

# Appendix 1: Annotated timeline of key developments

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## 1976

Then ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, Social Security, Employment and Industrial Affairs meet to discuss difficulties arising because of Indigenous peoples' access to social security benefits. Concern is expressed that a large proportion of Indigenous people of workforce age in remote areas could end up on unemployment benefits, so an alternative is sought.<sup>1</sup> An Interdepartmental Working Party on Aboriginal Employment is established.

## 1977

On 26 May 1977, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner, announces the creation of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) as part of a package of measures designed to deal with the employment problems noted in the Working Party's report. CDEP is seen as having particular value for communities that do not have access to a mainstream (waged) labour market.<sup>2</sup> CDEP starts as a pilot scheme in Wugularr (Bamyili) community in the Northern Territory.

At its inception, CDEP has the following characteristics:

- it is set up administratively with no legislative basis;
- it is designed to reduce the high level of Aboriginal unemployment;

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1 Sanders W (2007: 1).

2 Altman JC, Gray MC & Levitus R (2005: 28).

## BETTER THAN WELFARE?

- a secondary concern is the social effect on Indigenous communities of direct cash payments received as a result of unemployment benefits;
- the program is administered by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA);
- DAA provides block grants to Indigenous community councils or incorporated organisations to employ CDEP participants in community development projects (additional grants are made for on-costs like administration and capital expenditures);
- payments are notionally linked to unemployment benefits. That is, money is paid indirectly to CDEP participants as a basic wage approximating the unemployment benefits they would otherwise receive.

By August, a number of South and Western Australian Pitjantjatjara communities join CDEP on a pilot basis.<sup>3</sup> There are now four communities participating in the program. This expands to approximately 10 by 1978.

## 1980

A review of the CDEP Pilot scheme is carried out.<sup>4</sup> CDEP continues to expand under the Fraser Government. By 1981 there are approximately 1,300 participants across 18 communities. Expenditure has almost doubled to \$6.9 million.<sup>5</sup>

## 1983

The Hawke Government furthers the expansion of CDEP into remote communities. Funding increases to meet the growing level of demand for CDEP.

## 1985

The *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs* (the Miller Report) is released. The Miller Report recommends that CDEP be expanded on account of its potential

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3 Johns M (2008: 10).

4 Department of Finance and Deregulation, Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) (2009: 81).

5 Johns op. cit., p.10.

to provide employment, commercial and other entrepreneurial opportunity in remote communities.<sup>6</sup> CDEP continues to expand and by 1986 takes in 38 remote communities and about 4,000 participants.

## 1987

Acting on recommendations of the Miller Report, the Hawke Government develops the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP). The AEDP recommends an expansion of CDEP into 'wider target groups' in areas where Aboriginal people have poor employment prospects, opening the way for the introduction of CDEP into non-remote areas.<sup>7</sup> CDEP becomes the largest single program in the federal Aboriginal affairs budget. By 1986–87, there are 63 projects involving 6,000 participants and costing almost \$40 million.<sup>8</sup>

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The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs releases *The Return to Country: The Aboriginal Homelands Movement in Australia* report (the Blanchard Report). The Blanchard Report recommends that CDEP be expanded to all homeland centres wishing to participate in the scheme.

\* \* \*

The *Economic Viability of Aboriginal Outstations and Homelands* report is prepared for the Australian Council for Employment and Training. The report recommends 'careful consideration' with regard to expanding CDEP to homeland centres and outstations, as the economic impact of CDEP on outstations has not yet been adequately reviewed. The report observes that CDEP is often used at outstations for income support rather than for developing programs for the community.<sup>9</sup>

## 1988–90

CDEP begins to expand into southern regional and urban areas. The first non-remote CDEPs are established in New South Wales and Victoria in 1988–89. By early 1990, there are 2,900 participants in

6 Johns op. cit., p.10–11.

7 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.78.

