

## Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians  
in employment and business

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** VTEC and Jobactive providers

**Member:** Leaser

**Question reference number:** 0001

**Type of question:** Hansard page 2, 27 May 2021

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 9 July 2021

**Number of pages:** 2

#### Question:

**CHAIR:** Just before you do, can I understand: if you're a jobactive provider, you get paid whether you place the person or not, whereas if you're a VTEC provider, you only get paid for placing the person. Is that correct?

**Ms Jensen:** If there is an outcome as a result of a jobactive referring an Indigenous jobseeker to a VTEC and the VTEC gets them into work, the jobactive gets an outcome to reflect the fact that it's done a lot of preparatory work with that jobseeker and also so as not to discourage them from making sure those referral pathways operate effectively. The one exception is where the jobactive provider and the VTEC provider are the same entity. In that case, obviously, they can only get one outcome.

**CHAIR:** Are there many instances of that?

**Ms Jensen:** I'd need to take that on notice.

**Mr Bulman:** I think there are one or two companies that run both VTEC and jobactive. I know of one off the top of my head, but I think there's a second. We'll provide exact details on notice. I wonder whether it's worth thinking conceptually across the whole of Australia that we have the remote employment service CDP and the jobactive service in non-remote areas. I don't mean to be going back to the bare basics here, but all jobseekers who are on income support get referred to one or the other. The purpose of VTEC or other Indigenous targeted employment programs that largely come from our agency is to coordinate with or augment those existing services to enhance outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Like Ms Jensen said, a jobactive provider in Western Sydney might have done a lot of preparatory work from the time the person signs up to income support, working with their service, but then coordinates with a targeted system like VTEC, and together they will place someone into a position and wrap around them with the VTEC provider providing the more-intensive services. With our payment structure we then work with our VTEC provider, and we have our incentives for that provider to be weighted less on placement, because we do have these employment services, and more on achieving the longer term outcomes.

**Answer:**

There are two providers that have Vocational Training and Employment Centres and jobactive outcome claims (Atwork Australia Pty Ltd and JobLink).

## **Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs**

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous  
Australians in employment and business  
Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:**

**Member:** Leaser

**Question reference number:** 0002

**Type of question:** Hansard page 2, 27 May 2021

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 9 July 2021

**Number of pages:** 7

**Question:**

**CHAIR:** I suppose that what I'm really trying to get at is that I want to understand the payment system between different organisations that are trying to place somebody. I wonder if I might ask the departments to put their heads together and perhaps even present us a flowchart of that so we can understand it. I want to see whether there are any disincentives, because of the way the payment structures are made, to actually placing people in work.

**Ms Jensen:** Chair, I can table here the full jobactive fee rates table that you requested. I've got copies for the committee members.

**CHAIR:** I'll get the secretariat to distribute that. It would be good also to see a sort of go-to-whoa pathway. I want to see if we need to make any recommendations about things that are causing unintended consequences in terms of placing people.

**Mr Bulman:** We can prepare that on notice, but I will just say there is not a disincentive in the system but I think that, for some cohorts of Australians, there are stronger incentives to get them into work where there are greater barriers. But everyone has the baseline level of servicing and the incentives built into payment structures. But where we overlay it to get greater coordination is where there are those greater challenges, such as with Indigenous Australia.

**Answer:**

Information on the interaction between Jobactive and Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) programs is provided in the Fact Sheet attached (Attachment A)

The payment structure for VTEC providers is below which can be read alongside the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's submission 8.2 *Current jobactive fee rates*.

### VTEC payment structure

The VTEC payment structure effective from 1 January 2018 remains heavily focused on the most disadvantaged Indigenous job seekers. VTECs receive payment (as outlined in table) for outcomes (four, 13 and/or 26 weeks).

Payments are primarily based on Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) Streams under jobactive or whether the job seeker is on a Community Development Program (CDP) or Disability Employment Services (DES) caseload.

