



CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

Submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

Inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program (CDP)

June 2017



CLC interview for Land Rights News, 2016

Terms of Reference

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.

Introduction and context

The Central Land Council (CLC) welcomes this opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program (CDP).

The CLC is a Commonwealth statutory authority established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* ('ALRA'). Amongst other functions, it has statutory responsibilities for Aboriginal land acquisition and land management in the southern half of the Northern Territory. The CLC is also a Native Title Representative Body established under the *Native Title Act 1993* ('NTA'). Pursuant to the ALRA more than 50% of the NT and more than 85% of the NT coastline is now held by Aboriginal Land Trusts on behalf of traditional owners. The CLC region covers approximately 780,000 km² of land, and 417,318 km² is Aboriginal land under the ALRA. Given existing pastoral land was not able to be claimed this Aboriginal land tends to be very arid and remote. In addition, rights have been asserted and won under the *Native Title Act 1993*, and traditional owners unable to claim land under the ALRA have succeeded in obtaining rights to small areas known as Community Living Areas, under NT legislation.



Through its elected representative Council of 90 community delegates the CLC continues to represent the aspirations and interests of approximately 17,500 traditional landowners and other Aboriginal people resident in its region, on a wide range of land-based and socio-political issues.

The CLC aims to improve the lives and futures of its Aboriginal constituents through sustainable development and change. The CLC's development approach is based on an integrated and strengths-based strategy of building economic, social and cultural capital. Consistent with its statutory functions the CLC undertakes significant initiatives relating to: natural and cultural resource management; the development of remote enterprise and employment pathways; innovative community development work, ensuring land owners use income generated from land use agreements for broad community benefit; and negotiating land administration and land use agreements for third parties and traditional owners.

The CLC has a strong interest in the employment and social security policy settings and arrangements that apply to remote communities. The past decade has seen significant reform in this area, and the CLC has worked with other Aboriginal organisations, particularly through the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT), to develop and advocate a positive reform agenda aimed at creating more sustainable enterprise, participation and employment opportunities for remote communities. This work has included:

- Pre-2007 working with CDEP providers implementing community ranger programs and natural resource management programs;
- 2007 - CLC response to NTNER package of measures, including reform and dismantling of CDEP;
- 2007 - CLC submission to the senate inquiry into the NTNER Bills. The CLC opposed the scrapping of CDEP, and expressed concern about the clear link to income management as a driver for abolishing CDEP;
- 2007 - Proposal to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding the need to invest in essential environmental services (via CDEP) in the Northern Territory through the Central and Northern Land Councils' Caring for Country (CFC) programs;
- 2008 - CLC response in relation to the Australian Government 2008 CDEP Discussion Paper;
- 2010 - After the formation of the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) in 2010 the CLC worked with the other four member organisations, and NT CDEP providers, to not just critique government policy but develop an alternative model;
- 2010- The convening of 2 APO NT forums in Darwin to consult with NT CDEP providers;
- 2010 and 2011 – APO NT engagement of specialist assistance to develop a new model, and ongoing consultation with CDEP providers in its development and finalisation;
- 2010 - APO NT development of 'Funding the Jobs Gap: A proposal for a new Community Employment and Enterprise Development Scheme (CEEDS) for regional and remote Indigenous Australia';
- 2011 – APO NT response to the Australian Government Review of Remote Participation and Employment Services 'Creating and Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods: A Proposal for a New Remote Participation, Employment & Enterprise Development Scheme';
- Substantial lobbying efforts to promote the proposed new model, including with then Minister Macklin, Minister Scullion, members of the Opposition and various senior departmental officials.
- 2015 - CLC Submission to the Submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee in relation to the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Community Development Program) Bill 2015
- 2016 - APO NT convened a forum of CDP providers and Aboriginal organisations to consider the impacts of CDP in December 2016
- 2016 – APO NT plus 25 other concerned organisations wrote to Minister Scullion outlining concerns with CDP and seeking a collaborative redesign process.

- 2017 – APO NT convened a forum in Alice Springs and Canberra to workshop the proposed alternative model
- 2017 – Minister Scullion addressed the CLC Council meeting and CDP was discussed
- 2017 – CLC wrote to Minister Scullion regarding the CDP review process announced in the budget process
- 2017 – APO NT consulted widely on a proposed alternative model for remote employment arrangements.

