

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Community Development Program

Senator: Senator Rachel Siewert
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Type of question: Written
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Question:

In regard to the Community Development Program, please provide the following information in respect of referrals and commencements since 1 July 2015:

- a) How many people were eligible for referral to this program?
- b) How many were referred to it?
- c) Please provide a breakdown of reasons for non-referral.
- d) Of these, what proportion have commenced?
- e) What proportion of those referred did not commence within the required period: please provide a breakdown of reasons for non-commencement
- f) What proportion of those referred who did not commence within the required period were sanctioned for non attendance?
- g) Among those who have commenced in the program, please provide a breakdown by State/Territory, whether they were engaged with a host organisation, and whether the host organisations were not for profit or for profit organizations.
- h) Please provide a breakdown of the types of activities commenced
- i) What is the hourly rate of payment for 25 hours a week of participation in the program, for participants on different income support payments levels?
- j) How do these compare with the minimum hourly wage?

Answer:

All recipients of activity tested income support who live in a Community Development Programme (CDP) region are eligible to receive CDP services.

From 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015, 9,800 job seekers were referred to the CDP. This includes those referred by the Department of Human Services, those directly registered by CDP providers, and those transferring between providers following a change of address. Of the 9,800 referred, 62 per cent had commenced their formal engagement with the programme by 30 September 2015. Overall, 83 per cent of job seekers on the CDP caseload at 30 September 2015 had a status of commenced.

Job seekers may not be recorded in the system as commenced in the CDP for a range of reasons. These may include the time required to arrange an appointment following referral, job seekers failing to attend their appointment, job seekers exiting the caseload or becoming suspended before meeting with the provider, or job seekers failing to enter into a Job Plan. Data on the reason for non-commencement, and the follow up action for the 38 per cent of job seekers that have not yet commenced are not readily attainable and would require analysis of individual job seeker records. We consider this to be an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

A breakdown of job seekers who commenced in the CDP between 1 July 2015 and 30 September 2015 and who are undertaking some or all of their CDP activities in a host organisation is as follows.

State/Territory	Number of Job Seekers Placed with a Host Organisation
NSW	<20
NT	46
QLD	<20
SA	<20
WA	45
Total	130

Data are not collected on the not for profit status of host organisations

CDP participants can participate in a broad range of activities that build employable skills, while contributing to their communities. These activities can include: project style work; community activities such as aged care or beautification; work experience in a real business; language, numeracy and literacy training; vocational training; support to address vocational barriers; and drivers licence training. Data on the actual activities commenced would require analysis of individual job seekers records, and are not readily attainable. The Department will undertake an assessment of the type of activities job seekers have participated in as part of the scheduled evaluation of the CDP due by the end of 2016. A copy of the data or analysis will be made available to the Committee at this time.

There is no hourly rate of pay for income support. Income support is calculated on fortnightly entitlement periods and varies from job seeker to job seeker depending on their individual circumstance (such as dependents etc.) Further information can be found in the Guide to Social Security law at <http://guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law/3/2/1/40>.