

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013

Outcome 3 - Employment

DEEWR Question No. CA0017_13

Senator Payne provided in writing.

Question

Remote Jobs and Communities Program

Please outline how the new RJCP will service pre-release and recently released prisoners, and youth at risk clients.

Answer

Pre-release Prisoners (PRP)

Under the Remote Jobs and Communities Program, (RJCP), employment and participation services will be available as part of the Pre-release Prisoners Initiative (PRP) for adult prisoners who have been referred to a provider by state or territory corrective services; and for 15 to 21 year old detainees or prisoners who are not in full-time education or training and are registered with the Department of Human Services (DHS) as looking for work. This is consistent with the arrangements under Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services.

The state or territory corrective services will continue to be responsible for assessing a pre-release prisoners' eligibility and prisoners must meet all of the following criteria when they are being referred to an RJCP organisation, i.e:

- be in the last 12 months of their sentence;
- be considered by corrective services case managers to be granted a licence for release to engage in paid work; and
- are considered job ready.

RJCP organisations who are servicing PRP job seekers will work closely with the corrective services officers who are supervising the prisoners and the delivery of employment activities will be negotiated between each provider and the corrective services for the relevant state or territory.

This will ensure that proper consideration is given to each prisoner's circumstance and that the provider is aware of any restrictions placed on the PRP job seeker. PRP job seekers will be able receive the same level of assistance that is available to any other job seeker commenced in the RJCP. In some instances, PRP job seekers may require additional considerations related to their PRP status and the requirements of corrective services arrangements in place in different states and territories.

Services provided to PRP job seekers under RJCP could include:

- initial interview and assessment of skills and employment needs;
- help with updating their resumé;
- use of JobSearch Facilities (i.e. computer and printing facilities where available at the relevant location) and
- regular (at least monthly) contacts with their RJCP provider.

RJCP organisations may use the Participation Account to assist PRP job seekers, in line with program guidelines, and to complement activities and services available to them through corrective services. However, the Participation Account must not be used to fund activities or services that are currently or could reasonably be provided for by corrective services in their state or territory.

Recently Released Prisoners

Prisoners who have left a pre-release centre and are eligible for RJCP services will be referred by the DHS. These job seekers will receive assistance under the RJCP.

Youth at Risk

Youth at risk will be able to receive a full range of assistance from an RJCP organisation.

Young people on a qualifying income support payments such as Youth Allowance (other), Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment or the Disability Support Pension are fully eligible for RJCP. In addition, young people aged 15 to 21 years who are not on income support can volunteer for RJCP where they are not in full-time study or working for at least 15 hours per week. Vulnerable young people in crisis who are full-time students and approach the RJCP organisation with at least one serious non-vocational barrier are immediately eligible for RJCP.

The support from the RJCP organisation will include immediate assistance to deal with their non-vocational barriers and referring them to DHS to discuss their potential eligibility for income support (if not in receipt of income support already). Providers will also help them to develop an individually tailored Participation Plan which sets out the assistance they will receive and the activities they will participate in to address their barriers to employment, increase participation and move into employment, education or towards job readiness. This may include referral to other government programs. The Participation Account may be used to assist the young job seeker as appropriate to their circumstances with work related services and equipment or non-vocational interventions such as rehabilitation, counseling, building life skills, rent and crisis accommodation or the personal development courses.

For young people with the capacity to benefit from the program, over five years the Remote Youth Leadership and Development Corps (Youth Corps) will assist 12,000 young people 24 years of age and under (including vulnerable youth) to make the transition from school to work.

The objective of the Youth Corps is to assist young people to gain the skills needed to secure sustainable employment; either locally or outside the community. Youth Corps participants will undertake intensive activities over a 12 month period toward becoming job ready as well as vocational training tailored to identified job opportunities.

Youth Corps activities could include mentoring; assistance with raising literacy and numeracy skills and basic employability skills; assistance to overcome vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment. The activities will be work focused and work-like as possible, such as work experience with an employer, related to jobs in the community or elsewhere (e.g. mine regeneration work, office work, farm/station work, building and maintaining community facilities/infrastructure, environmental land management/caring for country).