

Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 31 March 2023

Outcome: Employment and Workforce

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. IQ23-000201

Senator Susan McDonald on 31 March 2023, Proof Hansard page 50

31 March 2023 | *Employment Programs*

Question

Senator McDONALD: Ms Lauman, it was terrific to hear of the programs that Ms Lange was just talking about. Can we get some more information on notice about those programs and perhaps the number of people that you are seeing come through in each region across northern Australia? I would also like to know which programs are the most successful and which ones you would like to do more of. But I guess that is tricky for you, because the ones that aren't successful you are kind of stuck with. How can I help you tell me what we should do more of?

Ms Lauman: I think there are a few things we can provide—certainly some information about what the service offer is and who we are reaching in those particular communities through each of the programs. Each of our regions has a local jobs plan that is developed by an employment facilitator who works in consultation with businesses and community organisations to identify what the most critical things are in that particular region. They use that plan to then guide partnerships across government and with civil community as well. So we can provide visibility of those plans and the issues that are the most important in those communities at the moment.

We don't have a lot of availability of data at the moment because we have recently transitioned to the Workforce Australia program. But, certainly, I am happy for us to take on notice perhaps some information that would be available about outcomes under similar programs—for example, and under Jobactive, which has just ceased—so that you can get a sense of the outcomes that come from those programs. We will make sure that that information includes that some programs have a particular focus around connecting someone with a job. Some programs recognise that the barriers that many people face are complex. So it is around starting people on that journey or progressing people on the journey. So a job isn't necessarily the outcome that we would measure success by.

Answer

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations addresses employment and workforce issues through the provision of direct services in six employment regions across Northern Australia.

Workforce Australia is the Australian Government's primary employment service offering a supported, connected and respectful service that:

- helps eligible individuals find employment through online or provider-led services
- supports businesses with recruitment and to adjust workplace practices to help connect them to candidates with the skills they need, and

- focuses providers on supporting participants who need more support, reducing their risk of becoming or remaining long-term unemployed.

Workforce Australia features include online servicing and provider servicing, across three primary programs and a range of complementary programs. The three primary programs are:

- Workforce Australia Online – for participants who are more job-ready, digitally literate and capable of finding work without the assistance of a provider.
- Workforce Australia Services – provider delivered services for participants at higher risk of long-term unemployment who require extra support.
- Transition to Work – a time-limited employment specialist service that helps disadvantaged young people aged 15-24 into work (including apprenticeships and traineeships) or education and training.

The Workforce Australia Employment Services Performance Framework assesses performance holistically, requiring providers to demonstrate performance against all of the following performance criteria:

- Success at moving participants into sustained employment.
- Success at progressing participants towards employment.
- Success at delivering high quality services to both participants and employers.
- Compliance with Deed requirements.

Workforce Australia Services commenced in July 2022. As such, data on performance in the first year is still being settled.

Workforce Australia also includes a range of other complementary bespoke programs administered by the department which are aimed at specific cohorts or employers by helping to connect people with a job or address any barriers they may face. Further information regarding the department's complementary programs for individuals and businesses can be found at www.workforceaustralia.gov.au.

The department also publishes Local Job Plans for each employment region which assist with connecting participants and employers. The Local Jobs Plans for Northern Australia can be found at www.dewr.gov.au/resources/local-jobs.

The following data (see Tables 1 and 2) illustrates participation and rates of unemployment in Northern Australia:

Participation and rates of unemployment in Northern Australia (as at 31 January 2023):

- The six Employment Regions (ERs) in Northern Australia have higher participation rates and lower unemployment rates than the equivalent national rates.
- Workforce Australia provider caseloads in the six ERs have a higher proportion of First Nations Peoples than nationally. Workforce Australia providers in Broome and Darwin support the highest proportion of First Nations Peoples within the six ERs.
- Education and Training, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail and Trade, Construction, and Accommodation and Food Services were the top five employing industries across the six ERs.

