

## REMOTE JOBS AND COMMUNITIES PROGRAM - OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYERS

From 1 July 2013, the Australian Government is introducing significant reforms to employment, participation and community-development services in remote Australia to help more people get into jobs and participate in their communities.

The new Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) will provide a more streamlined and flexible employment and participation service in remote Australia. With funding of \$1.5 billion over five years, the new program will build on the strengths of existing services: Job Services Australia (JSA), Disability Employment Services (DES), the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

Critical to the success of the new program will be engaging and building relationships with employers, ranging from private-sector businesses, large and small, non-government organisations to all levels of government.

There will be one RJCP provider with a permanent presence in each region resulting in a more streamlined servicing arrangement for employers through a single point of access. The RJCP will support the same type of services and activities as the current IEP, although they might be delivered in a different way.

RJCP providers will work closely with employers to ensure job seekers have the skills that employers need. This includes:

- matching the right job seeker to a job
- development of the job seeker's foundation and basic work skills
- individually negotiated support such as wage subsidies, on-the-job training and mentoring, or assisting job seekers with the tools, equipment, uniforms or licences needed for securing a sustainable job

The new program emphasises the development and skilling of the local workforce for local jobs in remote Australia. All training conducted by RJCP providers will relate to potential areas of work – training will be for real jobs, not 'training for training's sake'.

Each RJCP provider will be required to engage with local employers in developing a Workforce Development Strategy for their region. This will set out existing and emerging job opportunities within and outside the region as well as any seasonal, project or volunteer work. RJCP providers will also be encouraged to work together to provide targeted assistance to major employers where there is scope to benefit job seekers across several regions.

In addition, grants from the Community Development Fund (\$237.5 million over five years) may fund community projects including social enterprises, business development and support for employers. The Australian Government will involve employers, communities and RJCP providers in joint forums in the lead up to 1 July 2013 to help prepare for the new program and discuss the opportunities it presents.