



CDP COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT

For CLC Submission to the Senate Inquiry
on the appropriateness and effectiveness of
the objectives, design, implementation and
evaluation of the Community Development
Program (CDP)

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Project Brief

The consultant was briefed to interview CDP participants and their families, to explore the impacts and perceptions of the CDP on individuals and their families. Individuals were asked to provide this information to contribute to a de-identified report by the CLC, and/or to allow the information to be provided as a personal submission to the upcoming senate inquiry.

Method

The method was semi-structured interview based on the following questions supplied by the CLC. The participants were community members who volunteered to be interviewed by the consultant. The project was a rapid assessment over two days of interviews and was not intended to be a community-wide survey; results are a “snap shot” of community views. People were interviewed in Lajamanu, Daguragu and Kalkarindji. Respondents spoke about their CDP experience in Lajamanu, Daguragu, Kalkarindji and Elliot. Everyone elected to make their submissions private. A sample of the research consent forms are attached at Appendix One.

Table 1 CDP questions used in semi- structured interviews

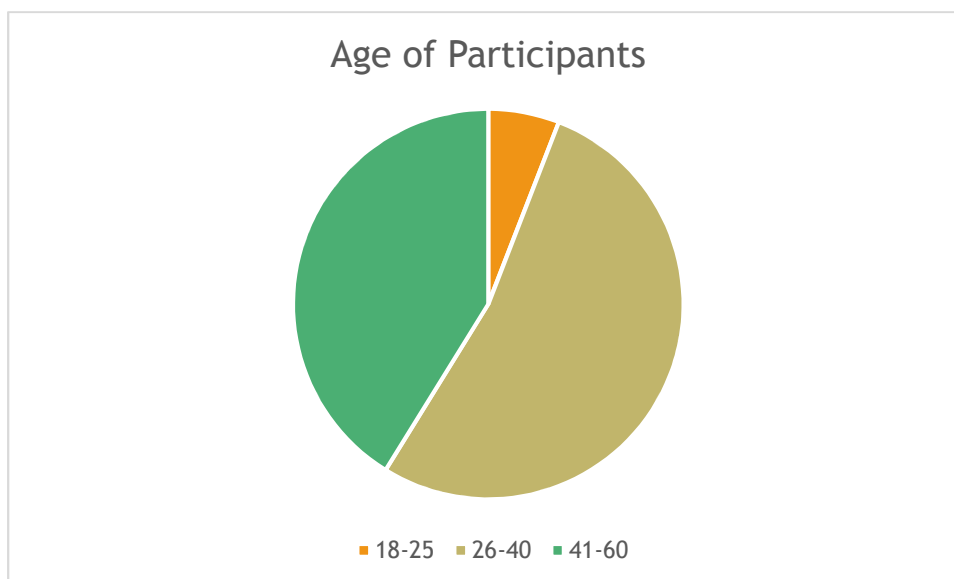
QUESTION	
1	Rough age of participant
2	How long have you been on CDP (work for the dole)?
3	Are you looking for work? What kind of work are you interested in?
4	What kinds of activities have you been doing as part of CDP?
5	Have you learnt new skills from those activities that might help you find a job?
6	Do you think that being in CDP will help you find paid work?
7	How do you feel about doing CDP each day?
8	Do the CDP activities make you feel like you are doing a job that is useful for the community?
9	I've heard that lots of people have been penalised since CDP started for not attending; has that happened to you?
10	If you were penalised, can you tell me about that? Why didn't you come along? What sorts of things can make it hard for you to come?
11	If yes, what kind of penalties (and how often) have you had and how does that affect you/your family?
12	Do you understand how the penalty system works?
13	Do you think people around here have enough control over the way CDP works?
14	Has CDP been good for the community?

