

The role of Community  
Development Employment  
Projects in rural and remote  
communities: Support document

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This document was produced by the author(s) based on their research for the report, *The role of Community Development Employment Projects in rural and remote communities*, and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVER's website:  
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# Regional Council – Roma

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## Regional needs

Members of the regional council agreed that the Indigenous communities in the region required people to acquire all the skills and knowledge that people in mainstream communities required. These included skills and knowledge to allow them to operate in political, professional, law and order, business, administration and trade occupations. There was need for Indigenous people to acquire the political and governance skills to enable them to participate responsibly on boards of Indigenous organisations and to develop the negotiation and decision making to allow them to participate in mainstream local, state and Indigenous politics. They required management skills to enable them to run organisations and deal with employees and the accounting skills to enable them to deal with the finances. They required skills to enable them to protect and promote their culture and heritage. Indigenous communities required solicitors, health workers, doctors, dentists, nurses, age and child care workers, teachers, policemen, accountants, bookkeepers, and tradesmen and women in a variety of trades. They required carpentry, plumbing, welding, automotive mechanics skills, and skills in operating heavy machinery including truck driving, chainsaws, and backhoes. They required skills and knowledge required for running enterprises, and administration skills for ensuring that organisations ran smoothly and efficiently. There was also a view that although skills for undertaking basic jobs, hygiene skills, and other life skills were essential in the short-term, that the major focus should be education. The advantage in having community members develop expertise in these areas, and acquire professional and trade qualifications, and special licences, was that communities would have the ability to pass on this expertise to future generations.

There was nothing particularly new about the desire to have communities develop these higher order and basic skills and knowledge. However, it had been difficult to get young people to move away from their communities to engage in education and training to develop such skills.

Apart from the acquisition of qualifications and the development of specific occupational skills what was also required was the development of successful job-seeking skills. These included skills in writing resumes, looking for jobs, preparing job applications, and attending interviews. Training Indigenous people to ‘sell’ themselves in an interview was particularly important as it was acknowledged that self-promotion was not generally practised in ‘Murri’ culture.

Above all regional councillors wanted their young people to be able to compete in schools, society and the job market without discrimination.

## Regional initiatives

A number of regional initiatives have been implemented for the communities in the region to acquire some of these skills. These have included the establishment of CDEP programs, Indigenous medical centres, and a regional housing authority. In addition to creating employment opportunities, the setting up of Indigenous health centres had been successful in training

Indigenous health workers, the establishment of the Housing Authority had meant that Indigenous young people have been able to undertake apprenticeships in the construction industry. This meant that career pathways had been opened up. The establishment of the CDEP schemes in the various districts had also meant that many community members had undergone training, acquired qualifications and moved on. CDEP had provided participants who had been 'on the dole' with a stepping stone to future employment by providing them with on-the-job experience and training. There was also a view that the CDEP should only be used as a stepping stone and should not be an end in itself, and that individuals should be prepared to go where the labour market was for work.

The establishment of Indigenous health centres (particularly the one in Dolby) with the focus on 'buying locally' meant that the centre also contributed to the local economy as it purchased uniforms and materials from local suppliers. The Regional Housing Authority had also increased the amount of housing repair and maintenance that was done on Indigenous housing and this had also in turn improved the standard of Indigenous homes and individual and family life styles. In addition, there had also been an increase in the numbers of people wanting to buy their own homes.

## Concerns

The major difficulties experienced in implementing these initiatives were often related to inadequate funding. For example, the funding available to the Housing Authority through the National Aboriginal Housing Scheme was for 2 years. This meant that it would be insufficient to cover the costs for apprentices in four-year apprenticeships. The Authority had used income from the rental properties to help to fund these apprenticeships but this not been sufficient. There was also a concern about what was perceived to be the inequitable funding of CDEPs across the region, with managers who were more able to write better applications for funding accessing a better share of the funds, than those who were less skilled in this area.

Other concerns related to problems with alcohol and substance abuse, and trying to encourage people who were not motivated to engage in training. For those participants in training there were also a lot of interruptions to training participation because of the need to attend funerals.

Other difficulties related to the ability of individuals to find jobs in external labour markets especially in those areas where employers continued to have an image of Indigenous people as a 'bunch of drunks'.

Solutions to these problems included instances where the regional council had provided communities with assistance with funerals. The Housing Authority had also accessed funds from its rental properties to ensure that apprentices were able to complete their apprenticeships.

## Benefits of apprenticeship and traineeship training

It was generally felt that communities derived considerable benefits from having community members engage in and complete apprenticeship and traineeship training. In addition to specific products (for example, houses, other constructions, repairs, and maintenance) it also meant that the community had available to it relevant industry-specific skills and knowledge and that local tradesmen would be on hand to supervise more apprentices and trainees in the future. Having Indigenous tradesmen provide services also meant that community members would feel more comfortable in discussing their needs. Seeing their own people construct or repair and maintain houses, was also perceived to lift community self-image.

Having skilled and qualified tradespeople meant also that schemes like the Housing Authority or CDEP could advertise and tender for work on the open market. There was also a view that this activity helped individuals to break the cycle of welfare dependence or criminality.

## Individual benefits

The benefits to individuals of engaging in apprenticeship and traineeship training were also significant. They acquired qualifications ('money could not buy that piece of paper'), skills, trades and professions. It also meant they were not reliant on handouts, had more money with which to feed and look after their families, buy clothes, travel, buy cars and pay the bills. It also meant that they were independent and could participate in the wider economy. People who were part of the economy (in terms of having a paid job) could also buy their own houses. When people were able to do such things their self-image and self-esteem was also improved.

Having these benefits translated into improved individual self-esteem and pride among parents and relatives. Such individuals would also be in a better position to become leaders in their communities. Where they remained in the communities, apprentices who completed their apprenticeships would be able to repay their communities by building houses and providing repairs and maintenance services. They would also be able to repair and maintain motor vehicles.

## Employer benefits

Employers who employed trainees or apprentices in their organizations were able to access subsidised funding (for example, they only had to pay them a training wage) and to provide them with the training that was customised to the needs of their organizations. Where employers hired an apprentice from the CDEP they were further subsidised in that the CEDP scheme provided payment for two days a week.

## Benefits of CDEP

It was generally felt that if there were no CDEP programs that communities, especially rural communities, would be seriously affected. One councillor believed that they would 'go back 50 years'. Another believed that there would be a 'lot of unemployed walking the streets' which might mean 'more drug and alcohol abuse would be committed out of boredom'. These anti-social behaviours would then put more hardship and pressure on parents. More importantly if there were no CDEP children would not 'see their mums or dads go to work' and would continue to believe that unemployment was the normal way of life.

## Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions for improvement mainly revolved around alterations to the CDEP arrangements would allow participants to access 'long service leave', increase the number of hours that were available to participants, and provide better equipment and facilities. Lifting the ceilings of participants would also ensure that more people were involved in work. There was also a belief that CDEPs should be more flexible in allowing participants from one CDEP to temporarily attend another, when visiting a different location. For example if someone had to attend a funeral for a week or so and this took them away from their parent CDEP then they should be able to attend the CDEP in the visited location.

# Regional Council- Tennant Creek

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## Regional needs

Members of the Regional Council were asked to identify what were the major needs for the Barkly area. In the main, members of the Council wanted to see Indigenous people develop the skills and knowledge required for the effective functioning of communities. Adequate housing, health and accredited training were seen as the major priorities. This meant ensuring that communities did not have to depend on non-Indigenous, non-local, tradespeople and administrative, or health-related professionals who came into communities, stayed for a while and then left the community without much positive impact. Often the community was also left to deal with mistakes they had left behind.

Council members wanted communities to have access to local Indigenous, multi-skilled and qualified tradespeople (for example, builders, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, motor mechanics, plant operators, railway workers, engineering workers, health workers and nurses). In addition, they wanted those who had already acquired basic qualifications like health workers, teacher assistants, and police aides to be able to upgrade qualifications and follow a career path that enable them to become nurses, teachers and policemen and women.

## Successes

Councillors agreed that CDEP had done a lot in some areas. It had encouraged people to move off the dole and work for their money. CDEP also kept participants engaged in regular and routine activities, provided jobs in communities, and provided participants with access to tools and equipment, for general use and for use in trade training. These were positive aspects derived from CDEP participation. However, they also believed that if 'keeping CDEP participants busy' was the major benefit, then CDEP participation was just a different form of 'work for the dole'.

## Concerns

Concerns were voiced about the lack of incentives to encourage participation in and continued attachment to CDEP work like holiday pay, sick pay, and super-annuation benefits. There were also concerns raised about the inadequacy of on-the-job training received by Indigenous CDEP participants especially those working in administrative positions in municipal or other local government agencies. In general, it was felt that community managers and town clerks, mostly of non-Indigenous background, did not adequately equip CDEP participants working with them with the administration and finance skills that would enable them to take over when these officers left the community.

In some areas it was felt that CDEP did not go far enough. For example, CDEP had enabled participants to become health workers. However, once they had achieved their basic Certificate III qualifications, there were limited advancement opportunities, even though they had been

accredited to administer drugs and injections, and there was a shortage of nurses in the wider community.

There was a belief that these CDEP participants were trained to certain levels of skill but were not given training that would let them move beyond these levels. This was because it was believed that apart from one or two basic skills, participants did not learn many advanced skills, and did not generally find jobs in the external labour market. Furthermore, Indigenous workers were still generally working in subordinate positions to white workers, and community managers, town clerks and municipal administrators were still white.

One councillor recounted the story of his nephew who was unable to find a job in the mainstream employment market, and eventually found a job with the Central Land Council. This meant that in the case of employment there was a re-cycling into Aboriginal agencies or enterprises. Councillors were also of the opinion that even though many CDEP participants wanted real jobs in the external labour market the reality was that CDEP was their only alternative.

Another problem related to the issue of the lack of jobs for people. In cases where people did get licences for driving special machinery they needed to move to places requiring such skills. This requirement also created another set of issues for people who, in the main, did not like to leave home for great lengths of time.

There were also concerns about the relative lack of improvement in communities even though governments had in place major objectives to improve the lot of Aboriginal people. For example, the Northern Territory Health Department has had a focus on improving the health of Indigenous communities. However, the same health problems were still recurring in the communities. Such lack of improvement of current situations was believed to be repeated across industry sectors.

## Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions were made for introducing work-place benefits for participants like superannuation, sick pay and holiday pay for CDEP participants to encourage Indigenous people to work for their benefits (dole).

One of the major factors inhibiting the skilling of community individuals to tradesperson status was the dependence on annual funding. What was required was on-going funding so that communities could plan for training that could take three or four years to complete. It was also important for communities to develop finance and accounting skills by having participants work closely with community managers or town clerks so that when these eventually left the community the skills required would remain, and communities would have their own people in these administrative positions. This would mean that communities could then rely on their own book-keepers and accountants to manage their finances.

It was also felt that the concept of a corporate CDEP arrangement with a cost centre located in Tennant Creek would lead to the elimination of a lot of corruption by minimising the number of people involved in the handling of money.

There was also a need to alter the performance indicators used to evaluate the success of the CDEP program. This is because the current indicators do not help the Regional Council determine the real outcomes of the program. What was required was performance indicators that were outcomes-based. One way to do this was for communities to develop work plans that would identify what communities required and the strategies required to achieve these objectives.

# Ali Curung CDEP

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Ali Curung is a community located about 370 kilometres north of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. It has a sealed road leading into the town, an air-strip, local municipal offices, a school, police station, store, bakery, church, auto workshop and health clinic.

## CDEP projects

There are currently 19 CDEP projects operating in Ali Curung. These projects employ a total of 76 participants in a wide variety of jobs associated with town council and community administration and development. There is an automotive workshop run as a private enterprise.

In the main, CDEP projects in Ali Curung are a vehicle for providing participants with the opportunity to contribute to Ali Curung community development and on-the-job training for participants. In some cases participants are also involved in formal off-the-job training including Office Administration and Teacher Education..

There are currently no apprenticeship or traineeship programs, although in the past Ali Curung community members have been involved in pre-vocational and apprenticeship and traineeship programs. Participation has been especially high in those jobs in which participants have a personal commitment. For example, there are rarely absences from night patrol duties.

CDEP projects involve participants in a variety of activities. These include the services described below.