GST excl.	Stream A/Unregistered		Stream B/CDP	Stream C/DES
	<i>Within cap*</i>	<i>After cap*</i>		
4 weeks	Nil	Nil	\$2,000	\$2,000
13 weeks	Nil	Nil	\$3,000	\$3,500
26 weeks	\$5,500	\$2,500	\$8,500	\$9,500
<b>Total participant cost</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$13,500</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>

\*A Stream A cap has been set for each VTEC provider based on the percentage of Stream A job seekers in the jobactive caseload in the VTEC provider's allocated region.

For example, if a Sydney Indigenous jobactive caseload is 25 percent Stream A, the VTEC will be able to claim a full Stream A outcome payment for up to 25 percent of their total contract places. Any Stream A job seeker the VTEC supports over this cap will have a reduced outcome payment of \$2,500



## ATTACHMENT A

### VTECs and *jobactive* organisations working together

Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTECs) are an Australian Government initiative based on GenerationOne's employment model. The objective of VTEC is to **support Indigenous jobseekers into a sustainable job**.

VTECs can match job seekers with a guaranteed job and provide mentoring and training to assist the jobseeker to stay in that job long term.

VTECs are required to:

- source guaranteed jobs
- provide or source job specific training
- support the job seeker into work
- supporting the job seeker through 26 weeks of employment

The VTECs in your region have **committed to working closely with you** to achieve sustainable outcomes, particularly for Stream B and C jobseekers.

**The VTEC in your region will rely on your jobactive organisation to source and support Indigenous job seekers.**

The VTEC initiative is an opt-in model for job seekers. VTECs need to ensure that job seekers have a genuine interest in working in the field of the job offered.

While actively participating in VTEC the job seeker is meeting their mutual obligation requirements.

#### ***Which job seekers are eligible for referral to VTECs?***

While the priority for VTECs is highly disadvantaged Indigenous job seekers, all Indigenous people can be considered for referral to a VTEC.

**The VTEC provider, in conjunction with your organisation**, will undertake an informal assessment of the job seeker suitability for the jobs available against the job description supplied by the employer. This will identify groups of job seekers that have the right characteristics for upcoming jobs.

A job seeker who is already receiving support under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (including a Jobs, Land and Economy Programme project) is not eligible to participate in the VTEC.

## What funding is provided to VTECs?

VTECs receive staged milestone payments to 26 weeks (4, 13 and final 26 weeks) and are expected to identify and source reasonable contributory funding through various sources, including jobactive organisations, State Governments, employers and community organisations.

Jobactive providers can also claim their outcome payments as per their funding agreement. **The outcome payments claimed by the VTEC and the jobactive provider are not considered duplication of funding** unless the VTEC is the jobactive provider.

The level of contributory funding provided through the Employment Fund will be at your discretion, you will need to take into account the Employment Fund Guidelines and Principles, your organisation's Employment Fund resources, the assistance required by the VTEC participant and the potential outcome payment. There may also be in-kind support negotiated, for example, the use of facilities or staffing resources to assist in the delivery of certain aspects of the project.

## ***What if a job seeker from your caseload is placed into the VTEC initiative and you were not involved?***

A job seeker may be placed into a VTEC without your involvement. A job seeker may be referred through a community organisation, through an employer's recruitment strategy or the job seeker may self-refer.

VTEC providers will be expected to monitor participant attendances and liaise with the relevant jobactive organisation. **The VTEC and jobactive organisation should communicate to ensure the training and other activities a participant is undertaking in VTEC are reflected in the job seeker's Job Plan and will meet their participation mutual obligation requirements.**

Where a job seeker has been recruited into the VTEC other than through your referral, the VTEC will contact you to determine the job seeker's registration status and confirm that participation in the VTEC activity is appropriate for that job seeker. If agreed, VTEC participation must be reflected in the job seeker's Job Plan. Refer to additional information on activity management code 'Vocational Training and Employment Centre' below.

### ***How can I partner with a VTEC?***

You both need to negotiate an agreement for working together. This may be reflected through a written agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding or Service Level Agreement.

The written agreement should include information on how the parties will work together to prepare and support Indigenous job seekers prior to, during, and after the employment placements. The document should include agreed processes for sharing data and information about case histories, cooperation in case management and the process and protocols for referring participants to opportunities under the VTEC.

