

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26 May-6 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Remote Jobs and Communities Programme

Senator: Senator Cory Bernardi

Question reference number: 259

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Did the program start on 1 July 2013?
2. How much notice did providers have?
3. How were assets held by previous providers, particularly under CDEP, distributed?
4. Can you outline the transition arrangements for CDEP participants to RJCP?
5. What are the key performance indicators for the program and providers?
6. What evaluation/audits of providers have been conducted to date?
7. How is the program performing in relation to expectations?
8. Is the program on target for activities for participation and job placements?
9. What adjustments have been made by the current government?
10. What future adjustments do you anticipate will be made to the program?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Providers were notified between April and June 2013.
3. During the transition of CDEP to RJCP the former Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) considered what rights and interests CDEP providers had over assets funded through the CDEP programme and worked with CDEP providers and RJCP providers to come up with place by place arrangements for the use of CDEP assets under RJCP.
4. The former Departments of FaHCSIA and Education, Employment and Workplace Relations implemented transition support for participants of the former CDEP programme including ensuring the payment of all leave entitlements and that RJCP providers were notified of other essential

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information such as bank account details and deductions being made by CDEP providers. RJCP providers were encouraged, where possible, to continue supporting existing activities being undertaken by CDEP participants throughout the transition period. There was communication to affected job seekers, including through mail-outs, radio advertising, communication from their existing providers, and via a hot-line.

5. The key performance indicators for the programme and providers are community engagement and participation, employment and education outcomes, and activity quality
6. Provider performance and delivery of services are regularly monitored by the Department. This includes formal performance discussions conducted with all providers in late February to mid-March 2014.
- 7-8. There are no set targets for participation and job placements. However, transition and implementation challenges have resulted in lower than expected outcomes being achieved by the programme.
9. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, announced on 29 November 2013 some initial changes to improve RJCP, including reopening access to the Indigenous Employment Programme in remote Australia; making available an advanced payment of service fees to assist RJCP providers to get established and get activities underway; and prioritising the Community Development Fund grants towards projects in the weakest remote labour markets.
10. The Government has commissioned a review of Indigenous Training and Employment Programmes, led by Mr Andrew Forrest. Changes to the programme will be considered as part of the Government's response to this review.