The CLC makes the following comments relevant to each of the inquiry terms of reference. In this submission, the CLC has tried to give voice to the concerns of our constituents and share their lived experience with CDP. The research report provided at **Attachment A** gives a snapshot of community views at Lajamanu, Daguragu and Kalkarindji.

Comments relevant to inquiry terms of reference

The adequacy of the policy process that led to the design of the CDP

The CLC is completely unaware of the policy process that led to the design of CDP. The CLC was not consulted during the design of this program. This is despite the fact that the CLC, and the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT), were involved in consultations in the design phase of RJCP, including the development of an alternative model in 2011. The CLC is not aware of any consultations in central Australia regarding the design of CDP. The program was simply announced and rolled-out.

Not only was there no consultation in the design phase but the CLC is not aware of any transparent process that involves Aboriginal organisations or remote community residents in monitoring the outcomes and impacts of the CDP. Data is generally not publicly available and organisations resort to senate estimates to obtain information about a program which is having a profound impact on Aboriginal people.

In the May 2017, the Government announced its intention to review the current CDP arrangements without any reference to the proposed review process. Any process aimed at reviewing and reforming the current CDP must:

- Be independent, open and transparent;
- Have clear terms of reference;
- Involve Aboriginal people and their representative organisations in steering the process, as well as participating in it;
- Draw on the expertise and experience of CDP Providers, particularly those that are Aboriginal organisations;
- Allow access to all relevant data; and,
- Allow sufficient time to design and manage change.

The CLC is concerned that this latest review proposal not be another exercise in disempowerment of Aboriginal people.

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



CLC interview for Land Rights News, 2016

Since 2007-8 there has been constant review and reform of the employment and social security arrangements applying to remote areas in the NT. These changes have included: the review, reform and eventual scrapping of CDEP, implementation of the 'real jobs' policy, application of blanket compulsory quarantining of social security payments and various reforms of these arrangements, roll-out of RJCP in 2013, and replacement with the Community Development Program in 2015.

In remote regions there is widespread frustration, confusion and exhaustion in relation to government policy generally, and specifically in relation to employment and social security arrangements.

Over this period of intense change, the CLC, like so many other Aboriginal organisations and insightful commentators, has consistently called for:

- Maximum involvement of local Aboriginal organisations in creating new flexible employment and enterprise opportunities;
- Greater support and case management capacity for families and individuals that are struggling, rather than the imposition of further punitive approaches;
- Adoption of a community development approach that seeks to build capacity, engagement and local Aboriginal control over the decisions that most impact on their lives; and,
- A halt to the rapid and unsustainable pace of externally imposed change, which is driving disempowerment and disengagement.

The Central Land Council (CLC) has a long and proud history of fighting for rights and acting as a 'shield' for Aboriginal people in central Australia, resulting in strong and trusting relationships with, and extensive knowledge of the concerns and aspirations of, our

constituents. The primacy of Aboriginal control and decision-making are embedded in our statutory functions: assisting traditional owners to claim back land, ascertaining and upholding land and native title rights, assisting Aboriginal people to manage and use their land, and consulting regarding third party land-use proposals. These 'core' functions require the CLC to work with Aboriginal groups to ascertain their views and progress their aspirations, and the statutory obligation to achieve informed consent ensures a rigorous approach to engagement and decision-making processes. In addition, the structure of the land councils, with provision for a large representative Council of Aboriginal people from across the region, ensures Aboriginal leadership and control over the most significant policy and organisational issues affecting the CLC and its constituents.

The CLC argues that creating sustained development outcomes requires the adoption of a deliberate and evidence-based community development approach. In 2005, the CLC made a decision to drive development through the adoption of a community development approach, based on principles of empowerment, local control, and capacity development. The CLC Community Development Framework states,

The CLC understands CD as being a way to support Aboriginal people to drive positive social change that transforms their lives now and lasts into the future...the fundamental focus is on the empowerment and development of Aboriginal people and groups. Ultimately it is about transformational development and self-determination.¹

Supported by the CLC, Aboriginal groups are working together to plan, implement and monitor projects that benefit people at a regional, community and outstation level using the income received from land-use agreements on Aboriginal land (such as mining royalties, and rent from leasing). Aboriginal groups achieve this through comprehensively facilitated community development processes. With meaningful local participation at its core, these processes are achieving social, cultural and economic outcomes and building individual and collective capacity, self-reliance, good governance and stronger communities. Traditional owners are increasingly directing income received from land-use agreements (effectively private income) towards community benefit projects rather than individual distribution.