### ***What types of job vacancies are available through a VTEC?***

VTECs can source job vacancies directly from employers. VTECs will work with employers that have guaranteed jobs to understand what skills and training the employer requires for the positions available.

VTECs will host regular information sessions for Indigenous job seekers. These sessions will provide Indigenous job seekers with an insight into the jobs available, the conditions, the benefits and the challenges of working in a particular industry.

**You are welcome to be involved in these sessions.**

### ***What are the impacts on jobactive organisation funds and fees?***

**Outcome Payments:** As you and your VTEC partner will be working together to assist job seekers to improve their work readiness and secure employment, usually both organisations may claim outcome payments for the same job, subject to the terms of the respective deeds. There is an exception to this for organisations that provide both jobactive and VTEC programmes (refer to next section).

**Administration Fees:** Job seekers referred to VTECs, either by you or by another means, will continue to be 'active' on your case load ensuring that you have access to your Administration Fee and you can continue to ensure your job seeker meets their mutual obligation requirements and provide services the job seeker may need.

**Employment Fund:** jobactive organisations, including those which are also VTEC providers, can use their Employment Fund to assist job seekers participating in VTEC.

The Employment Fund cannot be used to replace funding goods and/or services that VTECs are expected or choose to fund. For example, if the VTEC provider chooses to provide post placement support including mentoring or professional services to a job seeker, the Employment Fund cannot be used for these purposes. Under jobactive, the Employment Fund is available only for relevant accredited vocational training or (with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's approval) non-accredited training specified by an employer as a pre-requisite for a job. The Employment Fund cannot be used for job search related training or the application of assessment tools. The written agreement between the jobactive organisation and the VTEC provider should include an outline of which organisation is meeting each funding requirement.

All jobactive organisations must ensure that all expenditure through the Employment Fund meets the needs of the individual job seeker and meets all Employment Fund Principles. This ensures that any purchases:

- provide eligible job seekers with the work-related tools, skills and experience that correspond with their difficulties in finding and keeping a job in the relevant labour market
- provide value for money
- comply with any work health and safety laws that may apply
- will withstand public scrutiny, and
- will not bring jobactive or the Government into disrepute.

### ***Can a jobactive provider be a VTEC provider?***

There are VTECs that are also jobactive providers. In the case where a jobactive provider and the VTEC provider is the same legal entity, the jobactive provider is able to place its Indigenous job seekers in its own VTEC programme.

In these circumstances, the *jobactive Deed 2015-2022* prevents the payment of outcome payments to the jobactive organisation under clauses dealing with double payments for the provision of the same or similar services. If the organisation wishes to claim jobactive outcome payments, it should not claim the VTEC outcome payment, and vice versa. That is, the organisation can choose to claim outcome payments under one of the two programmes, but not both.

## Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business

#### Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** CDP – community advisory boards

**Member:** Snowdon

**Question reference number:** 0003

**Type of question:** Hansard page 5, 27 May 2021

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 9 July 2021

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Mr SNOWDON:** In your submission, at paragraph 3.4.3.3, you refer to community advisory boards. In this document you say: 'NIAA is working with providers to ensure there is a community advisory board operating in every CDP region by March 2020.'

**Mr Bulman:** Yes.

**Mr SNOWDON:** How has that gone? And can you tell us how they work?

**Mr Bulman:** Yes. I will just ask the team if they've got the latest stuff on the community advisory board rollout.

**Mrs Bird:** I don't think I've got them in front of me. But, generally speaking, the majority of organisations either have a community advisory board in place or they've got an arrangement that satisfies our requirements for what a community advisory board should do. The approach to it is that they set up these boards, usually with representatives from different community bodies that should be representative of the different people operating in that area—it might include businesses, for instance—and the aim of those boards is to help the providers understand the needs, aspirations and community views on what the CDP should be offering. So that may lead to some feedback on activities and how activities could be better designed to meet what longer term economic development outcomes they might be looking for in that particular community, for example. So it looks a bit different in each region, obviously, because each region is different. I can take on notice the exact status. I may have it in my other folder.

