

31 January 2023

## **Roper Gulf trials a new approach to support CDP job seekers**

Roper Gulf Regional Council has delivered the Community Development Program (CDP) to remote communities in the region for over 10 years and has proudly supported many job seekers into full time employment.

While the current program has provided great outcomes for job seekers across the country, it is now time for the Community Development Program to be reviewed by the Australian Government and a new, updated program will soon be implemented.

Through a 6 month trial program called 'Trialling Pathways to Real Jobs', CDP providers have been given the opportunity to trial their own ideas for the new program.

Council has been approved to pilot 2 trials in the Roper Gulf region.

One trial will run in Mataranka, Jilkminggan and Numbulwar and is called the 'Job Shadow' trial. The second trial will run in Minyerri and is called the Alawa Aboriginal Corporation 'Pathways to Local Employment' strategy.

Both trials were developed with input from local job seekers and have been designed by Roper Gulf Regional Council CDP staff and the Alawa Aboriginal Corporation to build confidence, identify needs and provide real work experience that generates capacity for the job seeker to move towards full time employment.

### **Background**

On 31 August 2022, the Minister for Indigenous Australians the Hon Linda Burney MP announced the opportunity for CDP providers to redirect a portion of their funding to trial a new approach to supporting job seekers into real jobs.

This is an early step in the Australian Government's commitment to replace the current Community Development Program with a new and improved remote employment program.

40 CDP providers from across the country have been approved to develop a new approach and to trial the program in their region. The ideas and results of these trials will inform the development of a new remote jobs program.

## **Alawa Aboriginal Corporation 'Pathways to Local Employment' Strategy**

This trial is running in Minyerri through the Alawa Aboriginal Corporation (AAC), who is subcontracted by Council to deliver CDP in the community.

The AAC have developed the program by combining a number of innovative new projects and by building on what they have already been doing in the community.

The AAC will provide intense personal development through the trial which targets job seekers and enables them to gain the necessary skills to ensure work-readiness in various industries and employers, such as the mining and cattle industry.

### **The 'Job Shadow' Trial**

The basis of this approach is to place CDP participants into the workforce of a local employer and have them 'shadow' an actual employee.

The trial will take place for 6 months with regular reporting and communication occurring between the job seeker, the employer and Council to measure its effectiveness.

Council's CDP staff have developed this trial with local barriers to employment at front of mind. Understanding the role and employer expectations is the foundation of building a strong work ethic which is why both have been incorporated in this new program.

Individuals seeking employment will be afforded opportunities to engage in a real job scenario, directly learning on the job and being supported intensely by workplace mentors. This gives job seekers the opportunity to learn unaccredited skills and essential work ethics required to successfully sustain working in a full time role.

This program offers financial incentives the employer through a 'Mentoring Payment' up to the value of \$15,000. This is an upfront payment to cover the costs to the employer for the 6 month period.

The initial placement would require the participant to work 10 hours per week, payable by job seeker payments (Newstart Allowance).

A 'Top-Up Payment' is available should the employer see benefit in engaging the participant in more work hours. This is a payment that is reimbursed by Council to a negotiated amount.

The employer also has the opportunity to provide intense support and training to a potential employee and create real jobs for local community members.

As a CDP provider, it is Council's responsibility to invest in local people and prepare them for meaningful employment.

'Local people into local jobs' is a regular ambition identified by constituents of the Council and the design of this program sees that ambition become a reality.

The program also drives Council towards meeting two of its key outcome areas – Wellbeing and Economic Development - as highlighted in its recent Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

“Finding innovative solutions for sustainable job creation is highly important to our Council”, said Roper Gulf Regional Council Chief Executive Officer Marc Gardner.

“We have a renewed strategic focus of facilitating economic development in our communities, which includes workforce development.

“Residents in our communities want long term meaningful employment that they can be proud of and that enables them to support their families and children.

“As the region’s largest employer and with the highest number of Indigenous employees, it is very important that we provide real skills to ensure that we have good employees, and who will also benefit and grow our local economies.

“There are real tangible benefits with this trial and we are excited to be part of the changes that are needed with the CDP program”, Mr Gardner said.

If you would like to discuss this trial program further, please contact Council on (08) 8972 9000 and you will be directed to the appropriate contact from the CDP sites.

ENDS

For more information, please contact:

Bethany O’SULLIVAN  
(08) 8972 9024  
[bethany.osullivan@ropergulf.nt.gov.au](mailto:bethany.osullivan@ropergulf.nt.gov.au)



Image description: CDP participants from Mataranka and Jilkminggan completed a No More Violence information session in May 2022. These sessions aim to remove employment barriers and assist with personal development, which are important aspects of these trials and fundamental towards employment.

Pictured: Roger Charlie, David Farrar, Robin George, Ambrose Sandy, Lewis Roy, Johnny Daily, Leslie Sandy, Steven Rory, Joaquin Huddleston and Edward Joshua.