The CLC's community development program has been operating for the past ten years, and has been subject to an independent evaluation.² Over this period, Aboriginal people have directed **\$62 million** to community benefit projects through the program. There are six major projects each with numerous sub programs and projects, including the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, NT parks and Reserves and Uluru rent money projects. Many of the funded community development projects provide critical community infrastructure, support homelands and outstations, support young people who are at risk of offending, and provide education and local employment opportunities. The CLC's community development approach achieves: governance capacity building, increased community cohesion, empowerment, and

¹ Central Land Council 2016, Community Development Framework 2016-2020 at www.clc.org.au

² Roche, C and Ensor, J 2014. Independent evaluation of the Central Land Council's community development and governance programmes, Central Land Council, Alice Springs, at www.clc.org.au

implementation of effective and sustainable initiatives. It is important to recognize and acknowledge the extent to which Aboriginal people in central Australia are choosing to use their own assets to drive social, cultural and economic development. The CLC asserts that sustained development outcomes will only be realized when governments move away from the entrenched 'top down' approach which creates a disabling environment.

In contrast to the CLC's community development approach the CDP was designed with no consultation with Aboriginal people or their organisations, is driven top-down from Canberra, imposes a punitive approach, is compliance focused, and provides little opportunity for local decision-making. CDP has adopted the rhetoric of community development but decision-making remains centralized and communities are not empowered. As detailed in the CLC research report provided at **Attachment A**, remote community residents neither own nor value CDP. Participants in the research stated that,

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 (p.6).

I just look at it as disempowerment, they are not trying to empower the community or the people in this community (p.6).

CDP is plainly not a development program, and it is disingenuous and misleading to pretend that it is.

The nature and underlying causes of joblessness in remote communities

There are many inter-linked causes to joblessness in remote communities but, in the CLC's view, three factors are critical: flawed and inconsistent government policies relating to remote Australia generally and Aboriginal people specifically; lack of employment opportunity caused, in part, by long-term neglect and underinvestment; and the state of the remote education system.

Remote Australia covers 85% of Australia's landmass and is occupied by only 5% of Australia's population, in fact 85% of Australian now live within 50kms of the coastline (Walker, Porter and Marsh, 2012³). Walker, Porter and Marsh (2012, p.10) argue that the problems of remote Australia should not be construed as an 'Aboriginal issue' but are the result of 'ineffective government arrangements, disengagement and national indifference'. They conclude that not only do policies for remote Australia need to be tailored to reflect specific needs and circumstances, there needs to be a whole new approach to governing and administering remote Australia. The CLC concurs. A coherent approach to the future of

³ Walker, B, Porter, D & Marsh, I, 2012. Fixing the Hole in Australia's Heartland: How Government Needs to work in remote Australia, remote FOCUS, Desert Knowledge Australia.

remote Australia is urgently required. Amongst other things, this approach needs to recognise that many Aboriginal people will continue to live on or nearby their traditional lands.

The state of remote communities is directly linked to the profound impact of successive failed government policies. Policies applying to remote communities from both levels of government have generally failed to reflect the realities and priorities of local communities, have been short-term, inconsistent, ideologically driven and based on the priorities of the government in power, and, tragically, often failed to support community-led efforts to drive their own solutions to issues affecting the community. In a submission to an NT Government consultation process in 2013 the CLC stated that,

At all levels of government there appears to be no one Minister or department responsible for taking an overall holistic view of the impact of such changes on Aboriginal people in the Central Australia region, or NT more widely. And despite the rhetoric from several successive NT Governments, Aboriginal people have been, and continue to be, left outside the policy-making process itself. Indeed, over the last decade Aboriginal people have become consultation rich, but governance-outcome poor: being more disempowered and isolated from genuine decision-making authority about their own governance arrangements as a result of unilateral changes imposed by governments.⁴

In Central Australia there is now significantly less local governance capacity and control than there was 15 years ago. This is why the CLC community development work is so critically important. A significant re-building exercise is required, and this will only be achieved by long-term investment in appropriate community development approaches, enabled by government policy and governance arrangements.

Remote communities in central Australia are heavily reliant on investment from the three levels of government to support the local economy. There are limited economic development opportunities in this region, which is arid, has poor road and telecommunications infrastructure and is remote from markets. Where Aboriginal interests do identify a possible economic development opportunity, they are often hampered by lack of sustained support and access to investment capital. The North Australia development agenda is a clear example of failing to involve Indigenous landowners in setting the agenda, and not providing Indigenous access to capital funds. Government investment can underpin solutions to joblessness if the policy settings are correct. Creating more employment opportunities and providing appropriate support for those transitioning into work will help to address joblessness. The APO NT model provided at **Attachment B** seeks to achieve exactly that.