**Mr SNOWDON:** Could you also provide us with a range of what they look like? I'm assuming there'll be some where the CDP provider engages well and others where they don't engage so well. So they might be responsive, very responsive or less responsive, depending on who they are or where they are. Can you provide us with the information around those sorts of issues? We know how these things operate, so understanding who are the good providers and who aren't—

**Mr Bulman:** If I can just take you back a bit, we announced the creation of community advisory boards as part of the 2019 changes.

**Mr SNOWDON:** Yes.

**Mr Bulman:** So, to address that concern, there were some providers that we had concerns about—that they weren't reaching into community, into local leadership, other organisations well. So my sense from the performance reviews that we've been doing over the years is that, once they are established, the providers are far more engaged with the community dynamics and leadership.

**Mr SNOWDON:** Can you provide us with a range of examples? That would be useful.

**Mr Bulman:** We can do a couple of case studies on how they work in practice.

**Answer:**

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) is continuing to work with Community Development Program (CDP) providers to ensure that Community Advisory Boards (CABs) are operating or that other suitable community engagement mechanisms are in place, noting there has been some disruption to operations due to COVID-19.

Early feedback on these community engagement mechanisms has been positive and they have been useful in regularly advising providers on cultural matters and identifying opportunities for economic development.

For example, in Region 33 (Central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory), CDP Provider Jobfind facilitates a CAB every 6 months with representatives from the five communities they service. Jobfind aims to have a diverse representation of people (youth, mature age, LGBTIQ peoples and people with a disability) at CAB meetings to ensure a wide range of views and advice. The CAB typically advises on new activities and projects, the needs of community members as well as planning for future advisory activities of the Board itself.

CAB meetings were maintained throughout the 2020 CDP program contingency arrangements and were used to update and plan for anticipated servicing changes. The CAB operates alongside Jobfind's other community engagement activities including participating at community events and broader engagement with employers, job seekers and other stakeholders.

In CDP Region 35 (Darwin Daly Region, Northern Territory), Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation leverages existing community forums on a regular basis, to discuss CDP interest, need and quality of CDP activities. In this region, the provider engages on a regular basis with job seekers and also reaches out to seek views from youth services and aged care.

The NIAA is currently undertaking a further assessment of CABs and other engagement mechanisms over coming months, which will also help to inform the new remote jobs program for 2023.

***Will participation in VTEC meet a job seeker's mutual obligation requirements, including the Annual Activity Requirement?***

Yes. Participation in pre-employment training in VTEC will meet a job seeker's mutual obligation requirements, and can be used to meet their Annual Activity Requirement during the Work for the Dole Phase. VTEC must be recorded as a compulsory activity in free text in the job seeker's Job Plan.

***What does a jobactive provider do in the information technology system when referring a job seeker to VTEC?***

VTEC participation must be reflected in the job seeker's Job Plan. The activity management code 'Vocational Training and Employment Centres' under 'Other Approved Programmes' should be used to indicate a job seeker's VTEC participation. The activity referral should include the name of the VTEC provider and a description of the activity including specific details such as actions, dates, times and hours. Participation hours must also be recorded in the Activity Diary component of the system on at least a monthly basis.

## Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business

#### Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** Remote Indigenous business incubator pilots

**Member:** Snowdon

**Question reference number:** 0004

**Type of question:** Hansard page 15, 27 May 2021

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 9 July 2021

**Number of pages:** 3

#### **Question:**

**Mr SNOWDON:** With the remote Indigenous business incubator pilots, are you able to give us a sense of how they've been going? Can you give us some case studies of how they're working and how successful they've been, or otherwise. You can take that on notice.

**Mr Bulman:** Yes, absolutely. Ms Phipps, do you have stats to quickly run off, and I can then provide a case study?

**Ms Phipps:** I don't have many of the stats with me, unfortunately. I do know that there have been 53 businesses overall that have been created under the incubator pilots, and all 12 pilots are now up and running.

**Mr SNOWDON:** Can you give us an idea of the spread of these incubators? Where are they?

**Mr Bulman:** We'll get a list and provide that on notice. The incubators work within the CDP provider, where we provide some funding to that provider to build new small businesses. An example might be the driver training courses and things like that we're looking at up in Arnhem Land. They are really great little small businesses. It's not dissimilar to the NEIS program that we run in other areas.