8 Altman, Gray & Levitus op. cit., p.29.

9 Altman JC & Taylor L (1989: 51).

13 newly participating Aboriginal communities in more settled areas of Australia along the eastern seaboard of Queensland, in New South Wales, Victoria and southern South Australia.<sup>10</sup>

## 1989

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) raises a concern that DAA cannot, in every instance, verify that CDEP payments are being made to entitled recipients.<sup>11</sup>

## 1990

The DAA initiates a review into CDEP funding and administration. The review recommends that expansion of CDEP be slowed in order to allow for administrative and policy issues to be resolved.<sup>12</sup> The Hawke Government responds by indicating that no new communities will be included in the CDEP scheme in the 1990–91 budget year.<sup>13</sup>

\* \* \*

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is established and takes over the running of CDEP. By this time CDEP is a major nationwide program.

\* \* \*

In November the *Report of the Auditor-General No. 12, 1990–91, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission – Community Development Employment Projects* is released. It focuses on planning and implementation issues to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme, and is referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs for review.<sup>14</sup>

## 1991

The budget for CDEP in 1990–91 is over \$180 million and the program now includes 188 organisations and 18,000 participants.<sup>15</sup>

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10 Altman JC & Sanders W (1991a: 13).

11 Altman JC & Sanders W (1991b: 3).

12 CDEP Working Party (1990).

13 Altman & Sanders 1991b op. cit., p.3.

14 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (1991).

15 Ibid., p.2.

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The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs releases its *Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 12*. It finds that 'CDEP is proving to be a sound and effective scheme that has much to offer', but owing to the rapid rate of its expansion the efficiency of its implementation could be considerably improved.<sup>16</sup> This is particularly so in areas such as coordination, monitoring and appropriate training for CDEP administrators in communities.

\* \* \*

ATSIC releases the report of an interdepartmental review of the administration of CDEP. The report—*Community Development Employment Projects: Review of Funding and Administration*—notes concerns about the possibility of so-called 'double dipping', in that CDEP participants can theoretically access partial unemployment benefits if their CDEP income is below a certain threshold (as can normal waged workers). It recommends the government prevents this either by increasing CDEP wages or legislating to prevent CDEP participants from receiving unemployment benefits.<sup>17</sup>

\* \* \*

The *Social Security Act* is amended to make CDEP participants ineligible for unemployment benefits because they are deemed to be already receiving another form of Commonwealth Government income support.<sup>18</sup>

\* \* \*

The *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* makes a number of recommendations with regard to the CDEP scheme. These recommendations include the following:

203: Recommends that the highest priority be accorded to facilitating social, economic and cultural development plans by Aboriginal communities and regions as a basis for future planning for CDEP schemes. In particular, it notes that the preparation of CDEP work

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16 Ibid., p.1.

17 Race Discrimination Commissioner (1997: 9–10).

18 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.78.

plans (community development plans) should be a participative process involving all members of the community, and should draw on the knowledge and expertise of a wide range of professionals as well the views and aspirations of Aboriginal people in the local area. It states that the processes by which plans are developed must be culturally sensitive, unhurried and holistic in approach, and that adequate information on the following matters must be made available to participants:

- The range of Aboriginal needs and aspirations
- The opportunities created by government policies or programs
- The opportunities and constraints in the local economy
- The political opportunities to influence the local arena.

317: Recommends that further extension of CDEP (or some similar program) to rural towns with large Aboriginal populations and limited mainstream employment opportunities for Aboriginal people be considered.

318: Recommends that in view of the considerable demands placed on staff of ATSIC by the expansion of CDEP, consideration be given to devolving responsibility for some aspects of CDEP administrative support to appropriate consenting Aboriginal organisations, in particular resource agencies.<sup>19</sup>

## 1991–92

The moratorium on CDEP's expansion in the 1990–91 budget is lifted in the budget for 1991–92.<sup>20</sup> A total of 185 CDEP projects are now funded, involving 20,100 participants and costing \$205 million. The scheme accounts for around one-third of Aboriginal affairs portfolio expenditure.<sup>21</sup>

## 1992

*Auditor-General's Report No. 44, Entitlement checks in localities with CDEP* is released.

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19 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991).

