

Prisoner Employment Services for First Nations Peoples: Consultation Guide

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and Elders past, present and emerging.

Aim

The aim of this consultation is to see how future services for First Nations people who are incarcerated could be designed to ensure:

- more participants get a job after release, and
- more First Nations organisations deliver employment support services.

Introduction

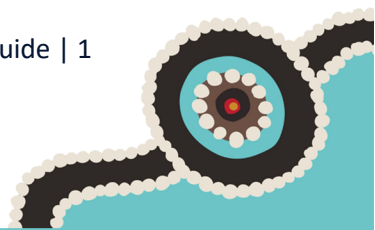
We deliver the Time to Work Employment Service (TWES) to help First Nations people who have been incarcerated get ready to find work and settle back into the community after their release. TWES will end in 2024 and **we want to hear from you** about how to improve these transitions for First Nations people.

An evaluation of TWES found that the program was not successfully achieving its aims. It had low take-up rates and low success rates in connecting participants to employment services after release.

Finding work after release helps a person connect to their community, feel empowered, and get on track with their life goals. People who have been incarcerated may need extra support to get into work. Government supports can play a big part in making these transitions smooth and successful. We want to make sure services for First Nations people are culturally safe, tailored to the needs of each person and give effective support after release.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement) was developed and agreed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all levels of government. The National Agreement has four important Priority Reforms. We want to use these to make the services that we fund better. The Priority Reforms are:

- Priority Reform One:** Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making
- Priority Reform Two:** Building the Community-Controlled Sector
- Priority Reform Three:** Transforming Government Organisations
- Priority Reform Four:** Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level



Who can contribute?

We are seeking views from everyone who wants to help shape services to support First Nations peoples. We want to hear from current and past TWES participants and from other First Nations people who have been incarcerated. We also want to hear from people who have helped people who were incarcerated or after their release, through their work or volunteering.

Anyone can contribute, including individuals, governments at all levels, social enterprises, community organisations, advocacy groups, employers and unions. As well as seeking views through this discussion paper, we are meeting with key stakeholders and asking our contracted providers to help us seek the views of participants.

What can you tell us?

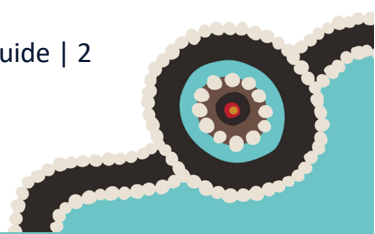
We want to know how you think future services could be designed to help First Nations people who are or have been incarcerated transition into employment.

You may choose to use these discussion questions to guide your input:

1. How should the Priority Reforms from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap be embedded in a Commonwealth-funded prison employment service?
2. How can we design and deliver a culturally competent service?
3. What sorts of supports does the service need to provide to participants while they are in prison?
4. How can the service help First Nations people who have been incarcerated after release (including connection to mainstream services, family supports or paid work)?
5. How can the service help employers to hire First Nations people who have been incarcerated?

We would also like to hear from you on any other areas we should explore.

Your knowledge, experiences and views will help inform the design of any future service. If you agree, your submission will also be published on our website, so everyone can benefit from the sharing of ideas.



Making a submission

You can make a submission of as few or as many words as you choose. You can choose for your submission to be anonymous. A Privacy Statement and Copyright Notice are available in the Discussion Paper on our website at the address below. Please provide your submission:

- Through the DEWR website at www.dewr.gov.au/time-work-employment-service/consultations/have-your-say-improving-prison-employment-services-first-nations-peoples
- By email to TWESconsultation@dewr.gov.au
- By post to

TWES Consultation

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

GPO Box 9828

LOC: 12M4 Canberra ACT 2601

Submissions close on 16 August 2023.