Table 1: Region Snapshot

Employment Region	Employment	Unemployment Rate	Participation Rate	Workforce Australia Caseload	First Nations Peoples Workforce Australia Caseload	First Nations Peoples % of Workforce Australia Caseload
National	13,721,900	3.7%	66.5%	641,000	89,045	13.9%
Broome*	N/A	3.3%	N/A	915	740	80.9%
Darwin	87,400	2.8%	76.1%	5,385	3,485	64.7%
Cairns	142,500	2.8%	68.6%	12,910	6,040	46.8%
Townsville	130,500	2.3%	69.7%	10,285	4,295	41.8%
Mackay	108,100	1.9%	72.0%	5,130	1,145	22.3%
Fitzroy	131,600	3.0%	66.5%	8,750	2,380	27.2%

*Broome is a Statistical Level Area 2 region and therefore employment and participation rate data are not available

1. [Employment Regions | Labour Market Insights](#)
2. Workforce Australia Caseload data, 31 January 2023. Workforce Australia caseload is the unique number of participants across three programs - Workforce Australia Online, Workforce Australia Services and Transition to Work.

Table 2: Top 5 Employing Industries by Employment Region

Employment Region	1	2	3	4	5
National	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail and Trade	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	Construction	Education and Training
Broome	Health Care and Social Assistance	Education and Training	Accommodation and Food Services	Public Administration and Safety	Retail and Trade
Darwin	Health Care and Social Assistance	Public Administration and Safety	Education and Training	Accommodation and Food Services	Construction
Cairns	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail and Trade	Construction	Education and Training	Accommodation and Food Services
Townsville	Health Care and Social Assistance	Education and Training	Construction	Retail and Trade	Public Administration and Safety
Mackay	Mining	Retail and Trade	Health Care and Social Assistance	Construction	Education and Training
Fitzroy	Health Care and Social Assistance	Accommodation and Food Services	Administrative and Support Services	Education and Training	Manufacturing

1. [Employment Regions | Labour Market Insights](#)

Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 31 March 2023

Outcome: Employment and Workforce

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. IQ23-000202

Senator Susan McDonald on 31 March 2023, Proof Hansard page 51

31 March 2023 | Private Enterprise Organisation: Pathways with Employees into Work

Question

Senator McDONALD: I keep saying that, don't I? I know that there was a program in Western Australia run by Fortescue, or one of Twiggy Forrest's operations, and it was about training for the job. It was, I understand, quite successful, as opposed to training people and not actually having that role for them. Do you have any knowledge of any programs like that—which were particularly successful but run by private enterprise—that we could continue via outreach into other areas?

Ms Lauman: There are some good examples of employers who are looking at how to reach out to disadvantaged jobseekers to look at both their recruitment processes and what the workplace is like. These things are both really important in attracting and then retaining jobseekers. We partner, through our employer liaison officers, with businesses to support them on that journey. We could provide on notice some information about some of that work and some of those initiatives.

CHAIR: What was it that we're going to take on notice? Sorry, but we need to record that.

Senator McDONALD: My understanding is you are taking on notice other private enterprise organisations you may have supported or partnered with to provide a pathway with employees into work.

Answer

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations delivers complementary programs and services that support employers to provide pathways to work for job seekers. These include Employer Liaison Officers (ELOs), the Local Jobs Program, Workforce Specialists and the Launch into Work Program.

Launch into Work helps businesses across a range of industries to fill entry-level vacancies and increase the diversity of their workforce. This is achieved through supporting job seekers on income support from disadvantaged cohorts to build their skills and confidence so they can transition into ongoing roles within the business.

The department is establishing an Employer Panel that will support businesses seeking to fill more than 30 entry-level vacancies each year. Employers can also contact the department directly to co-design a small-scale project (generally to fill 10 entry-level vacancies).