20 Altman & Sanders 1991b op. cit., p.3.

21 Altman, Gray & Levitus op. cit., p.29.

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The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs releases *Mainly Urban: Report of the Inquiry into the needs of urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people*. It finds that CDEP is 'proving of great value in rural towns' where there is intractable and structural Aboriginal unemployment. It recommends the further expansion of CDEP into urban areas, but suggests introducing a 'sunset clause' for phasing out CDEP after a certain period where there are other jobs available.<sup>22</sup>

### 1993

*No Reverse Gear, A National Review of the Community Development Employment Projects Scheme* is prepared for ATSIC by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.<sup>23</sup> The review recommends that CDEP's expansion be slowed due to lack of clear objectives or goals. It further recommends an increase in the capital component of CDEP to support increased investment in community development.

### 1994

Responsibility for CDEP is devolved to ATSIC regional councils.<sup>24</sup>

### 1995

By 1995 there are 252 CDEP organisations with approximately 27,000 participants.

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An Interdepartmental Committee of Review of CDEP finds that CDEP participants are unable to access a range of tax and social security benefits available to the unemployed. ATSIC releases a report stating that 'this situation can no longer be tolerated'.<sup>25</sup>

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22 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1992: 114).

23 McCullagh G (1993).

24 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.78.

25 ATSIC (1995: 92).

The ANAO releases an audit of the CDEP scheme. Phase one examines the operations of one central, one state and one regional office, finding examples of good practice with room for improvement in administrative matters. Phase two of the audit is to be completed in 1997.<sup>26</sup>

## 1996

The newly elected Howard Government stops the allocation of new CDEP places and cuts funding by 12 per cent for communities with less than 150 participants.<sup>27</sup>

## 1997

The *Independent Review of CDEP* by Ian Spicer (the Spicer Review) is released. It is generally positive about CDEP, stating that its importance 'cannot be overstated ... Without it, some remote communities would simply not exist.' It lists benefits including skills enhancement, improved quality of life, social and cultural outcomes, pride, enterprise development and economic growth. It also notes concerns that up to one-third of participants do not work (some therefore receiving very little income under 'no work no pay' rules). The review recommends moving these participants onto unemployment benefits where they will be financially better off and refocusing the scheme's objectives to provide work 'as defined by the community'. The report also emphasises that the principle challenge is ensuring that, where possible, CDEP acts as a conduit to unsubsidised employment options.<sup>28</sup>

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Phase two of the ANAO audit is completed. It focuses on the operational and planning aspects of CDEP. The audit recommends focusing on setting priorities, resource allocation and performance information over and above the operational plan of CDEP.<sup>29</sup>

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26 Johns op. cit., p.12.

27 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.78.

28 Spicer I (1997: 1-4).

29 Johns op. cit., p.12.

The Race Discrimination Commissioner releases *The CDEP Scheme and Racial Discrimination*, which deals in part with allegations that lack of access of CDEP participants to social security entitlements is discriminatory. It finds that there is no 'significant issue of racial discrimination'. However, it notes that different government departments treat CDEP participants differently; for example, the tax office treats them as wage earners for the purposes of calculating income tax payable, but the Department of Social Security (DSS) treats them as participants in a publicly funded employment program and as such precludes them from becoming DSS customers. This prevents CDEP participants from accessing a range of social security payments available to ordinary wage earners. The review urges the government to consistently treat CDEP participants as ordinary wage earners.<sup>30</sup>

\* \* \*

The ATSI Office of Evaluation and Audit (OEA) completes a report into the employment outcomes of urban CDEP schemes and the financial and non-labour market outcomes and benefits of the scheme for both urban and non-urban CDEPs.<sup>31</sup> The report finds that CDEP schemes generally produce positive outcomes for participants in urban areas when compared to urban unemployed Indigenous people. The report also finds that CDEP provides significant training opportunities for participants, while training opportunities are more limited in rural and remote areas.

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By June, CDEP covers 268 participating communities and 30,133 participants, comprising 20,501 participants in remote localities and 9,630 in non-remote areas. For many Indigenous people in remote locations, the local CDEP scheme provides the only alternative to unemployment.