**Mr SNOWDON:** What do the incubators provide? Who does the back-of-house work, for example. If I'm a person whose literacy skills are minimal, but I've got a great idea, how does it work?

**Ms Phipps:** The incubators provide \$500,000 dollars to each incubator pilot. That is to lease premises and also to get a business development officer, who does exactly that—organises the training and other support. It's also for any small capital items like tools and equipment that the business might need to get started.

**Mr SNOWDON:** What about the back-of-house stuff? The bookkeeping?

**Mr Bulman:** With the bookkeeping, they've been pairing up in different situations, with, say, Many Rivers. This is a real part of the work of the business development officer and is embedded in the CDP provider. They might just get a local bookkeeper, or link them up—that sort of coordination service—or support them to connect up with someone. Many Rivers, say, has another service provider that can help them build and establish their business.

**Mr YOUNG:** So it's more for set-up than it is for going?

**Mr Bulman:** It's really about set-up and that support. If you think about a small business in the first year, it's very difficult—

**Mr YOUNG:** Yes.

**Mr Bulman:** Then imagine it in very thin labour markets. Those are the kinds of concepts, where they can set something up. It might be whipper-snipping; they get a contract with the local shire, get a ute and some equipment and they're off and running. It's those kinds of concepts which they're dealing with. I have the 12 here, but I'm happy to table that on notice so that you have them on record.

**Mr SNOWDON:** Good—

**Answer:**

The incubator pilot operates in 12 CDP regions:

CDP Region		Service Provider
11	Kullarri, WA	Kullari Regional Communities
14	Derby/Gibb River, WA	Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation
17	Far West, SA	EyrePlus P.L (Novated from PeoplePlus)
18	Flinders and Far North, SA	Complete Employment Services
21	South West Alice, NT	RISE-Ngurratjuta Pty Ltd
31	Katherine, NT	Kalano Community Association Aboriginal Corporation
39	Ramingining, NT	The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation
40	Galiwin'ku, NT	The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation
45	South West, QLD	RESQ PLUS PTY. LTD.
48	West Isa, QLD	Rainbow Gateway Limited
50	Palm Island, QLD	Rainbow Gateway Limited
59	Torres Strait Islands, QLD	Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land

Performance reports received to date indicate that overall the objectives of the program are being met. However, the nature of thin markets in remote Indigenous communities mean this is generally occurring on a small scale.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a number of challenges with the Incubator program. During the period of COVID-19 restrictions in remote Indigenous communities, Business Development Officers (BDOs) could not access client communities and provide face-to-face services in most locations.

Despite these challenges, there have been a number of enterprises established with the support of incubators. The following examples have been de-identified to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned:

- Support for a sole trader to secure a contract for cleaning services. The contract entails cleaning and servicing the public toilets at Copley and Leigh Creek. The incubator assisted the business to obtain an Australian Business Number (ABN) and to engage an accountant to review the contract and assist with invoicing systems. The business was also provided financial assistance for vehicle repair, allowing travel across multiple sites in the local region. The business owner has also participated in an incubator business workshop, which encouraged them to continue to grow their business.
- Support the operations of a catering. The business owner has been able to cater for a number of clients in the subsequent period and generate important income for themselves.
- Support for a sole trader to open a business premise. The incubator and Many Rivers supported a beauty therapist to secure a business premises, resources and materials to move the operation of their business out of their home. The business opened in December 2020 and is receiving positive reviews with ongoing support from the incubator and Many Rivers. The business owner also accessed Tax Help through the incubator (a network of Australian Tax Office (ATO) trained and accredited community volunteers who provide free and confidential services to help complete tax returns) and continues to provide beauty services to their local community.

## Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians  
in employment and business

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** Girls academies – funding

**Member:** Claydon

**Question reference number:** 0005

**Type of question:** Hansard page 16, 27 May 2021

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 9 July 2021

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#### Question:

**Ms CLAYDON:** Okay. I'm interested in knowing that. I hope my memory serves me correctly, because I'm pretty sure that late last year we were told there was going to be this injection of new money into the girls' academies. I'm not sure if this is just confirmation of that money or if it's a new source of money.