### Garbage collection and rubbish pickup

This project involves participants in rubbish pickup and disposal activities. Wheelie bins are collected twice a week from homes and other services providers. Heavy equipment, car bodies, fallen trees or materials that are no longer required are picked up on a regular basis.

### Firewood collection

In this project CDEP participants, usually men, are involved in the collection of firewood for the elderly and other community households. Householders pay a \$20 fee for the service but it is free for the elderly. Firewood is used for heating and cooking. This activity generally takes place each afternoon.

### Women's Centre

The Women's Centre involves CDEP participants in women-only painting, craft activities and formal and informal training programs.

## Night Patrol

Night Patrol activities involve CDEP participants in monitoring night activities in the community. This includes walking or driving around the community watching-out and checking for any domestic or public disturbances that might be occurring. This may also mean making sure that people who are drunk are taken home. The purpose of night patrol is to help prevent incarceration by removing individuals from situations where they may be at risk and removing them from situations that may result in physical harm. An essential part of the process is the consultation between families the next day to work out reconciliation measures and anger management strategies. This is coordinated by Night patrol workers and Elders.

## Safe House

The Safe House project involves CDEP participants operating a Safe House. Here women and children who are experiencing physical abuse either from violent husbands or other members of the community can seek refuge. Refuge is also available for older men who are fleeing violence from others. Efficient operation of the Safe House is dependent on people being willing to staff it on a daily basis.

## Homemakers

This project involves CDEP participants in 'meals on wheels' type of activities. Participants are involved in the hygienic cooking, preparation and distribution of food. They also assist a group of elderly people who are registered for Commonwealth Government assistance. The CDEP participants receive training on a regular basis in food handling and other related fields such as First Aid and driver education.

## Respite for seniors

In this CDEP project participants are involved in the provision of aged care services including health checks, cleaning, washing clothes, shopping, transporting seniors to town and hunting. There is a focus on respecting elders, and preserving traditional knowledge.

## Broadcasting and Remote Aboriginal Services (BRACS)

In this project CDEP participants are involved in radio and television production. Broadcasts are transmitted almost every week day.

## VET programs

CDEP participants are also involved in vocational training. Workers in the automotive workshop have asked for formal accredited training for automotive qualifications.

## Sports and recreation

CDEP participants are involved in jobs in which they are developing skills required for, umpiring, sports medicine, office activities, management of the canteen, and provision of after school and school holidays activities for school children.

## Road and air-strip maintenance

Road maintenance involves CDEP participants in assisting the operation of heavy earth moving equipment for the grading of roads, and slashing activities which ensures that high grasses are kept to acceptable levels. It is planned to arrange annual training courses to increase the pool of

heavy machinery operators available for jobs. Airstrip maintenance involves CDEP participants in dragging the surface of the airstrip and maintenance of the marker cones, fencing and windsock.

## Parks and gardens

CDEP participants are involved in jobs that require them to take care of the physical environment like fencing, planting, and landscaping, including grass cutting and burr weed removal.

## Assistant teachers

CDEP participants have jobs in the local school as assistant teachers. The assistant teachers, under the guidance of trained teachers, help students learn English as a second language and to maintain their first language skills. Some Assistant Teachers are engaged in Teacher Education through Batchelor Institute.

## Automotive workshop

The automotive workshop is run as a separate enterprise. A CDEP participant has a job in assisting with the repair of motor vehicles.

## Shop

This CDEP project provides jobs for participants in running the community shop. Here they are involved in general retail duties like running the till, cooking takeaways, hygiene, stocktaking and storing materials.

## Office administration

CDEP participants are involved on an ad hoc basis in jobs associated with the administration of the town council. These jobs include reception, telephone, and mail duties. One participant is engaged in payroll administration and she is studying Office Administration at Batchelor Institute.

## Health clinic

CDEP participants are sometimes involved as health workers in providing basic health care to community members. This includes treating sores, applying bandages and other health related duties such as driving.

## CDEP store

CDEP participants are involved maintaining the store. This involves jobs requiring the warehousing of products, looking after and accounting for equipment, monitoring diesel fuel, and maintaining the log card system for the motor vehicles.

## Raising the skills base

The focus of CDEP projects in Ali Curung is on providing opportunities for acquiring skills in community development and in local government activities. In fact CDEP participants are providing services to the Ali Curung municipal council which in city metropolitan areas would often be provided by full-time local government council workers or contractors.

The objective of skills development in Ali Curung is to enable teams of local workers to develop the skills and knowledge required for the effective organisation, administration and care of their communities. This means that community members will have the skills and knowledge to take over roles when externally recruited professionals have left the area. However, this will be achieved only when the community supports the objectives of the program and fully participates in its development and operation.

CDEP provides participants with part-time jobs. In performing their roles, participants are also provided with on-the-job training and opportunities to learn, maintain or upgrade skills and knowledge in a wide range of areas. These include skills and knowledge in:

- ❖ Driving and operating heavy machinery
- ❖ Construction and building (including carpentry, plumbing, painting, fencing)
- ❖ Landscaping
- ❖ Automotive mechanics
- ❖ Welding
- ❖ Horticulture
- ❖ First aid
- ❖ Health and medical services
- ❖ Cooking and homemaking
- ❖ Retail
- ❖ Security and policing
- ❖ Aged care
- ❖ Radio and television production
- ❖ Interviewing for radio and television
- ❖ Teaching and training
- ❖ Language teaching skills
- ❖ Oral presentations
- ❖ Office administration
- ❖ Running a private enterprise
- ❖ Warehousing and accounting for equipment
- ❖ Basic book-keeping and accounting skills

## Formal training

Formal training for CDEP participants at Ali Curung is provided by a number of public and private training providers and agencies, generally selected on the basis of availability, expertise and cultural sensitivity. The community has found that some providers may be more culturally sensitive to Indigenous requirements than others. However, the ability of preferred providers to 'bend' rules to take into account the varying needs of Indigenous students to attend traditional ceremonies, sorry camps and other events, will also be moderated by their ability to meet financial requirements based on student attendance. There is a clear need for training authorities to review the approach of treating Aboriginal community participants in the same way as mainstream students who have a different motivation and concept of training and development.

Table 1 lists the training providers and agencies that have provided formal training for the community and for CDEP participants and the perceptions of effectiveness.

Table 1: The provision of training for Ali Curung community members and CDEP participants

Field of study	Provider	Reason for selection	Effectiveness
Driver training	Centralian College	Expertise and cultural compatibility	Effective but also dependent on attendance
First Aid	St John's Ambulance	Expertise	Found it hard to bend to Indigenous ways
Sport and Recreation-coaching skills	Australian Sports Commission	Expertise	Effective but no qualified participants yet
Teacher training	Batchelor College	Expertise and cultural sensitivity	Effective
Radio and television broadcasting	Warlpiri Media	Expertise and cultural sensitivity	Effective for production but not for technical support
Mechanics Housing and construction Welding	Centre for Appropriate Technology	Expertise and cultural sensitivity	Not Effective - try to bend to community needs, funeral, sorry camps etc.
Night patrol	Tangentyere	Specialists in night patrol, recognised course	Effective but insufficient contact
Council training, meeting training, administration training	Division of Housing and Local Government	Expertise	Not Effective because of inconsistent coordination
Computer training, email	Local Government Association of Northern Territory	Expertise	Effective because of high level of interest
Homemakers Nutrition	Centralian College	Expertise, cultural sensitivity, prior experience	Effective because of support from Coordinator

### *The use of RPL and RCC processes in assessment*

Processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) have not been widely used. There have been three cases where such processes have been used in assessing skill and knowledge. In one case where it has been used for CDEP participants, the individual had to leave the community and get employment at ADRAIL to get his skills in operating heavy earth moving equipment recognised.

### *Course completions*

Very few CDEP participants in Ali Curung have completed courses they have commenced over the last five years. The reasons for this non-completion are varied and relate to the need for students to fulfil cultural obligations, climatic conditions, appropriateness of training delivery, adequacy of facilities and equipment, student expectations and general enthusiasm for training. Course completion is also reduced by training that is perceived as not relevant.

For example, training participation is reduced at ceremony time when students will need to attend traditional ceremonies and in the event of deaths when they need to attend sorry camps. Training also ceases during the wet season when climatic conditions make it difficult for providers to come into Ali Curung to provide training, and for students to come in to the main town to attend training. Sometimes training completion is also reduced by the lack of appropriate facilities and equipment, and adequate funding for training. A reduction in student enthusiasm for training due either to poor presentation of material by instructors, non-relevant training or their own expectations of training that are not fulfilled will also affect the rate of completion.

Although providers with the required expertise and cultural sensitivity are preferred, at times they have not been able to complete their delivery of the total course in the allotted time because of interruptions to student attendance caused by the need for students to attend to cultural obligations. If students had not been allowed to adjust their programs in this way they would have not have continued attending training.

Contractors who sign agreements to build or repair houses in Ali Curung must agree to provide training as part of their contracts. However, this part of the agreement is often not met because contractors cannot afford to extend jobs in order to delay training delivery while students are attending to other cultural or non-cultural events and not coming to work.

### *Difficulties in attracting training providers*

One of the major problems experienced in planning for the delivery of training relates to the need for training providers to be assured of at least 13 students before they will consider coming to deliver a course. This number is often difficult to achieve in a small community like Ali Curung. Currently there are eight students (two females and six males) waiting to commence training in horticulture. However, it is difficult for training providers to come to the area and provide this training because they require a minimum of 13 students to commence a class. Training authorities must adapt to this reality or there will be a continued expectation of failure.

### *Apprenticeships and traineeships*

Currently there are no students in apprenticeship or traineeship programs, although in the past, seven students have completed their pre-vocational training, and one has become a fully qualified carpenter. However, there may be opportunities for a qualified tradesperson to take on apprentices and trainees in the automotive workshop and in housing maintenance.

The ability to provide apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities for community members is also dependent on the availability of qualified tradespersons and workplace supervisors to provide the on-the-job training and jobs requiring trade or other vocational skills. It is dependent on the availability in these jobs of appropriate and adequate facilities and equipment, and the willingness of apprentices or trainees to attend off-the-job training programs which are generally conducted in blocks of time away from the community. All of these requirements are not always readily available in remote communities.

### *Suggestions for improvement*

Suggestions for improvement largely revolve around efforts to improve participation, attendance and course completion. One of the major aspects of training delivery that may promote participation and completion is to identify skill and knowledge areas that community believes to be relevant to their needs. In the past, classes in repair and maintenance of houses and buildings, English, listening to music, nutrition, and computers have been made available to young community members under the 'Training for Remote Youth' program. Generally attendance was good. This was perceived to be a result of running the training centre as an adult education centre. Recently a group of young community members returning from a ceremony have asked for VET training in automotive mechanics so that they have the skills to look after their own

cars. It is hoped that this course, because it has been especially requested, will lead to high participation and attendance rates. Presenting information in modular form is also perceived to help student retention levels and to keep interest high.

If training is to be successful in Ali Curung then time lines for completions also need to be more flexible. That is, they need to take into account the various traditional obligations of community members and the history of the ad hoc approach to training and expectations of success.

## Perceived benefits of CDEP

The community as a whole has derived a variety of benefits from participant involvement in CDEP supported activities by providing individuals with extra funds (other than the dole).

As already noted Ali Curung CDEP provides the backbone for many community programs. In addition, it provides Aboriginal community members with an 'income producing' thing to do'. However the income derived from CDEP has not always been a sufficient motivator for consistent attendance and development.

# Bidjara-Charleville CDEP

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Charleville is a small town of about 3 800 people in South East Queensland. It has an Aboriginal community of 500 people. However the Aboriginal community is considered to part of the wider community. The CDEP scheme (Bidjara) services neighbouring towns and communities. The scheme comprises 250 participants just under a quarter of whom are female. It injects about \$65 000 per week into the local community.

## Activities

Participants in CDEP are involved in the following activities:

### CDEP administration

CDEP participants are involved in providing administrative support to the CDEP manager. This means undertaking reception duties, filing and general clerical work required for administering the CDEP scheme. CDEP participants are also involved in providing cleaning services for the CDEP complex.

### CDEP workshop – Labour hire and maintenance

CDEP participants may be hired out as labourers to local companies and properties. They are engaged in maintaining houses and properties. Services provided by participants include yard maintenance (odd jobs, lawn-mowing, rubbish removal) fencing, cleaning, picture framing. In addition the workshop also provides welding and gas fitting repair services for Aboriginal housing and for the general community and machinery operators.