15	[If you remember former CDEP] tell me what is better, or worse, or the same now under this new CDP program?
16	Do you know of any family members that have dropped out of CDP altogether (i.e. they are not getting any of their welfare payments)?
17	If yes, what age group are they in and why do you think they have dropped out?
18	If yes, where do they get their money from? Does it cause extra stress on other family members?
19	What do you think CDP should be doing to really help young people get ready for work? Is CDP doing that now?
20	The Government is running an Inquiry, looking at whether CDP is the best way to help unemployed people in remote areas. What would you like to say to them?
21	What would you like to see happen for this community?
22	Any other comments you want to make about CDP?

Participation

19 People participated in the research. 30% of those interviewed were currently on CDP. 60% were employed, had been on CDP in the past, or had family on CDP, 10% were not on benefits of any kind.

Figure 1 Graph of Age of Participants



Results Summary.

The results have been themed into three categories

Theme	Notes
Common	All, or nearly all participants reported this result.
Mostly common	Two thirds of participants report this result.
Divergent	Participants reported both positive and negative views on this topic.

Common responses:

- All respondents stated that the penalty system is extreme.
- All respondents reported themselves or someone in their family being penalised.
- All respondents stated that being penalised places a financial strain on family.
- Most people, whether on CDP or not, understood the penalty system.
- CDP was widely perceived as welfare and not a real job. It doesn't feel like work.
- All respondents reported that it takes a long time to get employment on CDP, if at all.
- All Lajamanu respondents call the program RJCP.
- Most respondents who were on CDP reported doing similar activities - welding, building, grass cutting and so on...
- All respondents stated that CDP is not good for the community when compared with CDEP.
- CDEP was universally viewed as a better program.
- CDEP was thought of as a real job

Mostly common responses

- Most respondents reported feelings of purposelessness when on CDP.
- Many respondents questioned the value of the work to the community.
- Most respondents stated that CDP did not lead to a job.
- Many respondents stated that CDP was demoralising and disempowering.
- Many people quit the program entirely.
- Many people thought it has too many rules.
- It was not possible to assess people's time on CDP in Lajamanu as people refer to it as RJCP.
- Respondents had a good sense as to why people did not turn up and therefore received penalties.
- All respondents knew of people who had dropped off CDP entirely. One family was interviewed in which people had dropped off CDP.

Divergent responses

- Training needs are adequate versus training needs are inadequate (e.g. Daguragu respondents were more likely to think it was inadequate).
- A minority of people reported someone in their family getting a job from CDP.
- Some respondents felt the work activities were pointless, other felt the work activities were good for the community. (E.g. people were proud of the recycled furniture being made for community members.)
- Some respondents felt CDP was only for young people. That is, they didn't feel like the activities were suitable for older, more qualified people.

DISCUSSION AND QUOTES OF KEY THEMES

Penalties and CDP

All people interviewed had been suspended or had someone in their families suspended and people universally thought this unfair. The financial flow-on effect was also clear with all respondents saying that they had to be supported or give support to people who had been penalised on CDP. All participants stated that the effect of penalisation was being cut off for 8 weeks. Some understood the process leading up to being suspended. An interesting situation is also the high rate of young grandparents, who are looking after multiple generations of children.

If you miss one appointment you get suspended, before you come back in you have to wait 8 weeks.

Then it is putting me into stress, I say to other one child you have to wait till next pay before I can help you.

Yes it is happening in all of our families, you have to feed people in those other weeks. You have to support family. If you are a father or mother, and you get cut out, then your kids have no feed. Some of the people on the dole are [young] grandmothers and grandfathers, they have a big family, you cut one out and you cut the whole family out.

They should sign up for youth allowance and sign up for that program now, and they have to attend every day Monday to Friday. If they don't their money gets suspended and we have to help them now, guardian, [parent, grandmother], it happens all the time for me now. I have to help them for Centrelink and take them down to RJCP.

Some respondents spoke about extreme measures such as children stealing food or goods due to hunger.

One little kid and two teenagers they were finding it hard to get money, that was driving them to that desperate situation. To get mangarri [food]. Lot of our mob do that, and they steal from each other.