**Mr Bulman:** Let me take it on notice.

**Ms CLAYDON:** Thank you. Then, when that comes online, are we reaching gender parity in those secondary school programs? They were way out of whack when we did our inquiry—completely skewed towards boys programs. I'm interested to know if we're now reaching a point where we have some gender parity there.

And that brings me to my final one which, again, I'm happy for you to take on notice. It's about the Women's Economic Security Package, which advised that there was some money to establish this early-stage social enterprise foundation. I don't know whether anyone has some information about that. I think that if it is to be established that it's not there yet.

**Ms Jensen:** I believe that's a measure from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Mr Bulman:** We've been involved in it as well, so I can provide some information on notice. We put some budget information up on budget night, but I'm happy to provide some more, to give you a breakdown—

**Ms CLAYDON:** I'm interested that it's in the women's economic statement, so is that entire program about early-stage social enterprise specifically targeted at women or is this a little carve-out of a bigger program that we're now going to focus on in some aspects for women? I'm happy for you to take that on notice.

**Mr Bulman:** Yes. I'll just have to get the details; it sits in another area.

**Answer:**

As per Budget Paper 2 from the 2021-22 Budget, \$63.5 million from the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) was announced to support 12,600 girls' academy places by December 2023. This funding delivers gender parity in Australian Government funded places for Indigenous girls and boys. The funding includes \$36 million of IAS funding previously announced for the recent girls academy grants process and \$27.5 million from the IAS to maintain existing girls' academies places until December 2023.

## **Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs**

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians  
in employment and business**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** Women's Economic Security Package

**Member:** Claydon

**Question reference number:** 0006

**Type of question:** Hansard page 16, 27 May 2021

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 9 July 2021

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

**Ms CLAYDON:** And that brings me to my final one which, again, I'm happy for you to take on notice. It's about the Women's Economic Security Package, which advised that there was some money to establish this early-stage social enterprise foundation. I don't know whether anyone has some information about that. I think that if it is to be established that it's not there yet.

**Ms Jensen:** I believe that's a measure from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Mr Bulman:** We've been involved in it as well, so I can provide some information on notice. We put some budget information up on budget night, but I'm happy to provide some more, to give you a breakdown—

#### **Answer:**

As part of the Women's Economic Security Package in the 2021-22 Budget, the Government announced \$13.9 million over four years to establish an Early Stage Social Enterprise Foundation (ESSEF). The ESSEF is focused on providing capacity building and financial support for early stage social enterprises that improve the safety and economic security of Indigenous women, particularly those who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. It is intended that the Foundation will provide grants, with potential for flexible loans, to social enterprises each year to support Indigenous women entrepreneurs to innovate and solve social issues facing their communities.

## **Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs**

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

#### **Inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business**

#### **Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** National Indigenous Australians Agency

**Topic:** Employment opportunities – gendered nature

**Senator:** Claydon

**Question reference number:** 0007

**Type of question:** Hansard page 15, 27 May 2021

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**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

**Ms CLAYDON:** I want to get a better understanding about the gendered nature of the employment opportunities and the unemployment stats. I'm happy for you to take it on notice—unless you have it at hand.

**Mr SNOWDON:** And could we do it by age as well?

#### **Answer:**

We have consulted with our colleagues at the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, who indicated the data requested is held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as part of the 2016 Census.

According to the 2016 Census:

- Approximately 223,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over were participating in the labour force (a labour force participation rate of 52 per cent).
- Indigenous males were more likely than Indigenous females to be participating in the labour force (55 per cent compared with 49 per cent).
- The highest labour force participation rate was for those aged 25 to 44 years (60 per cent), and the lowest for those aged 65 years and over (12 per cent).
- The unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over was 18 per cent.
- Males were slightly more likely to be unemployed than females across all age groups, although the difference was only between 1.1 and 1.3 times.

These data can be found on the ABS website at [www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/census-population-and-housing-characteristics-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release#employment](http://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/census-population-and-housing-characteristics-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release#employment)). Further information about the age and sex breakdowns related to participation and unemployment should be directed to the ABS.