Participants are also employed as labourers and yard maintenance workers in outstations serviced by the Bidjara CDEP (Auguthella, Cunnemulla and Roma) and community owned properties which have goats, sheep and cattle.

### Hydroponics

CDEP participants are involved in establishing hydroponic gardens for growing flowers and vegetables for sale.

### Sawmill operations

The CDEP scheme owns a saw mill used for providing timber for fencing, general construction and furniture making. Furniture constructed from the timber is put up for sale.

### Art shop

The art shop employs CDEP participants as resident artists, shop assistants and tourist guides. Artists are involved in painting on bark and canvas, and making jewellery from beads and glass.

The art shop also purchases carvings (for example, emu egg carvings, and didgeridos) from artists who have been through the CDEP training scheme and have set up their own small businesses.

### Sewing workshop

The sewing shop is a CDEP enterprise that employs participants to construct and embroider garments (including general tee shirts, caps and blankets) for sale. Tee shirts are made for local sports clubs.

### Host employment – Roma

CDEP participants are employed as shop assistants (IGA supermarket, MTC traders), labourers (Roma Rubbish Tip) radio announcers, administrative assistants (Bidjara Radio Station) administrative assistants, health workers (Aboriginal Health), rural workers (Bidjara properties), administrative assistants (Bidjara Legal Service), cleaners and cooks (Bidjara Hostel), groundsmen and administrative assistants (Historic House)

### Host employment – Charleville & Charleville outstation

Participants are also employed as couriers (Charleville Courier), printers (Charleville Westprint), administrative assistants (Property Services, Australia), groundsmen (Charleville Golf Course), labourers (Bidjara Motors), equipment maintenance workers (Newtek), retail assistants (Tamer Hardware) and cleaners (Charleville Daycare). There are two tourism trainees (Charleville Tourist Information Centre),

There are also CDEP participants employed as administrative assistants, panel beaters, spray painters and labourers in the Bidjara panel shop, and mechanics, labourers and administrative assistants in the Bidjara Body Shop. There are apprentices, carpenters and labourers hosted out to Bidjara Builders and a hairdressing apprentice hired out to Scizzed Edge Hair Design.

### Host employment – Cunnemulla

There are CDEP participants employed as administrative assistants (Bidjara Legal Service) and labourers (Roma Meatworks, Roma Enable Care, Maranoa Laundry).

### Host employment – Oakey & Surat

One CDEP participant is also employed as a teaching assistant at the Oakey State High School, and another is employed as an administrative assistant for the Surat Aboriginal Corporation.

### Employment – Mitchell Outstation

Teacher aides, kitchen hands, health workers, field officers, groundsmen, and administrative assistants were hosted out with employers.

### Employment – Morven and Wallumbilla

CDEP participants are hired out as shop assistants to local companies (Online News, Morven Post, Morven Local Store).

## Raising the skill base

The Bidjera CDEP aims to help participants develop industry-specific skills in addition to appropriate work habits including turning up on time, being disciplined to abide by policies and procedures.

These skills will enable CDEP to generate income by supporting local businesses and using local products. For example, local sporting clubs will buy team T-shirts from the CDEP sewing enterprise. In addition, communities benefit from the development of building and construction skills, and from the sale of products and services.

CDEP participants benefit from the skills they develop and the experience of work in CDEP programs in terms developing work histories for resumes, and having access to skills training which will better enable them to get a job.

Training is delivered on-the-job and off-the-job. For example, CDEP participants have acquired animal husbandry skills and experience through working on properties and rearing and tending goats and sheep. They have also acquired experience in practical welding and gas-fitting when they have been required to accompany the qualified gas-fitter and welder on repair and installation jobs.

Off-the-job training programs have provided participants with the skills required for obtaining the blue card which is evidence of their understanding of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) skills, and thus allows them to work on properties or in enterprises where this is required. They have also developed the skills required for operating specific machinery and equipment including chainsaws, bobcats, and sawmilling equipment. They are also involved in business administration programs and occupational health and safety. There are only a few instances in business office administration programs where there has been some use made of Recognition of Prior Learning processes. In the main most participants start course 'from scratch'.

Most of these off-the-job training courses are in business administration and OH&S and are delivered by the local Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (SQIT), chosen because it has a good relationship with CDEP, and because it is able to provide relevant training and an Indigenous support officer to help students. In addition, there are qualified assessors who can be used to assess training.

CDEP participants are involved in traineeships with legal aid, radio, health, the housing company and Gilby Land Council. These traineeships are offered in conjunction with Golden West Group Training Company and Skill Centred New Apprenticeship Centre. CDEP has had satisfactory service for these companies. However, there was just one instance of the provider not making regular visits to trainees. This was remedied once a complaint had been made.

## Benefits of CDEP and training participation

### Benefits to communities

It is generally believed that communities derive extrinsic and intrinsic benefits from the participation of community members in training and in CDEP employment. In addition to a lowering of the unemployment rate and an injection of funds into the wider community, there are also increased opportunities for community members (engaged in CDEP) to access external labour markets (especially in the case of trainees, and workers placed with external employers). Having participants complete apprenticeships and traineeships also improves community capacity. There are also other community benefits from having CDEP trainees or workers enter the external labour market. When trainees or workers are successful in getting a full-time job, a

vacancy is then created on the CDEP program for another participant. If the CDEP participant maintains employment for 20 weeks the CDEP will get an incentive payment from DEWR.

In addition, the knowledge that community members have achieved success either in gaining qualifications or jobs helps to lift the self-image of communities. The success of individuals and their engagement with the world of work also helps encourage others to engage in training or in CDEP by providing a positive role models for others.

Communities also benefit from a decreased crime rate and decreased alcohol and other substance abuse problems. This is because, when people know they need to get up and go to work the next day, they are more likely to temper their intake of alcohol and other substances on the previous night. In addition, they also have the money to buy alcohol and other substances, which means they are less likely to engage in criminal activity.

## Benefits to individuals

Individuals derive both extrinsic and intrinsic benefits from CDEP and training participation in general courses and in apprenticeship and traineeship training. Above all this participation allows individuals to develop work and training histories to refer to in the preparation of resumes and job applications. It also enables them to acquire accredited qualifications and industry-specific skills and licences to operate machinery (agricultural machinery, backhoes, chainsaws etc) which will enable them to obtain jobs in the external labour market. Where individuals undertake apprenticeships and traineeships they also have access to better jobs, better income, and regular work. Other training provides CDEP participants with an opportunity to develop skills which will enable them to set up their own small businesses. For example, CDEP participants who attended training in wood carving are now selling artefacts (carved emu eggs and didgeridos) to the CDEP art shop. Intrinsic benefits include increased pride, self-esteem and confidence from being engaged in the world of work. It includes an increased sense of achievement from learning new skills (even at older ages) and achieving success. It also enables shy people to come out of their shell and to speak with others. There is also increased respect within the community for those who engage in and complete apprenticeships and traineeships.

## Benefits to employers

In the main, host employers who have a CDEP worker or trainee or apprentice get free labour for two days of each week because the wages for these two days are paid for by CDEP. This means that employers only need to provide wages for the other three days. If the trainee is successful and obtains a job in the external labour market, employers may decide to put on another CDEP participant as a trainee or worker. Taking on a CDEP participant as a trainee, apprentice or worker enables employers to fulfil community responsibilities, while also engaging in training.

## Course completions

CDEP participants generally complete short courses. This is due to the fact that they will be liable for the full cost of the course if they enrol in the course and then drop out once it has commenced. (They must sign a payroll deduction form declaring that the cost of the course will come out of their pay if they do not stay for the duration of the course.) Although the expectation is that participants will complete, but not necessarily pass the course, (there is no obligation that they must pass) it is likely that they will pass the course because they have a commitment to it and a genuine interest in it.

However there are instances where participants do not complete longer courses because of poor literacy and numeracy skills. This sometimes comes about when participants follow one of their

friends into a course and find that they do not have the skills to understand and complete what is required.

Although participants generally complete the short courses in which they enrol, there are some drop outs from the longer courses involved in traineeships and apprenticeships. During the past five years eight apprentices and trainees have completed their programs. All now have full-time jobs. There have been about 12 apprentices and trainees who did not complete their programs. Reasons for not completing traineeships or apprenticeships are often due to learning difficulties and other personal issues. In the past trainees who have experienced difficulties have complained that they have not been given adequate support from their RTO mentors. However discussions with the RTO concerned have ensured that the Indigenous support officer makes regular visits to Charleville to monitor trainee training. There have also been instances where trainees have exited the program because they did not want to deal with the pressure associated with studying. Participants may also drop out of programs because they may move to other locations, have personal issues that prevent them from completing training, or are generally part of a transient population that does not have a stable base in the community.

It is clear that individual learning assistance is required to help students complete programs, however, there has been a history of high turnover amongst Indigenous support officers which has meant 'instability' of learning support available to students.

## The benefit of CDEP

It was generally believed that the Indigenous community and the wider community stand to gain a range of benefits from the CDEP scheme. If the scheme were taken away the unemployment rate would increase and there would be no chance for many Indigenous people to get a job. This would mean that many would drift away from the community, or if they stayed, would have nothing meaningful to do to occupy their time. In addition, there would be a loss of money injected into the community from CDEP capital and recurrent funding, which enables local employers to provide employment. Without the scheme 'bush communities would be in dire straits and would experience increased alcoholism, crime violence and abuse problems.' This would lead to further social dislocation among Indigenous communities.

# Cherbourg CDEP

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Cherbourg is a remote Indigenous town in South East Queensland with a population of 2 500 people. There are currently 333 participants in the Cherbourg CDEP scheme. The CDEP program is housed and run in association with the Cherbourg Community Council.

## CDEP activities

Participants have the opportunity to be engaged in work operations, building operations, community organisations, schools, meatworks police training, farm operations and tourism activities.

## Community organisations and schools

CDEP participants work in Respite Centre Services where they perform a variety of roles providing care to elderly people, meals on wheels to residents, helping older people with their shopping or helping out when the elderly go on 'golden' holidays. CDEP participants also work at the Ny-Ku Byun Hostel (a hostel for the aged) where they are engaged as carers, cooks, cleaners, and janitors. Cleaning and janitorial roles are also undertaken in the Medical Centre and in the Centrelink agency. Participants also work in the Jundah's Womens Group where they are involved in providing refuge services to Cherbourg women who may need escape from violent husbands or others in their family or social groups. There are also CDEP participants who work as care workers and janitors in the Beemar Yumba Children's shelter. Others work either as childcare workers, carers or janitors in the Gundoo Day Care Centre. There are CDEP participants working in administration for BACCA the local Children's Services agency and as cooks, cleaners and groundsmen for the Wunjuada Rehabilitation Centre for drug and alcohol abuse sufferers. The town runs a local radio station (4UM) and CDEP participants are involved in running this station. CDEP participants work as administration assistants in the Community Support agency which provides welfare services including food vouchers, and help with funerals and other social needs. They are also employed as mail sorters for the Cherbourg Post Office. There are also opportunities for CDEP participants to work as gym instructors, cleaners and janitors in the Sports Complex. CDEP participants work as teacher aides in the local private school (St John's Presbytery School) and as teacher aides and janitors in the Murgon State High School. They are employed in cleaning roles in the local TAFE annexe. CDEP participants are also involved in running the Bora Ring Café.

## Meatworks

Although the council also owns the abattoirs facility and premises, the meat works is run by a private company. CDEP participants work here for two days a week and have the option to increase this involvement if they so wish. Here they are provided with on-the-job training and experience.

## Council Chambers Administration and Community Police

CDEP participants work as administrative assistants, payroll clerks in the Council Chambers Administration office. When students are placed with the Council for work experience someone in each area is given responsibility for the training of these students. CDEP participants are also engaged in working with the Community Police, where they are involved in night patrols, and in working and liaising with the state police. Participants in administrative positions and in community police roles are paid additional top up wages for their work.

## Council Works Operations

CDEP participants work under a supervisor who trains them to run the water treatment plant, the sewage treatment plant, and sewage maintenance. They are also engaged in a program for controlling noxious weeds, and fencing of community houses, parks and gardens. The Council also has a market garden, a council stores facility (for boots, and machinery for council workers), and a garbage truck. CDEP participants are involved in all these activities.