## 1999

The Howard Government introduces the Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP), recommending that CDEP be considered a pathway to unsubsidised employment. A CDEP placement incentive is paid

30 Race Discrimination Commissioner (1997).

31 Johns op. cit., p.12.

to CDEP organisations when participants exit the scheme for other paid work. Key functions within the IEP are delivered through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

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Amendments to the Social Security Act<sup>32</sup> introduce a 'CDEP Scheme Participant Supplement' of \$20 per fortnight. This gives CDEP participants an equivalent payment to that received by Newstart and Youth Allowance recipients involved in Work for the Dole activities. It also means CDEP participants become Centrelink (formerly DSS) customers for the first time, such that they can access a range of other government payments previously inaccessible to them.

## 2001

The ANAO draws attention to the fact that a range of government services in Indigenous communities are being funded through the CDEP program.<sup>33</sup> This 'substitution funding' (in which CDEP participants are paid to do municipal services type jobs, shifting costs onto the CDEP program and away from government agencies that would otherwise be responsible) has long been recognised, but has not always been interpreted as a problem.<sup>34</sup>

\* \* \*

ATSIC releases *Outcomes Report on the Relevant, Responsive Remote CDEPs Workshop*, which seeks to evaluate CDEP schemes in order to rethink policy directions for CDEP in rural and remote areas.

## 2002

From February, the Howard Government introduces Indigenous Employment Centres (IECs) in cities and regional centres. These are designed to assist up to 10,000 CDEP participants move from 'work experience' into unsubsidised employment or other employment assistance. CDEP organisations are encouraged to take on the role of IECs.<sup>35</sup>

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32 *Further 1998 Budget Measures Legislation Amendment (Social Security) Act 1999.*

33 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.78.

34 Altman & Sanders 1991b op. cit., p.9.

35 Champion M (2002: 29).

\* \* \*

COAG agrees to trial working together with Indigenous communities in up to 10 regions to provide more flexible programs and services based on priorities agreed with the communities. A number of the trial sites include CDEP provider services.<sup>36</sup>

## 2003

At 30 June, ATSIC counted 272 CDEP projects with just over 35,000 participants, operating on total grants of \$484 million, three-quarters of which (\$365 million) is offset against welfare entitlements.<sup>37</sup>

\* \* \*

Budget 2003–04 announces the addition of 1,000 extra CDEP places each year for the following four years (where previously an approximate increase of 550 places were funded per annum). The places are allocated to remote communities to support projects that seek to prevent and address family violence and substance misuse.<sup>38</sup>

\* \* \*

The Howard Government releases Stage One of its report on the IEP. It recommends moving CDEP participants into more 'open employment'. Stage Two, focusing on the effectiveness of the components of IEP, is to be completed by 2004.

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ATSIC convenes a workshop on proposed reforms to CDEP, which recommends streaming CDEP into two directions: community development on the one hand, and enterprise and employment programs on the other.

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36 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.78.

37 Altman, Gray & Levitus op. cit., p.29.

38 Department of Finance and Deregulation, op. cit., p.78.

## 2004

ATSIC is disbanded amid controversy. Responsibility for CDEP is transferred to DEWR. Under DEWR's administration, the formal aims of CDEP shift further towards moving CDEP participants into unsubsidised employment.<sup>39</sup>

## 2005

DEWR commences a reform process, which leads to significant changes to CDEP. According to DEWR there are around 37,000 CDEP participants in 2005.<sup>40</sup> This number includes non-Indigenous CDEP participants, who make up an estimated 10 per cent of the total (usually spouses or de facto partners of Indigenous participants).

\* \* \*

The Remote Area Exemptions (RAE) for activity testing for unemployment benefits are progressively removed from 2005 (and phased out entirely by 2009). When an income support recipient has their RAE removed they are assessed by Centrelink; if they have sufficient work capacity they are required to enter into an activity agreement. This will include participation in CDEP, Job Network or a structured training course.<sup>41</sup>

\* \* \*

In April, DEWR releases the discussion paper *Building on Success CDEP – Future Directions*, suggesting that CDEP 'has become a destination rather than a stepping stone towards jobs' in many communities.<sup>42</sup> It argues for a 'stronger focus on results' in three areas of employment, community activities and business development, better links between CDEP and the mainstream Job Network, and an expansion of IECs.

