who cannot be placed in work to build the skills necessary for getting a job and ensure that people who are not working or involved in skills development or training are participating in community activities.

A job contributes strongly to personal, social and economic development and is essential to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

Key elements

The $1.5 billion Remote Jobs and Communities Program is a new approach to employment and community development in remote Australia. It will help people transition into jobs with proper wages and conditions and build sustainable, strong communities.

Key elements of the program include:

Single provider

Jobseekers in 59 Remote Regions will be assisted by a single provider with a permanent presence on the ground, reducing the reliance on fly-in-fly-out services. This will ensure that jobseekers can more easily access assistance.

Community-led development

The Government wants to see Indigenous and other organisations with a strong connection to the community delivering this program in partnership with local leaders.

Providers will work in partnership with the community to develop a Community Action Plan, which sets out employment, participation, economic and other development goals.

This more consultative approach will provide communities with a strong voice on the design and implementation of community projects and activities.
More development opportunities

A $240 million Community Development Fund will support community development projects. These projects will be developed in consultation with the community and must provide employment and participation opportunities for local people and be consistent with the direction of the Community Action Plan.

Flexible Participation Account

A new flexible $508 million Participation Account will provide funding to help people become job ready and participate in activities to benefit their community.

A ‘jobs first’ approach

The new program will be demand driven with a ‘jobs first’ approach that helps people build the foundation skills they need to take up available jobs and that support community development.

Job seekers will be provided with personalised support and case management, including access to job opportunities and skills development and training that meet their needs.

Job seekers will not be streamed as currently occurs under Job Services Australia. Remote Jobs and Communities Program providers and job seekers will agree on the most appropriate employment and community participation activities.

Some people may choose to move away from their communities to take up work, for example, in the mining and pastoral sectors. The new program will provide intensive case management to ensure they are adequately supported.

No Show No Pay

Job seekers in receipt of activity tested income support payments, such as Newstart and Youth Allowance, have strict participation requirements. Like Australians in non-remote locations, the ‘No Show No Pay’ rule will apply to people in remote areas. People who have participation requirements will risk having their payments suspended if they fail to participate in service without a reasonable excuse.

Wider participation

All members of the community will be encouraged to participate in community activities.

There will be more support for all community members, especially young people, women and people with disability, to find work.

For those who have limited capacity to work, there will still be opportunities to make a meaningful contribution through community development activities.

Support for young people

The $89 million Remote Youth Development and Leadership Corps will fund up to 12,000 places over five years for young people aged 24 years and under to undertake a nine to twelve month program to become job ready.

There will be a specific focus on providing work experience in jobs that are available in or near their community.

How will the new program affect you as a CDEP provider?

New program starts 1 July 2013

From 1 July 2103, the Remote Jobs and Communities Program will replace CDEP in remote Australia. As is the case for JSA and DES providers, CDEP providers are required to maintain services up until the new program commences.

Expression of Interest process

An extensive round of community information and consultations sessions was undertaken between late May and July 2012 to inform job seekers, communities, employers and other stakeholders about the Remote Jobs and Communities Program. Feedback from these sessions has informed policy and operational arrangements, which is reflected in Expression of Interest documentation. The Expression of Interest process will be used to select the organisations that will deliver the new Remote Jobs and Communities Program from 1 July 2013.
Information sessions to explain Expression of Interest process

A further series of information sessions will be held in all Remote Regions coinciding with the release of the Expression of Interest to explain the application process to organisations interested in conducting the new program. The purchasing process should be seen as an opportunity for funding recipients and communities to partner in innovative arrangements including sub-contracting and joining together in consortia. Expert advice will be available at most sessions for applicants who may want to form partnerships to conduct Remote Jobs and Communities Program activities within a Remote Region.

Support for successful organisations

Following the completion of the purchasing process, and in the lead up to the introduction of the new remote service on 1 July 2013, assistance will be available to successful applicants to ensure that quality activities are conducted from day one of the new program.

To provide greater certainty and stability for providers and communities, most funding agreements are expected to be for five years.

What about the CDEP participants I assist?

CDEP continues until new program starts

CDEP providers will continue to assist participants until the program ceases on 30 June 2013. A transition process will begin in early 2013 so that all CDEP participants in remote areas can commence in the new Remote Jobs and Communities Program on 1 July 2013. To the maximum extent possible, the transition process aims for job seekers to continue in existing work experience and community development activities.

A small number of CDEPs operate in locations outside of the areas that will be serviced under the Remote Jobs and Communities Program. These CDEPs will also cease on 30 June 2013 and participants will be assisted by JSA or DES providers, as relevant to their needs and circumstances, and be engaged in a range of activities designed to improve work readiness, build skills and address barriers to employment.

Stability for long term CDEP participants

To provide stability for current CDEP wages participants, they will continue to be eligible to receive wages payments until June 2017, provided they continue to meet eligibility requirements.

Where can I find out more?

For more information, please see the Fact Sheets and Frequently Asked Questions at www.deewr.gov.au/rjcp or phone 13 62 68