CDEP participants are also involved in activities which require them to work with back hoes and trucks, and other heavy machinery. They belong to the mowing gang which does lawn mowing for council parks and gardens and private houses for the elderly.

## Farm Operations

The community also owns a cattle and stud farm and CDEP participants work as farm hands, and on fencing gangs. Gangers (leading hands) receive additional top up payments for their leadership roles.

## Tourism Operations

The Council runs an emu farm where CDEP participants are engaged in fencing activities, feeding the animals and running the museum. Others are involved in producing artefacts for sale including screen prints, paintings, carved emu eggs, and shadow boxes. Emu leather has also been used to make shoes, handbags and outfits. These are also on display in the museum.

## Skill development

Participants involved in these activities are also developing industry-specific and general employability skills. These skills are felt to benefit the community because they give community members a better understanding of their jobs, and provide access to specific skills, knowledge and experience for those in formal training programs (for example, skills in building and construction, teaching, and child and aged care). In addition it makes available training to local people. It is believed that community members are likely to feel more comfortable interacting with government bureaucracies when they see local people manning these agencies. Tourism activities will also bring more recognition to the area.

## Training provision

Training is provided either through on-the-job training and experience or off-the-job training courses. On-the-job training is generally related to the jobs that participants are involved with and is provided by the workplace supervisor, and in the use of outdoor activities and works operations, by the ganger.

Off-the-job training in a variety of study fields, and skills areas, is provided by the local Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (SQIT). Training for teacher aides is provided by distance

education through the Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP) delivered by the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE. There is general satisfaction with the training delivery.

In the main SQIT is the preferred provider because it has a local annexe and can cover training requirements. The Special Aboriginal Unit in the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE has been selected because of its special affinity with Indigenous issues.

Apprenticeship and traineeship training is also provided in conjunction with SQIT. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the types of courses delivered by the different training providers.

Table 1: Courses by training providers and level of satisfaction.

<b>Short courses</b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>
Occupational Health and Safety	SQIT	Satisfied
Induction	In-house	Satisfied
Chainsaws	SQIT	Satisfied
Truck driving licence	Department of Transport	Satisfied
Driving licence	Department of Transport	Satisfied
Backhoe ticket	SQIT	Satisfied
Heavy machinery	SQIT	Satisfied
Council Rules	In-house	Satisfied
Equipment	In-house	Satisfied
Computer skills	SQIT	Satisfied
Communication skills	SQIT	Satisfied

<b>Long courses</b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>
RATEP	Far North Qld Institute of TAFE	Satisfied
Construction- carpentry and joinery (apprenticeship)	SQIT	Satisfied
Automotive mechanics (apprenticeships)	SQIT	Satisfied
Accounting	SQIT	Satisfied

In the past the Cherbourg Council has had apprentices in construction, joinery and automotive industry areas. These apprentices have now completed their apprenticeships and are qualified tradesmen. CDEP participants among these are on top-up wages.

## Course completions

In the main CDEP participants who commence a short course complete the course. However, there is a larger drop-out rate for the those in longer courses. Participants drop out of these courses for a variety of reasons including lack of self-confidence, social problems (for example, alcoholism, violence, substance abuse) and low levels of literacy and numeracy. Most notably, it is those participants who have not attended high school who have had major problems in completing the course.

During the last seven years about 34 apprentices have completed their apprenticeships and around ten have completed traineeships. Of these about three-quarters have left Cherbourg for jobs elsewhere and the others had remained with the Council on top-up wages. The small number of apprentices and trainees who had dropped out, mainly did so for personal reasons or because they struggled with academic work due to their poor literacy and numeracy skills.

The community benefits from having participants complete an apprenticeship program because it does not have to go externally to access the skills and services of skilled tradesmen (especially carpenters and mechanics). Completing an apprenticeship means that individuals acquire a trade qualification to which confirms that they are competent. It also gives them a qualification to take into the mainstream economy to look for work.

### Improving training provision

Having young people stay in school to complete their secondary school studies was a major priority for Cherbourg. This would provide them with the basic literacy and numeracy skills, and prepare them to go on to further studies to learn new skills.

It is generally agreed that having an Aboriginal tutor or someone who is approachable and down-to-earth to work with students will help Indigenous students complete the course.

### Perceived benefits of CDEP

A reduction of the town's unemployment and social problems was seen to be the major benefits of the CDEP program. It was generally agreed that, before the inception of the CDEP program in Cherbourg, there were higher levels of unemployment, alcoholism, domestic violence, and children engaging in various unacceptable activities. Today CDEP has brought more stability into the community by providing participants with 'something to do, somewhere to go, and something to learn'. 'Life in the town would be pretty boring without CDEP'.

# Elliott CDEP

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Elliott is small town on the Stuart Highway. It has a population of about 650 with 100 people in the Marlinja outstation. Its CDEP scheme comprises 81 participants who are rotated among a variety of activities.

## CDEP activities

CDEP participants in Elliott are involved in the following activities:

### Repairs and Maintenance

Participants are involved taking care of buildings and facilities. These activities involve them in building, plumbing, and tiling which are supervised by a qualified builder.

### Municipal activities

CDEP participants are involved in fencing, operating machinery, and horticulture. These activities are also conducted within areas controlled by the municipal council.

### Women's Centre

Elliott also involves its female CDEP participants in a Women's Centre. Women's Centre work comprises childcare, out of school hours and vacation care, home and community care, and arts and crafts activities. The creche is used to provide childcare for children of CDEP workers. Out of school hours care and vacation care provides activities for school children. Home and community care provides support for the elderly (for example, providing blankets, helping with washing activities). Arts and crafts activities involve participants in traditional painting and maintaining cultural skills.

### AMPOL service station

The AMPOL service station has been bought by the community and constitutes one of its income-generating enterprises. The Gurungu Council part owns the enterprise and it hires CDEP participants to run it. Recently a qualified mechanic has been hired to run the automotive workshop. This means that he will also be able to supervise training for trainee mechanics should the scheme decide to provide such an option. A manager with previous experience in running a service station has also been hired.

### Night Patrol

Night patrol activities involve CDEP participants (as volunteers) in helping prevent community members from getting into trouble and being arrested. This is done by helping them to get safely home should they be too inebriated or at risk of making a public nuisance which might lead to police arrests. It may also mean driving old people back home to their communities and making

sure that children are not at risk. Night Patrols generally patrol the streets on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Night patrols aim to work on the same nights as the police so that if there is violence in the community then they are able to settle disputes without the need for the police to step in. The police also prefer disputes to be settled in this way.

## Ground maintenance

One CDEP participant is involved in maintaining the school grounds.

## Housing

CDEP participants are involved in housing administration activities.

## Raising the skill base

### On-the-job training

CDEP activities in Elliott aim to provide participants with a wide range of experiences by rotating participants between different projects. In this way they are able to become multi-skilled and maintain interest and motivation.

Those CDEP participants involved in municipal activities learn skills associated with fencing, operating machinery, planting and maintaining trees and shrubs, and maintaining roads and grounds. Those involved in community service type areas learn the skills involved in engaging children in educational and recreational activities, and caring for older people. Night patrol participants develop skills in driving vehicles, resolving conflict, negotiating solutions, managing crowds and applying first aid. Those involved in the AMPOL Service Station learn skills and competencies associated with retail, small business and hospitality. In addition, some of these workers are undertaking on-the-job traineeships.

### Formal training

The majority of CDEP participants in Elliott are involved in formal training. In the main, RTOs chosen to deliver the training have been able to provide the training package qualifications and other training, and have been prepared to come to Elliott to deliver the training. Generally the community has been satisfied with the training providers. Table 1 lists the training providers and agencies that have provided formal training for the community and for CDEP participants and the perceptions of effectiveness.

Table 1 The provision of training for Elliott community members and CDEP participants

Field of study	Provider	Reason for selection	Satisfaction
Retail Certificate II	Centralian College	Able to provide training package Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied
Occupational Health and Safety	Centralian College	Able to provide training package Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied
Office Administration	Batchelor College	Able to provide training package Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied
Truck licence, forklift licence, bus licence, grading licence	Advanced Training International	Able to provide training package Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied
Certificate II in Community Services (Children's Services)	Centralian College	Able to provide training package Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied
Welding short course	Julalikari through IHAD (Indigenous Housing Administration)	Able to provide training Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied
CDEP manager system	ATSIC officer	Handy Available	Satisfied
Train the trainer for supervisors	Centralian	Able to provide training package Prepared to come to Elliott	Satisfied

*The use of RPL and RCC processes in assessment*

Processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) have only been used for driving skills. They have not been used for Retail and Hospitality qualifications.

## Apprenticeships and traineeships

There are no CDEP participants in Elliott currently involved in apprenticeships or traineeships. However, there are some plans for using user choice funding and the STEP program to introduce an automotive apprenticeship. The Training Package will be used to customise the training to suit the needs of the community.

## Perceived benefits of CDEP

CDEP was perceived to promote benefits for both individuals and the community. If there were no CDEP it was felt that the whole community would be 'on the dole' and only engaged in seasonal work. CDEP was also felt to provide jobs and incentives for people to be engaged in community work. Without CDEP participation there would be nothing for young men to do once the football season was over.

CDEP involvement was also seen to provide participants with a sense of worth which came from being occupied in meaningful activity, and a sense of pride in achievement. It increased self-confidence, self-belief and self-esteem in participants, and enabled them to provide positive role models for others.

CDEP was also felt to provide opportunities for individuals to gain qualifications that would help them obtain full-time jobs, and for children to obtain part-time work after school. Although it was felt that this would lead individuals to pursue further training or other job opportunities, it was also understood that such opportunities were limited by remoteness and in some cases the bigotry of employers to hire Indigenous people.

The benefits to the community of having participants complete their traineeships or apprenticeships are evaluated in terms of having qualified tradespersons able to pass on their skills to others.

The Gurungu Council also serviced a number of out stations. CDEP supervisors were involved in Repairs and maintenance and Municipal activities for these outstations. If CDEP no longer existed, community development for these outstations would come to a standstill.

Another major advantage cited for CDEP participation was that CDEP participants did not have to repeatedly provide evidence of their job searching activities for the continuation of their Centre-link benefits.

## Suggestions for improvement

### Increased wages and hours

There is a major need to increase the incentives for community development, meaning that participants on CDEP should receive more in their pay packets for their participation. There should also be an increase in the number of hours of work available to CDEP participants. This is especially important for people in remote areas where the CDEP is often the only labour market available. An allowance for remote location should also be considered. Any national funds which have not been used up by the end of the year should be used to provide more money and more work hours for participants

### Appropriate and sensitive training delivery

Although the community is generally satisfied with the training delivered, there are some concerns with some of the training approaches that have been used. There is a belief that that the

trainers need to be more patient, and more sensitive to individual participants. They need to guard against being too aggressive in their delivery and to trust that individuals want to learn. There is also a need for trainers to slow down the pace of delivery, and to be more flexible with time. That is, if there is a need to spend extra time on a certain module or a competency then they should be prepared to do so.

There is also a need for trainers to use more visual aids and to pass on skills in a practical way by showing and demonstrating the skill to students. They need also to be aware that there will be students who will be able to perform a task but not the associated written work. In such cases it is important that trainers focus on the practical side of training. Using plain English that describes concepts in clear and simple language will also be important for students, especially those who tend to ignore concepts if they cannot understand some of the words that have been used.

Trainers need also to be sensitive to the needs for students to take time off from training in cases of bereavement. They should be prepared to give students the opportunity to catch up on work that has been missed because of student involvement in important cultural activities.

# Julalikari CDEP

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The Julalikari CDEP scheme is operated by the Julalikari Corporation. It involves participants in a variety of activities and income-generating ventures.

## CDEP activities

### **Tip and recycling management**

Six CDEP participants are involved in managing the tip face. This activity includes making sure that rubbish is moved along, filling the tip, and keeping the premises secure.

### **Nursery**

Five CDEP participants are involved in propagating plants, installing and maintaining hydroponic operations, gardening, green housing, seed collection and banking. The principal job is to provide products and materials for CDEP programs in outstations and dust suppression.

### **Poultry farm**

There are four CDEP participants involved in working in the poultry farm. Eggs from the farm are sold to Morris Catering, a catering concern, servicing ADRAIL.

