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CDP an abject failure: PM's report

A report from Prime Minister Scott Morrison's department into a remote indigenous work-for-the-dole scheme has revealed the program as an abject failure.

The ACTU has been scathing of the Community Development Program (CDP), calling for the abolition of the program and its replacement with one that provides genuine paid employment.

The CDP forces unemployed people in remote areas to work for free, sometimes for for-profit companies for 25 hours per week, without any basic workplace entitlements, or protection of federal OHS or worker's compensation laws.

Under the CDP, people were twice as likely to lose 20 percent or more of their quarterly income to onerous penalties than they were to get a job, the report reveals. More than 80 percent of the people subjected to the CDP regime are indigenous.

Three in five people under the scheme have had their payments cut as punishment for non-compliance, with one in ten people losing more than 20 percent of their quarterly income.

Yet only 6.7 percent of participants got a long-term job after participating the program – a increase of only 350 extra jobs over the previous program.

Failure to comply with the rigid CDP obligations leads to harsh financial penalties that harm participants, their families and their communities.

At last year's ALP conference the party committed to abolishing and replacing the program.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Indigenous Officer Lara Watson:

“People in remote and regional indigenous communities have a right to be paid fairly for their work and to have the same protections as every other worker in Australia.

“This report from the Prime Minister's own department shows that the CDP has failed.

“You're twice as likely to have your income slashed than you are to get a job if you're forced into this discriminatory scheme.

“The coalition are the only major party clinging to this failed program. It must be abolished and replaced with a solution that provides genuine paid employment.”

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