⁴ Central Land Council, 2013. Submission to the 'Options for Regional Governance in the Northern Territory' consultation process at <http://www.clc.org.au/publications/content/submission-to-the-options-for-regional-governance-in-the-northern-territory/>

Achieving greater employment outcomes also requires reform of the remote education system in the NT. As the Productivity Commission found,

Educational achievement is linked to economic and social wellbeing, and positive health behaviours (for example, regular physical exercise) and contributes strongly to the formation of human capital (COAG National Reform Initiative Working Group 2006; Council for the Australian Federation 2007; Karmel et al. 2014; Osbourne, Baum and Brown 2013; OECD 2013). Young people who do not successfully make the transition from education to work are at risk of long-term disadvantage. Levels of education are key contributors to labour market success (p.7.15).⁵

Over many decades the approach to remote Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory (NT) can be characterised as disjointed, underfunded, lacking clear strategic direction and highly politicized. The one constant has been ongoing policy failure. The statistics on remote Aboriginal education outcomes are well documented; worryingly, remote student results worsen by year level and subject. This is despite dedicated effort and determination by many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators, including by many in the NT Department of Education. Many remote communities do not have secondary education provision, and little access to vocational training and pathways. The recent Closing the Gap report⁶ confirms that the NT is not on track for achieving improvements in attendance, or reaching literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

To improve education access and achievement amongst Indigenous students the CLC strongly believes it is vital to identify and mobilise the factors that give those students an advantage.⁷ This requires a shift from a deficit way of thinking to a strengths-based approach. The strengths-based approach must be inclusive of Indigenous cultural frameworks and local knowledge and language (Armstrong et al 2012, Scerra 2011).⁸ Research shows that the conditions necessary for success in remote education include a strong personal identity, strong family connections and then respect for local language and knowledge the incorporation of these into the school curricula (Osborne 2015).⁹ The alternative model proposed by APO NT (Attachment B) places a far greater emphasis on providing pathways to work experience and employment for youth. Community engagement and involvement with schools and the creation of partnerships with the schools are essential to achieving improved outcomes for the next generation.

⁵ SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2016, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016*, Productivity Commission, Canberra

⁶ Australian Government, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2017. Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2017

⁷ Laurie Bamblett, 2015, Aboriginal advantage: an insider look at an Aboriginal community, Parliamentary Library National Reconciliation Week Lecture, Parliament of Australia, 3 July, viewed 30 October 2015, <<http://apo.org.au/node/55915>>.


⁸ Armstrong, Stephanie; Buckley, Sarah; Lonsdale, Michele; Milgate, Gina; Kneebone, Laura Bennetts; Cook, Louise; Skelton, Fiona (2012). Starting school: A strengths-based approach towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Melbourne: ACER
Scerra, N. (2011) 'Strengths based practice: The evidence', a discussion paper, Uniting Care Children, Young People and Families.

⁹ Osborne, S. (2015), 'Anangu perspectives on what else matters in remote education', UNESCO Observatory Multi-Disciplinary Journal in the Arts, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 1-25.

There is no simple solution to 'joblessness'. However, in the CLC's view, driving change towards greater economic development and employment opportunities requires:

- A coherent and long-term policy approach to investing in the future of remote Australia, including recognition that many Aboriginal people will continue to live on or close by their traditional country;
- Support for local communities to determine their own priorities and drive their own development;
- Greater support for families, particularly those that are struggling, to allow them to raise children that are strong in two worlds;
- Improvement in education outcomes and more support for youth and transition to work programs; and,
- Government investment in a subsidised remote employment program (with costs off-set by social security payments), such as that proposed by APO NT.

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



Gus George
Daguragu

It's hurting communities. You should work for the community or a company and get full wages. That's why we walked off 50 years ago - for proper wages and for working for a proper company and get full wages from that company.

CLC interview for Land Rights News, 2016



Douglas Crowson
Kalkaringi

The work for the dole program doesn't help in any way. It's a step backward bringing us back to the past, bringing us back to slavery.