Those who could answer why people didn't turn up reported the same things:

- Kids sleep-in
- Participants in CDP, they don't like being bossed around
- People have funerals, or sorry
- People are travelling and can't sign on in other communities
- People are sick
- People have other appointments or meetings
- A minority of people reported not knowing when their appointment was
- People have childcare obligations
- People are sick of being on CDP

Feelings on CDP.

Approximately 90% of the feelings expressed about CDP were negative. A small minority stated that CDP was good for the community or themselves. The primary feelings reported in relation to CDP were around pointlessness and disempowerment.

Pointlessness stemmed from the perception that the program did not lead to jobs, or provided inadequate training or inappropriate work.

Disempowerment was related to a widespread feeling that the program was clearly working for welfare and was not a real job which was not perceived to be supporting wellbeing. This lack of positivity was also related to perceived low rates of pay and the lack on any top up. CDP also creates feelings of disempowerment as it is often compared with CDEP which respondents felt had been empowering.

“I wouldn’t want to stay on it, if I was getting that much money. Working hard for a little bit of money.”

“We are going backwards what our elders fought for - equal wages. Our elders were working on stations for nothing.”

“It encourages a “yes boss” attitude, like in the cattle station days. It is not good for our people, they need to learn to help themselves.”

“More or less the government is in control, they make us more dependent on them. We had yapa organisations everywhere, but they took them away from us, it’s one step forward and two steps back.”

“Does it feel like a real job because you have no choice?”

“People look at it as work for the dole.”

“I just look at it as disempowerment, they are not trying to empower the community or the people in this community.”

Some people reported feeling that it is only for young people:

“I was thinking about my age (44), and I need to look after grandchildren, attending didn’t feel appropriate.”

“They are not looking for older people with experience.”

“I see it for young people so they can learn new skills for the young ones.”

People dropping off all Centrelink benefits

. Some respondents reported people in their family or the community were not receiving any benefits. One respondent was not on benefits. In their situation, 9 people lived in a house of which 4 were adults (and 5 children): 1 adult was employed, 1 adult received child support, and the other 2 adults had dropped off Centrelink. As a percentage of the people interviewed 10% were reliably recorded as not being on Centrelink benefits. These figures are obviously imprecise as the rapid assessment was, by design, not a large survey. However it is clear that most participants know of people who are not on benefits. Anecdotally it would appear to be common. The following comments are from those

people who are not on benefits as well as those people who have observed others dropping off benefits.

Royalties is an issue too, why be on CDP when you can wait for royalty?

My nephew pulled out because he saw himself not going anywhere, so he now works at the club.

The following interaction is indicative

Interviewer: *Do some people drop off Centrelink.*

Respondent: *Yes - especially young ones, but sometimes older people.*

Interviewer: *Why?*

Respondent: *Maybe they are just going around in the same old process, they ask themselves from here, where are we going to go from this? How we going to get a paid job; some do ask themselves this question.*

Although no direct quote was recorded, the one participant who dropped off Centrelink stated that it was because of not liking the feeling of being forced to do something, like pick up rubbish.

Transition to a job

Most respondents interviewed did not report transitioning to work. A small minority reported someone in their family transitioning to a job. There was a general disgruntlement because of a perception that CDP did not lead to work. Many respondents reported cases of family being told they would get work and not receiving it.

“They promised him, he would work through RJCP at granite mine, or looking after outstation, or rangers, but it didn’t happen.”

“I was under impression that when you sign up for RJCP you get trained to the level that can look for a full proper wages job with the council, or with whoever comes out here. But they are not doing that.”

The main complaints about not transitioning to work were expressed with words like: *“Nothing ever happens”, or a feeling of going “around and around and around.”*

“When RJCP first started people were just walking around picking up rubbish and the community was asking, is that all they are doing?”

“No pathway they just sit in that little area and go round and round for 3-4 years, once they are trained they should move onto a real job.”

“They learnt a lot of stuff but don’t get proper jobs. There should be a timeline for those that have the skills.”