### **Public works contracts**

This contract is with the Department of Transport and Works. It involves CDEP participants in maintaining the lawns and gardens around public facilities, and planting and maintaining shrubs and trees in the main street and on the outskirts of the town. It also involves participants in water reticulation, collection of rubbish and disposal of dead animals. CDEP participants are also involved in providing support for community events. This often involves the preparation of venues and setting up and dismantling or clearing up of structures and facilities.

## Perceived benefits

The CDEP scheme provides social and economic benefits for the community. The Julalikari CDEP is heavily involved in the preparation of venues for community activities and events. It does this as part of its community responsibility and does not charge community organisations for the time involved and machinery used. In addition, the operation of the Julalikari CDEP scheme, and the Julalikari Corporation currently provides major support to the economy of Tennant Creek. Before the advent of ADRAIL the Julalikari Corporation was the only business in town. Vendors would telephone the corporation wanting to sell products, equipment and materials. Today it is not uncommon for owners to want to sell their businesses to the Corporation. Often these owners will quote the opportunity for the Corporation to 'employ their own people' as a major advantage.

There are also psychological benefits derived by participants from their involvement in CDEP activities. The majority of CDEP participants are of middle age and CDEP provides them with an opportunity to be employed, especially as there are generally no employers in the town or in the region that are able or prepared to give them a job. CDEP provides these participants with a sense of purpose that comes from a connection to the world of work. It also means that they benefit from having in place a set of routines to attend to, and a set of obligations to fulfil. At work they are expected to be respectful of the work environment, and to obey rules that state that there is to be no drinking, and no drug taking. A policy of 'no work no pay' also ensures that absenteeism is not a major problem for the scheme. In fact, the policy is often enforced through pressure exerted by the participants themselves.

CDEP also provides participants with opportunities to build up their confidence. For example, it has made it possible for some participants, who would not otherwise have done so, to obtain driving licences by providing them with an appropriate environment for learning and having their skills assessed. There have been specific instances of individuals obtaining driving licences who were originally too scared or shy to apply for a licence.

There are no 'hardship funds', 'kid's lunches' or 'breakfast programs' because the Julalikari Council has decreed that such provision is a family responsibility.

## Apprenticeships and traineeships

There is often a 'queue' of businesses wanting to take on Julalikari trainees, and currently trainees are employed by a number of local businesses including the Town Council, Lavery Planning, Beaurepaires, Sammy's Power Works, and Dexter Barnes Electrical. When employers take on CDEP participants they are encouraged to continue employing the trainee once the traineeship is over.

Julalikari acts much like a group training company in that it looks after the trainees' benefits, paperwork and wages. It also provides trainees with tools required for the training. However, if trainees leave their employment, they must pay for the cost of the tools. CDEP funds are used to top up funds from the STEP program.

## Concerns

The need to negotiate with three separate Centrelink Offices (that is, Tennant Creek, Mt Isa, Katherine) and obtain signatures for documents from workplace supervisors is providing difficulties for Julalikari. This is especially true with regard to ironing out issues dealing with incentive payments.

There are also difficulties in obtaining support from ATSIC.

## Suggestions for improvement

Suggestions for improvement include changes to rules for the averaging of ceiling levels, and for the rolling over of surpluses from one funding period to the next. Such changes would enable schemes to deal adequately deal with Christmas leave, ceremony leave and leave for cultural and community maintenance.

Suggestions were also made for increasing the pay for supervisors. Such an increase would increase employment opportunities for people to supervise others, and to keep participation levels up around the 95% to 100% mark. Increased recognition of the inadequacy of CDEP wages for the amount of work that is expected for positions is also required.

There was also a need to investigate the implementation of a superannuation or pension plan for CDEP participants.

# Julalikari-Buramana CDEP

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Julalikari-Buramana is a community-based resource centre with responsibility for servicing 44 outstations located within 340,000 square metres. It receives local government funds to ensure that communities have functioning electricity generators, adequate water supplies and basic infrastructure. It is also involved in land management activities including dust suppression and planting trees as wind breaks. Its activities are aimed at improving the health and living conditions for communities. Different communities have different levels of resources. For example, there are those with little water and little electricity. The Resource Centre is aiming to bring all communities to a certain standard, and to empower them to become independent and self-developing.

## CDEP activities

CDEP funds are used to support activities aimed at improving the health and living conditions for communities. Currently Julalikari-Buramana has 104 participants in 23 communities involved in CDEP activities. A bush crew is located in Tennant Creek with responsibilities for dust suppression, fencing, and building hand rails.

Activities within the 23 outstations include the following:

### Wood collection

This activity engages CDEP participants in collecting wood and providing fuel for cooking and heating to families in the community.

### Maintenance of community facilities and equipment

In this activity CDEP participants are involved in ensuring community buildings and ablution blocks are always in operating order.

### Construction of bough shelters

CDEP participants are involved in the construction of bough shelters to help provide shady meeting places for the community and play areas for children.

### Municipal duties

These activities involve CDEP participants in rubbish collection, road maintenance and upgrading and maintenance of parks and gardens. They are aimed at providing a cleaner and healthier environment for communities. Participants are involved in tree planting, upgrading roads and building fences around houses.

## Refurbishing shelters

These activities are aimed at providing more living space for communities and encouraging families to return to their homelands.

## Vegetable gardens and poultry pens

These activities are aimed at providing communities with fresh and affordable produce, to improve diet and so improve health and living conditions.

## Community housing maintenance

This community housing maintenance program is aimed at assisting and training community members to undertake basic repair and maintenance on their houses. In addition to increasing skill levels, these activities also improve living conditions for community members.

Buramana also has a Housing Department that is funded through the Indigenous Housing and Development Department, (IHAND). It receives \$1700 for each house in the community. Out of these funds it pays the wages of a Housing Officer who is a tradesperson, responsible for identifying work that needs to be done in the communities, and undertaking repair and maintenance tasks. When tradespersons from other trades are required (for example, plumbers, and electricians) the housing officer arranges hiring of them to undertake trade-relevant tasks.

Recently Buraman has provided community members with the opportunity to pay a housing levy. This enables them to readily access repair and maintenance assistance as they require it. Those who do not pay this levy do not get the same level of assistance. They are also liable to pay for any repairs and maintenance tasks where houses have already been fixed.

## Raising the skill base

The acquisition of skills can be described in terms of skills developed by community members and skills developed by Resource Centre staff servicing the communities. As has already been noted Buramana has a 'bush crew' located in Tennant Creek with responsibilities for dust suppression, fencing, and building hand rails. The crew has developed skills in truck-driving and handling small equipment. The foreman of this crew who is a boilermaker has also provided some on-the-job training for community members such as, 'basic welding' training for the Connors Lagoon community during the wet season. When this community needed to build a shed, the Resource Centre provided assistance and training in how to build it and provided access to building and welding skills that were needed. Julalikari Buramana also employs a storeman who has been able to access training in warehousing.

Individual communities are also beginning to develop work plans that identify community needs. For example one community, Corella Creek, operates a health clinic and school. The community is keen to establish itself as an office administration centre or 'hub' to service local businesses. Phone lines will be used to enable fax, and computer technologies to operate. If the community is to become a successful 'hub', individuals who will work in it will require training in administration, and computer skills.

Communities are also hoping to develop skills in warehousing, mechanics, and school assisting. These skills are all aimed at increasing income for the community and enabling it to look after its own accounts and its own resources.

## Formal training

The Julalikari Buramana Council has also provided opportunities for the delivery of formal training courses for communities. These have included courses in Land Management, oral and written English, and Jackeroo skills. These courses are provided by three training providers, mainly selected because they are able to provide a variety of courses, have the required training facilities and possess RTO status. Although Julalikari Buramana is satisfied with the formal training provided, officers believe that the amount of accredited training available to communities in the region is limited because RTOs are often unable to get the funds to run training for small numbers of participants. Although in theory community clusters could be established to provide the required numbers of participants to form a class, in practice there may be cultural incompatibilities that preclude such solutions. In addition, it is difficult to bring community members into Tennant Creek to access accredited training because of a lack of accommodation facilities in already over-crowded locations. The lack of communications facilities (for example, telephones, faxes, and e-mail) in remote areas also inhibits the effective coordination of such strategies. As well as this, there is a feeling that the 17 RTOs servicing the region are all competing for the same bucket of money and customer base and are therefore not coordinating activities to the best advantage.

Table 1 lists the training providers and agencies that have provided formal training for the community and for CDEP participants and the perceptions of effectiveness.

Table 1 The provision of training for Julalikari Buramana community members and CDEP participants

Field of study	Provider	Reason for selection	Effectiveness
Land management Literacy and numeracy	Batchelor College	Variety of courses	Satisfied No complaints
	Centralian	Residential facilities in Tennant Creek	Satisfied No complaints
Building and construction Jackeroo Parks and gardens	Julalikari	Registered Training Organisation	Satisfied No complaints
Literacy and numeracy	Institute of Aboriginal Development		Satisfied No complaints

## The use of RPL and RCC processes in assessment

Processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) have not been used to any great extent. There has been one case of a trainee having skills recognised to enable him to accelerate training and complete his course in 12 months rather than two years.

## Apprenticeships and traineeships

There have been two CDEP participants who have undertaken and completed traineeships in Building and Construction. These traineeships have used 'user choice' funding. One is currently working with the Housing Officer in the Repair and Maintenance department, and there are aims to have this individual undertake an apprenticeship. The other went to work with ADRAIL but has recently left the organisation.

Julalikari Buramana is presently trying to employ a receptionist under the CDEP scheme.

## Perceived benefits of CDEP

There are a variety of benefits derived from CDEP participation in communities. Because about \$33000 is injected into community activities for every 11 people who participate in the program the community obtains valuable income which helps them improve living conditions.

In the case of Corella Creek, the setting up an administration centre will enable people from surrounding communities to complete government forms and documents at the 'hub' rather than have to go into Tennant Creek. Developing the necessary administration skills will also give people confidence in their own abilities, raise money for the community, and ensure that the community can look after its own accounts and own stocktaking strategies.

Community development activities subsidised by CDEP funds are all aimed at improving living conditions, health and employment. The communities will also benefit by developing skills required for repairs and maintenance to their houses and community buildings.

In addition, there are benefits for community members as individuals, in terms of skill development, increased self esteem and confidence. One individual eventually moved out of CDEP and 'got a real job with real money'. Having community members undertake traineeships also has benefits for the community in terms of appropriate role modelling for other community members and young people, and the development of technical skills that can be used by the community.

One way to look at the benefits is to ponder on what would happen if there were no CDEP scheme to support such community development activities. Without the CDEP scheme there would be no Julalikari Buramana Corporation and community members would be forced to be solely dependent on other ATSIC funds and the Central Land Council.

CDEP provides a structure within which communities can work. Because in recent times a large proportion of Indigenous youth has not been used to the concept of employment, it is important to provide positive work role models. CDEP also provides incentives for people to stay connected to the world of work. Without it the participants would be relying on welfare.

## Suggestions for improvement

One of the major ways to streamline training activities for CDEP participants and their employers is to reduce the numbers of RTOs competing for the same customer base. There also needs to be more effort put into helping communities develop strategic plans and then to align RTO activities with the accomplishment of the planned objectives. Once this has been done CDEP activities can be customised to meet specific needs.

Another suggestion for improvement relates to the establishment of budgets for Repair and Maintenance activities that will adequately cover replacement of equipment and operating costs. These budgets are especially important because of increased overhead costs.

There are also suggestions for improving the way that excess monies are spent. The usual practice of spending monies within the financial year in which they are allocated should be altered to allow excess monies to be carried over from one financial year to the next. In this way program managers can invest wisely in much needed new equipment which may incur considerable costs, rather than spend time looking for opportunities to spend excess funds so as not to lose these in the budgeting process for the next financial year.

In order to help communities in specific regions get the most out of training there needs to be a re-evaluation of the type of training that is offered or provided. For example, a focus on providing communities in arid regions with the type of skills and knowledge that will help them get the most out of their physical environments.

# Kamilaroi–St George CDEP

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Kamilaroi Employment Aboriginal Corporation (KEAC) comprises the former St. George, and Dirranbandi CDEP programs and draws participants from these areas and from Surat, Thallon and Roma. It is situated in St George, a town of 3 800 people. Dirranbandi has a population of 800. The combined CDEP program comprises 204 participants. There is a waiting list of 24 people.

