Australian Government

Remote Jobs and Communities Program

Community Action Plan

Guidelines

May 2013

Closing the Gap.

REMOTE JOBS AND COMMUNITIES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

From 1 July 2013 the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) provides a streamlined and flexible employment, participation and community-development service in 59 remote regions across Australia. The program builds on the strengths of the services that have transitioned into the RJCP: Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services, the Indigenous Employment Program and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

The RJCP supports people to build their skills and get a job or to participate to their capacity in activities that contribute to the strength and sustainability of their communities. It also helps remote-area employers to meet their workforce needs and supports communities in remote Australia to plan and build a better future through the development of Community Action Plans for each region.

A single service provider with a permanent presence in each remote region provides a local point of contact for job seekers, communities, employers and others.

The RJCP is managed jointly by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). FaHCSIA is responsible for the operation of the Community Action Plans and the grant-funded Community Development Fund that supports projects providing employment and participation opportunities for local people and communities.

As the majority of job seekers in remote Australia are Indigenous people, the RJCP is part of the Australian Government's commitment to Closing the Gap.

Further information on the RJCP and RJCP Providers can be found at http://deewr.gov.au/.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

Each remote region must have a Community Action Plan (CAP) that is inclusive of all communities within a region. RJCP Providers work with communities and other stakeholders to develop the CAP.

Through the CAPs, communities have a central role and a strong voice in setting out a strategic vision for each remote region. The CAPs will guide delivery of the RJCP in line with the needs and aspirations of communities. Providers must ensure that the Remote Employment and Participation Activities[1] undertaken under their Funding Agreements with the Australian Government align with and support the region's CAP. Proposals seeking funding through the Community Development Fund will need to be consistent with the priorities outlined under the CAP.

These guidelines include a **CAP Template** to assist RJCP Providers and communities to develop their CAP and to assist in ensuring the CAP is suitable for Government approval.

What goes in the CAP?

The CAP will outline the priorities for social and economic participation and development for the region up to 2018, as well as an agreed plan of action to achieve the wider objectives of the RJCP.

The CAP has three parts:

- ***Community Engagement and Consultation:*** Ensures that communities are at the centre of the CAP process and the RJCP model; outlines the governance and ongoing engagement arrangements between the community and the RJCP Provider.

[1] Remote Employment and Participation Activities are activities that provide benefit to job seekers and support them to gain sustainable employment.

- ***Regional Profile**:* Identifies social, cultural and geographical issues that may be unique to the region as well as current opportunities for and barriers to economic participation, development and employment in the region; and also indicates how opportunities may be built on or barriers removed.

- ***Priorities and Action:*** Describes the high-level priorities for the region; outlines what RJCP Providers and communities will each do to deliver the region's priorities; and how the achievement against the priorities will be measured. This section will guide delivery of the broader RJCP, including ensuring that Remote Employment and Participation Activities are consistent with the CAP.

Community-level schedules

Individual community schedules may be added to a region's CAP, if needed. Where a community has social, cultural or geographical circumstances that are vastly different from the majority of communities in the region, a community-level schedule may be required to add value to the region's CAP and to ensure the priorities identified in the CAP are relevant to all the region's communities. These schedules may also identify a community's particular cultural participation activities and/or wishes, or community values or rules that RJCP Providers should be aware of and observe. **Appendix A of the CAP Template** is provided for this purpose.

Commitment to participation

All job seekers have a responsibility to participate in the RJCP according to their requirements. The RJCP has a strong compliance framework based on 'No Show No Pay'. This ensures that job seekers have the opportunity to undertake meaningful activities and remain accountable for their responsibilities within the program. The CAP will describe the ways that communities and RJCP Providers can work together to address any social, cultural and geographical issues in the region to maximise job seeker participation.

The CAP will also document what the RJCP Provider and the communities agree should be considered an acceptable explanation for non-participation. It will set clear boundaries in relation to these matters so that participants understand what is, and is not, an acceptable explanation (for example, how long can a participant undertake 'Sorry business'). The CAP will clearly set out strategies that ensure all participants understand their responsibilities and what action the RJCP Provider will take if they do not have an acceptable explanation for not participating. Ultimately, however, any compliance action will remain at the discretion of the Department of Human Services.