CLC interview for Land Rights News, 2016

Based on feedback from our constituents, the CLC is firmly of the view that the CDP does not and cannot provide long-term solutions to joblessness, nor will it achieve social, economic and cultural outcomes that meet the needs of remote Indigenous people. CDP locks people into a system of continual bureaucratic interference in their lives, of penalties and of poverty. CDP does not stimulate labour demand. It does not provide pathways for young people into employment and does nothing to support the creation of local enterprises to create new employment opportunities.

In order to ensure that the voices of remote Aboriginal people, including CDP participants and their families, were able to be heard in this inquiry process the CLC commissioned a small piece of research to capture a snapshot of views from people living in Lajamanu, Kalkaringi and Daguragu. Nineteen people volunteered to participate in the research. A consultant anthropologist with long-standing relationships in the region undertook the research for the CLC. The report is provided as **Attachment A**.

The report confirmed the views expressed by the 90 member Council of the CLC that CDP does not reflect or meet the social and cultural priorities or aspirations of Aboriginal people in this region.

In summary, the report found that:

Common Responses (All or nearly all participants reported this result)

- 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 the family.
- 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 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 (Two thirds of participants reported this result)

- 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.
- Respondents had a good sense as to why people did not turn up and therefore receive penalties.

- All respondents knew of people who had dropped off CDP entirely. One family was interviewed in which people dropped off CDP.

There were divergent responses on issues such as the adequacy of training, the suitability of CDP for older people, the value of some of the CDP activities, and a minority of people reported someone in their family getting a job through CDP.

The CLC is extremely concerned that some people are disengaging from CDP leaving individuals with no income or support, and increasing the financial strain on families. While it is difficult to obtain clear statistics regarding disengagement, it is notable that every participant in the CLC's research discussed above all knew of people who had dropped off CDP entirely.

What works? The CLC Ranger Program

In stark contrast to our constituents views about CDP there continues to be strong support from remote residents and landowners for the national Indigenous ranger program. As at November 2015, there were 108 Australian Government funded Indigenous ranger groups in Australia, employing over 1,600 Indigenous Rangers across 775 full-time equivalent contracted positions¹⁰. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet commissioned Social Ventures Australia to undertake a social return on investment analysis of a number of Indigenous Protected Areas and their associated ranger programs in 2016. The report observed that,

The Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and associated Indigenous ranger programmes have demonstrated success across a broad range of outcome areas, effectively overcoming barriers to addressing Indigenous disadvantage and engaging Indigenous Australians on country in meaningful employment to achieve large scale conservation outcomes, thus aligning the interests of Indigenous Australians and the broader community (p.4).¹¹

With 11 groups operational across the CLC region, and more than 100 Aboriginal people employed as rangers, this program is successful and highly valued by Aboriginal people in our region. The ranger program combines meaningful employment and training with cultural priorities to work on and manage country. The ranger program is widely recognised as one of Australia's most successful Indigenous programs.

It is worth noting that the old CDEP wages underpinned the creation of community ranger groups, with land councils and other organisations taking over management of the program after CDEP was abolished. Consolidation of the ranger program within the CLC has been

¹⁰ Social Ventures Australia Consulting, 2016, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Consolidated Report on Indigenous protected Areas following social return on investment analyses.

¹¹ Social Ventures Australia Consulting, 2016, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Consolidated Report on Indigenous protected Areas following social return on investment analyses.

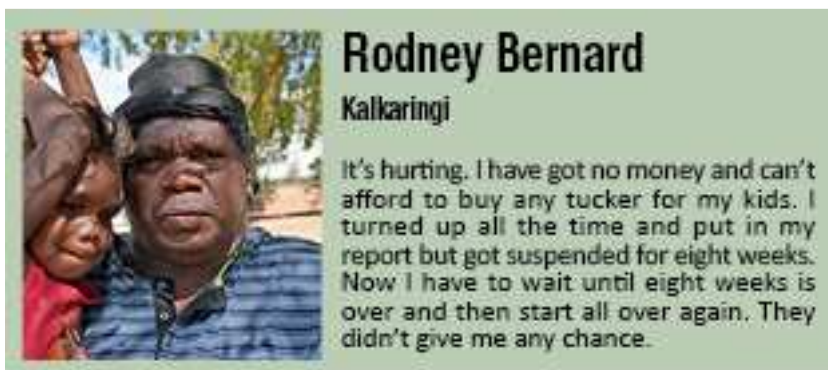
challenging but has brought some benefits including: increased coordination and expertise, centralised systems for mentoring and training, and enhanced relationships with traditional owners to direct work on country. The ranger program is now funded primarily by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, with funding now guaranteed until 2020 for existing ranger groups. Other funding sources include the Indigenous Land Corporation, one-off contributions from the Aboriginals Benefit Account, and more recently funding commitments from the NT Government. There is significant unmet demand for ranger groups in the CLC region, and no available funds to start new ranger groups.

