

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2011-12 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 7

**Question No:** 213

**Topic:** Female Participation in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP)

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Payne** asked:

What barriers does the Department attribute to the low participation rate in the CDEP program among female recipients of Newstart Allowance and Parenting Payment?

**Answer:**

Indigenous women face barriers as single parents, often with extended family responsibilities across their life cycle. These issues frequently prevent or interrupt workforce participation and low levels of involvement in CDEP.

The lower female participation rate reflects a demographic trend in remote Indigenous Australia of women outside the workforce as young single supporting parents and as older women caring for grandchildren.

Participation by women in CDEP receiving parenting payment is voluntary until the youngest child is five years old. After that time a participation requirement of 15 hours per week must be met. Some women may choose family responsibilities over voluntary participation.

For New Participants (those on income support), the CDEP program relies on referrals from Job Services Australia providers and seeks to offer a wide range of engaging opportunities to all participants.