Participants are involved in CDEP run enterprises, hired out to host employers, and engaged in providing out-sourced services.

## CDEP enterprises

KEAC has a small vineyard on the outskirts of the town where table grapes are grown for sale to the Sydney markets. Here CDEP participants are involved in tending the vines and learning about viticulture. KEAC also has a small property in nearby Bindle comprising a market garden and crops where CDEP participants are involved in growing vegetables lucerne and wheat, and a mixed farm where they are involved in raising poultry. KEAC also owns a sewing workshop (Kamilaroi Kreations) and a retail shop (operating under the trade name of Kreations) in Dirranbandi. Here CDEP participants are engaged in garment production, including school uniforms, dresses, T-shirts for local events, and hats. KEAC also owns a cherry picker which enables CDEP participants to be hired out for tree lopping. The CDEP also hires out workers to local businesses and residents for lawn mowing, yard cleaning and maintenance. In all CDEP run enterprises there is a manager who is on top-up wages.

## Host employment

CDEP participants are also contracted out to local cotton farmers (when crops are plentiful) as cotton chippers and stick pickers, and to local schools and kindergartens as teacher aides. They are also contracted out to the hospital and health centre as Indigenous health workers and drivers, to local businesses as cleaners and receptionists, and to the Indigenous elders' group as support workers. They work as administrators, assistants, receptionists, carpenters and maintenance workers for the Housing Company, and as youth workers attached to the local church group. CDEP participants work in a variety of administrative and support roles in the local museums, sports and recreation facilities and district council. They work as assistants in service stations, as waiters, as housemaids and cleaners in hotels, as waiters, groundsmen and cleaners in the local bowling club, as caterers in the school canteens, as assistants in childcare centres, and as shop assistants in local stores.

## Raising the skill base

In addition, to the industry-specific skills that are learnt on-the-job in CDEP enterprises or with host employers, participants are also involved in off-the job training. Here they learn to

communicate with co-workers and clients and develop an awareness of the importance of a professional appearance. They also develop self-confidence and improve their self-esteem from being engaged in work.

## Training provision

CDEP participants have been involved in a number of off-the-job training programs including:

- Viticulture
- Education (Remote Area Teacher Education Program)
- Sports and recreation
- Automotive retail
- Motor mechanics
- Screen printing
- Dressmaking
- Real estate,
- Heavy machinery (backhoes, back end loaders, front hoes)
- Health workers (blood pressure, sugar levels)
- Horticulture
- Hospitality
- Child protection
- Literacy and numeracy courses

In addition, participants are able to nominate for any training programs they would like pursue. In the main, most courses are done from 'scratch' although some use has been made of recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessment in the horticulture course. However, the manager of the program was of the opinion that although 'you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink... we give them options but we need to show what is beyond the course in terms of benefits for them'.

The Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (SQIT) was the major RTO selected to deliver these programs. In Roma SQIT was selected because it had an Indigenous officer to support trainees. In Dolby, SQIT was selected to deliver training because it the only available RTO in the district, and in Stanthorpe because it was the only RTO that was able to deliver viticulture and motor mechanics training.

The corporation employs three trainees in the Dirranbandi café, and two trainees in viticulture on the CDEP vineyard. In both cases SQIT at Stanthorpe is the registered training organisation. There was general satisfaction with the training provided by this provider, SQIT and the Skill-Centred New Apprenticeship Centre (based in Roma) and the Department of Training. However, it was also true that there was also no choice of other providers. On one occasion hospitality trainees working at the café in Dirranbandi were not receiving regular visits from their RTO mentor. This problem was soon remedied when a complaint was made. Since that time there have been no problems with inadequate monitoring of trainee training.

## Course completions

The completion of courses for students in the Kamilaroi CDEP program was often related to the type of learning support available to them and whether or not the students saw the course as being relevant to their needs. RTO mentors in charge of supporting trainees in their programs have generally been highly committed to their roles and have visited the trainees on a regular basis to provide learning support and conduct assessments. They have been found to be very helpful and approachable.

Over the last five years there have been about 80 apprentices and trainees in contracts of training. Of these about 75% have completed the programs. Some of these were working in mainstream jobs (for example automotive mechanics, administration, sport and recreation) but others had not moved into mainstream jobs and 'fallen into a rut'. Of those who had dropped out, some had moved to other localities, some had followed families out of the area, and a small percentage were not able to cope with the training or believed that there were no jobs to be had at the end of the program.

In terms of 'other' courses (that were not apprenticeships or traineeships) there was a similar completion rate with about 20% not completing the course they had commenced. There were a variety of reasons why CDEP participants did not complete other courses. These included physical problems, loss of interest and lack of commitment to full-time training. The inability of training delivery to accommodate different cultural learning styles or preferences may also have contributed to low completion rates.

## Perceived benefits of training participation

Both communities and individuals derive benefits from CDEP participants involvement in training and in traineeships.

### Community benefits

The major benefits for the community in having individuals undertake traineeships in viticulture and hospitality are related to equipping community members with industry-specific skills that can be used by the community in running community enterprises. The major benefit of having individuals involved in RATEP (Rural Aboriginal Teacher Education Program) is that Aboriginal children are supported by Indigenous teachers and teacher aides who have a closer affinity with their particular backgrounds and needs. In addition, these individuals act as role models for other community members, and show that it is possible for Indigenous people to be engaged in work and training.

### Individual benefits

There are intrinsic and extrinsic benefits to individuals from undertaking a traineeship (no participants were found to be undertaking an apprenticeship). Intrinsic benefits like increased self-esteem and self-confidence are derived from the knowledge that they have been able to engage in further training. Extrinsic benefits are related to the gaining of specific qualifications, skills and knowledge. Those who are involved in viticulture and hospitality traineeship programs and other courses which deliver accredited qualifications including first aid and occupational health and safety, and small engines training, acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and specific credentials to enable them to seek work in the mainstream labour market. This is also true for those who are undertaking training to become dressmakers, teacher aides, youth workers, Indigenous health workers, and sports and recreation workers.

Furthermore these individuals will improve their financial situations through access to more money on completion of their traineeship and moving into jobs. This will, in turn, provide them and their families with a better lifestyle and lifestyle choices.

## Suggestions for improvement of training

It was felt that the major way to improve training provision was to tie the training to a guaranteed job pathway. This was thought to increase the relevance of the training which turn would increase participants commitment to it. Also important was a need to break courses down into relevant components.

In addition to providing relevant industry-specific skills and ensuring a job pathway, there is also a need to make sure that teachers and instructors are trusted by students, and to provide a supportive and relaxed environment for students to learn. This means being respectful to students and avoiding any instances where they might experience shame and downgrading. There was also a view that training should be more customised to individual needs.

There was found to be a particular need for skills in landscaping and concreting to improve grave sites, and skills in welding, sculpting and emergency services.

## Benefits of CDEP program

There was a view that if the CDEP-sponsored activities were taken away, the general unemployment rate of St George and surrounding locations would increase and small towns like Dirranbandi would 'fold up'. The CDEP program was also felt to keep people off-the-dole, and reduce reliance on seasonal work. As a consequence, it reduced the amount of crime in the area. There were also economic benefits for shop keepers, retailers and businesses in St George, because the CDEP program had a payroll of over \$2 million dollars, considerable funds for capital expenditure, and a philosophy of spending locally.

If CDEP were abandoned many participants would 'go back into their shell and feel they had failed' which would create more social problems.

# Papulu Apparr-Kari CDEP

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Papulu Apparr-kari Language Centre performs a national role in promoting, preserving and promoting Aboriginal culture. Its core function is to revive, restore and retrieve all the languages of the Barkly Region. In doing so it allows Aboriginal communities of this area to share their culture and language with other Australians. In addition it enables formerly unwritten languages to be recorded in writing and provides resources for the understanding and learning of these languages by others, especially young people in schools. Languages include Warumungu, Yanyuwa, Kaytetye, Jingili, Garrwa, Alyawarra, Mara, Gurdanji, Mudburra, Wakaya, Wambaya, Warlp iri, Waanyi and Warlmanpa.

## CDEP activities

CDEP funds are used to support activities mostly dealing with the preservation, maintenance or promotion of Aboriginal language. There are currently 88 participants involved in a variety of activities related to language.

Activities include:

- ❖ Providing interpreting services to the courts, legal aid, department of health, hospitals and police on a weekly basis
- ❖ Translating books into Indigenous languages
- ❖ Compiling dictionaries for 16 different language groups
- ❖ Recording of Aboriginal songs and production of CDs and videos
- ❖ Translating the Bible into Aboriginal languages
- ❖ Producing booklets and teaching aids (for example, flash cards) for local schools
- ❖ Conducting language and cultural programs for local high schools
- ❖ Conducting cultural days each term with local schools, and schools in Elliott and Borroloola
- ❖ Providing cross-cultural training for teachers in the Barkly regional schools
- ❖ Translation and printing of literature for government agencies
- ❖ Conducting research into various aspects of Aboriginal life
- ❖ Production of films and radio programs

In addition, the Language Centre involves men and women in separate and integrated activities. In the main, women are involved in making teaching aids for the teaching of Indigenous languages. Men are involved in making artifacts for demonstration to high school students.

The Language Centre also has established its own Interpreter Service for the Barkly Region using CDEP language workers. The interpreters have played a pivotal role in helping non-English

speakers to understand the full nature of the law, which has helped them to get a fair trial in court.

## Raising the skills base

The Language Centre provides CDEP participants with part-time jobs. In performing their roles, participants are also provided with on-the-job training and opportunities to learn, maintain or upgrade skills and knowledge in a wide range of areas. These include skills and knowledge in:

- ❖ Teaching and training
- ❖ Interpreting
- ❖ Translating
- ❖ Lexicography
- ❖ Radio and television production

### Formal training

The overwhelming majority (90%) of the CDEP participants are undertaking some kind of formal training at various AQF levels, including certificate II and III, diploma and advanced diploma. There are also a large variety of short courses that do not lead to AQF qualifications.

The courses are provided by various training providers, selected mainly on the basis of being local residents and having experience, expertise, and cultural sensitivity.

Table 1 lists the training providers and agencies that have provided formal training for the community and for CDEP participants and perceptions of their effectiveness.

Table 1: Provision of training for Apparr-Karri and CDEP participants

Field of study	Provider	Reason for selection	Effectiveness
Office Skills Accounting	Centralian	Sole provider in Tennant Creek	Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Numeracy and literacy training Aboriginal management Advanced English and vernacular literacy Indigenous legal studies Office Skills Business Community Development Facilitation (Aboriginal	Institute of Aboriginal Development	Local institution, Lot of experience, Culturally sensitive, Indigenous controlled, CDEP presence on Board of provider	Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good

Land Care) Aboriginal Community Organisations Assessment and Workplace Training General Education for Adults			
Video Production	Metro Screen Ltd		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Multi-media training	Independent Video Production		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Work Safety, OHS Policy	Chamber of Commerce		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
First Aid	St John's Ambulance		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Interpreting training	Northern Territory Legal Service		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Driving Course	Julalikari		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Medium Rigid Vehicle Course Four wheel driving course	Data Driving		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Registrar training	ATSIC		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good
Avid editing training	Medical Image Production		Effective, no complaints from students, students say teachers are good

### The use of RPL and RCC processes in assessment

Processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) have been used in assessing skill and knowledge for courses in Office skills, Office procedures, Legal studies, and Aboriginal management.

## Course completions

CDEP participants in the Language Centre who commence a course of study generally complete their courses. There have been isolated cases where courses have not been completed due to loss of family members through death, cultural and personal reasons, and sometimes unwillingness to travel to other cities to complete formal training. Although some participants may be unwilling to travel to Alice Springs to complete residential activities associated with courses, this unwillingness to travel outside Tennant Creek and other communities is not universal. There are other individuals who are most willing to visit other places.

## Apprenticeships and traineeships

Currently there are two CDEP participants from the Language Centre in traineeship programs, employed by the Business Incubator and Barkly Enterprises Administration Centre. These organisations provide administrative support to mining and employment services. Off-the-job training is provided by the TAFE sector of Northern Territory University. The Language Centre was approached by Barkly Enterprises Administration Centre to provide trainees for these jobs, and CDEP funds were used to supplement trainee wages.

Factors inhibiting CDEP participants from acquiring employment in Tennant Creek are a lack of industries in the town with vacancies for workers, and a lack of jobs that people are willing to undertake.