In a minority of cases some respondents did report cases of their family members transitioning to work.

“Sometimes it works, people who go through RJCP and they get a job.”

However it should be noted that in Lajamanu people still assumed that RJCP was running and therefore it is difficult to know whether respondents were reporting employment under RJCP or CDP.

A minority of people also reported a perception that there is:

“No work available in the community.”

Those people also acknowledged that police clearances, ochre cards, and driver’s licences were common blocks to people achieving work.

One person (who had not been on CDP) described CDP as a “stepping stone” [to work]:

“They have to keep improving themselves before they get a proper job. They have to be committed to attend so they can get a shire job.”

Training

The responses to training question were variable. In Daguragu respondents perceived that there was little training being offered or completed by participants. In Lajamanu people reported that training was occurring, but some questioned whether it was certified training. One participant reported receiving mechanical training. One participant talked about turning up to gardening training but leaving because none of their peers turned up.

“CDP is here, but you don’t get any trainings, you don’t get any certificates. Like the house work here, people are not even getting their white card. They should be, they should be moving into another stage.”

“You just get people signing in, they are happy if people turn up, that is all. It’s like turning up school, it is just about attendance.”

“Training, training, training, goes on for ever till you are an old man, we have all these people here with these certificates.”

“Activity centre, some people come out, instead of going to Bachelor College, we do our training here. But some people do go attend Bachelor course.”

In Lajamanu several people reported that they felt that the provider was disorganised.

Some people felt that certification was a blockage to employment:

“If someone goes to ask for a job they like then you have to do a literacy test, to prove how good you are at English. You have to prove your English and writing. You have to bring back a certificate and IDs and then you get job. You can’t just get the job. We should do that for Kardiya, you have to bring a certificate if you want to live here.”

“I am a qualified nurse but they want someone with health worker training. Why? They are nearly the same.”

One person also perceived that non-Aboriginal people in Lajamanu get work straight away.

“Kardiya (non-Aboriginal people) come to community, they get job straight away, yapa have to get all the cards through RJCP, and I signed up for that a couple of

years ago and I was still waiting for ochre card, and I passed that test, and I got it, but I was still waiting for ochre card.”

Is CDP good for community?

Evaluations about “good” are inherently subjective. Results were both positive and negative.

Some people felt that the work that a CDP participant did was not contributing much, or was just “keeping people busy” for the sake of being busy.

“CDP - what is it developing?”

Some people thought the work was useful, particularly in relation to building and recycling furniture.

Most people stated that the program was not good because the pay was poor, which is most likely a comparison to CDEP.

Some people stated that picking up kids and doing breakfast and Friday BBQ were good.

What should CDP be doing to help young people get ready for work?

The following suggestions were put forward:

“Come and pick them up.”

“They used to call out names, if grandson is asleep they would go wake them up and bring them here. We do that for RJCP as well, it is a big task.”

“Increase top-up money.”

Activities on CDP

Most people reported doing, or seeing participants doing the following jobs:

- Welding, grinding, cutting grass
- Building recycled furniture for community and family
- Cleaning, cleaning up offices
- Fixing fences like on shire.

Length of Time on CDP

It was difficult to assess the amount of time on CDP as people did not necessarily distinguish between the program acronyms. Particularly in Lajamanu where people still refer to the program as RJCP.

What did emerge in most cases is a sense of going “around and around,” “not getting anywhere,” and so on.

“We want to be working towards something, it doesn’t feel like that.”

Comparison of CDP to CDEP

In 100% of cases those who had experience with CDEP viewed it as a better program. CDEP was clearly well loved, and had a strong sense of ownership by Aboriginal people.

Many people felt that Centrelink payments, CDP, RJCP or CDEP payments were an inalienable entitlement.

Key reasons for the success of CDEP were:

- Local sense of ownership
- Run by an Aboriginal organisation
- Was considered a real job by participants and community
- High participation and therefore good peer support
- Pathways to leadership within the program
- Training pathways for local community work
- Better wages
- Ability to work for top-up.