In this way the CAP will help to support a better understanding of job seeker compliance obligations in line with the strengthened participation requirements under the RJCP. It will also assist the day-to-day operations of the RJCP Provider by ensuring that communities and participants are aware of, and supportive of, the action RJCP Providers will take in response to individuals not meeting participation requirements.

The CAP will also provide an opportunity for the RJCP Provider and communities to agree what cultural activities are acceptable for RJCP participation.

Government assistance

Government representatives from both FAHCSIA and DEEWR will assist RJPC Providers and communities in the development, implementation and review of the CAPs. These include the FaHCSIA CAP Manager for the region, as well as the relevant Indigenous Coordination Centre, DEEWR's RJCP Agreement Manager and other Australian Government staff resident in communities such as Government Engagement Coordinators and Indigenous Engagement Officers.

CAP DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

1. CAP consultation and engagement

The RJCP is based on partnership between RJCP Providers and the communities they serve. Through effective and meaningful engagement both parties need to take responsibility for achieving the outcomes of the RJCP. The CAP is central to this process.

The CAP must show how the RJCP Provider has engaged with and will continue to engage with the communities in their region, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous job seekers, young people, women, older people and people with a disability. It is recognised that connections between RJCP Providers and communities will develop and deepen over time. RJCP Providers will need to demonstrate how they have engaged with communities in the development of the initial CAP as well as setting out a strategy for building support from all communities in the longer term.

RJCP Providers must also show they have consulted with local industries and key employers to identify the skills needed in the region and the availability of jobs. The CAP should detail local employer and employment opportunities to which local job seekers can be linked.

In addition, RJCP Providers need to work with government agencies and community organisations that provide services in the region. These links may facilitate activities for job seekers, CDEP wage recipients and volunteers.

In engaging and working with communities, RJCP Providers are also required to factor in any community-imposed rules or cultural practices – for example, community alcohol restrictions or rules about closure of the community or the length of 'Sorry business'.

2. CAP development

RJCP Providers are required to undertake a number of activities in relation to the development and implementation of their CAP. Providers must, in consultation with the communities, conduct a comprehensive assessment of the region to identify:

- the demographics of the region and the communities within it
- the employment and development opportunities that exist in the region and the barriers to participation and employment (skills gaps or social disengagement)
- the communities' employment, economic and community-development goals
- existing infrastructure in the communities
- service gaps, economic and social issues and needs, and
- communities' unique issues, and the strategies and resources required to address these.

In developing the CAP, the RJCP Provider will consider the priorities that have already been identified in current local plans that have been agreed by government, such as Local Implementation Plans in Remote Service Delivery communities and CDEP Community Action Plans. The priorities outlined in these existing plans will steer RJCP activities and investment decisions under the Community Development Fund until the CAP is in place.

Having assessed community needs, the RJCP Provider and communities will identify up to **five key priorities** for the region that relate to the RJCP's objectives – increased employment, participation and community development in remote Australia – as well as strategies to address these priorities. The priorities and strategies should be broad-based and inclusive of all the region's communities. Over time, the priorities and strategies must be reviewed and adjusted to take account of progress or changed circumstances.

Measures to assess the achievement of the key priorities will be agreed by FaHCSIA, communities and the RJCP Provider, and set out in the CAP. These will be in the form of a narrative that describes a) the current situation (the baseline) and b) what successful achievement against the priority will look like in the short, medium and long term. These narratives will be reviewed annually and should be updated as required. Broader CAP reporting and assessment requirements have been outlined below under 'Assessment and reporting'.

FaHCSIA officers will be available to assist RJCP Providers and communities to develop the CAP.

In developing the CAP and as part of their engagement with communities, RJCP Providers should also consider how their service-delivery model and projects funded through the Community Development Fund (or other funding sources) could support communities' economic and social aspirations.