## Perceived benefits of CDEP

The Language Centre derives benefits from CDEP in substantial ways. The Centre depends on CDEP funds to pay workers and to enable it to conduct the various activities that are currently in place. This means that people are given the opportunity to be involved in regular employment and to participate in training. There have been cases where local employers have recruited workers from the Language Centre. For example the Local Council has employed a former CDEP participant, and the Transport and Housing Department has recently made a request for a CDEP participant.

In addition to providing the opportunity to be engaged in daily work routines, CDEP fulfills a cultural and community responsibility to enable the preservation, protection and promotion of Indigenous languages.

For participants, there are benefits in terms of increased self-esteem derived from being engaged in undertaking training themselves, in providing training to others and in learning to read and write in different Aboriginal languages. In addition, to these personal benefits, CDEP participation enables participants to be involved in providing important and crucial interpreting assistance for Indigenous people when they come into contact with agencies like hospitals, courts, police and government departments.

There are also benefits for the community in having CDEP participants involved in traineeships as their improved confidence and increased experience enables them to look for other jobs and pursue further qualifications. In addition, CDEP participants involved in traineeship programs provide role models for young people in the Indigenous community. They provide an example of individuals interested in 'going forward and going somewhere'.

There are also benefits for employers in having CDEP participants in traineeship programs. These include financial benefits from having to pay trainees reduced wages because of the topping up of trainee wages by CDEP funds, and access to individuals who are prepared to work and undertake training. However, there can also be negative consequences in which some

businesses in the community feel aggrieved by the fact other businesses are being provided with CDEP supplements for paying the wages of workers whereas they are not.

## Suggestions for improvement

In the main, the Language Centre runs quite effectively. However, it would benefit from increased resources in the form of more computers and more space to accommodate its expanding activities.

# Toowoomba CDEP

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Toowoomba is a regional city of about 90 000 people. Of these about 6 000 are part of the Indigenous community. At the time of writing The CDEP program had 150 participants. Now the Toowoomba CDEP scheme has been amalgamated with the Marrumba.

## Activities

CDEP participants are involved in a wide variety of activities. However, the larger majority (100) are involved in the Arts and Craft program. About 50 participants are employed by host employers.

### Art and Craft Program

The Arts and Crafts program is conducted on 120 acre property owned by the Aboriginal Housing Corporation and provides activities for a total of 98 men and two women. In this program participants collect wood from the bush property and make didgeridoos, shadow boxes and boomerangs for sale to the tourist market. Currently the group is working to build up its stock of art and craft pieces which can be sold on behalf of the individual artists for a commission.

### Labouring gangs

CDEP participants are also involved in mowing lawns and other gardening activities. Workers on these gangs have been able to obtain licences required for the operation of heavy equipment and machinery.

### Host employment

Apart from those working in the Arts and Craft property, labouring gangs and the CDEP scheme itself, participants are in host employment. These participants are commonly selected for host employment on the basis of their desire to get a job and their perseverance in completing tasks and attending work. This helps to ensure that host employers get a positive impression of CDEPworkers, which in turn increases the employers' commitment to take on other CDEP participants in the future.

### *Schools*

CDEP funds are used to support the wages of two teacher training students who are undertaking the Remote Area Teacher Preparation Program (RATEP). The CDEP program also provides financial assistance to in-school tutors and Indigenous support officers.

### *Youth Group*

CDEP participants are involved in the Youth Group program run by the Church of Christ. This program aims to develop the leadership skills of youth workers.

### *Security crowd control*

CDEP participants have been involved in Murri Foot Patrol activities and have been able to gain their security qualifications. These activities are aimed at helping Indigenous Australians avoid incarceration.

### *Land Council*

CDEP participants work as receptionists and research assistants with the Land Council. Research assistants help to collect relevant information from traditional land owners.

### *Legal Services*

The Legal Service employs CDEP participants in a range of positions including trainee field officer, administration and finance.

### *Medical Centre*

The medical centre employs CDEP participants in dental assistant, receptionist, and driving positions.

### Mostly male participants

In the main, CDEP participants are male. This is because it makes more financial sense for women (especially sole parents) to opt for activities that do not require them to give up any special benefits are available to them under the sole parent benefit scheme (for example, for phone and electrical bills). There is a view that it is better for women to retain the sole parent benefits and participate in other training instead.

## Training Provision

In view of the fact that many participants have low literacy and numeracy skills and experience problems taking written examinations there is a preference for them to undertake on-the-job training. Nevertheless, participants are also involved in formal courses leading to licences (for example, back hoe, forklifts, chain saw, tree lopping) and horticulture, welding and business administration. There were currently five participants involved in traineeships with the CDEP and with host employers.

Three training providers have been used to provide formal training for the Toowoomba CDEP participants. These are Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE (SQIT), Downs Group Training Company and Golden West Group Training Company.

SQIT has been selected because it is felt that it provided value for money, and was willing and able to tailor courses to CDEP requirements. Students were able to access training without having to be involved in normal classes. Although little use has been made of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments SQIT was currently looking into the possibility of using RPL with CDEP participants. Golden West Group Training has been selected because of its good reputation in the area while the Downs Group Training Company was selected because it had approached CDEP and promoted its training activities.

There was general CDEP satisfaction with the service and training provided by these training providers. There was just one instance of dissatisfaction that occurred in a welding course where participants felt that they had not been provided with sufficient explanation of safety measures. This problem was subsequently addressed.

## Training completions

All of those who undertake short courses (generally courses aimed at achieving licences to operate equipment and machinery) complete the training. However, these courses have been structured to ensure that students have the support to enable them to complete the training.

The main challenge is getting those in longer term traineeships to complete their programs. The scheme has experienced a high drop out rate from longer term programs, mostly because participants do not like 'school' activities. For example of the 12 trainees who started traineeships in Security and Crowd Control with the Toowoomba and Districts Aboriginal Corporation for Community Support, only six received their security licences. Of the six who completed their security licences, four are still engaged in the Murri Foot Patrol, one works as a supervisor, the other as a ganger, both of them working four days a week for the CDEP scheme.

Those who did not complete their contracts had either left town, or dropped out of the course because they found it too difficult or had lost interest in it.

## Suggestions for improvement to training

Although the scheme has worked closely with SQIT to structure courses so that participants can complete them, there is a need to ensure that other providers understand that students will need extra assistance.

## Perceived benefits for community and individuals

Community benefits derived from CDEP were generally described in terms of getting more people off the dole, into the workforce and 'off the poverty line'. Apart from the industry-specific skills and qualifications that participants involved in traineeships and other formal training programs acquire from their participation in activities subsidised by CDEP, there are also benefits derived by the community. These benefits comprise the building of community capacity, improvement in community, public and self image, and positive role modelling in communities where engagement in regular work and training is not the norm.

Individuals who complete training and qualifications benefit from the opportunities for employment and further training these create. They also benefit from improved self-esteem and feelings of self-worth that come from increased knowledge and skill, and acceptance by the wider community. Those who do not participate in training have access to regular engagement with the world of work. This provides them with something to do and somewhere to go.

Employers who employ CDEP participants benefit from the subsidised wages provided by CDEP. In turn they help to build up the skills base and experience of individuals and communities. Individuals in host employment acquire on-the-job experience, training and work histories that can be used to help them secure full-time jobs. Once such full-time jobs are secured this opens up opportunities for other community members to enter CDEP and move into host employment and eventually into full-time jobs. Nevertheless the extent to which CDEP participants have moved into unsubsidised full-time employment in the non-Indigenous labour market has continued to be low.

## The benefits of the CDEP scheme

The major benefits of the CDEP scheme in Toowoomba can be described in terms of reducing the unemployment rate among Indigenous Australians, and providing them with a pathway and stepping stone to work or training. In addition, Indigenous agencies benefit from having access to CDEP participants to help conduct their operations.

# Thangkenharengge – Barrow Creek CDEP

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Thangkenharengge Aboriginal Corporation Resource Centre is located in Barrow Creek which is a small town on the Stuart Highway. The Resource Centre services four communities: Annera, Tara, Angkeweyelgke, and Barrow Creek.

The resource centre is charged with overseeing and arranging for house repairs, rent collection, CDEP administration, Centre-link duties, power cards, water and sewerage services, municipal services, and other essential services. The Resource Centre obtains most of its funding from ATSIIC.

## Problems at Barrow Creek

Although it is generally felt that one of the major ways CDEP can help these communities is to provide assistance with operational costs, and to get communities moving to improve their situations. Past attempts to establish a viable CDEP scheme have failed at Barrow Creek. Although recently re-instated the Barrow Creek CDEP scheme had been discontinued for the previous 18 months. It was discontinued due to a general lack understanding of what the scheme was meant to accomplish, insufficient numbers within the community to establish various forms of regular CDEP activities, lack of stability due to staff changes, and inappropriate behaviours of CDEP participants. Furthermore, the previous CDEP co-ordinator was assaulted when he refused to provide a motor vehicle, and the CDEP store was \$15,000 in debt.

Because of these factors the Resource Centre has been focussed only on the provision of municipal services required under 'duty of care' provisions. Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in having CDEP resume operations in Barrow Creek.

## What community members want

Community members reported being frustrated when CDEP was abolished and now want CDEP activities to start up again so that it can provide jobs for the community. They expressed the desire to keep their communities clean and to learn the skills required to run their own communities. They also made requests for vehicles to be based within their communities. One community leader or spokesperson wanted the return of the tractor grader that was formerly stationed in the community but taken away to prevent vandalism by young people.

A spokesperson also expressed the desire to have any training that participants had completed to be recognised with increases in pay.

## A revived CDEP scheme

In July 2002 a decision was made to re-instate CDEP activities at Barrow Creek with a formal start date of October 1 2002. Activities have already started in preparation for formal commencement of activities. The Women's Centre has been re-started with participants from Willora and Tara involved in traditional canvas painting, house painting, gardening and cooking activities. Participants from Willora have included within their community workplans the repair of a garage to house the tractor grader, and other tools and equipment. Participants from Tara have requested a park to be built, and plans are under way to clear the land and mount the poles required for the boundary of the park.

Although the establishment of the CDEP activities is still experiencing teething problems, motivation within the communities for the scheme is moving along. Night patrol activities that are common in other communities are not required in Barrow Creek because the hotel only serves alcohol to community members until 3.00 pm. At this time community members generally make their own way home.

# Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (2002)

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Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education was formerly Batchelor College which began as an annexe to Kormilda College, a residential college for Aboriginal students in the mid 1960s providing short training courses for teacher aides and assistants in community schools. It opened a second campus in Alice Springs, and annexes in Darwin, Nhulumbuy, Katherine and Tennant Creek in 1990. The majority of students are middle-aged (between the ages of 30 and 45 years) with well over two-thirds of them female.

Batchelor Institute comprises a School of Education Studies, Health Studies and Community Studies. It also has a Community Education and Training Division. The Institute is a Registered Training Organisation registered to provide AQF certificate, diploma and advanced diploma programs. It is also an institution of higher education and is the first ever education institution in Australia to be owned and controlled by Indigenous Australians that offers higher education courses. This means it also delivers bachelor and graduate diploma programs. In 2002 there were 58 different courses.

The Batchelor Institute's importance for CDEP schemes rests on its ability to provide a culturally sensitive approach to training.

## Training programs

Training programs which are currently being provided to CDEP participants include:

- ❖ Certificates II and III of Community Services (Children's Services)
- ❖ Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood)
- ❖ Certificate in Preparation for Tertiary Studies
- ❖ Certificates I & II in Spoken and Written English
- ❖ Certificate II in Australian Land Conservation and Restoration
- ❖ Certificate II in Art and Craft
- ❖ Certificate II in Broadcasting and Operations (BRACS)
- ❖ Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Social Science (Community Justice, Community Work, Alcohol and other Drugs, Recreation, Generalist)

The Institute also delivers Training Package qualifications for traineeship programs at the Certificate I, II, III and IV levels which come under User Choice arrangements. However, these traineeships are only available to CDEP participants if their community has selected Batchelor Institute as its preferred provider for these programs. User Choice programs include Library and Information Services, Information Technology, Museum Practice, Construction, General

Construction, Carpentry, Civil Construction, Metal Roofing and Cladding, Drainage, Urban Irrigation, General Plumbing.

