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Racist remote welfare program failing on every measure: new report

A new report from the Australia Institute has found that the Turnbull Government's remote work-for-the-dole program is racially discriminatory, incredibly punitive, ineffective and expensive compared to metropolitan work-for-the-dole programs.

The Community Development Program forces participants to work 25 hours per week for no pay, with no OHS protections, no workers compensation and no workplace rights or minimum standards.

The report has found that:

- Last year the scheme generated 2682 part and full time placements over 26 weeks, but cost \$360 million to operate, money which could employ almost 20,000 people for 6 months, full time.
- Fewer than 10% of CDP workers are supported into a job that they stay in for 6 months each year, and on average a CDP worker would have to stay in the system for 12.7 years to achieve a 26 week placement.
- For every dollar of actual support a CDP worker receives through the program, 70 cents is spent on administration, making the program incredibly expensive compared to other WFTD schemes
- CDP workers are 25 times more likely than non-CDP workers to receive a financial penalty through the welfare system and 55 times more likely to receive a serious penalty. CDP workers make up a majority of total penalties and serious penalties nationally despite being less than 10% of the total work-for-the-dole workforce.
- CDP covers 31,000 of the most economically disadvantaged people in Australia, with average incomes in areas where CDP is in effect drastically lower than the national average.

Quotes attributable to ACTU National Campaign Coordinator Kara Keys:

"The only people who benefit from the CDP are the companies which the Turnbull Government pays to run it. Minister Scullion is monetising racial discrimination.

"This program is expensive, ineffective and brutal in its treatment of its participants. It is inflicting economic and emotional trauma on remote Indigenous communities.

"CDP is causing people to go hungry, costs more than any comparable program and does not achieve its stated goals. The creation and pig-headed defence of this disastrous policy by the Turnbull Government has done lasting damage to countless remote communities who have been robbed of their autonomy.

"This program needs to be scrapped, and replaced with a model which puts economic autonomy in the hands of Indigenous people. The CDP's paternalistic approach has clearly failed and is causing serious harm."

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