3. Submitting a CAP

Once the CAP has been developed and agreed by communities and the RJCP Provider, it should be submitted to FaHCSIA in the format provided in the template**.**

RJCP Providers are encouraged to develop and submit a CAP as soon as possible after commencement of the RJCP. Development of the CAP is a requirement of each RJCP Provider's funding agreement with Government. At the latest, **the agreed CAP <u>must</u> be submitted by 28 February 2014.**

The draft CAPs will be reviewed and accepted by FaHCSIA, in consultation with DEEWR, before they are submitted for ministerial approval. RJCP Providers may be asked to resubmit the CAP if the Department considers that further development is required. **All CAPs will need to be in place and approved before 1 July 2014.**

In order for CAPs to be accepted by FaHCSIA, RJCP Providers must demonstrate that:

- the CAP has been created in partnership and through genuine engagement with communities in the region
- community groups and government representatives have been consulted
- existing local plans relevant to the scope of the RJCP have been considered, and
- the CAP aligns with the needs and priorities for the region and the objectives of the RJCP.

4. Approval of the CAP

Once accepted by FaHCSIA, the CAPs will be provided to the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for approval. RJCP Providers must make the approved CAPs visible and readily available at their premises.

RJCP Providers are required to review the CAPs, in consultation with communities and FaHCSIA, at least annually to ensure they are up to date and continue to reflect communities' needs. These revised CAPs must be submitted to FaHCSIA for approval by the Minister each calendar year. FaHCSIA will review any changes made to the CAP during the 12 months; these changes may require ministerial approval if the FaHCSIA considers they are significant.

5. CAP reporting and assessment

The Australian Government will review performance against the CAPs as part of wider reviews of RJCP Providers' performance. The RJCP Funding Agreement sets out the three Key Performance Indicators against which RJCP Provider performance will be assessed.

The timeliness of preparation of the CAPs and the quality of the CAPs and related activities will be considered as part of the assessment. Remedial action in line with the terms in the RJCP Funding Agreement will be taken where an RJCP Provider is assessed as not meeting their obligations in relation to the CAP. Providers will also be required to undertake specific reporting in relation to the CAP.

Six-month health check Every six months RJCP Providers must report on the progress of strategies outlined in the CAP – the 'CAP health check' – including whether participation activities and employment outcomes have aligned to the CAP.

Annual review Each year there will be an assessment against the Key Performance Indicators that measure the region's progress towards the priorities outlined in Part Three of the CAP template.

These reports will provide FaHCSIA and DEEWR with information about how the RJCP Provider is meeting commitments made through the CAP. Monitoring of the RJCP Provider's performance will be further supported through regular on-the-ground feedback, including consultation with communities on the performance of the CAP and their level of engagement in the RJCP model.

The outcomes of the annual review will be made available to communities. RJCP Providers need to describe in the CAP how they will provide feedback to communities on the progress of priorities in the CAP.

For further information regarding the CAPs or CAP development, you can contact your nearest Indigenous Coordination Centre on 1800 079 098 (Nhulunbuy – 1800 089 148).

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

Remote Region:	Insert region name
RJCP Provider:	Insert RJCP service provider name as it appears on the RJCP Funding Agreement
Contact Details:	Insert RJCP service provider contact information including details on office location(s)

Part One: Community Engagement and Consultation

This section will ensure that communities are at the centre of the CAP process. It outlines the governance and ongoing engagement arrangements that have been agreed between the community and the RJCP Provider.

Through effective and meaningful engagement both the RJCP Provider and communities need to take responsibility for achieving the outcomes of the RJCP. For the engagement to be effective there must be clarity about the purpose of the engagement activity, the type of involvement being sought from people, and the degree of influence they can exercise.

Section 1: Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy	
Describe the methodology used for community engagement and consultation, and demonstrate the CAP was created in partnership with communities (e.g. through existing local reference groups). Describe how the RJCP Provider and the communities will develop, engage and sustain relationships with employment and training stakeholders within the remote region.	
Who was engaged and consulted?	Provide details of individuals, communities and other providers/agencies you spoke to/consulted during the development of the CAP.
How were they engaged and consulted?	Provide details of how people were engaged and consulted (including dates and locations).
Was there anyone else who wasn't consulted? Why?	
What were the key points that came out of the consultation?	
Were there any alternative or competing views that should be acknowledged?	
Provide details of members of the community who can verify endorsement of the CAP.	

