

A new remote employment service

The Australian Government is reforming remote employment by replacing the Community Development Program (CDP) in two stages, in partnership with remote communities.

1. The first stage is the new Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) program, which is creating 3000 new jobs in remote Australia over three years and started in December 2024.
2. The second stage is the design and delivery of a new remote employment service which will begin on 1 November 2025. The new service will replace CDP with a flexible employment service across remote Australia.

It will better support job seekers in remote Australia to upskill, find pathways to work and contribute to their community. It will differ from the old program by leading with a strengths-based approach, supporting providers to work collaboratively with communities on projects and with job seekers to understand their needs.

CDP services have been extended until 31 October 2025 to support remote job seekers before a new remote employment service begins. There is planning underway to ensure a smooth transition between programs.

How will the new remote employment service work?

The new remote employment service will support job seekers in remote Australia who are currently receiving income support payments to build their skills and address barriers to employment.

It will support more than 40,000 job seekers across 1200 communities in remote employment service (RES) regions (currently known as [CDP regions](#)).

The service will:

- Help job seekers prepare for work, move into a job when available and stay employed with greater access to mentoring and tailored support.
- Support job seekers where work is not available through engagement in community projects that build their skills and help them become job ready. These projects give communities more flexibility to design solutions locally, tailored for individual needs.
- Change the way providers are funded, incentivising improved service delivery in critical areas, such as employment placement support (currently known as post placement support).
- In a small number of regions, trial local approaches to build language, literacy and numeracy as these are foundational skills for getting a job.
- Trial how existing job seeker assessment processes could be improved so that job seekers feel supported and comfortable, with providers working with job seekers to identify their strengths, skills and aspirations.
- Provide an increased investment in training and resources to deliver higher quality, culturally safe services tailored to remote job seekers.

What does this mean for job seekers?

Job seekers will still be required to agree to a job plan, attend regular appointments, and accept suitable paid work. Participation in activities to meet mutual obligations will remain voluntary in the first two years of the new service.

How can providers apply for funding?

Organisations that would like to deliver remote employment services will be able to apply for funding through a grant process.

A competitive grant selection process is expected to open in May for interested organisations in RES regions (currently known as CDP regions) to apply.

A [Forecast Opportunity](#) has been published on GrantConnect with more details.

Draft Grant Opportunity Guidelines are expected to be released in mid-March to provide further information about the design of the service.

How will the new service be different to CDP and CDEP?

What we know is that the current CDP is not working for everyone. The new remote employment service will be more flexible and address the barriers to employment opportunities that job seekers have faced for many years (including training and skill development opportunities). It will also link participants with suitable employment opportunities, including those created through the RJED program.

Participation in activities to meet mutual obligation requirements will remain voluntary until 2027 with any changes to compulsory attendance after this made in alignment with broader employment service reforms.

The new service will also abide by new workplace rules and laws that have come into place since CDEP including:

- Requirements for Working with Vulnerable People or Working with Children checks to protect vulnerable people and children from harm.
- New Work Health and Safety laws have also been introduced to manage risks to the health and safety of everyone in a job.

It's important to the Government that the service works for job seekers in remote communities and complements existing policies led by other Government departments, while also aligning with broader employment policy reforms.

There will be opportunities for improvement throughout implementation of the service to reflect further community and stakeholder feedback.

For more information

- Visit www.niaa.gov.au/remote-services
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