## 2006

*Performance Audit of CDEP Performance Information* is released by the Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs).

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39 Sanders W (2007).

40 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2005).

41 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.79.

42 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations op. cit., p.3.

The *Indigenous Potential meets Economic Opportunity* discussion paper is released by DEWR in March. It proposes major changes including ceasing CDEP in urban and regional areas.<sup>43</sup> Kevin Andrews, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, suggests that around 7,000 participant places in 40 CDEP organisations will be removed from the scheme from June 2007, out of a national total of 35,000 participants. These proposed closures are in areas with what are described by the government as ‘strong labour markets’. Affected participants and organisations will instead be offered opportunities to participate in general DEWR programs and an expansion of the Indigenous-specific Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) ‘brokerage service’. STEP provides funding and assistance for employers to take on Indigenous staff. IECs are to cease and all CDEP and IEC organisations are required to compete for contracts if they wish to become STEP providers.<sup>44</sup> CDEP participants in non-remote areas are required to register with a Job Network member, and new participants are limited to 12 months’ participation in the scheme.<sup>45</sup> In remote areas, a lower youth rate is introduced for new CDEP participants aged 20 years and under, and income limits are changed in an attempt to encourage CDEP participants into non-CDEP work.<sup>46</sup>

## 2007

Minister for Workplace Relations Joe Hockey states that the objective of CDEP is to move people off welfare and into ‘real employment’. He characterises CDEP as a form of social welfare that prevents participants from gaining ‘real’ employment.<sup>47</sup>

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From 1 July, around 60 urban and regional CDEPs are closed in areas deemed to have strong labour markets with unemployment rates of below 7 per cent. Around 6,000 people are exited from the program.<sup>48</sup>

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43 Johns op. cit., p.15.

44 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2006).

45 Sanders W (2007).

46 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.79.

47 Johns op. cit.

48 Altman JC (2007).

In July, Minister for Indigenous Affairs Mal Brough and Joe Hockey announce plans to abolish CDEP in the Northern Territory as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). This will make former participants subject to income management, another element of the NTER. Members of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) raise concerns about the proposed closure of CDEP in the Northern Territory. Jenny Macklin, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs, argues that removing CDEP will 'make communities, parents and children more vulnerable' and commits to retaining it if the ALP wins office at the next election. Warren Snowdon, Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia and Indigenous Affairs, argues closing CDEP will move people onto 'sit down money' and 'spell the death knell' of many positive initiatives in Indigenous communities.<sup>49</sup>

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From September, CDEP programs in the Northern Territory begin to be closed on a community-by-community basis. With the election of the Rudd Government in late November a moratorium is placed on further dismantling CDEP in the Northern Territory. By this time CDEP has closed in around 30 communities, representing 16 CDEP organisations and more than 2,000 CDEP participants.<sup>50</sup>

\* \* \*

CDEP administration is moved from the Employment portfolio to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

\* \* \*

In December, funding is committed to convert 1,600 CDEP positions supporting Australian Government-funded services into 'real jobs'. The Australian Government is also matching dollar for dollar up to \$10 million to create a further 2,000 Northern Territory Government and local government jobs from the conversion of CDEP positions where these were providing municipal type services.<sup>51</sup>

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49 Jordan K (2011: 15).

50 Altman JC & Johns M (2008: 10).

51 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.79.

## 2008

The Rudd Government releases *Increasing Indigenous Economic Opportunity – A discussion paper on the future of the CDEP and the Indigenous Employment Program*. This report foreshadows further major reform of CDEP from July 2009.

\* \* \*

From July, the Australian Government begins to reinstate a modified version of CDEP in Northern Territory remote communities where it was closed under the NTER. This is for an initial period of 12 months. However, not all of the CDEP positions that had been ‘dissolved’ under the NTER are reinstated.<sup>52</sup>

\* \* \*

Also in July, the Northern Territory Government announces the creation of ‘super-shires’, including the amalgamation of local Aboriginal community councils. Control of some CDEP schemes in the Northern Territory is handed to shires. Only a small number of the original CDEP organisations in the Northern Territory remain.