Section 2: Ongoing governance and management of the Community Action Plan
Describe the ongoing governance and management of the Community Action Plan, including: • how communities in the region will be represented in the development, endorsement and ongoing management of the CAP • how the CAP will be developed and updated, including how input from all communities will be distilled into the CAP • if it is not possible to have a CAP endorsed by all communities in the region in the first instance, describe the strategy for achieving full endorsement over time and describe how the RJCP Provider has ensured that there is an appropriate level of support for the CAP across all communities in the interim • how the RJCP Provider will give feedback on achievements and progress of the CAP to communities

Part Two: Regional Profile

This section will list the current opportunities and barriers to economic participation, development and employment in the region.

Section 1: Region Review and Opportunities
Give an overview of the region, covering population, job seeker numbers, level of participation, and level of economic development.
Give an overview of the strengths/enablers in the region that will go to support the RJCP (e.g. strong community governance).
Provide details on local employment, participation and training opportunities within the region.
Identify key local employers and industries, their employment needs and opportunities and how they will be engaged in the RJCP (You may refer to the Workforce Development Strategy for this question)
Identify infrastructure and assets available to assist in delivering the services in the region (e.g. resource centre, training computers) and how these could be used
Identify potential projects/activities that could be supported by a grant from the Community Development Fund

Section 2: Barriers
Provide details on any barriers to employment and participation across the communities in the region
Provide details on service gaps relating to employment and community development within the region
Provide details on social or cultural aspects of the region including how these may effect employment, participation and community development

Section 3: Remote Region Participant Characteristics

Use the table below to build a representative profile of the various categories of job seekers in the region, including the opportunities and challenges relating to these categories. This section will assist the RJCP Provider in tailoring support to maximise outcomes for individuals. The table can be expanded to capture the information required. The categories set out in the table are not intended to be prescriptive – they are provided as a guide for communities and RJCP Providers to consider the main job seeker groups that can be identified in a particular locality (de-identified examples may be used to draw out unique circumstances in the region).

Some individuals will fall into more than one category where they may face additional barriers and/or have additional requirements. Typical characteristics for these more complex categories of job seekers can also be captured in the table as a subset of the relevant category.

Disengaged individuals are those who would normally have participation requirements, but who are no longer entitled to, or never have received, income support or CDEP wages. It may be difficult to capture information for this group under each element on the left-hand axis of the table; as a minimum the 'The typical barriers to employment and participation' and 'Personal development and training requirements' should be addressed.

	Indigenous job seekers	Non-Indigenous job seekers	Women job seekers	Job seekers with disability	Young job seekers	Older job seekers	Disengaged Individuals	Other job seekers (including volunteers)
Typical skills and abilities; employment or participation related experience								
Typical barriers to employment and participation								
Career aspirations and interests								
Personal development and training requirements								
Community work experience; enterprise and business experience								

Section 4: Commitment to Participation
During the consultations on which the RJCP is based, many people said it was important that everyone contributed either by having a job or by participating in community development activities. They also said there should be consequences for those who failed to meet their responsibilities and obligations. All job seekers must participate according to their requirements. The RJCP has a strong compliance framework based on 'No Show No Pay', ensuring that job seekers have the opportunity to undertake meaningful activities and remain accountable for their responsibilities within the program.
Describe particular social, cultural or geographical aspects within the region that may impact on RJCP participants being able to meet their participation obligations. Describe the strategies that the RJCP Provider and community will use to deal with these impacts (e.g. transport to and from outlying communities). Describe the strategies that have been put in place to ensure that participants are aware of job seeker participation requirements, including the responsibilities of job seekers who are unable to participate and the consequences if job seekers do not have an acceptable explanation for not participating. Describe the cultural activities that the RJCP Provider and the communities consider would qualify for RJCP participation and the typical time commitments associated with particular cultural activities.
The two questions below will help the RJCP Provider have a better understanding of the issues in the region that may impact on RJCP participation and will also support RJCP Providers' day-to-day role in monitoring compliance and reporting non-compliance to the Department of Human Services (DHS) where this is considered necessary. In developing acceptable explanations with communities, it is recommended that the RJCP Provider consult the Guide to Social Security Law reference 3.1.13.90. Where the RJCP Provider reports non-compliance, DHS will use the Guide to Social Security Law reference 3.1.13.90 to assist in making any determinations. The latest version of the Guide to Social Security Law can be found here.
Describe what the community has agreed to as acceptable explanation for individuals not meeting their participation requirements and any limits, rules or expectations relating to these explanations (e.g. how long a participant can undertake 'Sorry business'). Also describe the job seeker's responsibility in reporting to the RJCP Provider (e.g. requirements for the timely provision of evidence).