Ranger program jobs are real wages, with standard entitlements and conditions. Any proposal to link ranger program jobs to CDP work-for-the-dole arrangements is strongly opposed by the CLC. However, under the APO NT alternative model (Attachment B) there may be opportunities to explore synergies between existing ranger program employment and the proposed new subsidised wage positions. Such synergies must be based on the following principles:

- The ranger program should continue to be funded as a separate program by the Australian Government;
- Ranger jobs are not work-for-the-dole activities, and no link should be made between the current CDP and the ranger program;
- Should a new model be adopted encompassing a new wages scheme, such as that proposed by APO NT, consideration should be given to using new waged position to provide pathways into the ranger program, and to encourage pilot programs in new areas.

The ranger program works and any proposed new employment scheme should carefully consider and draw on the elements that contribute to the success of this scheme.

The impact of the CDP on the rights of participants and their communities, including the appropriateness of the payments and penalties systems



CLC interview for Land Rights News, 2016



CLC interview for Land Rights News, 2016

The CDP model is discriminatory and premised on compliance, coercion and penalties in order to achieve engagement and participation. There is already sufficient evidence to suggest that discriminatory and punitive measures do not drive fundamental behavioural change. The application of income management in the NT is a case in point. The final evaluation report of income management (Bray et al 2014, p. 320)¹² clearly concludes that:

taken as a whole, there is no evidence to indicate that income management has any effects at the community level, nor that income management, in itself, facilitates long-term behavioural change.

A body of other evidence indicating that coercive policies generally do not create long-term sustainable change support this finding. Further, the evaluation report observes that 'building capacity is a challenging process that requires time and resources, and it cannot be developed by simply imposing restraints (ibid.). The Australian Government commissioned this report but it does not appear to have informed CDP policy development.

The CDP system imposes more onerous Work for the Dole compliance arrangements on remote participants than non-remote. Most remote participants are required to work 25 hours per week spread over 5 days per week, while those in non-remote areas (other than Alice Springs town camps) are only required to attend 15 hours of an activity – which might include Work for the Dole - in order to receive entitlements. CDP providers are forced to spend a significant amount of their time policing and enforcing rather than providing employment support and case management services. One participant in the CLC research observes that,

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

The data is already demonstrating that these onerous conditions are not resulting in the desired behavioural change but are driving the disturbingly high application of penalties, and resulting in disengagement from the social security system altogether. The CLC is extremely

¹² Bray, R., Gray, M., Hand, K., and Katz, I. (2014) Evaluating New Income Management in the Northern Territory: Final Evaluation Report, Social Policy Research Centre, Australian National University.

concerned that the application of financial penalties is driving household incomes down and putting more financial pressure on those that are employed or continue to receive their social security entitlements.

The funding of the CDP, including the use of unspent funds in the program

The CLC is not aware of how unspent funds are used. There is a lack of transparency regarding the funding arrangements, and program outcomes of CDP. This lack of transparency is reflected in a quote from one of the CLC’s research participants who said,

We don’t know where the money comes from, or who actually runs it, under CDEP we knew where the money came from (p.10)

Alternative approaches to addressing joblessness and community development in remote Indigenous communities

The CLC endorses the alternative model for remote employment arrangements developed by the Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (**Attachment B**).

The alternative model was developed over a 6-month period based on extensive consultations with our constituents, Aboriginal and peak organisations, and CDP providers. It reflects our frustration with the current CDP and our commitment to driving Aboriginal-led policy solutions to key issues impacting on Aboriginal people in remote communities. It also reflects the CLC’s strong view that remote community residents, like other Australians, should have access to the social security safety net, and a remote employment program must be implemented to suit the local context and drive local participation. This employment program will stimulate labour demand, encourage and reward job seekers, and ensure more remote residents are engaged in work not welfare. Importantly, the proposed new program will provide greater local control, flexibility to suit local conditions, and drive participation through local engagement in setting priorities and measuring outcomes.

Attachment A

CDP Community Consultation Report by Dr Miles Holmes, May 2017 (provided as a separate file).

Attachment B

Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT: Developing Strong and Resilient Remote Communities: Proposal for Establishment of a Remote Development and Employment Scheme, May 2017 (provided as a separate file).