Employer Liaison Officers work with large employers and industry to develop collaborative approaches to recruitment. The ELOs work closely with employers to understand their needs and identify collaborative recruitment strategies with the aim of attracting and supporting participants into employment. Some examples of this work include:

- The Hospitality and Tourism ELO has been working with the Accommodation Association of Australia since 2017 to co-design and implement a tailored pre-employment hospitality program. The program trains participants and matches them to identified vacancies, many of which are with large hospitality businesses including ACCOR, Hilton, Intercontinental Hotel Group, TFE Hotels, Australian Venues Co, Minor Group, and Luxxe Outsourced Hotel Services. Between mid-2019 and mid-2022, 224 people were employed through this pathway.
- The Maritime and Defence ELO worked with Riviera Australia, the Queensland government and employment services providers in 2022 to run a tailored recruitment and pre-employment program to fill vacancies at Riviera. The training was co-designed, with a range of non-accredited units including composites technology materials; operating and power tools; mould preparation and demoulding techniques; WHS, manual handling, computations, chemical handling and activity planning.
- The Retail ELO has supported IKEA and Community Corporate with their Skills for Employment program to recruit refugees. Approximately 160 refugees have joined the program and 80 per cent of these participants have been offered ongoing contracts with IKEA. Community Corporate provides the pre-employment training, mentoring and cultural competency training for IKEA Managers and staff. The Skills for Employment program includes three days of pre-employment training and a paid work placement in IKEA stores, to provide refugees with local work experience, confidence building, skills and social connections as well as an Australian work reference and an opportunity for on-going employment with IKEA.

The Local Jobs Program is a place-based initiative that supports tailored, local approaches to reskilling and upskilling individuals to meet local employer needs.

- A recent example of the Employment Facilitator's work in the Cairns region connected local aviation employers, industry stakeholders, training organisations and employment services providers to co-design and deliver training to create trade assistant pathways into the aviation industry. This resulted in 10 participants getting jobs in local companies. A second project will commence in April 2023 to prepare up to 20 participants for aviation administration, compliance and logistics roles at the Cairns Airport. This activity will target youth, mature age, First Nations and female participants.
- Industries which are being supported through projects undertaken through the Local Jobs Program's Local Recovery Fund include Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Construction, Aged and Disability Care, Childcare, Tourism and Hospitality and Warehousing and Logistics.

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Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. IQ23-000203

Ms Marion Scrymgour MP on 31 March 2023, Proof Hansard page 52

31 March 2023 | STEPS GROUP | Data

Question

CHAIR: so it would still be used to inform the way forward. If we look at employment, is the collaboration with NIAA going to inform the new CDP going forward?

...

CHAIR: Ms McNaughton, are you able to say who that provider is that is providing that program through that area?

Ms McNaughton: Yes, STEPS Group. Participants in that program can be referred from Services Australia as well as any employment services provider, so that is through CDP or DES or through ours. That's an example of how we are working together at a ground level with our NIAA colleagues. One of the things that we are seeing from this year—and when I say 'this year', I'm saying July 2022 to March—is that we're seeing an increase in the number of people in training compared to the same period last year. I don't have the actual round data with me at the moment; I've just got that there's been a 50 per cent increase in the training. We're also seeing a 155 per cent increase in Indigenous referrals.

CHAIR: Can we get that information, have you take it on notice and provide it to the committee?

Ms McNaughton: Yes.

Answer

The training figures provided relate to the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program. Details of referrals and commencements in the program between July 2022 and March 2023 for the Northern Territory show a strong increase in both referrals and commencements between 2021–22 and 2022–23.

Overall commencements in the program increased from 289 participants in 2021–22 to 598 in 2022–23, of whom 66 per cent (or 395) were indigenous.

Please note that point-in-time data are live and reflect participants moving in and out of programs, depending on when the data is extracted.

Further information can be found at: www.dewr.gov.au/skills-education-and-employment.

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Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. IQ23-000204

Senator Penny Allman-Payne on 31 March 2023, Proof Hansard page 52

31 March 2023 | Program Listings

Question

Senator ALLMAN-PAYNE: I'm happy for this question to be taken on notice. I think it relates very closely to the question that Senator McDonald was asking, so forgive me if there's some overlap, but it would be useful for us to have a list of the programs that are currently running and also information about what data is being collected to determine their effectiveness.

Answer

Please refer to Questions No IQ23-000201 and IQ23-000210.