Part Three: Priorities and Action

This section will describe the high-level priorities for the region. The section will also map out a clear, measurable path for both the RJCP Provider and communities to deliver the region's priorities, building on the strengths of the region. A baseline narrative and an achievement narrative for achievement against the priorities will be developed between the RJCP Provider and communities, in consultation with FaHCSIA. Further guidance on developing the narratives is at **Appendix B**.

This section will guide the delivery of the broader RJCP program, including ensuring that Remote Employment and Participation Activities are consistent with the CAP. This section should link the priorities for the region as identified by communities and the RJCP Provider in Section 1, and the strategies and opportunities identified in the Workforce Development Strategy. The Workforce Development Strategy can be attached and referred to in this section of the CAP.

Section 1: Region Priorities	
Provide details on the key priorities for the region that align to the objectives of RJCP (increased employment, participation and community development). The priorities should be sufficiently broad so as to include all communities in the region. Additional rows may be included, but the total number of priorities should be limited to five.	
Priority Name:	Priority Description:
1.	
2.	
3.	

Section 2: Action	
Provide details on the strategies and/or activities the RJCP Provider and communities will put in place to achieve the region's priorities (listed at Section 1). These strategies and activities should be sufficiently broad so as to include all communities and have specific actions to be taken for youth, women, people with a disability, older job seekers, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous job seekers. This section will be used by communities, the RJCP Provider and government to measure the progress of the region towards achieving its priorities. It will inform the structure of the six monthly CAP health check and the annual CAP review.	
Priority Name: ……..	
How achievement of the priority will be supported	
What strengths/enablers in the region (identified in Part 2) will support the achievement of this priority?	
What strategies and/or opportunities identified in the Workforce Development Strategy will support the achievement against this priority?	
What Remote Employment and Participation Activities will contribute to achievement against this priority?	
What resources will be used to address this priority and how will they be sourced?	
Addressing barriers to achieving this priority	
Describe the strategy/ies for addressing the barriers identified in Part 2 that relate to this priority.	
Describe the strategy for addressing any service gaps identified in Part 2 that will affect achieving this priority	
Measuring achievement through narratives – development of Key Performance Indicators	
Provide a description of what the current situation looks like and why this priority was chosen. This will be used as a baseline for measuring progress against the priority. This narrative will be updated as part of the annual review.	
Describe what achievement against this priority looks like in the region – include short-, medium- and long-term steps and timeframes.	

APPENDIX A: Community-level schedule (to be included as an attachment to the CAP where necessary)

It is not a requirement to include individual community schedules for every community in a region; however, where a community has social, cultural or geographical circumstances that are vastly different from the majority of communities in the region and that may impact on the community's ability to participate in the CAP, a community-level schedule may be required.

Community Name: _____

Section 1: Community Engagement and Consultation
Describe the methodology used for community engagement and consultation, and demonstrate the CAP was created in partnership with communities (e.g. through existing local reference groups). Describe how the RJCP Provider and the communities will develop, engage and sustain relationships with employment and training stakeholders within the remote region.