Apart from Information Technology, and General Construction (Carpentry), user choice programs are only offered up to the Certificate (no level) or Certificate II level. There are also plans to provide training for Tourism Training Package qualifications. One of the reasons for introducing this training is that the competencies are more relevant to Indigenous communities and related to local experience. In addition, communities are able to customise the package according to local needs.

## Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and current competency (RCC)

The Institute allows participants to apply for RPL or RCC so that they do not have to spend time on competencies they have already achieved through work, formal training or life experience. The process is especially important in that the objective of programs is to allow existing workers to train for qualifications.

## Practical training issues

The remoteness of communities from Tennant Creek, and the distance of Tennant Creek from other major areas have a major impact on the extent and quality of training that RTOs are able to deliver to communities and to CDEP participants within the community. Transport to communities can at times be problematic during the wet season because of the unsealed roads and airstrips. The communities may also not have available the required tools and equipment, and in some cases, trainers themselves are unwilling to go to these locations because of difficulty in bringing in the resources to do the job.

The delivery of certain qualifications is also hampered by the inability of the Institute to place students in environments where they can obtain the practical experience required to allow them to engage in required on-the-job training. The lack of such placement opportunities, and workplace supervisors to supervise such training are major issues for Batchelor Institute. Most communities are under resourced and extremely poor.

For example, it is often difficult for the Institutes to obtain jobs or appropriate work placements required for Certificates in Museum Practice. This is because the number of workplaces are small and because there are often difficulties in ensuring that communities have the resources and equipment required to complete the practical components of the training. Similar difficulties are also experienced in the delivery of training for construction, drainage and plumbing qualifications. It is often difficult to get qualified tradespersons who are willing to live or go to remote communities on a regular basis to provide supervision of workplace practice required for the completion of qualifications. In addition, accommodation facilities and spaces where learning can occur are also often lacking in these communities.

## Learning preferences

It is important to note that, like students from other cultures, Aboriginal students vary in the way they go about their learning. Students also differ in the things they want to learn and the extent to which they want to be engaged in further education. However, trainers have found that the majority of Aboriginal students generally prefer classes which comprise entirely of Aboriginal students or have a number of Aboriginal students, and in which teachers are able to introduce new concepts by moving from the familiar and known, to the novel and un-known. Many Aboriginal students also prefer to learn by listening to teachers provide easy to understand

explanations of concepts, seeing skills demonstrated, and discussing new knowledge with their peers (critical to grasping the deeper meanings in cross-cultural learning contexts).

## Differing aspirations

Like students from other cultures, Aboriginal students also differ in the extent to which they aspire to education and training. There are those who only want to learn the basic skills required to enable them to understand and complete necessary government forms (for example, tax returns, applications for drivers licences etc), and there are those who aspire to further education. Some also believe that too much higher education may alienate them from their communities.

## Low levels of education

Education and training for Aboriginal students is often limited by their low levels of education. It is not uncommon for some students not to have completed primary and secondary schooling.

## Financial problems

Other training inhibitors include financial debt that may be incurred during training. For example, absences caused by attendance at sorry camps may affect the level of benefits received from Centre-link. To maintain access to Centre-link benefits (generally Abstudy) students must show that they are fulfilling their part of the obligation to attend training. If they do not attend training the benefits will be withdrawn. If the training provider does not inform Centre-link of absences at the time the absences occur, any benefits received during absences must be repaid when Centre-link is informed of the non-attendance. This leads to students incurring debts that often mean that they will need to cease their training.

## Conflicting cultural and educational priorities

The need to balance cultural and educational priorities places Aboriginal students in situations where they experience major conflicts in performing their roles as community and family members and students. These role conflicts also have practical consequences for RTOs in ensuring that students participate in and complete their training programs. The difficulties generally relate to the obligation on students to attend sorry camps when there is a death in the family or community. Traditional sorry camps usually take about a week.

Keeping in mind that the extended family is a major and core feature of Aboriginal culture, and that there are higher rates of deaths within Aboriginal communities, it is not uncommon for students to be required to attend a number of consecutive sorry camps. This means that absences from classes can extend over substantial periods of time. When such instances arise students get far behind in their school work. In some cases lecturers may suggest that students withdraw from their classes and start again. In other cases training providers try to apply some flexibility by extending deadlines and encouraging students to catch up on what they have missed. However, there is a limit to the extent to which flexibility can be applied. At the same time there is a push within communities to protect adherence to traditional practices (for example ceremonies for young men and sorry camps). Other social problems experienced by students include drug taking, alcoholism, and domestic violence, within immediate families which can also inhibit continued participation and completion of training. Such conflicting priorities often make it more difficult for Aboriginal students to complete training and education programs.

## Successes

Notwithstanding some of the difficulties faced by Aboriginal students in undertaking training and education, the Institute has experienced some success with CDEP participants completing courses of training, and furthering their careers. For example, there have been some CDEP participants who have completed their training and become full-time teachers and health workers.

# Institute of Aboriginal Development

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The Institute of Aboriginal Development (IAD) is a Registered Training Organisation providing AQTF qualifications and other short courses and programs. It aims to deliver training in ways that are culturally appropriate for those who are returning to study, or looking for a change in career direction. Established by the Uniting Church in 1969, it is now an independent Aboriginal resource centre and adult education centre serving Aboriginal Communities in Central Australia. It is controlled by a board which comprises individuals from the community, Aboriginal organisations, and IAD staff and students.

## Training programs

IAD provides training in a wide variety of areas including:

- ❖ Community Services and Health;
- ❖ Tourism;
- ❖ Community Development;
- ❖ Advanced English and Vernacular English;
- ❖ Aboriginal Land and Community Leadership;
- ❖ Assessment and Workplace Training
- ❖ National Indigenous Legal Studies; Interpreting
- ❖ Aboriginal Management
- ❖ Aboriginal Cultural Awareness
- ❖ Various Aboriginal languages
- ❖ Aboriginal Translating and Interpreting Services
- ❖ Central Australian Dictionaries Program
- ❖ Arrernte in Schools
- ❖ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Initiative Program.

It also offers the following short courses: Computer skills, RPL Assessors Training, Tracking Your Rights, Workplace and Assessor training, and Train Small Groups. It conducts short training workshops and customised programs to meet community needs. It is currently providing Certificate II training for CDEP participants in office administration skills, using modules selected from the Office Administration Training Package. Modules for each student vary

according to the requirements of their particular jobs and circumstance. In this way training is made relevant to individual needs.

IAD will also transport students to training if they have no access to transport.

## Policy on course attendance

The policy relating to attendance states that 'students will attend on average 80% of course time'. If attendance falls below this level lecturers are asked to review the enrolment. If students display 'prolonged and unapproved' absences then Abstudy benefits are suspended or cancelled.

Allowances are also made for students to attend sorry and ceremonial and family business activities. However such leave needs to be approved by the appropriate lecturer and the officer from Student Services.

IAD is also a 'grog free zone'. This means that alcohol and drugs are not allowed on the premises. Any infringement of this rule leads to immediate suspension.

## Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and current competency (RCC)

IAD provides students with options for having prior work, education and life experience recognised in assessments. However, it is the students whose main objectives are to acquire qualifications that are more likely to request RPL. In contrast, those who are undertaking training to upgrade skills are generally interested in participating in training.

## Outcomes

Once enrolled the majority of IAD students tend to participate in and complete the course they have commenced. This is especially the case if it is a course they find relevant and applicable. For example, CDEP attendance and completion in the Office Administration course is high. This is perceived to be due to the fact that it is a course that has been specifically requested for participants who are engaged in administrative duties.

However, there are some instances of students failing to complete their training courses. Although the incidence of non-completion is higher if students believe they are in a course that is not appropriate, the institute has adequate counselling processes in place to ensure that students are channelled into appropriate courses. The non-completion of courses is mainly related to heavy work loads being experienced at the workplace which inhibit class attendance, and participation in traditional business including sorry camps and ceremonies which can mean that students miss out on considerable portions of the course.

# Julalikari RTO

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Julalikari RTO is part of the Julalikari Corporation, a multifaceted organisation which is also involved in the building and maintaining of houses in the bush, and providing aged care, disability support, and job placement services. Julalikari also operates a night patrol program (funded by the NT SAFE organisation, and staffed by CDEP participants), and homemaker programs.

## Training programs

Julalikari has been an RTO since 1997 with scope for the delivery of accredited training in Construction, Horticulture, Small Business, Office Administration and Community Services. Should there be requests for other qualifications Julalikari will negotiate with other training providers to deliver the training. For example, Batchelor College has been asked to provide Certificate qualifications in Women in Arts and Crafts, while the Institute for Aboriginal Development has been asked to provide Community Management qualifications.

Julalikari originally decided to become an RTO, because at the time, there was no one providing the desired training in Tennant Creek. Currently Julalikari provides training for about 70 apprentices and trainees in a variety of programs including Building and construction, Electrical, Plumbing, Painting and decorating, Welding and Gasfitting. Traineeship programs are also provided in Environmental health, and Education.

The majority of female students from CDEP programs are involved in Arts and Crafts programs, while the majority of men are involved in the Construction trades. The majority of students undertaking construction training are enrolled in Certificate II in General construction.

## Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and current competency (RCC)

There is substantial use of RPL and RCC processes at Julalikari. These are often conducted by workplace assessors from Julalikari and Centralian College. In the main RPL and RCC are awarded for Automotive mechanics, Construction, IT, Small business, Jackaroo and Stockmen competencies. RPL is also provided for evidence of competency in the operation and driving of heavy machinery like graders, heavy trucks, bobcats, front-end loaders, back-hoes and fork-lifts.

## Training delivery

The way that training is delivered can either facilitate or work against students remaining engaged in training programs. Sometimes trainers may be too aggressive in their presentation of information and teaching. Such aggressiveness in the classroom or workshop may lead certain students to feel 'shamed' all the time and so decide not to continue in the training program.

Sometimes shyness may inhibit students from completing training. For example, one student dropped out of a truck driving course because he was too shy to go to the Motor Vehicles Registry. Today Julalikari has subcontracted an assessor from Industry Training Services to

conduct driver education programs. Students now no longer have to go to the Motor Vehicles Registry to obtain their truck driving licences, and Julalikari is currently experiencing an increase in the number people wanting to do the course.

Julalikari has found that the need to leave home to complete block training for construction qualifications may have two consequences for trainees. For the more adventurous it may lead them to 'play up' and not attend training, because they are away from the discipline of wives and families. For those who are less adventurous it may lead them to not complete their training because they may not want to leave home to attend block training.

## Concerns

There have been major difficulties encountered in providing appropriate opportunities for students to complete modules required for many training package qualifications. For example, it is has been difficult for Julalikari students to access opportunities to complete scaffolding, roofing, glass brick, and painting and decorating modules. This is because there is a lack of appropriate building and construction or scaffolding work required for training being done in Tennant Creek or within the communities. For example, one trainee had to go to Darwin to complete a painting and decorating module, because the work that would provide the practical component was not available in Tennant Creek. Another trainee had difficulties in accessing work for the completion of competencies requiring work with glass bricks.

Other issues may also inhibit course completion. Low levels of literacy and numeracy may mean that students are unable to cope with the demands of the course. Sometimes the RTO provides one-to-one tuition for students who fall behind in their studies, however this becomes quite expensive. There are also cases where students need to attend traditional ceremonies during times they are scheduled to participate in block training in Alice Springs. At other times there are cases where students may just give up a course because of pressures placed upon them by friends or family, including repeated requests for money.

To deal with these issues Julalikari has employed trainee mentors who will be responsible for processing the paper work, timesheets and liaising with employers and trainees so that trainees are provided with as much support as they need to complete their training.

Other difficulties experienced by the RTO include funding problems associated with having to deal with State and Federal government departments and the length of time it takes for forms to be approved by government administrators. There are also difficulties with courses that must be run in areas quite remote from Tennant Creek and other major regional areas. For example, the Stockman's course requires young trainees to live away from home on a station. The RTO must take the trainee to the station, and make sure he behaves appropriately and stays there for the duration of the training. When a change either in training package requirements or other government procedures arises, the RTO must pay for someone to go out to the station.

There are also difficulties associated with the provision of adequate telecommunications and information technology. For example, The Front-line Management program is an on-line program that requires students to down-load information. However, down-loading the materials is found to be especially slow, and this also affects student motivation to do the course. Although it would be possible to speed up the downloading by installing broad band technologies the cost of such an installation would be too expensive.