

Finance and Public Administration
References Committee for inquiry into
the appropriateness and effectiveness of
the objectives, design, implementation
and evaluation of the Community
Development Program (CDP)



Australian Unemployed Workers'
Union Submission

Supplementary Documentation: Statement by a participant in the Community Development Programme

This document has been edited to remove identifying information. Some of the information removed raises additional serious issues about human rights abuses and the CDP, and the AUWU will follow these up in other forums.

The AUWU is continuing our work to consult throughout Western Australia, and we will bring forward more testimonials over the coming months.

A lot of people have a lot of concerns. This is what I want to say:

The CDP is imposed, and doesn't have any relation to how we live. The CDP is town based, and run by people who have no idea how life is in a remote community ... those that do live in community have no say.

There is competition for funding, and not everyone benefits from it. It goes to certain people, but the funds are not being evenly distributed for projects and activities, or training and courses. We don't have any say, or even know what's been allocated.

We have difficulties meeting the requirements of the CDP, and we find it particularly hard to get to the CDP office in Town, because of the distance. Suspensions are imposed if interviews are missed, and there is no consideration given for special circumstances, or difficulties people have. There is no concern about the distance, and how much of a problem this is. Suspensions happen on an average of three or four times per fortnight. Often if a fine is imposed then people do not have the money to travel to Town for their interview, and are fined again. So, one suspension can cause another suspension.

The punishing nature of the CDP causes conflict between people. There is a great deal of stress because of the suspensions, and people have to struggle for basic survival needs like, food, travel, electricity, rent.

The work we do with the CDP is not proper jobs. We do some gardening and cleaning, but they don't train us so that we can get a qualification. We need horticultural courses, catering and hospitality, and business courses. If we qualify, we can get an ABN number and start a business, and get a real wage instead of working for the dole. If people were trained for a trade like a plumber, electrician or carpenter, they could set up as a business and work on

housing maintenance in our community. At the moment, we are getting outsiders from town, and even from other places.

We don't want to leave our home to find work, we want to work in our community.

The work that is done in the community does not benefit us. The gardening revolves around the CDP building that is leased to the CDP provider, and not anywhere in our community.

Nothing is properly resourced. Our Community Organisation has supervisor's as paid staffs, were the service provider have elected this employee's to engage with participant supervision, not the director's members of the community where it'll benefit the people, when the supervisor lives in the community however, despite this, we cannot get the CDP to work for our benefit. I work as a volunteer and do countless hours, but I have to use my own money to pay for the costs to do my job, like going to meetings and stationary.

There is plenty of opportunity for paid work. We want to do horticulture and aquaculture. We would like our training centre to be staffed, and have computer courses. Some of us have done the training, but there is no work afterwards. We want a shop, a school, and we want our clinic to be properly staffed by community members. At the moment, staff travel from Town.

We want job creation. We would like to develop short stay accommodation, there is a lot of potential and opportunity for this. We have visitors, and would like to cater for tourists. We would like to bring business back to the community.

But we have no control over decision making, and no financial control. Everything was taken away and given to the CDP and our communities are left stranded.

But we have an outside organisation telling us what we can do and how to run our community. We, as board of directors and members of the community have our power to set up our own goals, and strategic planning, undermined.

The money is supposed to be for the benefit of the people, but we can't develop anything because the government continually disrupts us with their policy and procedures.

No funding is allocated toward our community, and we cannot run our own host agreement on developing and gaining future employment for ours people.

We felt intimidated and bullied by our CDP Contract Manager and Service Provider and that the constant intimidation against us personally. Were conflict of interest taken part within our CDP and Service Provider.

The situation turns towards drugs and alcohol due to depression

We want to move away from Work for The Dole, to independence.