\* \* \*

In December, Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin outlines key elements of the Rudd Government’s new Indigenous employment strategy that centres on significant changes to CDEP and reform of the IEP. The proposed changes will see CDEP cease to operate in all remaining non-remote areas as of 1 July 2009. In remote areas, new entrants to the scheme from 1 July 2009 will receive income support instead of CDEP wages.

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Additional funding is announced to convert a further 2,000 CDEP jobs in municipal services delivery into fully funded Australian Government jobs.<sup>53</sup>

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52 Jordan op. cit., p.15.

53 Department of Finance and Deregulation op. cit., p.66.

## 2009

From 1 July, CDEP closes in all non-remote areas. This sees it removed from an additional 30 locations, with just under 2,000 participants exiting the scheme. CDEP is now delivered only in areas deemed to be 'remote'. New participants in remote areas are to receive social security payments instead of CDEP wages. 'Grandfathered participants' are told they will be eligible to continue receiving CDEP wages and 'top up' until 30 September 2011.<sup>54</sup> All participants are also required to sign up to mainstream employment services with Job Services Australia (JSA). JSA and CDEP providers are asked to work together to assist their joint clients find mainstream jobs.

\* \* \*

The net effect of changes to CDEP under the Howard and Rudd governments means that by October 2009 total participant numbers have declined dramatically to around 14,500 people.<sup>55</sup>

## 2010

The date for cessation of CDEP wages for grandfathered participants is extended until April 2012. In announcing this change, Jenny Macklin suggests this will 'provide stability to the program while ongoing discussions about the way services are delivered are held with local communities to ensure they reflect local needs'. She reiterates that the changes to CDEP 'aim to see people transition out of CDEP into work with proper wages and conditions including superannuation and leave entitlements'.<sup>56</sup>

## 2011

CDEP participant numbers continue to decline, to just under 10,500 in February 2011.<sup>57</sup>

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54 Jordan op. cit., p.15–16.

55 Jordan op. cit., p.15.

56 Macklin J, Plibersek T & Arbib M (2010).

57 Jordan op. cit., p.15–16.

In June, the Gillard Government announces a major review of remote employment services, with the aim of developing a new scheme to be in place by 1 July 2013. The review will seek advice from a new 'Remote Participation and Employment Services Engagement Panel' and from consultation sessions in 20 remote communities in August and September.<sup>58</sup>

\* \* \*

A discussion paper is released to frame the review into remote employment services. Titled *The Future of Remote Participation and Employment Service Arrangements*, it suggests that existing services under CDEP, JSA, IEP and Disability Employment Services (DES) are 'fragmented' and 'their goals ... not always aligned'. It says these arrangements are 'inflexible and unresponsive to community needs and aspirations' and 'confusing for the communities and the people living in them' as a result of being 'delivered by several different providers'. The 'current market driven employment services', it says, are 'suited to urban and regional Australia' and do 'not adequately address the issues specific to remote Australia'.<sup>59</sup>

## 2012

In April, the Gillard Government announces the creation of the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), which brings together and replaces the CDEP, JSA, DES and IEP in remote areas, creating one single integrated service.<sup>60</sup> RJCP is to commence on 1 July 2013. All participants will be required to engage in Work for the Dole activities for 15–20 hours per week for social security payments, although grandfathering arrangements for those still on CDEP wages are extended until 2017. (In other parts of the country, this 'mutual obligation' activity requirement applies only to those unemployed for more than six months, and then only six months in each year.)<sup>61</sup> The changes are ostensibly designed to provide better support to help participants get jobs and participate in activities that improve their communities.<sup>62</sup>

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58 Arbib M, Macklin J & Ellis K (2011).