Section 2: Region Profile
Provide a high-level summary of the community in relation to population, job seeker data, participation, economic development/self-reliance and outline how these differ significantly from those of other communities in the region. Provide details on service gaps in the community relating to economic and community development. Provide details on social or cultural aspects of the community including the opportunities or barriers these may create for employment, participation, economic and community development and how they may affect the community's ability to participate in the region's priorities. Identify infrastructure and assets available to assist in delivering the services (e.g. resource centre, training computers) and how these could be used.

Section 3: Priorities and Actions	
Provide details of key priorities for the community that align to the objectives of the RJCP. Describe how these priorities will contribute to the development of the region. Additional rows may be included, but the total number of priorities should be limited to five.	
Priority Name:	**Priority Description:**
1.	
2.	
3.	
Part three Section Two of the CAP should be used as a template for this section of the community level schedule.	

APPENDIX B: Guidance on developing narratives to measure progress against priorities in the CAP

The narratives required at Part 3 Section 2 of the template can include quantitative and qualitative measures to review progress against each priority set out in a region's CAP. Individual narratives need to be linked to each priority.

The success of the actions undertaken to achieve these priorities is reviewed at six- and twelve-month intervals, and updating the narratives is a central element of these reviews. Updating the narratives will help to create an awareness of positive change and keep a focus on achievement. Where performance is measured, and the results are made visible, RJCP Providers, communities and others with a stake in the CAP can take action to ensure the vision and aspirations embodied in the CAP are achieved. This process needs to be underpinned by shared understandings, open communication and active collaboration.

The baseline narrative will provide a description of what the current situation looks like and why this priority was chosen. The second narrative will describe what achievement against the priority will look like in the short, medium and long term. The achievement narrative needs to be flexible and adjustable. Over time the priorities and actions in the CAP will change in response to external factors or as the original priorities move towards achievement.

The achievement narrative should follow the SMART principles:

Specific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**imely

Specific

The narrative needs to be specific to the priority set out in the CAP.

> *For example: That the working age population has the appropriate skills and capabilities required to enter into the labour market.*

Measurable

The narrative must be measurable, that is based on things that can be observed and documented, and which are related to achievement of the priority.

> *For example: The number of enrolments and successful completions of identified training opportunities.*

Achievable

The narrative must be seen by all as realistic and achievable. If the measures are set too high for the circumstances, they will not only be irrelevant but also ensure failure.

> *For example: Identify strategies to ensure that training opportunities are relevant to potential employment in the region.*

Relevant

It is essential that all parties to the CAP clearly understand the narrative for each priority, and that they have the same meaning for all those involved. A good engagement process in developing the CAP is more likely to result in measures that are relevant and valid.

> *For example: Developing engagement strategies to support participation in training opportunities.*

Timely

The narrative should have an appropriate time frame. It should clearly set out measures of achievement in the short, medium and long term.

For example:

- *Short term – Identification of training opportunities and training gaps – the RJCP Provider to develop and implement a strategy to build on opportunities or meet needs.*
- *Medium term – Number of people to have completed training within a time period.*
- *Long term – All job seekers are skilled to gain employment in the region.*

APPENDIX C: Provider checklist

Before submitting the CAP to FaHCSIA, the RJCP Provider should ensure they have followed the CAP Guidelines and carried out the following:

The RJCP Provider, where relevant, has:	Carried Out	Comments
General		
Developed the CAP in consultation with FaHCSIA and DEEWR staff in the region	☐	
Identified, and used to inform the CAP, the relevant local strategic plans	☐	
Used the agreed Workforce Development Strategy to inform the CAP	☐	
Part One: Community Engagement and Consultation		
Identified the methodology in consulting and engaging communities in the development of the CAP	☐	
Identified the ongoing strategy for engaging with communities	☐	
Part Two: Regional Profile		
Identified the opportunities and barriers to economic participation in the region	☐	
Developed the Remote Regional Participant Profile	☐	
In consultation with communities, developed strategies for job seekers' commitment to participation	☐	
Part Three: Priorities and Action		
In consultation with communities, identified the high-level priorities for the region	☐	
Identified how achievement against the priority will be supported	☐	
Developed, in consultation with FaHCSIA and communities, narratives relating to achievement of the priority	☐	