Respondent's comments:

"CDEP did more encouragement for people to do training, in most cases that did it as part of education."

"People were willing to work for CDEP because it was a good environment, you had your own peer group, family and friends, and we had 120 participants when the council ran it. We had a fencing group, painting group. People get up early and want to work. They feel good about themselves, making money for their kids, or their family."

"CDEP was less desperate, this one makes people desperate, they get penalised and all that."

"In CDEP some yapa became leaders in their workplace, not in this one. In CDEP they had yapa leaders looking after the workers."

"You used to get good money, proper job, cash money up front, and proper wages."

"I want Scott MacDonnell to talk to the legislative assembly to go back to the old CDEP way. Instead of RJCP."

"It is better because more top-up options, and because we had a foreman to go looking around for people not working, maybe the foreman would talk to the supervisor or coordinator to talk to the people to put in the effort, want to get extra pay you need to work."

"No way, CDP is the worst. CDEP was community development and employment program, they had more participants, and once they did a lot of training, and when we had local government they had local plumbers, electrical etc. They did their training and they moved onto council and give other people a chance to be under the CDEP a long time. CDEP was proper wages, and it wasn't the dole. But at least specifically they trained people up to work in the community, at school, health centre. At the health centre we had trainee health workers through CDEP, then they went to bachelor, then they could come to work full time."

"We don't know where the money comes from, or who actually runs it, under CDEP we knew where the money came from."

“We were a long time with CDEP, it was under the council, everybody, man and women used to work separate, cleaning the community, street cleaning, round the oval, round the rec hall etc. For maybe one week, then after that they would do an activity at home, like cleaning up yard as part of CDEP.”

“CDEP - was a real job, people could work half a day or a full day if they wanted top-up. Good workers we would move them onto jobs for council, or around the community.”

What is needed to improve CDP?

Other than the obvious comments to return to CDEP the following comments were recorded:

“If they are providing services to remote communities, shouldn’t we become members to those organisations to voice our opinions? I would like to see people be on the board in every community, to provide a better service to our communities”.

“They should have more focused training in jobs that they want to do.”

“They should make it good place to hang out, they should make it a place where people want to go every day.”

“You need PPE, uniform and you need more programs. Under CDEP they had fencing, they had people working under plumbing, under mechanics, delivering service to the community, outstation crews, CDEP would do the outstations, houses, water tanks and fencing.”

Some people reported that they thought there was a limited number of participants.

Appendix One : Consent Form



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Consent Form Community Development Program Research Project

What is the research?

The research is being done by Miles Holmes for the Central Land Council. The research aims to talk to people who are currently participating in the Community Development Program (work for the dole), and their families.

The research will be used to provide evidence to a senate inquiry which is looking at the impacts of CDP. There are two different ways to tell your story to the inquiry:

1. Talk to Miles and he will include your views about CDP in his report for the CLC to submit to the senate inquiry. You can tell us if you want your name included or just your initials.
2. Miles can take your story and once it is typed up it can become your own submission to the senate inquiry. If you want to do it this way you will need to provide your full contact details, and the CLC will need to bring back the final version so you can sign it.

Consent

I have had the CDP research project explained to me. I agree to share my views and experiences with CDP. I agree that the CLC can write up the details of my interview and use it in a report to the senate inquiry, and make it publicly available, including on the website, or in conference presentations or meetings with politicians.

I understand that I can tell my story but don't want to be identified, or provide my contact details. I also understand that I can chose to turn this into a personal submission to the senate inquiry if I wish.

I agree to be interviewed and this interview can be recorded.	Yes	No
I want to be included in the CLC report	Yes	No
I want my full name to be used.	Yes	No
I only want my initials to be used	Yes	No
I want to make a personal submission to the senate inquiry	Yes	No

I would like this name to be used:

Name.....Date.....

Signature.....

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