59 Sanders W & Fowkes L (2015: 1).

60 Macklin J, Shorten B & Collins J (2012).

61 Sanders & Fowkes op. cit., p.2.

62 Macklin, Shorten & Collins op. cit.

The 2012–13 Budget states that extending the payment of CDEP wages to grandfathered participants to 30 June 2017 will ‘support Indigenous people in remote communities with work and training opportunities ... [and] provide stability to CDEP wage participants as they move to the new Remote Jobs and Communities Program’.<sup>63</sup>

## 2013

From 1 July, CDEP is replaced by RJCP. The new service is delivered in 60 remote regions, by organisations selected on the basis of competitive tender. These include some Indigenous organisations with a history of delivering CDEP as well as shires, for-profit and not-for-profit providers. RJCP retains features of both CDEP and JSA, including CDEP’s focus on delivering activities and training, and JSA’s focus on mandatory client assessment and minimum monthly appointments to monitor progress on agreed commitments.<sup>64</sup> There are around 500 former CDEP participants who fall outside these designated RJCP regions; these participants are moved over onto JSA.<sup>65</sup> RJCP is not an Indigenous-specific program, but the large majority of participants are Indigenous.

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In August, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott announces that, if the Coalition wins office at the next federal election, Indigenous employment and training programs will be the subject of a review headed by mining magnate Andrew Forrest.<sup>66</sup>

\* \* \*

After the election of the Abbott Government in September, the new Minister for Indigenous Affairs Nigel Scullion is reported as describing RJCP as ‘a complete disaster’ because participants had become disengaged and meaningful activities were not being delivered. He is reported as saying that the old system of CDEP, which both ALP and Coalition governments had dismantled, was a better alternative.<sup>67</sup>

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63 Commonwealth of Australia (2012).

64 Sanders & Fowkes op. cit., p.1.

65 Macklin J, Shorten B & Collins J (2012).

66 Cullen S (2013).

67 Karvelas P (2013).

## 2014

Some 3,000 CDEP participants are still employed on wages within RJCP and can remain so until 2017.<sup>68</sup>

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*Creating Parity*, the report of the Forrest Review, is released on 1 August. It says that CDEP participants were better off financially than the unemployed on Newstart but recommends bringing forward the cessation of CDEP wages for grandfathered participants from 2017 to 2015 in the name of 'equity'.<sup>69</sup>

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On 6 December, Nigel Scullion announces that RJCP will be reformed with the expressed aim of delivering 'better opportunities for remote job seekers' and fostering 'stronger economic and social outcomes in remote Australia'.<sup>70</sup> He suggests that the RJCP has failed because 'it wasn't geared to the unique social and labour market conditions of remote Australia'.<sup>71</sup> Scullion also announces that, based on the recommendation of the Forrest Review, grandfathered CDEP wages will cease on 30 June 2015. The changes to RJCP will ostensibly ensure jobseekers are active and contributing to their communities.

## 2015

Nigel Scullion announces on 3 June that from 1 July RJCP will be renamed the Community Development Programme (CDP). CDP participants will be required to participate in Work for the Dole activities for up to 25 hours per week for 12 months of the year (with some provisions for identified leave). At the commencement of CDP there are over 35,000 participants, with around 30,000 required to undertake Work for the Dole activities.<sup>72</sup>

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68 Sanders & Fowkes op. cit., p.2.

69 Forrest A (chair) (2014: 134).

70 Moran M, Porter D & Curth-Bibb J (2014).

71 Scullion N (2014).

72 Scullion N (2015).

In December, Nigel Scullion tables new legislation in parliament seeking to remove income support recipients in remote regions from the standard social security legislation.<sup>73</sup> Instead, he proposes that remote income support recipients will be subject to different administrative and compliance arrangements under a separate legislative instrument. Broad-ranging powers would allow the Minister for Indigenous Affairs (presently Scullion) to determine how the social security system would function in remote areas, including the obligations of social security recipients and penalties for non-compliance, although there would be a requirement for 'consultation'. Scullion indicates these changes are in response to Aboriginal peoples' concerns about the closure of CDEP. They appear to attempt to resurrect some features of that scheme, but without a return to CDEP wages. The Bill is referred to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee for inquiry in January 2016. The majority report of the Senate committee recommends the changes be approved by parliament. Two dissenting reports—from the Australian Labor Party and Australian Greens—recommend the legislation be withdrawn.

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- Altman JC & Johns M (2008). *Indigenous welfare reform in the Northern Territory and Cape York: a comparative analysis*. Working Paper 44, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra.

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